

Valley Forge Elementary—April 2017—Team Updates

Kindergarten:

Spring finally feels like it arrived during April. Our theme, Protect our Planet, allowed us to focus on rain, trees, flowers, and of course, Earth Day! The children decorated the hallway with umbrellas and wrote about something they like to do in the rain. We read various fiction and nonfiction books related to our theme. The students practiced word families that related to our theme.

In math, we learned and practiced numbers to 100, sequencing and ordering, as well as comparing sets to find the difference. In Science we created landforms using playdough and learned about the water cycle and weather.



Earth Day was a huge success! We started with the students painting their own t-shirts to wear on Earth Day. Thanks to the parents who helped with this project. On Earth Day, the students rotated around stations learning about the importance of worms, how an oil spill affects the environment, and facts about recycling. They also made a craft and helped the environment by planting a sunflower seed and a flower. The children had a wonderful time learning about these important concepts through our hands on activities. Thanks to all the parents who were able to help out with this project.

First Grade:



The flowers are in full bloom and so are our first graders. Our first grade spent the morning outdoors on April 27th taking care of the earth. Students and teachers weeded, planted new flowers and added soil to the flower beds in front of our school. It looks beautiful and our students are so proud of their hard work! Thank you to the families who donated to this project. It would not have been possible without your kind donations.

During the month of April, we completed our study of the rainforest. The children spent the first part of the month learning about the insects and arachnids that live in the rainforest. We even created a few to add to our murals. Don't forget...our tropical rainforests are always sunny, so feel free to take a trip! The second half of the month was dedicated to green efforts. During this time, the children learned about reusing, reducing and recycling to help keep our earth clean!

The first grade teachers and students would like to thank Mrs. Nation for a fabulous music program. The children enjoyed learning Japanese and African songs and even had the chance to play some instruments. We are very proud of our first graders!

As we approach the upcoming month, MAY your days be filled with warmth and sunshine!

Second Grade:

Second graders and their teachers have been enjoying many spring activities! A highlight of the month was a Round Robin in remembrance of Earth Day. Students rotated from class to class and experienced a different activity with each teacher. There was a read aloud, crafts, writing activity, bingo, and a board game. All the lessons reinforced how important it is for us to care for our earth.

We are coming to the end of our study of the solar system. Students have studied each planet, the sun and our moon. They have been working on an activity packet writing important facts they have learned about each. Our next unit of study will be the life cycle of the butterfly. This is always a favorite!



We connected Social Studies to Language Arts as students wrote letters to Columbus applying for a job as a crew member on his first voyage. Second graders were required to give convincing reasons as to why they should be hired. Students also wrote Verb Poems describing the actions of Columbus. Next we will learn about the history of immigration to our country.

We would like to thank our fantastic music teacher, Mrs. Nation, for the wonderful music program she directed. We all had so much fun learning the songs about space and they helped us to learn about our solar system. We certainly appreciate your talent and hard work, Mrs. Nation!

We are looking forward to the busy months of May and June. A list of events will be sent home soon.

Third Grade:

April was busy indeed for our 3rd graders even with a week off for Spring Break! We managed to work successfully through PSSAs in both English Language Arts and Math.

You should have received a Biography Packet which explains the work your student should be doing at home to prepare for Biography Day on May 8, 2017. This was sent home before Spring Break.

In Science, we have planted our Wisconsin Fast Plants and expect them to pass through each stage of their life cycle within 28 days. During this time, students learn to thin, transplant, pollinate, and harvest their seeds. They also graph the growth of their plant on a regular basis. If you see black specks in an envelope arrive home someday soon, know they are from our Plant Life and Development unit in Science.



Learning about settlers and early colonists in the early days of Pennsylvania has been the focus in Social Studies. Students have learned from which parts of Europe early settlers arrived and their reasons for wanting to move to the New World. Future lessons will include learning about the geography of Pennsylvania and reasons why some settlers chose to move to the western part of our state.

Our study in Literacy by Design has been focused on Explorers in Space which lends itself to our biography study. Using the comprehension strategy of classify/categorize information, students look for details in the readings that allow them to synthesize information.

Many students in our Math classes are learning how to measure perimeter and area as well as to analyze and create bar, line, and picture graphs.

As April came to a close, we had the great opportunity to help kids with cancer by sewing pillow cases for the ConKerr organization!

Spring is such a fun and busy time for all of us at VFE, especially in 4th grade! We are getting ready to start our P.A.L (personal achievement in learning) presentations. The students have been working so hard putting together their research and becoming experts on their topics. It will be so exciting to see what they present next month.

In writing, we have wrapped up our informational writing and are now beginning to focus on different types of poetry. The students are not only writing their own poetry but also analyzing poems as well. They are learning about figurative language through poetry, as well as stanzas, rhythm, rhyme, and repetition.



- In science, we are busy with our vehicles! The kids are working in their science groups testing to see how adding a propeller and a sail change the way their cars move. Soon each group will be given a design challenge where they are given requirements that they have to meet. This is always an exciting way to end the unit.

In social studies, we are continuing to study how our new nation was formed. The students have learned about the three branches of government and the responsibilities of each branch.

In language arts, we are learning how the reading strategy of “asking questions” helps us to understand and think about what we are reading. We are continuing to read a variety of genres in our small reading groups and have even started reading novels and having literature circles. Some classes have recently begun an author study where the students work in small groups to research about an author’s life and read some of their most popular books. They will present what they have learned to the class in a fun and creative way.

In May, we are looking forward to our visit up to tour the middle school, our 4th grade music show with Mrs. Nation, and Field Day among many other things!



Special & Support Area Updates

Physical Education



April has been an exciting month in Physical Education class. Students in all grades practiced throwing and catching Frisbees with proper form by playing many lead-up games and activities. Students are just beginning to learn concepts and skills that come along with diamond sports such as kickball, baseball, and softball.

May is going to be extremely busy with Physical Education activities. We have the first ever 4th grade vs faculty basketball game, 4th grade Conestoga Relays, and of course, Field Day. Parents please keep an eye out for signup sheets on these activities as many of them would not be possible without our parent volunteers.

