



# VFES MONTHLY REPORT

*April 2018 – 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.



Finally, 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 our 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. 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! We ended our study with a "Products of the Rainforest" Day. Mrs. Guy, our science aide, gave a wonderful presentation on the products we get from the rainforest. The children were able to see first-hand the valuable resources the rainforests provide. The children also had the opportunity to visit the rainforest through virtual reality glasses. The children were amazed to see the beauty while feeling like they were there! Also included in this day was a game called Kahoot. The children had the chance to tell what they learned about the rainforest in a technology based response system. The children learned SO much about the rainforest! Our next Science unit is dedicated to green efforts. During this time, the children will learn about reusing, reducing and recycling to help keep our earth clean!

April was poetry month so first grade spent a week learning about poetry. They listened to and read many poems written by various poets, analyzed poems, and looked for patterns of rhyme and rhythm. In addition to poetry, April writing was also dedicated to the our publishing center books. The first graders are SO excited to have their stories published...coming to your home in June! We are sure they will make it to your "favorite book ever" list!

The first grade teachers would like to thank all of our generous families who donated to the first grade service project. You will see the results in the front of our school just in time for the Spring Fair. 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:

April was a fun month for the second graders at VFE. We had our second grade concert on Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup> that combined music with our science curriculum. Students spent many music classes over the last few months practicing songs and preparing for the show. In class, students practiced their speaking parts. They put on a great show for parents and families.

In April, students also worked hard studying our new science curriculum about the planets and outer space. This unit is one students really enjoy as kids learn numonic devices to remember the planets in our solar system and get a strong understanding of distances, sizes, and orbit tendencies of each planet.



Students continue to work on reading and writing strategies as we prepare for our Writer's Celebration that will be held on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Students will share writings they have done in their classroom with parents on this fun day to celebrate each child's success as authors.

Second grade is looking forward to May as we have our Spring Fair and a fun field trip to see the play "Dragon's Love Tacos" in Philadelphia.

## Third Grade:

April was a busy month for our third graders. Valley Forge is so extremely proud of the effort our students put into the English Language Arts, and Math PSSAs. They worked hard each day and applied all of the test-taking strategies and knowledge they have learned this year. We also completed our Family Life lessons on Families or Nutrition. The children learned so much and asked a lot of great questions.

We wrapped up our Chemical Testing Unit in Science by finding out what the mystery chemicals were by utilizing all of the results from our previous tests. We now move onto our Plant Unit which correlates wonderfully with all of the beautiful flowers blooming all around us. Students are planting a Wisconsin Fast Seed, caring for it, and measuring the length of the plants each Science Lab. It is exciting to see how quickly the plants grow!

April also had our students busy preparing for their Famous Pennsylvanian/American speeches. They have been researching their famous person at home and taking notes as they go. Students will be asked to share their research on Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup> by dressing up in costume and sharing a speech about their Famous Pennsylvanian/American. Parents are invited in that afternoon at 2:15 to view all of the presentations at our Wax Museum. It is a special time to enjoy all of their efforts!

In Language Arts, our themes have focused around the Solar System. Students have a great deal of background knowledge of the Solar System thanks in part to their studies in past grades. The stories in both our Reading Sourcebook and leveled readers have extended their understanding. Third graders also continued to study and identify the structure of texts, various types of figurative language, and practiced responding to text-dependent questions using Solar System themed readings. April is also National Poetry month and students have enjoyed reading and writing a variety of poems.

Many classes also read Flat Stanley and sent flat versions of themselves all around the world to go on some pretty fabulous adventures. We are excited to see the pictures that our friends and family send back to us with our flat selves!

Third grade is excited for May as we have the Bee Man assembly on May 8<sup>th</sup>, a Johnson Matthey Science Presentation on May 11<sup>th</sup>, Field Day on May 25<sup>th</sup>, and the Colonial Plantation Field Trip on May 30<sup>th</sup>!

Spring is such a fun and busy time for all of us at VFE, especially in 4<sup>th</sup> 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 exciting to see what they present next month.

In writing, we have wrapped up our informational writing and are now beginning to focus on realistic fiction. The students are brainstorming ideas for a realistic fiction story. They are learning about plot and character development.

In science, we are busy with our vehicles! The students 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 for what they are each responsible.



In language arts, we are learning how the reading strategy of “synthesizing” helps us to understand and think about what we are reading. We are paying close attention to how the way we are thinking about our reading is changing as we read. Also we are continuing to read a variety of genres in our small reading groups and have even started reading novels and working in 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 4<sup>th</sup> grade music show with Mrs. Nation, and Field Day among many other things!



## Special & Support Area Updates

### Library



Kindergarteners are wrapping up a unit on oviparous (egg-laying) animals. Students had a bird's-eye view of the incubation and hatching process of chickens through pictures that Mr. Wong shared of his son's 4H Egg-to-Egg project. We learned facts by reading non-fiction books and cracked up at many of the funny fiction books about birds.

During National Poetry Month, first graders listened to a short chapter book about a boy who challenged himself to respond in rhyme to every conversation during one school day. We challenged ourselves to create rhymes, puzzled over 'un-rhymable' words like 'orange', and shared books in rhyme from the picture book section of our library. We're ending the year with a non-fiction study of baby animals.

Second graders continue to work on understanding and finding materials in different sections of the library. In early spring we used the catalog to conduct title searches. We've explored book formats such as graphic novels, hybrid books, and novels in verse and discussed genre classifications like science fiction, mystery, fantasy, and realistic fiction. Our last unit of study will include stories of immigrants and non-fiction research about countries around the world.

Before beginning their biography projects for the wax museum, third graders were introduced to the biography section in our library through a mini-research project on famous artists. We learned how to locate individual biographies and discussed which information it was OK to copy (dates, place names) and when it was better to take notes in your own words. After conducting research with partners, each student wrote a report using Word. Basic skills such as formatting text, locating and including pictures, and saving documents were introduced and practiced through this work. Finished reports are displayed in the third-grade hall.

Recent library classes were spent formulating questions, evaluating resources, collecting information, and (for some 4<sup>th</sup> graders) working on presentations for their PAL independent research projects. We'll conclude our elementary school library studies with a unit on Media Literacy to help prepare students to understand, interpret, evaluate, and create media messages.

