

# *Valley Forge Elementary—February 2016—Team Updates*

## **Kindergarten:**

We opened February with Groundhog day on which we learned a poem and made a puppet. In math, we worked on the concepts of counting on, counting back, and time to the hour. We also began the Family Life lessons. These lessons will be completed in March.



We celebrated Valentine's Day and President's Day with special books and activities. Our Valentine's Day program was fantastic. The children worked hard to learn the songs and get up and stay up on the risers as well as get down from the risers. It was a fabulous performance and the audience loved it! We all got to enjoy some special treats and crafts at our parties. Thanks to the parents for planning such wonderful celebrations.

We finished the month by celebrating our 100<sup>th</sup> day of school doing many activities related to the number 100.

## **First Grade:**

February was a busy month in first grade. We kicked off our partnership with the Philadelphia Zoo when the "Zoo on Wheels" program visited our first graders at the end of January. The children had a great time learning all about the animals of the rainforest. Thank you to the PTO for providing us with this amazing opportunity. After the program, our fundraiser was announced to the whole school. For the first two weeks in February, all VFE students were invited to cast their votes by donating money to the jar of the animal he/she hoped to adopt. After two weeks of collecting, the panther won! Altogether, VFE raised \$580.50!! This money will be donated to the zoo and used to buy food and other necessary supplies for the panther. Please stay tuned for a Spring Fair raffle item that will offer the chance to win a visit to the Philadelphia Zoo with a special private tour.

There were many other important events to learn about and celebrate in the month of February. We learned about Dental Health Month with a visit from our school district's dental hygienist, Laura Forlano, who met with each class to teach the children about dental health. The children were given a new toothbrush to practice what they learned.

We learned about Groundhog's Day. The kids had a great time making predictions about our upcoming weather. Some children can't wait for Spring while others are enjoying the Winter weather. However, when the groundhog didn't see his shadow, everyone was excited by an early Spring prediction!

We celebrated the 100th day of school this month too. The children enjoyed celebrating 100 days of learning and fun!

Love was in the air in the first grade hallway as every first grade class celebrated Valentine's Day. The children enjoyed playing games, creating crafts, and sharing valentines with classmates. Following Valentine's Day, we learned about President's Day. During this time, the first graders learned about Abraham Lincoln and George Washington. Everyone enjoyed the day off in honor of these famous presidents.

A Round Robin was a perfect way for our first graders to learn about important African Americans in history.



We were sad to see our visit to Japan come to an end. Our final lesson was a visit to a "Japanese Tea House". In our classrooms, the first graders were served green tea and cookies as they took part in the customs of a Japanese Tea Ceremony. Japan was a wonderful unit that was enjoyed by all. We will soon be packing our bags for Africa!

Now that February is over, first graders are waiting to find out if March will come in like a lion or a lamb??? The teachers are hoping the groundhog was right . . . come on Spring!

## Second Grade:

The month of February brought some cold, snowy weather but second graders had lots of indoor fun. We began the month wondering if Phil, the groundhog, would see his shadow. We learned about these mammals and found out that Phil predicted an early spring. Some students were happy about his prediction while others were not. They wrote about their feelings and created adorable groundhogs, too.



Valentine's Day always brings fun and excitement to our classrooms! We made valentine bags and cards for friends and loved ones. Some even tried writing couplets! Books we read were *Arthur's Valentine*, *Someone Loves You, Mr. Hatch*, and *The Valentine Bears*. Thanks to all the volunteers who made our parties fantastic!

In remembrance of President's Day, biographies of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln were read. Students sorted facts about the two presidents. Our reading theme was Election Day which connected well with our study of these two important presidents and with current events. The comprehension strategy we are focusing on is making text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections.

We have begun our study of soils in science. The entire second grade made a compost bin complete with worms! Our study of ancient China has concluded and we will soon begin studying the exploration of North America.

We all enjoyed the Art Goes to School presentation. Students and teachers were fascinated with the works of art and facts about the artists.

We are all wondering if the month of March will bring some warm spring weather. We know it will bring many exciting learning opportunities!

## Third Grade:

The third grade had a super month of February! We have moved our science focus from land and water to the next unit about chemical tests. Students will complete a variety of tests on unknown chemicals to see if they can figure out which chemical is which! In social studies, we are wrapping up the unit on the Lenni Lenape and will next focus on William Penn and the Quakers.

Students have also been working hard in their whole groups and small groups during reading. We wrapped up theme nine which focused on having students compare and contrast information with a theme of "Factory to You." Our next theme will focus on the concept of money. Students will read a variety of pieces about saving, earning, and spending money and then reflect on the author's purpose. Third graders continue to practice answering text-dependent questions and citing evidence in their written responses as we prepare for the English Language Arts PSSAs in April. This allows them to show off all of the close reading skills they have learned this year! Additionally in writing, students spent time working on imaginative narrative pieces in which they wrote about a topic in the genre of realistic fiction. Next in writing, we will work on opinion pieces where students will be asked to state their opinion then support it with evidence.

Math classes continue to focus on problem solving and are working in units around the topics of fractions and customary and metric measurement. We have also begun our preparation for the Math PSSAs in April by reviewing previously taught material using sample test questions.



Special activities this month included our Valentine's Day party and 100<sup>th</sup> day celebrations. We finished working on our bird drawings and are excited to have them displayed on March 5<sup>th</sup> at the Annual Sapsucker Festival from 9 am-2 pm at the Audubon Center.

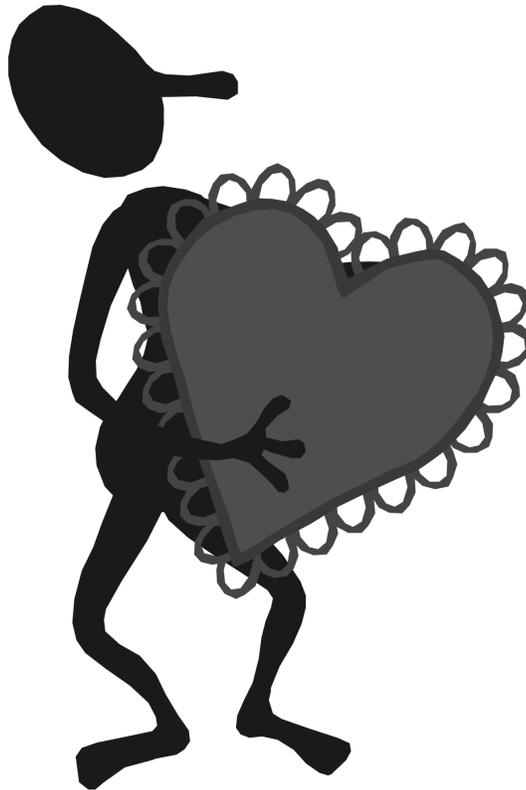
Third grade looks forward to a great month of March with more exciting learning opportunities yet to come!

## Fourth Grade:

The fourth grade started their new science unit, Motion and Design, this month. We will be learning more about basic physics, the effects of friction, and how a design can affect the function of a “vehicle”.



We would like to thank the Conestoga REACH program for visiting. The students and staff enjoyed their presentations and the students had a great time writing letters to the seniors going to the Prom this year. The Cultural Arts Committee did a wonderful job presenting the Art Goes to School program and we would like to give a special thank you to Mrs. Culbert for making this wonderful learning event happen. We want to thank all of the parent volunteers who helped make our classroom Valentine’s Day Parties a huge success. The students, faculty, and the parents seemed to have a wonderful time at their classroom parties.



## Special & Support Area Updates

### Art



Kindergarten artists have used several clay techniques to make their very own snowman. They will use glaze next to color their clay.



First grade artists drew koi fish in a pond. They observed simple shapes to build the fish and their confidence. After adding lily pads and other pond creatures, they used watercolors to finish their artwork. First grade artists then looked at the Impressionist art of Claude Monet. They created beautiful paintings inspired by his water lily and bridge paintings. In this lesson, the children used a simple printmaking technique to create a reflection of their bridge. This carried over nicely into their printmaking lesson in clay.



Second grade students created beautiful ink panda paintings. This lesson ties into their study of China in their core social studies curriculum. The children learned how to create a wash and use this to show details far away in their pictures. Second grade artists then made monkeys to celebrate the year of the monkey! The monkeys are dressed to reflect their interests and hobbies.



Third grade students learned about the art of drawing in one-point perspective. They drew aquariums and filled them with fun fish. They worked hard at a perspective drawing of a tunnel in an aquarium. By using rulers and one-point on their paper, they created depth and a believable space on a simple piece of paper! They added color and painted the water with watercolor to give a liquid effect. They were most impressed that their drawings looked three-dimensional!



Fourth grade students created overlapping mugs. They learned that the ellipse is a circle seen in perspective. They then created a drawing based on overlapping mugs to show space and depth. They looked at a still-life of mugs on a table and used this information to create their own place setting ready for hot cocoa and marshmallows! Using the simple three dimensional cylinder, the children created realistic still-life pictures of cups, mugs, and bowls. They looked at the art of Wayne Thielbauld. His cakes and pastry paintings also inspired many of our young artists! All 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes also rolled clay slabs, added texture, and cut out the initial of their first name or an initial of someone special.

