

## *Valley Forge Elementary—February 2017—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 time to the hour and shapes, both solid and flat. 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, 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 games 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:**

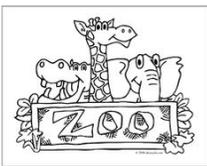
February was a lot of fun in first grade. There were many important events to learn about and celebrate. We started the month off with Groundhog's Day. The kids had a great time making predictions about our upcoming weather. This year Groundhog Phil saw his shadow and that means we are in store for 6 more weeks of Winter. Will Groundhog Phil be right?? For now we are enjoying the warm temperatures and hoping that Spring Fever doesn't happen early!

We also celebrated the 100th day of school! The children had a great time celebrating 100 days of learning and fun! How quickly the time flies when we are having fun!

Love was in the air in the first grade hallway as every first grade class celebrated Valentine's Day. The children had a LOVELY time playing games, creating crafts, and sharing valentines with classmates.

We also spent time this month learning about Abraham Lincoln and George Washington. Everyone enjoyed the long weekend thanks to these two famous presidents.

A Black History Month Round Robin was the perfect way for our first graders to learn about important African Americans in history. The children learned about famous inventors, Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, and Ruby Bridges.



We kicked off our partnership with the Philadelphia Zoo when the "Zoo on Wheels" program visited our first graders at the end of February. 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. VFE will have the opportunity to "adopt" an animal from the Philadelphia Zoo. For two weeks, all VFE students are invited to cast their votes by donating money to the jar of the animal he/she hopes to adopt. All first graders eagerly await to find out which animal VFE will adopt...a hippo or a giraffe??

Now that February is over, the children are waiting to find out if March will come in like a lion or lamb???

Come on SPRING!!!

## Second Grade:

Second grade began the month of February anxiously waiting to find out if Phil saw his shadow! Stories about Groundhog day were read and various art and writing activities were created. Even though Phil predicted six more weeks of winter, we all had fun with this tradition.



Valentine's Day always brings fun and excitement to our classrooms! We made valentine bags, and cards for family and friends. Books we read included: *Someone Loves You Mr. Hatch*, and *Arthur's Valentine*. We enjoyed fun games and activities during the day.

In remembrance of Presidents' Day, biographies of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln were studied followed by a fact-sorting activity. Our reading theme was titled Election Day which connected well with our study of Washington and Lincoln. The comprehension strategy focus has been making connections to what we read.

We are learning about soils in science. The entire second grade made compost bins complete with worms! Our study of ancient China has concluded and we are beginning to learn about the exploration of North America.

We all enjoyed the Art goes to School presentation. Teachers and students were fascinated with the artwork and interesting facts about the artists. We are grateful for this program.

In math, students have been working on measurement and mental math.

It seems spring has sprung early this year! Phil must have been wrong! We know that many new learning opportunities will be spring up too!

## Third Grade:

February was a fantastic month in third grade! We transitioned in Social Studies from our Lenni Lenape tribe unit to learning about William Penn and the Quakers. In Science, our students have been performing some exciting experiments using five mystery chemicals! They are making great observations and taking precise notes to use in future lessons.

Students have also been working hard during whole and small-group reading. We completed Theme 10 which focused on deciding the author's purpose for writing the story based on the theme, "Money Matters." They read various pieces about saving, earning, and spending money including the best ways to donate to reputable charities. Third graders continue to practice answering text-dependent questions and citing text evidence in written responses. This will be very effective as we prepare for the English Language Arts PSSAs in April. Additionally in Writing, students completed formal imaginative but realistic narratives. They used a writing rubric as they wrote which describes for students the expectations of receiving the highest possible score.

Math classes continue to focus on multi-step problem solving and working on curriculum-based topics such as fractions and customary measurement. We are also preparing our students for the Mathematics PSSAs by reviewing previously taught material and working on sample test questions that simulate the PSSA questions.



Special activities this month included our Valentine's Day class parties and the 100th Day of School celebrations! Each class also enjoyed a lesson in art with Art Goes to School. In addition, they completed some amazing bird drawings based on the James John Audubon Center visit. These drawings will be on display at the annual Sap Sucker Festival at the center on March 4 beginning at 9 am. All are welcome!

## Fourth Grade:

February has been a fun-filled and busy month for us in fourth grade. Once again, the students enjoyed learning about different artists and pieces of artwork during the *Art Goes to School* week. The kids also enjoyed celebrating Valentine's Day this month; handing out their Valentines, wearing their PJs, and watching Charlie and the Chocolate Factory together.

We are continuing to practice using different reading strategies in language arts. This month we have been focusing on synthesizing while reading. The kids have been formulating new ideas and bringing together different pieces of information from the text as they read. We are focusing on how their thoughts about what they are reading may change as they continue through the story. Speaking of reading, the fourth graders presented their Cereal Box Book Reports this month and they are now on display in the fourth grade classrooms. The students all did a great job putting together their boxes and commercials for the class, We had a blast watching them!

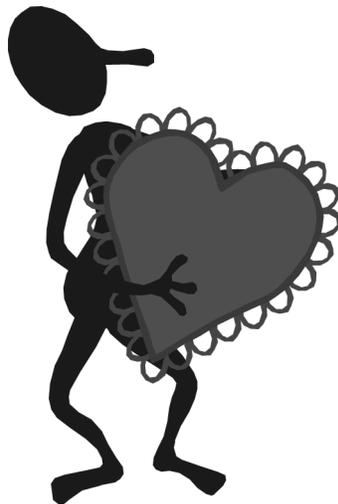
Also on display this month was our final project for the Electric Circuits science unit. In the science lab, the kids were working hard on the culminating project for the Electric Circuits unit which was a home or building made with real working lights. It was an interesting project to work on and the students did a great job! We are looking forward to starting the next unit, Motion and Design.



In social studies, we are continuing our study of The American Revolution. We are learning about the Declaration of Independence and how George Washington led the Colonial Army to victory with help from the French. We are lucky to live so close to Valley Forge Park which we will visit in the spring!

This month, the 4<sup>th</sup> graders also had a visit from the REACH Conestoga students. The 4<sup>th</sup> graders loved watching the older kids put on skits to teach them about making good choices when it comes to peer pressure, drugs, and alcohol. After the skits, the 4<sup>th</sup> graders wrote letters to the seniors urging them to make good choices this year especially at their upcoming senior prom.

As you can see, we were a busy group this month and we are looking forward to the spring weather and more fun learning opportunities ahead!



## Special & Support Area Updates

### Music



We had lots of fun in music this month! Here are just some of the things we have been doing and learning...

The Kindergarteners did a wonderful job singing in the Valentine's Day Concert on February 14th! Now we are learning to become active music listeners by identifying and moving to long and short sounds in music.

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> graders are studying Japan and Africa in their classrooms this month, we have been learning about various Japanese instruments and singing Japanese and African folk songs! We will be performing a show with these folk songs on April 20<sup>th</sup>! Rhythmically, we have been learning to read, write, and play quarter notes and eighth notes. We have also been learning about the life and music of the famous jazz musicians, Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong!

In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, we have learned to identify different sections and patterns in pieces of music. We concentrated especially on songs in AB and ABA form and we've been singing folk songs from all over our country and our world. Most recently, we have begun to learn songs for the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade show this year called "Spaced Out!" The performance will be on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are working hard playing the recorder! We have been talking about how to produce a proper sound and play together as a group. We can also read and play 3 note songs off the musical staff, including our favorite, "Hot Cross Buns!" In addition, we've been learning and singing important patriotic songs, like *America* and *America the Beautiful*. On June 4<sup>th</sup>, we will be performing the traditional "Pennsylvania Play," so please mark your calendars!

The 4<sup>th</sup> graders have been learning about musical form, in particular rondo form. Form in music can help the music listener better understand the music they hear and helps to find patterns within a piece of music. The 4<sup>th</sup> graders even composed rondo form songs in small groups and performed them for their class. We are beginning to learn songs for our spring show called "Music of America" on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

The band, orchestra, and chorus have been working hard to prepare for the Spring Concert on May 10<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. The evening concert will take place at Valley Forge Middle School (more details will be sent home in April). Keep up the practicing! Lyrics for the chorus songs can be found on the Valley Forge Elementary School music website.

