

TREDYFFRIN/EASTTOWN

School District News

Beaumont Elementary School Celebrates the Achievements of Influential Black Americans

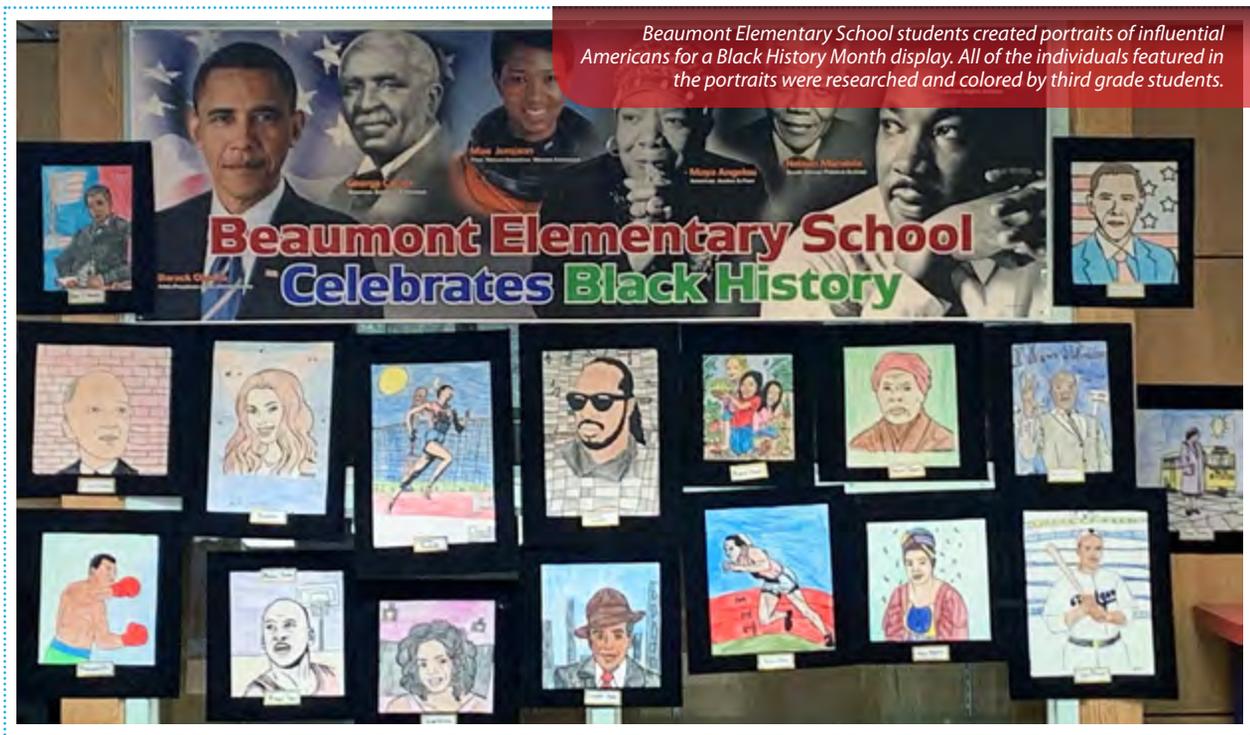
February has been the month to celebrate Black History. At Beaumont Elementary School, this rings true as well. Beaumont students and staff pay tribute to Black Americans who have had a positive impact on our country through inventions, discoveries, social reform and many more areas. In every third grade class, students are given the opportunity to research Black Americans in order to learn more about their achievements. The students consolidate this information into a few sentences and then recite their findings over the loudspeaker during the announcement period each school day in February. This activity is an appropriate follow-up to the extended morning announcement that third grade students present on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. In January, a choral reading of part of Dr. King's speech, coupled with the Freedom March song, "We Shall Overcome", helps encourage the school community to understand the struggles that Black Americans have faced throughout our country's history. The next month is then used to celebrate the achievements of influential Black Americans.

Charlemagne Jackson, a third grade teacher at Beaumont Elementary, introduced this tradition about ten years ago and has continued it each year with the students. Since Ms. Jackson started this celebration, she has received positive feedback from students, staff and the community as a whole. Students love the opportunity to share what they have learned over the school's

public address system, the staff appreciates the celebration of diversity, and parents and community members love that the children get to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

To continue the education in the classroom, Ms. Jackson and the other third grade classes use cross-curricular activities to build upon the information students have gathered through their research on influential Black Americans. Examples of these activities include reading about and discussing famous Black Americans; a Horace Pippin art project to honor the self-taught painter; and discussions about black scientists and the impacts they have had on the world. The other grade levels participate in activities celebrating the lives of these important Americans, as well. Porsche Davis-Taylor, the school's librarian, even facilitates a trivia activity with each of her classes.

Ms. Jackson hopes this celebration will continue each year and she would love to see it grow even more. She has dreams of school assemblies and productions to help permeate the information throughout the entire school community. Beaumont Elementary School Principal Dr. Stephanie Demming encourages students' participation in Black History Month activities. "Beaumont students and staff enjoyed this opportunity to celebrate diversity and recognize the many accomplishments of influential Black Americans. We look forward to continuing this tradition each year," states Dr. Demming.



Conestoga Captains Council: Bringing Leadership On and Off the Court/Field

When Tredyffrin/Easttown School District Athletic Director Kevin Pechin started his new position three years ago, he wanted to empower the student captains of each CHS athletic team to be true leaders and understand the importance of their role. "I wanted the captains to really understand the responsibilities, duties and importance of being a team captain," Pechin stated. He came up with the idea of the Conestoga Captains Council.

At the beginning of each sports season, Pechin meets with the elected captains of each sport at the Conestoga Captains Council. One of the goals of the Captains Council is for students to have the opportunity to discuss the role of a team captain and how it is not just being a leader during practices and games but being a positive influence on their teammates and peers off the court or field as well.

The council begins with a brief team bonding activity, followed by discussions that include the roles and myths of being a captain. The student athletes also discuss current topics that impact all sports programs ranging from playing field access, social media and being an extension of the coaching staff.

When asked about being chosen as captain of the CHS girls' soccer team, Emily Wertz stated, "I felt honored to represent the team and it was cool to be a leader and a positive influence on my teammates." Wertz also stated that outside of school, they would have team dinners and just "hang out" to develop a closer bond and build chemistry on and off the field.

The spring sports session concluded with guest speakers Sue Reynolds and Mike Mintzer from the Youth Mentoring Partnership, who discussed opportunities for the captains to give back to their team, teammates and school. They discussed the importance of setting goals, developing grit and perseverance, and expressing gratitude in helping students succeed in sports and in life. Pechin summarizes, "The Captains Council has been a great outlet for our team captains to come together and explore how they can set the tone as leaders and role models in their sport and in their school. I am looking forward to having the Captains Council as an ongoing opportunity to mentor our team captains for the benefit of all our student athletes."

The spring Captains Council meets with District Athletic Director Kevin Pechin during the beginning of the spring sports season.



Devon Elementary School Students Participate in Sun Salutation Marathon

In January, Devon Elementary School students participated in the Surya Namaskar Yajna, or Sun Salutation Marathon. This effort is coordinated by the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, an organization committed to global teaching about the benefits of yoga. At Devon, parents and other volunteers worked with the PE teachers to present the ten postures of the Sun Salutation. They visited PE classes, focusing on the benefits of yoga to strong minds and bodies and promoting the Sun Salutation as a daily habit. Devon's Principal Dr. Todd Parker noted, "The event was a wonderful opportunity for the Devon community to share yoga practices with our students. Students enjoyed each of the sessions and were engaged in rigorous and energizing rounds of moves and postures that emphasized the health benefits of the practice."

After students learned the ten poses and practiced them a few times, the volunteers turned their focus to breathing. Controlled breathing is an important component of yoga and to the Sun Salutation. Students learned how to control their bodies as they learned to control their breathing. The stated goal was for students to complete thirteen rounds of the ten poses during each session. In three days, Devon students completed approximately 160 rounds on yoga. Volunteers also led the students in different warm up activities and movement games, focusing on yoga poses. Students did "the wave" by starting a yoga pose and passing it down the line or moving in a circle and when the volunteer yelled freeze, they would go into "tree" or "mountain" pose. Devon students and staff enjoyed this experience and learned a great deal about yoga through the Sun Salutation.



Devon students practice upward dog during their Sun Salutation Marathon in gym class.

Camp Read at Valley Forge Middle School Library

“Calm, chill and relaxing.”
– Tanvi Bommiseti, Sixth grader”

In March 4, 2019, sixth graders at Valley Forge Middle School embarked on an epic journey to Camp Read. Even though it was bitterly cold outside and snowy, the students, armed with sleeping bags and books, went to camp in the library. Each class would enter camp and settle down by a cozy fire, in a tent, or lie in a hammock, with their books and read silently. The teachers and students had a wonderful day improving their reading stamina by staying focused on their reading for a long period of time without getting distracted. When asked about Camp Read, student Evan Sonn responded, "It was a great time to read and relax." Sixth grader Tanvi Bommiseti replied, "Calm, chill and relaxing."

Valley Forge Middle School is continually working to improve students' reading

What do the International Space Station and the Hillside Elementary School Library Have in Common?

One might expect to find books about agriculture and gardening in a library, but Hillside Elementary School's library is the site of a full-size hydroponics grow tower, the first in the T/E School District. Hydroponics is a horticultural method of growing plants without soil, using mineral enriched water as the growth medium. You may have noticed these towers in various local establishments. Astronauts have even experimented with growing vegetables on the Space Station using hydroponics.

Last November, Hillside's librarian, Patricia Lucy, visited the Friends' Central Lower School in Wynnewood, where they have embraced hydroponics in a big way. She wanted to assess whether a grow tower would be a practicable addition to the Hillside Maker Space. The happy answer is yes! Hydroponics on a small, manageable scale has turned out to be a wonderful supplementary science experience for elementary students.

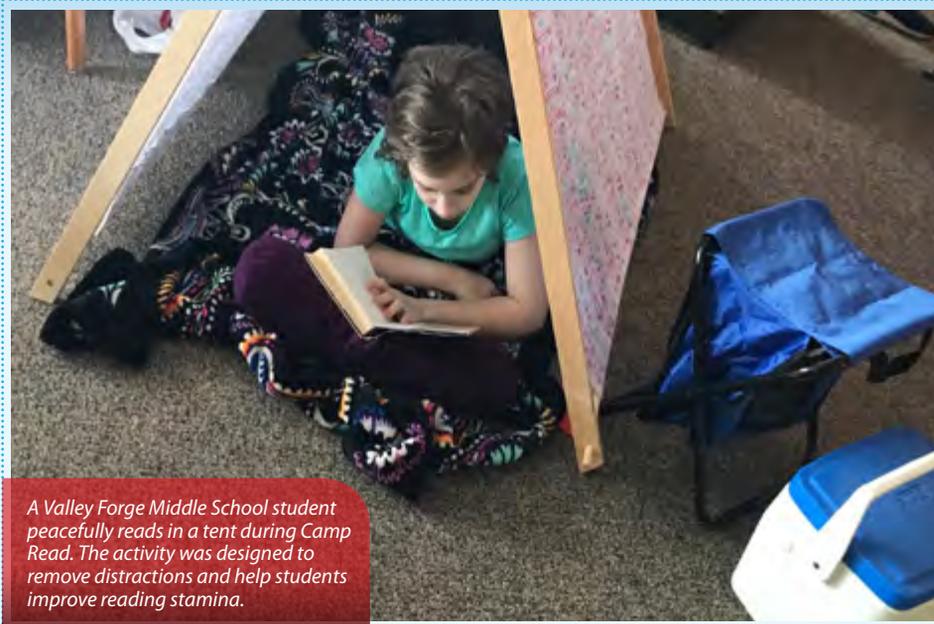
In February, 4th grade PAL researcher Kalai Kamalanathan, stepped in to help set up the grow tower as part of his study of hydroponics. He carefully measured the required mineral solutions, adding them to the 20 gallons of water in the holding tank. With the tower set up to mix the solution by circulating the water, he moved on to the crops, planting a half dozen types of seeds and monitoring their germination rates and timings. Finally, 4th graders observed several pH tests, helping Ms. Lucy figure out how to get to the optimal pH of 6.5.

At the moment, lettuces, cucumbers, bok choy, and kale are thriving in the library, but researchers are finding that just about any plant can be grown hydroponically. The grow tower is almost entirely self-regulating, with separate timers for the water pump and the grow lights. If you happen to notice an eerie glow emanating from the Hillside library late at night, it's the grow lights sustaining our efforts at indoor, soil-free agriculture!



Hillside Elementary School librarian Patricia Lucy and 4th grader Kalai Kamalanathan check their vegetable crop in the Hillside library.

stamina by modeling a reading culture. Teachers and students alike read books of their choice. Many of the books the students read were suggestions from book talks and presentations given by the teachers that emphasize books that connect to the school's curriculum and reading needs. By advertising great reads and teaching how to choose 'just right' books, teachers empower students intrinsically. Displayed around the room were piles of 'camp books' for the students who accepted the challenge to try something new. The removal of distractions allowed the scholars to truly read, concentrate and enjoy their books. Reading stamina is a skill that needs to be encouraged and practiced every day in and outside of school so VFMS learners will become life-long readers.



A Valley Forge Middle School student peacefully reads in a tent during Camp Read. The activity was designed to remove distractions and help students improve reading stamina.



T/E School Board Approves New School Start Times for 2019-2020 School Year

At its regular meeting on April 22, 2019, the Tredyffrin/Easttown School Board approved new school start and end times for the 2019-2020 school year.

During the 2016-2017 school year, the T/E School Board and administration began reviewing research regarding the science of adolescent sleep and the benefits of later school start times. In September 2018, the Board approved a goal to assess the impact of potential strategies for addressing adolescent sleep needs, including the implications for school start times. Through a series of public meetings, the School Board Education Committee identified a school start times scenario that could be implemented for the 2019-2020 school year. In March, the District carried out a survey to obtain feedback from current T/E parents, middle/high school students and staff members on the new 2019-2020 school start time option. The District received

over 7,000 responses to the survey. Following the presentation of the survey results and continued discussion, the Education Committee recommended the new 2019-2020 start time option for full Board consideration at the April 22, 2019 Regular School Board Meeting. The School Board subsequently approved the new start time option, which will begin at the start of the new school year in August 2019. For additional information on the history of the school start times decision and resources on adolescent sleep needs, please visit www.tesd.net/starttimes.

Between now and the start of the 2019-2020 school year, the District will be working on the adjustments needed for a smooth transition to the new start times. In the coming months, information about the new start times will be shared with parents through targeted communication from the schools and the District.



New school start and end times for the 2019-2020 school year:

High School: 7:50 AM - 2:50 PM (currently 7:20 AM – 2:20 PM)

Middle Schools: 8:27 AM - 3:10 PM (currently 7:50 AM - 2:33 PM)

Elementary Schools: 9:10 AM - 3:45 PM (currently 8:45 AM - 3:20 PM)

Thinking By Design at New Eagle Elementary School

New Eagle Elementary School fourth grade teacher Heather Lyford is incorporating Design Thinking into her instruction. Approximately five years ago, Mrs. Lyford observed that her students were becoming increasingly frustrated when asked to complete challenging tasks. She made it a goal to create and, in some cases, revise lessons that would challenge her students to overcome difficult assignments creatively. Through her research and resources from a District inservice workshop, Mrs. Lyford discovered Design Thinking from the Stanford d.school. Design Thinking from the Stanford d.school is a multi-step process. This method is used by designers and innovators worldwide to discover solutions to an assortment of challenges.

Mrs. Lyford emphasizes that her students' approach to problem-solving usually relies on their own natural talents and abilities. For example, if a student is strong in math, then that student typically takes a math-centered approach to solve the desired outcome. Students who enjoy drawing typically approach the problem from an artistic perspective. The ideas generated from Design Thinking are applicable from Kindergarten through grade 12. A ten-year teaching veteran, Mrs. Lyford believes this approach appeals to the strengths of individual students.

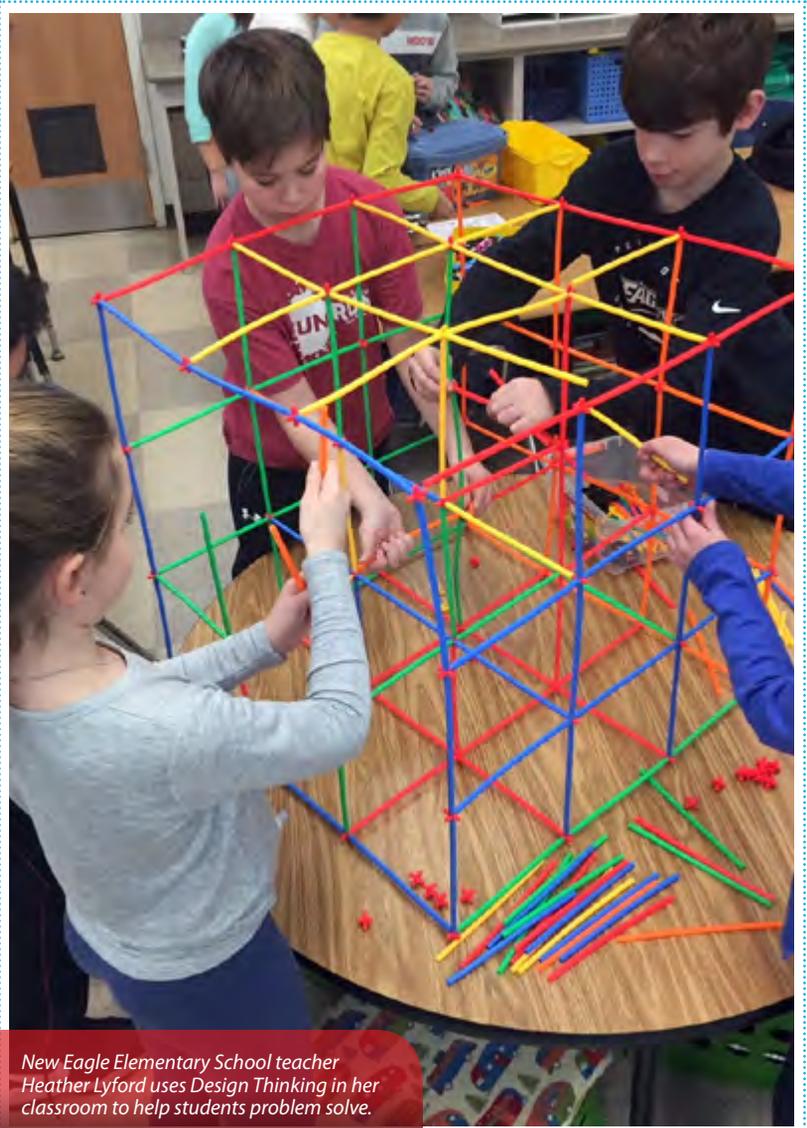
One lesson Mrs. Lyford designed is inspired by the book, *Iggy Peck, Architect* by Andrea Beaty. A story about a boy named Iggy, who loves to recreate famous structures using everyday items, the book follows his journey from being misunderstood to being embraced and valued by his peers. Mrs. Lyford read the story multiple times to her students and then had them create famous buildings with Magna-Tiles, Hape Totter Tower Blocks, Legos, K'NEX, Straw Builders and Waffle Blocks. Each group of students worked through the Design Thinking process several times. Students realized the need to plan, evaluate and in some cases, experience failure before they achieved a durable structure.

Mrs. Lyford reflects on a writing lesson she created using the Design Thinking method. "While learning about the Constitutional Convention, I challenged my students to put themselves in our forefathers' shoes by having them create their own plan for government. They learned about the challenges the forefathers faced under the Articles of Confederation, and they collaborated with their group to solve the complex problem of writing a system of government. We followed the steps of Design Thinking by starting with the 'empathy' step to get a better understanding of how our forefathers felt during this challenging time. Next, we completed the 'define' step by defining the problems they faced. After that we formulated ideas for solving these intricate challenges. This project weaved easily into our social studies curriculum and our writing curriculum.

“ Her students’ approach to problem-solving usually relies on their own natural talents and abilities. ”

Students wrote a multi-paragraph document that clearly explained their plan for fixing the Articles of Confederation. They also walked through the steps of the writing process as a group by prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing their document,” states Mrs. Lyford.

Mrs. Lyford has realized a significant improvement in student engagement and increased resiliency in the students as they strive to overcome the tasks presented to them. Students are highly engaged and remain on task and they realize that working as a team is essential.



New Eagle Elementary School teacher Heather Lyford uses Design Thinking in her classroom to help students problem solve.

Fifth Grade Book Love at T/E Middle School

One Friday morning in Dr. Kathryn McDermott's 5th grade HERO meeting, students were brainstorming ways to help others. HERO lessons engage middle school students in character building and bullying-prevention lessons that focus on building honesty, empathy, respect and open-mindedness. Several students suggested one way to make a difference would be to share their love of reading. From that conversation, Team 5A decided to collect books to donate to a school whose library had closed. On March 5, Ms. Jessica Kahn, a retired Chestnut Hill College professor, visited T/E Middle School to help coordinate this plan. Now in her retirement, the "book lady" as she is nicknamed around the city of Philadelphia, reopens school libraries that have closed due to lack of resources or funding. During the month of February, Dr. McDermott challenged her classes to a "Book Love" goal - collect 1,000 books. To Dr. McDermott's surprise, the TEMS students shattered that goal in just four days. By the end of the month the enthusiastic students collected over 3,204 books to donate to William D. Kelley Elementary School in the Philadelphia School District. Ms. Kahn was thrilled with the results. The library that she once described as "a desert," is now more of a "reading oasis, with 3,204 beautiful books to line its shelves thanks to the generosity of the TEMS 5th grade readers."

However, the beauty of this challenge was not just in the total number of books collected, but by the clever and creative strategies students used to find the books. Their dedication to the project was remarkable. One student, Emerick Lange, applied her successful advertising technique for selling Girl Scout cookies to

collecting books. "I typed up a flyer asking my neighbors to donate their gently used books in bags I provided for them," Emerick shared. "Then, I asked them to put their books on their front porches by certain dates and collected those book bags." Through this creative idea, Emerick contributed hundreds of books to Book Love.

Another 5th grader, Charlotte Friel, and her older brother, Jake, contributed some of their own books. Charlotte even reached out to her softball team for books. The team was so eager to help that they collected over 510 books. Charlotte was thrilled at the number and stated, "The kids are going to be so happy that they finally have books to read." In addition, the Costas family dedicated time on a February snow day to donate and categorize the mountains of books piled up in Dr. McDermott's room. Books that were too young for elementary school were even placed in a pile to donate to local day care centers. Fifth grade student Zac Costas and his older sister Alexis contributed not only many beautiful texts, but also their time to make this initiative possible.

Dr. McDermott was thrilled with the enthusiasm and leadership of her 5A students and she hopes that this initiative will continue in the future. In Book Love, educator Penny Kittle writes, "Every child in America needs access to books that will keep them turning pages, racing to the end, discovering new ideas and learning to understand the diversity in our world." Team 5A readers, through their support and contagious passion, spread Book Love to the surrounding community, making this wish of Penny Kittle's attainable for the students of William D. Kelley Elementary.



Dr. McDermott's students hold up their Book Love sign. From left to right: Emerick Lange, Sofia Calvitti, Vivian Peng, Alexia Tubbs and Vanessa Chen.

Valley Forge Elementary School Students Practice a “Growth Mindset”

Mindset is an idea coined by Dr. Carol Dweck after decades of research on the achievement and success of children.

According to Dr. Dweck, a fixed mindset is the belief that intelligence is a fixed trait that cannot change much. In contrast, a growth mindset sees intelligence like a muscle that grows with effort and experience.

First graders in Angela Janda’s Valley Forge Elementary School classroom are changing their thinking as they learn about growth mindset. Students are learning about how their brains are malleable and can change and even grow stronger. The first graders are able to distinguish between a fixed and a growth mindset. Students are learning how to change a fixed mindset to a growth mindset by using positive language and thoughts. Throughout the school year, the students will look for opportunities to face challenges, learn from mistakes and use growth mindset in all areas of the curriculum.

“As a first grade teacher, I often hear my students quickly respond to challenges with, ‘I can’t do it’ or ‘This is too hard.’ It’s sad for me to see first graders get upset or give up before they have learned how to truly apply effort. As an educator, it is my job to teach my students to try different strategies so that they can persevere through difficult situations and not give up. My goal is for my first graders to become lifelong learners who aren’t afraid to face challenges and make mistakes. It is my hope that by teaching growth mindset, our children will become resilient members of society,” states Mrs. Janda.

Second grade students are continuing to learn about growth and fixed mindset in Ashley Frost’s class. A key component in learning about growth mindset is being able to apply it in every day life. As children grow and challenges become more difficult, it is important for the students to be able to show confidence, resiliency, and grit.

“Growth mindset is about being positive and trying things even when they are hard.”

When asked, “What does it mean to have a growth mindset?” Students in Mrs. Frost’s class responded with the following answers:

“Growth mindset is about being positive and trying things even when they are hard.”

“If you see a tall tree that you want to climb, a fixed mindset would give up and stop trying. A growth mindset would find a way to get to the top of the tree.”

Mrs. Frost states, “It is my hope to provide the students with strategies to use perseverance, grit and resiliency to solve problems in every day life.”



Students wrote and illustrated about growth mindset and recalled a time that they had to be a flexible thinker and use a growth mindset.