

SPECIAL AREA NEWSLETTER—SPRING 2010

Elementary Library News & Notes

The Elementary Library remains busy with regular classes and special events as the school year is quickly disappearing. As always we began our year with Summer Reading Activities recognizing students' hard work accomplished through "The Art of Reading". The Fall Book Fair was a great success thanks to all of our very supportive families.

October was highlighted with a visit from Steven Riley, author of the Ty Cooney books. Mr. Riley entertained the students with his humorous stories as he inspired us to become writers and illustrators. We are looking forward to our next author visit this month when Renee Meloche will present her books and writing workshops based on Heroes of Our Faith.



Several events are planned to help overcome the winter doldrums. The Kindergarten classes have been entertained by our High School drama class's presentations and Book Talks are well underway this month. How exciting and entertaining it is to watch each student present favorite books to their classmates!

Each year the Kindergarten students and Fourth Grade Book Buddies work together in the library for an initial research on their woodland animal project. Having the little ones so intent on their work as the older students guide them through the work is indeed a blessing to everyone.

Congratulations to Mrs. Simmons' and Mrs. Hawkins' third grade students who won the AR challenge for the 2nd quarter. As a reward for their hard work the students enjoyed DEAR time in the library as they relaxed on beach towels reading and dreaming of warmer days ahead! A message from the library would not be complete without recognizing the group of wonderful ladies we have as our volunteers this year. We could not manage each day without their help. It is especially exciting this year to have nine wonderful grandmothers helping us on a regular basis!

As we look forward to spring and the end of the school year fast approaches we always welcome you to visit the library anytime.

¡Bienvenidos! Welcome to Spanish! We will be studying various topics this semester. Grades K-2 will be learning vocabulary about family, weather and how to tell time in Spanish. Grades 3-5 will be learning about items in the house, conjugating verbs and how to form sentences in Spanish. All grades will also be studying the Easter story with some Spanish words included. But Spanish is not all work and no play. Bingo games and Spanish Jeopardy also fill our time to help reinforce what is learned in class. So come join us in Spanish Land where learning and fun combine into a great experience! ¡Adios!

Hello from the Elementary Art Room

We have established lots of traditions over the years in the elementary art room. Fifth grade print-making...paper mache...cartooning and clay are popular projects. 4th graders are enjoying creating doll pin characters. Snow globe collages and salad box aquariums are always a highlight. 2nd and 3rd grader studied the artist Faith Ringgold and created story quilts in her style. Build-a-body scarecrows...roosters and Indians are a favorite of kindergarten and 1st graders...Our favorite artists are Norman Rockwell...Henri Matisse...Andy Warhol with Grant Wood's "American Gothic." Children are natural artists. Everyone should have access to the arts and engage in stimulating art activities that allow for exploration and expressing their unique perspective. Engaging in the arts means creating, experimenting, exploring, making choices, developing ideas, and enjoying new experiences...I look forward to sharing another exciting year of art with your children...Thanks...Mrs. Cook



PE News

The weather outside might be cold and dreary but not inside the red gym at Christian Academy. The activity and the exercising in elementary PE has been filled with fun! Students have already completed locomotor activities, soccer skills and games, cooperative/ team building games, throwing and catching games, volleyball activities, basketball activities and we have just ended a unit on hockey. To finish out the school year we will have units on fitness, gymnastics, jump rope, tinikiling, bowling and tennis. To cap off our year we will end with a bang as we hold Field Day on Friday, May 14th. Please mark that day to come and spend with your child. Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade will be in the morning for two hours and 3rd, 4th and 5th grade will be in the afternoon for two hours. More details will come as we get closer to that day! We pray that as warmer weather approaches you and your family will have time to incorporate exercise into your family plans. A few great activities might be: walk around the park, backyard kick ball game, turning a jump rope or shooting hoops with your child. So go back and think of the activities you enjoyed as a child, your child will love doing that activity with you.

Together we can make 2010 a healthy year. Keep moving!

Music Notes

The music classroom has been a very melodious and rhythmic place since school started again in January! Children from pre-school through fifth grade are experiencing, identifying, and exploring grade-level musical concepts. The lessons in the music classroom are rooted in the Orff method, a "way to teach and learn music. It is based on things children like to do: sing, chant rhymes, clap, dance, and keep a beat on anything near at hand. These instincts are directed into learning music by hearing and making music first, then reading and writing it later. This is the same way we all learned our language" (from the American Orff Schulwerk Association).

Through various singing and movement activities, the **pre-school classes** are experiencing such concepts as steady beat and singing voice. The children have been singing praise songs, moving to the beat, and listening to Song Tales. It is so important to get very young children involved in musical activities—both at school and at home. Dr. John M. Feierabend, a specialist in early music education, states that musical intelligence is stimulated by early experiences "such as hearing and responding to music through song and movement." These musical experiences develop brain pathways that are necessary for later musical learning. Children who are not sung to and bounced as babies do not develop the full range of brain connections necessary for musical intelligence. So, anytime you can sing to your young child or involve them in musical activities, the better.

Kindergartners continue to work on matching pitch, as they explore their singing voices. We try to get young children to sing in their "head voice," rather than the lower chest voice that is heard in so much popular music. They have transferred the steady beat from a simple knee-pat to classroom instruments such as xylophones and drums. They are also exploring musical opposites: loud and soft, high and low, fast and slow. Just as with the youngest pre-schoolers, kindergartners best experience these various musical concepts through movement and music games. These activities are a form of play that leads to musical learning.

First graders are playing, writing, and moving to quarter notes, eighth notes, and quarter rests. They continue to work on pitch matching with the solfege syllables, So and Mi. They are becoming more skilled at playing the steady beat on classroom instruments while they sing. **Second graders** add half notes and rests to their repertoire of rhythms, while they create AB forms and begin improvisation on the xylophones.

Third graders are singing and moving to canons and rounds, a simple form of harmony. They have been reviewing all previously learned note values, while adding the dotted half note and whole note this year. They will begin learning the notes of the treble clef staff within the next few weeks.

Fourth graders continue to play recorder, earning "belts" (pieces of colored yarn) for tunes of increasing difficulty. They are also beginning to work toward their Spring Music Program, which will involve singing, xylophones, and recorders.

Fifth graders also work on these musical skills, while exploring more advanced concepts such as time signature and syncopation.

Please mark down the following dates for the **Fourth and Fifth-grade Spring Music programs:**

Concert, Tuesday, **April 20th**: Classes on this first program include **Mrs. Cabal, Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Webb, Mrs. Lowry, and Mrs. Peters.**

Concert, Thursday, **April 22nd**: Classes are **Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. Hart, Mrs. White, Mrs. Parsley, and Mrs. Proffitt.** Students should report to their regular classroom at **6:30 p.m. for the 7 p.m.** program. Requirements re: dress will be forthcoming.

The **Performing Arts Club**, an after-school ensemble for third-fifth graders, will be presenting an Easter musical, "It All Happened in the City" in March. Please come out on Monday evening, March 15th at 7 p.m. to support this group. They will also participate in the ACSI Music Festival at Christian Academy of Indiana on Friday, April 16th. Last year, they received a Superior rating! The singers, musicians, and actors of CAL's Fine Arts future are active now in all grades of the elementary school!

"Sing to God a new song! Play skillfully and shout for joy!" Psalm 33:3

In Him,

Dr. Jean Marie Hoover



COMPUTER NEWS

We have been very busy in the computer lab this year. The upper grades have practiced keyboarding, conducted internet searches and research, created graphs in Excel and documents in Word. They did a great job on their Christmas PowerPoints in December. The new keyboarding program, Type to Learn 4, is up and running. The students complete exciting missions while practicing keyboarding skills.

Primary grades have learned many basic computer skills. They also practice keyboarding in Type to Learn, Jr. and have created documents in MaxWrite. We will be working on PowerPoints in MaxShow and creating graphs in MaxCount this Spring. They also enjoy going to educational websites. A few of our favorite math websites include: www.funbrain.com (Math Arcade), www.akidsmath.com (Math Games and Puzzles), and www.mathisfun.com (Games).

Please encourage you children to practice keyboarding at home, especially third through fifth grade. When your child is practicing keyboarding please encourage them to use correct fingering and keep their hand on home row. A simple way to get them keyboarding more would be to require them to practice keyboarding for 10-15 minutes every time they hop on the computer. If your child does not get on the computer very often then practicing keyboarding 2-3 times a week for 20 minutes would be a general guideline. Keyboarding programs can be purchased almost anywhere software is sold. There are also many websites where you can practice keyboarding. At school we have used Dance Mat Typing. If you do an internet search for Dance Mat Typing it normally pops up as the top choice. It is from the BBC and has a really long web address, doing a search it the easiest way to find it.

As always, monitor your children closely while on the internet. We discuss internet safety at every grade level. Parents also keep in mind if your child has a phone or games system that can access the internet (websites, email, messaging, chat rooms, chat in games), we need to monitor that as well. Many children will immediately identify a stranger on the internet if they receive an email or an instant message from someone they do not know. However, when they are playing games online on their computer or game system, the other players are strangers if they do not know them in the real world. They need to be very careful to keep all personal information private. We've talked about how personal information includes your real name, address, phone number, school, teams you play for, and specific activities they are involved in. With so much information readily available online (practice schedules, games, locations, recitals, etc...), unfortunately it can be easy to find someone. Also, even if they know a player / online friend in the real world, many of the games/blogs/websites are set up with open chatting which means all users can see what they are saying to each other so they need to be very careful what they share. As our media grows more of the world is brought right into our homes, I know we all want to be vigilant in protecting our kids.

Many of our activities and lessons will spotlight the Winter Olympics next month, please ask your child to share with you what they've been up to in the computer lab. Also watch for finished work and projects that we print to take home. The students are often very proud of their finished work. Thank you for sharing your children with me!

Jennifer Farrell

