

News from Kindergarten!

November 19, 2007

Dear Families,

November is flying by very quickly in kindergarten. Once the excitement of the Halloween Parade was over, we started learning about Native Americans who lived here long ago. We launched the unit with our wonderful trip to the Native American site at Drumlin Farm, where we prepared and sampled nokahik (a sort of corn bread) cooked on a campfire much as native people might have "in the old days." We also tried some games that children might have played; scraped some hair from a deer skin; made corn meal; used a simple drilling tool; listened to a story; and handled some artifacts. We also got a close-up look at some deer and learned how Native Americans only took what they needed from the land to live, and used every part of a deer when they hunted it.

In **Phonemic Awareness** we will be starting to work on beginning sound identification and letter-sound association.

In **Writing Workshop** kindergartners are beginning to write three page stories. We have practiced telling our stories orally while turning each page, sketching the pictures so we don't forget the story, then going back to add words and more details to the pictures. We are focusing on where the story took place, who was there, what happened, and how the story ended. Lots of great stories are emerging. The kindergartners look forward to sharing their work with you at our Author's Celebration on December 19th!

In **Science Workshop** we visited the woods right next to the kindergarten play structure outside the Spalding building. Each child found a special place to sit quietly and use their senses to observe their surroundings. Everyone drew pictures of something they observed. I attended a conference several weeks ago sponsored by Massachusetts Audubon and Wheelock College on the topic of connecting children and nature. One of the featured speakers was David Sobel, from Antioch New England, who has done extensive research on the universal themes common to children's outdoor play around the world, and how teachers can build upon these natural interests of children to encourage them to explore nature and become good future stewards of the land. Some of these universal themes

include making special places, hunting and gathering, using maps and paths, and creating small worlds. We hope to revisit *our* special places occasionally throughout the seasons to see what has changed.

Spanish update from Mrs. Seddon: "Hola Familias, we are having so much fun in Spanish class these days! Most recently, we have been working on the numbers 0-10 and the colors red (rojo), green (verde), yellow (amarillo), blue (azul) and purple (morado). We have a fabulous website for at-home practice and I would encourage you to check it out with your child and have them show you what they know. Practice, practice, practice ☺ The address is:

http://www.carlisle.mec.edu/curriculum/student_resources/spanish/elemspan.htm

Just find "K" for kindergarten and do what it says to do. Gracias!

Please note: There are times that volunteers sometimes provide additional student support with my guidance. If a volunteer will be working with your child outside the classroom, I will email you and let you know what she will be doing to enrich your child's academic support.

A **practice lockdown** will take place shortly after the Thanksgiving break. I have already explained what this will look like to the class. I said it's the opposite of a fire drill - instead of leaving the building we will stay in our classroom, because sometimes that might be the safest thing to do (i.e. a big thunderstorm or a fire somewhere else on our campus.) I was matter-of-fact about it and they seemed fine with the idea. We all wish we didn't have to practice such drills, but I'm glad we have a plan in place for what to do if we ever need it.

You're invited! Please know that you are welcome to bring your child to school any morning at 8:40 and have your child show you around the classroom. Arrival time can be very busy for teachers, so please don't plan to have an in-depth conversation with me, but by all means let your child brag a little about all their hard work. They would love to have you!

The **Veteran's Day Event** with our third grade buddies was a big success. Approximately 30 veterans attended and were honored with cards and singing. Almost all of the Veterans stood up, introduced themselves and said a few words to the students. It was a very touching and memorable occasion for everyone. Thank you for supporting this new initiative.

I am truly thankful for the opportunity to teach and learn with your child, and am most appreciative of all your support. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Chandler,
Keeper of Hearts