



NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF
December 14, 2009

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News and Notes

2nd-3rd Publishing Party this Wednesday

Come join us and listen to the poems and memoirs the children have written over the past semester. We will begin by 8:45 a.m. and finish by 9:15 a.m.

4th-6th Movements for All Parents to View this Thursday

This Thursday Dec. 17 at 8:45 a.m. at Camp Caravan. All parents are welcome to watch the 4th-6th graders move to special music. Movements are a great technique for developing attention, focus, and balance.

Holiday Celebration This Friday 11 am at Town Hall

Our Holiday Celebration is this Friday, December 18th, 11 a.m. at the Royalston Town Hall. Come join us, promptly (the children have such a hard time waiting). Each class has prepared something special. Feel free to invite relatives and friends. We'll finish with a simple lunch of pizza all together. Salads are very welcome too. There is an envelope in the hallway outside the office for donations for pizza. This is our last morning of school until we start again on January 4th. There is no Lunch Program or After School Program that day. Make sure to take home all of your child's papers, winter gardens, and other items.

Winter Gardens: Animals this Week

This week, we will attend to the animal world, and all the preparations that animals are making for winter. We will place wax or clay animals in our gardens. On the last day, this Friday, we will begin the 4th week, by looking at humankind with appreciation, viewing each person as a special being who brings precious light into this world. On Friday, we will place candles in our gardens. Make sure to take home your K-6th grader's winter garden on Friday. The gardens can grace your holiday table or the family display area until the New Year.

Food Drive ends Wednesday

Last chance to donate to the food drive for needy families in the Athol-Orange area. You can add to the boxes in the classrooms until this Wednesday.

Hannafords Dollars are Due

Send in those Hannaford dollars by this Wednesday, Dec 16. Ask friends for theirs too. The collection tin is on the hallway table.

Last chance to buy Original Artwork

Art teacher Renee (and a gifted artist in her own right) has hung a piece of her own artwork in the hallway, for sale, to benefit the art program. If you are interested, stop by the office.

Preschool

Today we walked to the Royalston Library and we were reminded how much earlier we have to prepare to go outside now that we have snow pants, boots, mittens and hats to contend with. Last week the children enjoyed playing with the new grocery store. They took turns being "grocers" and the "shoppers." They are learning to restock the shelves and how to bag the groceries in reusable cloth shopping bags. This week our story is *The Elves and the Shoemaker*. In this story two elves secretly and selflessly help a poor shoemaker by making shoes for him during the night.

One night the shoemaker and his wife discover the elves working at the cobbler's bench. They return the kindness by making warm clothes and shoes for the elves.

This week, we will make paper chains and ornaments with wood, glitter and glue. We will wrap gifts (in Preschool-made wrapping paper) and there will be a bag with your child's art work to go home at the end of the week. The class is practicing songs to sing for parents on Friday at 11:00 a.m. We'll see you all there at the Town Hall.

| December 2009 | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| 14 Winter Gardens: add animals | 15 8:45 Book Buddies 8:45 a.m. 2 nd -6 th Field Trip to Amherst College Museum | 16 8:45 a.m. 2 nd -3 rd Pub- lishing Party Food drive ends | 17 8:45 a.m. 4 th -6 th Movements Class at Camp Caravan All Parents in- vited. 2 nd -6 th : Bring in secret gifts | 18 1/2 DAY 11 a.m. Holiday Cele- bration at Town Hall (No Lunch or After School Program) Happy Holidays |

Kindergarten—1st Grade

We complete our *Shapes, Mirrors and Reflections* theme this week with the story of *Echo and Narcissus* about a girl who likes to talk and a boy who takes too much interest in his own reflection. In science we will continue investigating reflections using flashlights and mirrors and reading the book *I See Myself*, about how mirrors work. *Winter Birds* is the new theme, to start in January.

Last week we hiked out in the snow beyond the school garden to collect moss for our winter gardens. The class let out victory cries when they found moss beneath the deep snow cover! Our winter gardens continue this week looking at the animal kingdom. The children are adding model animals to their gardens. Many of the class made clay animals in art, which have been glazed and fired for this.

Last week in art the class made wonderful printed holiday cards. They began by making indentations with pencils on polystyrene mats, then used rollers to cover the mats with ink. Next they placed paper on top to make the print. We'll continue work on the cards this week, composing and writing holiday messages inside. This week in art we'll make sun pictures as the winter solstice approaches.

We will be rehearsing our singing for our holiday performance at the Royalston Town Hall at 11:00 a.m. this Friday. Now that the snow has arrived, the children have been delighted to sled and make snow forts during recess. We finished off last week with a snow hike and sledding in the meadow behind the school on Friday afternoon.

2nd - 3rd Grade

Everyone was so excited to be able to play in the snow last week. Sledding, fort building, tunneling and rolling in the snow are favorite recess activities. The snow certainly brings fun to cold-weather playing. With snow on the ground, we read the poem, *The Snow Man* by Wallace Stevens for our poem of the week.

The children are enjoying the book *Buffalo Dreams*, which is read during literature circle time. They have been thinking deeply about the book and have been making great connections to their own lives. During Thursday's discussions, the children connected with the characters in the story and realized that Sarah must really love the white buffalo calf (even though she does not know him), because she wants to give him her grandfather's eagle feather that her father gave to her for her dream catcher. We will finish the story this week.

During Theme the children worked on their dream catchers. They did a great job with the weaving and loved putting beads and feathers on them. Each one is unique and creative.

Tomorrow we will visit the Planetarium and Natural History Museum at Amherst College. We will leave the school by 8:45 a.m. and return by 2:00 p.m. Children should bring their lunches with them.

In Math, 2nd graders will work on groups of 2, 5 and 10 and will learn about sticker problems. The 3rd graders will work on finding the difference between two numbers by adding up or subtracting.

This Wednesday is the last chance to bring in non-perishable food for our Food Drive box. There is no homework this week so the children can focus on creating gifts for their secret gift receiver. Remember, the gifts should be homemade, and come in on Thursday.

On Wednesday we will have our Publishing Party. Come join us and listen to the poems and memoirs the children have written over the past semester. We will begin by 8:45 a.m. and finish by 9:15 a.m. Our secret gift giver exchange takes place on Friday. Children should bring their gifts in on Thursday. We will finish the week with our holiday concert at the Town Hall, which will start promptly at 11:00 a.m. The children are excited to sing songs for you that they have been practicing for weeks.

The kindergarten math group is working with patterns. The kindergartners also asked to play with the new "grocery store" in the Preschool. The children "paid" for their purchases and took turns being both "shopper" and "grocer." A lot of math was involved. 1st graders are working on addition and subtraction - solving and inventing story problems, using number lines and playing *Five in a Row* and *Roll and Record*. A popular math activity is using the classroom calendar, which shows birthdays, holidays and special events. We also use it for counting on, calculating the differences between numbers, and for addition and subtraction problems - for example "How many days is it until Camdyn's birthday?" The birthdays are usually the first events that get posted on the calendar!

1st graders will start cross-country skiing with the 2nd-6th graders on Royalston Common every Friday afternoon starting January 8th. Parents of 1st graders, it would be great if you could practice with your child over the winter vacation. And also teach them how to put on their boots and snap into their bindings. Make sure those bindings work! That will make it much easier for them for when we start skiing together. And parents are very (*hint, hint*) welcome to join us.

4th - 6th Grade

We went to New York City on Friday to see the comprehensive exhibition of paintings by Kandinsky at the Guggenheim Museum. For many of the class, it was their first visit to New York City, so the whole day was one of new impressions.

The exhibition itself was extraordinary, with dozens of Kandinsky's paintings spiraling up the museum floors, in chronological order, so the children could appreciate the evolution of Kandinsky's art over four decades. We were lucky to have two artists as guides - our art teacher Renée Malowitz and Susan Pepper Aisenberg (mother of Ruby) - and it was fascinating to see and hear the children's reactions to the works on display.

It was a bright sunny day (though very cold) so we had a quick picnic in Central Park before walking through the park to the zoo, stopping to clamber over the bronze statue of Alice in Wonderland and friends. After the zoo we found a small and typically New York pizza place where we thawed out before heading home in the evening. We arrived back in Royalton just after 11pm. Thank you to our New York friend Sam Nussenblatt, who found and reserved a parking place for us only two blocks from the Guggenheim, and helped us navigate the quickest route out of the city again.

This Tuesday we will have another field-trip to the Amherst College Museum where we will visit the planetarium as part of our study of the solar system. We will also look at various dinosaur fossils. Don't forget to pack lunches. We'll be back before 3:15.

The class has enjoyed working with various Greek artifacts (or copies thereof) as part of our study of an ancient Greek villa originally excavated in the 1930s. The children worked in groups to identify various objects and determine what they were used for, and which rooms in the villa they came from. We will complete this study this week, and sum up what the objects tell us about the Greeks.

Don't miss the open Movements class this Thursday at 8:45 a.m. at Camp Caravan, in the movements hall. Movements are a great technique for developing attention, focus, balance and centeredness. You can see what the children have been working on weekly.

Don't forget to send in the secret gifts on Thursday, and to take home the Winter Gardens on Friday. Lastly, don't miss our Holiday Celebration this Friday at 11 a.m. The class has prepared some special songs and recorder pieces to delight your ears.