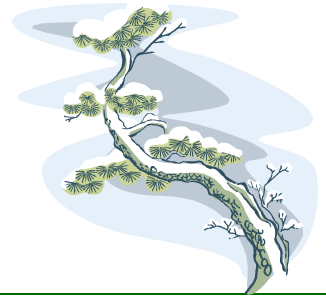




NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF  
**December 7, 2009**

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[www.villageschool.to](http://www.villageschool.to)



**News and Notes**

**Holiday Celebration**

Our Holiday Celebration is Friday, December 18th, 11 a.m. at the Royalston Town Hall. Come join us, promptly (the children have such a hard time waiting) to hear that most angelic of sounds, the sound of children singing. 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.

**Bring in Food for Families in Need**

Boxes are in every classroom for donations of non-perishable food, for needy families in the area. The drive ends December 16.

**Snow Day Procedure**

We are always closed when the Athol-Royalston Schools are closed. You will always get a phone call, around 7 in the morning when school is closed. Each classroom has its own system for notification. Occasionally, we have a delayed start, (again you will get a phone call), with school starting at 10:30 a.m.

**The Book Sale** ended, and reordered books come in this week

**Slippers, Boots and Snowpants**

It's that time of year. All children need a pair of slippers that stays at school. That way, wet outdoor boots stay in the hallway cubbies, and children move around the building with warm dry feet in slippers. With snow on the ground, children also need warm, insulated waterproof boots, for comfortable warm fun at recess. Lastly, when there is snow on the ground, children should bring snowpants to school with them.

**Winter Gardens This Week**

This week, the whole school continues with an appreciation of nature, by being mindful of the plant world. Children will add a thin layer of fresh green moss, and perhaps a few other green living things, to layer on top of the sand already in their gardens. Of course, this means spraying the moss daily to keep it alive!

**4th-6th Movements Class for Parents to View**

Thursday Dec. 17 at 8:45 a.m. at Camp Caravan. All parents are welcome to watch the 4th-6th graders move to music.

**Thank You** to all who supported the Toy Drive in November. May your holidays be even brighter knowing that you gave the gift of hope and happiness to your neighbors.

**Preschool**

The children are busy working on holiday decorations and gifts for home. Next time you are in the preschool take a moment to notice the children's "stain glass" candles in the windows. This week our story is *The Mitten*, illustrated by Jan Brett. This is one of many versions of this old Russian folktale. In this story a mitten is dropped in the snow and one by one an assortment of animals burrow into it. By the time the bear moves in, the mitten is stretching and bulging. Preschoolers love acting out animal stories so this one will be lots of fun to act out on Friday. The class

will be "sewing" and decorating a pair of mittens and making wrapping paper for holiday gifts. We started a class winter garden with fine sand and glass beads last week. This week we will add moss to represent plant life. On Thursday we will visit the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade class at 8:45 a.m. to watch their movement class. On Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup> parents and families are invited to the Royalston Town Hall at 11:00 a.m. to hear all the classes sing. This is followed by a pizza lunch.

December 2009				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7 <b>Winter Gardens: plant world: add moss</b>	8 8:45 Book Buddies  Music	9 Spanish  8:45 a.m. lambskin showing at Camp Caravan	10	11 <b>7:00 am 4th-6th to New York City</b>  Coffee order in Chanukah begins
14 <b>8:45 All School Sing</b>  <b>Winter Gardens: add animals</b>	15 <b>8:45 a.m. 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Field Trip to Amherst College Museum</b>	16  8:45 a.m. 2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Publishing Party  Food drive ends	17 8:45 a.m. 4th-6th <b>Movements Class at Camp Caravan All Parents invited. 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>: Bring in secret gifts</b>	18 1/2 DAY <b>11 a.m. Holiday Celebration at Town Hall (No Lunch or After School Program)</b>

## Kindergarten—1st Grade

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We continue our *Shapes, Mirrors and Reflections* theme this week with the story *Iron Hans* by the Brothers Grimm and the picture book *Kitten's First Full Moon* - both books feature reflections in water. For theme share we looked at some beautiful handmade quilts, identifying the various shapes in the designs. It was also a good opportunity to practice folding blankets corner to corner until they are small enough to pack away. Last week we used a laser light for bouncing light rays off mirrors on the theme share table. The children have also been using two mirrors at once to make multiple reflections and we also enjoyed looking through kaleidoscopes. We invented a story about a dragon who thinks he's a mouse until he sees his reflection in a pond, then the class used their journals to draw and write their own stories titled *The Dragon and the Pond*.

In science with Katrina last week we made shadow puppets from card and popsicle sticks. We set up a stage area with a white sheet and lamp for casting shadows. The children were excited to see their puppet shadows and some of the class

### 2nd - 3rd Grade

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Before Thanksgiving, Michael Young and Pat Worth of Royalston came in for drumming, storytelling and a Native American Thanksgiving ceremony. The children expressed gratitude for the world of nature and enjoyed using the rattles when singing. Thank you, Michael and Pat.

Last Wednesday we enjoyed singing at the Senior's lunch at the Town Hall. It's good practice for our Holiday celebration December 18. We'll be busy practicing our songs over the next two weeks.

On Thursday we joined the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> for their Publishing Party. The children heard memoirs about soccer games, exciting trips, and seeing a ghost. We noticed that the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders used great detail in their writing which made the memoirs come alive and helped us to picture their stories better. After hearing their stories, we were inspired and coincidentally (what perfect timing!), we were working on how to make our writing come alive and get more detail into our writing. During our lesson, the children were given the sentence, "I saw a boat." They unanimously concluded that that sentence was boring. Then they collaborated to "explode the moment" and make the sentence more detailed and interesting. Here's the revised sentence: "I saw a giant, light white boat zooming really fast over big waves and loads of people were on the boat, and it had three giant black smokestacks smoking pitch black smoke." What a sentence!

Our winter gardens are started. This week we turn to the plant world by adding moss. Last week we heard the story *The Moon Basket*. This week we'll hear the story *The Three Hunters and the Great Bear*, a Seneca story. The children will incorporate parts of the stories into their night dioramas. We continue working on our dream catchers this week.

We will go on a field trip to the Amherst College Planetarium and Natural History Museum on Tuesday, December 15. We will leave the school at 8:45 a.m. and return by 2:00. Please sign the attached permission slip. On Wednesday, December 16, we will celebrate the writing the children have done this semester with a Publishing Party at 8:45 a.m.

Don't forget to send in non-perishable food for our collection box for needy families.

made a whole cast of characters. This week we'll investigate reflections using mirrors and flashlights.

In art last week we glazed the pottery that we're preparing for holiday gifts. In music we'll be learning and practicing songs for the holiday performance and singing *Under the Sky*, *Begin Begin* and *Snowflakes*. The 1<sup>st</sup> graders are practicing *Jingle Bells* on their recorders.

Last week the kindergarten group began a new math unit called *What Comes Next?*, about constructing and extending patterns. We looked for patterns around the school, tapped out patterns on our bodies and constructed two unit and three unit repeating patterns. 1<sup>st</sup> graders are looking at addition and subtraction. We will investigate the *Number of the Day* including calculating ways to make that number using addition and subtraction. We'll also continue work solving story problems and using the Greater Than/Less Than signs.

### 4th - 6th Grade

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Last week had several highlights. The first was in science on Tuesday, when we put together the children's models of the planets of our solar system. The models are in scale with each other (except the Sun, which is half-scale, to fit in the classroom) and the distances between them are also in scale (albeit a different one, of course). The resulting display gives a very clear picture of the way the smaller planets (including ours) are clustered close to the Sun, with gigantic distances between Mars, Jupiter and the outer planets. The children have been fascinated by the display and it was very satisfying when one child noticed it must be very hot on the surface of Mercury, and then did research to discover the surface temperature is 600 degrees F.

The second highlight was our visit to the Town Hall on Wednesday, when the class sang a number of songs at the Seniors' weekly lunch. The class was joined by the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> graders, and together they sang a variety of lovely songs, including a Hebrew round and a tongue-twister from Scotland, under the guidance of our multi-talented music (and Spanish) teacher, Jocelyn.

Finally, we had a very successful Publishing Party on Thursday, to celebrate the completion of the memoir project. Parents, teachers and fellow-students read each memoir and wrote comments about it. It was clear that all the children had understood the importance of including their thoughts and feelings about the events they were relating, as a way of engaging the sympathy and attention of the reader. Taken together, the memoirs showed originality and a joy in language. If you missed the party, you can read the memoirs at the Open House on February 6.

This week we are making a surprise day-trip on Friday to New York City, to see the comprehensive exhibition of Kandinsky paintings at the Guggenheim Museum. We are prompted to go because of the strong positive reaction to the Kandinsky poster George brought back from the exhibition two weeks ago and which was last week's Painting of the Week. We will leave at 7 a.m. and return at 11 p.m. Please also sign the attached permission slip for the Field Trip to the Amherst College Museum, Tuesday Dec. 15.

Mark your calendars for our Open Movements class on Thursday Dec. 17 at 8:45 a.m. at Camp Caravan. We hope you can attend.

Don't forget to send in non-perishable food for our food box for needy families- the Preschool and K-1 classes have overflowing boxes, and ours is still quite scanty.