



Welcome Back!

School Photo Day is tomorrow!

News for the week of September 14, 2009

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News and Notes

What's New at the School This Year

Jocelyn Langer is teaching Music and Spanish this year. Jocelyn brings over 12 years of experience teaching music, and enjoys exploring music as a means of learning about other cultures and time periods, celebrating the seasons, and encouraging creativity through students' original compositions. The music program will also reflect classroom themes and Jocelyn looks forward to integrating music into the Spanish curriculum. Jocelyn studied Spanish at the San Pedro Spanish school in Guatemala, and taught Spanish at the Balance Rock Center in Jefferson, Mass.

Kim Barry is teaching Kindergarten math this year. She has been attending math staff meetings for years, and so using the hands-on Investigations math curriculum with last year's preschool students is a natural fit.

Elan Sicroff has offered to teach individual Suzuki piano lessons on Monday afternoons. Suzuki piano is based on ear training and close parental involvement. This is a terrific opportunity for young children to learn piano with an experienced world class certified Suzuki teacher who has just returned from giving concerts in Europe. Please call the school for more information.

Come to Parent Group Meeting Wed. Sept. 23 8:45 a.m.

Next week is our first meeting of the year. We'll introduce ourselves, talk about our activities during the year, and organize meetings. Rise will talk about what's new at the school. All parents are members of the Parent Group and are very welcome.

Fun with Clay This Thursday After School Ages 7 & up

Parents, students, siblings and friends are invited to join Renee & Jocelyn at the Village School **this Thursday** from 3:30-5:00 pm. We will have fun with clay while making bowls to donate to the "Empty Bowls Project", a fundraising event taking place at the Listening Wellness Center in Barre next month. The event benefits local food banks. Ages 7 & up are welcome. Sign up in the office. There is no charge.

Come to Curriculum Night Wednesday September 30

This is a once a year event, planned especially for Village School parents. Discover how learning grows, by scaffolding on a curriculum structure that provides plenty of room for creativity and individual voices. It's inspiring, and will help you feel totally connected to and involved in your child's experience. Parents of younger children are strongly encouraged to visit the kindergarten and upper grade classrooms. Each presentation will start promptly on time, so we can get through the evening without staying too late. Since this is an evening event, it's best for children to stay at home with a babysitter. Friends and parents of potential students are also welcome to attend. Presentations begin at 5:45 p.m.

Don't Miss the Garlic and Arts Festival! October 3 & 4

Parent volunteers are needed for the Village School tent. We offer a woodworking project for children. The sign up sheet will be posted in the hallway.

Preschool

The first three days of school were delightfully harmonious. Leanne and Kim overheard children's conversations about sharing and caring for each other's feelings. This week we will begin our first story, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. We tell the story using a different medium each day and the class will act out the story on Friday. On Tuesday we will begin Book Buddies. Each preschooler will be paired with a child in the 2nd-6th grade. The older child will come into the preschool each Tuesday at 8:45 to share books with their preschool buddy. This is the beginning of a special relationship, which will last all year and beyond. Tuesday is also School Photo Day. We will join in the All School Photo, and then take individual photos. Each week, on Thursdays and Fridays, Kim will be inside from 11:15-12:00 teaching kindergarten math. When you pick up your child on those days you will see Leanne and Jocelyn (on Thursday) and Leanne and Lynn (on Fridays) out on the playground.

Mark your calendar for our first field trip on Tuesday, September 22nd to Sweetwater Farm in Petersham. Parents are invited to attend with your preschooler. We will meet at the farm at 9:00 a.m. The class will get a tour of the farm and the animals and will get to help with a farm chore. Children should dress for being outdoors and helping on the farm. Let us know if you are attending with your child. A permission slip is only necessary if you need Kim or Leanne to transport your child to or from the farm. Thank you for picking up your child promptly at 11:30.

September 2009

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
14 All School Sing	15 8:45 Book Buddies Music Classes Photo Day	16 Spanish 2nd-6th to Sweetwater Farm 8:45 drop off, 11:45 pickup	17 Art Classes 3:30-5:00 Fun with Clay with Jocelyn and Renee ages 7 & up	18 Yoga Coffee orders due K-6th hiking
21 8:45 All School Sing	22 8:45 Book Buddies Music Classes Preschool to Sweetwater Farm Drop off at 9 a.m. pick up at 11:30.	23 Spanish 8:45 Parent Group Meeting at picnic tables All Welcome!	24 Art Classes	25 Yoga Coffee in K-1 Hiking 4th-6th nature drawing w Elizabeth Farnsworth

Kindergarten - 1st Grade

We are off to a great start! It was great to meet the class and family members at orientation last Tuesday. All the children are thrilled to be back in school after the summer vacation. They have quickly settled into the routines of the classroom and are producing great work and ideas. On the first day, the class illustrated in their journals the wild animals that they had encountered over the summer, including crabs, a fox, a seal, a turtle and a flamingo. The class has also been busy at the easels producing vibrant paintings to decorate the walls.

Our first theme for this semester is *Vegetables and Gardens*. We will explore the school and local gardens, visiting the garden at Sweetwater Farm, read books, make books and create art work related to gardens. Many thanks to parents for bringing in food for snack. So far we have had tomatoes, basil and peaches fresh from the garden, fitting in perfectly with theme. Look on the notice board for each child's theme share day. On their theme share day, the children can bring in something theme related to share at circle time – it could be an object, picture, story or memory.

In art last week, the children drew self-portraits. Colorful tissue paper was used to bleed colors onto damp paper. Look for the display in the hallway. This week we will make clay cups which will be fired and glazed, for use at snack time. Our rhyme this week is *Down is the Earth* and we will sing the *Apple Pickers Reel*. Our game is *A Little Seed in the Ground*. Science and Nature class begins this week with Katrina when we will explore all the changes in the school garden over the summer and look for bugs.

In math this year we will continue to use the excellent *Investigations* curriculum. Kindergarteners will learn math with Kim Barry (what a treat!) and 1st graders will learn math with Martin (also a treat!). This week the kindergarten group began their first lesson in the Investigations Math curriculum by exploring some of the math manipulatives and creating a chain of cubes for Kim to count. Excitement grew as the number got bigger and bigger. We now know that the preschool classroom is 453 cubes in length. 1st graders are working on counting and addition skills with the activities *Collect 20 Together*, *Counting On*, *Staircases* and *Mystery Box*.

Please sign and return the attached permission slip for visits to Sweetwater Farm in Petersham this year. This fall, we are going on Wednesdays,

2nd - 3rd Grade

What a nice beginning to the year! The children are full of great ideas to share and have been busy writing and discussing everything from favorite moments from their summer, to what they'd like to learn about Native Americans in our Theme study. Last week our poem of the week was *A Smile Connects Us* by Carol Hall and this week it is *Mary's Lamb* by Sarah Josepha Hale.

Our first writing unit will focus on poetry. Last week we chose an object from nature and used our senses to describe it. Then we took our observations and began creating a poem. This week we will continue to use Native American poetry to inspire our writing.

In Reading we worked on how to choose a "just right" book. A bookmark will be sent home this week to help your child remember the five-finger rule. We will begin using book bags and reading logs this week. Both serve as an integral part of our reading program and serve as a link between school and home. It is important that the book bags are used only for their books, reading log and other materials needed for reading.

In math the 2nd graders are working on accurately counting a set of objects by groups and by ones. They also learned the games *Cover and Count* and *Building Cubes*. They will use these games throughout the school year. The 3rd graders are working on place value in the tens place and began working on story problems in addition and subtraction.

We started Theme by reading from the book *Turtle Island ABC* and learned about different Native American symbols. The children then chose their own symbol, drew it and modeling the style in *Turtle Island ABC*, wrote their own pieces about their symbol. They will be on display this week.

In our first art class with Renee, we created a collage on our journals. Each journal is unique, creative and personalized individually.

Don't forget: We will join the 4th-6th at Sweetwater Farm this Wednesday, September 16. Drop off is at the farm at 8:45 and pick-up is at 11:45. Please make sure your child wears boots and is dressed to be outside all day. Also, we are hiking down to the river every Friday afternoon, unless it is pouring.

Wanted: A Cart for Art Classes

The school needs an Art Cart, for moving art supplies around to classrooms. It can be an old kitchen island cart, a tool cart, anything sturdy on wheels (it doesn't need to be pretty, just very functional). Old usable art supplies are also welcome— drop them off this week— and Renee will sort through them before ordering more art supplies for the year.

4th - 6th Grade

It's great to be back at school and once again, to find a class of surprisingly enthusiastic children! This year our theme is Ancient Greece, a topic rich in history, art and ideas, and with many echoes in the present day. The children are already used to their teacher's habit of leaping for the dictionary to look for word derivations, and throughout the year we'll be tracking the influence of Greek on our own vocabulary. This week the children will be learning Greek letters and using them to write their own names.

Last week we began by looking at the geography of Greece and its location in Europe. The class did a great job of coloring in a modern map of Europe – always a popular activity – and locating each of its 40-odd countries, including minor states such as Liechtenstein and tiny Monaco. We examined a large-scale map of Ancient Greece, showing the mountainous terrain down the center of the country. We considered how this, and the abundance of islands and long coastline, influenced the culture of Ancient Greece. By the end of this week we will have begun a study of Greek myths, beginning with stories about the various Greek gods and goddesses. Among other aspects we will consider how the gods' behavior was used to explain various natural phenomena.

As we establish routines for the new year, we will concentrate on journal writing this week, as well as organizing individual reading assignments. In our constant search for an effective yet light-touch means of monitoring reading at home, we are experimenting with dedicated bookmarks on which the children will record their daily reading. We hope this will prove manageable for both children and parents.

This week we will also start a unit on poetry. The children will begin by choosing various poems to read to the rest of the class and they will then learn at least one of them by heart. This will lead to a poetry-writing project that will occupy two or three weeks.

In math, 5th graders are exploring the properties of numbers. Using their knowledge of even, odd, prime, square, factor, and multiple, they will identify numbers with particular combinations of these characteristics.

Don't forget that this Wednesday (September 16th) we are at Sweetwater Farm in Petersham, the first of three visits we are lucky to have arranged for this semester. Drop-off is at 8:45 a.m. and pick-up at 11:45. Thank you for being on time. Also- we are hiking down to the river every Friday afternoon, so make sure your child is dressed for the weather. We will hike unless it is pouring.