

aWESome news



Let It
SNOW



From the Desks of
Ms. Gensel & Mrs. Shah

Whiton Elementary School has been gearing up for the holiday season by decking our halls with student work to display their growth as learners. It is hard to believe that we are already moving into the second trimester next week, and that the winter break is upon us!

Please be certain to carefully review your child's first trimester report card which will be sent home with them on Friday, December 13th.

We would like to extend the warmest of wishes to you and your family for a joyous holiday season. Enjoy one another and all the special celebrations that accompany the season.

Bundle up and we look forward to seeing you in 2014!



Dates to Remember

December 2nd

PTO Holiday Happiness
Collections Begin

December 6th

End of First Trimester

December 13th

Report Card Sent Home
PTO Holiday Happiness
Collections End

December 18th

Pre-K Holidays Around the World

December 19th

Holiday Parties—
(Grades Pre-K, K & 1)
PTO Meeting at SBS—7 pm
Topic: Anti-Bullying

December 20th

Holiday Parties—
(Grades 2 & 3)

December 23rd

SINGLE SESSION DAY

December 24th—January 1st

SCHOOLS CLOSED—
Holiday Recess

HAPPY NEW YEAR

January 2nd

Return from Holiday Recess

Preschool Celebrates Thanksgiving

By Mrs. Lunemann

Our curiosity about Fall leaves was piqued as November arrived in beautiful colors. We went on several leaf hunts looking for shades of red, yellow, brown and orange. We sorted some leaves by shape and some by color and discovered their stems and veins. After reading *Leaf Man* by Lois Ehlert and noticing the amazing shapes the leaves could make, our students used their imaginations to create equally amazing leaf pictures. They dictated sentences about their pictures and assisted in printing some of the letters.

As Thanksgiving approached, we began to learn about the First Thanksgiving. Life was very different in Pilgrim times. Boats had sails for movement, and our wind experiment highlighted the dangers of storms and doldrums for vessels. After donning Pilgrim hats and purchasing tickets, we sailed on the Mayflower experiencing "firsthand" what the long voyage was like. Counting to 66 seemed to take forever, but we finally landed and built our own version of a Pilgrim house. The Wampanoag introduced another new lifestyle. The Native American *wetu* and *tipi* contrasted the thatched huts of the Pilgrims. While reading books by Kate Waters, we discussed and compared the clothing of the Pilgrims and Native Americans. We practiced patterns while designing our unique Native American headbands and necklaces. The Pilgrims were introduced to new foods when they arrived in the New World. Pumpkins were one of them. Using our senses, we explored them inside and out, listed our observations and then drew pictures of what we saw. It was interesting to compare pumpkins and apples and see how much they had in common.

We celebrated Thanksgiving last week by wearing Pilgrim hats and Native American Indian headbands and acting out the story of the First Thanksgiving.

We hope all of our Whiton family had very happy and thankful Thanksgiving. Gobble! Gobble!



NEWS FROM THE GYMNASIUM

By Mrs. Carty

All the classes came into the gym and experienced a Spooktacular Obstacle Course during Halloween week. They climbed Mystery Mountain, crossed a River of red Jello, and crawled through a giant Spider Web. After navigating over a Plateau, they crossed a sea of lava on a beam 10,000 feet in the air and then had to tip toe through toe-eating tarantulas. They also worked cooperatively to hook monkeys together and toss fish and ladybugs through hoops. November brought fitness testing to the gym. The classes learned to do push ups, curl ups, the pacer test, the shuttle run, and the v-sit reach. The third grade scores will be recorded and sent home in December to be shared with the Family. Hopefully a Family winter workout plan can be devised which can help your child improve their fitness. A retest will be given in the Spring.



NEWS FROM SPEECH THERAPY...

WRITTEN BY DEBRA GESUALDO

The Speech Language therapists at WES are available to answer your questions regarding speech and/or language concerns. The top questions we get asked are as follows:

- **Do late talking children, who have typical skills in all other areas, always "catch up" to other children their age?** The answer is no. Research shows that approximately 40%-50% of children do not catch up on their own. Late talkers who use few or no gestures seem to be at greater risk for a language delay that does not resolve itself. Even when late talkers appear to catch up to other children their age, they are still at greater risk for weaknesses in reading. If you are concerned about your child's language development, don't listen to people who tell you to wait and see! Consult a speech language pathologist since the earlier a child receives help, the easier it is to catch up, and the better the prognosis is.
- **Does learning two languages at the same time cause language delays in young children?** This is false. Children learning two languages at the same time will go through the same developmental patterns in both of their languages and at roughly the same time as children learning one language. Sometimes young children learning two languages mix words or grammar from their two languages. This is very normal and does not indicate that the child is having difficulty with language learning. There may actually be benefits from bilingual language learning, as children who are fluent in two languages have strengths in the ability to think about language as well as in cognitive skills.
- **Is it true that boys talk later than girls?** It is true that boys produce their first words and sentences later than girls. However, these differences are only in terms of a matter of a few months. There is a normal range within which children acquire certain language milestones. "Girls tend to be on the earlier end, and boys on the later end, of this age range", according to researchers Seyda Özçalskan and Susan Goldin-Meadow (2010). Therefore, boys are not actually delayed in their language development, just a little behind girls. So if a young boy is really lagging behind in his speech and language development, don't assume that it's because he's a boy and that it's perfectly normal. He may require some speech and language intervention.
- **And here is a trick question. Do flashcards work when teaching vocabulary?** Actually, learning a new word from a flashcard teaches a child to say words in response to a picture. This, however, does not mean that the child will understand the full meaning of the word or how to use it appropriately in real life situations. New vocabulary has to be learned in meaningful interactions during everyday life and repeated many times before becoming part of a child's vocabulary. Roberta Golinkoff, PhD., co-author of "Einstein Never Used Flash Cards: How Our Children Really Learn and Why They Need to Play More and Memorize Less", explains that "babies learn best through playful interactions with people who love them" and had the following advice for parents about educational products: "Save your money! Play with your child". Please refer to www.hanen.org for more helpful information.

The students in Mr. Boehm's class love to write! Daily interactive writing activities have really given us a confidence boost! We write letters of advice to characters from the stories that we read, we make lists, create anchor charts and are constantly working on spelling patterns and word families. We love "sharing the pen" during many of these writing activities. In Writer's Workshop, we are writing our personal narratives with a focus on small moments. We are learning to zoom in to the best parts! In order to make our stories even more interesting, we are continuing to add feelings, talking, thinking and settings to our writing. Along with brainstorming ideas and connecting our writing to personal experiences, we are also learning how details can make a story more exciting!

We are paying close attention to our punctuation marks too! Understanding the rules of grammar is an important step to becoming a clear communicator and strong writer—skills that will benefit your child for the rest of his/her life!

Dress for Winter!

Students are reminded to dress properly for outdoor recess. We will continue to have outdoor recess as long as the temperature is above 35 degrees. The wind chill is considered during blustery days.

Students should come to school prepared. Gloves, scarves, hats and coats should be worn.

Keep in mind that the flu and the common cold are caused by viruses. When it is cold outside, people tend to stay inside and are more likely to spread germs. In fact, children get sick more often in the winter because of it.

Therefore, we encourage students to enjoy the outdoor recess session. It's the healthier option!



Over the Rainbow



By Mrs. Cole

The third grade students saw a fantastic multimedia presentation titled, "Over the Rainbow" presented by Motivational Media Assemblies. The focus of the presentation was finding our way to being better people. The students were mesmerized by the 3 huge movie screens filled with movie clips, music, motivational stories and the inspiring message that we can achieve greatness. Every person has some kind of dream of reaching for a better day, a better life. That dream might be something *they* want to become, or achieve. It might be a wish that they have for *others*. Too often, they run into problems or circumstances that block their progress. A positive *attitude* will allow people to keep believing, push through difficulties, and overcome the obstacles. And being determined every day, to work hard and never give up, will bring progress. Today is another *opportunity*. We can become GREAT people. We can find our path to "over the rainbow".

The Flu: A Guide For Parents

Submitted by Nurse Warren

What are the symptoms of the flu?

Symptoms of the flu can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea. Some people with the flu will not have a fever.

What are some of the ways I can protect my child against the flu?

In addition to getting vaccinated, take – and encourage your child to take – everyday steps that can help prevent the spread of germs.

This includes:

- ⇒ Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- ⇒ Stay away from people who are sick.
- ⇒ Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- ⇒ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- ⇒ If someone in the household is sick, try to keep the sick person in a separate room from others in the household, if possible.
- ⇒ Keep surfaces like bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, kitchen counters and toys for children clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.
- ⇒ Throw tissues and other disposable items used by sick persons in your household in the trash.
- ⇒ These everyday steps are a good way to reduce your chances of getting all sorts of illnesses, but a yearly flu vaccine is always the best way to specifically prevent the flu.

What can I do if my child gets sick?

Talk to your doctor early if you are worried about your child's illness.

If your child is 5 years and older and does not have other health problems and gets flu-like symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed and make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids.

If your child is younger than 5 years (and especially younger than 2 years) or of any age with a long term health condition (like asthma, a neurological condition, or diabetes, for example) and develops flu-like symptoms, they are at risk for serious complications from the flu. Ask a doctor if your child should be examined.

When can my child go back to school after having the flu?

Keep your child home from school, day care or camp for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. (Fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C) or higher.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/flu or www.flu.gov or call 800-CDC-INFO



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Mitten, The Hat and Gingerbread Baby

by Jan Brett

The Snowy Day

by Ezra Jack Keats

Where the Sidewalk Ends

by Shel Silverstein

The Polar Express

by Chris Van Allsburg

The Snowman

Raymond Briggs

Sometimes I'm Bombaloo

by R. Vail

Froggy Gets Dressed

by J. London

Hoot by Carl Hiaasen

Snow by Uri Shulevitz

Snowball by Lois Ehlert

Great Winter Reads

The White Giraffe

by Lauren St. John

The Chanukkah Guest,

by Eric A. Kimmel

Night Tree, by Eve Bunting

Dream Snow by Eric Carle

Christmas in the Country,

by Cynthia Rylant &

Diane Goode



The Gingerbread Man

by John A. Rowe

365 Penguins

by Jean Luc Fromental

Stella, Queen of the Snow

by Marie Louise Gay

There Was a Cold Lady Who

Swallowed Some Snow

by Lucille Colandro