

January 2014

a **WHITON** **WES** **SCHOOL** **me** **news**



From the Desks of Ms. Gensel & Mrs. Shah

Happy New Year to you all! We hope your winter recess was relaxing and filled with enjoyable times with family and friends.

The Whiton staff has returned recharged and ready to continue the good work that we started with your children. We were so happy to welcome them back.

Please be reminded that school will be closed on Monday, January 20th in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday.

January

January 2
Classes Resume

January 20
Martin Luther King's Birthday
Schools Closed



Snow Watch

Please be alert to inclement weather for possible closings or school delays. Be sure to check the district web-site for the most up to date information.



ESL News

By Danielle Cordaro, ESL Teacher

For the month of December, our ESL students have been learning all about different holiday traditions that occur across different cultures. I was so excited to learn about how some of my students celebrate their holidays! To kick off winter, some of our ESL students made snowflakes to hang outside of our room. Some of our English Language Learners wrote all about their holiday traditions, drew pictures, and presented their papers in front of the class. We learned how to say Happy Holidays, Santa Clause, and Merry Christmas all in different languages! It was a great experience and so much fun!

Speech Therapy

By Sandy Koscielski, Speech Therapist

Speech Therapy focuses on receptive language and expressive language. Receptive language is the ability to understand words spoken to you. Expressive language is the ability to use words to express yourself. It also deals with the mechanics of producing words, such as articulation, pitch, fluency, and volume. Adults may need speech therapy after a stroke or traumatic accident that changes their ability to use language; for children, it generally involves pursuing milestones that have been delayed. Some children only need help with language, while others have the most problems with the mechanics of speech. Some children need help with speech and language. Speech therapists work to find fun activities to strengthen a child's area of weakness.

If your child has an IEP, please read it over again. Review the speech goals. Choose the things you want to work on with your child over the holiday break.

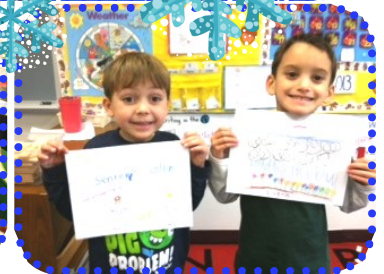
Happy Holidays!

News From Mrs. Apsley's Class

We have been working on our Writing Skills in Kindergarten. We learned that there are many forms of writing in our world. We practiced making signs, cards and stories as some examples of our writing lessons. Mrs. Apsley received a "flat Julia" in the mail from her niece in California. It is like the Flat Stanley story where Stanley is squished and then being flat but perfectly fine, travels around the world. We were asked to tell Julia's class about what it is like to live and go to school in New Jersey. Our Flat Julia came to Kindergarten for a few days and we completed a Writing Lesson to show the children in her First Grade class what we like about Whiton and what we are learning in school. We are putting it together into a book. We learned that on the map, Julia looks very far away. She lives near the Pacific Ocean and we live near the Atlantic Ocean. We also took photos to show ourselves in our winter coats as Julia's class does not wear heavy Winter coats to school. It is so much fun to learn about children in other schools. We were very excited to put our Writing skills into practice and send a package back to Julia's First Grade Class at Walter Hays Elementary School in Palo Alto, CA.

Small Moments with Mrs. Bryden

All of the red nosed reindeer in Mrs. Bryden's class have published their best small moment stories and have shouted with glee, "We are done! We have learned to use punctuation, expression words, and transition words in our stories! Our work will go down in history." In math, we are measuring with our reindeer feet and reindeer noses. We learned some reindeer facts: A baby reindeer is called a calf. Male and female reindeer have antlers. Reindeer are good swimmers. All of the reindeer in Mrs. Bryden's class want to remind you to "guide your sleigh with kindness, safety, and good cheer!" Happy Holidays!



What is Guided Reading?

By Dulcinea Elms

Your child participates in guided reading in his or her classroom, but what exactly is guided reading?

During reading workshop, a teacher works with your child in a guided reading group in order to help your child build an effective system for processing text, or reading, independently. A guided reading group is made up of a small group of individual children who are alike enough in their reading development and needs that they can be taught together for a period of time. Guided reading groups are flexible... groups can be rearranged and changed as needed. The group is structured so that individual children can get targeted reading instruction from the teacher, and the teacher can scaffold the support given to each child or group as needed. The teacher is able to help individual students effectively, can work on a skill with a small group of students, and can see where she needs to help them so they can become confident readers and read increasingly challenging text over time.

When a teacher selects a book for the guided reading group, she or he is thinking about the strengths, needs and reading level of the book. The book selected should provide some work on the student's part during the first read, where he or she can use and apply reading strategies effectively, and where the teacher can help expand what they know how to do as readers. A teacher will use the text to provide students with opportunities to engage students with the meaning, language and print of the text.

During guided reading, a student is developing many skills and strategies, among them are rich vocabulary development, using sight words to help with reading text, decoding words "on the go", understanding and discussing settings, characters, problems, solutions, cause and effects, text structure (for example, fictions vs. non-fiction), book features such as glossaries, headings, table of contents, reading with expression, reading fluently, and the list goes on and on!

The main goal of a guided reading group is to help a student become a confident, capable, independent reader with a high level of reading comprehension.

So the next time you are reading with your child, ask him or her what they have been learning in their guided reading group!

¿Hablas español?

By Sra. Gerry

One of the great responsibilities of educators is to expand the world view of children in order for them to develop appreciation, empathy and an understanding of cultural differences. One of the ways to do this is through language learning.

Speaking another language, gives you a better understanding of the practices of other cultures and provides opportunities to participate and share experiences.

Nowadays, one does not necessarily need to travel to another country to practice language skills. Technology provides a window of opportunity to read, listen, write and speak a language by providing many sources like forums, blogs, apps, videos, software, etc.

Learning another language also has other research-supported benefits, such as:

- ◆ Develop native-like pronunciation when second language instruction begins at a young age
- ◆ Students can naturally acquire language rather than learn it through the study of grammar rules.
- ◆ More confidence towards second language learning.
- ◆ Better understanding of the English language.
- ◆ Improved understanding of other curricular areas.
- ◆ Increased meta-cognition (creative and critical thinking).

Learning another language can produce better educated citizens, which are aware of the connections of the world. Language is the mortar of civilizations. It fosters understanding of the different cultures and provides the need for cooperation, and tolerance.