

Valley Forge Elementary—November 2013—Team Updates

Kindergarten:



We began the month of November with our very exciting tradition of Bear Hunt Day! This fun day consists of 5 stations where the children learn about Native American culture and traditions. To prepare for our special day, we learned about picture writing and practiced it on our Teepee paper. With the help of several parents, we erected a huge teepee using the paper the students decorated as our walls. At the stations the children learned about the Native Americans' use of corn or "maize", storytelling, crafts, games, and animal tracks. We all had a great time and the children learned all about Native Americans.

In Science, we completed our unit on Farming with an engaging lesson that helped the children make a connection between the food they eat and the farm it comes from. After learning about a Dairy farm, we made our own ice cream using milk from a cow! They thought it was yummy! Then we moved on to a unit on matter and investigated how states of matter can change.

Numbers, numbers are every where! We continued working on numbers in math and practiced counting, composing numbers, decomposing numbers using our ten frames, and ordering numbers. We practiced concepts such as one more and more or less.

We continue to work on the alphabet as we practice each letter's sound or sounds, proper letter formation, and then drawing pictures of words that begin with the letter.

First Grade:

Where did November go? First grade has been so busy that we can't believe December is near!

In reading, we have been learning about determining importance and synthesizing strategies. The children are getting very good at practicing these strategies as they read.

We completed our unit on Maps and Communities in Social Studies and are now learning about Japan. The children participated in a Round Robin where they had the opportunity to visit each first grade classroom to learn about Japanese culture. It was a fun way to learn a lot of information!



In Science, we are learning about the weather. As the unit progresses, the children will have the chance to learn about various weather-measuring instruments and take home student-created models to practice what they have learned.

In math we are learning about Geometry. The children learned all about plane and solid shapes. They can name and recognize these shapes in our environment.

It was a pleasure meeting with parents during conferences. Our first day of conferences was also the day of our pretzel bake sale. Thank you for your support and donations!

November gives us an opportunity to express our thankfulness. Our first graders spent time learning about the first Thanksgiving and wrote about things for which they are thankful. The children are thankful for many things . . . parents included. The first grade teachers are thankful for our fabulous first graders and their families. We wish you a happy Thanksgiving!

Second Grade:



It was Turkey Time during the month of November in second grade! Students created Favorite Book Turkeys and Thankful Turkeys. The children read a non-fiction article about turkeys and answered comprehension questions. Teachers read books about Thanksgiving and worked on projects related to those read-alouds. Two favorites were *A Turkey for Thanksgiving* and *Thanksgiving at the Tappletons*.

Some students wrote letters to their parents persuading them to let them have a dinosaur as a pet! We have concluded our dinosaur unit in social studies and have now traveled to Ancient China, as we learn about an early civilization.

Our last science lessons about sound included a study of the human ear and listening to *Peter and the Wolf*. It was a fascinating unit with many interesting hands-on activities. We will begin our Changes unit in December. Second graders will learn about solids, liquids, and gases. They will discover what properties each has and what causes one to change to another.

Please remember to send a coat, gloves and hat with you child each day. We go out to recess, despite the cold! The second grade teachers hope you have an enjoyable Thanksgiving filled with family, friends and food! We look forward to December fun and wonderful winter parties!

Third Grade:

November was a busy month for third graders at VFE. The month started off with the Falcon 5K which was a great community event in which many teachers and students participated!

We continued the fun month with many exciting projects and activities. Students completed a rock collection project at home that has been shared at school. They took the unit we had been studying and made connections at home with rocks they found in our local area. The students did a wonderful job with this project!

In language arts, all students are continuing to practice skills that go along with each theme unit we teach. Students are making inferences, creating images, and monitoring their understanding as they read. These skills are helping our students to become independent thinkers who make strong connections to the stories they read!



In social studies, we have started our Native American unit. Students are learning about specific tribes. They are becoming experts on each tribes culture and will be doing a round robin activity at the end of December to share all they have learned with the rest of the third grade.

Also this month, each third grade class had a digital citizenship lesson. During these lessons, students learned about internet safety and what information is safe and not safe to share. We find these lessons to be more and more valuable each year as technology is becoming so commonplace with our students.

We look forward to a great month of December filled with fun activities and learning opportunities!

We would like to thank Mrs. Moreno for coordinating the field trip to the Adventure Aquarium. The field trip helped us tie our Ecosystem Unit to different habitats and everyone had a great time. The new science unit that we started in November was the Food Chemistry Unit. While working within this unit, we will learn about starches, glucose, fats, and proteins. We will investigate how a balanced diet helps our bodies develop and helps us grow up strong and healthy. The fourth grade hallway is filled with wonderful writing projects and the group presentation posters about the early European Colonies in North America. You will see turkeys in disguise and leaves hanging from the ceiling in the hallway. The Fourth Graders did a wonderful job in the month of November!



Special & Support Area Updates

Physical Education



We have had a great month of November in Physical Education! Kindergarteners are working on spatial awareness, locomotive skills, and introductory rock climbing skills. First and second graders have been working on more advanced ball skills, teamwork, and many different beginning fitness concepts. Students in third and fourth grade have worked on throwing, catching, teamwork, cooperation, social skills/responsibilities, and more advanced fitness concepts. All parents are encouraged to practice basic fitness concepts with their children like jogging, running, climbing, and strengthening exercises. These are great family activities to do together!

Just another reminder - please don't forget to send your child to school with play clothes and sneakers on PE days so that they can participate. For safety reasons, students need to wear sneakers that can be laced up or velcroed. Winter boots or "Ugg" type boots are not acceptable.

Please consider having your child participate in our Hoops to Help event the week of December 9th. All proceeds will go to the American Red Cross to benefit the victims of the typhoon in the Philippines and the tornadoes in Illinois. This is a wonderful way for the students to help others during this upcoming holiday season.

