

The Bear Essentials

Principal's Monthly Bulletin

February 2004

BRRR! The seasonal cold snap that hit Greece resulted in us sending students home early and closing for one full day, but students will not be marked absent for those days. I appreciated the many calls we received from parents who wisely decided to keep their children at home due to the dangerous driving conditions. Decisions to close are difficult to call as there is such an amazing and sudden contrast between the weather conditions north of Kifissia and those in central Athens, but the safety of our students is always the deciding factor.

- We sent 250 euro to the **"Make a Wish" Children's Foundation**. Thank you!
- The recent parent coffee meeting on Child Safety reminded me of the importance of "local knowledge" for newcomers to our community. For that reason I am including the Babysitter's Guide and the Emergency Phone Numbers we distributed at our meeting and suggest you keep the listing near your phone at home.
- This month's international bulletin board features Vietnam, courtesy of Mrs Borsetto who also gave a wonderful presentation on the Vietnamese New Year and the Vietnamese language. Her presentation included special gift envelopes and chocolates for everyone . Thank you!

Diary Dates for February

Mid trimester reports will be sent home on Thursday 5th February. A small number of parents still need to make appointments for their parent-teacher conferences for the first trimester. If you would like to meet with a teacher to discuss your child's progress at the mid trimester point, please call Ms Dimitra. (Tel: 210 8169421)

The second trimester parent –teacher conferences will be held on Wednesday 31st March, on the same day as the Middle and High School conferences, so there will be no classes for students on that day.

- **On February 2nd raffle tickets for international and themed (origami, cosmetics, etc.) baskets will go on sale** and the draw will take place at the 100 day celebration. Tickets are 2 euro each or 5 tickets for 5 euro. Donations of wine, chocolates etc are still being accepted through till the end of the week.
- **Friday 6th February: Mid Year break – no classes.** Classes resume on Monday 9th February.
- **On February 13th our Early Years students will be celebrating the 100th Day of School** with special activities during the afternoon that focus on the number 100. Thanks to the parents who have volunteered goodies for the special Bake Sale on that day also.
- The parent coffee meeting for Feb. 18th has been postponed to March 10th.
- **Friday 20th February is Greek Carnival Day.** Details of parade etc. will be sent home next week.
- **Clean Monday Holiday is on 23rd February and school will be closed for this Greek holiday.**

Now read on for news from the single subject teachers . . .

Hello, everyone, and Happy New Year!

It is a pleasure for me to teach Greek to the students of the Tasis Primary School. I really enjoy working with the children, in a continuing effort to explore the Greek language through their interesting and colorful new Readers and Grammar books.

Everybody is trying hard to cope with the ... labyrinth of the verb endings and the various paradigms of noun declension. An improvement in their spelling scores is an evidence of this effort.

New vocabulary, dialogue, figures of speech and plot building are some of the aspects that are examined during our novel reading period. I will be looking forward to the students' book reports toward the end of this second trimester.

As far as the Independent Writing skills are concerned, the Native Greek students have been inquiring into the techniques of description (following certain questions/steps) and ways to expand their sentences, in order to give more specific and interesting information. An attempt has been made to match the units explored in the homerooms as much as possible.

The projects of the Pre-K and Kindergarten students also follow their Language Arts Units, although emphasis is given on oral communication skills. This term the Kindergartners have started getting acquainted with the Greek alphabet.

During the Host Language and Culture sessions, the children are becoming familiar with the Greek alphabet and with basic grammar and vocabulary. They have also learned facts about the Minoan, Mycenaean and Archaic periods of the Ancient Greek Civilization. They have wondered why life at the palace of Knossos was so carefree and luxurious, and have realized the change that came with the Mycenaeans and how "the ideal of the hero" was formed. The little ones were particularly interested in the stories from the Iliad and the Odyssey. Finally, all of them performed very well in their vase restoration projects and got to appreciate the tough and responsible job that an archaeologist has!

Conclusively, I would like to thank the parents for supervising home assignments - especially the Christmas revision work - and for encouraging our efforts.

Dimitra Dimakopoulou

Library News

What a busy time we have had in the Library since I last wrote! **2nd Graders** have been finding out all about call numbers, what they are and how they can help us find books on the shelves. They have coped really well with work that I would normally have assigned to an older grade!

3rd Graders have been working on the various parts of a book to link with their unit on Best Sellers, focusing on the index and glossary but also covering the dedication and acknowledgements. I was privileged to accompany them to the *Magic Pencil* exhibition where their exemplary interest in the books and original illustrations, not to mention the animations, impressed the presenters. Many of the books are amongst our library collections so we were able to pursue the themes further at school.

4th and 5th Graders have been taking advantage of the library's many facilities to research for their unit projects, using the electronic encyclopedia and the Internet, as well as print materials, to gather the required information. Keyboarding skills have assisted 5th Graders in their typing up of reports on Word.

The library has been the lucky recipient of a wide variety of donations. Juliette donated a '3-D echo images of the heart' video to supplement 4th Grade's unit on the Human Body. Ian (5th) parted with almost a hundred books he has out-grown, all in immaculate condition. Nancy and Harrison donated 12 CD- ROM which will be very useful for class work (Math, Science etc). Riena's mom gave a presentation on Alaska and donated two books that tell much about the culture of their country. The illustrations in *The Great Serum Race* give cause for awe! Perla and Francesco donated an electronic dictionary. Lara has brought in many books she

has outgrown. The list for donations is long... Pamela and Christina (2x fiction), Emma (3x fiction), Chris (A delightful Book of Hugs!), Luke and Damian (a Nursery Rhyme poster), Mary Grace (Science), Laila (3 board books) and Mrs. Bear (many novels).

The Indigo Children was donated by Petros on the occasion of his birthday and may be of interest to parents. His donation brings me to a perfect point to mention that I am beginning to compile a list of books from our collection that may be of interest to our parents, e.g., *How to Help Your Child with Homework, Is Your Child Gifted?*, for example. Once the list has been compiled I will send a copy home and you would simply indicate, in a note sent with your child, if you were interested in a particular title and it would be in your hands by the end of the day!

Thank you so much for all of those fabulous donations – they have kept me and my faithful volunteers busy, but we don't mind! I owe my greatest appreciation to Tara Daskalakis, Sydney Miller, Sarah Monahan, Nina Zinn and Marina Linardou for all the diligent help they give for the well being of the library.

Rosalyn Psallidas, Library-Media Coordinator

News from the Art room

With the first month of the 2004 already gone by, all of us are back on track. Kindergartners worked with different materials and have put up a lovely **Frederick** display outside the art room. By now in Grade 1 everybody knows what complicated words like **solid, liquid, gas, evaporation and condensation** mean and in art we made something solid that sounds like a liquid. Can you guess what it is? We also painted with ice and saw how the paint spread once the ice started melting.

Simple machines in Grade two were the object of our art projects also. If you ever have a minute to glance on the bulletin board right as you come in our building, you will see artwork with a soccer player kicking a ball, a girl reaching for a book or a singer dancing as the curtains open up on stage. All of our pictures move if you slide the handle. In Grade 3 everyone is very busy working on their storybooks for their **Best Seller** unit, deciding on the size, the style, the materials they are going to use in order to make their books as engaging as possible.

4th graders have just finished their landscape group projects for the **Beneath Our Feet** unit. It took a lot of careful planning and coordination as it was the "messiest and stickiest project ever!" The 4th Grade models are now on display in the reception area. Grade 5 foil sculptures are also on display. Just walk around the building and you will find them creeping among you.

On the February 13th, which, is our 100th day of school, we will be having a **bake sale** during snack and lunch, in order to raise money for a digital camera. Parents who have volunteered have already chosen their delicious recipes and we can't wait to try them out. If you would like to help bake or set up during that day please let us know.

Moreover, our **international and themed baskets** are just starting to fill up. A big **THANK YOU** to all the teachers and parents for their generous donations for our baskets. Students will be able to buy raffle tickets as of Monday, February 2nd and the raffles will be drawn on the 100th Day of school. Good luck to all!

Mata Bardis

PE.

January was a short month, but we did manage to complete our tasks. PreK, K and 1st grade have developed their gross motor skills so much, that it is now much easier for them to zig zag through cones, hop on one foot, run backwards or catch a ball in the air. They also played a lot of new games, the most popular one being *Farmers and sheep*.

2nd and 3rd grade worked a little on basketball skills and educational gymnastics. Everyone can now do the front roll safely with the head tucked in. Favorite game for this month was *Mila*. 4th and 5th grade also improved their basketball skills and we may organize a game between these two grades.

Our after school activities have started again and I am looking forward to coaching softball (3rd, 4th, 5th) and sharing new games with our younger children. I would also like to inform you that health week will be held from the 4th to the 8th of February, so our student will be getting a lot of information on how to maintain a healthy life style. I am counting on your support and encouragement.

Ms Stephanie Vavoulas

E.A.L NEWS

Our **cheerful Pre-K's** have been busy learning about the different types of **families**. In this way the group had the opportunity to bring photos of their own families and share them during language time by saying: "**This is my Father, mother, baby brother etc.** Please come into the classroom and see our beautiful **Family Collage** created by the J - Pre-K class. Also, the children have been naming "**winter clothes**" while reviewing the sizes of different clothing. **The E.A.L Kindergarten class** has been discussing, describing and comparing the sizes of different shapes and objects. Also, the children are creating a booklet with a variety of patterns and shapes.

Grade 1 Beginners group has been learning about the **weather** and **seasons** as well as naming the months of the year. Each day one child is responsible for changing the weather chart and to further describe the weather conditions. In the process the children are developing their own **weather/seasonal booklet** while answering questions such as "What's the weather like today? The weather is... What was the weather like yesterday? It was..." etc. **Grade 2 Intermediate group** has been learning forms of **Singular and Plural** through story writing as well as the use of **Past, Present and Future Tenses**. The group has been enjoying learning the above concepts while singing from the "Super Songs and Activities" English Language Teaching book, for example "Mouse and mice and foot and feet. Fish- fish, person- people".

Grade 3 Intermediate group has become familiar with the "**Narrative text type**" of writing. It involves the stages of orientation, complication and resolution. The group has chosen their own favorite tale and is continuing to practice the use of **Irregular verbs** through spelling and word scramble activities.

Finally, Grade 5 Intermediate group has been working with great enthusiasm from the workbook **In Touch** while improving their grammar skills through listening, speaking and comprehension question-answer activities. This time around the group is focusing on **research writing** (paragraphs/sequence/structure).

BRAVO TO ALL E.A.L GROUPS ! KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK TO FURTHER IMPROVE YOUR GRAMMAR SKILLS!

Miss Venetia