

The Bear Essentials

Principal's Monthly Bulletin

March 2004

- **What a wonderful example of parent cooperation we had on the 100th Day of School, which – due to a snow day the previous week - became also our Carnival Day, Bake Sale day and Raffle Day!** Our parent volunteers did a great job of supporting our efforts and we are now the proud owners of TWO new cameras: a Sony combined video and digital camera and a small Sony digital camera, purchased with the funds we raised. Our video camera will be in constant use over the next month or two, especially by the grade 5 students as they prepare for their PYP exhibition which is the culminating event of their primary education. More details of this special event will be shared soon. ***Thank you all so much – we raised over 900 euro in this project – it just proves again that working together certainly makes a BIG difference!***
- **Hearing Dogs for Deaf People** is the charity in England to whom I forward all the used stamps families drop off into the basket in our reception area. The charity receives 1.50 pounds for every kilo of used postage stamps. In 2003 we achieved our target of raising 2,500 pounds towards the costs of assessment, training, placement or after care of one hearing dog, following the death of its owner. So, please don't throw those envelopes out without cutting round the stamp area, and giving the stamps to your child for this charity. Perhaps you can ask your work colleagues to do the same? Thank you!
- **TASIS students will again join the parade in Kifissia on Thursday 25th March,** thanks to the positive response we received from our families. Rehearsals begin on Monday. **School will be closed on March 25th, Greece's Independence Day**

Diary Dates for March

- **March 10th at 2.15 p.m.: Parent coffee meeting** - Please join us for what promises to be a revealing presentation on the hidden role of food in our lives.
- **March 24th at 9. 30 a.m.:** A short assembly to honor the national heroes who led Greece to independence in 1821.
- **March 25th: no classes. Greek National Day**
- **March 31st: Parent/teacher conferences.** No classes for students. Letters with your appointment times will be sent home next week.

Now read on for news from the Intermediate classrooms . . .

Grade 3: I would like to congratulate third grade on all the hard work, commitment and enthusiasm they showed whilst writing their 'Best Seller' storybooks! The storybooks are a wonderful read, with lots of lessons to learn. The illustrations have a personal style, are creative and attractive. You are welcome to stop by our class library to read some if you'd like.

Students first collected the necessary information by surveying the Early Years grades and researching other storybooks, in order to discover the essential elements of a popular storybook. At the same time, in Language Arts, they explored the structure of the narrative writing type and learned about paragraphing, speech marks and other punctuation marks. They combined their knowledge and skills, and worked through the writing process to produce their own popular storybooks. They, and I, are very proud of the results and we are confident they will become popular once shared with the other grades.

In our current unit, 'Let There Be Light', students are having fun learning about the properties of light using mirrors, flashlights, candles, a gas flame, the sunlight, prisms and more! They have explored questions such as 'What is light made of?', 'How does light travel?' through a variety of hands-on tasks in our science room, which they all love to work in.

In Math, they have been exploring lines, rays, angles and properties of polygons and learning a lot of new mathematical language, too. We have been making links and connections to our unit to reinforce concepts such as light rays, that the angle the light strikes a mirror equals the angle of where it leaves the mirror.

Finally, in Language Arts, they have been learning about the explanation type of writing, which they will be using to explain the light properties. They have also looked at children's science books, as they will be presenting their explanation writing in the form of a science book.

Ms Nancy Salaounis

Grade 4: Since we last wrote we have completed our unit "Beneath our Feet", where we learned about different landforms and how they affect populations. Ms. Mata assisted us in this unit by helping us make models of these landforms, which parents saw on display in the reception area. Students also wrote reports on different Mediterranean countries. We were also able to visit the planetarium, as part of our last unit "Myths and Legends" to see the planets as we studied them.

Currently we have started our fourth unit "Golden Oldies" which involves the study of Ancient Greece. We have already studied the history and construction of the Parthenon and then we visited the Acropolis and Ancient Agora to actually see how the Ancient Greeks lived.

Students are now working on debate speeches- "Life in Athens was more advanced than life in Sparta". Each group is gathering information about life in their city-state and will begin developing their arguments.

Irene Katsiotis

Grade 5: February was a short, snowy month, but 5th graders have been kept quite busy!

Our current and fourth unit of inquiry this year is under the theme **Where We Are in Time and Place**. This unit focuses on Social Studies and the central idea is **People migrate for a variety of reasons**. Through brainstorming activities, discussions, and critical thinking, the children were able to decipher the reasons why people had to emigrate from their own countries. With this in mind, the children had to empathize with these immigrants by choosing ten special items that they would carry with them if they had to emigrate. Come and gaze at the trunks they designed for their journey and read why they chose them.

One reading group has finished the novel *From Anna* about a family who emigrated from Germany to Canada during the Great Depression. Another reading group is currently reading *Katarina* which is set in Slovakia at the time of World War II. They will be focusing on and researching about events which occurred at that time.

In math, we are continuously reviewing our multiplication and division facts during our mental math time. We have also been exploring geometric shapes and finding the area and perimeter using formulas and non-conventional methods.

5th graders have been working hard all year on the twelve attitudes and how to incorporate them into their daily lives both at home and at school. Do come and look at how cooperatively and respectfully they have been acting!

Pamela Tagas