

February 3, 2012

Third and Fourth Grade Friday Letter

Dear Third and Fourth Grade Parents,

We have been making a lot of progress on our Painting the Sky writing project. So far, students have created 4 watercolor paintings depicting various times of day. They have also completed rough drafts of their descriptive paragraphs about each painting. Next week, we will begin the editing process and work on typing their work into the computers. It's a lot of work being a writing/illustrator! Although our writing project has been our main focus during the past few weeks, we have continued to progress through our American History unit. We have started to read *Liberty or Death: The American Revolution 1763-1783* by Betsy Maestro.

Third grade students have been exploring perimeter and area in math. Students used geoboards to create squares and rectangles with given perimeters, used pattern blocks to determine the area of given shapes, and found the perimeter of triangles made out of straws and twists ties. While using pieces of square paper to determine the area of their desks, students had the realization that they didn't need to cover the entire desk with squares. Once they knew the amount of squares on each side they could just multiply! It was an exciting breakthrough.

Fourth grade students have been working with decimals in math this week. We focused on rounding decimals to the nearest tenth and hundredth. We also started to add and subtract numbers with decimals. In order to practice adding and subtracting real-life numbers with decimals, students placed pretend orders from The Sweet Life menus. Students practiced adding up order totals and then subtracting (on paper) to figure out how much change was due. We had a lot of fun ordering lattes and PuPu platters while practicing math too.

Our exploration of sounds continues to capture students attention. Through experimentation with objects such as plastic bottles, wooden sticks, strings and water, students discovered three methods for producing musical sounds- hitting, plucking and blowing- and related these methods to the ways that musicians play percussion, string, and winged instruments.

Experiential Education News!

I am excited to announce some initial details of our spring experiential trip. We will be traveling to Santa Fe, New Mexico from May 8-11. We will make stops in Durango and Pagosa Springs as well. Santa Fe, being the second oldest city in the U.S. and an art mecca, has a plethora of offerings to support our humanities curriculum, which focuses on American history this year. In the upcoming weeks, I will be sending home additional information such as a detailed itinerary, information on accommodations, and other trip specifics. For now, mark your calendars with our pre-trip meeting set for Wednesday, March 28th at 3:15. This will be the third time that the Mountain School has done a 3/4 trip to Santa Fe and it should be wonderful!

Best,

Caitlin Buttor-Foederl

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Spanish

Hola Familias,

This week in Spanish, we used our knowledge of **Los Partes del Cuerpo** to learn the 5 senses in Spanish. The students were challenged to describe the sense and learn the "YO" form of each verb. We also began to look at the verb "**Tener**" (to have). The students were asked to tell a partner how many of a particular body part they have as well as discuss the sense associated with the part. We also began a mini unit on **Los Emociones** (the emotions). Students were asked to act out a particular script according to the emotion they drew out of a hat. It made for an exciting, interesting, and of course, comical lesson. Next week, we will continue to use our **Los Partes del Cuerpo** vocabulary as we move on to **La Ropa** (clothing). Have a great weekend!

Hasta Luego,
Adios,
Sra. Lacey

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Art

This week, the third and fourth graders:

- Viewed a presentation on the history of architecture.
- Learned how to make a small house from one sheet of paper.
- Compared and contrasted the architecture of Telluride with the adobe buildings of Santa Fe in preparation for their spring experiential trip.
- Began designing their own adobe style houses.

Architectural styles, building techniques, and famous architects were discussed.

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Music

KidSpeak

TMS students offer their view on their RRA experience:

"I like that it is a good bonding experience with your friends."

"I like that you only help us with the stuff that we need you to."

"You let us choose our instruments and our songs and you make it a free place."

"My favorite part is learning how to play the instruments and watching the song come together."

"I like how you allow us to have some space to figure things out on our own so as we get older you're teaching us to be responsible."

When asked where she learned the complicated keyboard part to her song, Kelly replied, *"On my mom's phone, on the Internet."*

Seek Mystery, Not Answers!!

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