
The Tidewater Times

Volume 18 Issue 4

February 2004

Cold Weather but Friends have Warm Hearts Happy Valentine's Day to All!

The Calendar:

Feb. 5 K – Cloverbuds

Feb. 11 K – Bookmobile

Feb. 11: **Jump Rope for Heart** at the Mt. Hope Community Center **for all grades**. Please plan to join us for the exercise and fun! Permission slips will be sent home soon. The activity will be in the morning.

Feb. 13 – PK: Our **Valentine's Tea Party** will be in Latin America. Parents are invited to join us at 11:00 a.m.

Feb. 19 K- Kennedy Center

Feb. 25 K - Bookmobile

A Change in Our Calendar:

Our school calendar has 4 days "built-in" for inclement weather. We have used them all now. Our plan was to add days as needed at the end of the year, however, given that by the end of January we had exhausted our built-in supply, caution is needed as we look to the months ahead. For this reason, we will not be having a President's Weekend Holiday. **School will be held on both days: February 13th and 16th.** We have used those days in the past to

provide a break in the winter for the children and staff however we have certainly just had that! We regret if this creates a disappointment or inconvenience for anyone, *but* continuity is so important in education, especially in the elementary curriculum. Hopefully, the addition will help so that more days do not have to be added later in the school year.

Special Thanks:

To Christine Harding for writing our news release.

To Khiem Nguyen for volunteering to inspect the playground equipment for safety.

To the Abbotts and the Esch Families for taking down the old swing set and placing the beams as a barrier between the play yard and the woods.

To the Families who served so graciously as our greeters for our Open House.

To the Families who provided such wonderful treats for our Open House.

To Sophie for the wonderful additions to our library in honor of her birthday!

To Sophie for the poster, cookie cutter and activity book for our Egypt souvenir box

To Karen Nega for the moveable alphabet objects + math game

To Rose Neal for weekly Yoga + Brain Gym instructions

To Carol Frederick for fabric

To Drivers for the Kennedy Center Field trip: Jonathan Fears, Laura Amin, Lynne Evans-Reister, Pat Koelbel and Celia Anderson

To all our Parent drivers to the performance of Mike Mulligan.

Playground is coming!

Our new slides, swing set and large sand area for digging will be arriving once the weather starts cooperating. This is such good news for the children. We will need help with the mulching after the equipment is installed by Play World Systems. Our excavation work will be done by the Graner Company. Please keep your eyes posted for the request to help with mulch spreading. It is hard work but the time together with one another makes the task so much smaller and so much fun!

STEP: Our group continues to meet on Thursdays. We have now completed session 3, examining ways that we encourage our children and one another. There are a few books left for purchase. If you were not able to join us but would like to purchase books, see Nancy. The books make wonderful gifts to parents of young children.

Very Wonderful News! Lauren, Lily and Mike welcomed home Dylan last Wednesday following his discharge from the rehab center at Hopkins. He will continue to receive speech, physical and occupational therapy each week as he continues to make progress. We all join in this celebration of the miracle of Dylan's smile, his sweet voice and his joyful humor! Please continue to keep this special child in your prayers.

PK News:

It seems impossible that Christmas and Hanukkah were our holiday celebrations just one month ago. The joy and love from the children was overwhelming. Nancy and Cecelia once again want to thank the families for the very thoughtful and generous expressions of love. The children honor us every day more than we deserve. Their smiles and trust affirm our call to this place. Our young friends came back to school with such joy and enthusiasm. The pause to refresh and be with family is always a blessing. AND the time to rejoin with PK is also a blessing. The children have enjoyed snow paintings, snow gourds, and many new lessons. Despite the cold chill outside of the windows, the room is more like a hive in summer: Busy little bees collecting new bits of material for their future. It is so good.



Our lessons in our circle have been directed toward understanding safety and sharing respect for our families. We have learned that "Hide and Seek" is a game which means that we share the rules ***before*** the game begins. We do not hide from a family member, teacher, or friend unless we have asked them to participate in the game. Otherwise, they do not know we are hiding, sometimes nearby and that can frighten us. Stories such as Goldilocks help children understand that mothers and fathers provide guidance with boundaries because they love their children and do not want them to get hurt. We have also had lessons about staying with parents in stores and other public places. Our focus has been on what the children need to do to be safe, which means staying with parents. The world presents major challenges today for parents and children. Our lessons were not to frighten the children but to encourage them to respect and understand ***their*** responsibility in listening and being near their guardians. Emphasis was placed on how special they are and how we all long to keep them safe in their play and their work.

Lessons have also begun toward our world tour. We have learned that people around the world (and even in our classroom!) are all different in appearance. Not one person in our class looks like anyone else in our class! We

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discovered that our eyes are different shapes and colors and so are our noses! Our hair not only comes in a variety of colors but textures with curls and straight lines! Some of us are taller than others. We discovered that each one of us is just right the way we are! As we examine pictures from around the world, we realize that not only physical appearances are different but so are clothing, hair styles, homes, transportation, games and more. However, we will see that regardless of where we are in the world, children are born into families with mothers and fathers who adore them, who laugh with them, who play with them, who feed them, and who love them just like our families here. Our lessons will include geography concepts of land and water formations; animals; food; and art. Art and food are wonderful ways to explore foreign cultures with children for they are not abstract principles. They become real as we eat new foods and experience new media for self expression.

Our World Tour will begin in February and last through the end of March. We have set some special dates and hope that you will be able to join us.

Our Valentine's Tea Party will be in Latin America on February 13th.

And we will have a special Tidewater Museum Tea in March; this date will be set soon.

Kindergarten:

Happy New Year to all our friends and family! We are happy to be back in the classroom, back to our routine and back working with our friends.

We continue to work diligently each day on our language and reading skills. We're enjoying reading to each other, sounding out longer words with the moveable alphabet and writing them with

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ease. It's fun to paint at the easel and then write stories to go with our art work. Friends are getting to be experts with the decimal cards and number chains. Can you believe we have classmates that can complete the chains counting backwards?

Have you heard about Flat Stanley?—a young boy who was flattened by a bulletin board and then makes the best of a bad situation by mailing himself to a friend in California. We decided we would like to try taking an adventure, too. We've made paper tracings of ourselves, folded them up and sent them off to friends and family. We're anxiously waiting to get letters back about our adventures.

We're learning how to read maps and the globe. We just may want to try a trip around the world. We're finding a lot of interesting places we'd like to learn more about.

You should have heard us tooting the brass instruments after the Bravo Brass! Concert at the Kennedy Center. It's not as easy as it looks! We listened to members of the National Symphony Brass Quintet play Bach fugues, Dixieland and a Sousa march as they demonstrated their various brass instruments. They started the concert by playing Row, Row, Row your Boat with conch shells, one of the first brass instruments.



We continue to monitor our weather by consulting our weather stick. We are finding that even though the weather stick is pointing up (good weather) it doesn't mean that it is warm. We have discovered that if you keep running, you stay warmer outside even on COLD days.

Clover Buds - Our group enjoyed hearing about safety from a member of the Capitol Police Force. When the officer took off her police hat & jacket, we recognized her—it was Jocelyn's mom, Ms. Sheila! She came to our meeting in her work uniform and gear. She talked to us about safety--practicing how to give name, phone number or address in case of an emergency; how to seek help if lost; establishing "family rules" for talking to strangers, and having a "secret family word" to use if asked to go with an unfamiliar person. The children had opportunities to ask questions and role play emergency situations. It was a very valuable meeting for both the children and parents.

Kdg. Reminder: Please send in an additional 4 rolls of film for our World Tour Adventures as well as photos of our classroom work.

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Wanted: Chick-Fil-A's freebie

This fast-food restaurant is giving away regional USA mini-fandex cards with each children's meal. We would love to have a complete set for our classroom.

Lower Elementary:

Even though it is cold outside, winter is my favorite time of year in school. The children are so focused on their work, into their routines and excited about learning at this halfway point in the year.

We have been very busy learning about words this month. The students have been learning about antonyms, synonyms, prefixes, suffixes, contractions, compound words, ABC order, and abbreviations. We are filling a wall in the classroom with compound words. Some of the many contributions are as follows: fireball (Dawson), baseball (Caylyn), sunflower (Megan), moonlight (Ian). Anthony and Thomas have brought in lists of words from home several times. Megan discovered that the book she is reading has many contractions in it! It is fun to see such excitement generated.



We are continuing our second year spelling bees. Some of the first year students have asked to participate which is fine. The spelling bee does remain optional for first year students. Please leave this decision up to your child. The spelling bee is very low key, but can be intimidating to some children.



We have been learning about the Chinese New Year. The Chinese New Year took place on Thursday the 22nd. It is the year of the monkey. Ms. Lil (Kelsey's and Shelby's grandmother) came in to tell LE and UE about the Chinese New Year. We learned that in China, people welcome the New Year with happiness and good thoughts. It is a time to share food such as chicken and noodles with family members. It is traditional to clean your house as long as you remember to put all of your sweeping into a corner until after the New Year. It is a custom to wear red on New Year's Day. Celebrations include dragon dances, parades, and firecrackers. Children are given sweets or money to buy sweets and it is important that children do not cry on New Years Day. Ms. Lil, Kelsey and Shelby brought in gift bags for each child which included money for sweets, fortune cookies,

an orange, a piece of candy, and a Chinese zodiac word search.

Ms. Charlotte read the children a book about New Year's Day celebrations and the children enjoyed cooking and eating Chinese food during our celebration. The children have also been learning about the Chinese Zodiac.

LE goes outside **every** day. Please make sure your children have appropriate clothing. I feel that it is important at this age that children get daily outdoor exercise. We will continue to go outside throughout the winter unless it is dangerously cold.

Sparky made a special request that we study the great artist Degas this year. Degas will be the subject of our art history lesson this month (LE and UE).

The LE has been busy working with Ms. Tracey on this year's musical, *The Wack-a-do Zoo*. It will be a show you won't want to miss.

Our next unit of study in LE will be Early Man. We will be learning about the fundamental needs of humans and how language and math evolved.

This is an exciting time of year for me as the LE teacher. As contracts come in for next year, I get to see who will be joining us in elementary from the kindergarten class. Please know that Ms. Suzanne and I are available for any questions or concerns you may have relating to your child's transition. I hope that you will read our sections in the Tidewater Times to find out what is happening in Elementary this year.

I would like to thank Ms. Lil for coming in to share her Chinese heritage with the children. It was wonderful!

Thanks also to Liz Novack and Sandy Horseman (as well as

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the parent helpers) for their great job with 4-H. You are so appreciated!

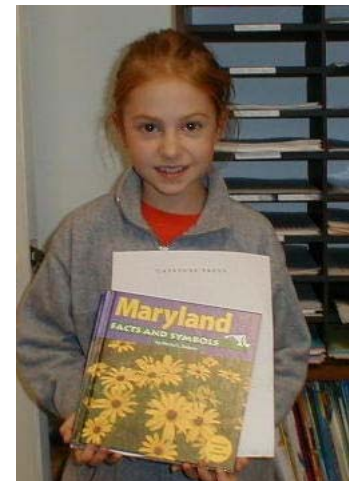
Thanks also to Tyler for donating his old video tapes to sell in order to benefit UNICEF.

I would also like to thank Marina and her family for taking such good care of Petunia over the holiday break. She came back healthy, happy, and well rested.

Ms. Megan

Upper Elementary:

Marta and her fellow students have received credit for their excellent proofreading skills. Recently, they discovered in their Maryland text, that our state was placed beside the Pacific Ocean instead of the Atlantic. Marta wrote a letter to the publisher, the error was corrected, and a new text was published. Congratulations to our upper elementary!



Upper Elementary continues to wait with great excitement for the birth of Lois's baby. Who's Lois? Lois is the mother goat who is carrying Upper Elementary's baby goat. We will keep you posted on this special event.