



CONCORD NEWS

Cass School District #63

Volume III—Issue III

December 2006

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S CORNER...



No matter how you celebrate the winter holiday, thoughts of the year-long gifts of your partnership remain a constant. It also brings us that special time of the year for reflecting upon the daily gifts we have in one another and in your children. On behalf of administration and staff we extend a most genuine holiday wish for you and loved ones. May 2007 bring you a renewed spirit, peace, health and treasured memories.

As we complete 2006, we have been in the 'hustle bustle' of keeping the focus on teaching and learning! Parent-teacher conferences were well-attended and your feedback from the evaluation forms suggest your satisfaction with the programming and progress of your children. We appreciate your feedback and use it as a forum for further school improvement.

To date, we have not received the parent copies of the ISAT/IMAGE individual profiles from last Spring's administration date. The Illinois State Board of Education has indicated that these reports should be available late December/January. We apologize for the delay but it is beyond our control. As soon as the reports become available you will receive notification. Thank you for your patience.

During our November Institute, the staff addressed strategic planning relative to our school improvement goals. As part of that staff development, teams are working on updates to web pages so that you, as parents, can access to learn more about the teams and/or individual classroom. This will be part of our continuous efforts to increase communication resources. We also focused on the importance of establishing common language as it relates to core vocabulary and strategies. For purposes of identifying those commonalities, we are in the process of establishing "WOW" words and phrases that support the Illinois Standards and cross-articulation from one grade level to the next. Part of the Institute provided a summary of the "READ WITH ME" grant that has been presented to parents with future dates to be determined. Our Emergency Management Plan is also being reviewed to ensure that everyone understands building/district policies, procedures, and strategies.

May your holidays be special and magical, Ms. Linda Farley (Concord Principal)



EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT! MRS. JANET MILLER WINS "TEACHER OF THE YEAR" AWARD!!!!

Santa must be checking his list! It is with great respect and celebration that we highlight the news that our own Mrs. Janet Miller, first grade teacher, has received the Wal-Mart Teacher of the Year Award! This award program is one of the largest teacher recognition organizations in the country. Since its inception in 1995, it has recognized more than 25,000 teachers in the U.S. and Puerto Rico and contributed more than \$19 million to those schools. We are SO very proud and honored to have Mrs. Miller receive this recognition. She will be presented with her achievement at the December 21 Cass District #63 School Board meeting. As humble as a professional as Mrs. Miller is, she has one wish: if the parent or student that submitted her name would contact her, it would give her such immense pleasure to thank you personally!!!

Special points of interest:

- 12/19—Jr. Chorus Assembly 9:00 a.m.
- 12/19 –Board Mtg. 7:30 p.m.
- 12/20-Winter Choral Concert Cass Jr. High 7:30 p.m.
- 12/21-FS Holiday Parties
- 12/22-EC/K-4 Holiday Parties
- 12/22 -1/5-Winter Break
- 1/8-CLASSES RESUME
- 1/10-last day for 3rd quarter online lunch orders
- 1/10-Journey to READtopia assembly
- 1/15-NO SCHOOL Martin Luther King's Birthday
- 1/19-End of second marking period
- 1/19-Early Dismissal Day at 1:00 p.m.
- 1/22-1/26 Concord Book Fair
- 1/25-Second grade music program 1:40/7:30 p.m.
- 1/26-Progress reports issued

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FROM CONCORD'S SCHOOL COUNSELOR, MRS. JUNE SCOTT...

This is such a special time of year. Though it is a very busy time, I feel it is important for each of us to take time to reflect upon and appreciate what we have. Our world is unsettled, but we are fortunate to be in a country with many opportunities and freedoms. We are free to go to the schools of our choice, free to choose careers that inspire us. It is the time to take inventory of our blessings. It is a time for family and friends. It is a time of sharing and giving. It is time to appreciate all we have. Near the top of my list of blessings that I appreciate is the ability to read and have access to many books. These books allow me to explore other parts of the world and its people, to learn about people of the past who have contributed to society, and to think about new ideas.

In one of my favorite books, "Gifts I'd Like to Give to You," edited by Douglas Pagels, I rediscovered a poem that I had tucked between its covers. This poem holds a great deal of meaning for me. It is a little gift to you and your families.

"Thoughts of Happiness" by Wilferd A. Peterson

You can't pursue happiness and catch it. Happiness comes upon you unaware while you are helping others.

Happiness is like perfume-you can't spray it on others without getting some on yourself.

Happiness does not depend upon a full pocketbook, but upon a mind full of rich thoughts and a heart full of rich emotions.

Happiness does not depend upon what happens outside of you but on what happens inside of you; it is measured by the spirit in which you meet the problems of life.

Happiness doesn't come from doing well what we like to do but from liking what we have to do.

Happiness grows out of harmonious relationships with others, based on attitudes of good will, tolerance, understanding and love.

Happiness is found in the little things, a baby's smile, a letter from a friend, the song of a bird, a light in the window,

Perhaps you would like to share these thoughts about happiness with your family and then add you own.

As Marcus Aurelius said, "Very little is needed to make a happy life. It is all within yourself, in your way of thinking."

In this busy, busy fun time of the year, remember to enjoy your family even if some of the "to do list" does not get done. Parents who live well, laugh often, and love much with their children have discovered the keys to success. May all your hopes and dreams come true at this special and magical time of the year.

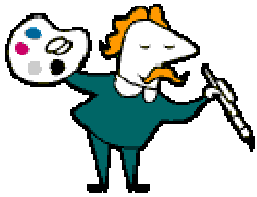
Mrs. June Scott, Concord Counselor

Our Student council representatives act as busy elves in loading the gifts for "Toys for Joy" delivery! Special thanks to ALL that made this special service project so successful!





“MEET THE MASTERS” UPDATE FROM ART TEACHER, MS. SCHALLY



Our “Meet the Masters” classes in November enjoyed learning about the Post-Impressionist French painter, Paul Gaughin. The boys and girls are particularly interested in his use of bold unrealistic colors. His paintings of tropical islands will be carried over to abstract student oil pastels of Tahitian landscapes.

In October, the students found that Rembrandt’s windmill landscapes really do exist. Some believed that the ‘old-fashioned’ windmills were only found at miniature golf courses!

Our third and fourth grade art classes are spending more time this year with the art of Egypt and King Tut. Many have already enjoyed a visit to the special exhibit at the Field Museum of natural History in Chicago. The special King Tut display will be there until January 1, 2007. Other artists we will be learning about may include Edgar Degas, Faith Ringgold, Pierre Renoir and Joan Miro.

Our creative elves in third grade combined their cooperative group dynamics and creativity to design wonderful gingerbread houses! It is thoroughly delightful to witness the talents these budding ‘architects!’



P.E. CUPS OF HOLIDAY CHEER!!!

No eggnog please! What is required for the physical education activity of cup stacking is concentration, motor planning, eye-hand coordination, and speed. The students in first through fourth grades are learning and mastering their *Speed Stack* skills. Each student competes against his/her individual time. All improvement is cele-

F.A.R. (Fitness At Recess)

Hall of Fame Record is

145 MILES!

brated! Of course, some students are determined to become the new Concord record holder by berating the time of 4.65 seconds. Stay tuned...

While we are on the subject of ‘personal best,’ there are fitness conscious students who are walking, jogging, or running laps at recess. Ask your child how many miles he/she has completed so F.A.R. this year!!!

Wishing everyone a healthy and happy 2007,

Mrs. Voss, Concord Physical Education Teacher

JOURNEY TO READTOPIA COMES TO CONCORD IN JANUARY 2007!

As part of our school improvement efforts and as a preliminary launch to our BOOKS ALIVE theme, the students will participate in a highly recommended assembly entitled ‘*Journey to READTOPIA*’ on January 10, 2007. It is one of the very few assemblies in Chicagoland that addresses the reading portion of the ISAT with a focus on exploring techniques that engage ALL students to learn about the joys of reading. The assembly focuses on the following premise:

Ruby has a reading test coming up and she’s unhappy because she doesn’t like the book and believes she is poor at reading.

On her way home from school she finds a mysterious leather book. Upon opening the book she is invited on a “Journey to READTOPIA,” a magical place where reading comes to life! Along the journey other characters evolve and they all learn about the ‘4 Golden Rules of Reading: asking questions, forming connections, creating mental pictures, and making inferences.

This assembly is made possible through the support of our generous Parent Teacher Club and is part of our BOOKS ALIVE celebration of literacy. We look forward to a magical journey of active learning and enhanced literacy learning opportunities!

*Dear Santa,
Please be sure to fill all of
our Concord families
hearts and dreams come
true with special memories!*



BRRRRR...It's that time of the year again! As Mother Nature weaves her spell, may we ask you to help us keep your children snugly warm and healthy! Please follow these guidelines for winter fashion!

Children need to have gloves, hats, boots, coats, etc. in order to go outside during the recess periods. For our snowbound adventures, boots and preferably snow pants are fashion statements in order to play in the snow! Otherwise choices at recess are limited to the blacktop.

- We call the weather station to determine the wind-chill factor. If the wind-chill factor and/or the temperature is below 20 degrees, the children do NOT go outside. Obviously if it is sleeting, extremely windy, snowing excessively, or simply too wet/messy, indoor recess is determined.
- Please remind the children that snow is played with rather than to eat! Snowballs or ice ball throwing is NOT allowed for safety reasons.
- Please remind the children about appropriate bus behavior at all times but especially during inclement weather.
- If school is closed due to weather the District uses our calling system, EXPEDITE, to inform you. That is why it is extremely important to have a current phone number. If you have privacy manager, you will receive a phone call from one of our staff. In addition to this system, you can access: www.emergencyclosings@tribune.com as well as the following radio and TV stations: WGN 720 AM, WBBM 780 AM, WBBM 780 AM, Channel 2,5,7,9, FOX, CLTV. We hope this information is valuable!



Please keep in mind the importance of school attendance when planning family trips. Our spring break (!) is March 26 – March 30. State testing in grades 3 & 4 is scheduled during the weeks of March 12-23.

SPOTLIGHT ON LITERACY!

Parents play a very important role in their children's literacy journey by setting an example for reading and by helping their children select books they enjoy.

How do you help your child find books that they like? One great parent resource is the Children's Choices booklist. This list has been published every year for over 30 years and is made up of books selected by children from all over the United States. Books cover a wide range of genres and styles and are grouped by reading levels:

- Beginning readers (ages 5-7)
- Young readers (ages 8-10)
- Advanced readers (ages 11-13)



The Children's Choices list is an extensive list prepared by a joint committee supported by the International Reading Association and the Children's Book Council. You can see all 97 titles from the 2006 list (and previous years) by downloading a PDF file at www.reading.org. (Search for Children's Choices.)

Happy Holidays!

Mrs. Pam Nosbisch & Ms. Joanne Riesgo, literacy specialists

Research supports that all important element of fostering literacy by reading to and with your child. If you are interested in learning about how you can engage your child in reading with early literacy strategies, why not consider expressing such interest to either Mrs. Jane York or Mrs. Pamela Worth, coordinators of the "Read With Me" grant! They eagerly look for their stockings to be filled with parent responses for availability to attend a parent workshop highlighting early literacy, pre-K through second grade!

You can email :

jyork@cassd63.org or pworth@cassd63.org.