

Principally Speaking

THE MISSION OF THE WHATELY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IS TO PREPARE OUR STUDENTS IN A SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TO BE CONFIDENT, RESPONSIBLE, LIFE-LONG LEARNERS.

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Goodbye! Welcome Back! & Thank You

Well, they say time flies when you are having fun! And the staff here at Whately Elementary sure have had fun with two of our staff members that are here as Long-Term Substitutes. Not only have we had fun, but we all had a chance to get to know two excellent educators who are also really nice people that fit right in to this community. Alas, it is time to say good-bye to both our Long-Term Subs, David Grout who covered our 6th Grade Classroom, and Jess Rigollaud who covered our Library/Media Center. Both Jess and David are dedicated and talented educators as well as fine people that added two smiling faces and positive attitudes to our staff. Mr. Grout's last day is Friday, January 27, and Ms. Rigollaud's last day is Friday February 3rd. We offer them a huge THANK YOU and wish all the best of luck, prosperity, and health! We'll miss you both!

On the Welcome Back Wagon we have our regular 6th Grade Teacher, Mrs. Laurie Gay, and our regular Library/Media Center Teacher Mrs. Paula King returning to us! Hooray! Both Mrs. Gay and Mrs. King gave birth to beautiful baby girls last summer who are doing very well. And while we are quite certain that leaving their babies at home and returning to work must be bittersweet for our teachers, they can rest assured that the Whately Family will welcome them back with open arms. Both staff and students have missed Laurie and Paula and it will be our pleasure to have them back with us! Mrs. Gay will be back on Monday, January 30th and Mrs. King will be back on Monday, February 6th.

As for more THANK YOU's, I have a couple of big "thank you's for our fantastic PTO. Besides the many other things that they do around fundraising and providing funds for our staff to buy supplies, our PTO is also very family and community oriented. Most recently, they hosted a great Movie Night here at the school for all families. In the recent past they also hosted a Halloween Party, a Fall Fun Day, and last Winter, a Winter Fun Day for families! Back in the financial realm, they also purchased a Color Photo Printer for the school so that we might more easily and less expensively document all the great things we do at our school AND a new Photo Club (in the works) will also benefit from that generous purchase. So... THANK YOU PTO!

DATE REMINDERS...

January

January 20 Report Cards Close
January 27 Report Cards sent home
January 30 Ugly Duckling Presentation @ 10:00

February

February 1. PTO Meeting @ 3:30
February 2 6th Grade Spaghetti Supper Mtg. @ 6:00
February 3 Jump Rope and Hoops for Life fundraiser
February 6 School Committee @ 7:00
February 8 School Council @ 3:30
February 14 Valentine's Day
February 20-24 School Vacation

Save the Date: March 4th – Pancake breakfast



Volunteer Services

Needed @ Whately for lunch/recess

Safety is always at the forefront here at Whately Elementary. The better we supervise our children, the safer they will be. Mr. C would love to have a few more sets of eyes helping out at our Lunch and Recess times.

We welcome any parents or grandparents who may be available during the week between 11:15 AM and 12:45 PM to call Mary, 665-7826, and set up a time to meet with Mr. C to discuss your interest in this important volunteer opportunity.

We also owe a big THANK YOU to our Out-of-School-Time Program (OOSTP) and its Director, Deb Lane, as well as our own Site Director, Dot Spadola and her assistant, Christine Belder. When the refrigerator in our nurse's office stopped working, the OOSTP used their funds to immediately purchase a new one for us. Now this is an important fridge, not because it holds food, but because it holds ice packs and

medicines that are important for keeping our students healthy and comfortable. The OOSTP is now doing some fundraising to help recoup the costs that they kindly covered for us! So, THANK YOU to the OOSTP and its great staff! Please look for the Out-of-School-Time Program's concession stand at upcoming basketball games and make a purchase so that we can thank you, too, for helping our school!

Best regards,
Mr. C., Principal

Reminder from the office:

Please be sure to date all notes you send to the school.

Lunch money:

If you use your own envelope, please be sure to indicate student's name.

Indoor recess:

Inclement weather sometimes necessitates indoor recess. Bingo is one of the activities offered. If you have any small toys, matchbox cars or children's books in excellent shape, we could use them as prizes.

FYI:

The Whately School Committee Meetings are broadcast live on Chanel 15 each month. The next meeting will be February 6th at 7:00 p.m.

Whately Elementary School Seriously Recycles!

Over the past two school years Whately Elementary School has made a focused and successful effort to be green and recycle more than we ever have. The proof is in the number of recycling totes we fill and the flatbed we need to get it all to the transfer station!

Our students and staff are the first line in making sure that recyclable material ends up in a recycling bin rather than in the trash. Then our 6th Graders, with help from their teacher Mr. Grout and from our custodian, Ralph Lovering, collect all the recycling in the building weekly and bring it out back to one of our many totes! I should also mention that during our lunch block the students sort through all of their lunch waste and recycle what can be recycled, including their milk cartons! All of their food waste is put into a compost tote and, at no expense to the school, is taken by the very generous Mr. Bill Obear of Bear Path Farm.

Speaking of generosity, the town works very cooperatively with us and a lot of credit goes to Ethan Dickinson, who transports our recycling, and Fran Fortino, who supports our efforts to keep this program working! BIG THANKS to you both!

So if you see any of our students around town, please thank them for helping to keep Whately green!

Pete Crisafulli, Whately Elementary Principal



Bullying Prevention

Children learn best when they feel safe, respected, and cared for. In our continuing effort to create a safe and positive learning environment, the staff at our school decided to re-launch a bullying prevention curriculum called the *Steps to Respect* program in grades 3-6. This program is designed to prevent bullying and promote responsible, respectful student behavior. We also provide a similar program, *Second Step*, for grades Pre-Kindergarten through 2nd.

Our school has developed an anti-bullying policy and specific procedures for responding to bullying reports. Copies of the policy are located:

- In the student handbook.
- In the office.
- In the classroom.

All staff members have received training to respond effectively to bullying problems. In addition, classroom teachers, the school counselor, and the Principal have been trained to provide more extensive help for students involved in bullying.

Students in grades 3-6 will participate in *Steps to Respect* lessons. They will learn:

- How to recognize, refuse, and report bullying when it happens to them or someone else.
- Friendship skills that reduce the risk of being bullied, including how to make friends, join group activities, and manage conflicts.
- Emotional skills, such as understanding the feelings of others and managing emotions.
- How to use positive values (responsibility, respect, and caring for others) as a guide for behavior.

Family involvement is an important part of creating and maintaining a safe and positive school environment.

If you have any questions or concerns about the *Steps to Respect* program, please feel free to contact Mr. C. Together, we can work to create a school that is safe and secure for all students.



Health Office

Hello Whately Elementary School Families,
Just a note to touch base about the students going outside during colder weather. Each day, we assess what the conditions are outdoors as to whether it is safe and appropriate to go outside. It is our best hope to get the **students** outside as it is always great to get fresh air. As a gauge, we often use 20 degrees as the cutoff, but decisions are always made also based on wind chill and the ice on the playground, keeping in mind that we will always bear on the side of caution and safety. Please remember that there are 3 monitors on the playground at recess for lunch. The morning and afternoon recesses are monitored by the classroom teachers and/or assistants. Your help is really appreciated to

make sure your student is sent in with appropriate clothing for outdoor play, to include hat/snow pants/gloves/scarf. On wet days it is great that students have another set of clothing to change in to in case theirs gets wet. We like to avoid calling home for clothes if possible.

Please note the weather chart that we have added as a guideline for safety in weather conditions. So, WHETHER THE WEATHER IS COLD OR WHETHER THE WEATHER IS HOT, WE WILL WHETHER THE WEATHER WHATEVER THE WEATHER, WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT!

Stay Warm,
Nurse Juli



News from Preschool...

The preschoolers have been learning about Arctic Animals and Animals in the winter. We have seen many wonderful clips on our smart board as we watched polar bears roll in the snow, care for their cubs, slide on ice and swim in the cold water. We've also seen snowshoe hares, winter fox, walrus and seals. We made polar bear faces and dictated some information we learned about them. Other winter projects such as snowmen mobiles are now hanging in our room and snowmen masks are ready for a song. We are in the process of making Animal in Winter booklets, too! We hope you have enjoyed the newly fallen snow since we've done our "famous SNOWDANCE"! We have enjoyed filling our water table with snow and colored icebergs. Plastic arctic animals lounge on them trying to hide from the polar bears. We love winter in preschool!

Susan, Nancy & Sally



NEWS FROM KINDERGARTEN...

In kindergarten we continue to have our literacy time every morning and we work in small reading groups at each child's "point of need". That means that each child is working at a level that is right for her or him, and all children feel excited and successful about their reading and writing. We are working on sounding out and blending small words, such as: hat, dad, pig, jet, cat. One way we practice is to hop out the sounds on alphabet carpet squares. In writing we have started writing our own books.

The class is enjoying listening to books about winter and especially enjoying several different versions of The Mitten. In science we are also learning about things in the sky and day and night. In math we have been working on our Measuring and Counting Unit. We are learning how to measure and compare things in the classroom, including our feet.

Kindergarten is definitely enjoying the snow during recess. Thank you for sending your child prepared for the snow (coat, snow pants, mittens/gloves, hat, and boots). We always go out unless it's bitterly cold or too icy as it was last week.



In February we will explore the many ways that we can keep our bodies healthy. We will discuss the importance of exercise, cleanliness, and good nutrition. For math we will start the Investigations Unit, Make a Shape, Build a Block. The focus is on two and three dimensional geometry. In social studies we will learn about President's Day. The class is looking forward to celebrating the 100th day of school and on February 14, Valentine's Day, we will have a Friendship Day celebration. If you would like to send in Valentine cards, please send enough for each child. There are 15 children in our class. We will send home a class list as we get closer to the date.

Ms. Vicki Sittig



NEWS FROM FIRST GRADE...

What a great holiday craft workshop we had on our last day of school in December! A big "THANK YOU" to all the parents and Mr. C. who were able to come and help out! With both Christmas and Hanukkah being celebrated in the month of December we took time to investigate both of these holidays. We read some wonderful stories such as Herschel and the Hanukkah Goblins, The Magic Dreidels, and Light the Lights. The first graders loved looking at the Hebrew alphabet and comparing it to our own alphabet! We even tried writing the word dog in Hebrew.

We had to start writing on the right and go left (it's backwards for us). We also learned how to play dreidel. By playing the dreidel game we learned an important math concept: how to divide a group of coins in half. We learned about even and odd numbers and discovered that even numbers can be evenly divided in half but odd numbers cannot! We also

learned the correct form to use in writing a letter (date, greeting, body, closing and signature) when we wrote our letters to Santa. We also learned the correct way to address an envelope. After the holidays we then wrote a thank you letter to Santa.



We started the month of January by learning about a famous African American man named Martin Luther King, Jr. The first graders learned that he helped to change unfair laws in this country so that black people could go to the same schools, restaurants, hotels, etc. as white people. They learned that this was known as segregation. We read many books that told us Dr. King gave speeches and showed people how to change laws in peaceful ways. The first graders felt very strongly that the laws back then were very unfair and definitely needed to be changed. They learned that Dr. King was fighting for equality. After watching and listening to Dr. King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech, the first graders were inspired to write their own dreams and wishes for the world today. You can view them on the bulletin board outside of our first grade classroom.

We have started our weekly spelling words (I spoke about them at our November conference and showed you a sample). Each week we explore a different word family, (**at, in, ip, et, all, ar, ill ...**). The spelling words, which range in difficulty, are chosen by each first grader, from the weekly word family list and from their personal words to learn list. Every Monday they choose a total of 6 words (4 from the word family list and 2 from the personal high frequency word list) and on Friday they have their own individual spelling test. Any words from their personal words to learn list (sight words) that they get wrong are carried over to the following week for extra practice. So, when you look at the 6 words on the list they bring home on Monday, the first 4 are word family picks and the last 2 are from their personal assessment list. It's only the last 2 words that will ever be carried over to the next week if they were spelled wrong. Many children like to challenge themselves with some hard words from our word family list. If, during the week, they find any words that are just too difficult for them, it's okay to let me know and I will help them choose some different words. Please hang the spelling word list that comes home on Monday some place visible (refrigerator) so that you will remember to practice them all week. If you have magnetic letters on your refrigerator that is a great way to practice the words. If you have a dry erase board at home that is also another great way to practice. Breaking longer words into syllables or finding a part in a word that can help, such as trying to remember that the word **when** has a silent **h**, you can try a little trick like it's **hen** with an **w** in front of it. Part of spelling a word correctly is visually checking it (how many times have you had to write down a word to confirm its correct spelling)? Another practice method is for you to write down the word incorrectly and have your child find the part that's wrong and fix it; however, you don't want to make it too difficult. If **was** is a difficult word you could write **wus** and have them fix it.

In math we have been keeping up practice with addition and subtraction with and without a number line. We've also worked on adding 3 numbers together. The first graders learned the concepts and the corresponding symbols for greater than, less than and equal to. We have also taken a more in-depth look at those even and odd numbers we learned about back in December when we played Dreidel. Ms.Collette



NEWS FROM SECOND GRADE...

In December, the second graders "packed their suitcases, and took a trip" to learn about how holidays are celebrated in America, Mexico, Brazil, Liberia, Japan, Australia, Antarctica, and Germany. We watched animated PowerPoints about each country, focused our writing on what we learned, created a scrapbook, and read books that told us more about the traditions celebrated. The children enjoyed making "fireworks" to represent the fireworks that are set off in Brazil and Liberia. Some of the facts that we

thought were interesting were that in Mexico they break a piñata at Christmas time, the Christmas tree tradition was first celebrated in Germany, and that Santa uses a surf board to get from place to place in Australia, as Christmas takes place during their summertime! Did you know that people do not live permanently in Antarctica? It is as cold as -150 degrees in the wintertime, and there are six months of darkness! Seals, humpback whales, penguins, gulls, cormorants, albatross, and other animals inhabit Antarctica, but the only humans there are scientists and explorers. Therefore, the holiday celebrated is determined by those people who are briefly visiting at the time!



In Math, we have learned how to identify all of the coins and bills by name and value. We used coins to show amounts and count up, and played an exciting money review game on the SmartBoard. The students enjoyed throwing a beanbag at the SmartBoard to select which question would be answered. In January, the second graders began learning multiple strategies to add two and three digit numbers, with and without regrouping. We have added by estimating, using mental math, and using base ten blocks and cubes to regroup from the ones to the tens place. We have been very fortunate to have Mr. and Mrs. Neal (Paige's grandparents) volunteer in our classroom each Wednesday to work with small groups of students to review and have fun with money concepts! Thank you Mr. and Mrs. Neal!



Recently, Mrs. Ruth Fairman volunteered her time in our classroom and shared some of her gardening and agriculture expertise with us! Mrs. Fairman, and "Miss Ladybug" (the friendly puppet) taught us the importance ladybugs play in our gardens. The students learned that ladybugs eat aphids, a bug that can cause harm to plants. Mrs. Fairman helped the students to create their own ladybug craft. In addition, she brought us two Amaryllis plants to take care of. An Amaryllis is a tropical plant that is grown inside. Groups of students will be sharing the responsibilities to water, rotate, and measure the growth of the plants. Thank you Mrs. Fairman!

In our Second Step lessons, we have been discussing ways to be respectful learners and students. We have also been learning ways to use self-talk and focus our concentration on listening. We have also been discussing well-known leaders that have made a positive impact. In studying the huge impact Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. has had on our lives, the students wrote their own dreams or wishes to make the world a better place. Finally, we have been discussing the types of things that good writers do. We have practiced emulating the work of some great authors. In December, we read *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*, and in January, *The Tale of Despereaux*, both by Kate DiCamillo. By studying two works from the same author, we have been able to compare and contrast the writing in each book and identify examples of great writing.

Lacy Pittelli



News from Third Grade..

Happy 2012! It's hard to believe that we have been back in school for a month, following our holiday break. I hope that you were all able to spend some quality time with family and friends, during our time off from school.

During the month of December, the third graders learned about the 13 colonies and how the colonists celebrated Christmas. Did you know that Christmas was not allowed to be celebrated in Massachusetts until well into the 1700's? The Pilgrims and the Puritans thought that "merry-making" was a dishonorable thing to do. We have the colonists from Virginia to thank for helping to establish the holiday traditions that we know and celebrate today.

The third graders rolled up their sleeves and mixed up a batter for fresh ginger cake. (This included the shredding of the fresh ginger root!) This cake was a traditional one, commonly served for the holiday season during the colonial period. Needless to say, the cake was a big success in third grade! In addition, we published our first classroom book entitled, The Third Grade Holiday Scrapbook. Each third grader was given his/her own page to write about how their family celebrates the holidays. This book turned out to be quite interesting and unique!

The month of January has allowed the third graders to become better at learning their multiplication facts. I encourage you to maintain the use of flash cards at home. You'd be surprised at how much 10 extra minutes a day can help in achieving mastery! We have been using flash cards each day in class, to help us learn the product and factors in each multiplication fact. We've also had fun playing different cooperative games and using interactive white board activities to help with multiplication. We've been analyzing word problems by looking at "what we know" and "what we need to find out." Some word problems can be tricky, by giving us too little or too much information. This can be hard work, but the third graders continue to make a good effort in this subject! During our guided reading groups, we have been reading about significant historical figures that played a part in the Revolutionary War. Ask your third graders about Deborah Sampson, Betsy Ross, and Paul Revere. We've also been working on answering questions in complete sentences and using details from the story. This has tied in nicely with our unit of study on Massachusetts. We've been concentrating on Boston and the many events that took place there leading up to the Revolutionary War. Recently, the third graders were split into 2 different groups, the Loyalists and the Patriots, to answer the question: How would you feel if you knew the colonies were going to war with England? The Loyalists were colonists who wanted to remain under British rule. The Patriots were colonists who wanted to break away from Britain and gain



their independence. Surprisingly, both sides felt much the same way, for different reasons. Most felt that they would be happy, sad, scared, and brave!

The third graders did a fantastic job on their first book reports! Each student chose a fictional piece of genre to read and write about. We added some art work to each report, then the students had an opportunity to share them with their classmates. They are now hanging up in the classroom and are a very special part of our decor. We recently created some snow globe winter scenes as inspiration for writing a cinquain poem. A cinquain is a 5 lined poem that uses adjectives, verbs, and synonyms. This is the first time the third graders have had a chance to use the computers to type up their final drafts. Mrs. Rigollaud has been teaching them how to use different fonts when typing in a Word document, during our technology time. (Thank you, Mrs. Rigollaud!) Please check out our published work on the hallway bulletin board outside our classroom.

Jennifer Kellogg



NEWS FROM FOURTH GRADE...

Winter has finally arrived! We like to play outside in 4th grade. Please make sure that your child comes to school with winter clothing so he/she can play outside each day. We are working hard when we come back inside! Please see the weekly newsletter on the front of your child's Friday folder for up to date details about each week! It is almost time for the Pancake Breakfast! The 4th grade holds the basket raffle at this event to fund-raise for our upcoming trip to the Roger Williams Zoo. More information about how you can help out will be coming soon. Stay warm!

Mrs. Apanell



NEWS FROM FIFTH GRADE...

The New Year started off with writing our New Year's Resolutions. We have them displayed in our classroom as a daily reminder to "stop chewing my fingernails", "to practice the piano at least 10 minutes every day", "to watch less TV and play more in my room", to name just a few. This month in word study we focused on reviewing past units, r-controlled vowels (disappear, enormous, pierce), vowel diphthongs: oi, oy, ou, and ow (amount, allowance, moisture, decoy) and prefixes: pre-, re-, post-, and co- (preview, rewrite, posttest, coexist). The children sort, make connections to thinking, vocabulary, reading and writing, create sentences, and extend and transfer their thinking using the spelling principle for the week.

In reading, we have been enjoying several books in our small guided reading groups. Also, as part of our fifth grade curriculum, Mrs. Riggolaud and I have chosen a new monthly genre for the students to read and report on. The reading will take place during SSR each day in class, and I expect them to read independently at home each day as well. The

activity I assign to the book will be an independent homework project. "Mystery" month was December. January is "historical fiction" month, when the children get to summarize their story and dress up as a character in the book to present to their classmates. The following genres will be read in the months ahead: February – Biography, March – Folktales, April – Poetry, May – Fantasy/Science Fiction, and June – Humor/Comics. There will be a new assignment with each new genre. This is a fun way to expose these young readers to genres they may not naturally gravitate to.

Currently, the fifth graders are engaged in learning and working with division using two-digit divisors. This unit of study encompasses dividing by multiples of 10, estimating quotients, problem-solving strategies and skills, dividing with whole numbers, choosing computation methods, dividing with zeros, and dividing money and decimals. The children are getting more automatic with their basic multiplication facts, so keep up that good practice at home. It can really make a difference.

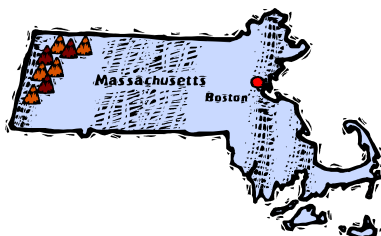
In social studies, we just finished a small group project to learn more about the ancient Maya, Aztec and Inca civilizations. They researched such topics as culture, government/political structures, religious practices, education, economics, geography and other interesting facts. They also made timelines. Each group presented to the class with a power point presentation. It was wonderful to see the terrific cooperation and helpful workings of the groups. We invite you to go to our class website and view our presentations and visit our class bulletin board for our written reports. Many thanks to Mrs. Anderson for sharing her pictures from Guatemala and the present day Maya people.

Ms. Shafran and I have begun to co-teach a unit on Friendship as part of the "Steps to Respect" anti-bullying curriculum. We're learning to understand the importance of clarifying intentions, why trust is important in a friendship and ways to build trust in a friendship.

This month, we remembered Dr. M.L. King Jr. by learning more about his life and those that influenced him. Mahatma Ghandi was one of those influential people who led Dr. King to establish the "Six Principles of Nonviolence". Dr. King "had a dream" and we'll be thinking and writing about our dream for peace as well.

I will be finalizing our spring trip to Boston next month. I'll keep you posted as we move along. All your efforts with bottles and cans will certainly make a difference when the time comes to pay for the bus and field trip. The attendants at the Transfer Station appreciate a weekly pick-up. Just a reminder: please pick-up on your scheduled date or find a substitute if you can't.

Thank you so much!!
Happy New Year,
Thanks,
K. O'Rourke



NEWS FROM SIXTH GRADE...

The 6th grade class is getting ready for a large transition. Mrs. Gay is returning to school on Monday, January 30th so my last day with the class will be Friday January 27th. I have had a fantastic time singing, acting and learning with this truly remarkable sixth grade class. I want to thank the Whately family for being so welcoming and I will always treasure the memories I have of this school. Whately Elementary is truly an educational gem.

Thanks for the memories!

Thanks,
Dave Grout



NEWS FROM THE COUNSELOR'S CORNER...

I have begun to introduce the concept of language skills to my Spanish students in grades 4-6. These four ascending skills are learned sequentially and the first one – listening – begins even before birth. The second skill speaking follows, then reading and finally writing. Whether one is learning his or her native language or a second (or third or fourth...) one, these skills are typically acquired in this order. I emphasize the first two – listening and speaking to Spanish students in grades 1-6, and add reading in grades 4-6. The language skill of writing is challenging to many students even in their native language, as it combines so many mental processes. My advanced Spanish students in grades 5 & 6 are introduced to this skill at the word level only for this reason.

¡Feliz año nuevo! Students in all Spanish classes have learned this expression recently, which means *Happy new year* (literally *happy year new*), now that 2012 is upon us. Whenever something in Spanish looks or sounds different from English, I like to remind students that neither language is wrong or right, just different from the other. This reminder serves as a useful measuring stick for mutual tolerance and understanding, whether between individuals, groups, countries or cultures.

Paz,
Stephanie B. Shafran aka Estefanía
School Counselor and Spanish Teacher



News from the Student Council....

Whately Elementary School needs a mascot! There has been talk of a mascot for the school for over a year and the Student Council has collected boxes of suggestions generated from the students in each class. A list of possibilities includes the Whately Wombats, the Whately Owls, the Whately Warriors and about 50 other ideas. Stay tuned to see what the mascot will be and whether we can make a costume for school events.

Terri Anderson



News from the Whately Peer Mediators – the Peacers

This is a season for celebrating our willingness to share and give. Sierra Warren, a third grader, wrote this poem for the

National Conflict Resolution Day Poetry Contest this past Fall. Here is her lovely poem about kindness, respect and generosity.

Generosity's in your heart,
with a whole bunch spread apart.
Without a doubt, you have to seize
all the words like thank you and please.
All this stuff you have to learn, cause it is your turn,
now go out there and help someone,
but your job is not done.
You'll never have too many friends,
cause generosity never ends.

Thanks Sierra!
Sally Rice, Peer Mediation Advisor



News from the Music Room....



Belated congratulations to all on a great Holiday Concert in December! Special thanks to Mr. Grout for playing guitar. We're already working on our Spring Concert, which will be Wednesday, April 11, 6:30 pm. Our band and string players are preparing for their Union 38 concert on Thursday, May 3, at Frontier Regional High School. More information will be provided in future newsletters. I hope you will be able to join us for both events! Thanks, Denise Genderon



NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY...

The library, as always, is a busy place in the winter! Fourth grade worked on recounting the story When Ruby Sings the Blues from a different character's point of view. They added their own voice to a picture to create a PowerPoint. Second grade has gotten very comfortable using Paint, which is a stepping stone to other computer programs. In January, fifth grade researched about ancient Maya, Inca, and Aztec civilizations. They created booklets, and group PowerPoints. Middle grades have worked on creating essential questions, a pivotal first step in research. Pictures and PowerPoints are posted on the Technology [website](#) under Student Work. The Technology website also holds a listing, and any relevant links, of what each class does during technology time. You can see those details, and even review some of the websites your student uses with them.

The New Year brought a state-wide bookmark contest for all students, with the theme "I'm Wild about my Library." Students drew their own bookmarks in art class.

Congratulations to our finalists: Jillian A. (1st), AJ M. (1st), Mya L. (1st), Conner B. (3rd), Sierra W. (3rd), Sophia D. (3rd), Dylan J. (5th), Caitlynn D. (5th), and Greyson Y. (6th). State winners will receive copies of their bookmark, an award certificate, a chance to tour the State House, and a gift certificate to a local bookstore.

I have had a wonderful time researching, reading, and working with your students in the library at Whately Elementary School.

Mrs. Rigollaud



Fire and Life Safety Corner

This month I wanted to write about a couple of things including installing and maintaining smoke detectors in our homes and the proper disposal of fireplace ashes.

I feel compelled to write about the importance of installing and maintaining smoke detectors after the horrible fire in Stafford Connecticut on Christmas morning. If you recall five people including three children were killed when the 1.8 million dollar home they were living in caught fire. They were asleep when fireplace ashes were improperly disposed of in a paper shopping bag and placed outside or just inside the mudroom. These ashes smoldered for hours and ignited the house while the family slept.

There were reportedly no working smoke detectors in the home. A simple step to insure the safety of your family was not followed and a tragedy occurred.

As the days become shorter and the temperatures continue to drop, Massachusetts' residents start to prepare for winter. We will soon have to fire up our furnaces and fireplaces. Are you ready for it?

Heating has long been the second leading cause of residential fires in the Commonwealth and the leading cause in Franklin County. As the economic situation worsens and everyone tightens their belts, the risk of heating fires increases. The fire service is concerned that preventive maintenance like having the chimney cleaned or the furnace checked out by a professional might be deferred, or that people will turn to alternative heating sources such as electric space heaters, wood or pellet stoves, or worse, illegal unvented kerosene heaters.

Tragedy frequently strikes in winter months where one fifth of fire deaths are caused by heating. No one wants to be a statistic; but the fact is space heater fires are usually deadly. Space heaters need space. You should keep space heaters three feet from anything flammable, such as furniture, bedding or newspapers. Make sure to use only heavy-duty extension cords.

If you heat your home by burning solid fuels such as coal, firewood, or pellets, be careful before, during and after using these kinds of fuels. Have the chimney annually cleaned by a certified professional. Dispose of the ashes in a metal container, with a lid, away from the house – not in the garage or under the porch.

Natural gas and fuel oil are both safe and efficient, but remember to get yearly tune-ups. Gas leaks can be poisonous so the Gas Company adds something to make it smell like rotten eggs. If you suspect a leak, move outdoors and contact the local Fire Department immediately.

If you ever have a question about home heating, contact me or any member of the Fire Department or visit the web site, www.mass.gov/keepwarmkeepsafe By working together we can keep warm and keep safe.

Well that's enough for this month and as always if you have any questions or suggestions for programs, email me at Jason_dorval@comcast.net
Jason K. Dorval FF/EMT-PPublic Fire and Life Safety Education Coordinator
Whately Fire Department



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Whately Library

January & February Events:

Movie Times – Join us for movies and popcorn each month! Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

Get Low, Robert Duvall, Bill Murray, Sissy Spacek, PG-13

Monday, February 27, 3pm and 6pm

Watch trailer:

<http://www.imdb.com/video/imdb/vi479725081/>

Kid's Craft Table – Drop in anytime for a monthly craft project. January snowflake cut-outs and fancy Valentines for February!

Kid's Crafternoon

Spring Craft – To Be Announced!

Wednesday, Feb. 22, 3:30-5pm (school vacation week)

Gentle Yoga - Wednesdays 6pm, please contact Alexandra Mello 413-210-4346.

LIBRARY HOURS

Monday 1-8 pm Wednesday 1-8 pm

Tuesday 1-8 pm Saturday 10-3 pm

Closed Monday, February 20 for Presidents' Day

Whately Public Library: www.whately.org/library

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Free!!

SOUTHERN FRANKLIN COUNTY PLAYGROUP

Come join the playgroup for an informal morning of play and conversation. Snack will be provided.
Parents and caregivers with children 5 years and younger are welcome to join the playgroup

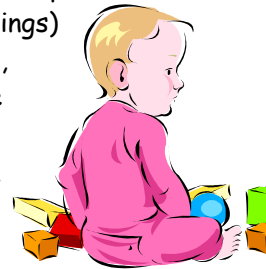
When: Tuesday: 9:30-11:30 Playtime and interactive literacy activities.

Friday: 9:30- 11:30 (In the gym)

(Tuesday, Sept. 27, 2011 - June 2012 except for school vacations and winter school closings)

Where: Sunderland Elementary School, After-School Room, Swampfield Drive

For information contact: Karen Green, CFCE Coordinator, at 665-8928 or greenk@frsu38.deerfield.ma.us or Francina Wisniewski, Franklin County Family Network, at 475-1553.



Contact Karen Green

@ 665- 8928 for more info

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Are you a parent of a child with special needs?

Would you like to join a supportive group of parents and educators to discuss topics of interest and learn about community resources?

PLEASE JOIN US!

Parent Advisory Council Meeting at Deerfield Elementary School Monday, February 27, 2012 from 6:30- 8:00

Topic: Advocating for Your Child: Your Role and Rights As A Parent

PRESENTER: Karen Ferrandino, Director of Special Education,

Refreshments will be served.

If you need childcare, please contact Juli Mason, the District Nurse at Whately Elementary School at 665-5560.

Please leave a message for Juli and she will call you back to confirm if there is a sufficient number of care providers. **REGISTRATION IS REQUESTED:**

Please email Karen Green, greenk@frsu38.deerfield.ma.us, call 6665-8928

Or just drop in!!