



# A Note From I-B



October 17, 2008

The beginning of October brought on a few changes within the classroom. The children changed seats, as they will each month, and are now working at a table with a new community of learners. We have completed our first math unit, *How Many of Each?* and have started our second, *Making Shapes and Designing Quilts*. Next week we will begin writing narrative stories in Writing Workshop. We will continue guided reading groups while children learn to select just right books independently. Children will also continue reading at the listening center and begin reading on the computer next week. As you may be sensing, we are diving into the curriculum!

This week we continued to work on community building, reading the book series, *The Best Me I Can Be*. This series provided us with conversation starters about we want our classroom to look like and what the children have to do to make that happen. So far, I have witnessed numerous genuine acts of kindness. We have completed the first seven lessons: I Show Respect, I'm In Charge Of Me, I'm A Good Friend, I Can Make Good Choices, I Can Cooperate, I Am Responsible, I Have Manners, and I Am Generous. We talk about what it means to be respectful, cooperative friends. We think about the choices we make each day and how we decide what action to take. We are polite to one another and accept one another's differences. You can help at home by encouraging independent decision-making and acts of kindness. As we continue to practice our daily routines in the classroom, my goal is that the children understand why we do what we do. For example, we are not silent in the hallway because their mean teacher won't let kids talk. Rather, we are silent in the hall because we don't want to disturb children learning in the hallway or in classrooms nearby. Being respectful in your every day experiences happens when you truly understand why it is you are doing what you are doing. We will finish these books (but the conversations are year long) next week.

During today's discussion after reading, *I Am Generous*, it was clear that the concept of generosity is one we need to spend more time on. The act of doing something to help another person, without expecting anything in return was difficult for the children to grasp. Although we discussed many different ways generosity is demonstrated, this is a conversation you may want to continue at home. We brainstormed together and came up with the following ways children can show generosity:

- Offering to help before being asked
- Thoughtfully writing cards for friends and family
- Sharing something special with a friend or sibling

- Raising money for those less fortunate than ourselves or to support a good cause

This year, rather than asking children to collect money for Unicef on Halloween night, 1-B will raise pennies to donate to Unicef together as a class. Your child should ask you how he or she could earn pennies around the house, maybe 10 pennies for setting the table or 8 pennies for reading to a sibling. They are welcome to donate their own pennies towards our effort (requesting allowance in pennies one week or using pennies from their piggy banks to bring in), but are discouraged from simply taking pennies from you that have not been earned. On Halloween, after the parade, we will roll our pennies to see how much we have earned, combining the pennies to make a donation to Unicef. Thank you for your help with this valuable life and mathematics lesson!

### Announcements:

- **Homework Question:** Should I be helping my child complete his or her homework (e.g., spelling) at night? **Response:** Please help your child understand the directions of each assignment, setup a homework time and place, and expect your child's best effort go into his or her homework (e.g., using pencil, writing neatly, finishing the assignment). You should not "correct" the work but you should expect that homework be completed neatly and turned in on time as this simply good homework practice.  
**Apology:** As I too am becoming familiar again with routines, I apologize for forgetting to send home homework on Wednesday, oops!
- Walkmans & Discmans: If you have transitioned to an ipod and have walkmans or discmans you are not using, 1-B would gladly take them off of your hands (either to borrow for the school year or as a donation)!
- Friday, October 31: Volunteers needed to help 1-B roll our hard earned pennies from 11:00 to 11:45! Please send a note or email if you are interested~ we will take the first 5 volunteers!

### Save The Date

- Friday, October 31: Halloween Parade, 8:45-9:30
- Tuesday, November 4: Early Dismissal, Conferences
- Tuesday, November 11: No School, Veteran's Day
- Friday, November 14: Family Sock Hop 6:30-8:30
- Thursday, November 27-Monday, December 1: No School, Thanksgiving
- Tuesday, December 23: 1-B Performance in gymnasium from 9:45-10:15

### Conversation Starters

- ❖ Who are the characters in Charlotte's Web? What was the problem Wilbur was facing? What was the solution? Who helped and how?
- ❖ What phone number do you call in case of an emergency? Do you know our address and phone number? If not, let's practice now!
- ❖ Let's have a fire drill at home. Let's plan a meeting spot outside.
- ❖ Why did Mrs. Byrnes switch from pencils to pens in the classroom?
- ❖ What is a beam balance? What happens if you move the fulcrum?
- ❖ What kind of balance did you and your partner build today? (equal arm balance) How is it different from a beam balance?

Have a nice weekend,

Sarah Byrnes