

November 14, 2008

Dear Families,

It was really nice meeting with all of your for conferences during the last few weeks.

### Reader's Workshop

We are continuing to explore books by Tomie DePaola and have really enjoyed several of the Strega Nona stories. Strega Nona, the grandmotherly "old witch" lives in Calabria, Italy. Everyone in town goes to see her when they have troubles. We are having fun getting to know Strega Nona, Big Anthony, Bambolona, and all of the other characters in the stories. We have discovered that as we read, we can easily make predictions on what will happen next based on what we already know about the characters. Making predictions helps children to use what they know to think about what will follow while reading continuous text.

### Math

This week, the students were introduced to addition and subtraction situations. They discussed and solved story problems using their own strategies and recorded their solutions so that someone else can understand their thinking. We also worked on making up problem situations for various number sentences. The mathematical emphasis has been on developing models of addition and subtraction situations; solving problems using numerical reasoning; and recording solution strategies clearly.

### Writer's Workshop

We have started our writer's workshop! The students are writing about their favorite topics and turning them into focused narratives. The goal for writer's workshop is to offer children the opportunity to bring their lives to school and to put their lives on paper. We want to teach kids that writer's workshop is an opportunity to make and convey meaning. This week, I model the process of choosing a topic, sketching it, and then writing a small piece about it. We also discussed what a memory is after reading Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox. This is a gentle story about a young boy who helps an elderly woman find her lost memories.

Some books we shared:

Strega Nona

Big Anthony

Strega Nona and the Magic Lessons

Andy That's My Name

The Art Lesson

Oliver Button

Walter Buys a Pig in a Poke

Fish is Fish

My Friend Whale

Some questions to ask your children:

What story are you working on in Writer's Workshop?

What are you an "expert" in?

What words would you use to describe Big Anthony?

What are some ways Strega Nona helps the people in her town?

Who is Bambolona?

How is Big Anthony different from Strega Nona?

What addition strategy are you using in math?

A big thank you to all of the volunteers that have come into 2W!

Have a great weekend.

Tell me about Big Anthony:

Carly: He always forgets. He never understands because he loses his job, and when he was a kid he was called Little Anthony. He lost his lunch in the haystacks. When he found Strega Nona he kept on getting into more and more trouble.

Duncan: He always gets in trouble and he is very forgetful. Sometimes he thinks he did something bad, but he didn't really.

Alex: He doesn't listen. He forgets things that people tell him. He only listens to half of the sentence that someone tells him.

Luke Celi: He gets into mischief and doesn't listen. He does the opposite of what people want him to do. When his mom said "don't leave the gate open" He left the gate open. He made a mess when he was little. When he tries to get a job he always gets fired.

Devin: If you tell him to do something, like put books on a shelf, he will put everything on a shelf! In one book he is on the leaning tower and he is laying on it and he thought he bent it. He tied it up to trees because he thought he bent it and the people got really mad.

Luke Cohen-Abeles: He doesn't listen. He's clumsy. He's not trustworthy. He's big. He looks for a job, but gets fired from most of them. He's forgetful.

Colin C.: He doesn't listen a lot. He forgets a lot of things. He leans against the leaning tower of Pisa and thinks he ruined it so he ties it up straight. He doesn't pay attention. He gets into lots of mischief.

Anna: He's kind of clumsy and he doesn't really listen. He gets into mischief. He doesn't always do what he is supposed to do.

Julia: He gets into trouble. He gets distracted and he doesn't listen to people when they are talking to him and telling him what he needs to do. He normally does the opposite of what they tell him to do. He is forgetful and not trustworthy.

Lauren: He gets into a lot of mischief and doesn't really pay attention a lot. He doesn't listen very well. He is forgetful and not trustworthy.

Neil: He's clumsy and he doesn't listen to people. He does everything wrong.

Justin: He always gets into mischief. He never listens. Whenever he gets a job he gets fired usually. He usually listens to stuff he is not supposed to.