

February 2009

Dear Parents,

I want to begin by thanking all the parents who helped with the construction and performance of "Hill of Fire." The children will remember this experience for a long time. If anyone took still pictures and would like to share them with the class, I would love to have them.

This month in literacy, we will spend a week reviewing the last several letters followed by the letters Y and Z. We are continuing with our spelling groups in which the children are sorting pictures or words and pictures. The children are continuing to work on learning the 27 kindergarten words as well as on various phonemic awareness activities. In addition, we will be starting an author study of Ezra Jack Keats this month. The children will hear several of his books, learn about his life and look at how his personal experiences influenced his writing.

In Writer's Workshop, several children have completed their first books and begun a second one. Others are editing their first books, while some are continuing to work on writing their first books.

After completing at least 2 books, the children will be given the opportunity to publish one book. Publishing involves having an adult type their words on the computer (in grown-up spelling), illustrating this final copy and making a cover for the book. This book then becomes reading material in our classroom. Part of Writer's Workshop involves sharing time. At the end of each session, 1 or 2 children sit in the author's chair and share a finished story or one in progress. The listeners watch and listen for good writer strategies that the author has used. The children may point out that the author has used periods at the end of his/her sentences or that the words and pictures match. In this way, the children learn about what good writer's do.

In math, we are continuing with the unit, "Measuring and Counting." During the next two weeks, the children will continue with games and activities that involve combining and separating groups. I have introduced "number sentences" in which we write an equation to match a story problem. Although the children are

exposed to the plus and minus symbols, it is not expected that they will understand and use them now. After February break, we will begin a new unit, "Make a Shape, Build a Block." This is a geometry unit that focuses on 2 and 3 dimensional shapes. The children will be asked to describe, identify, compare and sort shapes. They will also use blocks to compose and decompose shapes. Part of this unit involves work on the computer in which the children will be completing activities similar to the ones done with manipulatives.

In science, we will be completing the water unit by vacation. We still have lessons involving erosion, snow and ice, the 3 forms of water and the water cycle. I want to once again thank all the parent volunteers who have assisted with this work. The children have loved all the hands-on activities and proved that even 5- and 6-year olds can be scientists.

After vacation, it is off to Mexico for KM. Maybe the warmer weather will help get rid of all the germs in our classroom. This is another engaging unit in which the children learn by doing. They actively participate in activities that teach them about the art, music, language, clothing, celebrations, housing, climate, geography, food, history and family life in Mexico. If any of you have anything you'd like to share with the class related to Mexico, please let me know.

One of the biggest days of the year is quickly approaching. As you have probably heard, we have been counting up to the 100<sup>th</sup> Day of School. Because of the 2 snow days, our 100<sup>th</sup> day is now on Thursday, February 12. On this day, KK and KM will get together to have a special stations time. Activities involving the number 100 will be set up in both classrooms, and the children will be free to go back and forth between rooms. Lynn and I will need several parent volunteers to help with this event from about 10:30 to 11:30. If you can help, please send me a note. As part of the 100<sup>th</sup> day celebration, we will be collecting cans and boxes (no glass, please) of food for the Wellesley Food Pantry. The children will be counting the number of cans and boxes on February 12 with the hope of getting 100 items. **If you would like to donate food,**

please send it in any time before the 12<sup>th</sup>. We will need a couple of parents to bring the food to the food pantry after the stations time. If you are willing to help transport the food, please let me know.

We will also be celebrating Valentine's Day this month. The children will be decorating Valentine mailboxes and mailing cards to all their friends. In order to make the mailboxes, I am asking that every child bring in a shoebox (or similar size box) by Friday, February 6, with his/her name on the bottom. We will decorate them at school. Our policy is that if your child brings in Valentine cards, he/she must bring in one for every child in the class. I have attached a class list so that your child can copy the names onto the cards himself/herself. Cards should be brought to school no later than Wednesday, February 11, so that your child has time to mail them.

Another special day that occurs this month is Open School. On February 11, your entire family is invited to visit Hunnewell School. From 6:30-8:00, you are welcome to roam the school and visit each of your children's classrooms as well as the specialists' rooms. This is an opportunity for your child to show you around our classroom and share some of what he/she does at school each day. Portfolios and Writer's Workshop booklets will be available for your child to share with you. You may also visit the specialists (Art, Music, Library and PE).

Progress reports will be coming home on Friday, February 6. A letter will be sent home via backpacks next week with information about them. After you finish reading your child's report, please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Please sign the white Parent Response Sheet and return it to school in the manilla envelope. We reuse the envelopes in June. You should keep the report itself. Feel free to write a response on the white sheet, but don't feel you have to write anything. The sheet merely acknowledges that you received the progress report.

With all the germs that have plagued KM recently, our supplies of Kleenex and liquid hand soap are dwindling. If you would like to contribute either of these to the classroom, I'd really appreciate

it. Also, I'd just like to remind you that children should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school and/or been on antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school. Keeping sick children home when it may be questionable as to whether they should go would really help us all in fighting these illnesses. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,  
Donna McFarlane

### KM List

Jonah

Sebastian

Henry

Charlie S.

Celia

Sydney

Lily

Seth

Alice

Adam

Jaci

Chase

Julian

Alexander

Lilianna

Caroline

Madeleine

Olivia

Sophia

Charlie P.

Blake

