

January 2009

Dear Parents,

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a wonderful break. I can't wait to hear all the stories the children have to tell about their vacations.

This month in the area of literacy, we will be focusing on the letters U, V, W and X. We will also continue with phonemic awareness activities involving beginning sounds, ending sounds and rhyming words. The spelling groups have begun. One group is working on sorting pictures by rhyming words while the other group is matching pictures to their corresponding words. In Writer's Workshop, every child has begun writing his/her first story. These stories are based on personal experiences. The children are focusing on writing whole sentences, leaving spaces between words, writing the sounds they hear in a word (invented spelling), using periods at the end of their sentences, matching their illustrations and text as well as writing complete stories (beginning, middle and end). In addition, they have been introduced to the concept of editing and will be revisiting their completed stories both alone and with peers in order to make changes once they are finished with their first drafts. Finally, we will start another group piece of writing in which we use interactive writing to compose information about water.

In math, we will be starting a new unit this week called "Measuring and Counting." In this unit, the children will use nonstandard units (ex. unifix cubes, popsicle sticks) to measure lengths. They will also participate in activities that involve counting a set of objects and finding the total when a small amount is added or taken away. This will be an introduction to addition and subtraction, and they will be asked to act out stories and play games that involve combining and separating amounts. Lastly, the children will be asked to create and recreate images for quantities to 10 using tiles.

For the next 6 weeks or so, KM will be studying the wonderful world of water. This unit is filled with hands-on experiences that

allow the children the opportunity to make predictions, test out their ideas and then record their findings. Some of the topics we will address are the behavior of water drops, sinking and floating, the 3 forms of water and the water cycle. I want to thank everyone who volunteered to help teach the water lessons. I couldn't have done it without you!

Although we won't be starting the unit on Mexico until after February vacation, we have an exciting creative arts opportunity coming up the end of January. Nan Rumpf will be coming to Hunnewell to help KM and KK perform the play, "Hill of Fire." This is a true story about the birth of a volcano in Mexico in 1943. The children will make simple costumes and scenery on Tuesday, January 27, and perform the show for parents on Thursday, January 29. The show will take place at about 10:15 and last no more than 15 minutes. More details about the exact show time and the need for parent volunteers for the construction phase as well as the performance will be coming soon. Younger siblings are welcome to attend the performance.

On Friday, January 16, the kindergartners will view a performance from a group called "Kids on the Block." This show is performed by a group of parent volunteers and exposes the children to the idea of physical differences such as cerebral palsy as well as learning differences. After performing a short skit, the performers ask the children questions. You may want to ask your child about the performance, as it is a perfect way to start a family discussion about differences.

I just want to remind everyone that we go out every day (unless the weather is severe) and that your child needs to have all his/her winter clothes in order to play in the snow. Please label all the clothing! If your child wears boots to school, he/she needs to have shoes to change into upon arrival. We have had many children wearing boots all day because the shoes were left at home.

If you haven't been in recently and would like to volunteer for activity time, there is a new schedule for January and part of February. Please stop by before or after school if you'd like to sign

up or send me a note with a couple of possible dates. I'd be happy to sign you up!

Progress reports will be coming home the beginning of February. I am currently in the process of assessing the children and writing the reports. I will be sending home information about the reports later in the month to assist you in reading them. Please watch for this information in the backpacks.

Finally, please remember to send back the blankets/beach towels that went home before vacation for washing. It helps me if you return them in a plastic bag with your child's name on the outside of the bag. Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Donna