

Glen Haven Elementary School

Principal's Pride

December 1, 2011
Volume 12, Issue 3

A Message from Dr. Smith

Dear Glen Haven Families,

Thank you to all parents, guardians and friends of our students, for coming out and participating in two very successful Parent/Teacher Conference Nights with my staff and for meeting with us to discuss the strengths and/or growth areas needed for our children. Thank you to those of you who, because of job and/or other commitments, were not able to attend these conferences on either night, but made sure that you kept abreast of the performance of your

child by participating in telephone conferences with your child's teacher.



Now that the yearly first quarter in-school conferences have been held, what are the next steps in continuing to strengthen our home-school connections? Our School Improvement Plan (SIP) provides us with a roadmap...focusing on helping our children develop and enhance their critical thinking skills.



Critical thinking has become a buzzword in education. In the past, the emphasis in classrooms has been on imparting information and content — the times tables or the capitals of the United States, for example. In recent years, however, there's been a shift toward teaching *critical thinking*, a skill that elevates thinking beyond memorization into the realm of analysis and logic.

Put another way, critical thinking is about knowing how to think, not what to think. Teachers use a number of techniques to help students learn critical thinking, starting as early as kindergarten and ramping up especially in 2nd grade and beyond. Below are strategies that you can try them at home to help your child become a critical thinker:

- **Critical thinking: Ask open-ended questions.** Asking questions that don't have one right answer encourages children to respond creatively without being afraid of giving the wrong answer.
- **Critical thinking: Categorize and classify.** Classification plays an important role in critical thinking because it requires identification and sorting according to a rule, or set of rules, that kids must discover, understand, and apply. If you play classification games at home, be sure to follow up the activity with questions about the similarities and differences between the groups. You can sort everything from dirty laundry to Legos to produce to doll clothes to promote critical thinking.
- **Critical thinking: Work in groups.** In a group setting, students are exposed to the thought processes of their peers. Thus, they can begin to understand how others think and that there are multiple ways of approaching problems — not just one correct way.
- **Critical thinking: Make decisions.** Help your child consider pros and cons, but don't be afraid to let her make a wrong choice. Then evaluate the decision later. Ask your child, "How do you feel about your decision? What would you do differently next time?"
- **Critical thinking: Find patterns.** Whatever you're doing, whether it's going to the park or watching television, encourage your child to look for patterns or make connections for critical thinking practice. For example, relate a favorite television show to a real-life situation. Or, while driving in the car, have your child identify different shapes in roads signs and in the windows and roofs of passing houses.

It might be tempting to pass off the critical thinking buzz as just another fad in education. However, most educators disagree. It's still important for your child to know basic facts, but it's just as vital for him or her to know how and when to use them. While it has been an extremely busy, yet gratifying few months with your child (ren), we are looking forward to experiencing many more.

As we prepare for the upcoming Winter Break, I wish each and every one of you the warmest of wishes and thoughts from all of us at Glen Haven Elementary School, "A Place for Learning for All."

Sincerely,
Dr. Joanne Smith



*"When hearts, minds,
souls and hands meet . . .
nothing is impossible."*

Dr. Joanne B. Smith

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Important December/January 2011 - 2012 Dates

December 9, 2011	Interims Mailed
December 15, 2011	Winter Concert 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
December 26 – January 2, 2012	Winter Break
January 3, 2012	Classes Resume



Reading Specialist's Corner *Mrs. Lucina*

We are focusing on the importance of answering higher level comprehension questions. You can support this at home by asking your child questions that require him/her to think within, beyond, and about the text. Within the text includes 'right there' questions and summarizing, beyond the text includes making predictions, connections, and inferences, about the text includes analyzing or critiquing.

Examples of **Within** the Text:

- Summarize ideas from a text and tell how they are related
- Identify important ideas in a text and report them in an organized way
- Read dialogue with phrasing and expression that reflects understanding of characters and events

Examples of **Beyond** the Text:

- Search for and use information to confirm or disconfirm predictions
- Infer characters' feelings and motivations through reading their dialogue
- Infer causes of problems or of outcomes in fiction and nonfiction texts

Examples of **About** the Text:

- Notice how pictures are used to communicate meaning
- Express opinions about the quality of a text
- Agree or disagree with the ideas in a text
- Hypothesize how characters could have behaved differently



*We are continuing to collect book donations for Family Reading Night on Thursday, January 12, 2012! If you have any books at home that your child no longer reads, please consider donating them to our Book Giveaway. We are also collecting books for adults if you have any to donate. Donations can be sent in to Mrs. Lucina at Glen Haven at any time.



Physical Education

Mr. Miller and Mr. Skellchock

In physical education, our students are making great strides in improving their skill level. This month, students in grades Pre K - 2 will be working on improving their hand eye coordination through juggling. They will begin with scarves and progress toward bean bags. Students in grades 1 and 2 will utilize juggle sticks, juggle clubs, and juggle rings. Learning to juggle in a variety of ways enhances tracking skills which are an integral part of effective reading.

Skill development in grades 3, 4, and 5 will concentrate on throwing and catching skills. They will also continue developing team work and sportsmanship skills. Our continued emphasis on skills development will enable our students to be successful in the games that follow.

It's getting dark earlier now. There are still ample opportunities to get outside and play. Be sure to wear light colored clothing so you can be seen by motorists. Dress in layers to maintain warmth. Gloves and caps/hats should become an added fashion accessory as the temperatures fall and daylight decreases. Have fun out there but be safe and warm.

Technology

Ms. Olson

(Underlined items can be accessed on the Glen Haven Elementary School website by clicking the link.)

Today's students must learn more than the basics to be prepared for life. Using technology, students develop learning skills, such as thinking and problem-solving skills, information and communication skills, and interpersonal and self-directional skills. However, like with other mediums, students must be guided to make appropriate choices in how they use technology. Take time out to make sure that your child is using technology as a tool to learn and communicate, not just as entertainment. Make time this month to sit down at the computer (at home or in the library) together with your child and explore all that it has to offer.

5 Great Ways to use Technology This Month

Learn to type better- **Dance Mat Typing:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing/>

Develop critical thinking and spatial reasoning skills – **Rush Hour:**

<http://www.thinkfun.com/playonline>

Research Holidays from around the World – **Encyclopedia Britannica:**

www.school.eb.com (Username: mcps, Password: search)

Track Santa Claus, send a free Chanukah card to a friend, and learn about the origins of Kwanzaa. - **Class Brain** www.classbrain.com

Find a healthy recipe that kids can help make. – **Kids Health**

<http://kidshealth.org/kid/recipes/index.html>

If you are interested in being part of the technology committee please contact the main office.



Technology Committee

The Technology Committee has begun plans to host student clubs. Please check child's book bag for more information: Our Critical Thinkers (CT) Technology Club is open to grades 3 - 5 and is designed to challenge our students and expand their critical thinking skills beyond the classroom. We will create technology products, review math and reading concepts, and develop logic and strategies. The activities will require students to compute in their heads and think creatively.

Little Bytes Technology Club (Grades 1-2) The Little Bytes Technology Club is for students in grades 1 and 2. Students will review and apply computer skills learned in Pre-K and Kindergarten and become familiar with the internet and multimedia software. Throughout their time in the club, students will also utilize word processing.

Counselor's Corner

Mrs. Willis
School Counselor



Hello Parents and Guardians,

In the month of December, we will focus on the character trait of Fairness. During classroom guidance lessons, students will learn that fairness means taking turns, sharing, and listening to what others have to say. Children learn at an early age that fairness is important, but daily questions of fairness are often complex. Parents, please take this opportunity to reinforce the message at home, by discussing the importance of being fair with people. Let your children know that fairness is important to you. Remember that you are a powerful role model for your children. If you treat others fairly, that is what your child will learn from you.

Fairness Do's

- Treat all people fairly.
- Listen to others and try to understand what they are feeling and saying.
- Consider all the facts, including opposing views, before making a decision.
- Make impartial decisions, using the same criteria, rules, or standards for everyone.
- Correct your mistakes.

Fairness Don'ts

- Don't take advantage of other people's mistakes or ignorance.
- Don't take more than your fair share.
- Don't let personal preferences; prejudices or other feelings improperly interfere with decisions which should be based on merit.

Thank you and have a wonderful December.

Media Center News

Mrs. Maldonado
Media Specialist



With Thanksgiving behind us, we are looking forward to the winter holidays and continuing learning with renewed enthusiasm. Winter holidays, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and winter are our special focus books for this month. Our media aides continue to do a wonderful job helping us to shelve books, deliver laminating, and keep the media center looking great. With the cold weather outside, we're counting on our books to keep us warm!



Winter Mathematics

Sheila Manevitz
Math Content Coach

December is a festive month! Many families often buy presents for their children. Use this opportunity to purchase things that will also help educate your child. A video game with math activities, membership to great math websites, a watch with hands, board games that teach math like *Battleship* teaches coordinates, chess teaches higher level thinking skills, *Lego* teaches spatial skills; *Uno* teaches counting. Other games such as: *Stratego* and *Candyland* teach colors and counting, *Monopoly* teaches money and finances, *Sudoku* helps with logic. *Quizmo*, *Pizza Fractions*, *Polygon* are recommended by the National Gifted and Talented Association. *Continuo* is a game is about patterns. *Checkers*, *Dominoes*, and *Risk* teach strategy and planning. When you read the directions you are reading to perform a task - math connections to reading! Go to www.areyougame.com and search math games for some online fun.

Talking with your child about budgeting and money is a good time for them to learn about savings. You can also teach them:

- to bake a cake to use measurement skills and fraction skills,
- to write a check properly, and balance a checkbook, uses adding and subtracting skills
- to make paper snowflakes; you teach symmetry
- to estimate when you shop, teaches estimation skills
- to guess the next address at a home and tell you if it is an odd or even number.

We are so lucky to live so close to Washington, D.C. the capital of our nation. The museums are amazing, the American History museum just reopened. If you go to the American war exhibit, there is a time line that shows the dates of conflicts in our history, Thomas Edison's exhibit show some of his inventions. As you look at each exhibit, see if you can identify where math is connected. The gowns of the president's wives were made by designers, who needed strong math skills measure fabric and body proportions. The transportation exhibit illustrates how our nation moves. There are so many wonderful things to see and of course, every Smithsonian museum is free. People come from all over the world to visit these museums. We often take these treasures for granted, because we live here. Use the winter break to visit some of these wonderful museums. They even have earphones for translations.

Practice the number facts with your child whenever you are traveling; in the car, train etc...to master these skills. If your teacher sends home work over the break, make sure your child completes it. If your child's teacher does not send home work, you can still take the initiative and do math each day. The more you do with your child now, the more success he/ she will have in school this year and in the future. These early successes will open doors of opportunity for them as they enter high school and college. Remember "Everything We Need to Know We Learned in Kindergarten," a great book by Robert Fulham? Our children are learning critical life skills now. They are who we are counting on for the future of this country. Together we can instill the knowledge students will need to fulfill their dreams and endeavors. Remember to count the days to vacation. Happy Holidays!

Art

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The Art Department continues to display art throughout the school many creative items done by Glen Haven students. Fourth grade students' "Self-Portraits" are now on display in the "Creativity" hallway, between the Arts & Physical Education rooms. "Splash Paintings" are on display in the hallway leading to the Multi-purpose room. All grade levels have completed their self-portraits by including several art lessons into one final artwork. The primary grades (pre-k/kindergarten) created with shapes, colors, proportions, and patterns. The other grades created "Collages" with paints, magazine pictures, and craft papers. In addition to making the artwork, students wrote and presented their final work to their classmates for discussions. Also, the work of famous artists was presented to the classes. Romare Bearden, Jackson Pollock, Chuck Cloes, and Faith Ringgold were presented to the students for inspiration. It was great fun for everyone!

The next quarter's work will include Paper Engineering, Still Life painting, Clay making, and introductions to Symbols. Stay tuned!



ESOL

Ms. Barnes, Ms. Dyson, Ms. Green, Mr. Lynn, and Mrs. Tom



The ESOL team wishes the Glen Haven Family a happy New Year! We enjoyed meeting with families during conferences last month. We want to thank our supportive parents for attending parent nights across the grade levels and for reinforcing reading language arts skills by practicing at home! We are using Bloom's Taxonomy questions across grade levels to develop critical thinking in our children. After reading with your child, try asking him or her, "What could have been a different ending for this story?" Our children are very creative thinkers!

Gifted and Talented (GT) Connection

Mrs. Mary Courtney Green



GT & Enrichment Connection

Dear Parents,

The holiday season brings a wealth of opportunities to help nurture your child's gifts and talents. If you venture outside of the pages of a book and beyond the walls of a classroom, you will discover an abundance of activities which are fun and educational - right in your own back yard! Here are just a few:

- **Personalized Holiday Cards** - Instead of buying a generic pack of cards this year, encourage your child to make their own for family, friends, or teachers! Look around your house for colorful papers (try wrapping paper!) or visit your local arts & crafts section of your favorite store (i.e. Michaels, AC Moore, Target...etc.) and get materials for designing holiday greeting cards. Your child will engage in the writing process by creating a greeting, message, and cover design.
- **Theatrical & Dance Performances** – There are many local plays and dance performance around our community this month! Not sure where to look? Check out the "Lifestyle" section of The Washington Post, the "Entertainment" section of the local Gazette in your favorite internet search engine type "December in DC" and there are many sites that offer happenings around DC and southern Maryland.

- **Guess Box Giving (Critical Thinking Strategy)** – GHES students LOVE Guess Boxes! Give your child just one clue. Then tell them to ask you yes/no questions about the attributes (description or characteristic) of their present (they know how to do this!). You could either open the gift that day or wait until the actual holiday. This activity will help sharpen your child's deductive reasoning skills.
- **Holiday Scrapbook** – Say cheese! Give your child a Polaroid, disposable or digital camera. Encourage them to take pictures all throughout the holiday season. Print out or develop the pictures and have your child make a scrapbook about their Christmas, Hanukah, and Kwanzaa or vacation experience.

Have fun!



Music Department

Mr. Fisher, Ms. Meshbane, Mr. Neal

Congratulations to 5th grade students Natalia Figueroa and Fernanda Orellana who will be representing Glen Haven Elementary in the Montgomery County Public School Honors Chorus!

You can hear the Glen Haven Chorus sing and the Instrumentalists play on Thursday, December 15, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the gym. Mark your calendars and come out for some beautiful music!

Musically yours,
Mr. Fisher, Ms. Meshbane & Mr. Neal

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