

PAW PRINTS



Web-Version

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Rock Creek Forest Elementary School
Mr. David Chia, Principal
Mrs. Stacy Ashton, Assistant Principal

Principal's Update

Parents & Guardians,


Happy New Year! I am sure we are all looking forward to the new adventures that 2009 will bring to each one of us. I hope you all enjoyed the extra family time during the winter break. I enjoyed the extra time with my children. Jedidiah is now almost four years old and Grace, who is a year and a half old, is beginning to speak more every day! Breaks are always a good time for relaxation and rejuvenation. I also appreciated the time to reflect on 2008. As we begin a new year, I look forward to continued improvements at Rock Creek Forest. We will continue to monitor each student's growth and development. We continue developing *student academic plans* for students. Our Leadership Team continues to discuss *race and equity* so we can work more effectively with children of all backgrounds. Students and staff are looking forward to our second annual "**Reading Rocks at RCF**" day on January 14th with special guest readers for our students. Confirmed guest readers include Board of Education President *Shirley Brandman* and Vice-President *Patricia O'Neill*, several RCFES PTA board members and *Track Team members from the University of Maryland at College Park*. We are particularly excited to have university student-athletes read to our students. Our goal at RCF is to have all our students college-ready by the time they graduate from MCPS. We realize there is still middle school and high school ahead of our students and our part is the early years. We also realize that the majority of your child's public school education in any one level is the elementary level.

To that end, we work with due diligence so that your child will love learning, enjoy school, and be prepared for middle school. Ultimately, if your child goes to university, they will have had the opportunity to hear from current university students about what traits, work ethics and habits they need to begin to develop in their elementary years so they will be successful at the university level. We hope you will ask your child about the University of Maryland readers and their conversations on the Reading Rocks day. There are many new and exciting things to look forward to in 2009 - let's make each day count!

Mr. Chia
Principal

School News

Student News

 A special thank you to our fifth graders and the *Class of 2009* for a terrific musical performance last month. They presented, "Santa, You've Got Mail" three times on December 16th. Students (and parents) should be very proud of the performance that was shared with much enthusiasm and gusto! A special thank you goes to the many parents who supported Mr. Fisher and the fifth grade team - your encouragement and helping hands made a big difference - thank you!

Staff Update

We welcome *Mr. Jacob Johnson*, building services manager, back after being on medical leave. A special thanks to *Ms. Brenda Holandes* who served as our substitute building services manager while Mr. Johnson was on leave.

School Improvement Team Meeting

Our next *School Improvement/Leadership Team Meeting is Monday, January 12th from 3:45 pm to 5:00 pm*. Parents are invited to attend this quarterly meeting. We will share updated RCF student data and continue our discussions and study on race and equity. Please contact Mrs. Over at 301.650.6410 if you would like to attend.

Multicultural Night

Mark your calendar and plan to attend this year's Multicultural Night on Thursday, January 22nd!

Cafeteria News - Snack Purchases

Snack purchases are available to students in grades 2-5 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Students may only purchase **one** snack for themselves **after** they finish their lunch. They will **not** be permitted to purchase a snack for a friend. If you have questions about this, please see Mrs. Ashton.

Computer Lab Headphones

Beginning in January 2009, we will have students use individual headphones in the computer lab (and classrooms when appropriate). The individual headphones will reduce the noise level in the computer lab so students can concentrate better. Individual student headphones will mean students do not share headphones and thus, health concerns are eliminated.

Class News

Kindergarten - Happy New Year! We hope you had a wonderful holiday break!

READING AND LANGUAGE ARTS

We will continue to read folk tales, engaging students in discussions of books, and helping students make connections. They will be able to retell, illustrate and dramatize stories. Also we will put emphasis on our high frequency words and writing will be based on our word wall. We will also be covering winter, weather changes and seasons.



MATHEMATICS

Please continue to review the following concepts in math: Read, write, count, and represent whole numbers; Group objects in sets; Recognize odd and even numbers of objects in a set; Connect counting to actual objects.

SOCIAL STUDIES AND SCIENCE

We will continue Living Things, Myself and Others, and Communities. We will be looking at our heritage backgrounds. The K classes will have a display of



multicultural dolls in the kindergarten hallway. It's an exciting unit of study! Please come and see the dolls!

FIELD TRIPS

We will begin planning our third field trip for the year. More details will follow.

The Kindergarten Team - Isa Barnet, Silvia Goncalves, Veronica Lay, Brooke Mayhew and Dolly Xeron

First Grade - The First Grade Team hopes that your holidays were wonderful and you had lots of time to spend with your families. In January we will be finishing up the second quarter. The first two weeks of January will be very busy so we hope the children come back to school rested and ready to get back to work. It is hard to believe; time goes so fast! The quarter ends on January 23. Please make sure your child continues to reads every night. Maybe we will have some snowy days to cuddle up and read together! We hope 2009 is a wonderful year for everyone. Thank you for all the ways you help our children and the school.

The First Grade Team - Olga Allen, Debbie Cunningham, Nancy Morgan and Melissa Sanders

Second Grade - In **writing** this month our second grade authors continue writing pieces to inform. We have researched topics of interest and used this information to write about. We are focusing on using a variety of sentence types, strong verbs, transition words and many different ways to organize their ideas. Students are also working hard to reread their work in order to revise (check for meaning) and edit (look for capitalization and punctuation).

This month in **math**, we will continue with our third unit of study, computation. We will be working on modeling addition and subtraction, two and three digit computation, alternative strategies for adding and subtracting. We will also be covering mathematical expressions. **Please continue to practice addition and subtraction facts at home.**





In **reading** this month, students continue to be taught how to read and use the features of non-fiction texts. Students are instructed in the use of graphic organizers and text structures such as compare and contrast. We will also be working on how to write BCR's (brief constructed responses) to questions about the texts that they are reading. Please make sure your child continues to read each night at home and tells you about what they read.



In **social studies** this month will focus on **Economics: Changes in the Way We Live**. This unit introduces economic concepts to help students learn the economic decision making process and its consequences.

We will begin our unit of **Balancing and Weighing** in **science**. Children explore the relationship between balance and weight and learn strategies for making comparisons. They explore by manipulating objects on a beam balance, building mobiles, and by using an equal-arm balance. The relationship of density, weight, and volume among different foods is explored.



*We would like to wish you and your family a **Happy New Year!***



The Second Grade Team - Lyndsay Fetrow, Erin Lisa, Yamalis Nieves and Eva Pacheco

Third Grade - The third grade has been working very hard as we come to 2009. As we enter the last part of the second grading period, in math, we will continue working on multiplication and division concepts, and work on fact strategies and estimation. In reading, we will continue working on folktales and fables and we will be reading different texts in order to perform a task. In science, we will be beginning our chromatography and fingerprinting unit, and in social studies we will begin to examine characteristics of a map and transportation systems. And finally in writing, we will continue working on the six traits of writing, in particular focusing on the organization stage.

The Third Grade Team - Nicole Cohen, Rodrigo Godinez, Veronica Kheradmand and Matt Rosenthal

Fourth Grade - Writing



Students will continue writing research reports based on teacher-directed and/or self-selected topics. They will pose questions, select resources, take notes, paraphrase, and quote information. Students will be expected to reference sources of information by developing bibliographies.

Reading

January's focus will be *Reading to be Informed*. In the first quarter, the focus for *Reading to be Informed* was on text features; the second quarter focus in on Functional Reading and understanding text structures (description, sequence, comparison, cause and effect, and problem and solution). Teachers will make connections to social studies and science content when appropriate.

Science

Students will continue their study of environmental science by developing the following understandings: organisms interact with each other and the environment; human activities affect the environment; some individuals have a better chance of surviving and reproducing than others; and scientific knowledge is based on evidence gained from research investigations, and/or observations.

Math

During January, students will review content from Units 1 (place value, geometry, and data analysis) and 2 (multiplication and problem-solving with variables) before moving on to Unit 3. Fractions and probability are covered in Unit 3. Students will look at the relationship between common and decimal fractions and at how to perform some of the basic number operations with fractional parts. These understandings are extended by some students who will begin performing operations with unlike denominators and per cents.

The Fourth Grade Team - Jan Bloom, Maria Garcia and Laura Perez

Fifth Grade - Students have been introduced to comprehension strategies which actively involve them with the text. One strategy is the literature web which focuses the students on key words, their feelings, ideas, structure and images/symbols as related to the text. We have completed our unit on poetry and have initiated an author study project which will be done in conjunction with our writing program.

Math 6 students are working in the fourth and final segment of Unit 2. They are determining the relationships of equivalent ratios, fractions, percents, rates, and ratios. They will be taking the unit assessment in mid-January.

Math 5 students recently completed the geometry and measurement unit. They are now working on decimals and equivalent fractions.

In science we are continuing the studies of electricity and magnetism. The students have built series and parallel circuits.

Our social studies program is currently emphasizing the study of post-Revolutionary America and the building of a new nation. The political, social, and economic systems will be the main focus of this unit.

We applaud our students for their excellent work in Mr. Fisher's musical production, "**Santa, You've Got Mail**". We fully appreciate the support of the many parents who participated in the success of this effort.

The Fifth Grade Team - Mary Crilley, Marvin Kopit, Eric McDonald and Ivelisse Yordan-Torres

Community News

Homework Hotline Live

MCPS Instructional Television produces Homework Hotline Live which allows students to call into the program with questions about homework. If your child would like some



homework support, they may want to check out the show on MCPS TV.

RCF Ice Skate

There will be a RCF Ice Skate at the Wheaton ice rink on January 26, 2009 from 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm. There is no school for students on January 26, 2009. Students will pay \$6.25 for a bracelet to skate during that time and RCF will receive 15% of proceeds. At the time of bracelet purchase directly at the rink, **purchasers need to indicate they are there for RCF for RCF to receive 15%**. Please contact Mrs. Sandra Aresta if you have any questions.

Calendar



- Jan. 12 Spanish Immersion Open House (9:30 am)
School Improvement Team/Leadership Team Meeting (3:45 pm)
- Jan. 14 Reading Rocks at RCF
- Jan. 19 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
(School Closed)
- Jan. 20 Inauguration Day (School Closed)
- Jan. 21 Reading Rocks at RCF (snow date)
- Jan. 22 Multicultural Night
- Jan. 26 Report Card Preparation Day
(No school for students)
- Jan. 29 Multicultural Night (snow date)

Paw Prints is published on the first and third Thursday of each month with school information for parents. The first Thursday edition (odd issue numbers) includes grade level news and the third Thursday edition (even issue numbers) includes teacher specialist news. The web-version is modified from the hard copy version that you receive in Backpack Thursday.



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