

PAW PRINTS



Web-Version

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April 2, 2009

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

Principal's Update

Dear Parents,

As we look forward to *spring break*, may you find the next week to be a time of rest, relaxation and extra time with your children. When we return to school on Tuesday, April 14th, we will have just two short months before the end of the school year. We expect to finish strong and make it a memorable two months with several special events such as Math Night, Technology Night, the Spring Fair, Auction, field day and promotion ceremonies. Please mark your calendars for these special events!

When I look towards next year and review our *school improvement plan* (SIP), I believe we have the pieces in place with our school targets as described in our SIP (*see the plan which is posted on our school website*), *grade level action plans* that provide more specificity for each team, and *student academic plans* to meet the needs of individual students. One of our on-going goals is to continue developing student academic plans for students who are working above grade level. In addition, we continue to look at the whole child and I believe that we can *develop every child as a leader* at Rock Creek Forest. To that end, our staff is in discussion as we look at ways to provide skills and strategies to develop students into leaders. We have high expectations for our students. We send key messages in our beliefs of our students. Now is the time to provide the tools for our students to become leaders in our school and in our community. As staff discuss ways to teach strategies for our students to be more effective as a student, we will invite your feedback and encourage your support in this

endeavor. We are looking at developing highly effective habits for our students through the work of Stephen Covey. A kid-friendly version, *The 7 Habits of Happy Kids*, has been recently released by Mr. Covey's son, Sean Covey. As we review and discuss options, we invite you to join us at our next **School Leadership Team** meeting on **Monday, May 4th at 3:45 pm**. In the meantime, you might want to check out *The 7 Habits of Happy Kids* from your local library/bookstore or you might want to look at www.theleaderinme.org (take a look at the parent resource page) for online resources.

Have a terrific spring break!

Mr. Chia
Principal

School News

Student Spotlight - Congratulations to our Virtue of the Month students who have displayed Responsibility during the month of March.

Family Math Night

All students and their families are invited to join us on Thursday, April 23, 2009 from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm to **Family Math Night!**




Come learn new math skills by playing games and using math manipulatives. You'll leave with some new ideas for learning math at home. There will be a potluck dinner sponsored by the PTA beginning at 6:00 pm that night.

Staffing Update

Mr. Glenn Hall, art teacher, is on medical leave for the remainder of the school year. We are in the process of finding a long-term substitute teacher and will keep parents informed.

Afterschool Programs Update!!

 Spring Afterschool Activities will be held from April 14th to June 5th. An information packet has been sent with Backpack Thursday. If you have questions, please contact Mrs. Ashton at 301.650.6410.

Student Information Articulation Form

Parents and guardians received a copy of the "**Student Information Articulation Form**" for the 2009-2010 school year. Please take the time to complete this important information sheet as it will help school staff work on class assignments for next year. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child homeroom teacher. We would like the forms returned to school by April 24th at the latest. Thanks for your continued support.

Class News

Kindergarten - We hope you have a wonderful spring break! In **reading and language arts**, we are enjoying our selection of folk tales. We continue to engage our students in the discussion of books and we help them make connections. There will be an increased focus on reading comprehension as well as retelling stories and recognizing cause and effect. We are continuing with our 3rd quarter's writing intent, *Writing to Persuade*. In **mathematics**, we are almost at the end of quarter 3 in math. We will be assessing the students in the following areas: estimation, measurement, and weight. Please review the names of the three-dimensional shapes and their attributes with your child. We will continue to talk about before and after as well as different times of the day as a precursor to telling time. In **social studies** and **science**, we will continue *Myself and Others* and *Communities*. We are still talking about the seasons as well as living things. We will be using our 5 senses as we learn about spring. We will enjoy our spring weather as we learn about it. We are also planning our last field trip of the year. More details will follow.

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

First Grade - Spring is here, and the third marking period ended last Friday! We will finish up our **math** unit on geometric solids and measuring. We are also beginning our author study of Ezra Jack Keats. During the month of April, the **reading** and **writing** focus is on poetry.

We will write our own poems! In **math**, we will start with money and then move into fractions and problem solving. The **social studies** unit is called "Telling About Ourselves." We will learn about ourselves by focusing on family traditions. Further, our new science unit is about weather. We will study clouds and learn about different kinds of weather. April will be a busy month for learning. Please continue to have your child read to you every night. Reading together is so important. Thank you all for all the ways you help your children learn, as well as help us! We couldn't do it without you!

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

Second Grade - In **math**, we continue to study and review fractions and measurements in the units 4A and 4B.



In measurement students will be able to select an appropriate tool and use it to measure the attributes of an object. Please encourage your child to measure liquids as well as weigh objects by using a weigh scale you may have at home. It is also very important to review reading a clock at home. This includes using an analog clock that shows all the numbers on the face of a clock or a watch. Review the hour hand and the minute hand. As always, practice basic facts using the flash cards that were sent home. For **writing** in April, students will be instructed on how to write poetry. We will use various elements of poems in our own writing including rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and more! In **science** we will begin a unit on the phases of matter. This will include solids, gas, and liquids! In **social studies** we are wrapping up a unit on Economics. We will move from examining the relationship among wants, goods, and services to economic decision making. In **reading**, teachers will continue to motivate students to read independently. We will continue to read grade level text with expression. We will set a goal for each student to be able to read 25 books independently by the end of the year. This will include books of various genres.

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

Third Grade - The third grade continues to work hard as we enter spring. We have begun unit 5, dealing with fractions, probability, algebra, money, multiplication, and division. In *reading*, we will be studying our unit on reading for literary experience, dealing with various texts dealing with fantasy and poetry. In *writing*, we will be finishing our unit on writing to persuade, and will begin our unit on writing for personal expressions, which goes into detail about developing a story map, and working on the students beginning, middle, and end of a writing piece. In *science*, we will begin our third unit dealing with sound. In this unit, the students will be exposed to concepts such as pitch, vibrations, volume, and decibel. The unit will conclude with the students making a musical instrument. Finally, in *social studies* we will be finishing unit 2 dealing with transportation systems, and beginning unit 3, dealing with cities of the past in order to meet the economic wants of expanding groups of people.

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

Fourth Grade - Reading: We are concluding the comprehensive study of poetry. Students have reviewed more thoroughly yet another form of literary genre and learned about an alternate way authors convey a message. Students begin to take a closer look at biographies and autobiographies.



Writing: Students finish up their presentations and arguments in their persuasive writing pieces. Writing now begins to focus on autobiographical sketches. These are narrative pieces that focus on one time in a person's life that has influenced or changed him/her. Students write about one important moment in time that has helped them to become the person they are today. Grammar usage and mechanics include editing and checking their writing for punctuation, grammar usage, capitalization, and spelling. Reinforcement of previously learned concepts such as sentence structure and parts of speech continues to be supported. Attention is given to handwriting and

how the final product will be presented or shared. Spelling and word study include understanding root words and suffixes, and homophones as well as the proper spelling of past tense verbs.

Mathematics: During this month students reinforce previously learned concepts about telling time. We will now take a closer look at elapsed time by estimating and identifying equivalent periods of time. Also students learn the relationships between and among seconds, minutes, hours, days, months and years. Multiplication and division are taken to a higher level by using two and three digit factors and dividends. Continued reinforcement of basic multiplication facts as well as strategies to help in memory retention of them is implemented. Students solve word problems using logical thinking and reasoning.

Science: Students are in the process of continued examination of the changes of states of matter. They will work their way into environmental science and interrelate the concepts of matter, in particular that matter is made up of smaller parts. This sets the stage for students to learn that rocks are made of minerals.

Social Studies: Students continue to study the contributions of immigrants in the shaping of our society. They explore and analyze how immigrants' contributions affect our communities, regions and nation.

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

Fifth Grade - Our Reading and Writing classes will involve our students in a study of Memoirs. This study will be particularly significant as it ties in beautifully with our Candace Wolf program, "**Honoring Our Elders**". We look forward to this powerful learning experience and would like to thank those who worked so hard to make it a success! We will also dedicate time to the study of **Legends** and **Tall Tales** during this quarter. In **Math 5** students will work with different measuring systems to calculate capacity, distance and weight. They will also become acquainted with converting these



measurements from customary units to metric units. In **Math 6**, our study of algebraic patterns and functions students will use and create tables and charts to extend a pattern and produce a rule. We will also be applying the order of operations to simplify numerical expressions. In **science** this quarter students will be completing their exposure to the principles of astronomy. In **social studies** we will study historical and contemporary sequence together. Students will examine the turning points that will serve as the foundation for their future study of our country's history. In our **Family Life** unit, parents and guardians will be invited to a general orientation session on April 16 at 6:00 p.m. The information session will take place in the Rock Creek Forest E. S. Media Center. Teachers will present information related to the curricular demands of the Family Life and HIV Prevention unit which will be taught in May. **Bill Harley** - Grammy award winning singer and song writer Bill Harley will conduct workshops with our fifth grade students on April 15. Please be advised that our students will visit **Westland M.S.** on April 20. In addition, Rock Creek Forest Elementary will hold its annual **Math Night** celebration on the evening of April 23, 2009. Our annual spring fair will take place on May 1, 2009. Please join us for a family affair to remember.

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

Parent Resource

Calling All Junior Astronomers! - Some of our parents have found a great deal on telescopes! The International Astronomical Union (IAU) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are among the organizations sponsoring the International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA2009). In support of IYA2009, astronomers have built a high-quality, low-cost telescopes called Galileoscopes™. For approximately \$15 plus shipping, your family can view the night sky just as Galileo did in 1609. There are several astronomical guides and activities, as well as additional information about the Galileoscopes™,

at www.galileoscope.org. Get out there and find a new planet!

Calendar



- Apr. 2 - Scheduled Code Blue/Red Drill
- Apr. 2 - Student Variety Show (evening)
- Apr. 6 - 13 Spring Break
- Apr. 23 - Family Math Night (Potluck begins at 6:00 pm; Math Activities @ 6:30 pm)
- Apr. 29 - Open House (9:30am - 10:30am)
- May 21 - Kindergarten Orientation
(No school for Kindergarten Students)

Kindergarten Orientation Thursday, May 21, 2009

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.



Rock Creek Forest Elementary School
8330 Grubb Road
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815
301-650-6410