

December 2011



Winter

“A new report by a presidentially appointed committee on arts education makes the case that such instruction not only helps young people find their voice but also is an effective tool in improving student achievement in all subjects.”

**(Excerpt from the Washington Post, The Answer Sheet by Valerie Strauss
May 30, 2011)**

Halloween Young Run

Congratulations to all of the students who participated in the Halloween Young Run on Sunday, October 23, 2011. We had a great turnout! Pictures from the run and the Ritchie Park banner are now hanging in the gym. Feel free to come by before and after school and take a look.



Sneaker Check Award

The “Sneaker Check Award” for the first marking period was earned by Mr. Nelson’s fifth grade class. Great job! The second marking period contest has already begun. Don’t forget to wear your sneakers on your P.E. day!

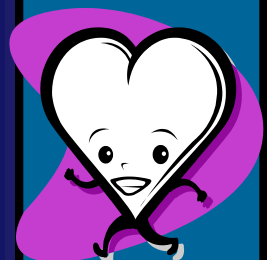
Currently in Physical Education all classes are continuing to learn about muscles and bones. Weekly, a new bone and muscle are presented to each class. This helps us learn about our bodies. We have also learned about the heart and how to find your pulse, the lungs and their job, and how to identify changes in your body when at rest and after exercising.

Kindergarten, First, and Second graders are working on a unit on throwing and catching skills as well as other ball handling skills (using hands) such as dribbling and shooting.

Third, Fourth, and Fifth graders are working on reviewing throwing and catching skills and being able to catch on the move. They will then apply these skills to a game situation.

Ms. Svejda

Physical
Education



MUSIC NOTES



Music Instruction

Kindergarten: Kindergartners are locating a steady beat to songs with changing meters. They are thinking about high/low and long/short sounds as well as the iconic representation (notes on the staff) of those contrasting ideas.

First Grade: First graders are identifying quarter and eighth notes and playing them on instruments. They are combining fast/slow with long/short sounds and learning about patriotic music.

Second Grade: Second graders are learning about musical form. They will soon learn about rests and apply that to their knowledge of note reading. They are performing a variety of singing games.

Third Grade: Third graders are getting ready to take their first recorder challenge (white belt). We use a system called recorder karate in which the students pass challenges to earn recorder belts. They are also learning about solfege (do, re, mi) with appropriate pitch and corresponding hand signs.

Fourth Grade: Fourth graders have passed the green challenge on their recorders. They are learning about dynamics (volume), distinguishing between major and minor keys, and decoding songs on the treble staff.

Fifth Grade: Fifth graders are preparing for the striped recorder challenge. They are learning about songs in compound meter and singing songs with descants. They are also learning about conducting patterns.

Ritchie Park Chorus

The Ritchie Park chorus performed their first concert last Thursday night. The students did an excellent job of performing the musical concepts that we worked on in rehearsal. We are now working towards the Richard Montgomery Cluster Concert coming up on February 8th at 7:30pm in the Richard Montgomery High School Auditorium.

Looking Ahead:

Cluster Concert 2/8

Richard Montgomery High School

Spring Concert 5/24

Ritchie Park Elementary

MYSTERY COMPOSER

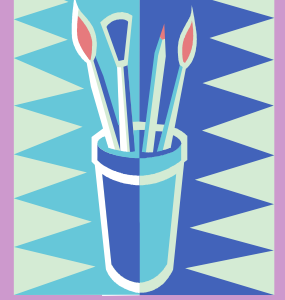
Our first mystery composer of the year was George Gershwin (1898-1937). He is best known for combining classical music with jazz. His most famous piece “Rhapsody in Blue” was written in a matter of weeks after a newspaper article incorrectly advertised the impending premiere of a brand new Gershwin piece. It made him famous and became his most enduring contribution.

Chen Yi (b. 1953) is a well-respected Chinese composer. She is married to Pulitzer prize winning composer Zhou Long. They both currently teach at the University of Missouri and are known for writing modern classical music. Several students noticed that her picture and biography were “hidden” in the school lobby showcase while we were trying to solve the mystery of her name!

-Mrs. Davis



Art Room News



“Art washes away the dust of everyday life”. Pablo Picasso

A Reminder... *Please send a smock to school with your child's name on it. The smocks will be kept in the homeroom classes. We are very careful but we do work with a wide range of materials, some of which are messy!*

*Kindergarten: The Kindergarten students are currently learning how to make their own colors by blending tempera paint. Their drawings and paintings are being inspired by a Wassily Kandinsky painting that they are studying! Kandinsky's paintings are typically filled with many shapes and colors and are very whimsical.

The students are also learning about texture and two and three dimensional art.

*First Grade: The First grade students are learning about the illustrator, Christopher Wormell. They are creating their own illustrations working in his style. They are sketching from observation and learning about the importance of drawing rough drafts. They are creating an imaginary setting for the characters in the illustration.

*Second Grade: The Second grade students are currently working with the theme of the still life. They are studying the work of Matisse, Van Gogh and Redon and creating their own versions of a still life collage. The students are learning about how shapes, (geometric and organic) can be put together to create new shapes and that compositions can be symmetrical or asymmetrical.

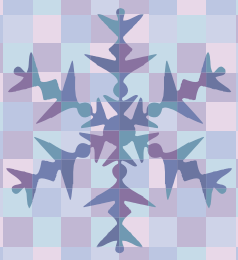
*Third Grade: The Third grade students are working with the theme of architecture! They are currently designing their “dream” tree house! They have learned about the importance of structure, detail and texture when designing a building. They are transforming their designs into clay tiles! They are learning about how to create a slab, the stages that clay goes through, and how to add color to the clay.

*Fourth Grade: The Fourth grade students are learning about composition and water-color techniques. They are creating fish paintings and using what they have learned about composition to create interesting rough drafts. They have used different water-color techniques on their final draft to add color and different effects to the painting.

*Fifth Grade: The Fifth grade students are learning about the art work of Peter Max! They are creating batiks inspired by his work. The batiks are brightly colored and whimsical like Max's work!



From the Media Center



READ, READ, READ! That's what we're all about! There has been lots of excitement and loads of fun as our Reading Incentive Program "**READING IS ENLIGHTENING!**" is well under way. We have new "Campers" turning in "lightning" sheets every day! Excellent start everyone! It is not too late to start. "Lightning" sheets and information on the program are available in the Media Center and on the Media Center web page. Keep up the great work!

Congratulations to Mrs. Oliva's second grade class for winning the first quarter Overdues Contest...where the **LOWEST total wins!** They have earned a popsicle party. **OUTSTANDING!** This is also a great time to remind everyone that students in grades 1-5 may check out two books for two weeks and Kindergarten students check out one book for one week. Due dates are stamped on the back of the book for everyone's convenience. When that due date comes up, the book must be brought back to the Media Center. Students who want to keep their books longer may **renew** them for an additional two weeks (Kindergarten is one week).

Students in grades 3 through 5 will soon be introduced to the Black-Eyed Susan Book Award Program. This is an exciting program sponsored by MASL, the Maryland Association of School Librarians. Participants must read a certain number of the nominated books in order to be able to vote for their favorite. A special part of this program is that only **STUDENTS** in the state of Maryland get to choose the award winners! There are two categories we are focusing on-Picture Books and Chapter Books (Gr. 4-6). Third through fifth graders have the opportunity to work on the books independently and those who qualify to vote (by reading the required number of titles) will participate in a Voting Party in April. Information about this program is also on the Media Center webpage.

Kindergarten students have been studying maps and globes, what makes books non-fiction, fiction and fantasy; and animals.

First Graders have been studying cultures and took a look at CultureGrams, an online resource.

Second Graders have enjoyed folktales from around the world, and are now reviewing the parts of a story, how to re-write a folktale, and what makes a good storyteller.

Third Graders have been hard at work mastering the Dewey Decimal System, learning the AGOPP Research Model we use at Ritchie Park, and using CultureGrams for research.

Fourth Graders have also reviewed AGOPP and are now working on their Native American research projects.

Fifth Graders have learned how to use star charts to study the night sky in preparation for their upcoming Astronomy unit and have looked at the life and works of Langston Hughes.

Please continue to keep those **used computer ink cartridges** coming! We earn \$1 for each cartridge we recycle. What a great way to help the Earth and Ritchie Park at the same time. Cartridges should be put in a zip lock bag and can be dropped off in the Media Center.

Image from familyreading.org



"Reading will give you lasting pleasure."

Former First Lady Laura Bush