

# "HOW WAS YOUR DAY, DEAR?"

## 3rd Grade Newsletter

### October/November 2009

How many times have you asked your third grader, "How was your day, dear?" and heard the reply, "Fine." Then asked the question that naturally follows, "What did you do today?" and heard, "Nothing." Well...feel comforted knowing it is a *universal question* with a *universal answer!* Our newsletter is set up to equip you with timely information. In lieu of asking the *universal question*, the information will provide you with ideas for discussion with your child.

Parent/teacher/student communication is an extremely important part of your child's education. We all play an important role in the communication process. As teachers, it is our job to keep you abreast of the goings on in the classroom. Therefore, you will be receiving a newsletter periodically. Your child's responsibility is to promptly deliver the newsletter to you and return the signed portion to school. Your job is to read, discuss, and sign the newsletter. If we all work together, this means of communication is sure to be a success.

We look forward to working with you and your child! Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Anne Calabretta  
Mr. Chris Higgins  
Ms. Liz Hum  
Ms. Yvonne Mar  
Ms. Taryn Veith

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We have read the newsletter.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Student Signature

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Parent Signature

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#### NEWS FLASH

#### CURRICULUM UPDATE

We will continue to work on our very exciting unit in Science: **Plant and Growth Development**. During this unit, students will observe the growth of their plants from seed to flower. They seem to be enjoying this unit so far, as we will also be learning about the parts of flowers, bees, and the pollination of flowers.

In Social Studies our first unit, **Where We Live**, is under way. The children have been focusing on the elements of a map. Also, students will be working on reinforcing the economic resources and geographic features introduced in second grade. Part of our study is thus far has also included being able to identify human, capital, and natural resources as well as natural and human-made features.

We are very pleased with our spelling program; however, we know that sometimes your child may be confused with the directions of an assignment. If this is the case, please send a note or an email to their teacher, and we will be happy to make the directions more clear for them.

Also, keep in mind that third grade students are still developing skills to use when spelling. Work that is published will be checked by the teacher and have the correct spelling on it. However, some written work that comes home may contain spelling errors. As we continue teaching spelling strategies throughout the year, it is our hope that spelling errors will begin to appear less frequently. Also, we are expecting students to use the resources (word walls, word lists, words on the paper they are given, etc.) around them to help them spell words correctly. Like a sport, in order to get better, spelling must also be practiced. Remember, this is an on-going process.

Reading groups within homerooms are getting underway. With close to a ninety-minute reading block, we are able to have structured centers that contain smaller instructional groups directed by the teacher. There is also a focus on word study (spelling work) within these instructional groups. Small group instruction will focus on exposing children to a variety of text including work with expository readings. This term the concentration will be on descriptive writing as well as the following comprehension

strategies: making connections (text to self, text to text, and text to world), visualizing, and questioning.

Students are currently using a writing rubric that addresses the six traits of writing: organization, ideas and development, word choice, voice, sentence fluency, and conventions. We are slowly breaking apart each trait so that students will be knowledgeable on the expectations of our grading. As we teach each trait, we expect students to continue to use what has been previously taught with what is currently being taught.

## Boooo!

As Halloween approaches, students will be participating in poem presentations that relate to this day. They will be evaluated on their speaking skills as they present their poems to the class. **Information about this assignment will be given two weeks prior to Halloween.**

## Pumpkin Math

We are planning a fun activity for the end of October...Pumpkin Math!! On **Friday, October 30 from 9:20-10:45ish**, the students will be engaged in math activities involving pumpkins. Each class needs at least five parents to make this possible. If you are interested in volunteering, please send a note with your child this week. Each volunteer will need to furnish a medium sized pumpkin and a few utensils. We will send letters to volunteers explaining the activity in more detail.

## Homework Check

We are pleased to announce the majority of third graders are consistently completing their homework. However, we are concerned with those children who are not completing homework on a nightly basis. Now that we are in a regular homework routine, you can expect your child to have math and spelling homework each evening. In addition to this, there may be an occasional special assignment in another subject area. Please check your child's student planner every night to be sure your child has completed all of their homework. Thank you for your support with teaching the children about the responsibility of homework.

Please note that math homework will never be graded. Our policy for math homework is to check over homework as a class. Students are asked to check their homework with a crayon or colored pencil as the teacher goes over the assignment. Questions are addressed as the teacher reviews the assignment. Math homework is meant to be practice for the skill that has been taught in class.

## Communication Alert!

We would like to reiterate that we have found that e-mail is the most efficient means of communication between teachers and parents. However, we realize that sometimes it is necessary to contact us through other means and we welcome all forms of teacher/parent communication. Here are our addresses once again:

Mr. Higgins - Christopher\_B\_Higgins@mcpsmd.org  
Ms. Hum - Elizabeth\_A\_Hum@mcpsmd.org  
Mrs. Calabretta - Anne\_Calabretta@mcpsmd.org  
Ms. Mar - Yvonne\_H\_Mar@mcpsmd.org  
Ms. Veith - Taryn\_E\_Veith@mcpsmd.org

## Progress Report Update

We are noticing that the children are taking the progress reports seriously because we have seen a positive change in the students' learning skills. We want to reemphasize that a "L" on a progress report reflects that students are progressing in this area. There is no reason to be overly concerned if your child receives a "L". However, we encourage parents to talk with their child about areas for improvement and to set personal goals.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!

October 2	Half day for students
October 6	PTA Meeting at 7:00
October 7	Walk to School Day
October 9	Fun Run
October 12	Open House for parents
October 13, 14	Field Trip to Brookside Gardens (Calabretta and Mar on October 13 and Higgins and Hum on October 14)
October 14	Flu Clinic
October 15	Multicultural Night at 7:00
October 16	No School - Maryland Teachers Convention
October 23	Cultural Arts Program
October 30	Halloween Activities (Pumpkin Math, Parade, and Party)
November 2	Professional Day for Teachers
November 11	Report Cards distributed
November 11, 12	½ days (Conferences)
November 26	½ day (Thanksgiving)
November 27-28	Thanksgiving Holiday

## IN LIEU OF...(THE UNIVERSAL QUESTION)

- What story is your teacher reading during literature time?
- What are some elements of setting, other than place?
- What are the elements which are included on most maps?
- Provide some examples of natural, capital, and human resources.
- Think of an example of two mental images that you have visualized in a story you have read recently.