

# Middle School Newsletter

# November 2011

October was a busy month: International Children's Day, Terra Nova tests, camp, band concert and, of course, Halloween. Among all this busyness, the students are working hard. We are thankful for your support.

## Important November Dates

November 1	Mass (Feast of All Saints)
November 3	Curriculum Night: 6:00 – 7:30 Children share curriculum with parents.
November 4	Carpool Coffee, 8:30 – 10:00 A.M.
November 5	Short North Gallery Hop: 6:00 – 10:00 Childcare provided by Erdkinder.
November 8	Board of Trustees Meeting, 6:00 P.M.
November 15 and 17	Parent/Teacher Conferences
November 21 and 22	Parent/Teacher Conferences
November 23 – 25	Thanksgiving Holiday – NO SCHOOL

## Academic Information

### Mathematics

In November the math survey of skills will be given. Each group is tested on the skills they have studied since September. The fifth and sixth years will have a whole number and a decimal test. The sixth years will also have a fraction test. The fourth years will have 3 tests that cover almost all of the whole number skills. These tests will be sent home and can be used as a guide of what each child needs. Your child might want to look at the last set to see in which areas of math he/she has improved.

There are quite a few students who have gotten behind in word problems. Susan will help them at recess, but not all at once. Your child may make arrangements to come early or to work after school.

In place of Math Club, Susan has been doing a math group. The focus of November is fifth grade math word problems. Any fifth year student may participate. Snack may be eaten at 3:00-3:10. Students provide their own snack unless they are officially in Aftercare. Band members come after band, eat snack and begin work. The session is over at 4:00 and students not picked up will be sent to aftercare.

Everyone has started geometry. We have been learning or reviewing perimeter and area of quadrilaterals.

Facts are being finished quickly now. There are only a few fifth and sixth years to finish and about half the fourth years. When you help your child study a good method is the fact family. In each family there are four facts that use the same three numbers.

$5+8=13$	$6 \times 8=48$
$8+5=13$	$8 \times 6=48$
$13-5=8$	$48 \div 6=8$
$13-8=5$	$48 \div 8=6$

It would be a good idea to study 5-10 minutes each night, if possible. Thanks.

## **Biology**

The children have been given Anatomy packets with a list of requirements. We are focusing on the Skeletal, Muscular, and Nervous Systems. Some of the packet can be done at home and some must be done at school. They must have their biology binder in school every day.

## **Grammar**

Verb is the word! We are delving into various aspect of the verb. The Montessori materials mostly being used for this work are the sentence analysis materials and verb boxes. Hope you were able to use them with your child on Curriculum night. SRA work is going well. Most children are up-to-date!

## **Reading**

Fourth year students have chosen to be in one of two reading groups: one is reading Summer of the Swans, a Newberry Medal winning book by Betsy Byers. This book focuses is about 12 year old orphan girl, Sara, and her relationship with her brother, Charlie, who is mentally handicapped due to a childhood illness. If your child is reading Summer of the Swans, ask them about Aunt Willie's ride on the motor scooter.

The other group of fourth year students is reading a different book by Betsy Byers: Trouble River, which is an adventure set in pioneer America. Dewey's cabin is attacked by Indians who pursue him and his grandmother. If your child is reading Trouble River, ask them what "Grandma" is like.

Fifth year students have just begun reading from the collection of books by Gary Paulsen. Some are reading one of the sequels to Hatchet. Others are reading some of his adventure books, or his comedic books, or his character exploration books. Paulsen has written a wide enough variety of stories that there is at least one book that should appeal to everyone. Ask your child why they chose the book they did.

Sixth year students have begun reading Detectives in Togas, a mystery set in Ancient Rome, involving a group of Roman schoolboys, one of whom is accused of a capital crime! Can his friends prove his innocence? Can they discover and reveal the true criminal? Can we learn about Roman culture from reading this book? Be sure to ask your sixth grade student about the author's inspiration for the story.

## **History**

Fourth year students will be studying the Timeline of Life this month. As they research animals and geography from the past they will be doing a great deal of reading, note taking, and writing. They will be reading about dinosaurs, trilobites, cephalopods, mastodons, cycads, conifers, and millions of years worth of other ancient life.

Fifth year students will be reviewing the Needs of People materials as a method of researching culture. They will work through the pre-made materials and then be asked to research a culture of their own choosing, using the Needs of People as a foundation for that research.

Sixth year students will soon finish their study of Ancient Greeks and will present to their peers some self-directed research. Following that, they will study the Ancient Romans and how

their civilization has contributed to our modern world. Their reading book, Detectives in Togas, will hopefully supplement their understanding of Ancient Roman culture.

### **Welcome Back!**

Welcome back, Sandra Matheny! Sandra, our music teacher, is finally back at school following surgery and initial therapy. While the students enjoyed their time with Sean, and will miss him, we are also happy to have Sandra back with us!

### **Curriculum Night**

Curriculum night was fun. Lots of parents and children came. While MS students shared their work, siblings played quietly with pattern blocks. Some parents helped with work, some got timed on facts, others played games. It was a good night.

### **Giving Many Thanks**

Thank you for your efforts to get your children here on time or early during the Terra Nova tests. Most children seemed calm and ready for the tests. All the special subject teachers plus tutor Mary Jo Vogeler helped. This allowed us to provide a positive testing environment for everyone and accommodations our students needed.

We would also like to thank our classroom parents who contribute so much of their time to assist in the classroom, furnish food, etc. for special events and otherwise offer support.

Happy Thanksgiving!

*Thank you for your support as we work with your children. As always, if you have any concerns or questions, please contact us.*

Sincerely,

Karla McKenna – [kmckenna@cducation.org](mailto:kmckenna@cducation.org)

Susan Walling – [swalling@cducation.org](mailto:swalling@cducation.org)

Bill Reed – [wreed@cducation.org](mailto:wreed@cducation.org)