



Ben Franklin Herald

DECEMBER 2008

Benjamin Franklin Elementary School

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From the Principal

Happy holidays! If I did not have the opportunity to speak with you and wish you season's greetings at conferences last week, I hope that you had an enjoyable holiday break.

This time of year brings the beauty, as well as the beast of winter. Please make sure that your children are dressed appropriately for the cold weather. We also recommend that you are aware of the daily weather reports as they might provide an early indication for delays and potential cancellations.

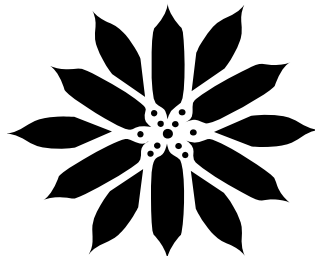
Student achievement is our highest priority. By establishing and supporting high expectations for your children, you send a positive message that their education is important. Take advantage of teachable moments by asking your child questions about the books your children are reading. Quiz their understanding of literary elements such as plot, characters, and setting. Turn everyday trips to the grocery store into opportunities for your children to practice skills like rounding, estimating, and basic addition and subtraction. The PSSA tests are quickly approaching so authentic teaching and learning opportunities like these reinforce what they are practicing in school.

Finally, I want to recognize the students, teachers and community members who make the Ben Franklin K-Kids such an important part of our school. Thanks to all the members of the Ben Franklin community for supporting our Love Basket fund drive, the K-Kids met the lofty goal of 2000 units for this holiday season. The final number was actually 2098!

It's great to see that the true spirit of giving is alive and well!

Happy Holidays!

-Mr. Minnick



Dates to Remember

December 3	Holiday Band/Choral Concert 7PM at East Pike School
December 4 & 5	Santa's Workshop
December 17	District String Ensemble
December 24-Jan. 4	Winter Break
January 5	School Open



School Closings and Delays

When weather is severe enough to warrant a school delay or closing, announcements can be heard on several local radio stations: WCCS (1160 AM), KDKA (1020 AM), or WQMU (92.5 FM). The announcement will state "Indiana Area School District" and includes all schools in the district. Please do not call the school. Our phone lines need to remain open to receive emergency information.

CLASSROOM NEWS

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten had a busy November! We participated in the Veterans' Day assembly, finished up our unit on the senses, talked about being brave and prepared for the Thanksgiving holiday. We will be participating in the school wide Teddy Bear fund drive as well as taking an imaginary trip around the world as we celebrate December holidays. We wish your family peace and joy this holiday season!



FIRST GRADE

First grade will be busy with many activities in December. In Reading we will continue to read stories in our Treasures anthology. Your child is working on building words and word families, such as cat, hat, and mat that rhyme. We will be learning about our Heartwood attribute HOPE. Math finds us learning to measure, practicing telling time to the hour and half-hour, counting money and telling number stories. There are many school activities we will also participate in such as Santa's Workshop, making our blue snowman turn white via monetary donations and bringing in gloves, mittens and hats for our Caring Tree. In Social Studies, we are teaching the children about Mexico and it's culture. Please remember to listen to your child read books to you from their READ book bags, as we are developing our reading skills. ©

SECOND GRADE

The children in 2nd grade have been focusing their math skills on four topics:

- Numeration and place value
- Money
- Telling time
- Data collection and analysis

These concepts and skills are developed and expanded over time. It is suggested that some follow-up be done at home, especially with counting money and telling time.

The children should be able to show a given amount of money in a variety of ways. For \$0.25, the children could show a quarter, two dimes and a nickel, or five nickels. They can show various amounts for money up to \$1.00. Have the children tell you the time on an analog clock rather than a digital one. Practicing all of these skills will help your child in the coming months in math. We build upon this basic knowledge.

THIRD GRADE

Classes are currently putting the finishing touches on their math addition unit and will now be exploring subtraction concepts and facts. We have also completed our language arts theme, Investigations. Our next theme will focus on Discoveries. We will also continue learning about the Southwest Native Americans.



FOURTH GRADE

In Social Studies we are continuing our study of the United States focusing on the sunny Southeast. Our math classes are working on multiplication and division fact mastery. In language arts the students are creating their own version of The Twelve Days of Christmas centered on a theme of their choice.

FIFTH GRADE

We would like to express our thanks to all of the parents who took time to meet with us for conferences.

In academics, our math classes are working on fundamental skills with opportunities for extension and problem solving. Our students are also exploring the events that led up to the Revolutionary War, as well as the war itself. We will be using a variety of resources to make this phase of history come to life. In science, we are studying basic physics concepts. We are also working to improve our skills in the area of persuasive writing.

Because of the hectic pace the holidays bring, it is the perfect time to "study early and study often" to prepare ahead of time for test and quizzes.



Merry Christmas.

SIXTH GRADE

December is upon us! The sixth grade will woo us at the **Holiday Concert** on **December 3rd**. They will participate in the **Holiday Shop Spectacular** provided by the PTA to purchase gifts for family members and friends **December 4th and 5th**. They will also try to help the school meet our **Children's Hospital fund drive** goal with opportunities to participate in an auction at lunchtime. Sixth graders will also be participating in a homeroom **Geography Bee** for the selection of our representatives for the school-wide bee in January. What fun! Look for upcoming information on the **Family History Projects**. As you encounter family over holiday gatherings, encourage your child to solicit stories from relatives. Happy holidays to all our sixth grade families.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Parents/Guardians:

How do we teach children to care?

How do we teach them to be empathic, kind, thoughtful, and helpful? As adults we often ask ourselves these questions. Naturally, young children are solely concerned about themselves (known as egocentric thinking). Children tend to think that they are the most important things and that everything revolves around them. Helping them understand another person's feelings and perspective takes a lot of work on our part.



This time of year can be extremely helpful with this task. Everywhere you go or look there are people asking for your help to make the holiday season special for those less fortunate. Take the opportunity this holiday season to talk with your children about being caring individuals.

Remember, children model what they see and hear. Be careful to demonstrate these caring behaviors throughout your daily lives as you interact with your children, other family members, and others that you meet. We at school will strive to model these behaviors as well.

Have a wonderful Holiday season!!!

K-Kids



"We Build"

Thank you to everyone who has been supportive of our programs thus far this school year!

The K-Kids were able to collect \$75.58 to donate to UNICEF while trick-or-treating on Halloween.

Ben Franklin Elementary collected 2,098 items for the Love basket Collection for ICCAP.

For the Teddy Bear Fund Drive this year in December, the K-Kids have each made an original piece of clay pottery or artwork that we will be selling raffle tickets December 8 through the 12 and draw the winning raffle tickets on the afternoon of the 12th.

We are starting a new recycling program to trade our garbage for cash! We have signed up with TerraCycle and are now collecting Nabisco brand cookie wrappers, Any brand of juice pouches, Bear Naked Granola bags, and any brand of energy, granola, nutrition, cereal and protein bars with an inner foil lining. If you ask your family,

friends and neighbors to collect them for you, we will raise money for Ben Franklin Elementary! The collection bins will be in the lobby.

We wish you a very happy and healthy holiday season!

Ms. Helm, Ms. Zacherl, and The K-Kids

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Kindergarten through third grade classes are beginning to work on their jump rope skills. Students will start with long jump roping in small groups and will then progress to single jump roping on their own. Fourth through sixth grade students will begin a volleyball unit in which they will learn the rules of volleyball, how to serve, as well as how to bump, set, dig and spike a volleyball. After learning all of the skills, we will then begin to play games of volleyball during class.

ART

Kindergartners made pinch pots using clay (shhh...they might be keeping it a secret. Some plan to give them as Christmas presents), while first graders created symmetrical designs. Second graders have been working on an Egyptian profile painting that we jazzed up with jewels, sequins and glitter. Third graders are putting a new twist on an old favorite by painting self-portraits that are from behind and looking into a mirror. Fourth graders used the slab hand-building clay technique to create an Egyptian sarcophagus. Fifth graders are busy adding color using paint or oil pastels to their grid self-portraits. Sixth grade is continuing a printmaking lesson using linoleum.

LIBRARY

A lot has been accomplished in the library over the past few weeks. Let your child tell you all about it. If you have a *kindergarten* child, ask him how the chipmunk got his stripes. If you have a *first grader*, ask her how to find a book in the easy section of the library. If your child is in *second grade*, have him tell you about the Caldecott Award books. If your child spends her day in *grade three*, give her the opportunity to share a folktale from Italy. If your son or daughter is a *fourth grader*, he or she can tell you how a worm spends his day. Your *fifth grade* student can find answers to your questions using reference books and your *sixth grader* can tell you how to locate books in the library using our computer OPAC system.

Technology

Need a holiday gift idea? The program our students use to learn proper keyboarding technique is available online.

You will need to log on to

<http://www.smartkidssoftware.com/ndsun3.htm>

This is actually a newer version than we use in class, so the lesson/practice sequences follow a world history theme, rather than the outer space theme we follow in class.

Speedskins are also available, but boxer shorts work well. Place the shorts over the keyboard, with the waistband at the top. Put the left hand through the left leg opening and the right hand through the right leg opening. You now

have a creative alternative that will help your child keep their eyes focused on the monitor.

NURSE

Physical examinations are required for students in kindergarten or first grade and also for students in sixth grade. If your child has had a private physical, please return the completed form to the nurse. If you prefer to have a school physical for your child, Dr. Twal will be conducting school physicals at Ben Franklin on Friday, December 12. A school physical permission form was sent home to all students who had not turned in a private physical form. Please return these forms as soon as possible.

Love Basket

The Love Basket Foundation is a voluntary organization whose mission is to provide an emergency food bank for the people of our county. Our school collected non-perishable food items from November 17 until November 24. Our grand total was 2098 items

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SECRET SANTA'S WORKSHOP IT'S HERE!!

Our fun and festive "Santa's Workshop" will be held on Thursday, Dec. 4, and Friday, Dec. 5. The workshop is a great opportunity for your child to shop independently (with some assistance from PTA volunteers) for parents, grandparents, siblings, pets and others. Our new supplier, 84 Fundraising, promises more than 100 new items to select from, with prices ranging from 25 cents to \$6 -- and, most are less than \$2.50!

Letters and budget envelopes have been sent home to assist you in planning your child's shopping. Please make sure to write your child's name on the envelope and seal it. Teachers will let their students know which day the class will be shopping.

And, don't forget that each child will receive a coupon for \$3 from the PTA and 84 Fundraising to be used for purchasing merchandise!

If you have any questions, please call Andrea Ebeling at 724-463-8248 or Amanda Owens at 724-349-0272.

REFUNDING

I hope everyone is still clipping and saving those labels and box tops. The contest for the homeroom with the most turned in by December 15th will win prizes for their room. Please try to save and send in all you can, as we use these points to buy needed items for our school. Thanks for your support.

PTA REFLECTIONS

Congratulations to all this year's participants in the 2008/2009 Reflections Program. There were 53 entries, and all were winners! The top three winners in each

category will be forwarded to further competition. Here are the results of the contest:

Primary (K-2) Literature

1st Place Harley Kessler
Intermediate (3-5) Literature
1st Place Noor Ghanam
2nd Place Ellen Simmerman
2nd Place Sarah Coffman

Middle/Junior High (6th grade) Literature

1st Place Paul Birch
2nd Place David Hanson

Primary (K-2) Photography

1st Place Avery Redd
2nd Place Nathan Birch
3rd Place Chloe Kocinski

Intermediate (3-5) Photography

1st Place Benjamin Strong
2nd Place Kallie Kocinski
3rd Place Jack Ferguson

Middle/Junior High (6th grade) Photography

1st Place Jennie Graham
2nd Place Jennie Graham
3rd Place Jennie Graham

Primary (K-2) Visual Art

1st Place Harley Kessler
2nd Place Nathan Birch
3rd Place Breanna Smathers

Intermediate (3-5) Visual Art

1st Place Kallie Kocinski
2nd Place Joseph Cook
3rd Place Rachel Baumler

Middle/Junior High (6th grade) Visual Art

1st Place Jennie Graham
2nd Place Abbi Henry
3rd Place Rachael Shanshala

Honorable Mentions are: Makenzie Kessler, Benjamin Strong, Sandra Shanshala, Katie Davies, Sarah Coffman, Jack Ferguson, Danielle Rosenberger, Vincent Birch, Ryan Holby, Paul Birch, Grace Margita, Alexis Smathers, Noor Ghanam, Samantha Palmer, Brianna McCurdy, Ellen Simmerman, Jarrett DeFoor, Kara Gibbon and Rachael Shanshala.

Thank you to Mr. Minnick and Donna Swatsworth for coming and speaking at our ceremony. Thank you to Dana Smathers for arranging the refreshments. And the biggest thank you to the students for their creative projects and for the parents support.

VETERANS DAY

A huge thank you to the following people for making the Veteran's Day assemblies a huge success!

First Private Eddie Marozzi	Tracey Redd
Major Chuck Ziegenfuss	Melissa Kocinski
Mr. Minnick	Travis Berry
Mrs. Bruner	Lexi Gamble
Mrs. Balcerak	Ben Linder
Mr. Moran	Amia Redd
Mrs. Werner	Amanda Owens
Mr. Olear	Stacy Kovalchick
Mr. Stanek and his staff	Chris Slupek
Ben Franklin Teachers	Candy Adamson
Cafeteria staff	

We really appreciate all of your time and dedication!
Deb Gibbon
Melissa Shanshala

The winners of the Sheetz Gift Cards for the PTA Membership drive are:
Terri Williams, Alan Baumler, Sherry Horne,
George Edwards, Connie Merriman, Steve Griffith, and
MaryAnn Olechovski
Congratulations to all!