



Ben Franklin Herald

JANUARY 2010

Ben Franklin Elementary School

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

From the Principal

Happy New Year! Welcome back from what I truly hope was a restful and peaceful break shared with family and friends. Looking ahead, there is better than one half of the school year remaining and much work to do.

Dates:

January 18th Teacher in-service

January 29th "Data Day #2". This will be a half-day/11:45 dismissal. Teachers and administrators will analyze NWEA data, look for achievement trends among our student body and establish instructional goals for the remainder of the year.

Attendance: Please make sure your child attends school on time. Maximizing their instructional time here at Ben Franklin positively impacts their learning! In the event of a tardy or absence, please remember to send an excuse. Thank you!

Inclement Weather: During this blustery time of year, proper coats, shoes, hats, and gloves are encouraged more than ever. Also, please stay tuned to your local news channels for updates on school delays and/or dismissals.

Reading Tip: Nothing is more important for fostering readers than showing genuine enthusiasm. Ask your child to read to you, a younger child, or a special visitor. Talk with him about what he is reading and respond supportively.

Heartwood: The Heartwood attribute for the month of January is Loyalty. Loyalty is being faithful to a person, group, or ideal based on the understanding that we are all part of something greater than ourselves.

In closing, I offer these (borrowed) words, which helped decide my new year's resolution:

"It's faith in something and enthusiasm for something that makes a life worth living." Oliver Wendell Holmes

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

December was a busy month in kindergarten! We learned about many different holidays celebrated around the world. We found out it is nice to receive special things this time of year, but also to give. Each classroom made a blanket to donate to the Alice Paul House. We gave lots of pennies to the Teddy Bear Fund Drive, too! We want to wish everyone a Happy New Year!

FIRST GRADE

Happy New Year! New things are happening in First grade. In math we have started a new unit. In Unit 4 we will explore measurement, place value, number scrolls, and continue with addition and subtraction. New readers are appearing every day! We will be assessing your child's individual reading level this month with the DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment). We will look at things in new ways as we read our Scholastic News and learn about winter, hibernation, and Martin Luther King in Science and Social Studies.

SECOND GRADE

Second graders will begin a science unit in the second semester entitled, Changes. The students begin the unit by thinking and talking about a familiar concept, how things around them change. The children will focus on the changes that occur in solids and liquids. Through many hands-on explorations the children will discover that:

- Changes occur all the time in the world around us.

- Some changes happen quickly, and others take place over a period of time.
- Substances can be classified as solids, liquids, and gases.
- Mixtures can be made by combining solids, liquids, and gases, or any combination of these.

We are sure that your children will share some of their new knowledge after these exciting experiments.

Keep encouraging your child to read their W.E.B. books nightly. Spending ten minutes a day reading, the leveled books your child selects, will greatly increase his or her skills in reading as well as boost their vocabulary.

THIRD GRADE

Third grade classes are currently completing their subtraction unit and will soon be exploring multiplication concepts and facts. We are working together through our language arts theme, "Discoveries". Our classes are involved in various activities correlated with our social studies unit on the Native Americans. The students are starting to prepare for the PSSA tests, which will be given in the spring.

FOURTH GRADE

As the New Year begins students will continue to practice multiplication in math. Problems will range from basic facts through two digits times found digits. The students will then work with different types of graphs and solve problems with the information. The 4th graders will be investigating electricity and magnetism in science class. In social studies we will be plotting our letters from around the country from the Great Mail Race. We will also be starting to study a new section of the US. In reading students will continue to read stories from the anthology, and complete related activities. They will also be required to read a Newbery Award Winning book, on their own, and then complete a book report at school.

FIFTH GRADE

Our fifth graders will be exploring graphs this month. The students will increase their knowledge and improve their use of a variety of different types of graphs including bar, line, and stem and leaf graphs. In addition, we will create appropriate scales for original graphs and do some projects with Excel spreadsheets. We will also be involved in playing graph paper battleship! Some extension activities for further use of mean, median, mode, and range will be included too! Early algebra explorations through discovering rules will round out our study in this unit. The students will be working to increase their skills in making inferences, drawing conclusions, identifying facts, and opinions, and recognizing the elements of a story. Various fictional and non-fictional selections will be read. We will continue to use reading strategies to improve reading comprehension. In science, the students will be learning about how shape impacts air resistance and the relationship

between mass and gravity. They will also explore why objects are weightless in space why people and objects move differently on the moon than on the earth.

SIXTH GRADE

Welcome back to 2010! We hope your holidays were cheerful and restful. January, like other months, is jam packed with deadlines and activities. The **Ben Franklin Geography Bee** is scheduled for January 7th in the gymnasium. Don't forget the **deadline** for the **Family History Project** is January 12th! The **Festival of Immigration**, which supports the Family History Projects, is planned for January 22nd at East Pike. It is a great opportunity for our Ben Franklin sixth graders to interact with all the other 6th graders in the school district. We will be sharing our projects and ethnic foods on the afternoon of Friday, January 22nd.

STUDENT COUNCIL

Happy New Year!!!

Student Council was busy during the month of December. The annual Teddy Bear Fund Drive was a HUGE success. Students and faculty raised over \$2000 for local children's hospitals. Congratulations to 2nd grade for winning the Penny Wars and to 4th grade for raising the most amount of money. We would like to send a special thank-you to all the families that helped to make this fundraiser such a huge success. Another Movie Night is being planned for Friday, January 15, 2010. Additional information for the upcoming Movie Night will be sent home soon.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Experts agree that bullying not only exists in every school and community, but in our country as well. Bullying exists in adulthood as well; often the causes of adult bullying are rooted in diversity. Diversity is defined as the understanding that each individual is unique, and the recognition of individual differences. These differences can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, age, appearance, physical/mental abilities, or belief systems. As our school and country as a whole becomes more diverse, it is important to teach our children the importance of appreciating individual differences. Guidance lessons this rotation will focus on diversity and the importance of appreciating individual differences. Students will learn that people can vary based on "inside" characteristic (personal strengths, abilities, likes) as well as "outside" characteristics (hair color, eye color, height, age). I hope that the students will gain a deeper appreciation of their classmates' personal differences. I also hope that the students will understand that everyone has a unique quality that makes them who they are. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

As the new year begins, we will be starting our volleyball unit. Fourth through sixth grade students will be working on volleyball skills. They will learn the bump, set, serve, passing and the rules of the game. After learning the skills and rules, we will begin playing volleyball games during physical education class. Kindergarten through 3rd grade students will be learning the skills of volleyball using beach balls and will then start playing games of newcombe ball, which is a variation of volleyball in which you are allowed to catch and throw the ball.

ART

Kindergarten made all sorts of sparkly, festive projects for the holidays, while first graders are using a "magical" technique to create a symmetrical design. Second graders made a squiggly line sculpture and gingerbread or snow people, while third graders celebrated the holidays by making snow globes. Fourth graders are adding color to their sarcophagus and will next sculpt a mummy to place inside. Fifth graders are adding color to their self-portraits, while sixth graders continue to carve their linoleum.

NURSE

I would like to wish everyone a **healthy** new year! Please remember the following tips for keeping your children healthy this year.

- Have your children eat breakfast every day and eat breakfast with them. Breakfast will give your children energy to listen and learn in school.
- Encourage your children to be physically active every day.
- If your children do become sick, keep them home until they are fever free and without vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours.

I would also like to share some new information for the new year. The Pennsylvania Department of Health has proposed new immunization requirements for the 2010/2011 school year. The new requirements are listed in this bulletin. Please send in any updated private physical forms and immunization records for your children.

TECHNOLOGY

Last year IASD adopted a new reading and language arts series for our students in kindergarten through fifth grade. When choosing this new series, our teachers were excited that it included a technology component, a free website that is accessible to both parents and children. The website, www.macmillanmh.com, offers activities that complement the story your child is reading. Once on the website, click on Reading in the column on the left, then choose Pennsylvania in the Select a State box, and finally click Go. The Families tab will provide you with resources, including additional practice for weekly comprehension skills and strategies.

The Students tab lists all the stories by grade level and offers additional practice for vocabulary and spelling words, as well as oral language activities. Check out this great tool to extend the weekly themes and skills your child is experiencing in school each day!



Don't forget about the **Terra Cycle program** at school. Check out www.terracycle.org for more information! Remember that items should be clean and in sets of 10 before bringing them in to school.

Card Collection- as you clean up from the holidays instead of throwing away your holiday greeting cards, send them to school with your child and the K-Kids will give the card fronts to the Prisoners at Pine Grove to use as postcards.

Thank you to everyone who purchased raffle tickets for the beautiful clay ornaments. Ben Franklin was able to raise \$2,497.50 for the Teddy Bear Fund Drive. We were thrilled to be a part of that donation!

Plastic Lid Collection:

Ben Franklin is collecting Plastic lids for a child with cancer. For every 1,000 lids the young boy will receive a free chemotherapy treatment. Please collect your lids from ANY plastic bottle (soda-pop bottles, butter tubs, liquid soap, etc). Please bring your clean lids to the bin outside of room 11, in the mail hallway.

PTA

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MEMBERSHIP

Thank you to everyone who joined the Ben Franklin PTA this year. If you're not a member but would still like to join, please send in your membership form by January 31, 2010. We appreciate your support.



Save the Date

Father/Son Banquet

Tuesday, February 23, 2010 6-8 pm

Ticket sale dates to be announced

Attention 6th Grade Parents:

We will be holding a meeting Tuesday, January 26th in the school library to discuss the 6th grade celebration and yearbook. Please mark your calendar and try to attend. We need your help to make these events successful and fun for our students.

REFLECTIONS

We've received word from Council and these are our students who have won at the next level of PTA Reflections competition:

Avery Redd--2nd Place Primary Literature
Kara Gibbon--4th Place Intermediate Film Production
Chloe Kocinski--1st Place Primary Photography
Grace Margita--2nd and 3rd Place Intermediate Photography
Benjamin Strong--3rd Place Middle/Junior Photography
Congratulations and Good Luck at the Region Level!

REFUNDING

The winning room with the most Box Tops and Campbell's Labels was Mrs. Crandall's room. They will be getting a pizza party. We will be starting a new contest in January, look for more info to come home. The PTA would also like to let the families who save and send in their Campbell's labels know that we were able to put them to good use. We just recently were able to get two new acoustic guitars for Mrs. Werner using our labels. Thank you so much for your continued support with this program.

Santa's Workshop was a huge success due to the efforts of these wonderful volunteers:

Candy Adamson, Ronda Amsler, Laura Arbuckle, Alan Baumler, Shari Baumler, Candy Beighley, Heather Critchley, Gretchen Davis, Stephanie Drahnak, Laura Ebeling, Michele Fatora, Deb Gibbon, Melinda Juart, Melissa Kocinski, Stacy Kovalchick, Brandy Lauer, Heather Marcozzi, Angel McCracken, Michele McGarvey, Joan Moran, Kim Morrow, Kelly Mouser, Susan Nutter, Tracy Pernesky, Linda Raible, Melissa Shanshala, Stacy Simmons, Chris Slupek, Dana Smathers, and Donna Swatsworth.

Thanks for all your hard work!

Also, a special thanks to Mr. Stanek and his staff for obtaining tables for us and cleaning up all those empty boxes, Mr. Cadile for happily providing use of the gym, and and Mrs. Bruner and Mrs. Balcerak for assisting with so many things, time and time again.

Happy New Year!

Andrea Ebeling and Amanda Owens, co-chairs

Caring Homes Directory Dr. David R. Allen, District Psychologist

The ninth edition of the Indiana Area School District's Caring Homes Directory has been mailed. I am happy to say that we reached this year's goal of having 45% (1,294) of our District's students represented in the directory. The directory has certainly grown since the very first directory in 2001 which had 13% (442) of our students included. If you have received this year's directory please carefully exam your families information and let us know if any corrections are needed. We try our best to keep up with current information but we do make mistakes and sometimes the ever-changing family

information gets past us. We apologize if we did not "get it right" for your family.

I believe that the growth of the directory can be directly related to the value that parents place on communication with other parents. Parents want to be assured that there is appropriate supervision whenever their children leave there home. Please continue to utilize the directory and encourage your friends to take the Caring Home Pledge for the 2010/2011 directory. Information about the Caring Home Program and a printable version of the pledge can be found on the District's website (www.iasd.cc). That's right, we are already accepting pledges for next year's directory.

Finally I would like to give a great big "shout out" to the Armstrong-Indiana Drug and Alcohol Commission. Their general financial contribution made this year's directory a reality. Funding for the project was provided through the Commissions Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant. A special thank you to Executive Directory Kami Anderson and Deputy Directory Carrie Bence. It is wonderful to be in a caring community where many people and agencies are interested in the health, welfare, and safety of our children. If you are unfamiliar with the Armstrong-Indiana Drug and Alcohol Commission you can learn all about them at their website (www.aidac.org).