

Letters from GGM - February 2023

GEORGE GRANT MASON SCHOOL

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Terlecky Talk

Dear Parents and Guardians,

February is here and despite the cold outside, GGM is still a warm and cozy place to be. This month we are learning about sportsmanship, reading with partners, and celebrating several special days.

We kicked off the month on World Read Aloud Day, February 1, by reading *Lucia Lacorte, Poor Sport* by Christianne Jones at a school assembly. Ms. Emily Dowling, our physical education teacher, led a lively discussion about sportsmanship with our students sharing their ideas about how they can be good sports.

On February 3rd, GGM's good friend Dr. Chung visited to help us celebrate National Children's Dental Health Month. Our speech therapist, Mrs. Stephanie Bussard, brought Dr. Chung to Pre-K, Kindergarten, and first grade so she could share with them the importance of good dental hygiene.

From February 2-17, the whole school will be participating in Pick a Reading Partner (PARP) program which is designed to encourage a love of reading and learning, as well as reinforce the relationship between child and caregiver. Ask your child to tell you all about their fun activities, such as guest readers, reading partners, and the Potato Book Character Contest.

Valentine's Day is coming up this month. The students may bring in cards for their friends and classmates. They may also bring in small gifts, for example, pencils, bookmarks, erasers with little hearts on them, etc., if they so choose. However, there can be no food brought in for another student. Even pre-packaged store-bought food may not be brought in to school.

All month long, we will be celebrating Black History Month by teaching our students to respect the history, culture and accomplishments of African Americans. By doing so, we hope they will become more aware and ultimately more tolerant of everyone in our diverse community.

Finally, please consider supporting the PTO's Dine to Donate fundraiser at Characters Restaurant on February 6th. You will be supporting the school with the added benefit of not having to cook dinner!

Character Trait for February:



Upcoming Events

February 2-17 PARP – Pick a Reading Partner Program

February 3 Dr. Chung visits Pre-K to Grade 1 for National Children's Dental Health Month

February 6 Dine to Donate at Characters Restaurant from 3-9pm

February 8 PTO Meeting 7pm

February 14 Potato Book Character Contest due date

February 15 Board of Education Regular Meeting at 7PM

February 16 PARP Reading Challenge Logs due

February 17 PARP winners announced

February 20-24 Presidents Week – School closed



Pre-K: Ms. Braffett

Pre-K had a great start to the New Year. We worked on the letters "F", "G" and "H". We had fun making letter "F" frogs and letter "G" giraffes. Pre-K enjoyed practicing letter formation with the "Trace and Erase" activity on their own chalkboards! Pre-K continues to do an excellent job at naming words that begin with each letter and we really enjoy pointing out objects around the room that begin with the letter of the week. We also loved pretending to be scientists. We mixed two special ingredients together to make pretend snow. It was snow much fun to play with this mixture in the sensory table and it even felt cold, just like real snow! Pre-K learned all about hibernation and had fun identifying different animals that hibernate, migrate, and adapt during the winter. We learned about KWL charts and created our own chart about hibernation. This month we are excited to finish our hibernation theme and learn all about family, friendship and love.

Kindergarten: Mrs. Rush

Hello 100! Kindergarten has been counting the days until 100 days of school! We will finally make it on February 14, 2023 (unless we get a snow day)! In celebration of the 100th Day, students will make their own 100 Day projects using their creativity, fine motor skill, math, and writing skills. Kindergarten is looking forward to displaying their creativity. In school the students keep track of how many days we are in school on a daily calendar, will make a 100 Day Crown with 100 drawings on it, and make a necklace by adding items in groups of ten – we know 10 groups of 10 makes 100!!! Students are learning different ways to count to 100 and different ways to show 100! We are learning more and more every single day and we will soon be 100 days brighter!

First Grade: Mrs. Matthies

February got here and it is going fast! It is the start of a new year and we continue to be super busy in first grade. In reading we are digging deeper into a story and really getting to know the main character. We also are going to discuss different phases that affect emotion. For example: yelling "Surprise" to someone at a surprise birthday party. These phrases help us to feel how the main character might feel in the story during an important event. We are learning to use these phrases in our writing when we are summarizing a story. In phonics the words are getting bigger and bigger. This month we are working with the

digraphs, ch and tch. We will also be working with words that begin with wh, and end with ng and nk. In addition, we are also learning to use ing and contractions. Phonics will be busy this month in first grade! In science, we continue to learn about animals and their different habitats and diet. In math, we are learning to model two digit numbers in two different ways. For example, using 10 rods to count by ten and using one cubes to represent the ones. The friends love to do this kind of math. They think it is fun. Last but not least in social studies we will continue to read about America, while at the same time learning about people who helped form our country. Some of these people are Harriet Tubman who helped the slaves via the Underground Railroad and George Washington Carver who discovered more than 300 ways peanuts can be used as well as being a pioneer in crop rotation!

Second Grade: Mrs. Blume

Students in second grade are in the midst of two science studies. They are learning about wind as a source of energy and how it can do work. First, they explored the properties of materials in order to create a sail for a boat which was then tested on a track to see if it could interact with the wind (a fan) enough to push the sail along the track. The students are now using what they learned about their sails' material to create the blades on a windmill. The windmill will work to lift a cup with small weights in it. The students are also learning about the diversity of animals and plants in a variety of habitats. Can an animal or plant survive in any habitat? How does an animal survive in its habitat? What are its adaptations? These are some of the questions we are exploring in second grade. February also brings triple digit subtraction and addition! We are continually practicing our math facts to help solve these algorithms smoother and quicker..

Third Grade: Mrs. Rocklin

Happy February, the month of love and appreciation. In math, we have been working on division strategies and using the inverse operation of multiplication to help us solve two and three step word problems. We will continue to play Around the World, our multiplication game to enhance our multiplication skills. In social studies we have been learning about Pangea, the first global countries that were once combined. We will be doing a book report on the migration of people and animals and how they have adapted to different

climates and terrain. Our plants are growing! In science we have been tracking the growth of several seeds and the different ways each seed grows based on teams deciding how to water each plant. ELA has been a series of narrative books in which we compare and contrast the author's intent and style of writing. We will also continue to work on our comprehension skills. I will continue to use Dylan Dollars and Luna Loot to enhance good behavior in and out of the classroom. The students love being able to shop on Fridays to earn prizes with their dollars.

Fourth Grade: Mrs. Bock

We have been very busy in fourth grade! In math, we are going to start our study of division. The students will learn different strategies to solve multi-digit division problems. In Social Studies, we are going to continue our study of New York State and discuss the Iroquois League. In Science, we are going to continue to study the Earth's system by natural hazards and types of weathering. My fourth graders have been doing an amazing job! Keep up the great work!

Fourth Grade: Mrs. Rota

Fourth Grade has been hard at work!! In February we will continue to explore non fiction texts and work on our reading and writing skills. We are starting the month with an interesting read aloud, Groundhog Gets a Say (which is a fun non fiction text), coupled with some activities for Groundhog Day. We have a variety of other engaging nonfiction texts to read and discuss this month. We will review main idea, text structure, and text features. Students will also work on a research project to celebrate Black History Month. Spelling and grammar continue to be a focus for us as well. The students continue to work diligently on their assignments - they have much to be proud of!

Fifth Grade: Ms. Valastro

This month 5th grade continues to integrate reading and science as we read our novel that takes place on a game reserve in Africa. We are about to explore the wonderful world of fractions in math and look forward to a few upcoming experiments in science. Good sportsmanship will be on our minds throughout the month as well the spirit of love & kindness!

STEM: Ms. Klimowich

Third grade STEM students will be introduced to Makey Makey kits in the month of February. What

are Makey Makey kits? These invention kits allow students to connect everyday items to computer keys. The small USB device will plug into the students' Chromebooks to power the circuit board. Students will connect alligator clips to items found throughout the classroom. Once the students have connected their clips and USB cords, closed loop electrical signals will send their Chromebook a mouse click or keyboard signal. The class will be able to use any object in the classroom, transform it into a computer key and use it to code!

Physical Education: Ms. Dowling & Mr. Brunner

This February, our students will be playing basketball in Physical Education. During this unit students will work on their passing, dribbling, and shooting skills through a wide variety of games and activities. Basketball allows students to work on their hand-eye coordination, strength, agility, balance and so much more! Being a team sport, basketball will easily allow us to continue working on our teamwork and sportsmanship skills as well.

Music: Ms. Cienki

Hello! I hope everyone has a great February! In music, we're doing a variety of things as always. From the play getting ever closer, to song creating, to learning about listening maps and music from around the world. 3rd grade is starting recorder, and we're going to go over instrument families as well. It's going to be an exciting month!

Spanish: Ms. Brusseler

¡Bienvenido Febrero! In January we were focusing on the parts of our body. Specifically, we started with our head and face. Students of all grades were able to work together to identify each part of our face. We also focused on reviewing how to say the date including what month, year, day of the week, and season it is. I see tremendous effort from all students and I definitely see it paying off. As we enter February, we will move onto other parts of our body by drawing and labeling these parts together. I am excited to see what this month brings!

Reading Specialist: Mrs. Sayles

In February, we are LOVING books in the Reading Room! We will be reading Valentine's Day books and writing valentine and candy inspired descriptive writing. We will focus on reading fluently while practicing strategies. We will also read about influential black Americans throughout history and in present time.

Library: Mrs. Mui

February celebrates PARP, Pick a Reading Partner! During Digital Literacy, students will be checking out books to read for pleasure to share with a reading partner. Remember to keep track of minutes read in your PARP reading log to see which individual and which class read the most minutes in the whole school. Families can sign up to read in their child's classroom and help everyone log additional time! Students will also be able to view our entries for the voluntary at home activity, the Potato Book Character Contest here in the library media center (due 2/14). If anyone is in need of a potato, please come see me. Thank you to the PTO for organizing an event to celebrate GGM's love of reading!

Multi-Subject: Mrs. Donnelly

The Show Must Go On! After a series of cast illnesses, adverse weather events and other pre-holiday craziness, my 4th graders were finally able to perform their Reader's/Puppet Theater version of the Christmas classic, Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol! For Reader's Theater, students do not memorize their lines or act out the roles. In our performance, students recorded their roles and acted with student-designed puppets. Students helped design the PowerPoint "scenery" in the background, added special effects (think Marley's chain and scary ghost howls!) One student was the Technical Director as she was "backstage" controlling the various scene changes and audio on the computer. Because we had so much fun, my students didn't even realize that they were working on their reading fluency and expression skills while learning about how a character can change over time and of course, the various positive themes of the text. Students performed for an audience which included their 4th grade peers from Mrs. Rota's and Mrs. Bock's classes and school VIP's including Mrs. Terlecky and Mr. Poka. I am SO PROUD of their efforts and enthusiasm! Stay tuned for our next Reader's/Puppet theater production in the Spring, The Chocolate Touch!

Math Specialist: Ms. Stack

Happy February! Students have continued to work hard in the math room. Everyone has been very focused and ready to learn. We have been working on division and multiplication with our older grades. With our younger grades, we have been practicing place value, addition, subtraction, and learning new numbers. We are excited to see what February

brings. Our love for math is like dividing by zero, you can not define it.

Art: Mr. Stankiewicz

Pre-K, Kindergarten and 1st grade were introduced or developed more of their painting techniques. They were taught how to hold the brush, and to know when to use a small or large one. These grades, and those above them, learned about or reviewed color, mixing, the primary colors, the secondary colors, and how to make them. They were allowed to mix colors right on the table to experience the thrill of changing those colors into something completely new! Kindergarten and 1st grade created, colorful, abstract, playgrounds in the style of Wassily Kandinsky. Second and third grade also created a radial symmetry project. They learned about the different types of balances in an artwork, and created an original Mandala. Despite the lack of snow, GGM painted three-dimensional snowman in some grades and winter scenes in the 4th and 5th grades. Our students have learned about shapes, creating forms/spheres, Foreground, Middle Ground and Background, and practiced different painting techniques.

Speech: Mrs. Bussard

February is National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM) and Mrs. Bussard would like all the students in GGM to understand how their tongue and teeth play a significant role in the production of the sounds that make up our speech. Mrs. Bussard even set up a special visitor, Dr. Se-A Chung (from Alpha & Omega Dental in Tuxedo) for pre-k, kindergarten, and first grade. Dr. Chung will emphasize the importance of establishing good dental habits including how to brush and floss. The children will also receive a "goodie bag" with a newsletter, timer, toothbrush, toothpaste, and floss from Dr. Chung.

PTO on the GO

January was a busy month for the PTO! We brought back the Scholastic Book Fair (shout out to Susan Mitchell for heading this up!) invited local author Lucy Bermingham to read her book, "Tickety Boo" to students, and sold hot chocolate and cider at Tuxedo's annual Bonfire. Please join us on February 8th at 7pm for our next PTO meeting. Also, don't cook on Monday, February 6th! Instead, dine in or take out at Characters in Sloatsburg from 3-9pm. Fifteen percent of your bill will be donated to the PTO!









