

# Letters from GGM - March 2023

## GEORGE GRANT MASON SCHOOL

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### Terlecky Talk

Dear Parents and Guardians,

"You make each day a special day. You know how, by just your being you. There's only one person in this whole world like you. And people can like you exactly as you are." February 27th was the twentieth anniversary of Mr. Rogers' death but his inspiring words, spoken to children but meant for parents to hear, as well, still have power and relevance today as we teach our children about acceptance, our character trait for March. On March 2nd, our fifth grade teacher, Ms. Michelle Valastro, along with her class, kicked off Read Across America by reading *I Am Enough* by Grace Byers at our Acceptance Character Assembly. Students were very excited to share their thoughts on the best ways to make their friends and schoolmates feel accepted. Ms. Valastro also emphasized the importance of self-acceptance by encouraging students to share what things they love and are most proud of about themselves.

GGM will continue to celebrate Read Across America with a full week of fun activities, from wearing themed clothing to reading their favorite picture books with high school students. Our librarian, Mrs. Valerie Mui, is coordinating these activities. She continuously finds ways to ignite our students' love of reading.

Students have been enthusiastically practicing for their upcoming musical, *On the Radio*, with our music teacher, Ms. Cailin Cienki. There will be an evening performance on Friday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at 7PM, and a matinee on Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at 2PM. It promises to be quite an entertaining show so do not miss it!

Our GGM Kindergarten Orientation will be held on Tuesday, March 14th in the GGM multipurpose room. If you know anyone who has a child who will be attending Kindergarten in September, please encourage them to attend. They can sign up for the orientation by calling our registrar, Mary Dixon, at 845-351-4797 extension 3110 or emailing her at [mdixon@tuxedoufsd.org](mailto:mdixon@tuxedoufsd.org). We look forward to welcoming our class of 2037.

#### Character Trait for March:



### Upcoming Events

#### **March 2-8** Read Across America

- 3/2 Spirit wear
- 3/3 Favorite hat
- 3/6 Pajamas
- 3/7 College shirt, vacation or dream occupation wear
- 3/8 Bright colors and glasses

**March 3** Quarter 3 progress reports for grade 5

**March 8** PTO Meeting at 7PM

**March 10** "On the Radio" Musical at 7PM (doors open at 6:30PM)

**March 11** "On the Radio" Musical at 2PM (doors open at 1:30PM)

**March 14** Kindergarten Orientation at 1pm in GGM Multipurpose Room

**March 15** Board of Education Regular Meeting at 7PM

**March 16** PTO Movie Night at the Lafayette Theater at 7PM

**March 17** Superintendent's Conference Day – No school for students

**March 18** End of Trimester 3

**GGM CELEBRATES  
WOMEN'S HISTORY  
MONTH**



### **Pre-K: Ms. Braffett**

Pre-k had an awesome month. We worked on the letters "H," "I," and "J". We had fun making letter "I" ice cream cones and iguanas and jellyfish for the letter "J". Pre-k continued to practice letter formation with the "Trace and Erase" activity on their own chalkboards and worked hard identifying words that begin with each letter of the week during small group stations. We also learned how to use a ten frame and had fun counting and identifying the correct amount given in a ten frame. Pre-k had fun making Valentine's Day slime and playing with glitter shaving cream! Pre-k learned all about the importance of love and being kind to one another. We made Valentine's Day cards for our friends and family, too! Pre-k slowly walked their way into class as 100-year-olds during our 100th day of school. Additionally, each student brought in 10 items and we counted each of these items up to 100. We even learned how to count by 10's up to 100. This month we will be talking about healthy foods and celebrating St. Patrick's Day with many fun and magical science activities and crafts!

### **Kindergarten: Mrs. Rush**

From the ocean to the desert, plants and animals are everywhere. Kindergarten is learning all about the different habitats of the world. We will begin our journey of habitats with the ocean learning all about the beautiful sea creatures of our planet. We will travel from the deserts of Kalahari to the deep seas of the Arctic to learn all about the different animals, plants, and their living environments. We will use our reading, writing, and artistic skills to create our very own book about the habitats of the world. We are excited for this journey to see life all around the world.

### **First Grade: Mrs. Matthies**

March is here. In first grade, we are learning to comprehend a story on a deeper level. We do this by using the close reading strategy. As we read a text, we highlight important details such as setting and discuss how this adds to the plot of the story and the final outcome. We also discuss other possible outcomes if the details of the setting change. In phonics, our spelling list contains words with the skill inflectional endings. This ending is the ing ending. These words are getting longer but we are having fun learning to read them and learning to decode them. First we read the root word without the ing and then we add it. For example: play + ing = playing. In science, we are at the tail

end of our animal report. The children will be sharing them this week. In social studies, we are ready to learn more about when it means to be a patriot in America. We continue to learn about important American symbols such as the Lincoln Memorial and the White House! Last but not least, In math we are starting unit 8. This unit focuses on two digit numbers and how we add and subtract them by regrouping. It might get a little spicy, but we can do it. We got this first grade. Happy winter days, families! Thank you for all you do for first grade!

### **Second Grade: Mrs. Blume**

Second grade recently finished a Jaqueline Woodson author study. We looked for common themes that were woven throughout her children's books. Some of the themes are family, self-love, identity and courage. She is a prolific writer who has written books for all ages! March is Women's History Month and we will celebrate the achievements of women scientists, mathematicians, activists, artists, environmentalists, and more. The students have just about completed the final drafts of their animal books and we look forward to sharing them with other grades and with you. Stay tuned for a date to visit our class.

### **Third Grade: Mrs. Rocklin**

An exciting development in our science project! We have growth from our lima beans and rye grass! We will continue to track the plants' growth in order to make presentations on our hypothesis and data we collect. In math, we are starting our exciting adventure into fractions. We will be focusing on vocabulary and working on comparing equal parts. We will make a project with partners that is an architectural design project. The students will have to create space for a garden to grow vegetables in equal groups based on the people who order specific vegetables. ELA focus for the month is on clarifying strategies. We have begun working on "Red Lollipop" and "The Broken Bike Boy and the Queen of 33rd Street." Once we have completed a vocabulary study and clarifying strategies we will be writing summaries for both pieces of literature and create an opinion piece that will be presented to the class on which book they liked better and why. This month we celebrate National Reading Month and Women's History Month. We all know how important reading is. It is fundamentals to all learning and as a class we will continue to have independent time to read.

Students love being able to find a space of their own in the classroom to concentrate on their reading. They love to share with me what they are reading and I just love watching their faces light up with excitement. For Women's History Month, we will be doing a research project on individual women who have impacted our past and present. We look at this as an opportunity to celebrate others who have made a difference in the world and focus on what we can do today to make a difference.

#### **Fourth Grade: Mrs. Bock**

We have been very busy in fourth grade! In math, we are going to continue to explore multiplication and division. We will discuss real life applications of multiplication and division as we study area and perimeter. In social studies, we are going to continue our study of New York state and discuss European explorers in New York. In science, we are going to continue to study the Earth's system by discussing erosion. My fourth graders have been doing an amazing job. Keep up the great work!

#### **Fourth Grade: Mrs. Rota**

In ELA, students will be practicing their ELA skills by reading a variety of non-fiction texts to celebrate Women's History Month. We are also continuing to study different spelling rules to improve our spelling. In writing, we will be working on utilizing the RACE strategy to help us formulate constructed responses. Please encourage your students to continue to read varied texts at home. You can never read enough!

#### **Fifth Grade: Ms. Valastro**

Happy March! We are kicking off this month in 5th grade by hosting the character trait of acceptance. We are looking forward to reading about this and sharing what it means to us with the younger students at GGM. In ELA, we are practicing essay writing and we will be bringing some of our writing to life through projects. Continuing fractions are on the agenda for math and we are exploring plant adaptation in science. We are looking forward to working on the yearbook with Mrs. Donnelly as we roll into spring. Fifth grade is certainly busy!

#### **STEM: Ms. Klimowich**

Kindergarten students will be learning about digital citizenship during the month of March. Students will learn good habits to maintain in a digital world. We will be focusing on balancing screen and play time, online safety, our digital footprint, and how to be kind online. Students will learn that good digital

citizens are mindful of what they post, protect personal information, report cyberbullying, and never communicate with strangers. The students will participate in an "unplugged" coding activity. The students will use the skills they have learned on our coding apps and printed arrows to create a physical model of a coding course within the classroom for a classmate to complete.

#### **Physical Education: Ms. Dowling & Mr. Brunner**

Happy March! To begin this month, students will continue working on their basketball skills: dribbling, passing, and shooting. At the end of the month, students in Pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will start a Fitness unit that will include working on our jumping roping skills! 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders will begin a Badminton unit which will allow them to practice striking, hand-eye coordination, perception, and anticipation.

#### **Music: Ms. Cienki**

We are getting close to the musical which is going to be on March 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, and I hope to see many of you there. In music class, we are also very busy. 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade will be learning how to play the ukulele. Pre-K and Kindergarten are going to be exploring their emotions when listening to music. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is going to continue learning recorder and how to read music. Finally, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade are going to work on reading parts of a staff, as well as more music vocabulary. March should be a fun month for us all!

#### **Spanish: Ms. Brusseler**

¡Bienvenido Marzo! February went by so fast with all of our hard work paying off! In February we were able to name the parts of our face, so we moved onto other body parts such as arms, hands, etc. Our students have been super enthusiastic and excited to learn new Spanish vocabulary and it makes class so much more fun. By the end of March, we hope to finish learning about our body and move onto learning basic classroom commands. Again, we continue to review the date, as well as what season we are in. I am looking forward to seeing what March brings.

#### **Reading Specialist: Mrs. Sayles**

Spring is right around the corner, and we are reading about signs that the season is changing. We will read about planting and animals coming out of hibernation. Students in the upper grades are continuing to prepare for our state tests. We are using the "ACE" model to answer our questions. A-stands for Answer, C-stands for Citing our text



evidence, and E- stands for Explaining our answer. This allows students to be thorough in answering each question.

### **Library: Mrs. Mui**

Our Tuxedo Tornados are already celebrating National Reading Month with Read Across America Week! March 2<sup>nd</sup> through March 8<sup>th</sup>, join us in celebrating our love of reading by participating in spirit days! Each spirit day will have a read aloud to go along with it, along with more opportunities for GGM students to read that align to the NEA's Read Across America themes. Students may also participate in a bookmark contest to have their work copied so that everyone can enjoy it.

3/2- Get in the Spirit of Reading with Tuxedo Spiritwear or Colors

3/3- Hats Off to Reading: Wear Your Favorite Hat

3/6- Cozy Up with a Book: Wear your pajamas and bring a picture book to read with a GFB student

3/7- Reading Takes Us Places: Wear vacation attire, a college shirt, or dress like your dream occupation

3/8- Reading Makes Us Bring: Wear bright colors and sunglasses

### **Multi-Subject: Mrs. Donnelly**

GGM Yearbook News! We are pleased to inform you that GGM has selected a new yearbook provider for the 2022 - 2023 school year. TreeRing is a yearbook company that makes capturing student memories easy, and creates beautifully printed books.

We chose TreeRing because:

- They plant a tree for every book sold
- Online ordering is super easy
- Parents will have the option to create 2 FREE custom pages for your child. These 2 pages will print only in your child's yearbook. The combination of personal memories and school memories will create your child's own personalized yearbook. Custom pages can include vacation and camp memories, lists of favorites, sports, hobbies, clubs, and any other memories you want. This is available for ONLINE ORDERS ONLY!

We hope this change to TreeRing will help make your yearbook experience easier and more personal for you and your child. GGM Yearbook 2023 sales will start later this month.

### **Math Specialist: Ms. Stack**

Happy March! I hope everyone had a great mid-winter break. Now we are recharged and ready to do some more math. Students are working very hard to master their multiplication and division

facts. Students are also working on sorting, patterns and of course some critical thinking. We are excited for what is to come. Why did the leprechaun refuse to divide his pot of gold? Because he didn't want to give anyone a "fraction" of his wealth!

### **Art: Mr. Stankiewicz**

The upper grades continued their winter scenes, using foreground, middleground and background. This is a project done over several days in tempera paint. The younger grades worked on portraits. They learned about the proportions of the face. Kindergarten students colored with chalk, and mixed it with liquid starch. The 1st grade students used watercolor. All the elementary students created Valentines cards. While the pre-K used felt and googly eyes, they could decorate theirs anyway they wanted. All the other grades made a surprise Valentines card, learning a technique to continue drawing from a fold. Lastly, 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade created Doodle for Google drawings for an annual contest. Whether they join the contest or not, the students were to draw what they were thankful for.

### **PTO on the GO**

Thank you to all of our guest readers who read to GGM classes during PARP. Our Dine to Donate at Characters was a huge success! Thank you to Characters and everyone who dined in or carried out to support the PTO. Save the Date for our Retro Movie Night at Lafayette Theater in Suffern: Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. The movie selection will be chosen by our students.

And please join us for our next PTO meeting on Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.





















