

Focus on Curriculum

Building Foundations for the Future

February 2009



In today's world of Facebook, My Space, and instant messaging, we felt it imperative to address issues of Internet safety. Mary McCoy, Special Agent from the Office of Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania spoke with 5th through 8th graders. She emphasized the following critical points. First and foremost, a young person should only be on a computer if it is in a common area of the home, never isolated in a bedroom. A young person should never reveal any part of their identity online. A young person should never agree to meet anyone in person whom they have met online. Finally, a young person should immediately alert a trustworthy adult if they suspect anything is amiss. Mrs. McCoy definitely had the boys' undivided attention.

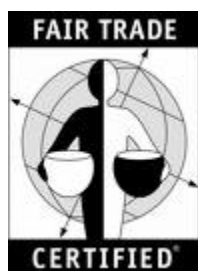
Kindergarten through second grades already are putting to use their brand new

SmartBoards. 1st grade read Dr. Seuss' *Lorax*.

Everyone played interactive math. After reading John Updike's poem *June*, 2nd graders found him on the Internet. Students also found clips honoring Lincoln's birthday and took a virtual tour of D.C. Kindergarten watched how great lower case letters were formed.



Reading, writing and arithmetic are still critical components of an elementary education. First graders are mastering their addition and subtraction facts. Second graders combine writing with social studies as they compose a comparison paragraph about community helpers. Third graders are concentrating on the reading of biographies this month. Excitement builds until the end of the month when the students, using props and costumes, become the person they have read about in a biography. Fourth graders are discovering how William Penn acquired the land we now call Pennsylvania.



Seventh graders are selling Fair Trade jCertified Divine chocolate bars during the month of February. Proceeds will be sent to the non-profit *Free the Children*. In their study of the Catholic Social Teaching principle of *Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers*, students have learned that even though a multi-national company may have an exemplary Code of Conduct, this does not guarantee a livable wage or safe working conditions for

workers. Fair Trade Certified means that every worker in the supply chain of the chocolate bars has benefitted from fair wages and humane working conditions. Students will encourage all to look for the Fair Trade Certified symbol on coffee, rice and bananas that are purchased. Look for the label and go to <http://www.transfairusa.org/content/WhereToBuy/> to discover where you can buy these ethical products.

As part of the physical education curriculum, seventh and eighth graders go to Jack Frost Mountain for a day of skiing.

Approximately half of the seventh graders have not had the opportunity to ski so they are offered introductory lessons. Skiing is a life-long skill that can play an important role in staying physically fit during the winter months.

Kindergartners in KA got a view of Polar Bears up close and personal on the SmartBoard. They learned that due to global warming, the ice in Hudson Bay now melts in the summer. The Polar Bear catches seals while perched on those ice floats so the bears have been forced onto the land during the summer months. They are losing an alarming amount of weight which has even affected the females' ability to carry baby cubs. To see what the students saw, go to <http://wizard.4teachers.org>. Scroll down and change Poster ID to Worksheet ID. Enter 47844 and click on that number on the next webpage.

In advance of their April trip to the Holocaust Museum in D.C., eighth graders are taking an in-depth look at that period of time via literature. They are reading Joseph Joffo's Bag of Marbles. Prior to beginning this piece of autobiographical non-fiction, students learned of the long history of anti-Semitism, and the historical reasons behind the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party.

What is better than Spanish class with Senora Uribe? Spanish class when the students get to eat the vocabulary!

As part of the kindergarten Spanish curriculum, the students learn the Spanish words for fruits and vegetables.

Senora treats the boys to la ensalada de frutas with bananas, strawberries, grapes, oranges and pears. Their favorite? The whipped cream topping!



