

Focus on Curriculum

Building Foundations for the Future

May 2009



What could be more delightful to watch than the *annual Spring Show*? This show gives each and every student the opportunity to sing, dance, and be a part of a very big production. Hopefully, this exposure will encourage theater participation in high school and beyond. Hats off to the Music Department and all the students for a glorious performance!



On a beautiful spring day, *fourth grade students took on the role of 18th century colonists* at the Colonial Pennsylvania Plantation in Ridley Creek State Park. While touring the farm, the boys heard the squawking of Guinea

Hens, as well hogs, horses and cows. The students got to make their own cake, apple cobbler, and shortbread with hand-whisked whipped cream. These treats were baked over an open fire in a dutch oven. They drew water from the well, sawed logs with a two-man saw, and made their own toy, a whizzer. They toured the 18th century house and marveled at how small the bedrooms and beds were back then. This supplemented their study of Pennsylvania in their social studies curriculum.

Third, fourth, and fifth graders would highly recommend Disney's Earth. Filmed on each of the seven continents and narrated by James Earl Jones, this documentary focuses on the struggling polar bear and the melting ice; the 4,000 mile long migration of the humpback whale from tropical waters where their calves are born to the icy water of Antarctica filled with krill; to the journey of African elephants through the desert in search of water. At one point in the film, one elephant mother and her calf get separated from the herd. The students did not find out of their successful reunion with the herd at the watering hole until the end of the film. Applause rang out in the theater!

Second graders are delighted with their new hardbound books – probably do to the fact that they are the authors and illustrators! Second graders have been learning about authors, illustrators,



authors who are illustrators, different styles of drawing, Caldecott award books, fiction and nonfiction books. The students then chose a topic that interested them. After researching their topics using encyclopedias and nonfiction books, the students were ready to write their own nonfiction books. As illustrators, the students drew their pictures in their own style of drawing to illustrate each page. The books were then published in hardback. The stories were enjoyed by everyone as each boy read and shared his creation.

On another beautiful spring day, *seventh and eighth graders made their way to Washington, D.C.* Via literature, eighth grade students studied the Holocaust. Before beginning, the students learned about the history of anti-Semitism and the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party in the 1930s which led to the Nuremberg laws, the ghettos, working camps, and the “Final Solution”. This was all in preparation for reading Joseph Joffo’s



account of his brother and himself trying to stay one step ahead of the Nazis in Vichy, France from 1941 to 1945. This unit of study concluded with a visit to the National Holocaust Museum and World War II Memorial. Seventh graders were fascinated with artifacts from the Civil War at the National History Museum. This visit enhanced both their social studies and literature classes as they studied the Civil War and read *Across Five Aprils*. Seventh graders also got a tour of the new Visitor Center at the U.S. Capital in addition to the Rotunda.

Service continues at St. Aloysius as part of the commitment to PAWS. Seventh graders sponsored a successful Reuse-a-Shoe drive. One hundred ten and one-half pairs of athletic shoes were brought to Nike. The rubber soles will be ground up and re-used as rubber flooring for sport courts and playgrounds. Students in 5B put together over thirty pasta meals for Food for Friends following on the footsteps of eighth graders putting together a ham dinner. Thanks to all families who contributed to both efforts.