

Valley Forge Elementary

May/June 2015 - Team Updates

Kindergarten:



The kindergarten classrooms have certainly been busy buzzing the past couple of months. During the months of May and June, we created insect books and learned all sorts of cool facts about insects. In our classrooms, we got to watch the amazing metamorphosis of butterflies and ladybugs. The butterflies arrived as caterpillars, formed a chrysalis, and emerged as beautiful painted lady butterflies. The ladybugs arrived as larvae, formed a pupa, and finally emerged as ladybugs! After a few days of observation, we let them go so the ladybugs and butterflies could live in their natural habitat!



We also learned about habitats in preparation for our trip to the Elmwood Park Zoo. We learned about the animals and plants in the woodlands, grasslands, ponds, and wetlands.

In Science, we moved from insects to magnets to floating and sinking. In math, we learned about addition and subtraction number stories and number sentences. We also covered measurement and fractions.

In June, we had a fantastic time visiting the Elmwood Park Zoo! We also participated in Move-Up day and Relay for Life. We will close the school year by finishing our study of habitats. We hope all the kindergarten students and their families have a wonderful, safe summer!

First Grade:

We made it! June is here and our days together are winding down. Despite our year coming to an end, first grade has continued to fill our days with learning and fun!

Our large group reading time is coming to an end but we are still reading every day! It is an amazing time of year for first grade teachers . . . the progress in all of our students is incredible! The first grade teachers are hopeful that the habit of daily reading continues throughout the summer.

As our Social Studies unit on Africa comes to a close, the children are busy summarizing what they learned about Africa . . . their lists go on and on! Our Science unit on organisms has brought “pets” to our classrooms. The children created terrariums that have Bess beetles and Pill bugs crawling around. They also created aquariums. We added guppies and snails so that the children could observe aquatic life as well. The children are hoping to get a few baby guppies so that they can “adopt” a pet of their own.



The children are all looking forward to the last week of school to experience “First Grade Fun Week”. Please make sure you are checking our list of “scheduled events” so that your child is prepared each day.

It has been a pleasure teaching your children this year. Have a safe and happy summer!

Second Grade:

We have been as busy as bees in second grade! Second graders should know that is a simile, as we learned about them in reading. We have also been learning how to summarize and to identify cause and effect. We have been making visual images in our minds and thinking about how we feel as we read. Remind your student to keep reading over the summer!

May was spent practicing for our music program, How Does Your Garden Grow? It was fun for students and for teachers! We are proud of our performance and thank Mrs. Nation for teaching us such fun music!

Of course it wouldn't be May without the always popular and exciting Field Day! Second graders ran, jumped, scooted, and danced their way through the day! Thank you to Mr. Johnson and to the parent volunteers for giving us such a great day! As our original day was much too cold, Field Day was rescheduled, but we had the Healthy Food Fair presented by third and fourth grade that afternoon. Everyone enjoyed sampling and learning why certain foods are better for us.

Earlier in May, Second Grade traveled to Philadelphia to see a production of Charlotte's Web. The theater was beautiful and we all loved the story and music.



Always a highlight of second grade is the Writer's Tea. Students chose a piece of their best writing to read to invited guests. Following the presentations, iced tea, lemonade, and snacks were served. As adults and children munched on the treats, students shared their writing portfolios. Everyone was impressed with all the hard work that went into each piece..

Our last science unit was the study of the life cycle of the butterfly. We all watched carefully as our caterpillars went through the process of metamorphosis. The study culminated with the release of the Painted Lady Butterflies. We learned about immigration in Social Studies and ended the year with a unit about the early history of flight.

It has been a pleasure getting to know our second grade students and their families. We wish you a happy, healthy summer! Remember to come back to visit us in September!

Third Grade:

VFE third graders have had a very exciting end to the school year! May and June were full of special events and activities! On May 13th, students shared their Famous Pennsylvanian projects. Students worked hard to research a famous person, shared their information with their classmates, and then later in the afternoon shared with their families at our Wax Museum! The kids did a fabulous job and felt very proud of themselves!

The Bee Man came for a special assembly on May 18th. The Bee Man ties in with our Plant Unit in Science, specifically the pollination portion. Our students loved participating in the whole group assembly where all students became a part of the bee hive. They then broke off by class for center rotations with the Bee Man. The highlight of the day was making a candle out of beeswax!



On May 21st, second graders visited our classrooms for our primary division Healthy Food Tasting event. Trader Joe's in the Gateway Shopping Center provided fruits and vegetables for this activity. Third graders worked hard on posters which shared important facts about each food. The 2nd graders loved tasting the healthy food and listening to the creative presentations!

Then on May 22nd, 3rd Graders had Field Day! The Rain Dance worked and we had a fabulous day of fun participating in all of the exciting activities Mr. Johnson and the many volunteers helped to set up and run! Thanks for making Field Day one of the best memories of the year!

After much preparation, our Pennsylvania show on June 4th was a huge success! All students who had a speaking part did a super job reciting their lines and the whole third grade did a wonderful job singing our Pennsylvania themed songs! The play is a great way to wrap up all of the things we have learned about our great state!

Our last theme in Language Arts focused on making laws and government. We were very lucky to have PA State Representative Warren Kampf visit on June 12th to talk about this and to share even more facts about our state of Pennsylvania!

On June 9th and 12th, students visited the Audubon Center for the last time. We are excited for our field trip to Crystal Cave on Wednesday, June 17th! This trip will review all we learned during our Rocks and Minerals science unit from the beginning of the year.

We have loved watching our students grow and learn this year and are so proud of all they have accomplished! We know they are in for more success in fourth grade! Thanks for a special year - enjoy your summer! We look forward to meeting the new third graders in September!

The beautiful month of May went by very quickly and we had many wonderful learning experiences. We started the month with the wonderful Spring Fair. We would like to thank all the members of the PTO and all the parent volunteers that make this such a special event. Thank you to all the teachers for donating the wonderful gifts to the raffle. We would also like to thank Ms. Reed and Mrs. Nation for their hard work. The fourth graders did a great job singing and playing for the Spring Concert and singing for the fourth grade music show.

We had a great time at Valley Forge Middle School for Move-Up day. The students were fortunate to have fantastic guides from the Gold Team showing the future 5th graders the lay of the land. We would also like to thank Mr. Gibson, the other administrators, and the staff for their outstanding presentations.



The Conestoga Relays went off without one dropped baton and all the students did a great job running their races. Thanks to all the staff and interns that helped with this event. The students would not be able to shine as brightly without the help of all the volunteers.

We want to give a huge thank you to all the parent volunteers and Mr. Johnson for their hard work to make Field Day full of fun and excitement for the 3rd and 4th graders. Thank you to the Team Leaders from Trader Joe's® who brought us all the wonderful food samples for our Food Fair. The posters we made for the 1st, and 2nd graders will be hanging in the Trader Joe's® store for everyone to see.

The month of June was short but we had some fun and learned so much. We want to start by thanking Ms. Carathanassis for coordinating the walking tour of Historic Philadelphia. The wonderful tour guides walked us around to the many historical sites and told us about the many less-known facts regarding these famous people and places.

The Social Committee and Mr. Johnson helped to put together a great talent show and everyone had a wonderful time. We want to thank all the students who participated and the parents who came to enjoy the show.

The Fourth Grade End-of-Year party was a splashing success and it could not have been accomplished without the parent volunteers who worked very hard coordinating the party and running the entire event. The Fourth Grade Team and all the students thank you for the fantastic party.

This school year was an outstanding year! The effect of everyone's hard work showed on our students' faces! Thanks to all the staff and parent volunteers who helped to make this happen!



Special & Support Area Updates

Library:



We are closing in on the final chapter of this year in the library. It has been a fantastic first year and I am grateful every day that I get to work with such wonderful students, faculty and parents. This year we had almost **35, 000** circulations! The library sure is a busy hub of learning, reading, researching (and a good bit of laughing too).

Kindergarteners spent the spring semester exploring various versions of fairy tales, looking at non-fiction, and enjoying many of the new picture books in our collections. We continue to talk about how to choose a book that is “just right” to take home.

Anansi stories and “Tell me why” stories were the focus of first grade library time. We had many laughs at Anansi the spider’s antics. Students learned the difference between the E (easy reader/picture books) and I (intermediate books) and had the opportunity to select from both of those sections in the library.

Second graders were introduced to the non-fiction classification system and did some research in the 599’s using the “It’s a Baby (animal)” series. We paid close attention to the non-fiction text features and took notes to answer specific questions. We also enjoyed poetry and the several narrative chapter books.

Third graders worked with Word to create bird posters using the Audubon Society’s online field guide to birds. They also selected biographies from the 921’s for their Wax Museum project on famous Pennsylvanians and did a library study of a children’s book author/illustrator.

Our fourth graders delved more deeply into research with their PAL projects, utilizing many print and online resources in the process. Many students worked on their presentations in the library and we had great mini-lessons on creating effective and attractive presentations.

Thanks go out to:

1. The students and families who have returned their library materials or paid for lost ones. It helps us maintain our wonderful collection for the use of all students.
2. The parent volunteers who helped out in the library this year covering new books, running the circulation desk, and shelving. Your time and talents are much-appreciated.
3. The PTO and parent community for your generous support and gifts to the library. All of the students benefit from your kindness and support and the resources will be well used.

You may have heard that our library was painted recently. This summer we’re getting new carpeting and the stacks will be rearranged. Be sure to drop in this fall to see the results!

Remember to visit your public libraries this summer and keep reading.

