



February 2008

Hello Parents,

February, being a shorter month, is whipping by, and there's a lot happening in the classroom. We're preparing presentations for Black History Month and we're in full swing with the science program through Environmental Concern. If you can make it out to Eaton next Thursday, February, 21, you can be part of the students' walk around campus to begin the design phase of our schoolyard habitat. We'd love to have you join us! Additionally, we were awarded a full grant to participate in Chesapeake Baywatch, although the program director asked if we could make a donation. It normally costs \$3,500 per class (it was \$1,200 last year!). Anything you could donate for this phenomenal program would be appreciated (checks should be made out to Discovery Creek Children's Museum). We are also planting seeds, and the germination is evident on each classroom's windowsill. The children are learning about the Chesapeake Bay watershed and how their careful attention to individual habits and corporate habits will have a big impact on the fresh water available to us. We're very excited about this phase in our curriculum. It sweeps across the entire curriculum! Don't forget the science fair, to be held on May 2!

The children are engaged in novels during literature circles. Please be sure to check their homework. They have chapters to read (based on the group's decision), discussion questions to write and vocabulary words to note and define. The words can be those that are new to them so that they have to reference a dictionary to get the meaning or they can be words they simply enjoy, like "poof!" I just desire to lead them into the beautiful world of words, words, words. I am beginning to tape their discussions and am amazed at how savvy they are in their conversations. I believe these book discussions are a worthy way to develop deeper comprehension and the drive to read. Wordly Wise continues to be an important block in their literacy development. These classes consistently score in the high range! We also read newspaper articles and work on mini-lessons on such topics as word roots, grammar and proofreading.

In math, we are beginning our unit on data and probability. We will begin with graphing to represent data, and continue on to outcomes for simple probability. This is a fun and hands-on unit, and we will need your help at home. We will be connecting these concepts to real world data and situations such as the upcoming election and weather patterns. Children may need to bring in various math "manipulatives" from home to use in our classroom work. I will keep you posted through homework assignments— please be sure to check math homework every night.

We're studying early exploration of America in social studies and will move into colonization in the next couple of weeks. Hopefully, you've received notification of the State Fair that happens on June 1. If you didn't get the handout, please let us know since it's full of tips and resource bases to get your child started. The children will study their state at home and then work in groups to develop a presentation of a particular region of the U.S. The fair is a highlight of the school year!

We continue to work together to bring the best of what we have to your children. This school year has been a wonderful journey, and we will continue to strive to make this a wonderful academic and socially

conscious year for all our students.
Thanks again for all your support.

Sincerely,

Ms. Coti, Ms. Grant, Ms. Coto