

THE RAM REPORT

NOVEMBER 2015

Greetings from our Principal

It looks like Fall has arrived very quickly to Spring Garden, as it is a crisp cool morning as I write this. November is a very exciting month here, as we wrap up the first quarter and look forward to Parent Teacher Conference right before the Thanksgiving break. We are thankful for our involved parents, our fantastic students, and our hard working faculty! Check out the November edition of the Ram Report for important information from the PTO and our teachers!

In the Know With PTO:

- *Breakfast with Dad on November 16th at 8am*
- *The Scholastic Book Fair is November 21st and 22nd during school and conference hours*
Online ordering available November 13th – 26th
- *Barnes and Noble Family Night Thursday December 1st, 6-8pm*
- *Online ordering and purchases made after the event will benefit our school when Spring Garden is mentioned. More details to follow.*
- *Happy Thanksgiving!*

News and Notes from Classroom Teachers

Kindergarten - October was a very spooktacular month! We were very busy traveling to the pumpkin patch and parading around in our costumes. We had fun sorting, weighing and graphing our pumpkins. We also enjoyed guessing each others' costumes. November will continue to be just as fun! We will have a Thanksgiving Friendship Feast with our buddies. More information will be sent home. We are looking forward to seeing everyone for conferences to discuss your child's transition to kindergarten and progress thus far. Happy Fall!

Grade 1 - In first grade we have been very busy! The children are well on their way in learning how to combine quantities and are beginning to learn math facts.

We all love to read and have been reading many books about fall, firemen, bats, and pumpkins. The children have been blending sounds into words with short vowel sounds and proud that they can write them, too! Now that Halloween has passed we will be learning about veterans, the Pilgrims and Native Americans before the winter holidays begin.

We want to thank all of the parents for your consistent support and encouragement. Here are some more ways to help your child:

- Please check folders EVERY DAY and remove extra papers.
- Start practicing math addition facts up to 10's. A pack of flashcards would be helpful!
- Practice your children's spelling words with them. For extra practice have them spell words with similar patterns, especially words including digraphs like sh, th, and ch.
- Practice the high frequency "memory words" too
- Please dress your child in layers so he/she will be comfortable throughout the day. Also, remember practical shoes for playing outside at recess, as we will be going out as often as possible.

Grade 2 - October was a very spooktacular month! We were very busy traveling to the pumpkin patch and parading around in our costumes. We had fun sorting, weighing, and graphing our pumpkins. We also enjoyed guessing each other's costumes. November will continue to be just as fun! We will have a Thanksgiving Friendship Feast with our buddies. More information will be sent home. We are looking forward to seeing everyone for conferences to discuss your child's transition to kindergarten and progress thus far. Happy Fall!

Grade 3 - Third grade continues to work hard in all subject areas. We can see that students are starting to become more responsible and they are taking ownership of their work. Great job third grade!

**Reading skills...*In reading, we are continuing to review character, setting, plot, character traits, main idea, and details. We will be working on summarizing, problem/solution, and inferencing in the upcoming weeks. Please make sure your child is reading nightly. We will be sending home a book log starting in November, which will help the students track their reading goal.

**Math...*In math, the students continue to learn strategies to help them master multiplication skills. Students are almost finished with the multiplication topics and are eager to begin division. Please continue to practice multiplication facts nightly with your child to achieve mastery.

**Leader in Me...*Students are setting academic goals and personal goals. They will be developing a plan to work towards their goals.

Third grade students and teachers are excited to see the finished Thanksgiving turkeys. Please remember that these are due the first week of November. You are welcome to send them in ahead of time. Thank you for your continued support at home.

Enjoy your fall break!

Grade 4 - Our 4th grade students recently travelled back in time and visited The Freemansburg Canal Education Center. Our host was Dennis Scholl, the Director of Education and Museum Services for the Delaware & Lehigh National heritage Corridor and a team of canal historians. Fourth graders were emerged into life on the canal, and even archeological digs that produced "treasures" to be brought back to school for further study. Please visit the The Tales of the Towpath website at

www.delawareandlehigh.org/talesofthetowpath for additional information on this fascinating curriculum.

Fourth Grade will be attending a concert by the Pennsylvania Philharmonic Orchestra, at Northeast Middle School on October 25. Be sure to ask your child to tell you about the performance!

As 4th grade continues to meet the challenges of the new math series, Envision, please review nightly multiplication and division facts with your child. This will strengthen their foundation for problem solving skills.

Teacher conferences will be conducted on the evening of November 21, and the afternoon of November 22. Please return your conference form to ensure an appointment with your child's teacher. We look forward to meeting with you on your child's academic success!

Grade 5 - *Each month will feature a guest author for grade 5's portion of the Ram Report. This month's edition was written by Ryan Montero and JonAnthony D'Annibale.*

This has been a great October in grade 5! We have researched space and caves, walked the Ram-a-thon, and run in the mileage club.

Fifth graders have been researching caves recently, and are on a quest to become spelunkers. It's really interesting! We learned about physical and chemical weathering, landforms, cave formations, and how caves are made ... chemical weathering. Remember, kids, do not eat the cave bacon! Students are getting excited for a trip to Lost River Caverns in Hellertown in November.

Recently, everyone in Spring Garden took part in the Ram-a-Thon. Hundreds of children walked around the school to raise money for the PTO so they can sponsor field trips and other costly items this year. It raised over NINE THOUSAND DOLLARS! There were baskets to put tickets in (one ticket for \$10) and they had some really cool stuff in them! Our friend David won the candy basket and we had to resist the urge to steal some from him when he wasn't looking.

Also, October 19 was Unity Day. We participated in activities that were associated with preventing bullying, and a lot of people were dressed in orange to show support. It was cool when we got a huge picture of orange-clad people! We read an interesting Scholastic News about Damian Lillard, a famous basketball player for the Portland Blazers, who helps to prevent bullying. Believe it or not, the end of the quarter is almost here! Time is flying in our final year of elementary school, so we are making the most of it!

Art - When I look out the windows in the art room this time of year, I always look for those towering maple trees on Linden Street and wait for the leaves to turn bright red. Well, they are bright red as I write this, and I finally feel fall has arrived!

There are so many art projects you can do with leaves and since they are abundant this time of year. I plan to engage certain classes with leaf projects. There is an interesting book by Morteza E. Sohi titled Look What I Did With A Leaf, if you are interested in creating projects with leaves.

My 5th Grade students are just about done working on their clay, abstract paintings, and pointillism projects. Grade 4 has almost completed working on their Matisse interiors and cut paper assemblages. Fourth grade's next project will involve making a piece of artwork with leaves. The rainforest birds have arrived and I have begun to grade and hang 3rd Grade's toucans and parrots. Grade 2 has begun a second symmetry project. I will be hanging a selection of their initial symmetry projects in the hallway this month. First grade has almost completed their giraffe and hermit crab projects while Kindergarten is working on giant pumpkins this month.

Vocal Music - Just a Reminder: Please mark your calendars with the following dates ...

On **Monday, December 19th at 2:00PM** and **Tuesday, December 20th at 9:30AM**, Spring Garden Elementary School students will present their annual **Winter Holiday Concerts**. Students in **Grades 3, 4, and 5** will be singing tunes that will have you ready for the holidays. The theme for this year's Winter Holiday Concert is "Give a Gift." **RAM Ringers** will perform a few selections at the concert as well. Students in the **5th Grade Spring Garden Strings** and **5th Grade Spring Garden Band** will be performing their holiday selections. We welcome all parents/guardians, relatives, and guests of those students performing to attend the Winter Holiday Concert. The snow date for the Winter Holiday Concert is to be determined.

Library - Kindergarten is up to letter D in the Library.

Grade1 learned that Pam Munoz Ryan writes both fiction and non-fiction books. They learned about Tony Baloney, a fiction book, and The Flag we Love, a non-fiction book.

Grades 2 through 4 have learned how to use the OPAC (catalog) to find books in the Library.

Grade 5 has learned how to use the OPAC (catalog) that they will be using in middle school to find books in the Library. Ask them to show you how to get to the OPAC (catalog) at home from the Spring Garden School Website.

We are preparing for November 18th when Brod Bagert, the Poet, will visit Spring Garden, thanks to PTO fundraising.

Instrumental Music - Beginning instrumental music students are off to a good start in their lessons. Band students have learned five notes as well as several rhythms and string students have learned two of the strings along with the notes they can create by adding their fingers. It is important that students have a practice routine at home. Students should be practicing four or five days each week for 15-20 minutes each day. They need to review the exercises and songs at home to improve their playing ability.

Second year students have begun morning rehearsals for the Winter Concert. Strings rehearse on Monday mornings at 8:20 on the stage. Band rehearses on Friday mornings at 8:20 on the stage. Students should review this music at home along with the songs in their lesson books. Be proactive and practice, practice, practice!

Habit 2 – Being with the End in Mind

Have a Plan

I plan ahead and set goals.

I do things that have meaning and make a difference.

I am an important part of my classroom and contribute to my school's mission and vision.

I look for ways to be a good citizen.



Parents Make the Difference

Teach your child to persevere when challenged

If your child has a goal he wants to reach, such as earning an “A” on a project or making the travel soccer team, achieving it will probably take hard work. And there may be times your child will feel like giving up. That’s why it’s important to teach him to persevere, even when things are difficult. Here’s how:

- Discuss past successes. Did your child save to buy something with his own money? How did he do it? What did success feel like? What did he learn?
- Choose a fun, realistic goal. Make it something your child is likely to complete soon. If he wants to read an entire series of books, start small. Have him set a goal to read the first book. Achievement is a great motivator to keep going.
- Listen for ideas. Kids often mention goals without actually setting them. (“I’d love to be in the talent show” or “I hope I finish my report on time.”) Together, create a step-by-step plan for success.
- Be a cheerleader. Say things like, “You are really sticking with this. I’m very impressed!” Even if your child misses the mark, praise his efforts. Trying hard and learning from mistakes is a major accomplishment.

Make attending school a priority for your child

Your child’s teachers will do their best to help your child learn and succeed in school. But there’s one thing that only you can do—get her to school every day.

Children who don’t attend school regularly fall behind and score lower on tests. They can also have a hard time making and keeping friends—especially in elementary school.

How often a child is absent in elementary school sets a pattern for absences in later school years. Lots of absences often lead to students dropping out of school completely.

Let your child know that you take attendance seriously:

- Tell your child how important school is. Attending school is her job and it is important that she arrive on time every day.
- Discuss the consequences of missing school: needing to do make-up work, missing friends, not understanding.
- Make appointments during non-school hours.
- Schedule vacations when school is not in session.
- Keep your child home from school only if she is sick or there is a family emergency.
- Keep track of your child’s absences. Look for any patterns that need to be addressed.

Talk to the teacher or the school counselor if your child regularly doesn’t want to go to school.

Family meals can lead to school success

Busy schedules can make it hard to find time for family meals. However, studies show that kids who eat meals regularly with their families earn better grades. They are more likely to talk with parents and are less likely to use drugs and alcohol.

This school year, strive to eat dinner as a family at least once a week. To get the most out of family meals:

- Ask for help. Get your child involved in planning and preparing the meal.
- Turn off the TV and keep cell phones off the table.

- Talk about everyone’s day. Ask each family member to share something that happened that day.
- Keep the conversation positive. Don’t use this time to lecture your child. Make family meals and dinnertime conversations something the family looks forward to!

Source: A. Dolin, M.Ed., “How Family Dinners Improve Students’ Grades,” Educational Connections, Inc., niswc.com/elem-meals

Busy parents can support their child in many ways

Family life is so hectic these days that it may seem impossible to be involved in your child’s education. But even on your busiest days, there are things you can do to support your child’s learning:

- Listen and respond when your child is talking to you.
- Read together.
- Stock your house with books and other reading materials.
- Quiz your child on spelling, math and other facts.
- Share favorite poems and songs with your child.
- Talk about the daily news.
- Find places mentioned in the news on a map.
- Review your child’s homework.
- Go to the library together.
- Tell family stories.
- Engage in “word play,” riddles and tongue twisters.
- Play board games.

Place limits on your child’s recreational screen time.

Here’s how to make the most of your parent-teacher conference

Preparation is the key to a successful parent-teacher conference. Here’s what to do before, during and after:

Before the conference:

- Make a list of things you should tell the teacher: your child’s favorite subjects and activities, difficulties in school, medical needs and sensitive issues.
- Make a list of things to ask the teacher about: your child’s work habits, attitude, behavior, strengths and weaknesses.
- Let your child know you are having a conference. Ask her what you and the teacher should discuss.

During the conference:

- Be on time. Teachers have many conferences, and a five-minute delay can throw off the schedule.
- Listen carefully and take notes about your child’s progress.
- Be positive. Remember: You and your child’s teacher both want what’s best for your child.
- Make a plan with the teacher to address any concerns and schedule a time to follow up.

After the conference:

- Let your child know how the conference went.

Stress the good things the teacher said. Talk about the suggestions she made for improvement—and how you plan to help your child carry these out.

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