Class Newsletter September 19, 2014

Dear Friends and Families,

We’ve done it again! We had another Champ Card celebration this week for following our school rules of Being Safe, Respectful, and Responsible. The kids just loved wearing their pajamas to school and showing off their fancy slippers. Thanks for helping support these celebrations at home.

Here’s a summary of what we have learned:

**Readers’ Workshop** – **Our learning target for reading is *I can read with a wide awake brain*.** This week students learned what “just right books” feel like. We used the metaphor of riding a bike, when we ride a bike uphill it is hard, when we ride a bike downhill it is easy, and riding a bike on a flat ground is just right. “Just right” books exercise our reading muscles and help us become better readers. Students have been practicing reading with a “wide awake brain” by asking questions, making predictions, summarizing. This week we practiced making connections, visualizing, and making inferences. **The purpose of our learning target is for students to be active readers, increasing their comprehension of the text they read.** We continued establishing the structure of our daily Readers’ Workshop, by starting with our lesson, then having independent reading time with our “just right” level, partner reading, and time to share about our reading and how we applied the day’s lesson. Students have been introduced to what it “looks like”, “sounds like”, and “feels like” to read with a partner. During partner reading we help each other read with a “wide awake brain”. Partners share just right books with each other and engage in a “book talk” that encourages us to think deeper, make connections, ask questions, visualize, and infer meaning. Learning to read is what we do in first grade! Please support this work at home by talking to your child about the many different reasons people need to know how to read, how it’s important in your own life, and by reading to and with your child each day. Next week, we’ll be practicing specific skills to decode, or tackle tricky words.

**Integrated Studies –** **Our learning targets in writing are *I can use a planner to write sentences* and *I can write a list with a purpose.*** Through our riddle book writing about our family, a friend, and animals students are practicing how to use a planning page to write sentences. Students first organize their thoughts with the use of a graphic organizer. The graphic organizer supports the children when they are transitioning their thoughts into written sentences. Additionally, we started to learn how to make authentic lists that serve a purpose. This lesson connected to our “Print is all around us” lesson and the authentic use of lists and other informational text. We had a variety of lists created, the “Holidays” list included holidays celebrated throughout the year; birthdays, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Earth day, Easter. A list of maps and a list of names for the amounted of cupcakes that would be needed for a birthday celebration were also created. Have your child write an authentic list for you at home. In science we have been practicing how to record our observations through labeled diagrams and written sentences about what we observe and what has changed since our last observation. **Our learning target in science is *I can draw a diagram with labels* and *I can record my observations*.** Students have observed how the holes in the milkweed plant are getting bigger as the caterpillars get bigger. They also noticed that the caterpillar has two sets of antennae. Good scientist also make predictions. We predicted how our monarch will change over time, which we will revisit at the end of the unit. It is great to see how excited the children are about watching this metamorphosis. Each day they come into school and check to see how the caterpillars have changed. They sure are getting bigger every day! Next week we will learn more about the stages of their life cycle and the body parts of the monarch caterpillar. Ask your child about their observations!

**Math** – **Our current learning target is recognizing that numbers are made up of other numbers.** We are building numbers with tally marks, Popsicle sticks, ten frames, and through symbolic notation. To formulate addition and subtraction equations involves being able to identify "more," "fewer" and "the same." The read aloud *Just Enough Carrots* by Frank Remkiewicz is a story about comparing the amount of carrots, peanuts, and worms a rabbit, elephant, and bird are buying at the grocery store. The class practiced using this math vocabulary by comparing the sets of numbers in the story and determining if there were more carrots, the same carrots, or fewer carrots.

We are also building our understanding around place value with tens and ones. We are asking the questions; *How can we represent a number using tens and ones? and What happens when we collect 10 ones?* Next week I will be asking students to bring in a collection of items we can count. We will be forming a *Counting Collection Museum* in the classroom to help us with the concept of grouping ten ones into one group of tens (unitizing). The collections students bring in should contain no more than 120 items that fit in a container I will have them bring home on Monday. Please help your child collect an item at home to fill their container with. Examples of possible items to fill the container are; Cheerios, Q-Tips, pennies, marbles, cotton balls, marshmallows, beans, buttons, beads, etc. Please contact me if you need any clarification.

**Word Work** – This year our Word Work will include 2 different programs. *Fun*dations focuses on pattern-based spelling and explicitly teaches skills students can apply to many different words. Our Sight Words will include words that students are expected to know by sight because they often contain spelling “tricks” that we can’t sound out or “tap out.” Our current *Fun*dations unit is: **digraphs at the beginning of words**  These are words with th, wh, sh, and ch at the beginning of the word, like **ship, chin, thumb, when**

Here are the kindergarten words we reviewed this week: ***the, and, was, can, yes, no, see, you, day***

Next week’s words are: **big, off, play, look, as, not, like, for, dad, mom**

Current sight words are listed on our website [www.mrsgalushasfirstgrade.weebly.com](http://www.mrsgalushasfirstgrade.weebly.com/)

**Homework** – First grade homework will include practicing our sight words at home, and in a few weeks, reading our “just right” books to an adult at home as often as possible. I will not be sending home worksheets or other written assignments on a regular basis in first grade. I know how hard your children are working all day and that they need some down time in the evening. I also want to respect your time together as a family at night.

**Some other logistics:**

* **Applefest**: Friday, September, 26th 5:30-7:00pm
* **Picture Day Monday, September 29th**
* **CHANGE OF DATE: Curriculum Night** is NOW **October 1st; 5:30-6:00 and 6:05-6:35**.

I will be sharing information about our curriculum and programs in first grade. In order to accommodate families with more than one child at Champlain, we will be offering 2 identical sessions. The first will be from 5:30-6:00 and the second from 6:05-6:35. See you there!

Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Jeannine E. Galusha

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