

Akron Elementary School Points of Pride



December 2008

Todd K. Esposito, Principal
Robert C. Lauffenburger, Dean of Students

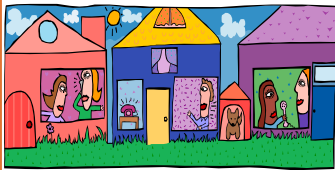
Kindergarten

December is a time for caring and sharing so kindergarteners began the month discussing the differences between needs and wants. This gave them an appreciation for the many things in life that we have already, and helped them realize that there are many children in the world who are less fortunate. All classes were very generous in their elementary canned food drive donations! Christmas also means their traditional trip around the world. As travelers visited each classroom, they learned about the December customs in Mexico, Italy, Holland, Australia, Poland and Israel. What fun! Classes also had a special December treat as Mr. Rainey gave each class demonstrations about the fine art of candy making. What a wonderful way to end the month!



Grade 1

First graders have continued their discussions of the current reading theme, "Communities".



Students have talked about how people (and animals) live, work, and learn together as well as how they help each other in a community. The holidays are a perfect time for the students to help others, near and far, by donating food and other necessities. It is a great way to show that they care!

As scientists, they are learning about different animals and how they adapt to the winter weather. Children are learning to wear their hats and mittens to be warmer too.

During their writing time, first graders composed their letters to Santa. They were very careful to use proper capitalization and punctuation. Thanks to the PTA for helping with this project.

Mr. Scott Logan came and shared two stories with each class for enrichment. The students were mesmerized by his tales. Mr. Logan, you are appreciated!



Grade 2

All second grade classes have begun their unit of study with Mrs. Huff.

Mrs. Zbrzezny's class has been writing many friendly letters. They learned the five parts of a friendly letter, then wrote to a sick friend, to Major Cummings after an informational and exciting K-9 (canine) visit with Dobbs, to "Mr. Turkey" and to Santa!

Mrs. Sollecito's (Mrs. Bellis) class was very busy writing about what they were thankful for and learning about the Mayflower. They learned how to add/subtract 10's and 1's and completed their Ch. 3 & Ch. 4 Math tests.

Miss Chudzinski and Mrs. Flaglor's classes are extra healthy after learning all about how germs can make you sick. They enjoyed their many science experiments.

The actors and actresses in Mrs. Best's class have worked daily preparing a holiday program for their parents and friends. Their program included a three act play, favorite holiday songs and a retelling of their favorite story, The Night Before Christmas.

This generous class also donated food items to the Akron Newstead Food Pantry and constructed a giant pictograph outside the library to help keep track of the total donations made each day. Throughout the month of December each student recorded a daily Random Act of Kindness and these thoughtful students sent their holiday wishes to the residents of the Cloisters with a small gift.





Points of Pride - December 2008 (con't.)

Grade 3

Mrs. Matusek and Mrs. Magera's classes were getting into the holiday spirit by making gingerbread houses on December 12th. Each student built and decorated their own house to display at home (and nibble on!) The students also wrote poems based on the book Gingerbread Baby by Jan Brett. We hope everyone had a Happy Holiday!



Grade 4

Fourth graders were busy at work gearing up for a fun holiday season. In Science they have finished up an extensive matter unit and have moved on to the study of the human body and its major systems. They are enjoying learning about this through hands-on experiments.

In Social Studies classes have been studying geography, resources and regions of New York State. Some classes have been making brochures of New York and salt maps of the different regions to make learning fun!

Math classes have been focusing on multiplication of two digit by one digit factors.

Students have been taking timed basic facts tests all year to get ready for this.



In reading and writing classes the students have begun to prepare for the upcoming New York State ELA. They are doing some preparations to get everyone comfortable for this exam. Students did take an ELA in the third grade, but the 4th grade ELA is more extensive. Teachers know that their students will do their best.



Grade 5

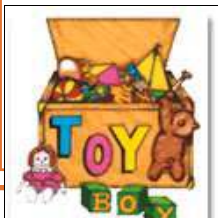
Students of the Month November

ELA	Anna Pisano
	Emily Herberling
	Casey Bower
Science	Preston Kelkenberg
Math	Mary Conrad
Social Studies	Emily Buckley

Dr. Roger Kurlan, a neurologist from Strong Memorial Hospital, visited the 5th grade science class earlier in December. Dr. Kurlan talked to the students about how the human brain functions. The highlight of the visit was when the students were given the opportunity to touch or hold the human brain.

Fifth grade students read A Tale of Despereaux, by Kate DiCamillo, in December. The students watched the movie about the adventurous and courageous mouse at the Regal Cinemas on December 23rd.

Mrs. Turski and Mrs. Kieffer's ELA class have concluded their fundraising drive for "Owen's Toy Box". They traveled to Children's Hospital on December 15th to present a check and bring gifts to the children. An enormous "THANK YOU" goes out to the whole Akron community for their support!!!



Points of Pride - December 2008 (con't.)

Music

The 4th/5th Grade Choir participated in Akron's Community Christmas on Saturday, December 13th. They paraded with Santa and the high School Marching Band from school to Russell Park and led the community in a holiday sing-along following the tree lighting ceremony! The choir members also carried food donations in the parade that were given to the Akron/Newstead Food Pantry. Carriage rides, hot chocolate, caroling, and our community's beautifully lit Christmas tree put the spirit of the holidays into the hearts of everyone who was near!



Physical Education

Our 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades raised \$1887.69 for the American Heart Association in their annual Jump Rope For Heart Event held at the end of November.

The annual Elementary Food Drive to help fill the shelves of the Newstead Food pantry was a huge success. Elementary students brought in a total of 1,988 (almost 2,000!!!) items to donate to help local families.

A HUGE "Thank you" to Mrs. Kershenski, who organized, collected and boxed up the food for delivery!!!!



Submitted by Janine Huff, Cultural Education Specialist
December, 2008

As promised in the last "Points of Pride", I am following up on the article that was planned for publication by the *Buffalo News*. The article, published on November 28th, 2008, contained a photograph of Ms. Antoinette Abrams, Elementary School liaison assisting Kindergarten students in making Seneca male headdresses. The article, "Tonawanda Seneca ties enrich Akron schools", appeared in the City and Region section. The focal point was an overall review of the exciting progress made by our district toward meeting the educational needs of Native American students and of strengthening the links with our Tonawanda community. Ms. Suzanne Kovic provided the majority of the information presented. The article also highlighted our Native American Committee work and the programming efforts of Native American staff. Many favorable responses both from the Tonawanda Seneca community and from other Native communities in Western New York to the article were shared with me.

Second grade classes began on December 3rd, 2008, and will end on January 9th, 2009. Topics will include: creating a Haudenosaunee clan symbol book; making a clan mural; Haudenosaunee government; legends; wampum; Native American music; and Native American contributions. The students seem to enjoy working on their clan booklets and I look forward to the upcoming classes!





Points of Pride - January 2009

Pre-K

The Pre-K classes survived the "big chill" in January by learning about the letter "s". They completed many different "hands on" activities, including snow experiments. After comparing and contrasting polar bears and black bears, they celebrated the letter B with a teddy bear picnic!



Later in the month Pre K students learned about Martin Luther King Jr. By re-enacting the historic Rosa Parks bus event, they learned that the rules have not always been fair. As four-year olds, it is somewhat difficult to understand the concept of equal rights, but they sure know if something is fair or not!

These classes also celebrated President Obama's inauguration with a gala on January 21st. With many parents in attendance, they made patriotic craft projects, decorated special cookies, and danced in their finest "formal wear".

The end of January found them learning about penguins and other birds. They made bird feeders and learned about the letter P.



Grade K

While January has us in its wintry grip, kindergarteners are making the most of the weather by learning about the seasons, hibernation and migration of local animals. They also looked at the lifestyle of polar animals. They have become very talented at making snowflakes. Students celebrated the life of Martin Luther King Jr. Kindergarteners couldn't believe that our society once judged people by their color only. They could not imagine not being able to play with a friend because they didn't look the same. They were glad that Dr. King taught us how to have peaceful change.



The Kindergarten Inaugural Ball was an outstanding success! Moms baked cookies and students wore their finest red, white and blue outfits. They danced waltzes and switched partners during each song. They are sending some pictures of the ball to the White House and hope for a presidential response!

Grade 2

Mrs. Best's class met many interesting characters as they learned to write biographies. Each student chose a historical figure to research and write about. They completed a detailed graphic organizer and wrote their paragraphs using the Writing Process. Their final display showed a representation of the person holding their biography for all to read.



These talented actors and actresses also appeared in the Winter Homegrown Assembly. They brought some of their classroom learning on stage by reciting a poem about homophones. They explained their different spellings/meanings and read them to the audience in a sentence.


All second graders enjoyed a visit by Chief Jamieson (Mrs. Huff's father!) as they finished their Native Studies program for this year. Thank you letters were sent to show Chief Jamieson how much his visit was appreciated.

The scientists in Mrs. Zbrzezny, Mrs. Flaglor and Miss Chudzinski's classes have been busy experimenting with the three states of matter: solids, liquids and gases. Students form hypothesis, follow procedures, and write conclusions. Students are also reading biographies and "traveling around the world" with math facts.



Points of Pride - January 2009 (con't.)

Grade 2 (cont.)

Students in Mrs. Sollecito's class  have been busy making globes and working with maps. They have been singing songs to help remember the seven continents and four oceans. Their literature book helped them learn about George Washington Carver and the many things that he created from peanuts. Mrs. Sollecito has enjoyed working with her class and will miss them as Mrs. Bellis returns on January 26th.

Grade 4

Fourth grade students have had the opportunity to take special electronic field trips to Williamsburg, Virginia during the months of December and January. They viewed "live" national television broadcasts that brought American history to life for them. The broad-relevant stories of people, places and casts immersed the 4th graders in past. These broadcasts provided authentic, historical content. Their December "trip" gave students a "behind the scenes" look at how historical African character portrayals were created for Colonial Williamsburg. Their most recent "trip" took them into the world of early American scientists and their important scientific exploration/discoveries that took place in the year history of America.



Following the broadcasts, students were given the opportunity to call in "live" questions to Colonial Williamsburg historians. Students were highly motivated, and really enjoyed this experience. They will have other opportunities to visit Williamsburg throughout this year.

Fourth grade teachers wish to compliment their students on all of their strong efforts and hard work in preparation for the ELA State test and during testing week!

Grade 5

Fifth grade students recently took the NYS ELA exam after many months of intense preparation.

Fifth grade scientists are currently learning about weather. Students are tracking local weather, learning the different weather instruments used to measure different weather conditions, and building their science vocabulary. All of this knowledge will come in handy when students work together on small teams to prepare a 2-day forecast.

Students of the Month

December

ELA - Cameron Brooks

ELA - Emma Chubb

ELA - Emily Berchou

Math - Jonathan Herrmann

Science - Kaitlyn Stachowiak

Social Studies - Haley Kappus-Kron





Points of Pride - January 2009

Native Studies

Second grade students ended their Native Studies classes by learning how the Haudenosaunee people govern themselves. Students prepared for a visit from a chief who sits on the Tonawanda Seneca Nation Council of Chiefs. They compiled a list of very interesting questions. Chief Stuart Jamieson brought his traditional outfit, including his gastowe' (headdress). Students asked excellent questions and wrote thank you notes to Chief Jamieson. He was pleased to meet and spend time with our students! Second graders completed their Native Studies classes by hearing a Native American legend and painting a picture to accompany the legend.

First grade students began their classes by completing a Venn diagram comparing two Native American legends. Currently they are learning about the clan symbols. Many remembered the Clan Song from kindergarten.

Mrs. Huff has been asked to participate in the Albion School Culture Days.

Music

Attached are the scores of our outstanding musicians. Kaitlyn Stachowiak was selected for the Erie County Orchestra. Also selected as alternates were Megan Kidder, Katie Grant, and Emma Chubb.