



CGS PTO Newsletter January 2011

A Memo From Marybeth Moyer, Principal

Giving and Caring

By the time you read this newsletter, the holiday decorations will have been put away, and the New Year, 2011, will be with us! Looking back, we truly enjoyed the final few weeks of school in December as we embraced traditions and joined together at our annual holiday sing-a-long. (With thanks to the musical talents of Mr. Careau, Mr. Gale, Mr. Kyer and Mrs. Osowiecki!) We want to thank the PTO for funding the final cultural arts program of 2010! The students and teachers all enjoyed the lively holiday performance by Rick Adams who highlighted the winter holidays through song and dance. Thank you also to the many families who purchased items for the *Mitten Tree* during the month of December. Our students and families certainly displayed their generosity and holiday spirit by reaching out to others in our community.

Student Success

Our goal at CGS this year is designed to ensure a full-learning experience for each child everyday. This begins by having students ready to start their day on time! Please make every effort to get your children to school between 8:10 and 8:30 if they are not taking the bus. When the students enter at this time, they settle into their morning routine and organize themselves for the day. In kindergarten through Grade 2 these routines are crucial in building independence and organizational strategies. Our teachers plan lessons based upon the skills that are introduced and reviewed with the students at the beginning of each day. We ask parents to be respectful of this all-important start for all of our children. If you are a parent who is driving your child to school, we ask that you walk your child into the building. Although we are teaching our students to be independent, children between the ages of five and seven need your guidance and support for their safety.

Academic Standards

We are now well into the school year. The students are deeply entrenched in the curriculum expectations in all content areas. The teachers are looking closely at progress which was noted on the students' November report cards as well as the benchmark assessments that have been given. Grade-level teams, are working to develop *Smart Goals* in an effort to focus on specific and measurable goals for each student. We will continue to look at student data throughout the year to monitor progress and determine strategies that can be successfully implemented within classroom settings and smaller intervention groups. Your child's January report card will clearly indicate the skills that have been highlighted since the last marking period.

Computer Lab

Teachers continue to bring their classes to the computer lab on a regular basis to reinforce skills previously introduced in the classroom. Lessons on keyboarding, as well as reading and math reinforcement, have been extremely successful with the students.

Also noted in the lab are staff members who are working on entering and analyzing student data on a weekly basis. This technology hub is certainly adding a new dimension to the student and teacher learning at CGS. We are proud to have three interactive whiteboards in resource areas in each wing. These boards plus three that will shortly be installed in classrooms are adding an exciting dimension to technology-infused lessons in the classrooms. One of our first-grade teachers, Mr. Bruce Gale, will lead us through a sample interactive lesson at our next PTO meeting on January 10. I hope you will plan to join us!

(continued on page 2)

Coventry Grammar School

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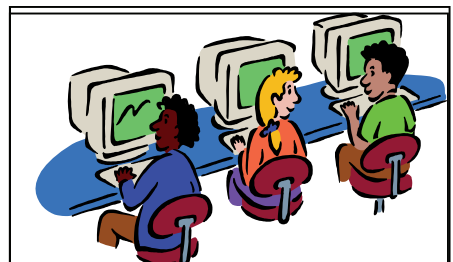
Website: www.coventryps.org

CGS PTO Newsletter

January 2011



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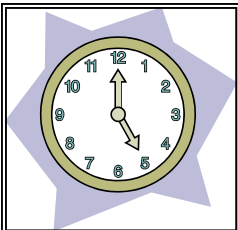
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(Principal - continued)

Parent Volunteers

Our active PTO and classroom volunteers have certainly lent a hand to school and classroom activities through the first four months of school. Throughout the month of December alone we had over 130 parents assisting or visiting CGS in one way or another. We certainly appreciate the support of our students and their classroom activities. If you would like to assist or lend a hand either at school or through an at-home project please make a phone call to your student's classroom teacher.

I hope your new year is off to a great start!
Stay warm!



"One Minute Tasks" will be part of our center activities where children are exposed to the attribute of time. Share with your child the ways you measure and use the clock in your daily schedule so that they can make a practical connection to the mathematics introduced in kindergarten.

Kindergarten News

Kindergarten Team

Teachers: Wendy Baver, Terry Bitwinski, Heidi Bosco, Eileen Hosey, and Debbie Hurlburt
Para-Educators: Debbie Carroll and Sue Lewis

*Red mittens, blue mittens ... mittens for cold weather.
Wool mittens, knit mittens, fingers all together.
Lost mittens, found mittens ... mittens in the snow.
Wet mittens, dry mittens, hanging in a row.
Green mittens, orange mittens, yellow mittens, too!
Furry mittens, soft mittens ... which ones are for you?*

The holiday season has passed, and a new season has begun. As we continue with our study of seasonal changes, we will learn about weather, how a thermometer works, and how birds and animals cope with winter weather conditions by migration, hibernation or adaptation to the environment.

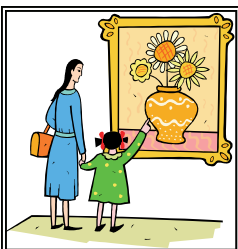
Measurement activities will continue into January as part of our math series. Children will be comparing and describing objects by length, weight or capacity. They will also order objects using these same attributes. "One -Minute Tasks" will be part of our center activities where children are exposed to the attribute of time. Share with your child the ways you measure, and use the clock in your daily schedule so that he/she can make a practical connection to the mathematics introduced in kindergarten. Later in January, we will work on comparing, ordering and joining numbers as part of our math program. These new concepts and skills build upon the prior activities that kindergartners have been involved in.

What can parents do to support their children in becoming successful readers? Talk with your children. There is no substitute for time spent talking with your child. You are teaching new words and ideas. Talk in complete sentences and encourage your children to do the same. Ask your child to describe experiences and ideas. Use photo albums or magazine pictures to start a conversation. Take your child to visit interesting places – playgrounds, music or dance performances, libraries, museums and historical sites. Discuss these places or read more about them. Help your youngster make connections among words or concepts such as winter = cold, snow, holidays; or dinner = food, family, evening. Remember to have fun with your child. From making up silly sounds to talking about a story, appreciate your child's special joy for learning new things. So laugh even when your child asks you to read that one favorite book --- *again!*

Do you know the *star word* of the week? Kindergartners will be exposed to different high-frequency words each week for the remainder of the school year. All kindergarten rooms will have yellow stars with the *word of the week* displayed on them. Every day children are given different opportunities to say and spell the word. Students are expected to write and illustrate a sentence using this *star word* for homework each week. So, ask your child to say, spell and write the word of the week for you at home! We are joining the first and second graders by including this literacy activity in our daily routine.

Please remember to mark all clothing, boots, hats and mittens with the name of your child. Also please encourage your child to independently collect his/her belongings and dress him/herself. This includes zipping, snapping, tying shoelaces and getting into and out of boots without assistance. If your child has difficulty tying shoes or zipping, please work with him/her on this. Make it a "New Year's Resolution" to accomplish such a task. Whenever winter boots must be worn, please send in a pair of shoes, sneakers, etc. to have your child change into. Winter boots **cannot** be worn all day at school. We spend a good part of our day in activities on the rug and a change from bulky winter boots to sneakers is necessary for everyone's comfort.

Parenting Tip: Try not to compare things your child can do to things his or her friends can do. Keep in mind that all children develop at their individual rate with varying strengths. Instead, talk about the things your child can do now that he or she could not do the year before. Talking about these accomplishments can give your child the confidence and patience needed to try new things.



What can parents do to support their children in becoming successful readers? Talk with your children... Encourage your child to describe experiences and ideas... Take your child to visit interesting places – playgrounds, music or dance performances, libraries, museums and historical sites.

First-Grade News

First-Grade Team

Teachers: Megan Babcock, Bruce Gale, Colleen Hamblett, Patricia Klaneski, Matthew Kyer, Jennifer Osowiecki, Cristy Rau, and Ginny Taber

Para-Educators: Laurie Darling and Jennifer Ray

Hello January! The first-grade children are back at school after a long break and ready to re-establish their daily routines.

In math, students will continue to solve addition and subtraction problems as they further develop their understanding of the relationship between the two processes. Later in the month they will concentrate on ordinal numbers and multiples of ten. They will use concrete objects and pictures to represent two-digit numbers as tens and ones. Students will also learn to represent two-digit numbers that are one or ten more or less than a given two-digit number.

Whole group and guided-reading instruction will include comparing and contrasting elements of a story and making predictions as a story progresses. Students will continue telling a story sequentially including details. Children will have many opportunities to practice short-vowel sounds and high-frequency words. Please help your child practice recognizing the high-frequency words and *Star* words that are sent home each week.

Progress reports will be sent home with your child on January 31. Please remember to keep the progress report and return the signed and dated envelope to school.

Although the month of January can be very cold, outdoor recess is still a possibility. Provide your child with mittens, a hat, and boots each day. Sending an extra set of socks and mittens is a good idea. Children should always bring shoes to wear in the school building. We hope to keep our students healthy, happy and comfortable in the new year.



In math, students will continue to solve addition and subtraction problems as they further develop their understanding of the relationship between the two processes.



Please provide your child with mittens, a hat, and boots each day.

Second-Grade News

Second-Grade Team

Teachers: Carolyn Bennett, Jerry Craig, Nancy Gwozdz, Erin Hazzard, Heather McPeck, Nancy Plaster, and Angela Puccia

Para-Educators: Gloria Barry and Heidi Holever

Happy New Year! The entire second-grade team wishes you the very best for 2011. The new year is a perfect time to reflect and set goals for the future. The second graders will be writing their very own New Year's Resolutions.

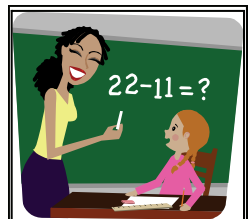
During math instruction, children are continually being challenged as different problems are presented. Students are required to represent problems and their solutions using efficient strategies. Skills being learned include extending their addition and subtraction knowledge to include adding and subtracting two digit numbers. They will also begin to explore problem-solving with money, telling time and graphing data. Additionally, students should continue to practice their addition facts.

Scientific discovery and exploration this month will include the properties of matter. Students discover and identify the properties of matter by experimenting with materials in various forms.

Strategies and skills are most frequently taught to the entire class during shared reading through teacher modeling. Then, within guided-reading groups, these strategies and skills are practiced. Some of the skills being practiced include visualization, character analysis, story elements and written response to comprehension questions.

Recess Reminder:

We are now into January and the weather is getting consistently colder. Please be sure your student has appropriate attire for outdoor recess. Teachers will expect students to have winter coats, hats, gloves, snow pants, scarves and boots throughout the winter season.



During math instruction, children are continually being challenged as different problems are presented... Skills being learned include extending their addition and subtraction knowledge to include adding and subtracting two digit numbers.



From Our Reading Room ~

Reading Room Team

Jennifer Jones, Carol Bittner, Nan Kandolin, Hannah Pietrantonio, Mary Talaga



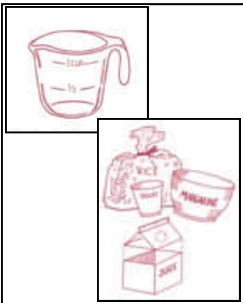
We have been very busy squirrels in the Reading Room with our first grade students gathering acorns to store for the winter. Our squirrel names are Adam, Ed, Isabel, Oliver, and Umber. These squirrel names help us remember the sound of our short vowels (a, e, i, o, u).

Happy New Year, Everyone! We have been very busy squirrels in the Reading Room with our first-grade students gathering acorns to store for the winter. Our squirrel names are Adam, Ed, Isabel, Oliver, and Umber. These squirrel names help us remember the sound of our short vowels (a, e, i, o, u). Mrs. Jones has been reading poems that target each vowel, and we have done mini-lessons to review the short vowels. Then, we practice our short vowels by segmenting and blending the sounds in words, building consonant-vowel-consonant words with tiles, and reading them in our stories. Finally, we are "word detectives" and find a word with the target vowel sound in our stories. We write this word on an acorn and add it to our interactive bulletin board.

With our second-grade groups, we have been working on practicing retelling with our comprehension groups. We have been doing repeated readings, timing, and *Reader's Theatre* with our fluency group. With our accuracy groups, we have been practicing using our reading strategies to figure out unknown words and self-monitoring our reading when it doesn't look right, sound right or make sense.

Mrs. Jones has also been going into first-grade classrooms to do short vowel mini-lessons. She uses a poem to target each vowel sound, and literacy center ideas are given to the teachers to utilize throughout the week. We have figured out short *a* riddles and went fishing for short *i* words. A poem that she has introduced during the mini-lesson is going home for parents and children to read together.

Have fun reading together! Play "I-Spy" and search for short vowel words in the poems and stories you read.



Fill It Up...
As your child begins to understand more, do activities using different-shaped containers that hold the same amount of a substance (water, rice, and popcorn kernels). This helps your child see comparisons, as well as the various capacities of different sized and shaped containers.

From Our Math Corner ~ Mrs. Stephanie Wissler, ASSIST Program

Your home is full of opportunities to explore math with your child and, at the same time, build his or her self-confidence and understanding of mathematical ideas. This is a chance for you and your child to "talk math" that is, to communicate about math while discovering relationships between numbers. Being able to describe mathematical patterns and relationships, such as those between "addition and subtraction" or "odd and even numbers," is important to later success in math. Here is an activity you can try at home.

Fill It Up Grades K-2

What you'll need: A measuring cup, 4 glasses of equal size, and water

What to do:

1. Pour water at different levels ($\frac{1}{3}$ cup, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup and 1 cup) in each glass. Put the glasses next to each other. Ask your child: Are all the water levels the same or different?
2. Ask your child questions to encourage comparison, estimation, and thinking about measurement. Which glass has more water? Which has less? How many glasses of water do you estimate it will take to fill the container?
3. Pour more water into one of the glasses to make it equal to the amount of water in another glass. Move the glasses around so that the glasses that have the same amount of water are not next to each other. Ask your child: Which glasses do you think have the same amount of water?

As your child begins to understand more, do activities using different-shaped containers that hold the same amount of a substance (water, rice and popcorn kernels). This helps your child see comparisons as well as the various capacities of different sized and shaped containers.

Stephanie Wissler
Math ASSIST CGS/GHR
swissler@coventryct.org

From Our School Nurse ~ Mrs. Paula Curtiss

During the winter months I receive many calls from parents questioning when it is appropriate or not appropriate to send their child to school.

Following these general guidelines can be in the best interest for both your child and the other students in their classroom.

- If your child has had a fever please keep him/her home until he/she is temperature free (without "Tylenol" or "Motrin") for 24 hours.
- If your child has been vomiting or experiencing diarrhea, please keep him/her home until he/she has been tolerating a regular diet for 24 hours.
- For strep throat, conjunctivitis or other illnesses requiring treatment with an antibiotic, your child should have a full 24 hours of the medication before returning to school.
- If your child has symptoms that prevented him/her from sleeping during the night such as an asthma flare-up or severe cough, he/she should stay home.
- If your child is complaining of severe, ear pain or throat pain, he/she should stay home and be seen by their health care provider.
- If your child is not well enough to participate in the full-school day, he/she should remain home.

Please feel free to phone or email me at anytime with any questions or concerns.

It is my goal to have a safe and healthy environment for all of our students.

Wishing you a very happy and healthy 2011.

Paula Curtiss, School Nurse

860-742-4558

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Following these general guidelines can be in the best interest for both your child and the other students in their classroom.

From Our Friends at the Coventry Early Childhood Center ~

To children, the world of cooking is magical. We combine all kinds of ingredients, then stir, simmer, boil, or bake, and –presto!– something delicious is created.

Being asked to help with cooking makes kids feel grown up and important. And when they cooperate with others to make a dish, they take great satisfaction in producing something for everyone to eat.

Cooking with children- pointing out *key* words on the recipe as we go along, having them measure, pour, and stir – is a time of learning as well. Reading, science, and math concepts abound in cooking experiences. Children learn to recognize numbers and words from recipes. They begin to use vocabulary related to cooking. And they observe how ingredients change when they are mixed together.

Kids also learn basic-math concepts such as counting, measurement and part-whole relationships. It will take years before young children fully understand concepts like numbers, weights, measurement, time and temperature, but repeated experiences with cooking promote the development of these concepts.

Cooking with young children does take more time than cooking alone. But the learning that accompanies cooking and the closeness fostered by the shared experience are worth the extra time.

The CECC Staff



Cooking with children- pointing out key words on the recipe as we go along, having them measure, pour, and stir – is a time of learning as well.



From Our School Psychologist ~ Mrs. Heather Zilora



A good time to start an allowance is at the age of six or seven, when children are learning about money at school and understand the abstract value of money.

As parents we are very busy trying to make it all happen. Sometimes we end up doing things for our children that they can do for themselves. We need to make sure we are giving them the tools to be independent. One way to instill responsibility and independence are chores around the house. Earning an allowance is also a way for the children to learn financial responsibility. A good time to start an allowance is at the age of 6 or 7, when children are learning about money at school and understand the abstract value of money. How much allowance is enough, but not too much? Janet Bodnar a columnist for the New York Times says, "Enough so that your children can squander it, but not so much that you'll be upset when they do." It is important for children to earn money. Some parents may wish to differentiate between jobs that are not paid for (just expected...like making their bed, picking up their room, etc.) and which jobs may be done to earn extra money over and above the regular allowance. As a family decide what works best for you and set the guidelines.

Here are some resources you can check out for more information about allowances.

- [Dollars and Sense for Kids](#) by Janet Bodnar (ISBN 0938721674)
- www.kidsmoney.org

Heather Zilora
School Psychologist
hzilora@coventryct.org



Please Stop Laughing at Me chronicles how one child was shunned by her classmates ...

Community Conversations

Annual Community Conversation, Book Talk with the superintendent: [Please Stop Laughing at Me](#) by Jodee Blanco is the book for this year's Community Conversation. [Please Stop Laughing at Me](#) chronicles how one child was shunned by her classmates from elementary school through high school. Jodee Blanco's vivid story will open your eyes to the harsh realities and long-term consequences of bullying.

There is room for 15 to attend the conversation on Tuesday, March 1, from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m., in the superintendent's home. Community members interested in attending this Book Talk should contact the Superintendent's Office at 742-7317 x2 or aboudreau@coventryct.org.



**January 14
Booth & Dimock Library**

Donuts With Donna

The superintendent of schools is available for casual conversations with community members during the school year. "Donuts with Donna" is a way for you to greet your school superintendent, ask questions, and keep informed about education in our town. Please feel free to stop by where there will be an informal atmosphere with an open dialogue and no set agenda. The next session of "Donuts with Donna" is scheduled for Friday, January 14, from 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. at the Booth & Dimock Library, 1134 Main Street.



Weather-Related/Emergency Closings, Delays and Early Release Notifications

Announcements regarding these closings, delayed openings and early releases will be made via our ALERTNOW calling system. In addition to broadcasting this information on selected TV and radio stations, all student homes are now phoned by ALERTNOW. If families would like a list of the selected media outlets, please see the website at www.coventrypublicschools.org.

For an electronic copy of this newsletter,
or for additional information about the Coventry Grammar School,
please visit our website: www.coventryps.org/cgs/cgs.html

PTO News

A huge thank you to all of the parents who provided the fabulous goodies for our bake sale on December 4. The response was phenomenal, and we truly appreciate your support and generosity. The proceeds are being tallied, and they will be distributed among the four school PTOs in town. The final numbers will be provided in next month's newsletter. Also, thank you to the workers who came and helped price and display all of the baked goods on Friday night and Saturday. We couldn't have done this without your help!

After a busy November and early December, we decided to take a breather since it is such a busy and important time of year for families. We are planning some great events for the cold winter months ahead, so stay tuned!

Finally, we'd like to thank Kate Hurley-Dizigan for her tremendous work on this newsletter!!!

Have a wonderful holiday season everyone! We look forward to a terrific 2011!



Upcoming Events:

- Monday, January 10, at 6:30 p.m., is our next PTO meeting. Free babysitting is available.
- Friday, January 21 (tentatively), Crayons for Cancer Family Night. More information to follow.

Look for the CGS PTO on Facebook and become a member today!

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Phone: 860-498-0189;

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Anita Hilinski, Secretary

Phone: 860-742-1907;

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Camilla Byam, Treasurer

Phone: 860-742-8682;

Email: camillabyam@hotmail.com

PTO Treasurer's Report ~ as of December 20, 2010

November 23 through December 20, 2010

Treasurer: Camilla Byam

Beginning Balance:	\$7,768.40
Income: ~ Dimitris Fundraiser: \$102.25 ~ Thymes Remembered Fundraiser: \$164.00	\$266.25
Expenses: ~ None for this accounting period	(\$0.00)
Ending Balance:	\$8,034.65



PLEASE NOTE:

The profits from the PTO Bake Sale will be reported next month.

Merci

