

the *Howler*

winter 2016



“Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future.” ~Dr. Maria Montessori

Classroom Updates

Pre-K & K Our Primary student's have been learning a lot about communities and the responsibilities and contributions of people in communities. Miss Heather's class just completed a unit on the 7 Continents and Cultural Celebrations. In Math, our students have been working hard on addition and many are beginning to explore subtraction. (Miss Jarvis' class: Ask your kiddos about “Get off my boat!”). All of our kindergarteners have been enjoying reading and writing, whether through journals, research projects, guided reading, Book Buddy Bags, or Wonders Take-Home Books. Miss Gabrielle, the student teacher in Miss Heather's room, finished her semester with us in December and will be moving on to study Montessori teaching at graduate school in England. We were all lucky to meet Mrs. Lawrence's baby last week and we are excited she will be back in the classroom in the beginning of February!

1st & 2nd This year continues to fly by, as we have finished the second quarter and are quickly approaching the 100th day of school. Please keep an eye out for more information about upcoming 100th day of school events. The information will be sent home in the purple F.I.S.H Folders. Below you will see all the subjects that we have covered during this past quarter. Remember that B's may mean that we just began this topic and have not collected enough data to give an accurate mark for your individual student's ability.

Math: In math, we continued with subtraction. We covered subtraction facts, double- and triple- digit subtraction, and regrouping. Before break we moved into time. We worked on telling time to the nearest hour and half hour, nearest quarter hours, and nearest five minutes. Graphing followed break, along with a review week while we complete DIBELS testing with students. Graphing will continue into the third quarter.

Reading: Our students have adjusted well to switching rooms for our reading lessons. If you recall, at conference time we spoke to you about switching rooms so that we could do a more in-depth study of our reading series. We are working our way through Unit 2 as we explore the genres of fiction and non-fiction.

Cultural Studies: This quarter we allowed the students to choose their area of study. They had the choice of learning about Native American with Mrs. Johnson and the Solar System with Ms. Rickell. They have learned a lot of interesting facts and have enjoyed switching the rooms. The kids have chosen their next area of study, either dinosaurs with Mrs. Johnson or penguins with Ms. Rickell.

Reminder: Please make sure that you children our dressing appropriately for the weather. We will be going outside as weather permits and want to make sure that are children stay warm and healthy.

3rd & 4th What we've been working on...

We have been working hard on developing our multiplication skills, practicing at school and home. While our unit on this concept is complete, please remember to keep practicing as mastery in multiplication is an important skill that we'll build off of as the year progresses. We just finished our unit on division and took our mid-year assessment. This quarter in Language Arts, some of the concepts we continued to work on were distinguishing points of view, comparing and contrasting themes/ settings/plots, and determining types of genres. Through our weekly Wonders assessments and in our whole group lessons students are practicing asking and answering questions to demonstrate understanding of a text. We are pleased with all of the students' hard work this quarter!

What we're looking forward to...

In Math, we will be starting units on fractions, decimals, and measurement in the upcoming quarter. In Language Arts, 3rd grade students will be reading about Earth and its neighbors. 4th grade students will be reading about important people from the past and ways science advances can be helpful or harmful.

5th & 6th Students in Upper Elementary have had a very eventful few weeks! The students worked extremely hard on their Market Day projects during the month of December. On Friday, January 13th, the students were finally able to present their projects to their peers and families. We learned so much about the continent of Africa, saw some great costumes that represented specific areas, and we were able to share in some very scrumptious dishes. Everyone did such an amazing job on this project. On Wednesday, January 13th, the fifth and sixth graders were able to attend the 100th annual Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg, PA. Students were able to see and pet many animals that are raised on local farms, learn about different crops native to PA, watch the equestrian show, and of course slurp down a milkshake! This was a very enjoyable experience for all who attended.

Upcoming projects: Keep an eye out! Students will be completing a technology project as a part of their ELA lessons. Also, students will be given guidelines on a book report near the end of February.

Music

The GMCS music program has continued to sing, dance, and play our way into 2016! This March we will be celebrating Music in our Schools month. Stay tuned for ways in which you can engage with your student's music education at home and in the community. Our ensembles are continuing to work hard in 2016. The third through sixth grade chorus performed an excellent concert for the school community, and got families and teachers singing together, ending their performance with an audience sing along. Fourth through sixth grade students are continuing their instrumental lessons on flute and clarinet, and are preparing for their debut performance at the spring concert later in May. We were able to have two musical assemblies this second quarter: the Mirari brass quintet through the Gettysburg Community Concert Association, and Vida Charter School's winter concert in-school performance. The music was enjoyed by all grades at GMCS. Check out the classrooms below to get more updates!

Primary: Students in the primary classroom are continuing to sing songs, play games, move to music with scarves, bean bags, and parachutes, and have begun learning to use classroom instruments such as rhythm sticks and BoomWhackers.

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First & Second: First and second grade students are singing and moving to explore different rhythms and meter. They are composing lyrics to echo songs, and extending their creativity to illustrate those lyrics.

Third & Fourth: Third and fourth grade students wrapped up their musical trip to Bali with a residency and walking field trip to Gettysburg College where they learned gamelan from a world-renowned Balinese teacher. They worked towards their black belts in the Recorder Karate curriculum, and began to learn about instruments of the orchestra.

Fifth & Sixth: Fifth and sixth grade students continued work on ukuleles, learning many new chords and pop songs. They analyzed and discussed musical lyrics and rhyme schemes. Students then worked together to write their own class song, and created verses and a chorus to record. Students are continuing their musical collaboration by working on a class music video.

We are excited for a great rest of the winter in music!

Physical Education & Health

Over the past few weeks, students in lower elementary PE have been working on jumping and landing as well as different parachute activities. During the unit for jumping and landing, students worked in stations that practiced jumping for height and distance and began to practice timing and coordination through the use of jump ropes. In the upcoming weeks, we will be moving on to group games where students will be using teamwork and effective communication to participate in a variety of games.

In lower elementary health, students have been introduced to the importance of handwashing through an experiment that showed how bread molds more quickly when handled with unclean hands. We also described the different stages of growth and how to identify which stage a person is in. I've created a work that allows students to categorize these different areas that can be done in the classroom.

In upper elementary PE, students have been working on basketball fundamentals as well as gymnastics over the past few weeks. In gymnastics, students practiced skills such as balancing, vaulting, and stretching in a variety of activities. During our basketball unit, students worked in stations that practiced the fundamentals of basketball such as layups, jump shots, dribbling, and passing. In the upcoming weeks, students will be moving on to our group games unit where teamwork and communication are key.

In upper elementary health, students have just completed their unit on the senses where we had the opportunity to have a blind taste and smell test! We have moved on to our nutrition unit where students will be understanding how to read food labels and the different types of nutrients in food. One class in this unit will be a cooking class where students will prepare a low calorie dessert. At the end of the unit, students will be placed into groups for a small project where they will find a low-calorie snack recipe, present their nutritional facts, and prepare the snack to share with the class.



Greetings from the School Counselor! Our friends at GMCS are continuing to be awesome bucket fillers and are so close to getting BINGO on our Bucket Filler bingo board! Getting BINGO will earn our whole school an extra recess together. Small groups are continuing, covering a variety of social skills, learning how to be mindful, and book club has almost reached the end of our first book. I will continue doing my monthly classroom guidance lessons. As spring approaches, I will begin focusing on career exploration with students in 2nd-6th grade. A big part of this exploration is the joint Career Café I host with the School Counselor from VIDA Charter School. More information about the Career Café and how you can take part will be sent home closer to that time.

Board Briefings

New Building

Ms. Pleso and the GMCS Building Committee continue to work tirelessly on the new home for GMCS. We are excited to have you meet our amazing architect and learn about the plans for the school's new location. We plan to have an open house in the coming months where all of your questions can be answered and curiosity satisfied. We'll be in touch soon with the details!

Call for Volunteers: Board Vacancy

The GMCS Board of Trustees is currently seeking individuals interested in serving on the board for the remainder of the school year. If you have ever been interested in public service and governance, or are looking for a way to volunteer in the school this is a fabulous opportunity to get involved. The board meets at least once a month and board members are also responsible for some light committee work.

The board is looking for hardworking, dedicated individuals to help the school thrive and transition to a new location. It's an exciting time for the school, and a great time to get involved! If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact the board at board@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org.

Board Meetings

GMCS Board of Trustees meetings are open to the public. Meetings this fall will be held on Thursday, Jan 28; Feb 25; Mar 31; Apr 28; May 26; Jun 30 & Jul 28 at 7:00 p.m. at the school.



Clearances for Volunteers

All volunteers and chaperones need to have 2 up-to-date clearances on file with the school. These clearances are : Child Abuse History and PA State Police Criminal Record Check (ePatch). All volunteers need to update their clearances every 5 years.

Parents and guardians are encouraged and welcomed to volunteer and be chaperones once the 2 clearances are acquired. If you are interested in pursuing these clearances, an information sheet can be picked up in the office or found on our website.

