



OUR 23RD YEAR

NEWS FOR THE WEEK OF

September 9, 2013

PO Box 122 Royalston, MA 978 249-3505
www.villageschoolma.org



News and Notes

Calling all Parents to Parent Group Meeting this Friday

New parents and 'old' parents - let's get to know each other at this first monthly meeting. Find out how the Parent Group supports our children's learning. We'll meet at the picnic tables outside.

After School Music Lessons

The After School Music Program will start up the week of September 30th. Lessons will be available on violin, cello, guitar, ukulele, flute and piano. Free trial lessons will be available the week of September 23rd. See the attached (and online) brochure for details or ask Jocelyn.

When is Pick-Up for K-6th graders?

Please pick up children at 3:15 on Mon., Tues., Thurs. and Fridays and at 12 on Wednesdays. At 3:20, teachers have meetings inside. Children who are not picked up by 3:20, will be in the After School program with a minimum charge of \$5.

Water Bottles in Cubbies

We recommend that all K-6th children have water bottles in their cubbies, with water from home. It's handy when they come in from recess, or any outdoor activity. The school is a Public Water Supply, and the school water is chlorinated and certified drinkable.

Deans Beans Coffee Orders due this Friday online Find more information on the Village School website. Prices go up in October.

How to Sign Up for the After School Program

You can email Lynn at afterschool@villageschoolma.org; or text her cell phone (on the School Directory); or call the school the day before; or write your child's name on the After School calendar on the board in the office.

School Photo Day is Friday, September 20th. Photos are taken here in the school yard by Kirsten Spencer, and they come out terrific. Individual photos are taken, as well as classroom photos, and an All School photo. Sibling photos will be taken **upon request** - let the office know. **IF you do not want a photo taken of your child, let us know before, to save time.**

About a week later, the proofs will be displayed online for school parents only, accessible with a password. You can then order photo packages of a specific proof using order forms in the hallway. If you don't like them, you don't have to buy them.

Come to Curriculum Night Sept. 25th K-6th Presentations

Don't miss your child's teacher's presentation on the curriculum, events and practices for the year. Also, if you are **a parent of a young child at the school**, you may want to attend any or all of the presentations to learn about the unique challenging curriculum. If you can't get a babysitter, sign up in the office for babysitting at the school.

Here are the times: 5:45: K-1st 6:30: 2nd-3rd 7:15: 4th-6th

Preschool

It was exciting to welcome the new children to the preschool and to reconnect with the returning preschoolers. We are practicing name-games to help the children learn each other's names. Last Thursday we made a new batch of play dough with the class. Many children helped to measure and stir all the ingredients, and before long the whole class had their hands in the warm, fresh dough. Today the children joined the whole school for All School Sing down in the 2nd-3rd classroom. This Tuesday and Thursday the preschoolers will meet their Reading Buddies. They will look at books together from 8:45-9:00 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the whole

year. These relationships are very special to the children.

This week our class will learn the story *Three Billy Goats Gruff*. On Monday they will listen to the story, and on Tuesday they will watch the story being told on the flannel board. On Wednesday the class will be the audience for a *Billy Goats Gruff* puppet show. On Thursday the class will follow the story in a picture book and on Friday the preschoolers will act out the story outside using the ramp as a bridge! It's always a great way to finish the week.

September 2013

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9 8:45 All School Sing Spanish	10 8:45 Reading Buddies Music Classes	11 4 th -6 th to Sweetwater Farm Drop off at farm at 8:45, pick up 11:30 at farm	12 Art classes	13 PARENT GROUP MEETING 8:45 a.m. Coffee Order due online Yoga K-6 th Hiking
16 8:45 All School Sing Spanish	17 8:45 Reading Buddies Music Classes	18 K-1 to Sweetwater Farm drop off 9:00 Pick up 11:30	19 Art classes	20 Yoga School Photo Day K-6 th Hiking

Kindergarten—1st Grade

We are off to a great start in the K-1 classroom, with the class happy to be back and engaged in activities. We welcome Ezra Kurinsky to the class and the school.

We begin our themes this year with the theme of *Growing*. We'll be exploring, visiting, reading and writing about, drawing and painting, subjects that grow. We'll begin with plants, vegetables and animals, and will then move on to ourselves. We begin this week with the beautifully illustrated book *Waiting for Wings* by Lois Ehlert, which tells the tale of the life journey of a butterfly. Last week we went into the school garden to introduce the theme and the class identified many of the vegetables growing in the garden and began to harvest (and eat!) some of the pole beans. We'll do more of the harvesting later this month on all school Harvest Day.

Theme share starts this week - children are invited to bring in a theme related item to share with the class. See the notice board in

the classroom to find out which day is your child's theme share day. In art last week the class experimented with block crayons. This week we'll be making clay pinch pot cups to use at snack time.

On Wednesday September 18th we'll visit Sweetwater Farm in Petersham for our first field trip of the season. We'll be exploring the farm, including visiting the gardens, the orchards and the animals. Parents are welcome to join us for the morning. We'll also visit The Farm School and Maggie's Farm in Orange on September 25th. More details to follow.

In math, 1st graders are beginning a new *Investigations* unit *How Many of Each?* We'll use the calendar to mark special days, and for counting, ordering, and adding numbers.

We had a wonderful all school hike last Friday down to Lawrence Brook. Hiking will continue this Friday, and parents are always welcome to join us.

2nd - 3rd Grade

We've had a great start to the school year. The children are eager to dive right in and begin learning and working. We are working on building community in the classroom. Last week we played games that challenged the children to group themselves in different ways without talking, such as lining up in the order of their birthdays. They found silence challenging, but then figured out clever ways to communicate with each other and accomplish the tasks. We will continue to use games to build teamwork.

We have had some interesting discussions about the importance of listening, rules, and silence. The children have some insightful ideas about why listening is important. Here are a few: "We have to learn to communicate without words." "We need rules so we know what we are expected to do." "When we listen, we show we care about what someone else is saying."

In reading, we are discussing and practicing how to be a reading buddy. We will have our first reading buddy session on Thursday. In writing we are working on poetry. The children will pick out a poem that they will memorize. Then, they will recite their poems in front of the class next Tuesday. Children may bring in poetry books from home. Please make sure the family names are inscribed in any books that come in.

The children are working on creating their journal covers. They can bring in any magazine cut-outs or pictures to create a collage on the covers. In theme, we are creating a talking stick for the class and the children will create one to take home. They can bring in objects such as feathers, beads, and shells to attach to the talking stick. We discussed how talking sticks are used in councils and how they hold power and are symbolic.

Please see the attached letters for an overview of the year and for some specifics about our reading program. Also, if you haven't sent in your child's spare clothes bag, please do so. You never know when they might need them. Be sure to include an extra sweatshirt.



4th - 6th Grade

We have had an excellent start to the new school year, and during the first three days we've concentrated on a variety of activities to promote community building within the class. These will continue in the next few weeks, interwoven with the regular curriculum.

We are very happy to welcome Emmet Wright to the school as a 4th grader, and Myra Chapman as a second teacher in our classroom. Myra spent a semester in our classroom in 2011, as part of her teacher training, and it's a pleasure to welcome her back. Amongst all of her teaching duties, she will also be responsible for teaching math to the 5th grade.

Our theme this year is *The American West*, which will focus mainly on westward expansion, and how the USA grew from 13 colonies to a country spanning a whole continent, and more. We'll include the Native American perspective in our studies. To give a narrative thread, and provide a picture of pioneer life in the West, we will be reading the first five books in the *Little House* series, by Laura Ingalls Wilder.

We have begun our theme study by asking questions about American history, and establishing what the children know already. We will soon be looking at the background to the Louisiana Purchase, and we'll follow the story of the Lewis & Clark expedition, not forgetting the lesser-known expedition to the south-west led by Zebulon Pike. We will also spend time throughout the year mapping various developments across the USA, including the accession of new states and the growth of railroads.

Our class library has continued to grow over the summer, so that we now have over 800 fiction titles, many in multiple copies. This year we are focusing on expanding our non-fiction library, in various categories: history, science, animals, geography and ecology, etc. We welcome any suggestions for new titles.

This Wednesday (September 11th) we will have our first visit to Sweetwater Farm. Please drop off your children at 8:45 at the farm; pick-up is at the farm at 11:30. Please check the weather for appropriate clothing; whatever the conditions, please don't send you child(ren) in sandals.

A reminder- the children will not be using the microwave this year, so please adjust lunches accordingly.

See the attached overview for homework routines and more.