

THE SEA LION Journal

The Official Newsletter of McDowell Elementary School & Children's Choice Preschool



We Are Excited For Middle School This Fall!

February 2009



Now that 2009 is here, we are closer to opening our doors to Middle School students this fall. We are very excited about creating a challenging curriculum as well as fostering an environment that emphasizes personal responsibility. This environment will be enhanced with our laptop-immersion program, providing new opportunities for our students to develop writing, researching, and critical thinking skills. Our 5th graders are busy aiming for our 25wpm and 90% accuracy minimum typing requirement as well as solidifying skills with MS Powerpoint, Word, Excel, and Publisher. For those of you who may not know much about our program yet, Our Middle School mission is to:

- Develop a rigorous academic program that will provide the best opportunity to gain admission and honor tracking to the high school of choice
- Provide a wide range of academic experiences
- Maintain high behavior standards as well as develop and foster individual character
- Strong focus on math, science, writing, critical thinking, and leadership while utilizing technology on a daily basis in class
- Provide a significant amount of testing (math, language arts, science, writing) each year (ERB) that is normed against other independent schools

- Continue McDowell traditions of providing a family atmosphere where all students meet their full potential

The Middle Schoolers will be differentiated from Elementary with their different schedule, uniforms, special social area, additional lunch privileges, 8th Grade lockers, special field trips, and much more!

Already, the 6th grade Pre-Algebra books have arrived and we are finalizing curriculum design and sequence in Social Studies, Science, and Language Arts. Middle School uniforms have been ordered along with special "Class of" sweatshirts reserved for Middle School students only. Let's not forget incredible international opportunities with our fellow Meritas schools via video conferencing, exchange programs, or the annual Meritas Academic Olympics. Our current 5th graders are excited about many things.

Our current students are excited and had this to say. . .

Back Row Left to Right, see cover photo;

Devon Dabba: *I think the laptop program is excellent. I am very excited about this. I am nervous about more homework next year! I feel that next year will be quite fun.*

Ronald Sanchez: *It will be cool to have my own laptop. I am excited about sixth grade.*

Continues on page 2

On the Inside...

- ▶▶ Administrators
Ms. Cari L. Caris,
Miss Cheryl Cragun 2-3
- ▶▶ Book Worm
Book Club 2-3
- ▶▶ What's New
in Art Class? 4
- ▶▶ Spanish Update 5
- ▶▶ Expanding Computer
Knowledge 5
- ▶▶ Spanish News 5
- ▶▶ Music:
Ms. Schneider 6
- ▶▶ McDowell Sports 7
- ▶▶ Class Updates
Pre-K to Fifth grade 8-13
- ▶▶ Visual Guide to
15 Heathy
Snacks 14-15
- ▶▶ Fall
Enrollment 16
- ▶▶ Summer School 16
- ▶▶ Upcoming Events 16



Cari L. Caris Executive Director Elementary Principal

Happy New Year! I hope all of our families had a healthy and happy holiday season. It feels great to be back at school to finish out a fantastic first semester. Throughout the semester, and at the Meritas School Leaders summit, I had the opportunity to meet with staff

to evaluate new academic programs, class pacing, individual student success, character education, writing, and critical thinking. As you can guess, these are the areas that our entire staff is focused and we will continue to review our progress on a regular basis across all grade levels.

In a quick review of the current school year, we have had so many exciting moments and events. Everything from our monthly character awards, our Thanksgiving Stone Soup feast, the Winter Concert, wonderful holiday plays, Composer Countdown, and Walk through the Revolution makes me even more excited about all the events we have planned in the coming months. Cotillion for 4th and 5th grade is around the corner and Basketball season is well under way for the girls and

boys teams. All Elementary students(K-5) are finishing up their entries for their first art contest of the year. Our 2nd-5th graders are working hard on their global challenge in preparation for their next "Touchpoints" videoconference with our fellow Meritas school, Instituto San Roberto, in Mexico.

"Muffins with Ms. Caris" was a most enjoyable time for me to meet with parents in smaller groups and gain your insights and feedback about McDowell. I have already received several great suggestions that we are immediately putting to work.

As always, please stay in close contact with your child's teacher. I like to remind all our families this time of the year that it is very natural for our children to experience added academic challenges, as they are moving into more demanding concepts and information each school day. Please continue to provide support and encouragement for their hard work. Use the New Year to take the opportunity to set new limits on television during the school week. Please communicate with your teacher if you feel that your child needs some additional attention on a specific subject or assignment.

I appreciate the continued commitment and sacrifice your family is making to send your children to McDowell.

Best Regards,
Cari L. Caris
Executive Director/Elementary Principal

Our current students are excited and had this to say. . .

Continued from Cover

Timmy Nelson: *It will be exciting to continue in middle school at McDowell. I love it here!*

Grant Kauffman: *Wow, am I excited about this laptop program I have been hearing about. I can't wait to get additional choices of what clothes we want to wear. THIS WILL BE THE BEST YEAR AT MC DOWELL EVER.*

Front Row Left to Right, see cover photo;

Jessica Chin: *Honestly, I am pretty excited to be in this middle school. I am excited about everything. The uniforms, new computers, changing classes!*

Kristina Coffin: *I am really excited about the new Middle*

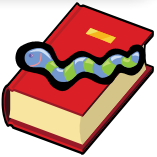
School Program because it gives me a chance to stay at McDowell longer. Having a personal laptop is going to be exciting. I know sixth grade will distinguish itself by having our own laptops! I am most excited that we are going to be like a real middle school and move from classroom to classroom!

Taylor Poehlman: *It will be fun to go to middle school at McDowell. I have been here since preschool. I am really excited about the laptops. The uniforms the sixth graders will wear are awesome.*

Megan D'Souza: *I love the new uniforms for sixth grade! I also like the fact that we get to have our own computers. I have never had a locker before and I am very excited to use one!*

Book Worm Book Club

Kyra Smith and Taylor Poehlman, Fifth Graders



When I approached Mrs. Peotter to discuss the possibilities for some fifth grade students to design and implement a book club program for 2nd grade, she knew she had several students who were up to the task. We struck gold when Kyra Smith and Taylor Pohlman ended up taking on this project. January 12th was the day they launched their 2nd Grade Book Worm Book Club. This interview reveals their love of reading and commitment to helping others. With all of the hard work and excitement that they put into designing the club – I am sure that it will be a success.



Kyra Smith and Taylor Poehlman, Book Worm Book Club Leaders.



Cheryl Cragun Preschool Director

Hello again! Right before our “winter recess” we all had a chance to enjoy the preschool Holiday Sing-A-Long. The children did an outstanding job performing and looked so cute dressed up and wearing their reindeer headbands. It was wonderful having so many family

members here to join in on the fun!

The “New Year” is underway and things are moving along well throughout the preschool classes. We have been combining fun and learning which was evident by our very popular Number Day. The children had a fabulous time traveling around the preschool classes engaging in “number” activities. They really enjoyed doing the number rock, playing number musical chairs, creating number headbands and having their faces painted with their favorite number. I had the job of making number pancakes for all the preschoolers and watched as they identified the numbers and then gobbled them up. Boy, do they love pancakes! Our field trip to Olympic Gymnastics was a lot of fun too. The variety of activities the children participated in was wonderful. They all

had fun climbing, jumping, bouncing, swinging and tumbling throughout the gym. There were many budding gymnasts among us!

At the end of February and the beginning of March, we will be making our annual visit to a local dental office as we celebrate Dental Health month. The children will tour the office and learn ways to keep the sugar bugs away and how to keep their teeth healthy and strong. We also have a planned themed day coming up. We will be having “Hat Day” in February. On this day, the children are invited to don their favorite hat to wear to school.

We look forward to next month where many more activities are planned. Spring will be around the corner and along with it will be planting activities, the magical world of leprechauns and more assemblies and field trips for further fun and learning.

Please be sure to mark your calendars with two very important dates. Our annual “Dads and Donuts” day will be held on Saturday, March 21st and our “Moms and Muffins” day will be held on Saturday, May 2nd. More information will be sent home as these dates approach.

As always, it is a pleasure being a part of your child’s education!

Sincerely Yours,
Miss Cheryl
Preschool Director

How long have you been students at McDowell?

Kyra: 6 years.
Taylor: 7 years.

What interested you about starting up a book club for 2nd graders?

Kyra: We wanted to help the class because we like reading a lot.

Do you enjoy reading? What is one of your favorite books?

Taylor: Yes. *Inkheart* by Cornelia Funke
Kyra: Yes. I like the book *The BFG* by Roald Dahl and the *Harry Potter Series* by J.K. Rowling

The mascot for your club is a worm, Fred. How will Fred inspire 2nd graders to read more?

Taylor: Because he’s cute.

Kyra: And, who doesn’t like a worm with spectacles? He likes to read.

What’s the best reward you can get for reading?

Kyra: Probably the enjoyment and a higher imagination.
Taylor: I would say enjoyment and maybe more knowledge.

If you could start another club for students what would it be?

Kyra: Probably a science club with experiments and a mascot.

What would the mascot be?

Taylor: A caterpillar.

Are you involved in any clubs yourself?

Kyra: I don’t really have a club but I kind of have a Chinese school and gymnastics team.
Taylor: I don’t really have a

club either but I’m on the gymnastics team and the soccer team. Last year Grant and I made the chess club last year.

What will you do to keep student’s interest in the book club?

Taylor: Well. I think with Fred he can make a weekly visit and make a point about how reading can be enjoyed. The prizes can keep them like excited, too.

In a poster Fred said ...reading can take you to a whole new world. What do you mean by that?

Taylor: Well, um. If you’re really into a book.. like *Magic Tree House* you can kind of feel like you’re there with them.
Kyra: If you really enjoy the book and you’re really into it and if the book is really

detailed and well written it can kind of take you into the book and... it can make you imagine that you’re there

What are your favorite subjects in school?

Taylor: Science and art
Kyra: Science and art and I’m good at math but it’s not really my favorite.

When you’re reading and you come across a word you don’t know - how do you figure it out?

Kyra: I either ask my mom then she tells me to look in the dictionary.
Do you like working with younger students?

Kyra: Yeah... because it’s fun and it kind of reminds us when we were young and we didn’t have a book club.

Interview Date: January 15, 2009
By Ms. Anderson

What's New in Art Class?

A lot of exciting work and events are in progress in the art classes this quarter. There are two competitions which I am excited to have the students participate. One competition is sponsored by Meritas and involves uploading student artwork to their website where it will be judged against work from the corresponding grade levels of the other Meritas schools. McDowell will be entering 10 works, 5 from each of the two categories we are eligible for; K through second and third through fifth. I don't know how I can choose from amongst the many beautiful artworks that our McDowell students create! This virtual art competition is certainly challenging me to join the 21st century and I find it quite exciting! I will keep everyone updated as I find out more.



Second Graders Shahrzad Ghazizadeh, Melody Tajalli, Emily Khosravi, and Estelle Vaughn create Pointillist paintings.



Emily Adkison having fun on the Tapestry Loom.

In other news, progress is being made in getting students in all grades familiar with the tapestry loom. The Kindergartners first practiced weaving a rope through the fence bars outside to see the concept of weaving on a magnified scale. Students are allowed to weave on the loom at anytime after they have finished their class projects. February will see all classes beginning our printmaking segment of the art class. They

will all learn mono-printing, scratchfoam, and glue prints, and the fifth grade will learn linoleum block printing and K and first will do vegetable printing and stamping. I always love to meet my students' parents and I invite you to visit the Art Room. I am very proud of it and thrilled that McDowell has such a great space to have the children create art!

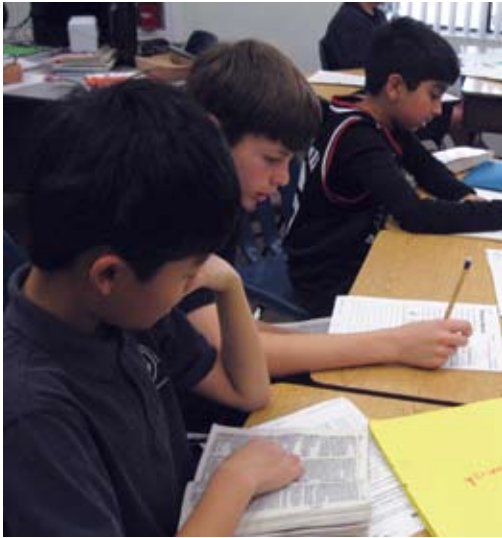
The other competition is a more traditional one. It is sponsored by the California Coastal Commission. I would like every child at McDowell in grades K through Fifth to enter a piece

of work. This means that if a student completes the artwork and fills out and returns the entry form that was sent home, their work will be entered in the competition.



Taylor Poehlman, Kyra Smith, Noelani Murayama and Leah Ghavami look up from their art projects.

Spanish Update



The elementary students are working hard in Spanish! The Kindergarten students have learned the days of the week, basic greetings, colors, and clothing in Spanish. It was very fun. Next, they will be learning about different Spanish-speaking countries and the way their flag looks. In first grade, the students have learned the months and seasons in Spanish. The children enjoyed learning a song to help them remember

Devon Dabba, Timmy Nelson, and Christopher Choan write sentences using possessive adjectives and occupations.

the months and seasons in order. Second graders have learned household and classroom objects in Spanish. They are working on expanding their vocabulary. Third graders have excelled in learning how to conjugate regular verbs. This very important foundation is



Joshua Silk and Sam Rafizad learn about the flags of Spanish speaking countries.

key to being able to speak and write correctly in Spanish. Next, they will expand on their vocabulary to help facilitate this process. Fourth and fifth graders have recently learned about various occupations, expressions with the verb “tener”, and have also learned about many Spanish speaking countries. They recently completed a project where each student was assigned a country to research. They learned about the country’s flag, the capital, natural resources, typical food, and famous people from their country.

After completing their research, they presented their country to the class. It was an enjoyable learning experience for all of us. This year has been exciting as well as challenging!



Noelani Murayama, Rostin Amirani, and Willy Miyamoto write sentences in Spanish using new vocabulary.

Expanding Computer Knowledge



Fourth Grader Sarah Khoshniyati having fun writing descriptive words in her Microsoft Word project.



Second Grader Evan Davis writing about Tales of Fourth Grade Nothing in his Microsoft Word Document.

The students are having a wonderful time in the computer lab. They have been very busy working on special projects. Kindergarteners are reading stories, writing words in MS Word and working on typing skills. First graders are having fun learning how to change color, font, and size in MS Word as they are writing short sentences and adding graphics. They are also practicing typing skills through the use of software along with instruction. Second graders are

working on their project “All About Me” in PowerPoint. Third graders are excited about their Excel projects as they are learning about cells, sums, sorting and graphs. They are working very hard to improve their typing skills which will improve their words per minute. Fourth and Fifth graders have been diligently working on their PowerPoint projects and at the same time improving their typing skills with accuracy and words per minute.



Third grader Tarika Gujral is mastering her typing skills by improving her accuracy and words per minute.

Music: Ms. Schneider

What an exciting time in music class! We wrapped up the first part of the school year with our winter concert where the McDowell students sang and danced their hearts out.

During the next couple months we will continue working on song acquisition, instrument manipulation and improving music theory and aural skills. We will also be looking at composers in music history such as Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Grieg & Sousa. Stay tuned for the theme of our spring concert coming up in May!

We have been having so much fun in music class that we have decided to add an extra-curricular after-school drama activity on Fridays that will begin on February 27th. Students in second through fifth grade who choose to participate will be working on a play based on Dr. Seuss's book The Lorax. They will be learning lines and blocking in addition to designing costumes, props and stage makeup. It should be a fantastic show!



Brandon Wu, Evan Giltman, and Grace Miyamoto spin dreidels during the song "Spin, Spin, Spin!"

"Turn the World Around"

- 1) We come from the mountains.
We come from the mountains.
Go back to the mountains and
turn the world around. (clap, clap)
We come from the mountains.
Go back to the mountains and
turn the world around. (clap, clap)*

*(the next time you sing it substitute
the following words for "mountains")*

- 2) water*
- 3) fire*
- 4) sky*



Hunter Stull and Olivia Grund peek out of the mitten during the winter concert.



Elena Dahi, Yasmin Minai, Hailey Hageman, Mikayla Chapman, and Gwen Martin play recorder during the song "Jolly, Old St. Nicholas" in the winter concert.

Physical Education K-5

In January, we started learning basketball related skills. We will continue to work on these skills through March. The children will then move on to the sports related skills of soccer, baseball, and hockey. This will keep us busy for the remainder of the school year.

The Kindergarteners are working on dribbling a basketball in a stationary position and progressing to walking from one cone to the other cone while dribbling. They will learn a variety of ways to pass the basketball; the bounce pass, chest pass, over the head pass and baseball pass. The children will also practice shooting

the basketball with the hoop adjusted to their level.

The first and second graders are working on dribbling a basketball as they run up and down our basketball court. They too will learn a variety of ways to pass the basketball. We are also playing different shooting and passing games.

The third through fifth grade classes are learning the rules of basketball. They are also doing basketball drills on dribbling, passing and shooting to create an offense. They will then do drills on playing defense to stop the offense.



Timmy Nelson ready to take the shot during one of our basketball games.



Go McDowell Sea Lions boys' basketball team.

After School Sports

The boys' flag football season and the girls' volleyball season has ended. The boys set a new record for flag football at McDowell with two victories. This is a first for McDowell and we are proud of their achievements. The girls' volleyball team had a great season as well. They had a victory against Morasha and made much improvement throughout the season.

McDowell has moved into basketball season which started in January and will continue through March. We have a boys' and a girls' basketball team. The children are really excited about playing basketball and have done very well in their first few games.

The last after school sports program will be co-ed soccer. This starts at the end of March and goes until May.



Mr. Myers teaching the second graders how to pass a basketball.

Go McDowell Sea Lions!!



Athletic Director, Mr. Myers helps Jackson Williams score a basket.



Sophia Colback and Logan Silk having fun string painting.

With 2008 behind us, school resumed in January and we have been keeping busy. 2009 began with the three year olds learning about winter, cold weather animals and snow. We picked up with the alphabet right where we left off and have been on a role ever since. In January we also began working on our number books. We are covering a new number each week from zero to ten. On January 14 we had number day and that was a day that the children really enjoyed.



Allison Lin and Ryan Bahri making number headbands on Number Day

We danced to the "number rock", ate number pancakes, made number headbands and even got numbers painted on our faces! Who knew that numbers could be so much fun? We ended January with a field trip to Olympic Gymnastics. The children got to climb, jump and tumble their way through the gym! The children just loved getting the chance to run and jump indoors.

February began with talks about community helpers. Our main focus was on mail carriers. The children learned just how important their jobs were and how busy they are delivering all of the valentines to our homes. The children got to decorate their own valentine "mailboxes" and then took turns pretending to be a mail carrier and deliver their valentines to their classmate's boxes. We

kept busy cutting and pasting hearts to many different projects and had fun getting ready for such a fun celebration. All the children came to school with hats on for hat day and that was a fun treat! The children's fine motor skills are being put to work on a daily basis cutting, tracing, lacing, gluing and tearing, and it's amazing how much they have all improved!

We are getting ready for March by talking about dental hygiene and how to take care of our teeth. Our class field trip to the dentist will be in March and we are all very excited for that! The children will also be learning about those sneaky leprechauns around St. Patrick's Day and we will be going on a leprechaun hunt to see if we can catch one. We will be talking a lot about spring and different animal units as well.



Hayden Jones, Nicole Donahoo, and Emery Shields enjoying Number Day.

This year has been progressing so quickly. It feels like we just began the year. That must mean that we are having a great time! We teachers continue to be amazed at the progress that our classes are making and look forward to enjoying the rest of the year with them!

Miss Mary and Miss Katie



Hayden Jones and Bryce Pennington playing musical chairs.

Pre-School 4

Fun-Loving Fours



Aden Gallagher and Zackary Zahr experimenting with frost.

January brought the new year and with the holidays behind us, the fours were ready to get busy once again. We learned about snow, winter, and some interesting facts about some of our favorite cold weather animals. We made frost, felt very cold frozen ice, and floated polar bears on icebergs. Did you see the giant polar bear in Ms. Lori's class? We remembered Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and discussed diversity and tolerance and found out that our differences make us very interesting indeed. We also learned some interesting facts about our new President, Barack Obama. Ms. Lori's class

spent two weeks digging up some dinosaur facts. This unit always inspires wonder and fascination about these giants of long ago. Our gymnastics trip was a huge success; the children had fun bouncing, jumping, sliding, and balancing.

February is also a busy time for us. We put our fine motor skills to work by tracing, cutting, and assembling Valentines and Valentine's projects for our families and friends. That's a lot of name signing and very good practice for us writing our names the 'kindergarten' way. Ms. Sheree's class had fun making Valentine folders and Ms. Valerie and Ms. Lori's classes had fun making their own Valentine mail boxes and pretending to be mail carriers by delivering their own Valentines. We are looking forward to another special day in preschool this month. This one is Hat Day and we can't wait to see all the different hats that

will be worn to school on the 18th.

The fours will also sink their teeth into some dental health activities to prepare for our trip to the dentist office. Ms. Valerie's class will end the month with the letter "L" and have a class lemonade stand where they'll make and sell their own lemonade.

March will find us talking about spring's arrival and doing many wind experiments. We will also be discussing all kinds of animals this month as well. Ms. Lori's class will have her annual Spring Shirt Style Show. Her class will surely put their creativity to work and strut down the

aisle to model their creations. Ms. Sheree's class will be making books about farm animals which will be on display at Open House.

So, as you can see, the fours are busy with all of these activities in addition to our regular learning program of Saxon math, alphabet and phonics, and bushels of kindergarten readiness activities. Isn't it exciting to see how much fun learning can be? We think so and we get to witness it everyday. Stop in to lend a hand and see for yourself.

Miss Valerie, Miss Lori and Miss Sheree



Natalie Cipriani, Ava Mitchell, Hayden Jones, and Joshua Kanne discover they are smaller than a polar bear

Early Kindergarten

Early Kindergarten News



Tanner Stull sharing his dog, Sasha, during pet week.

January was a month filled with many new activities in the Early Kindergarten class. We began writing in our journals, which seems to be a big hit. We have added many more activities to go alongside the letters of the week. "P" week was fun as some of our classmates brought in their pets to share with the class for "Pet Week". We also enjoyed a Teddy Bear Tea Party

during "T" week. The children are being introduced to sight words. We practice writing and reading them. Each week they "wear" a new sight word, so be on the look out for sight word stickers coming home "on" your child. Our field trip to Olympic Gymnastics was a blast. Thanks to PSG we are able to participate in many fun activities outside of school. Thank you to the parents that help drive on all our field trips.

Love, friendship, and caring are in the air in the Early Kindergarten class. During the month of February we are celebrating Valentine's Day with a card exchange and we will be decorating cookies here at school for a special sweet treat. We have been talking about how to be a good friend and how we care for one another at school and at home. Hat Day was a fun day for everyone to wear a silly, cute or funny hat. We are also excited for our upcoming field trip to the neighborhood Dentist at the end of February, as we celebrate Dental Health month.

March is the month when we look forward to learning about spring and new growth of animals and plants. We will plant seeds and do many other science experiments. We will continue working on our Alphabet books and our monthly dictation books. I can't believe we will almost be finished with all of the letters and will be getting ready for the biggest event of the year, Open House. We also look forward to spending an hour with our dads at "Dads and Donuts" day in March. We have many fun activities planned for this event, so you won't want to miss it. As the Early Kindergarten program stays strong, the children continue to make great strides and work to their full potential. Keep up the good work!

Miss Courtney



Brooke Fischbeck and Brooke Cressy dress with numbers during number day.

Kindergarten

Kindergarteners in Action!



Alden Cressy, Emily Bush, and Evan Gordon discuss our new President.

Our two Kindergarten classes have been busy! First of all, we had several parents come to our class to help teach us specific lessons. Mr. Gordon taught us about global warming and how vital it is to recycle in order to protect our planet. We were also very fortunate to have Mrs. Rosiak and Mrs. Selvan teach us about Hanukkah. We learned about the menorah

and learned that this gentle man continues to teach to this day about peace and justice. Our learning themes in January 2009 also included "Hibernation and Geography". These themes



Mrs. B reading with Logan Ewert, Olivia Newbold, and Zoe Leland.

our Alpha Friends. Whether in our Leveled Guided Reading Groups or our Accelerated Reading program, the children continue to have individualized, hands-on experience to sharpen their skills and learn about the simple pleasures of reading.

In Math, we continue to review such skills as addition, subtraction, patterning and graphing but we also have the opportunity to be introduced to telling time, counting coins and fractions. Journal writing offers the boys and girls the opportunity to express their thoughts while at the same time strengthening their phonic's skills.

Science provides the opportunity to explore and ask questions. The boys and girls learn about plant life in Life Science and different types of textures (paper, cloth, wood and metal) in Physical Science. They also learn that the only silly question is the one they don't ask.

Kindergarten is a time of wonder and we consider ourselves most fortunate to be a part of watching these young minds grow.

Warmly,
Ms. M. & Mrs. B.



Kindergarten learning Hanukkah with Mrs. Selvan and Mrs. Rosiak.

and listened to a beautiful song. Learning about Hanukkah was just in time for our Winter musical program. Mrs. B's class "rocked the house" with the Tango and Ms. M's class performed an adorable play titled "The Mitten". The following week was our last week before Winter Break and we celebrated with a super class party. Our wonderful parent volunteers created a special event for the children with stories, beautiful crafts and delicious treats.

January soon arrived and we celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr.

were topped off by our field trip to Zoomar's Petting Zoo. The children LOVED IT!

February is here and the students will study about George Washington and Abe Lincoln. In addition to learning about two famous past presidents we will continue to have discussions about our newly elected president, Barack Obama. February is National Dental Health Month, Black History Month and the 100th Day of School!

In Language Arts, phonics, storytelling, and good listening skills are stressed with the help of



Robby Szczepaniak, Paige Queen, Shota Tokutsu, Nicole Tatantino, and Zoe Stone are getting ready for the winter program.

First Grade

Flat Stanley Arrives!



Flat Stanley arrives in Mrs. DeHart's class.

One of our first homework assignments in first grade was to send the literary character Flat Stanley off to see the world. Our little cardboard friend was sent to locations throughout the United States as well as many foreign countries. His task was to come back with photographs and stories of his travels and then have his first grade "student friend" give

our study of "Life Science" we examined plants and their needs, animals and their needs, and plants and animals living together. This required our first grade scientists to read, draw, write and observe our environment. We even worked in cooperative groups to complete lesson outlines in our text books so that everyone was prepared to

we will continue to work on throughout the year. We also continue to read about all the adventures of Flat Stanley, and will be attending the play, "Flat Stanley" at the Barclay Theatre in Irvine next month. We can hardly wait to see the little guy come to life on stage!

Another curriculum area where we are having fun learning is in science. In



Holiday Winter Party with Mrs. H's class.

ocean, and forest. Our next area of study in science is "Earth Science", where we will be looking at weather and seasons. Rumor has it we will even produce rain in our classrooms!

First grade is also a busy place for writers. We get practice writing in all subject areas, but our students seem to especially enjoy writing in their journals. The growth in our student writing has been phenomenal! This month we started our Writers' Workshop with the help of parent volunteers. During this activity the children polish skills through the guided writing process

outstanding citizens, we have spent time learning about many positive character traits. Honesty, compassion, and friends were our focus this quarter. Mrs. DeHart's class performed a skit and song about the importance of honesty at our flag ceremony, and Mrs. H's class will perform at the ceremony scheduled in May. It is always fun to watch each class have an opportunity to perform in front of the student body and families.

Speaking of families, both classes joined together to enjoy a wonderful winter holiday party. Parents provided several fun



Mrs. DeHart's class dioramas.

a written/oral presentation to the class. The twenty-four first grade Stanleys arrived at McDowell on December 5th to the absolute delight of all the children, parents and teachers! The student presentations were beyond our expectations, and we learned about many foreign locations on our classroom maps. This assignment was enrichment to our social studies lessons on maps, which

test on this material. We all take responsibility to help our fellow classmates learn! The culminating project for this unit was each student creating a habitat diorama using a shoe box and photos or drawings. The most difficult part was to decide what plants and animals would live in a particular habitat. The end products were beautiful student projects depicting the desert, rain forest, grasslands,



Mrs. H's class dioramas.

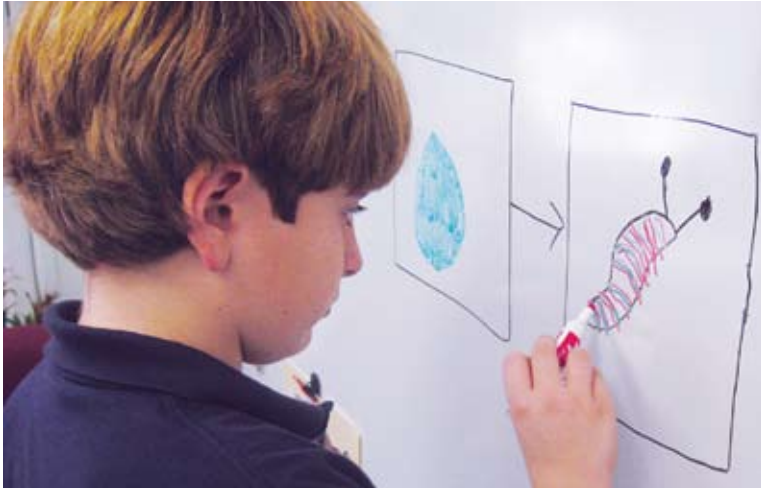
of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. We are sure that our budding authors will publish many fine pieces of work before the year is through! We encourage the students to also publish stories at home to bring in to share with their classmates.

In our ongoing effort to develop

projects including a giant pine cone bird feeder, gingerbread house puzzle, and snowflake ornament. And we can't forget to mention all the yummy food and treats! Our families are great!

Second Grade

This school year promises to be great!



Max Kauffman illustrates a Life Cycle.

The earth science unit captivated students' interest as they classified rocks by properties and identified different soil types. Students are looking forward to learning about earth long ago - studying fossils and dinosaurs.

If you pass by our classroom lately you may hear us singing

The "Star Spangled Banner" or "America the Beautiful". We are learning about important American symbols, landmarks and the role of the President. Next, we'll be studying history and visiting the Heritage Museum in Santa Ana to learn more about what life was like long ago.

Second graders agree that Reading is "Sweet" and students are working on their Accelerated Reading goals for this month. We will be celebrating our success with Ms. Caris in February.

We finished our lessons in manuscript printing and will begin

cursive writing in February. When asked how he felt about learning cursive Evan Davis replied, "Kind of happy because it's like my first time doing cursive. I just tried doing cursive one time." It's shaping up to be a spring full of learning and fun!



Ms. Anderson sewing stockings in December with Eddy Wagenseller.

Third Grade

Stupendous Students



Evan misplaced his ruler so Tarika, Melanie, Nathan, and many more students try to help out.

The 17 third graders have a lot of curiosity. We are busy studying all about three different Indian tribes and working on weights and measurements, including putting together Allen the Gallon Guy. We are now dividing with remainders and improving in our mental math exercises. In science we have completed our three chapters of life science and now get to explore earth science, starting with the sun and the moon.

We are getting ready to introduce double double digit

multiplication (34×67) and enjoy our many math investigations.

But don't think it's all work in third grade. One of our adjective writing projects had us describing our favorite treat in detail. We then printed our paper out during computer class and finally got to devour the subject of our writing assignment. We also entertained the senior citizens in Mission Viejo by singing holiday songs and caroling through the convalescent home.

As you can see, there is never a dull moment in third grade.



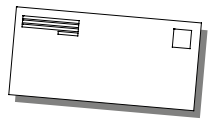
Catherine Orihuela, Melanie Shams, and Nathan Mirsky, and the rest of the 3rd graders are constructing our measurement guide.



Third graders cheer up our elders with songs and poems.

Fourth Grade

Relive the Revolution



Got Mail?

Fourth grade looks forward next month as they anticipate replies to business letters written in class. Students are excited to see if they will receive a formal response. Be sure to check the hallway bulletin board for those letters.



Mrs. Schoenhoefer and her students Walk Through the American Revolution.

Fourth grade students kicked off the New Year with "Walk Through the American Revolution", a Colonial re-enactment where children combine learning with fun. Students were assigned historical characters for role-playing, created their own original dramatic skit, memorized vocabulary words, were encouraged to wear costumes, sang songs, and participated in a trivia-style game show format.

The excitement continued as each student churned cream into butter, wrote proverbs with quill pen and ink and dipped wax to make their very own candles. The fourth grade enjoyed every part of the fifth grade Colonial Re-enactment Day. They loved the "hands on approach" to learning and they will remember this event as one of the best learning experiences.

Fourth Grade Students are on a Mission (Pun Intended)

The students are well on their way to becoming mission experts. A class fieldtrip to Mission San Juan Capistrano allowed students to become engaged in learning much information about this beautiful Orange County "jewel." Independently, students continued their research on one of the twenty-one missions to develop an informative report, artistic rendition, and a memory book. Their work was showcased during the Open House in January.



Aidan, Ameen, Chase, Jackson, Moshe, and Elena taking notes at Mission San Juan Capistrano.

Fifth Grade

Fifth Grade is a Happening Place.



Fifth Grade "Walks Through the Revolution".

The fifth grade has been busy writing! We wrote and illustrated a book on holiday traditions in December. The students dedicated their book to their families and on the back cover wrote about the author.....themselves! Please read our Descriptive Paragraphs on our hall bulletin board. Descriptive writing is fun and in our classroom we have posted a description of enjoying hot chocolate using all the five senses. We are working on an individual original comic strip. This has been an enjoyable process. Take a walk through fifth grade and enjoy our innovative and humorous comic strips. Also in the classroom is an essay by each student on the book we read called, *Hatchet*. The class as a whole would definitely

recommend this book. We learned about irony and foreshadowing and wrote about examples of each from the book. We are starting a writing portfolio. The students look forward to collating a nice portfolio of twenty different types of writing. We will have ready by the spring Open House!

"Walk Through the Revolution" is a fantastic program! Each student dressed in a Colonial Day famous character costume, memorized lines to recite and practiced famous battle scenes. We spent an enjoyable morning learning about the American Revolution and the Thirteen Colonies. After the enactment we enjoyed some colonial crafts. Thanks to wonderful parent

volunteers from fourth and fifth grade we churned butter (well, shook heavy cream in baby food jars) and chanted, "Come butter come, come butter come, George and Martha waiting in the kitchen but the butter won't come, come butter come". We enjoyed our butter with corn bread! Secondly, the class enjoyed writing famous quotes with a feather pen and ink. Also, we made homemade candles by dipping string into melted paraffin. This day will long be remembered as one of the best days of the fifth grade year! Each student is making a book to commemorate this special day. Included is a writing assignment describing: What the "Star Spangled Banner" Means to Me. This book is student illustrated and filled with some nice photos from the day.

Special to fifth graders are Anagrams. An anagram is a word that is scrambled. The students are so good at unscrambling the words that they are making up lists for the class to work. This shows great analytical thinking.

Math is a favorite subject for many students. There are two math groups and we enjoy moving at a good pace. There are many "Mensa Math" students in fifth grade. The class enjoys speed tests as well.

In Science we are studying Earth Science. We are enjoying

learning how rain, sleet, hail, and snow form. Learning about the water cycle and oceans of the world has been great. Science has become a favorite subject for several students because of the wonderful science experiments organized by Mrs. Wong and a special group of talented parents who come in and volunteer. We have done a lot with poetry



Kyra Smith as Betsy Ross.

this year. Our class entered the California Coastal Commission Poetry Contest. It is most impressive how talented our class is at writing different types of poems.

Fifth grade is definitely a happening place. Please drop by and visit!

Mrs. Peotter

A Visual Guide to 15 Healthy Snacks

The challenge is to balance convenience with nutrition.

Here is a pictorial guide to a selection of healthy snacks - and remember - healthy eating is not just about the number of calories*.



Raw Almonds

Serving shown: 20 almonds
Calories: 139



Raw Mixed Nuts

Serving shown: 30g / ~1oz
Calories: 178



Dried Fruit

Serving shown: 40g / 1.4oz
Calories: 97

Note: Dried fruits are more calorie dense (per weight) than fresh fruit - and are easier to overeat.



Mandarin Oranges

Serving shown: 180g, 1 medium & 1 small. Calories: 95
Note: Great packaging. Small portions. Seasonal



Apple

Serving shown: 185g / 6.5oz
Calories: 96



Banana

Serving shown: 1 medium banana - 118g
Calories: 105
Note: Nicely prepackaged.



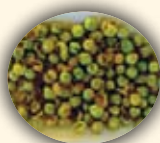
Grapes

Serving shown: 215g / 7.6oz
Calories: 148
Note: Seasonal



Tuna

Serving shown: 85g / 3oz
Calories: 99
Note: Be wary of tuna in oil - many of the oils are vegetable oils (high in omega-6 rather than omega-3 EFA's).



Dried Peas

Serving shown: 25g / .9oz
Calories: 72
Note: Find in bulk bins - often with different seasonings.



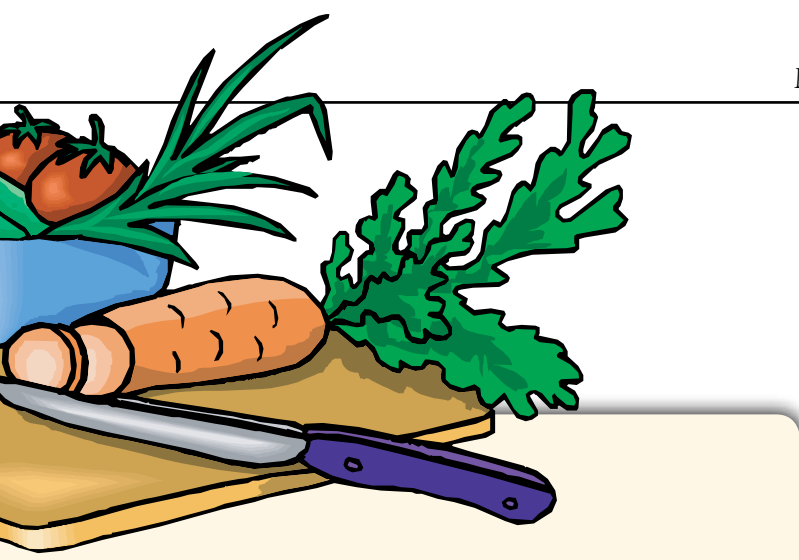
Popcorn

Serving shown: 2 cups
Calories: 62 (air-popped)
Calories: 110 (oil-popped)
No condiments added.
Note: Avoid pre-packaged popcorn (often contains trans fat).



Baby Carrots

Serving shown: 170g / 6oz
Calories: 60
Note: Convenient - can buy pre-washed and pre-bagged.



Celery & Hummus
 Serving shown: 40g / 1.4oz hummus
 Calories: 108
 Note: Buy celery pre-cut and pre-washed. Goes well with many other dips.



Cherry Tomatoes
 Serving shown: 150g / 1 Cup
 Calories: 27
 Note: Seasonal.

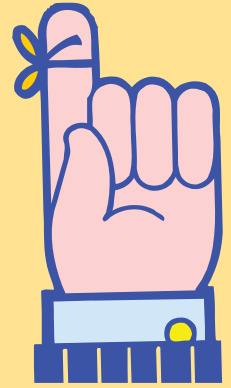


Whole-grain Crispbread with Cottage Cheese
 Serving shown: 1 cracker + ~45g (1.5oz) cottage cheese (light)
 Calories: 70
 Note: Aim for crispbreads or crackers that are completely whole grain and have a minimal amount of oil.



Bean Salad 80g / 2.8oz
 Calories: 90

Snacks Facts to Remember



Functional Fruit

All fruits are great - however many have a very short season (berries, peaches, nectarines) and others can be a bit too messy if you are at school (grapefruit, oranges, melon).

****It's Not Just About Calories***

Some snacks may be low in calories, but lack in other essential nutrients. What's more - some snacks do nothing to satisfy the appetite. What's the point in saving 20 calories just to be gnawingly hungry 15 minutes later? No vending machine will be safe from you...

Not Everyone Needs to Snack

For some people - three square meals works fine. For others, snacking is a way of life - and without a little pre-planning - most of those snacks will not be the best choices.

Snacking is a great way to maintain even energy levels and manage hunger and prevent bingeing.

Building Positive Habits

Snacking is habit forming. Switch out bad food choices for good ones - and before you know it - your 3 hourly pilgrimage to the vending machine will be a thing of the past.

NOTE: All items were carefully weighed and measured. Calorie amounts came from the USDA nutrient database or from labels.

Upcoming Events 2009

March

- 1 Tuition Due
- 2 Cotillion – Grades 4 & 5
- 6 Non-Uniform Day – Sports Shirt Day
- 9 Daylight savings begins
- 11 Kindergarten 2nd Trimester Progress Reports Sent Home
- 13 Flag Ceremony – Elementary
PSG Meeting 8:45 a.m.
- 16 Cotillion Family Night - Grades 4 & 5
- 27 School Spirit and Pizza Day

April

- 1 Tuition Due
- 3 Flag Ceremony – Elementary
PSG Meeting 8:45 a.m.
- 6-10 Parent Conference Week – 3rd Quarter Progress Reports – Elementary Only
- 10 Non-Uniform Day
- 13-17 NO SCHOOL – Spring Recess
- 20-24 PSG Silent Auction
- 24 PSG Silent Auction Evening Picnic
School Spirit and Pizza Day
- 27-May 1 Elementary Achievement Testing Week (K-5th)

May

- 1 Tuition Due
- 4-8 PSG Teacher Appreciation Week
- 6 PSG Meeting 8:45 a.m.
- 7 Mom and Child Night – Elementary Only – 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
- 8 Flag Ceremony – Elementary
Non-Uniform Day
- 11-15 Book Fair
- 15 Twin day
- 12 Preschool Open House ~ 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- 14 Elementary Open House ~ 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- 22 Spring Musical
- 25 NO SCHOOL ~ Memorial Day
- 29 School Spirit and Pizza Day
- 29 Spelling Bee – Grades 2-5

June

- 1 Tuition Due
- 3 Talent Show – Grades K-5
PSG Meeting 8:45 a.m.
- 5 End of the Year Event for Preschool
Flag Ceremony – Elementary
- 8 Elementary Awards Ceremony – Grades K-5
Progress Reports Sent Home – Grades K-5
- 9 Last Day Event for Elementary
Non-Uniform Day
- Last Day of School – Preschool thru Grade 5
- 15 First Day of Summer Camp

**Schedule subject to change – please consult the calendar on the website at: <http://www.mcdowellelementary.com>

Fall Enrollment For Elementary & Preschool 09/10 Enrollment Has Begun!

Please remember that enrolling as soon as possible ensures a placement for your child. During the Open Enrollment periods, spaces are limited and available on a first come first-serve basis.

Summer School

GET READY FOR OUR INCREDIBLE SUMMER CAMP!

Our summer camp enrichment program filled with fun, sports, music, arts and crafts, and field trips! Camp McDowell is open to all children 3 years old through 6th grade. Two age appropriate camp groups are offered; one for Preschoolers and one for Elementary Students. Be on the look out for more information to be released soon . . .

MCDOWELL *Elementary*
& *Children's Choice Preschool*

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