

Specialists' Newsletter

FIRST GRADE

September/October 2010

ART



First graders began the year with an exploration of **Vincent van Gogh's** work. Specifically, they examined his numerous self-portraits with their bold brushstrokes and intense colors. Next, they reviewed the six different types of lines: **horizontal, vertical, diagonal, curvy, ziz-zags and dotted.** Students noticed many interesting lines and colors in van Gogh's paintings and created their own self-portraits using oil pastels and watercolors. They selected one or two main colors to express their feeling and incorporated it into the background and face. On October 28th, we will go on a field trip to the de Young Museum to see the **Post Impressionism** exhibit. Students will spend time painting landscapes and still lifes with emphasis on capturing mood and feeling with bright colors and brush technique. Be sure to check out the completed self-portraits currently on display in the lunchroom!

MUSIC



It has been a delightful start of the year! I hope you had a chance to read through the music curriculum documents that were sent to you in conjunction with Curriculum Night. They contain an overview of the music program at Burke's along with grade level specifics, including this year's performance dates for your daughter. Please mark these dates in your calendars now (this information is also available on the website).

First Grade got reacquainted in September with the folk dances "Boanopstekker," "The Mixer Dance," and "The Virginia Reel." They honored the 8th graders and welcomed the kindergarteners by singing "Bashana Haba'ah" and "Sansa Kroma" at our All School Assembly. Following up in the music room the girls learned more about the Jewish New Year and danced "Bashana Haba'ah." They also learned about Ramadan as they sang and played tambourines and hand drums to "The Ramadan Song."

'Timothy the Music Mouse' and the rest of his puppet family have been helping the girls review vocal quality for singing (calling, whispering, speaking and singing voices), practice steady beat, and build readiness for melodic and rhythmic reading with the songs "Seesaw" and "Lemonade." Using felt staff boards the girls practiced placing notes "on" the lines (with the line going through the middle of the note) and in between the lines (on the space) and counting the five lines and four spaces (from the bottom) of the music staff. They have just learned the melodic hand signs and solfa syllables *so* and *mi* and are starting to read them from the music staff.

The girls have been exploring the many percussion instruments in the music room and reviewing how to care for and play the barred xylophones. Using the story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" the girls learned the names for the bass, alto and soprano barred instruments, played up and down the instrument as Goldilocks and then the bears climbed the stairs, echoed short rhythm patterns and played a simple accompaniment while singing "Pease Porridge Hot."

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments as the year progresses.
Ms. Mandelstein
x322
Lisa.M@KDBS.org

PE



First grade girls continue to show great enthusiasm now that we have PE every day. Listening and safety skills are reinforced as the girls move in different directions, at varying speeds, and at different levels such as a high or low level. We often warm up with a short tag game. Bridge Tag and Jumping Jack Tag are two examples. Playing catch with beanbags, balancing the bag on various body parts, and throwing for height and distance are examples of tracking or eye-hand practice. Keeping a beach ball in the air with continuous soft hits also takes concentration and skill. First grade girls combine locomotor skills. An example is "hop to the cone and leap on your way back." The girls are also working to execute a push up using proper form.

SCIENCE



Since many first grade students now buy their lunch at school for the first time, we began the year with a study of healthy food choices. The girls went through a pretend buffet line where they chose a healthy lunch with a main dish, one or two sides, a drink, and an optional dessert. We also discussed the food pyramid and the importance of having balance in what you eat. We learned the difference between a fruit and a vegetable, sorting produce into these two categories. From our own nutrition we moved on to studying food chains. The girls played the roles of plants, predators, prey, or the sun in several different simulations of food chains to show how energy starts with the sun and is passed from organism to organism. The girls also practiced using a Venn diagram as we compared carnivores, herbivores and omnivores. We are now beginning a new unit on weather. Each school day the girls will track the weather and temperature in their classroom, while we focus on one kind of weather a week in science. You might do some weather observations at home with your first grader, noticing the different shapes clouds can make or how the weather changes as fall continues towards winter. The girls are enjoying having their own science journals to record their learning as we journey through the year together!

TECHNOLOGY



First graders began the year by exploring different examples of technology and how these technologies extend our human powers. For example, written words extend the power of one's voice and paper clips extend the power of a pinch. As a support to their study of van Gogh, students used online resources from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and an online drawing tool to learn about his use of line. They used Kidpix paint tools to rework some of his paintings. As an introduction to programming the students have used interlocking blocks to teach a "turtle" to draw. The program, Turtle Art, allows the students to change color, line, and direction to make geometric designs. You can view a compilation of their designs and programming blocks on this page. <http://www.kdbs.org/node/814>

LIBRARY



Welcome!

Library

FIRST GRADE
SEPTEMBER/
OCTOBER 2010



Reading, Researching, Relaxing. Browsing and Borrowing. Sharing and Caring.

Welcome! First Graders are off to a wonderful start in Library! In conjunction with work going on in Art, we began the year with a study of Vincent Van Gogh. We read **CAMILLE AND THE SUNFLOWERS** by Laurence Anholt and did research in many nonfiction art books featuring Van Gogh's work. We then introduced Readers—that is, books with controlled vocabulary, large print, short sentences, and interesting stories to be used for independent reading with those just learning to read. We discussed how to choose a book that is “just right” for you, and the girls are working on that

skill. (Important tip: Use the Five-Finger Rule to test for reading level comfort.) To encourage their independent reading at home, the girls may now have out up to five books at a time, with the bonus book being a Reader. Most recently, we have focused on different versions of **STONE SOUP**, the classic folktale by Marcia Brown and a newer version by Jon Muth. We compared and contrasted the versions. The Stone Soup tales have allowed us to think about healthy foods, and we are about to use nonfiction books to do research on different vegetables in order to create our own class recipes

for Stone Soup. (A tasting will follow.) The Stone Soup tales have also afforded us the opportunity to consider the question “What is a community.” The girls have many good ideas.

Questions:

What is a folktale? How are some folktales similar and different?
What is a community?
What are healthy food choices?
What is a “reader?”
How do I find a book “just right for me?” What is the Five-Finger Rule?

21st Century Learning

Process Information.

Use information for good purpose.

Appreciate social context of learning—sharing, collaboration and ethical behavior..

Pursue personal and aesthetic interests.



2010

Lower School students may have

out up to 4 books at a time. In addition, they may have a bonus book—a Beginning Reader. First graders may borrow up to 2 books during each library class period plus a Beginning Reader. A book is due 3 weeks from the borrowing date, but it may be returned any time before that. You are, of course, invited to use the Library as well. You have a card on file, and you may borrow as many books as you like. It's best to come before school or at the end of the school day on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 3:10 and 4:00. Should you have any questions or requests, please call me at 751-0177, ext. 311 or e-mail me at susan.f@kdb.org.