**KB News**

 **(TMAS - This Month at School)**

**Friday January 29, 2015**

It’s been a busy month in KB! Since we haven’t sent TWAS home yet in January this is a long one! Thank you for taking the time to read what we’ve been up to in KB and how you can help support your child’s learning at home. We feel strongly about keeping you informed and appreciate your involvement in staying informed ☺.

**![C:\Users\s.ferren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\5L1M3PZ5\gingerbread-man-clipart[1].jpg]()HIGHLIGHTS:** The Gingerbread Man was certainly a highlight and is still popping up in the children’s play and conversations in the classroom. You probably heard that we made a gingerbread man in class after reading many different versions of the story. We conducted a survey about how to decorate him and we recorded answers on a graph. We learned how to look up a recipe and how to follow a recipe. We used 13 different ingredients and spent time comparing the smell of all the different spices we used. After taking the gingerbread man out of the oven, we went snowshoeing while we waited for it to cool and when we came back inside, he was gone! The students made signs using descriptive words and hung them up all over the school, they painted pictures and labeled them to show people what he looked like, they wrote letters to staff members asking if they had seen the gingerbread man, and they used persuasive arguments to convince Mr. Parish and various students throughout the school not to eat their gingerbread man. We spent a week searching for him and following the daily clues he left for us. We made a map of the school and kept track of places we’d searched and clues we discovered. We found clues in the forest, the gym, the lost and found closet, the breakfast club room, the office, the library, our classroom, and our outdoor classroom. We received tips from secretaries, principals, custodians, teachers, and students. The children decided to try to persuade the gingerbread man to come back by making him some gingerbread friends, writing him a letter, and leaving him a trail of cupcakes to our classroom. The next day, we found the cupcakes with bites out of them, flour footprints outside our classroom door, and the gingerbread friends playing with toys amongst flour scattered all over our classroom. The children went crazy with excitement and began searching like crazy to find the Gingerbread Man. They found him in our play oven in our drama centre and there was an iPad beside him. The iPad had photos on it highlighting all the places our Gingerbread Man had been over the week, including Las Vegas, Niagara Falls, Toronto, India, and China. The kids were amazed that the Gingerbread Man had his own iPad and was able to take so many “selfies” ☺. Once we were re-united with the Gingerbread Man, the students had to decide what to do with him. It didn’t take long for them to decide they wanted to eat him! It was a fun 2 weeks and a fantastic inspiration for some amazing learning. We hope the students have enjoyed our gift of copy of the Gingerbread Man book that we sent home.

**![C:\Users\s.ferren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\KSF4CGGJ\ice-skates[1].jpg]()**Skating was a lot of fun on Wednesday and definitely another highlight. A huge shout-out goes out to our parent volunteers who joined us along with our 10 Gr.6-8 student helpers. We could not have done it without so much wonderful support so thank you!! Our next skating dates are: **February 11, February 25, March 11.** We hope you can join us!

**LITERACY:** We learned *The 5 Little Snowmen* poem and practiced retelling it last week. This was sent home to be added to your child’s poetry book. Some of the students told us they never look at their poetry book and don’t even know where it is at home ☹. Others told us it was thrown out – eek! We hope that you have been adding our shared reading poems to your child’s poetry book at home and find time to read them together often. The students love learning these poems at school and love finding letters and sight words with us when we read the poems in our small guided reading groups. They get so excited about bringing the poem home to show you and read to you. Hopefully we aren’t just wasting paper ☺.

We read the story *Sadie and the Snowman* and practiced retelling it this week. If you are not familiar with it, it is a cute story about a girl who builds a snowman and uses food to decorate the face but the animals take the food and the sun melts her snowman. She rebuilds the snowman 3 times using different food each time. And each time, the animals eat the food and the sun melts the snowman. All winter, Sadie rebuilds the snowman and in the spring she puts the melted water into a Ziploc bag and puts it in the freezer so she can start again the next winter. The students enjoyed retelling the story with play food and animal props. Afterwards, the students made their own snowman craft using real food (cereal, pretzels, goldfish crackers, etc.) to decorate it. The next day, we brought some snow inside and the students each made their own real snowman and decorated it with craft materials. We put them in our water table and made predictions about when they would melt. Some thought spring, others thought 2 weeks, and some predicted the end of the day. They were surprised when all of the snowmen were gone by the next morning ☺. Today, we made some mini snowmen outside and decorated them with food for the birds and other winter animals to enjoy.

We continue to work on phonological skills (rhyming, 3 part phonemes, syllables). The students are improving but still need loads of practice with this. At home, you can help by: making up some goofy rhymes together; challenging your child to find the number of syllables in different words; giving your child a 3 sound word (cat, sit, lake) and asking them to stretch it out into its 3 sounds; giving your child 3 sounds to blend together into a word. The more exposure your child has to phonological practice, the easier it will become. As our note earlier this week indicated, we are now learning sight words in class. The students have been telling us excitedly about practicing their sight words at home. Thanks for taking the time to do that – it is already paying off. We reassessed letter/sound awareness last week for report cards – if your child does not yet know all 26 letters and sounds, we have made that our primary focus. Those students are still being exposed to our sight word learning but our goal is to help them learn letter/sounds first.

Now that we are in the second half of our school year, we are really encouraging students to write. We ask them to “stretch out” the word they want to spell. Our goal is for JK’s to simply take the risk to write and to at least include the beginning letter/sound of the word they are trying to write. Our goal for SK’s is to find the beginning, middle and ending sound and to check that they included a vowel in every word they are trying to write. We do not focus on spelling accuracy at all. The first step in writing is to take a risk and if children are worried about spelling words correctly they stop taking risks. At home, you can help by: encouraging your child to label their pictures or make words in the bathtub with foam letters. Try to start with words that interest your child to engage them and then help them stretch out the word to find the beginning sound. When that becomes easy for your child, help them search for the ending sound (i.e. what sound do you hear at the end of shark). And lastly, see if your child can find any other sounds that might be in between.

**SCIENCE:** We are learning about the scientific procedure – ask questions/wonder, make predictions, investigate, make observations, record results. We read *Stella Queen of the Snow* and tried to copy Sam by asking lots of questions about snow. When we want to encourage the students to ask questions, we ask them what they wonder or we model it by saying, “I wonder why snow is white.” “I wonder how many different shaped snowflakes there are.” So far, the big question has been, why does snow melt and how can we make it melt faster? We asked the students to make predictions about what they thought might melt snow. Today, we experimented with some of their ideas. The students tried coffee, a fan, a blow dryer, a lamp, a flashlight, boiling water, cold water, a spray bottle, sand, salt, sugar, tea, saran wrap, foil, and paper towel.

**OUTDOOR LEARNING:** We have enjoyed snowshoeing, sledding, following tracks, painting the snow, searching for scat, finding deer beds, feeding the birds, visiting our forts, and making snow sculptures. With the lack of fresh snow lately, we found the most amazing animal community in the forest. We found hundreds of tracks, dozens and dozens of scat and urine piles, and more than 15 deer beds. The students even decided that they found the animal’s toilet ☺. Then, we found a flock of turkeys and the students got really excited and of course scared them all away. It was amazing to watch the children make so many discoveries and listen to their excitement each time they found something new. Some of them even carved a layer out of the snow’s crust to bring their scat and track discoveries back to our class. One little boy asked to put his in the fridge at school so it wouldn’t melt. Cute! Many wanted to bring their “poop trays” (as we began to refer to them) home to show you but most didn’t survive the trip to the bus. Phew!

**MATH:** We incorporate all 5 strands of math into each day but our whole school is doing an intensive focus on *Number Sense and Numeration.* We began a new mental math program called *Number Talks* and the students are beginning to use it. You might see evidence of this at home. Each day, we try to spend 5-10 minutes using dot cards, rekenreks, or 10-frames to help children recognize numbers in a set without counting by 1’s. This skill, referred to as subitizing, helps students develop strategies for solving math in their own way. For instance, we might flash a card with 4 dots on it and ask students how many dots they saw. We don’t flash it long enough for them to count by 1 so it forces them to think in groups. Some will say, “I saw 2 and 2 more and I know that’s 4”. Others might say “I saw 3 like a dice and 1 more so I counted on from 3 to get 4.” It is amazing to see how this daily practice is improving their overall number sense. Today a student said “I have 8 blocks in my tower because I see 5 and then 6, 7, 8.” Awesome!

**REMINDERS**

* Tomorrow is a PA Day. There is no school tomorrow.
* Library day is now on **Wednesday** due to the PA Day tomorrow. We will go to the library on Wednesdays until the Family Day holiday in February.
* Please remember to include a spoon or fork in your child’s lunch if they need it and remind them to wash it and bring it back home. We have gone through several packages of plastic spoons and forks already this year. Thanks.
* Please limit the number of treats (if any) you send in your child’s lunch. Our school rule is that children need to fill their bellies with healthy food first and save treats for 2nd nutrition break. However, we are finding that some of the kids aren’t eating anything until 2nd nutrition break and then only eating their unhealthy snacks.
* We have started a new round of Star of the Day and the students are enjoying sharing their favourite book. Remember to check your child’s Note Tote daily to see if they are the Star of the Day the following day. You will find a “star” in your child’s backpack reminding your child to bring their favourite book to share with the class. Please leave the star in your child’s Note Tote so we can pass it on to the next Star. Thanks.
* Our February calendar will come home on Monday.
* We will be having a Valentine’s Celebration in February (see calendar for date). If your child is bringing Valentines for the class, please label them **“To: A Friend”** rather than using specific names. This makes it much simpler for the students to hand out valentines independently. Thank you.
* We are in need of some supplies and would greatly appreciate the following donations: Kleenex, straws, glue sticks, toilet rolls, plastic bags. Thank you!
* Pizza orders due Tuesday February 3rd.

☺ Have a great weekend, Ms. Ferren, Ms. Hewitt, and Ms. Bain