

# Hillcrest Elementary Newsletter

## September 2018

### Upcoming Events

- Wednesday, Oct. 3 - Half Day In-Service. Noon dismissal. (11:30 a.m. Preschool)
- Monday, Oct. 8 - No School. Columbus Day.
- Wednesday, Oct. 10 - Hillcrest Open House, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, Oct. 16 - Friends of Hillcrest meeting, 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.

### Principal

What a wonderful first month of school we've had! We were so glad to celebrate the children's learning at our September All School Meeting. The whole community enjoyed presentations from Ms. Chase's preschool class, Mrs. Fox's kindergarten class and Miss Matrishon's and Ms. Casey's first grade classes. All School Meeting is a monthly ritual at Hillcrest which is designed to build a warm and welcoming community, to focus on our student's growth and development, and to include families in their children's learning. All School Meeting is held on the fourth Friday of each month at 9:00. We hope to see many family members each month, so please feel free to bring along younger siblings and to invite extended family members, too!

In addition to my weekly newsletter, Hillcrest families can also count on this monthly school-wide newsletter to learn more about what's happening across the grades and throughout the building. This year, we have several new staff members and I will be using this space to "introduce" you to a new staff member each month. Our September Staff Highlight is focused on Ms. Katie Hopp, our new Technology Teacher. I am sure that your children have already told you about their Technology Classes with Ms. Hopp. You're probably hearing about new apps on our student iPads, about the classroom smart projectors, and about programs like Starfall and Lexia. Here are a few fun facts about Ms. Hopp that you may not

already know! Ms. Hopp is currently training to run a marathon, she loves hotdogs and she owns more than 60 pairs of sneakers! I wonder if any of our Hillcrest community members also share these interests? Stay tuned for our October Staff Highlight . . . we'll be learning more about Ms. Francis Liri, our new School Nurse.

Wishing you a wonderful weekend -

*Sarah Burstein*

### **Preschool**

Happy Fall from Preschool!

This has been an exciting month of getting to know classroom routines and expectations, building friendships and learning. We spend the first six weeks of school getting to know how to use materials and work together as a class. We use a program called Tools of the Mind and this month we have learned a few activities such as: Buddy Reading, I Have/Who Has - Colors and Freeze Dance. The Lively Letters program has arrived in our classrooms. Lively Letters is a multi-sensory approach to learning the letter sounds essential to early literacy development. The program teaches each sound based on the where the sound is made. We begin with "lip" sounds: our first letter is P.

**From, Ms. Chanda, Ms. Sarah and Ms. Teresa**

### **Kindergarten**

During the month of September, our focus is largely on establishing rules, routines, and building our classroom communities. Kindergarten students have been practicing walking in a line down the hallway, listening to a story, and following directions.

In the next few weeks, we will be reading *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, *The Three Little Pigs* and *Goldilocks and The Three Bears* as part of our Fairy Tale Unit. We read each story multiple times and think about them differently during every read-aloud. We visualize the story, discuss how the characters are feeling, what the characters could be thinking, and we put the events of the story in order. It is also

a lot of fun to read different versions and compare the stories. The other literacy skills we are working on include: rhyming, counting syllables, name recognition and name writing. Name writing is great to practice at home too!

Our focus during math has been on shapes, number recognition, number writing and counting. Counting is a wonderful activity to do with your child. You can count as you drive in the car or count the number of goldfish you are going to eat.

Thank you to all of the families who donated materials to our classrooms! We greatly appreciate it. We would like to remind everyone that we do not allow candy or other high sugar foods at school and that juice has to be 100% juice. We encourage students to drink water and milk during snack time and to enjoy fruits, veggies and other healthy foods. You can find this policy in our school handbook.

**Mrs. Fox, Ms. Hirst, Mrs. Lesenski**

## **First Grade**

Welcome to first grade! We are all very excited about the beginning of a new school year. It has been a very busy time during the first weeks of school. We began by creating a welcoming classroom community. We are looking forward to being able to fulfill everyone's hopes and dreams for first grade.

Caterpillars and butterflies started our year as our first science unit. We have watched as our Monarch Butterfly caterpillars grew bigger and bigger until they finally turned into a chrysalises and then waited patiently for them to turn into a butterflies. We have been studying their life cycle and learned about what they need to grow and change as we were observing them. If you find any caterpillars (they are the yellow, black and white striped ones) that you would like to share with the classes, we would be happy if you would send them in for us to watch as well.

We have started our year with a review of all the letters and sounds that the children had learned in Kindergarten. We have gone on letter and word hunts, searching for words that have a featured letter or looking for specific words. We

are also reviewing sight words from Kindergarten such as *the, and, we & see*. We will be reading books that feature these words. Math began with a short review of the numbers to 10 and we have been finding the "partners" that make a bigger number. "Partners" are two numbers that you can put together to make the larger number like  $2 + 3 = 5$ . It has been an exciting beginning to our first grade learning!

**Ms. Casey, Miss Matrison, Mrs. Saylor, Ms. Smith**

## **English Learner News**

Ms. Wulfkuhle's groups have been exploring who we are and how we're both alike and different from others. We're using this information as we create self-portraits to decorate the class. Kindergarten students are beginning to learn norms for having academic conversations, while first graders are expanding on skills for focused listening in conversation, such as nodding and smiling, making eye contact, and responding as your partner talks.

Ms. Wulfkuhle has also been visiting some classes for Morning Meeting to share some books, sing songs, and teach new greetings. This month we practiced saying greetings in 42 languages with the help of the book *Hello, World!* and did our own greeting in Spanish.

**Lea Wulfkuhle**

## **Fall Music Newsletter**

Music has gotten off to a good start this year. In music we have a new march, "Beat In My Feet" that we are marching into class on. We have been working on loud and soft through an echo song called "Hello, Hello How Are You?" Students are working on keeping a steady beat through marching and a variety of songs. First grade has been singing and dancing to a new song, "September", which helps them remember September is month number nine. Students are working on singing solo through a music game, "Higgelty Piggelty" and singing for attendance. All music classes end with a song book. This month's book is "This Old Van", a take on "This Old Man."

**Susan King, Music Teacher**



**Body awareness** is the ability to recognize where your body is in space. Your muscles and joints send your brain information about your body and how it moves. Whether it be avoiding obstacles when walking, reaching out to grab a pencil or determining left from right these are all examples of tasks that require spatial or body awareness. Body awareness helps us to understand how to relate to objects and people at home, at school and outdoors. Body awareness is important to teach throughout childhood development because it is a foundation that is required for mathematical development and handwriting skills.

### **Activity Ideas for Body Awareness**

There are many ways you can help children develop body awareness. Start out by reviewing and identifying body parts. Begin with very simple commands such as kick your leg, wave your hand or shake your head. Then progress to motor commands such as "touch your elbow". Then progress to more difficult commands such as "touch your right knee".

Trying playing games that reinforce body awareness such as Simon Says or Follow the Leader.

Practice drawing pictures of people or ask the child to draw a picture of himself or herself. Name body parts as they are drawn.

Set up obstacle courses for the child to go over, under, around and in between objects.

Complete heavy work activities such as pushing, pulling or carrying heavy objects. This will help to reinforce where the joints and muscles are in space.

**Linda Gordon, Occupational Therapist**