

# NEWS & TIDINGS

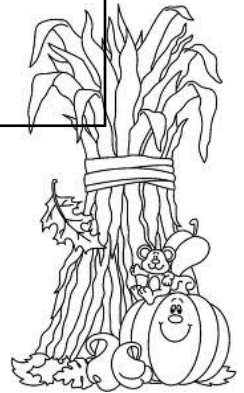
## WARWICK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Elizabeth Musgrave, Principal  
November 2014

### MAKE A DATE: YOU ARE INVITED!

**TURKEY TROT!** Wed. Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>, at BES  
**PTO MEETING:** 3:00 PM Thurs., Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>  
**WINTER HOLIDAYS CONCERT:** 6:30 p.m., Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>

**COME, TROT WITH US!** Family members of students in grades 1-6 are invited to join us for the Turkey Trot to run, walk or cheer us on at Bernardston Elementary School at 9:30 on the morning of Wed., Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>. Parents of Multi-age students are invited to join the Farm Trot on the same morning at Hettie-Belle Farm (across from the school on Rte. 78)



**WCS WINTER HOLIDAYS CONCERT** will be 6:30 p.m. Tues, Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>. Please bring students by 6:15 pm to warm-up. We look forward to sharing an evening of music and hope you can help us celebrate the season and the wonderful talents of our children!

### 'TIS THE SEASON TO COUNT OUR BLESSINGS!

**A BIG THANK YOU** to ALL the many helpers for our Pasta supper! It was a grand success and raised over \$800! Even more important, everyone had a truly good time! Many hands made cheerful work - and delicious food. Thanks to moms and dads, students and siblings, and community members who made it happen!!

**THANK YOU TO ALL WCS UNICEF TRICK-or-TREATERS** who raised \$137. for the United Nations Children's Fund! Great job! We're proud of you!

### WARM & MILD WEATHER CLOTHING DONATIONS WELCOME!

Warwick residents, Steve and Janice Kurkoski, have visited Haiti and established relationships with orphanages and hospitals there. They have learned that many children, ages 2-17, are in need of warm and mild weather clothing. Steve and Janice will be returning to Haiti soon and have offered to take with them your donations of used clothing in good condition would be greatly appreciated by the children of struggling families in Haiti. Contact Tom Ziniti at WCS. Thank you!

**WCS's NEW RED CURBS:** You will notice that the curbs around the bus circle and building have been painted red. This is at the urging of our MA State Police, who have been instructing us on increased safety measures for our school. The red curbs indicate "No Parking" so that emergency vehicles have immediate access. Thank you to all for your understanding and use our parking lot when visiting the school.



**WEATHER PERMITTING!** Our days are quickly getting colder. Please check that your child leaves the house in the morning dressed for a 30-minute outdoor recess. Playing outside on a bright chilly day is so much more fun when we're snug in a warm jacket and hat. And we love to play outside, weather permitting!

## WARWICK PLAYGROUP FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Meets Wednesday mornings, 9:15-11 a.m. This is an informal group organized by parents and the PVRSD Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) Coordinator. The Playgroup will meet in the WCS gym and provide for our youngest children/caretakers to play, socialize, and enjoy stories, songs and games. Call or email Deb Wood 413-498-2660, [woodd@pioneervalley.k12.ma.us](mailto:woodd@pioneervalley.k12.ma.us)



**HOLIDAYS and SCHOOL at WCS,** we try to keep the holiday weeks low key and focused on learning. It's not that our staff is "bah humbug!" (We love the holidays as much as anyone!) We do this because our foremost responsibility is to the successful academic and social learning of our children. Every

moment of the school day is precious and necessary to teach our curriculum, which is huge and important!

Also, the holidays are very stimulating, with a media blitz aimed directly at kids. During holiday times, we always see an uptick in crankiness, anxiety and acting-out in school. We ask your help in keeping things simple and making sure children get a good night's sleep. We also thank you for NOT sending in holiday treats. You will always be notified if your child's teacher is planning a celebration.

We intentionally leave holiday celebration to families, according to their own beliefs and traditions. - and intentionally preserve the school day as a quiet haven for learning, even in the midst of "holiday madness."

## OUR CLASSROOM BUZZ...

**MULTI-AGE CLASSROOM:** Children in the multi-age have been busy telling stories. Preschoolers have been working on storytelling.

They have been creating stories on the Ipad with a beginning, middle and end.

They record their voices to tell the story. They have also created props to retell the story "Caps For Sale". I will see if I can add some of these stories to my blog site for people to view. Kindergarteners have been creating stories in math to use in making and solving math problems.

The classroom pretend center has been changed into a storytelling center, with puppets, scenery and characters that the children can use to act out familiar stories or to make up their own. The children have also created characters that they will use to act out jobs on our Friday trips to the wooded area. They are creating a village of people, families, jobs and homes there.

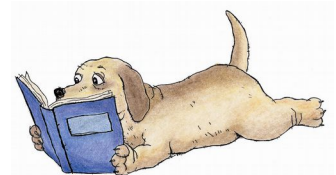
We will be starting units on "We all Grow and Change" and "Families-Alike and Different" in the upcoming month. Anyone interested in sharing Family traditions, activities, or recipes with our class can contact me. **Ms. Alison White**

**GRADES 1 and 2:** It has been an exciting autumn in the first and second grade classroom! We have been doing so much great learning and thinking in all areas of our academic day. With our "Small Moments" narrative writing unit coming to a close, our class is getting ready to start our non-fiction writing unit. This unit will coincide nicely with our on-going science study of animal adaptation. During the month of December, each child will pick an animal from our area to study. We will be focusing on how this animal's life adapts during the cold months and changes in the seasons. We will become experts on our animal by researching and observing. Once we gather enough information to be true experts, each student will write a non-fiction story about their animal of choice.

We have finished up our "Reading Strategies" unit in reader's workshop. During our classroom reading time, we will be moving into thinking deeply about our books, and gaining stronger comprehension skills.

Second graders have started their place value math unit. They are doing some wonderful thinking in breaking apart numbers into 100's, 10's, and 1's. We will continue working with these math concepts through the month. First graders continue to work within the number 10 and are becoming fluent with their math facts. They've also been working hard on understanding beginning story problems, and practicing different ways to show their work. I look forward to all we have to accomplish ahead and wish our families a happy, healthy, calm holiday!

**Ms. Kristyn Gibbs**



**GRADES 3 and 4:** Our first unit on narrative writing has recently wrapped up.

We have become experts on writing personal stories about people and places that mean a lot to us. Over the course of this unit we learned how to brainstorm ideas, how to organize our ideas into paragraphs, how to revise and edit our draft, and finally, how to type a professional looking piece of writing. To celebrate the completion of the unit, we held a publishing today. Our families and teachers stopped in to hear us read our stories and share feedback on our pieces. It was a wonderful activity! I really loved seeing all of the parents in listening to the children. Each child put so much time and effort onto the pages that they have shared with you, it meant the world to them that you took the time to listen.

Thank you! We look forward to sharing our realistic fiction stories with you in December/January.

Speaking of realistic fiction, we are working hard developing characters for a story that comes from our own experiences. We have mapped the stories and explored character traits. This past week we have also gained a great new technology tool in our classroom, a projector. During writing, our work is projected from the laptop to the screen to create a true interactive writing experience. We are really enjoying discovering all that we can do with it!

Our reading lessons have fit perfectly with our writing lessons as we explore character traits and finding evidence in the text to support our findings. Recently we studied the protagonist and antagonists of stories. This led to a great discussion on heroes and enemies; our class really loves super heroes this year!

Third and fourth graders are working very hard to finish their second math unit on multiplication before the Thanksgiving holiday. Third graders will then continue into the trickier multiplication facts of 6,7,8s and fourth graders will move onto LONG DIVISION! We are really growing as mathematical thinkers and problem solvers!

Finally, we are working diligently on creating maps of the United States, the second activity in our Regions of the USA unit. Our maps have led to discovering the great lakes, oceans, capitals, and major cities. During morning meeting we even played 5 questions and 3 clues about the USA map.

**Ms. Christine Mullen**

**GRADES 5 and 6:** The social studies curriculum in fifth and sixth grade this year is World Geography and Cultures. Before we go on a tour around the world and explore other people's cultures, we are investigating our own family cultures. In this way we can learn about our similarities as well as our differences.



Culture is defined in our text as, "Everything that people make, build, think, believe and do". This includes nine aspects which are Customs and Traditions, Work, Language, Rural/Urban/Suburban Life, Housing, The Arts, Religion, Population Demographics (of the area where you live), and Family and Social Structure. Each student has chosen five of these nine aspects to focus on to create a family culture web; a writing and poster project to represent their interpretation of their family culture. These will be on display throughout the school shortly after Thanksgiving.

During December, we will also be keeping track of the hours and minutes of daylight each day by calculating lapsed time between sunrise and sunset. We will make graphs of the amount of daylight each day in December as we count down to Winter Solstice. We will simultaneously learn about the five major world religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism), each of which has a celebration around the time of Winter Solstice.

We will have a culminating Family Culture/Winter Solstice party on Monday, December 22. Students and families are encouraged to bring in a dish from their family favorites. We will also have a sing down; a friendly team competition of singing songs with the words *sun* or *sunshine* in them. Our Family Culture/Solstice Party is always a highlight of the year! Stay tuned for more information as the month progresses.

**Ms. Lynn Hansell**



**MUSICAL NOTES!** The cold and the darkness are upon us, and we counter them with warmth and light and music. All classes are practicing the songs they've chosen for the winter concert on Tuesday, December 16.

I am delighted with how well they sing together. While we are so focused on practicing, we don't pursue other aspects of the curriculum as intensely, but 5&6 enjoyed their journey to Australia, and will be heading to Japan next. 3&4 will continue to sing songs about American heroes and legends as well as songs that help them remember the states and their capitals. 1&2 will continue to work on becoming a singing community in class, and on the skills of listening, singing and moving in time to music. In PK&K, we are building repertoire - first, songs about cars, busses, trains and travel, then, songs about snow, the coming of winter, looking for owls, and the giving of gifts.

**Ms. Kim Wallach**



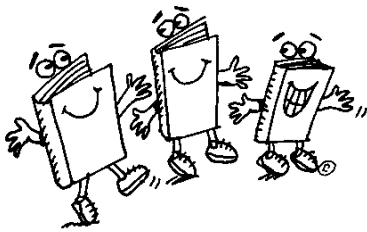
**PHYSICAL EDUCATION** It's that wonderful festive time of year again! Students in all grades have been training each week during our Cross Country unit. They are getting ready for the annual Turkey Trot that will be taking place on Wednesday November 26th @9:30 at Bernardston Elementary School. We hope that many families will be able to join us. We are asking for each student to donate a food item as their entry into the race. All food collected will be donated to the United ARC food pantry in Greenfield. Thank you and we hope to see you at the trot!

**Ms. Sue Scott**

### **LIBRARY LEARNING! Parent Lending Library**

Changes have happened to the brown bookcase in the foyer next to the library doors. A new selection of parent resource books is on display. Materials on teaching the core subjects are now available such as science and literature. We all know that the education of our children involves the whole "village". The sign-out sheet is available so that you can check out a book, magazine, article, or CD. Also, you are welcome to come into the library when I am there to peruse the whole collection.

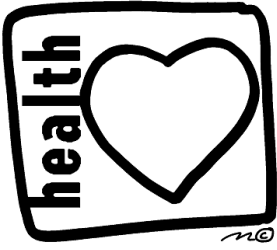
### **With Students In Our Library**



November is a full month and we have highlighted books about elections and the voting process, Veteran's Day and patriotic symbols. As Thanksgiving and Harvest Celebrations approach, we will focus our attention on the natives of our country and their contributions to the creation of the country we now all inhabit.

This month's Library Assistants are not only helping with our featured topics, but are also encouraging the students to explore some brand new books that we have added to our inventory. Books are literally flying off the shelves as students grab books they have been waiting for! There's nothing like losing yourself in a new book!

It is very important to note that all of this would not happen without the dedicated volunteers that come in whenever they can squeeze time out of their busy schedules. These wonderful people help me check books in & out, re-shelve books and find books on our featured topics. The most time consuming work is handling all the new books. Each one must be catalogued, covered and labeled. Lisa Rhodes is our resident "expert". We'd appreciate more help. Please let me know if might have a spare hour here and there! Thank you. **Ms. Laurel Powell, Librarian**



## HEALTH UPDATES:

Backpack Strategies for Parents and Students: Aching back and shoulders, weakened muscles, stooped posture - does your child have these symptoms after wearing a heavy school backpack? Carrying too much weight in a pack or wearing it the wrong way can lead to pain and strain. Parents can help children load and wear backpacks the right way to avoid health problems.

- Loading a backpack: Never let a child carry more than 15% of his or her body weight. A child who weighs 100 pounds should wear a backpack no heavier than 15 pounds. Load heaviest items closest to the child's back (the back of the pack). Arrange books and materials so they won't slide around. Make sure your child carries to school only the items are necessary to the day's activities. If the backpack is too loaded, have your child hand carry a few items. Also, consider using a book bag on wheels.
- Wearing a backpack: Both shoulder straps should always be worn. Wearing a pack slung over one shoulder can cause a child to lean to one side, curving the spine and causing pain or discomfort. Select a pack with well-padded shoulder straps. Shoulders and necks have many blood vessels and nerves that can cause pain and tingling in the neck, arms, and hands when too much pressure is applied. Adjust shoulder straps so that the pack fits snugly to the child's back. A waist belt helps distribute the pack's weight more evenly. The bottom of the pack should rest in the curve of the lower back, never resting more than four inches below the child's waistline. Backpacks come in sizes; choose the correct size for your child's back.

*The source of this information is The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. For more information on occupational therapy, visit [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org).*

**We're Thankful for Our Families, Friends & Community!**



**HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**