January provided rich opportunities for our students to display their skills and talents. Thank you to the many parents, grandparents and community members for taking time to recognize our outstanding students. The music concert was thrilling and the evening of Pictures and Print was a stunning tribute to what students, given guidance, support and inspiration, can produce. Much of this work still graces our halls; it’s worth a visit to school to read their writings and view their artwork.

The current Island Creek School Improvement Plan targets math instruction and implementing research based strategies for math instruction, in the same manner that we improved language arts teaching, using uniform instructional strategies that have been proven to work. During math time teachers work with small groups of students using various strategies to engage children's thinking, they systematically build an understanding for higher level math concepts. Teachers want math to be meaningful for their students. When children give an answer in math they are encouraged to ask, "Does this answer make sense?" It’s not enough to simply complete a work sheet and have the teacher say which answers are right and wrong. We want students to be able to say why an answer is wrong or right. We want math to make sense, to be logical, and for children to make meaningful connections between math concepts and their real world.

Children get bored quickly and don’t do well with rote skills or memorizing facts. However children do find challenge in using the same math skills which we ask them to memorize to solve everyday problems. At some point children begin to see the importance of memorizing critical facts. Interestingly, the building blocks of many mathematical concepts are found and applied in our everyday life. Parents can help their children by talking about math with their child, helping children see connections between class math and everyday activities.

The following suggestions for enrichment activities using used catalogues or the advertisement sections of newspapers support critical thinking and develop challenging math concepts. These are also ideas that can provide hours of enjoyable learning time for your child.

- Have your child choose a specific number of items and cut out the pictures. Children can then organize items from least to most expensive (or vice versa, from largest to smallest, from heaviest to lightest.) They can also organize a chart to show the cost of multiple purchases of each item.

- Give your child a set amount of money to spend. See who can come the closest to spending exactly the amount (without going over) by listing items from one or more catalogs or newspapers. Figuring and adding Virginia sales tax and/or the company’s shipping charges for their purchases can further challenge older students.

- Children can use items cut from catalogues to look for attributes and classify into sets. They can begin with at least a dozen items to sort and classify in as many ways as possible and justify each grouping, or they can begin with attributes of their choice and create a chart by finding and pasting items that display each characteristic.

- Children can draw scale enlargements by cutting out an object, gluing it to a larger sheet of paper, and drawing a grid over it. They can then use or make a graph paper with larger (at least 2") squares and draw an enlarged version of the item.

I hope you find these ideas useful and enjoyable. I believe that changes in how we teach math will allow students to take on challenges in mathematics far beyond what we have expected in the past. I further believe that for every child to make expected gains, parent support is essential.

Thank you for being our partner in your child’s education,

Susan Z. Owner
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<td>President's Day Holiday - NO SCHOOL</td>
<td>7:30-8:15 am Writers Block (Gr. 4-6)</td>
<td>Joseph Stands with Many CAPS Program</td>
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<td>7:30-8:15 am Writers Block (Gr. 2-3) 1-2 Rising 7th Gr. Student Registration</td>
<td>3:05-4:05 Drama Group 6:30-7:30 Pyramid Art Show, Hayfield Secondary</td>
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<td>8:30-9:30 Living a Writers Life (K-6)</td>
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Check-it Out at the Library

Dear Island Creek Families,

In the December newsletter, I shared with you the change in circulation policy for Island Creek—we now have unlimited check out. It has been fun to see students selecting the exact number of books that they want to read. It is clear that we are a community of readers. Our circulation statistics also show that to also be the case. In December of 2006, Island Creek students and staff checked out 3,579 items from the library. In December of 2007 a total of 5,165 items were checked out. There has been an 44% increase in items being checked out from the library. Thank you for all your support and help in returning the books. Happy Reading!

Mrs. Woodall, Librarian

January Library Happenings

It has been a busy and fun time in the library this month. Here are just a few of the highlights:

- In a special project, Mr. Morris's 2nd grade class have been researching the Iroquois, Sioux and Hopi Indians. They used nonfiction books, encyclopedias, and reference books. They also used primary sources as a source of information for their research. Soon they will be making a nonfiction book.

- All third grade just finished a pre-assessment on reference resources. In the coming weeks, they will be learning more about almanacs, atlases, dictionaries, thesauri and encyclopedias.

- All fifth grade classes continue working on the Global Awareness & Technology research project. We are using the Big6 research model. Currently, they are defining the task and identifying resources that they are going to use in their research.

Stay tuned for more library happenings!

ASK YOUR STUDENT: WHAT IS THE TREASURE IN THE LIBRARY

Library Catalog

You can access the Island Creek library catalog from home: http://libcat.fcps.edu/uhtbin/cgisirsi/x/0/0/57/49?user_id=429WEB

6th Grade Book Club

The next meeting of the 6th Grade Book Club will be February 21st at 7:30AM in the library. The title of the book we are reading is The Single Shard by Linda Sue Park. New members are encouraged to attend. See you there!!
Steps for Book Discussions with Independent Readers

1. **Before Reading**
   - Choose one comprehension strategy to discuss.
   - Tell your child to use two or three “post it” notes to mark areas of the text where he/she used the strategy. He/She may want to jot his/her thoughts on the “post it” notes.

2. **During Reading**
   - Your child should read silently for thirty minutes, using the “post it” notes to mark places for your follow up discussion.

3. **After Reading**
   - Use one of the questions/prompts provided with the comprehension strategies to open a short discussion about the book.

The SCA will be selling **Kindness Candy Grams**

**February 1-12 from 8:10-8:25 in the lobby**

**COST $0.25 each for a note and a piece of candy**

These will be delivered on February 14.

Proceeds will be put in the SCA fund and will be used for a school gift and other projects.

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**ISLAND CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**“GOT HEALTH?” WELLNESS EXPO**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 2008**

**10:00AM – 2:00PM**

Island Creek Elementary will hold a health and fitness fair on Saturday, March 29, 2008 from 10:00AM- 2:00PM. We will have booths, entertainment, screenings, and activities with professionals from the health community. This event is open to family, friends, and neighbors of all ages in the Kingstown, Alexandria, and Hayfield Pyramid. Here’s just a sampling of what we have planned: Free health screenings such as blood pressure and BMI (Body Mass Index); Performance groups from Yong In Karate, Dancensations Dance Center, and Metropolitan Fine Arts Center; Audience participation for children’s yoga from Lee District RECenter; and booths from the fire department, bus safety, summer camps, health organizations, day care, health clubs, recreation, and more!

Mark this date on your calendars!
How can you help your Clinic provide the best possible care?

- Advise the School Clinic Aide of any special health concerns.
- Children who have fevers (temperature of 100 degrees or more), vomiting or diarrhea are not able to stay in school. It is best for children to be at home for 24 hours after these conditions resolve.
- When medication must be administered during the school day, please follow the medication policies:
  1. Properly complete Fairfax County Public School forms (available in clinic).
  2. Properly label all medication containers (your pharmacist will usually provide an extra container if you request one).
  3. Medication MUST be transported to and from school by a parent; this is to assure that medications are not lost or damaged, and that other children do not have access to them en route. No medication will be administered to a child unless it is brought to the clinic by the parent or guardian.

MESSAGE FOR PARENTS OF CURRENT 5TH GRADERS

Effective July 1, 2006, all students in Virginia must receive a booster dose of Tdap vaccine prior to entering sixth grade, if at least five years have passed since the last dose of tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine (DTP, DTap, DT or Td).

Please check your child’s immunization records carefully. If your child is required to have a Tdap booster, we ask that your child receive it and that you provide documentation to the school office. This documentation can be a copy of your child’s immunization record, or a note from your physician listing the date of their most recent Tdap booster shot.

The Tdap booster can be obtained from your child’s physician. Immunizations required for school are also available at the Fairfax County Health Department at no charge. Clinic locations and walk-in hours are online at http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/hdclinicsite.htm. Students receiving immunizations at the Health Department must be accompanied by an adult, and students should bring their immunization records to the Health Department with them.

It is most important that you plan ahead to attend to this matter. Sixth graders cannot begin school without documentation of having had the Tdap booster or having had a tetanus-containing vaccine within the past five years.

Please contact Gail Acker, the school public health nurse, at 703-704-6100 or gail.acker@fairfaxcounty.gov, if you have any questions.
Attention: PRESCHOOL PARENTS

The non-categorical preschool special education program at Island Creek is looking for typically developing peers to join our classrooms for the 2008-2009 school year. We are looking for children aged 2-5 who live in Fairfax County and meet basic requirements:

- Must be toilet trained
- Speak English relatively well
- Parents must provide transportation

Community children will attend 3 days a week for either morning or afternoon sessions. There is no tuition, but families will be expected to pay monthly snack fees. Parents may be asked to contribute their time to help out in the classroom or with projects at home.

If you are interested in learning more about this program, please contact the Island Creek preschool staff (571-642-6345) or stop by the school office for an application. Applications will be due by March 30, 2008.

SCA FOOD COLLECTION

Thanks to the many families that contributed food items during the SCA food drive. The SCA collected 1,849 pounds of Food which was donated to address hunger in our community.

F.A.N.tastic Fridays
FREE Family Autism Night

Family Autism Night is a drop-in program for individuals on the autism spectrum and their families. Each event is designed for individuals in the age range of 3-21. Participate in games, Crafts, sports, and a different special activity each month. Take advantage of this free opportunity to come together, socialize, and have fun!

When: 7 to 8:30 pm
Date, Location, and Event:
  - February 8, 2008 - Southgate Community Center for Pet Therapy!
  - March 7, 2008 - Providence Recreation Center for Joey Pizzano Family Pool Night!
Cooperation is the character trait for the month of February. Cooperation is sharing the responsibility to complete a goal by working and playing together. Cooperation is teamwork that includes: following the leader, willingness to share, taking part, and encouraging each other. Cooperation is sometimes staying out of the way.

Often times, children learn best when they learn from each other. For children to work together and learn from their peers, they have to cooperate and work together as a team. “Team players” are children who:

- Listen.
- Encourage their peers.
- Allow and invite others to contribute their talents and skills.
- Follow as well as lead.
- Recognize their strengths and use them for the common good.
- Treat others equitably.
- Recognize the needs of the group.
- Think before acting.
- Communicate calmly.
- Put competition aside.

Please take the time to reinforce this character quality at home. Teach your child to cooperate by demonstrating cooperation through everyday chores such as working together in activities around the house, with other siblings, in the community and organized sports. Point out examples seen in newspapers, on T.V. and elsewhere.

Cooperation is a character trait we must possess. Cooperation brings more success at home and at play. Cooperation brings more success at school. All must cooperate when working together on a project or task.

Your partners in character education,
Virginia Hulke
Stefanie Shelesky
School Counselors