Dear Parents,

We hope all of you had a wonderful winter break… and I take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support during the busy months of November and December. Our canned food drive was really over the top this year; we collected more than a thousand cans over our goal, so many families benefited from the thoughtfulness of this community. We also want to thank our families for the kindness shared with our school this holiday season, your thoughtful gifts, candy and treats, helping out in the classrooms, helping for class parties, and so forth. The time you spend with us and for us is sincerely appreciated.

As we look ahead to the spring, testing time will soon be here… so we have our full focus on teaching basic skills. As parents, one of the important things you can do is to reinforce the math lessons your child receives in school. Teaching children to use strategies for problem solving is one area where your daily life presents opportunities to practice with your child. Math is learned naturally by the inventive, curious mind. Pre-schoolers are easy and confident with numbers. They love to count and use counting in a number of ways. By the time they enter kindergarten, they have many practical but informal math skills. However, they do not have an adult’s understanding of what numbers mean and they can easily be distracted by irrelevant details. So, don’t be surprised if your pre-schooler fails to see that the number of marbles in the row doesn’t increase when the row is spread out, or decrease when the marbles are crowded together.

Three things are essential for a child to learn math and all three are things you can help reinforce at home.

**Understanding**: The child must understand the steps involved in working and solving a math problem. If the child’s ability to solve problems is based solely on memorization without understanding, the ability won’t carry over from one problem to another.

**Practice**: This means practicing the base skills—addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals—so that the child can learn and remember them, and then use them correctly in the future.

**Seeing Patterns**: Children need to see patterns and regularity in math and ways of organizing mathematical information. Math builds and extends simple ideas into more general concepts.

Good problem solvers have certain things in common: They are quick to understand the important features of a problem; they approach a problem with confidence, and they can transfer their learning from one problem to another. When they get an answer to a problem, they know whether the answer is reasonable because they estimate well.

Always remember to reward your child with praise for the correct answers. This helps build the child’s confidence in problem solving.

Thank your for being our partner in learning,

Susan Z. Owner, Ph.D.
Principal
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<td>MLK Birthday Holiday No School</td>
<td>PTA Restaurant Night at Olympians for K, 2nd, 4th &amp; 6th Grade</td>
<td>PTA Restaurant Night at Olympians for PS, 1st, 3rd &amp; 5th Grade</td>
<td>3:45 Writer’s Block Gr. 5/6</td>
<td>7:30am 6th Gr. Book Club 6:30pm Rising 7th Grade Parent Coffee (Hayfield MS Lecture Hall)</td>
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**January 2011**

- **Feb 1**
  - Student Holidays - No School

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**Yearbooks on Sale!**

**www.ybpay.com**
Check-it Out at the Library

**Virginia Readers Choice (VRC)**

VRC encourages young readers to become better acquainted with contemporary books with outstanding literary appeal. Each year ten books are selected for primary grade students to vote on. This school year the books are:

- "Chester" by Melanie Watt
- "Dog and Bear: Two Friends-Three Stories" by Laura Vaccaro Seeger
- "Duck! Rabbit!" by Amy Krouse
- "Hansel and Gretel" by Rachel Isadora
- "I Ain't Gonna Paint No More! by Karen Beaumont
- "I'm the Biggest Thing in the Ocean" by Kevin Sherry
- "Katie Loves the Kittens" by John Himmelman
- "Rhyming Dust Bunnies" by Jan Thomas
- "Too Many Toys" by David Shannon
- "Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa" by Jeanette Winter Shannon

ICES students in the primary grades will vote late February or early March for their favorite VRC book.

**Library Staff:**
- Jill Woodall, Librarian
- Debi Poole, Library Assistant

Students had a chance to “Warm Up with a Good Book” before winter break.

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**6th Grade Book Club**

The next meeting of the 6th Grade Book Club is Thursday, January 20 at 7:30AM in the library. We are reading “The Heroes of Olympus, Book One: The Lost Hero” by Rick Riordan. New members are welcome. See you there!

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**Library Catalog**

You can access the Island Creek library catalog from home: [http://libcat.fcps.edu//uhtbin/cgisirsi/x/0/0/57/497?user_id=429WEB](http://libcat.fcps.edu//uhtbin/cgisirsi/x/0/0/57/497?user_id=429WEB)
IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR PARENTS OF CURRENT 5TH GRADERS

It’s not too early to check!

All students in Virginia schools 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 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](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.

Please, plan ahead to attend to this matter. **When the 2011-12 school year begins on September 6, 2011, sixth graders will not be assigned to a teacher without documentation being received by the school.**

If you have any questions, you may contact Deborah Jackson, the school public health nurse, at 703-704-6100, or email her at deborah.jackson@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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NOTES FROM THE ENERGY ZONE

**EAT RIGHT – EXERCISE – HAVE FUN**

The United States Department of Agriculture’s release of MyPyramid for kids recognizes the importance of childhood nutrition and provides families with tools to make healthy choices. For more information and activities visit MyPyramid.gov.

**TIPS FOR FAMILIES:**

**EAT RIGHT**
- Choose healthy foods from each group.
- Increase whole-grain foods.
- Eat fruits and vegetables especially dark green and orange.
- Include calcium-rich foods such as low-fat dairy products.
- Select low-fat meat, chicken, turkey and fish.
- Avoid foods and beverages with sugar as the first ingredient.

**EXERCISE**
- Be an active family.
- Exercise 60 minutes per day.
- Include physical activities at family celebrations.
- Limit TV and computer time.

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Calling All Volunteers!!!!!!

Please join us on Friday afternoons, from 2:15-3:15, in room 126 for Volunteer Hour. We will be helping various teachers around the school with special projects. Just sign in at the office and donate an hour or just a few minutes to help out our teachers! Hope to see you there!
Happy New Year – 2011!

Many people make New Year’s resolutions; some want to lose weight, get a new job; train for a marathon; and even get “married!”

This New Year perhaps we can all try to change one thing in the lives of our children. It won’t cost us anything, it is completely FREE. It is something we want them to “stop” doing more rather than adding something else to their some already overloaded schedules.

First take an inventory of the time your child spends on their cell phone, on social networking sites such as: Facebook, MySpace, u-tube, club penguin, WebKinz, Habbo, or Neopets, to name a few of many.

Also check the time spent on individual games or systems, such as: Wii, Xbox, Playstation, Gameboy, Nintendo DS, or a notebook or listening to an MP3 player or watching videos.

Next, write down the time you spend as a family just spending unstructured time together. Playing together, reading together, taking a walk – with or without the dog, or just talking.

Now sit down as a family and look at the times you have written down about your family. Make changes to the ratios involved. Cut the electronic time down and increase the family time.

Decide what you would like to do as a group. Let everyone choose something so it is a “family” decision.

After you have tried your new family time for a while check to see how your lives have been impacted by the changes in family time vs. singular electronic time.

The best guess would be for better:

- understanding of each other
- quality of life
- closeness of siblings/parents
- more cooperative times together
- and basically an overall happier lifestyle for everyone involved.

We wish you all a Happy New Year and hope you will have the time to try the “family plan”.

Your partners in Character Education

Virginia Hulke
Stefanie Shelesky
School Counselors
Ms. Alf’s preschool class working on painting to develop those pre-writing skills!

Ms. Leech’s class enjoyed a walk during the recent snowfall.

The Kinder Crocs had a busy month learning about several different Winter Holidays: Ramadan/Eid, Diwali, Las Posadas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, and Christmas. Right before the winter break, we had lots of fun at our Winter Celebrations. And an elf came to visit all of the Kinder Crocs on the Wednesday before break to share a holiday story with them.

Students had the chance to “Warm up with a Good Book” before winter break. The library provided hot chocolate and a great selection of reading materials for all the students who participated.