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NEWSLETTER No. 15-18
Thursday, February 12, 2015

Principal's Message

This week we welcome Ms Amanda Alblas to our staff as our new administrative assistant. Ms Alblas will be sharing the role with Mrs. deKleer until the end of June. Please read about Ms Alblas on the Choice website, and stop by the office on a Monday or Thursday to introduce yourself.

February brings Valentine's Day and, fittingly, a focus on events to do with the heart. Last week we heard a presentation from Ms Mary Pappajohn, from the Heart and Stroke Foundation in which she introduced its upcoming "Jump Rope for Heart" fundraiser. Ms Pappajohn discussed the mandate of the foundation, which is three-fold: to support research about heart health, to provide support for those with heart diseases, and to educate about ways to keep our hearts healthy. She shared recent discoveries about the effects of sugar on the heart, and invited students to consider the importance of moderating their sugar intake. Students are excitedly collecting pledges for the school's jump rope event on February 25th, and are working to perfect their skipping skills in PE.

As a staff we are encouraging students to bring healthy, sugar-free snacks and meals for recess and lunch. We believe it is important that students be aware of the correlation between nutrition, exercise and brain function that has been well-documented in the neuroscience literature. We all need brains that function at their best!

Last Friday, teachers worked collaboratively to plan the student-led conferences scheduled for the afternoon of Tuesday, March 3rd. Further information about the purpose and format for these conferences will follow, and parents will be invited to schedule a time that will work for them.

On Friday as well, we revisited the seminal work in critical thinking that has been developed by Drs. Richard Paul and Linda Elder. Paul and Elder provide a framework for the critical thinking process that can be applied in every subject area. It invites teachers and students to "routinely apply...intellectual standards to the elements of reasoning in order to develop intellectual traits" (Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2005).

To explore ways in which parents can encourage their children to think critically and extend the deep thinking processes they are learning at school, we invite you to attend our upcoming Gifted Lecture by Ms Maureen McDermid, *Raising Critical Thinkers*. Scheduled from 6:00 – 8:00 pm on February 24th, it promises to be an informative and valuable lecture. A flyer with further details is attached. We hope to see many of you here.

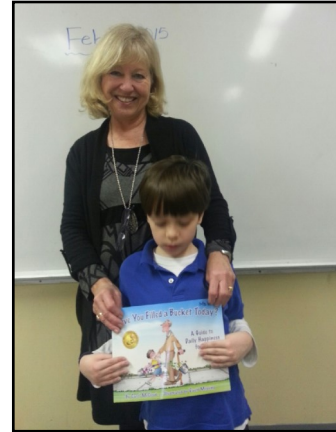
Our families and staff are looking forward to the Chinese New Year Celebration next Friday morning, February 20th from 10:30 – 12:30 in the gym. It will be a wonderful event that showcases music, art and culture. Parents are asked to contribute to the potluck lunch according to the plan that accompanies this newsletter. We extend enormous thanks to Mrs Irene Yu and her team who have spent countless hours organizing this event for us.

And finally, we hope you enjoy reading two examples of exemplary student writing that follow. Please note the creative risks each author has taken with conventional language to bring their words to life. Our thanks to Levi and Emily for agreeing to share their work.

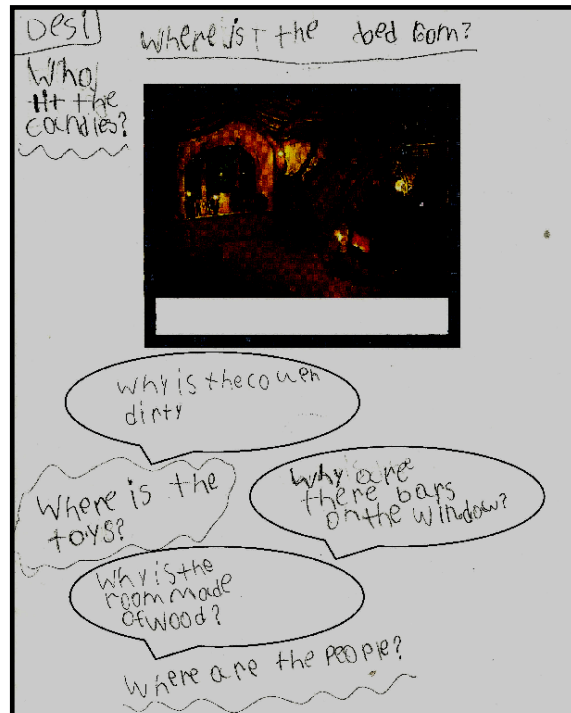
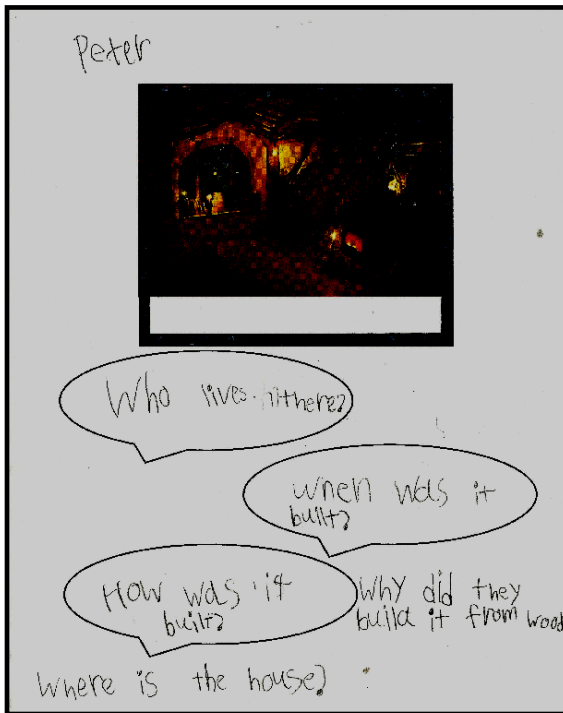
Wishing you all a Happy Valentine's Day weekend,

Virtues Project

The Choice School virtue for December was Kindness. Students participated in Random Acts of Kindness and were awarded ballots for their acts of kindness by teachers. The draw was made and Sebastian Miller's ballot was drawn. Each student who had a ballot received a certificate of completion for Bucket Filling. There was also a 30 day challenge during kindness month. Thank you to Sebastian, Kelvin and Mandy for participating and completing the 30 day challenge.



Class A has been writing informative questions about pictures to find out more details.



Upcoming dates to remember

- Feb. 13 PAC Meeting - 8:30am
- 20 Chinese New Year Celebration-10:30am
- 23 Class A celebrates 100th day of school
- 24 Gifted Lecture #3 **Raising Critical Thinkers** - Maureen McDermid-6pm
- 25 Pink Shirt Day, Jump Rope for Heart
- 27 Open House 9-11am
- Mar. 13 Last day before Spring Break
- 14 - 29 Spring Break
- 30 School re-opens



If I Could be Someone Else

If I could be someone, anyone, I would be a figure skater. I would have long, silky, shining black hair trailing loosely from a bun captured in dazzling gems and sparkling stones, with maybe a few feathers. I would be slender but strong. Wearing soft, sparkling costumes. Jumping and spinning with rushes of air and powerful energy surging up in me. Feeling the pull of speed and stretching forward to lift myself up.

There would be exhilarating times when gravity would lose its hold and flips would launch into the air and leave me breathless when I land on an edge. Then jumping up with all my might and almost flying through the air. Practicing these things everyday while the shining ice is scarred and crossed with the prints of my skates. Launching through leaping spins and after lots of practice, having the achievement of landing without a quake or quiver.

Becoming stronger after months and months and learning new things that would raise me higher and higher in the perfection of the art. Controlling and learning precision. Having the exact timing when I cross or spin. Feeling the world slip away from me as I practice and skate over the glassy surface of ice.



Focusing on my part and finding all that the world of figure skating can offer. Taking the pain as well as the hardships and letting them teach me how to do better next time. Gaining experience from my mistakes.

Also, choosing the music to skate to and figuring in melodies either sweet, energetic or mournful. Lending movements of the hands and twists of the body to capture the mood. Letting all the sounds soak into me and flowing with the spirit of the music. Choosing what to do and how to skate according to the song. Swaying to and fro with feeling as the music drifts over you.

Afterwards perfecting this talent and practicing with my coach, over and over again, programs that would be performed in front of thousands. Feeling the nervous excitement of getting everything just right and going over things till my movements shine with the added polish of finished perfection.

Soon going to competitions with all my programs done. Worried if I will get a good score or not. Waiting in tension as the other skaters before me go and I wait nervously. Stepping timidly onto the ice and starting my program as the speakers blare out the music which I have built the base of all my choreography and getting ready to skate the best program ever on the strange, unfamiliar ice of a foreign rink.

And on the ice, doing everything I have worked on and trying my hardest to please while I pump as hard as possible to gain exceptional height. The flow of time and movements almost dazing me and then, I finish and run off the rink to be bombarded with cameras and people.

Standing, staring at the scoreboard while my score comes up followed by a rush of sudden joy or dull disappointment. Both these possibilities making me work harder to achieve more. It would all be wonderful though. If I couldn't be me, I would be a figure skater with the life I have just mentioned.

by Emily - Class C

Hamlet: Journal Entry

Feb 2: The day after the marriage

I felt torn in two. My father's death made me don black robes and feel miserable, and my mother getting married to my serpent of an uncle was the final blow that ruined my life. I felt such anger at my uncle for taking and forever binding himself to my mother yesterday. I took all that anger out on the pillow on my bed, a lovely thing, adorned with jewels and embroidery in purple silk. I hacked it to pieces with my knife, the little pieces of swan down flying around my room in erratic circles of the wind from my open window. I felt that those little bits of fluff represented my state of mind, a mass of swirling emotion and nothing else. No order or peace, just pure chaos.



I am yet another sinful being in this terrible world, created by Father Adam's great mistake. I feel mixed feelings as I write this journal, thinking about the little peasants down below to my anger, trapped in their endless toil to find resources for the kingdom. They have absolutely no knowledge about what goes on in this castle. Yet they are just sinful creatures that can do terrible things, as am I.

Trapped in thought at this very moment, I ponder, "Is this journal the only thing keeping me from going mad?" I think yes. Pouring out all my feeling into written language is the only thing keeping my sanity in check. Burning this journal would destroy my very being. If anything at all happens to this gray, leather-bound book, I will lose all connection with the world around me.

As I go through my daily routine, I don't think about anything except my father's death and my mother's marriage. I am like a dead person, yet living at the same time, my head a raging hell and a void. I used to burn with passion, ambition, drive. Now I only burn with anger and rage. That sums up this mass of moving flesh and blood, Hamlet.

To this day, I wonder if my father's killer- if he had one- felt any guilt around his terrible deed, as did Father Adam and Mother Eve. And would he pay for it in the future? Adam and Eve did. Something makes me sure my father was murdered, and I'm looking for revenge.

As I look out the window, I wonder, is being angry and living in the past the right thing to do? Everyone will look at me oddly as I wander the castle ramparts with a sullen, angry look, in my black clothing. Something made me do this, and it wasn't me. Even in my own room I feel like I am being watched by something and at night I will cower at the corner of my bed like a cornered animal. Is it the feelings I have experienced or is there something peculiar, malevolent and supernatural watching me? Is it the Lord, or a Ghost? I feel the worst is yet to come.

by Levi - Class D



More amazing magnet STEM projects from the students of Class C.



“Class C as a part of their Language Arts program completes a book report every two months and then has a choice of 24 different ways to present what they have read. I am as always 'AWED' by how creative my students are and of the variety of ways they have chosen to present their 'reads'. Please feel free to come up to class C and see their reviews. They deserve five stars.”

- Ms. Champion



Classes C & D in the computer lab.

Students in Class C are studying International Trade and the focus for this week has been on child labour in different countries around the world. Students in classes C & D role played the children in Kolkata, India who make paper bags for rupees. The students had to make perfect paper bags in order to be paid and then analyzed their results to see if they could survive on the streets in India.



Heart and Stroke presentation.



Gym class

Students in Class C planned, implemented and played a new sport in Physical Education. Using a cross-curricular approach they wrote up detailed instructions, for a new original game to be played in physical education using the elements of Fun, Fair, Active and Challenging as their key goals. The game played so far was fabulous.



You Are Invited

to join our Gifted Lecture Series
on Tuesday, February 24, 2015 6:00pm
at Choice School

Raising Critical Thinkers

with Ms. Maureen McDermid

Critical thinking is recognized as a core competency in the provincial curriculum and is the foundation of an intellectually rigorous curriculum. It equips us to make thoughtful decisions and reasoned judgments, and as such is an essential skill for success in our modern world. Critical thinking gives gifted students tools to think deeply as learners.

However, what do we really mean when we use the term “critical thinking”? How should critical thinking be taught? Can parents help to develop and nurture their children’s ability to think critically about events in everyday life?

Mrs. Maureen McDermid is highly regarded for her writing about critical thinking and teaching critical thinking skills to students of all ages. Her presentation will share ways in which parents and educators can give children the tools for critical thinking that will enhance their success as lifelong learners.

About Maureen McDermid

Maureen works as a consultant in gifted education with Choice School and as a staff developer on curriculum design and critical thinking across Canada. She was on District Staff in SD38, Richmond for 12 years as the Coordinator of Gifted Programming, a position she came to from working with gifted students in both elementary and secondary classrooms. She is the parent of 2 gifted adults and grandparent of 5 gifted grandchildren who have given her lots of practice in understanding and supporting gifted individuals!

Admission is free and free childcare is provided

RSVP
by February 18, 2015

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