

## School Closings:

Thurs. & Fri.  
Sept. 29th & 30th  
Rosh Hashanah  
( *School Closed* )

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Fri, Oct. 7th  
Staff Day/Yom Kippur  
( *No Classes Held* )

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Mon, Oct. 10th  
Columbus Day  
( *School Closed* )



## Upcoming Events:

Mon., Oct. 24th  
to  
Fri., Oct 28th  
Literary Week

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Sun., Oct. 30th  
Fall Festival, Open  
House, Book Fair  
&  
Barn Dance!  
11:00 to 3:00

## Notes from Michelle

Welcome back everyone! One would hardly know the stormy start to the year we had, observing how quickly these kids have dug back into the learning, creating, and playing of this past week. On my morning rounds the other day, I observed children gathered on their new benches in first grade absorbing a counting lesson, collaborating on a complex block structure in The Nest, warming up to the idea of long division in the sixth grade, and eighth graders engaging in a driving half-court basketball game with their new PE teacher, Bill. In fact, I overheard one of the boys mutter, as Bill dribbled by, "Wow, he *can* play..." High praise. I have a few quick notes to get out of the way before I get to the essay portion.

1) Early Arrivals and Before-care: Children are arriving before 8:45 for a variety of reasons: Parents need to get to work, buses are arriving early, and some families are using this time as transition time. It's all fine, that is what Before-care is for: to provide a safe place for chil-

dren to be until teachers are ready to receive their students at 8:45. What we cannot do is hang out in classrooms, where teachers are preparing for the day. So...

Parents: **If you need to drop your child(ren) off at school before 8:45**, they are to attend Before-care with the wonderful Hollie and David Paynter. The cost is \$5.00. On sunny days, they are outside corralling children. On rainy and cold days, you can find them in the PAC.

Children in grades N-6, **arriving by bus before 8:45** must also go to before-care. Parents, **you will not be charged, as this is not in your control**. We do ask that you let your child know that this is the expectation. 7/8th graders **arriving by bus before 8:45** are to go immediately downstairs to the multi-purpose room and check in with Ike and Amy. Parents, **you will not be charged** but we ask that you please let your child know that this is the expectation.

**Reminder about End of Day Plans:** Please make sure that you call the office prior to 2:00 if there is a change in your child's end of day plan. We understand that in the case of an emergency, this may not be possible. Please know that if the plan is that you are picking up your child, and you are running late and can't reach us, your child will be safely placed in after-care, which goes until 5:30. Please don't rush!

Bluestone anyone? We are looking for donations of bluestone for the walkway and ramp to the Gazebo. If you have some, let Patrick know at [patick@highmeadow.school.org](mailto:patick@highmeadow.school.org). Thanks!

It was lovely to see how our school has grown at Community Night last Thursday, to witness veteran parents reaching out to new ones, and to see everyone so engrossed in the teachers' presentations. I want to bring those parents who were not able to attend Community Night (I am reevaluating the childcare situation, I promise!), *cont. on pg.2*

## Notes From Michelle (cont. from pg.1)

into a discussion I initiated by sharing my comments from that evening with you. These words set the stage for a theme we are developing this year: *Independence*. For those of you who were there, I completely understand if you want to turn the page...

“It is said that the most critical role a parent plays is to prepare their child to become competent and independent adults. This process begins at birth, at the very first separation and continues through walking, then speaking, and finally reading, which is the last big separation of early childhood. While we encourage our children along the way, what heart-break it is to *truly engage* in the endeavor towards our children’s independence...for it requires allowing our children to experience frustration, disappointment, hurt, and dare I say it? Failure. We struggle with wanting to save them because we love them and do not want to see them suffer. But suffer they must: they must come to see they can survive these negative emotional experiences to build resilience, to learn at their appropriate level of challenge, and to embrace increased independence.

For the past couple of years there has been much glib talk about what helicopter parents we are. With that has come glorification of the 70’s (*after all we survived*), and an elevation of “Tiger Parenting”. Well, yes, we survived the 70s. And sure, there were some great things about running the streets while our parents were having cocktails...but I for one, wondered where the grown-ups were at certain critical moments. As it turns out a bunch of us did, because look at the parenting our generation adopted!

It is our tendency, as a culture, to vacillate between extremes in our trends. Before we throw the baby out with the bathwater (please excuse the pun), let us recognize that just as there *was* much good in the survival skills we developed as children, there is much good in the connections *we* have made with *our children*. In fact, statistics reveal that a majority of teens characterize their relationships with their parents as ‘good.’ Clearly we are doing something right. On the other hand, solid research also shows that a thoughtful retreat from high vigilance is needed on our parts. Our children are

very capable, very resourceful, and besides, for them to grow they need us to back off. What is needed is balance.

What is the measure then, of too much or not enough vigilance? The measure is age-appropriate, child-appropriate struggle. Our children *should* be struggling to master the life-skills, learning, and physical challenges appropriate to their age. We should not rush in when our six year old is struggling to tie their shoes, when our ten year old is creating a diorama for class, or our thirteen year old is in conflict with a teacher or friend. These are age-appropriate struggles where we can be side-line cheerleaders offering suggestions and support as needed, or simply listening.

One of the articles we chose for you this year in the Parent Handbook, ‘How to Land Your Kid in Therapy,’ is about the challenges of parenting for independence. The author asks an important question: Should happiness be the goal in life or a by-product of a productive life? The second article, ‘Universal Design

for Learning,’ describes the universal design framework that some educators have adapted from the architecture and industrial design world.. This framework asks us to consider: How do we design [a learning community] so that all members can be successful and appropriately challenged so that they may become the independent beings they were meant to be?

In ending, I want to share with you a short quote from an essay in the New York Times last week by Pulitzer prize winning and profoundly dyslexic poet, Philip Schultz, entitled, Words Failed, then Saved Me. I think this poignantly captures the struggle and then triumph that one child experiences as he breaks the code: and in using his imagination, develops independence.

*When I did finally learn to read, my teachers didn’t have much to do with it. I was 11, and even my school-appointed tutors had given up on me. My mother read the one thing I would listen to - Blackhawk comics - over and over again, hoping against hope that by some leap of faith or*

## Notes From Michelle (cont. from pg. 2)

*chance I would start to identify letters and then learn to arrange them into words and sentences, and begin the intuitive, often magical, process of turning written language into spoken language.*

*One night, lying in bed as she read to me, I realized that if I was ever going to learn to read I would have to teach myself. The moon glowing outside my window, I remember, seemed especially interested in my predicament, perhaps attempting its own kind of encouragement. Was it a dummy, too? I wondered. If only I could be another boy, a boy my age who could sound out words*

*and read and write like every other kid I knew.*

*I willed myself into being him. I invented a character who could read and write. Starting that night, I'd lie in bed silently imitating the words my mother read, imagining the taste, heft and ring of each sound as if it were coming out of my mouth. I imagined being able to sound out the words by putting the letters together into units of rhythmic sound and the words into sentences that made sense.*

*I imagined the words and their sounds being a kind of key with which I would open an invisible door to a world previously denied me.*

*And suddenly I was reading. I didn't know then that I was beginning a lifelong love affair with the first-person voice and that I would spend most of my life inventing characters to say all the things I wanted to say...'*

I invite you to come to discuss independence, appropriate challenge, and other topics of parenting and educating our children at a breakfast on **Friday, October 7th**, in the 8th grade classroom, downstairs in the Upper School. Subsequent breakfasts will be the first **Fridays of December, February, and April.**

Lastly, I would like to remind you all to get out

there and vote in support of the much needed renovation of the Stone Ridge Library. Not only is it our very own local public library, it is a beautiful, historic stone building that is literally falling apart.

Polls open at the library on Wed., October 12th, and voting is from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. We know that a mailing has gone out about this already, but if you would like to know more, drop by the main office and you will find more printed information on the front desk.

Thanks!

## Events, Updates & Announcements

### **Mosquitoes!!!!**

The mosquitoes are vicious right now, and are really driving everyone crazy while playing outside. We can either spray your kids here at school with what we have on hand (all natural – DEET free spray), or you can send your child in with your preferred bug repellent (just put their name on it). If there is anything we need to know around this issue pertaining to your child, please let your teachers know. Thanks!

### **Compost News**

As Chief Compost Maker for HMS (a position I invented and appointed myself to last year), I am happy to report that all grades bring snack and lunch scraps to the compost bins every day.

Last spring we had a nice pile of rich organic compost for Tanya to add to the school garden. Unfortunately we have outgrown our current composting bins. I'd like to expand our compost pro-

duction by building new, larger bins. To do this I need 10 wooden pallets. I would also like to ask anyone who bags their autumn leaves and/or grass clippings to donate them to the cause. If you can help, please contact me at 687-3333, or find me in the Pre-K.

Thanks,  
Kerry Pharmer

### **Coat Drive!!**

This is the time of year for our annual coat drive in support of our local migrant community. We donate clean, new and almost new warm weather outerwear: coats and jackets of all sizes, adults and childrens. Please bring items to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom. Thank you for participating in this event.

## PTO News

Hello & Happy New School Year from the folks in the PTO. At our first meeting, we were happy to welcome our newest members: Molly, Julia, and Corinna, and to reunite with our tried & true PTO members: Jackie, Deb, Stephanie,

and Susanne. On October 11th we will be making lunch for our beloved teaching staff to say welcome back & thank them for their commitment and outstanding service to our children. If anyone wants to make something yummy to

contribute, let me know! FYI: they love chocolate...

We are looking forward to an active year and are open to new ideas & suggestions from you. The PTO welcomes anyone who would like to join. As always, please contact your Class

**Jodi**

Parent or your Teachers with any questions about classroom activities. They are happy to help. With warmest regards,  
Jodi

## P.E. News

It is a joy and a privilege to be involved in the PE program here at High Meadow. The children are enthusiastically energetic as they reunite in celebration, and begin working and competing with one another. Most of our activities have been indoors thus far as the tropical storms of last month have left the outdoor playing field and nature trail soggy and mosquito ridden, but that has not daunted spirits. The entire PAC reverberates from bodies in constant motion. With dry and cool weather ahead we hope to be outside more often, beating feet under the autumnal blue sky.

We usually start off each session with a 10-15 minute team building challenge, learning how to work together towards a common goal. These challenges require team coordination, communication and imagination and will become increasingly more difficult and complex as the groups strengthen their connections

throughout the year. We follow up with a discussion about the results, looking to see where our team strengths and weaknesses are and where we can improve.

Ball and/or tag games are next. For the younger grades, 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, Monster ball tag and color tag seem to be universally popular. For the older grades- volleyball, soccer, capture the flag and basketball are on the top of the list. Across all age groups, the importance of sportsmanship- inclusion, fair and honest play and the fine art of gracious winning and losing are being openly experienced, discussed and processed. The value of creating cooperative team strategies in less structured games like capture the flag and tag, are also continuing to be developed. We then close with a general health discussion.

On the "Healthy Minds Strong Bodies" front, the concept of our bodies as each being a unique masterpiece and the importance of

keeping them healthy was introduced. We overviewed the cardio-vascular system and basic exercise physiology. We learned how to take our pulse, carotid and radial, and discovered what our resting heart rate is. We learned what a target heart rate is, why it is important, and why a minimum of 20 minutes in that "zone" at least 3 times a week is important. Yes, there is indeed a target HR for children. I was surprised by this also. Quick refresher: The target heart rate occurs when your heartbeat reaches 60 to 80 percent of its maximum ability. While adults use the formula of subtracting their current age from 220 to find their target heart rate, this won't work for children. The target heart rate for children depends on their age, but on average, it's 137 for 3- to 4-year-olds, 133 for 5- to 7-year-olds, 130 for 8- to 11-year-olds and 115 for 12- to 15-year-olds.

*One has to marvel at the numbers and how they re-*

*flect the incredible compensatory abilities of the young cardio-pulmonary system.*

In the upper grades we talked about warming up before exercise and the importance of strength and endurance training. We also refreshed on the difference between ligaments and tendons, their health and how they relate to common injuries, especially for those involved in sports and dance.

Next month we will be introducing an "owner's manual" for each student to develop. Each student will also be receiving a stethoscope to help gain more understanding of what goes on inside and how our bodies respond to exercise.

I want to thank all the parents and staff for the positive comments and support. Appreciation also to Elena and Tanya for their invaluable insights and advice.  
Bill

**Bill Brantmeyer**

## Early Childhood Program

Vanessa

### Parent/Child Class

The littlest members of the High Meadow community are off to a great start. They have had two days of school and they are already settling in. They are enjoying exploring the classroom and sharing snack together.

The caregivers are doing great, too, supporting their little ones as they face the new challenges like taking turns and waiting.

### 3/4s

Yesterday was our first full day of school! The slow and steady approach

gave everyone a chance to acclimate to being at school with very little stress.

The rhythm of the day is becoming more familiar to everyone. We read the schedule each morning at circle time and the children can recognize the symbols for each activity. They especially like the last one, a little house with the word HOME.

You'll also notice symbols beside their names in the cubbies. Those same symbols are repeated on

the name chart in the classroom. The symbols will be used throughout the year to help them identify their work.

Children are beginning to connect with each other in positive ways as they learn the language of the classroom, asking nicely, "Can I have that?" and answering kindly, "When I'm finished." Friendships are budding as children with similar interests find themselves next to each other again and again. Sitting all together in a



group is always a challenge at the beginning of the year, it's our job as teachers to make it interesting and important to take part.

Yesterday the whole class sat together and enjoyed a puppet show about a farmer that just could not get a carrot out of the garden. It is amazing to watch your children open up a little more each day as they become comfortable at school. Each one has so much to offer.

I can't wait to see where this year takes us!

## Pre-K

And we're off! What excitement there is in PreK as this group of children begin their work of becoming a class. It's wonderful to watch as the room is explored and friends discover or rediscover each other. Blocks have become stages and towers. The classroom store is frequently crowded, often with more children selling than buying. The toy castle and the fairies, princesses and princes who live there are also quite popular. This is a busy group of children and it's great to watch them bring life to the classroom that Kerry and I set up not so long ago.

One of the first books we enjoyed together as a class was Owl Babies by Martin Waddell. It's about three owlets who wake up one night and find their mother is gone. They worry and wait and huddle together until she comes swooping back, just as you all did for your own little owlets at the end of the school day. After reading the story the children took turns acting it out using the adorable stuffed owls that you may have noticed on our mantel. The part of



Bill, the smallest owl, was the most coveted. Ask your child if she or he can remember what he said again and again in the story.

Another book I shared with the class is Chalk by Bill Thompson. This is a beautiful wordless book about three children who find a bag of magic chalk

one rainy day. This story prompted us to imagine what we might draw if we found chalk that brought our pictures to life. This rich conversation then led to the lovely chalk drawings your children brought home last week.

It is a pleasure reading to this group. Conversation stops as each child focuses completely on the book, smiling and making great observations when asked. What a gift you've all given your children!

I look forward to many more stories and discoveries as the school year progresses.

Kathy

## Kindergarten

Hello all! The Kindergarten class has settled right into school. They are navigating through the classroom with ease and interacting with each other with such comfort and care. The conversations are blossoming each day. The children are very eager to learn

In language Arts we have been rhyming, segmenting sentences and segmenting words into syllables. We have also begun to name colors, shapes, things that are round, square and rectangle. We described and compared different ob-

jects, listened to stories, retold them in sequence and also brainstormed ideas for writing a story. Ask your children about the "It Would be Funny If.." story. Busy, busy, bees buzzing around the classroom.

Our Science area is expanding and it's lovely to see that we have a lot of Scientists in our classroom. We are observing our see-through-compost and creating a time lapse to watch the process of our food decomposing, very exciting! The children have been slowly taking apart a rotting log

to see what kind of life lives there.

The children love Math, especially the workbooks. We have also been working on some hands on activities such as making different shapes using rubber bands and the Geobords, one-to-one correspondence using counters and different objects in the classroom. The C-Rods and Block area has been a great resource for Math activities.

It's so wonderful to see how delighted the children are to show ownership of their classroom.

## Cindy

***Our first "Family Breakfast" will be on Friday Oct. 21st, from 9-10.*** It's a great way to mingle with other parents and it allows you to explore the classroom with your child.

### **REMINDERS:**

- 1) BOOK ORDERS ARE DUE!!!!
  - 2) PLEASE REMEMBER TO HAVE YOUR CHILD WEAR SNEAKERS ON WEDNESDAYS FOR P.E. OR HAVE A PAIR IN THEIR CUBBY.
- Thanks!~



## 1st Grade

What a wonderful start we have had this year! Cindy and Sandy really did a great job preparing your children for first grade. They are happy, confident first graders, who delight in being the oldest class in the lower school building.

The new classroom configuration is working just beautifully. The benches nicely support focus during group time, act as landscapes for Lego play and offer extra space for independent work with children.

They take pride in "Signing In" in the morn-

ings, recording their after school plans and choosing their first activities of the day. All areas of the classroom are busy as children drill, hammer, sweep and swing on the porch. Lego building, drawing, playing "Guess Who," collaborating on puzzles and clay work are favorites inside.

During this play teachers have been moving around the room performing informal assessments in order to organize small groups for reading instruction.

By now the children have eagerly attended

PE, Music, Spanish, and Dance as well as a very exciting cooperative arts project with Una's mom Suzy. We look forward to sharing a wonderful year.

**We will be taking our first field trip on Monday October 3 to the West Wind Orchard in Accord.** West Wind is having a great season despite our recent weather events, and they have organic apples, a pumpkin patch, and raspberries that are ready for the picking! Below is a link to their website. Email us and let us know if you can drive and how many

children you can fit in your car. We'll be leaving first thing in the morning on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Remember to send in a booster seat for your child. Thanks!

<http://www.westwindorchard.com>

## Kristin

## 2nd Grade

What a glorious start to the school year! In morning letter this morning, we referred to your children as seedlings, and though it isn't spring, this is truly what they are; bursting forth with vitality and growth and wonder at the sun-lit world around them. It is such a pleasure for Tanya and I to be with them each day.

By this time, we have settled into many of our classroom routines and these children exemplify community. They are direct, yet polite, advocates for themselves and their

friends. They shine when given responsibility and are eager participants in whatever new endeavor we take on.

One area of the curriculum we would like to highlight in this week's newsletter is that of Hands-On-Science. For those of you who attended Community Night you got to hear a little bit about this weekly tangible exploration. So far, Tanya has led us in dissecting watermelons and collecting a huge variety of seeds on the nature trail while simultaneously

expanding our scientific vocabulary and exposing us to the intricacies of scientific drawing. Each student has a science journal in which they are recording their work and the insights and means of expression are very thoughtful and sophisticated. Please come take a peek when you're next in the room.

We also hope to get a chance to witness the transformations our outside classroom wall makes as Suzy M. (thank you!) leads us in a mural

## Carrie

project inspired by native sun designs.

On a logistical note, I would like to thank the following parents for having a huge part in transforming our new classroom into the magical burrow/oasis it is: Pia D., James & Leo L., Elena U., Jackie D., David L., Jodi P., David K., Garrett R., and, Linda B.G.

Finally, a huge thank you to Johnny Poux for adding the most magical loft to our classroom habitat. Without you all, there is no us!

## 3rd Grade

What a glorious beginning of school! The children are so eager to learn and so open to new concepts and working cooperatively. We are making the transition to a new building, new teacher, new friends and new responsibilities. I am so pleased with the level of maturity so early in the year.

In language arts the children are studying the many complexities of who we are. There is daily reflection and discussion before our written work. We are learning about autobiographies

and how it applies to our families and our lives. Please be prepared to answer questions or relay stories of family history. We will be exploring many aspects of ancestry.

In science we are enthralled in the study of rocks. However, the ladybugs have arrived! Your child will be compiling a booklet on facts and observations discovered in the classroom on these fascinating insects. We will return to our geology unit next week.

We would love to warmly welcome our new families into our

community. The children are extending friendship and support to Shaye, Sam and Dahlia. I hope we can all reach out to these new families as only the HMS community does so well.

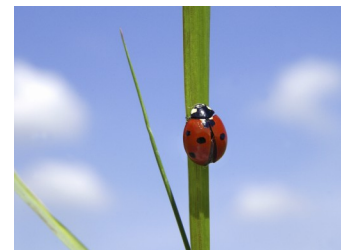
### **Important Dates:**

*Tuesday, September 27th Trip to ValKill, Eleanor Roosevelt's home in Hyde Park*

*Wednesday, October 12th Trip to Huguenot Houses in New Paltz*

*Trip to Chagall's art exhibit TBA*

## Barbara



Blessings, Barbara

## 4th Grade

We seem to be off to a strong start this year! Our two new students have been welcomed beautifully and appear to have integrated seamlessly into this cohesive group.

The children are currently engaged in several academic projects, ranging from team ecosystem studies to small group Native American biographical research projects. We also engage in independent academic work every day, such as handwriting, map studies and reading/writing comprehension skill building efforts.

The children are enjoying both of our current

novels and are writing throughout our days.

By the time you read this, they will have all received their own set of pentominoes! Please be sure to ask about them - they will not come home until we finish the corresponding novel.

I know that math can be confusing to parents and I have sent a separate email inviting you to a parent math meeting. Please respond as soon as you can so that I can make necessary arrangements. Even though parents may feel lost and children may forget how to complete

an assignment at home, it is important to know that they are all faring quite well in class: they are quicker than you might think to recall various problem solving techniques when sitting with me before class in the morning.

Please remember that Physical Education takes place on Wednesdays and that the children must have sneakers for class. Also, please return the field trip permission slips as soon as possible. At this time, we have two drivers signed up and will require more in order to

attend – please consider joining us!

Lastly, If you have not yet sent in a bowl and some slippers, please do so by next week!

As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Best, Jackie

## Jackie

## 5th & 6th Math

*Newsletter written by Alden and Talia:*

We welcomed two new students into our class this year: Zoe and Ari. They immediately made themselves at home in our class. We had James Childs (photo below) come to our class to talk about S.T.A.R. (Sensitivity, Trust, Appreciation, and Respect).

We started ensembles. We began researching early humans on the internet and in books with Ally. We are learning Estimation and Algebra with Betty. We are looking forward to going on a field trip on Friday to Madden Environmental Center. We started self portraits with Ally. We learned how to play Hex, a math game Betty made up, inspired

by the tiles in her bathroom. We have Jacinta as our assistant for our third year in a row!

*From Betty:*

Hi and welcome back to school and welcome especially to the Upper School! Jacinta and I are so thrilled to be working with each other this year.

You will note that in the Upper School, the students are responsible for writing the newsletter. Your child will have the opportunity at some point during the year to do so. It is wonderful for them to be able to say that they had a role in this great sharing. So please, read the newsletter for the whole year to see if YOUR child was its author!

*Reminders: Friday 9/23 is the 5/6 Field Trip to Madden Environmental Center.* Please make sure that your child has a snack and a lunch packed and are dressed appropriately for the weather. If you would like your child to have bug spray, please instruct them on its appropriate application. We are leaving as soon as the last bus arrives (9:15 ish) and returning BEFORE 3:00. Your child should be clear on how they are to return home on Friday so there is no confusion at the end of the day.

Please note that Jacinta and I both realize that the transition to the Upper School is a big one. From taking notes from the board to using a planner for homework daily, plus

being the younger fish in a larger pond, reactions and feelings can arise. Please, honor these feelings, but kindly let me know if your child is experiencing difficulties, as we can help them negotiate these waters... we just have to know. So call or drop me an email.

The fifth grade Weekly Schedule of classes will be going home soon. Please look for it.

Thanks...  
Betty & Jacinta.



## 5th & 6th Humanities

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Humanities

Welcome back! It has been a fantastic couple of weeks. The children are really delightful. Their curiosity and enthusiasm is amazing. We have plunged headlong into all areas of the humanities curriculum. The students are reading The Search for Delicious, and have produced glorious illustrations to reveal the depth of their comprehension and appreciation for detail.

In grammar their ability to think critically and analytically is in evidence as they tackle the challenging lessons in our workbook, The Rules of the Game.

Our exploration of earliest human kind has been intriguing and really paves the way for our study of Ancient Civilizations.

These students have applied impressive persistence and cooperation to the challenges of cooperative research. They will be constructing mobiles showcasing the material they have discovered about australopithecine, Homo habilis, Homo erectus, Homo sapiens and Homo sapien sapiens. Their fascination with the subject matter is really fueling the engagement they have brought to this inquiry. We've been having an absolute blast! We are so looking forward to this Friday and the field trip Betty has planned for us at Madden. Thank you to Betty!

### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Humanities:

It is so wonderful being reunited with this extraor-

dinary group of children! Their eagerness to dive into this year's exciting curriculum has been impressive. They have revealed such focus and earnest engagement with our study of world religions. Already, our conversations about the function of religion resonates the knowledge we accumulated studying mythology and ancient civilizations last year.

The concept of religion and how it shapes our interactions with other cultures is important to our understanding of differences and the universal beliefs and questions that all people share. This group of students revels in such a profound and sophisticated study.

We are reading The

## Allyson

Witch of Blackbird Pond. This is an excellent work of historical fiction with wonderfully developed characters and a richly conceived plot. It resonates with our religious inquiry as well as exploring the themes of justice, loyalty, and difference.

The students are diligently pursuing their course of grammar and writing, they have begun essays around their academic and social goals for the year.

It is a pleasure reading the essays which they completed over the course of the summer. They have eagerly shared this work and I look forward to displaying the impressive art highlighting their writing.

What an excellent beginning to the school year!

## 7th Grade Humanities

The 7th grade had a powerful start to the year-- the workshops they participated in with James Childs challenged them to examine their often hidden biases regarding groups of people. I witnessed many kids shocked at their own responses when asked to write key words, without thinking, in reference to different groups. I believe they came to recognize the cultural influences we need to consciously ad-

dress in order to exist free of self limiting biases. Bravo, everyone.

In Humanities, the 7th grade have completed and taken a quiz on lessons one and two of their Classical Vocabulary books. They seem to be absorbing the essence of this approach, and are saying they enjoy the exercises. This makes me very happy

We have completed our review of summer read-

ing, and used the opportunity to discover and share the broad themes of the novels. We discovered the universality of themes in novels, and illustrated this observation in small group discussions. The students engaged in rich conversation during this short study and shared their thinking with respectful and sophisticated language.

Ike is currently leading the class in a short story

unit. The students are listening to stories and responding to both comprehension and inference questions in both large and small group configurations, as well as in written form in their literary response journals. The history component of our curriculum will begin next week.

As always, don't hesitate to email any questions you may have regarding any aspect of your child's day.

## Ann Marie

## 8th Grade Humanities

The 8th grade had a smooth and exciting start to the year-- "Well, here we are!! Who's the top dog now?!" seemed to be the excited and much anticipated posture among many of the students. They seem very pleased with themselves and the rightful place of honor they are currently inhabiting. It's fascinating to watch, and slightly unbelievable. Wasn't it just yesterday?..

This years workshops with James Childs challenged our

students to examine their often hidden biases regarding groups of people. I witnessed many kids shocked at their own responses when asked to write, without thinking, key words in reference to groups of people. They came to recognize the cultural influences we need to consciously address in order to exist free of self limiting biases. Bravo, everyone.

In Humanities, the 8th grade have completed and

taken a quiz on lessons one and two of their second Classical Vocabulary books. This book is more challenging, but this group is certainly up for the challenge. We completed our exploration of universal themes in literature, using their summer reads as material. this was a fun and successful mini study, and the kids showed heightened abilities with this sophisticated subject.

In class today, students

listened to a reading of The Tell Tale Heart, by Edgar Allen Poe, stopping to write prediction responses in their literary response journals. It was pretty great to see the students awe stricken responses as we revealed the unreliability of this perverse narrator. We'll start a creative project based on this story in class tomorrow.

I can't wait!!

**Ann Marie**

## 7th & 8th Math/Science

### *7th Grade Math/Science:*

Welcome back everyone to a new school year! It's great to have this new class with us down in the upper upper school. As we adjust to the new routines of this school year I'd like to remind everybody that the students have specials at 9:00 a.m. for their first class on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. So they should have their homework in by 9:00 a.m. in their subject teachers' boxes and be ready for class. If the students happen to arrive at 9:00 or later they should go straight to specials and not to their cubbies or their classrooms. Thanks.

We are beginning the school year with a review of arithmetic, including such things as the order of operations, fractions and decimals. The four-fours challenge proved to be a fun brain-teaser that further honed the students' arithmetic skills as well as challenging their creativity. It was wonderful

to see the variety of solutions offered (I love this problem). We will be looking at different number systems shortly and hopefully seeing the superiority of our base-10 number system.

In science we will be exploring geology through the study of the Grand Canyon, whose rock layers span billions of years of Earth history.

We started by looking at some of the human history and now we are starting to form questions relating to the natural history of the Canyon that we will further explore through simulations and examining rock samples from the various layers.

### *8th Grade Math/Science:*

Welcome back everyone to a new school year! It's great to have this class again now in their last year!(It's hard to believe) As we adjust to the new routines of this school year I'd like to remind everybody that the students have

specials at 9:00 a.m. for their first class on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. So they should have their homework in by 9:00 a.m. in their subject teachers' boxes and be ready for class. If the students happen to arrive at 9:00 or later they should go straight to specials and not to their cubbies or their classrooms. Thanks.

We are beginning the school year with a review of arithmetic, including such things as the order of operations, fractions and decimals. We began again with the four-fours challenge which proved to be a fun brain-teaser that further honed the students' arithmetic skills as well as challenging their creativity. It was wonderful to see the variety of solutions offered (I love this problem). We will be looking at different number systems shortly and hopefully seeing the superiority of our base-10 number system.

In science we will continue

our exploration of geology through the study of the Grand Canyon, whose rock layers span billions of years of Earth history.

We started by looking at some of the human history and now we are starting to form questions relating to the natural history of the Canyon that we will further explore through simulations and examining rock samples from the various layers.

Peter

