



## OAK HILL ACADEMY NEWSLETTER #3/2017

### Headmaster's Message Joseph A. Pacelli

#### Visual Intelligence

I am reading a fascinating book by Amy Herman entitled Visual Intelligence. It is an easy read in which Amy makes a case for us to sharpen our perception and use our visual skills to get more out of life. She is an attorney and also an art historian. She works with the FBI and police departments all over the country on crime scene investigations. In this day of tunnel vision on computers and cell phones, she claims that people are not being observant as in the past and, therefore, are missing many great aspects of life. She has also spent a lifetime working with doctors helping them to better observe patients rather than relying solely on charts to make diagnoses.

The following are some of her quotes:

"Often we see, but we do not observe, observation is a skill."

"Proper seeing has to be learned."

"We all see things in different ways."

"To get the most accurate picture of something, we need to see others' perceptions and recognize their point of view."

"Sometimes, we see what we want to see."

"The average person checks their cell phone 110 times a day and nearly once every six seconds in the evening."

Well worth the read!

**Mrs. Larkins**  
**Director of Development**

#### Spread the Word

We will be having a special FRIDAY open house for families interested in Oak Hill during the school day on February 24th. Attendants are to arrive at school at 9:00 a.m. The morning will include an information session, classroom visit, and tour of campus by OHA students. Please spread the word to any family that you know might be interested in OHA.

Also note that Oak Hill Academy will continue its tuition assistance program to benefit our current students as well as prospective applicants. Information has been sent home and is available on our website. Thank you in advance for your continued help.

#### "Nobody Does It Better" Cash Raffle and Ad Journal

"Nobody Does It Better" was chosen as the 2017 theme of this year's annual cash raffle, gala/auction, and ad journal.

The cash raffle is part of the school's major fundraising event of the year. The cash raffle itself is a wonderful opportunity to win sizable amounts of money. This will be the 24<sup>th</sup> year of our progressive 50/50 cash raffle whereby three cash prizes are awarded. The FIRST PRIZE is 70% of the winning 50/50 share up to \$17,500. The SECOND PRIZE is 20% of the winning 50/50 share up to \$5,000. The THIRD PRIZE is 10% of the winning 50/50 share up to \$2,500. Tickets are \$50 each are limited to the first 1,000 sold.

Each current Oak Hill Academy family will receive a raffle packet containing four raffle tickets. For every four tickets sold, you will receive, in turn, an incentive ticket qualifying you for our beautiful incentive prize donated by Ashford & Grace Fine Jewelers of Colts Neck (owned by OHA's Blankenbaker Family).

The winners of the cash raffle prizes and incentive prize will be drawn during the April 1<sup>st</sup> gala and auction at the lovely Navesink Country Club. It should be an evening to remember and we hope you can join us.

Please encourage friends, relatives, co-workers, etc. to take a ticket. Why not take a chance...like they say...you never know!!! (and you will be supporting a worthy cause!)

We have continued the tradition of the OHA Ad Journal in conjunction with our Cash Raffle. It is a wonderful opportunity

for a business to advertise to our local school community and a nice place to send a personal message to your child, teacher, etc. Ad forms were just mailed home.

Proceeds from all these events will continue to expand school technology. Please participate at any level and help us prepare for an even brighter future for our children.

**Mr. Bruckmann**  
**Communications Director**

#### Web Page Updates

We are pleased to announce that Oak Hill Academy now has a BLOG! You can subscribe and follow it @: <http://oakhillacademy.ss10.sharpschool.com/blog/One.aspx?portalId=1189546> or just click on the quick menu link on our homepage.

**Mrs. Livingston**  
**Lower School Guidance**

With the happy holiday of Valentine's Day taking place in February, the stories that I will share with the children will focus on reaching out to other people through "heart thoughts."

Gr. 1 - Heartprints by P.K. Hallinan defines heart-print as "the impression left behind by a deliberate act of kindness." Throughout the story many examples of ways that we can leave heart-prints behind were given. It was also pointed out that the heartprints we give out make us happy too. Needless to say, it is a win-win situation. We are encouraged to make a deliberate effort to leave heart-prints behind each day!

Gr. 2 - Howard B. Wigglebottom Listens to His Heart by Howard Binkow is the story of a little bunny that stops doing what he loves the most because he wants to "fit in". He tries the activities that his friends are involved in but finds them not to be the answer to his problem. Howard's grandpa convinces him to keep doing what he loves—dancing. His classmates come to appreciate Howard's talent for dancing and cheer him on. Upon completion of the story, the class discusses what "following your heart" means. It is important to be true to yourself as we all have different talents and reasons to be proud of ourselves.

Gr. 3 - Somebody Loves You Mr. Hatch by Eileen Spinelli is a favorite that we share around Valentine's Day. Mr. Hatch was a lonely man who thought no one liked him and therefore led a very solitary

life. One day an anonymous valentine arrived that changed to life of unsociable Mr. Hatch, turning him into a joyful friend who began to appreciate and help his neighbors. We never know when our kindness touches someone's heart and changes the outlook of their day!

Gr. 4 - Our folktale this month from Rhinos and Raspberries is "The Emerald Lizard." This is a Guatemalan tale of helping others. It is the story of a priest who has a kind heart and helps a poor man who cannot afford medicine for his sick wife. The priest gives the man an emerald lizard. Many years later the man goes to the priest to return the gift to him. Be sure to ask your children about this special lizard and the part it plays in this story. We will discuss the kinds of things that enrich our lives other than money or expensive material goods.

**Mrs. Weikes, Director**  
**Mrs. Wood/ Miss Bonanno**  
**Mrs. Menges, Teacher Assistant**  
**Pre-Kindergarten**

Happy New Year and best wishes for 2017 to all of our Oak Hill Academy students and families. We hope that everyone enjoyed a memorable and joyful holiday season.

Students eagerly came back to school and welcomed in the New Year. January brought a substantial amount of cold weather, a snow storm and plenty of opportunities for winter science experiments that included animals in winter. During after school Science for Young Minds Club, the students took part in a lesson on Birds in Winter. The children enjoyed making bird feeders to be placed on trees around the campus and at home. During Science lessons in the classroom will also find students involved in a unit on hibernation.

Author Jan Brett set the scene for the story, The Mitten. This classic piece of literature came to life during Creative Kids Club, with students acting out the story stressing inclusion and friendship. In addition to rich literature, Pre-K will also be enjoying exposure to art and famous artists in the classroom; Jan Brett, Picasso, Cezanne and van Gogh are a few of the most recent. It turns out that water color paintings and still art are student favorites.

Pre-K recently completed an alphabet review of letters and sounds introduced to date. Pre-K loves The Letter People and literature based activities from our Little Treasures reading program. Rhyming is an ongoing skill, while word families and curriculum generated sight

words have now been introduced. Our Pre-Emergent reading skills continue to evolve.

The school-wide character trait for January is perseverance. Ask any of the students in Pre-K what perseverance means and you will certainly get a clear answer and evidence of this is exhibited through their daily effort in the classroom.

In celebration of diversity and Martin Luther King's birthday, students enjoyed the story Martin's Big Words which were then highlighted when Mr. Pacelli read a part of M.L. King's, *I Have a Dream* speech over the public address system. Students illustrated and recorded words and pictures detailing their hopes and dreams.

*Whistle for Willie* and *A Snowy Day*, just a few of the first classic pieces of children's literature by Ezra Jack Keats, depicting an African American boy named Peter, will be highlighted in February during Black History month.

In preparation for 100 Days of School, students are practicing their counting skills to 100. As a challenge students are counting objects by 2's, 5's and even 10's and counting using tally marks and bundling sticks. Lessons in Singapore Math continue to stress graphing, sorting, classifying objects and strengthening our basic shapes and geometric shapes. Lessons on telling time to the hour, coins and correctly forming numbers to 20 are being highlighted throughout January and February. ST Math has also been introduced to the Pre-K helping boost math comprehension and proficiency through visual learning. Life skill lessons in math include learning family telephone numbers, addresses and birthdates.

Some of the highlights for Pre-K during the next several weeks will be our scheduled swim and play classes in the OHA pool. Students cannot wait!

In addition, a trip to Sunrise Assisted Living facility, in Lincroft, to deliver handmade valentines, heart pins, necklaces, and Valentine cookies, Pre-K will serenade the residents with their "Love Songs for Seniors." On Monday, February 13th at 10:15 a.m. the moms will join Pre-K for a Valentine's Day Tea. Above all, we cannot leave out everyone's favorite, the upcoming Lip Sync, to be held on March 2nd for Pre-K through grade 3. Pre-K will perform We Go Together, that classic 50's song from GREASE. Don't miss it!

"Mommy and Me" classes for 3's and 4's began in October 2016 and will run

through the month of February 2017. Mrs. Weikes conducts the series of eight engaging classes for children accompanied by an adult. The classes serve to introduce the children to the Pre-K experience and the strong and nurturing environment at Oak Hill Academy.

"Mommy and Me" classes are open to both Oak Hill Academy and non-Oak Hill Academy families. Classes are still open for February. For information on attending any of these classes please contact the Pre-K at: 732.530.1326.

On February 27th our Chinese New Year celebration will highlight "The Year of the Rooster." Pre-K festivities will include; a Lion Dance parade, Chinese number writing, a craft and sampling of Chinese food. Dr. and Mrs. Yu, parents of OHA students Robert and Edward Yu, will join us to celebrate this happy occasion. We wish all of our families celebrating the Lunar New Year, "Gung Hay Fat Choy." Happy Year of the Rooster from all the Pre-K students and staff.

Registration for Camp Oak Hill 2017 will begin in February when our brochure will be available on the Oak Hill Academy website. Families registering before the end of March will receive a 10% discount. Brochures will also be available in both the Pre-K and Main offices. You can also contact Mrs. Weikes in the Pre-K with any questions. Ask anyone that has attended Camp Oak Hill....it is "The Place for Summer."

Once again, the Pre-K staff wishes all of our OHA families a Happy and Healthy New Year.

**Pre-Kindergarten**  
**Mrs. Colbert/Mrs. Gilfillan**  
**Mrs. Lambert**  
**Kindergarten**

HAPPY 2017! We are thrilled to start 2017 in Kindergarten and to reflect on all of the exciting things we did at the end of 2016. In keeping with our theme of diversity, Kindergarten learned how holidays are celebrated around the world. Each child was asked to bring in one shoe to leave for St. Nicholas in hopes that he would leave us a treat. We were thrilled the next day to see that he and his horse had come all the way from Sweden, his horse had eaten the carrots we had left out and that he gifted us with brand new crayons! We then "ventured" to Holland where our Kindergarten girls wore a headband of candles and served our class a sweet treat in honor of St. Lucia. We also honored our Jewish students and families by lighting a

Menorah for each day of Hanukkah (even though it happened to fall over our winter break) and enjoying delicious potato latkes.

We were then treated to a special visit by Santa! He helped hand out presents in the Student Activity Center where our parents and friends were there to watch and help us decorate gingerbread houses. We thank our class moms for the wonderful party we had beforehand.

No month would be complete in Kindergarten without a field trip. In December we visited Woodfield Christmas Tree Plantation. It is a perfect location to get into the Christmas spirit! We learned a great deal about different types of trees and were treated to hot chocolate and candy canes.

In Math the children have learned how to measure the length of objects using items other than a ruler and to utilize a balance to compare the weight of objects. We are currently studying capacity and actively using water and different containers to see how much each can hold. The children are beginning to realize that math is a part of their everyday lives which makes it easier for them to relate to the concepts.

The Letter People continue to join our Kindergarten family. With the addition of Letterlights I and O we are able to make so many more words. We'd like to take a moment to thank the parents who join us every week for special snack. Coming up with original snacks for each letter sometimes tests one's creativity. We appreciate your time and always have so much fun during your visit.

The children will soon be given journals to write in at home. This is a great opportunity for them to further fine tune their writing skills.

We are gearing up to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school in February so be on the lookout for Kindergarten marching through the halls and classrooms of Oak Hill with their 100<sup>th</sup> day flags, glasses and crowns! We look forward to what the rest of the year has in store for us.



### **Miss Colson/Mrs. Quagliato Grade 1**

Happy New Year to our first grade families. We are all back at school and hard at work. We are off to a good start!! We have been learning about Martin Luther King, Jr. and his pursuit of PEACE, LOVE and HARMONY. We read MARTIN'S BIG WORDS by Doreen Rappaport. This book tells about Martin's life and focuses on his many speeches and peace marches.

Our FACT FAMILY FESTIVAL was a huge success. We practiced our Singapore math facts by playing fun games...then we played Math Bingo with Mr. Pacelli as our Bingo caller. Prizes were awarded and we had such a good time with our families by our side.

Our WE LOVE TO READ program is going very well. Reading 10 books a month earns a seasonal charm on a chain attached to our backpack. A special prize is awarded to the students who have read 10 books each month until May.

WE LOVE FIRST GRADE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

### **Mrs. Buchner/Mrs. Caprara Mrs. Savarese Grade 2**

We have settled into our second grade routine after a nice winter break. We shared some great stories about what we did while we were off and everyone was happy to see one another and to back in school.

We have a very exciting day coming up in February: Our "Math Arcade." We will be having it on Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will be having some fun math games to play that afternoon. Some of the names of the games are: Add Three, Think Big, and Pig, followed by a game of Math Bingo. One of the greatest things that afternoon will be seeing the books the second graders wrote and published. Right before our winter break the children worked diligently writing and editing math problems for the publishing of their books. After they were satisfied with their written problems they then illustrated each of their problems with a beautiful full page colored picture to go with their math sentences.

We are all looking forward to February where we will watch to see if the groundhog sees his shadow, discuss and read about Chinese New Year, exchange cards for Valentine's Day, Presidents' Day, and learn about famous African

Americans as we move into Black History Month.

It is going to be a very busy next few weeks. Looking forward to seeing everyone on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. We hope you and your families have a very healthy and Happy New Year!

### **Mrs. Alexander/Mrs. Staley Grade 3**

The winter snow has finally arrived, and the third graders are plowing into the world of the Plains Indians. This month students will be preparing for Plains Indians Day. They will be designing Native American clothing, learning about Native American folktales and legends, as well as performing them.

After Kirsten met Singing Bird in the story Kirsten Learns a Lesson, the students learned about the impact that pioneers had on the lives of the Plains Indians. The students have gained an understanding of the importance of the buffalo and how the pioneers' farming practices diminished the Plains Indians' food supply. We look forward to a fun day with family and friends at our Powwow.

The students just completed the 6, 7, 8 and 9 multiplication and division facts. They learned how to quickly multiply and divide, so their attention could be on solving multi-step word problems. Presently, students are conducting their own surveys and learning to present their data in graph form.

In Novel Studies, students are reading the story Wind in the Willows. This adventurous tale takes the students into a world where animals behave just as humans. The children are very interested in these anthropomorphic characters! The animals are teaching the students about the strength of friendship and how two unlike creatures can form a strong bond.

### **Mrs. Cahalane Lower School Science**

PreK students have been doing color chemistry science experiments. Kindergarten students have been working on Penny Chemistry. First graders completed a unit on clouds and second graders are doing solid, liquid, gas science experiments. The third grade students have been creating artbot robots and fourth graders are working on cabbage chemistry experiments. Please see my teaching blog for some great photos of the students at work in science class!

**Mrs. Vacca**  
**Ho Ho (Heads On, Hands On)**

Students are learning so much about this wonderful and vast country, island, continent, **Australia**. Students recently enjoyed watching some video clips of **Australia** and learning songs about this beautiful country, its wildlife, terrain, points of interest, and people, and the amazing Great Barrier Reef.

Preparations have been in full swing now that the lower school students are meeting once a week for Ho Ho. The Kindergarten class completed their booklet of **Australian "K"** creatures and have been brainstorming about transportation and the naming of the **Gym**. The 1<sup>st</sup> graders will be designing their postage stamp and their artwork will go on display at the **Parrotfish Post Office**. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students designed their passports and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders will be having fun creating clay pretzels for their business- **Platypus Pretzels** on **Littletown Day**.

Posters will soon be sketched as advertisement, **Littletown** houses will be drawn, menus created for **The Cassowary Cafe** and so much more. Progressive work is being done on the **Littletown Day** invitations, thanks to Mrs. Griller and the third graders along with the design of the **"tiny bucks,"** by the fourth graders. In February, a much detailed packet will be coming home about our annual event called **Littletown Day** which be held on **Wednesday, March 8, 2017**. It is a half day and fun for all, so mark your calendars and encourage your child to continue earning those important **"tiny bucks."** Also, students should start writing mail to each other using the **Littletown Day Address Book** that will be going home at the beginning of February. Students can also earn **"tiny bucks"** by submitting items for inclusion in the **Littletown Press**. Thanks to our returning editors: Mrs. McConnell and Mrs. Patel and daughters, Madeleine and Aanya as co-editors for once again taking on this important job. The Ho Ho room is bursting with enthusiasm anticipating the upcoming event. Any questions, please feel free to e-mail me at any time.



**Mme Koar**  
Grades 1 & 2- French

The students completed a review of their newly acquired French vocabulary playing "quizlet live". Teams of three and four students work together to match French and English vocabulary faster than the other teams. Students acquired more than 30 vocabulary words including numbers, colors, animals, and days of the week. We look forward to continuing our foreign language learning with Spanish. Students will combine classroom activities with an online program developed by Middlebury College. Students will be introduced to Spanish through stories, videos and fun activities. Thematic units include, greetings, numbers, colors, family, school, animals, body, and calendar.

Grades 3 & 4 Spanish

The students arrived in class every day with enthusiasm. Their favorite activity was playing quizlet live, an in class activity that requires teamwork and collaboration to practice vocabulary skills. We acquired vocabulary including numbers, time, clothes, food, weather and animals.

**Mrs. Scheuer**  
**Upper School Guidance**

Ring in the New Year provided a great opportunity to make resolutions. During Language Arts and Critical Reading classes, upper school students wrote their goals for 2017. Students referenced; continuing to work hard at their studies, avoid procrastinating, devote more time for pleasure reading, exercise more frequently and increase involvement in community service projects.

Service learning projects have taken root both on and off campus. Student Council efforts assist numerous charities to help those in need in Monmouth County, Haiti and Africa. Our upper and lower school interaction provides an opportunity for our students to connect within our school community. Grade levels were paired accordingly; 1<sup>st</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>. Each marking period, teachers coordinate a meaningful project to foster the interaction. Two grades meet to work on arts and crafts, read together or view presentations. The interaction experience, bolstered by Mr. Pacelli, yielded wonderful results. It has been a joy to observe upper school students greet their lower school friends by name, offer a big hello in the commons and high fives around campus.

It was a pleasure to observe the countless lessons throughout the upper school pertaining to the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The classrooms were alive with role playing, video and audio excerpts of his speeches, stories as well as music and art projects. Dr. King's principles of fairness, equality and education resonate throughout Oak Hill Academy. A famous quote of Dr. King's in Mrs. Williams room exemplifies our core values; "Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education."

For fifth graders and students new to the school, exams presented an enhanced experience for cumulative review. A round of applause for students and parents alike for instilling effective time management skills and the level of preparedness for mid-terms. Congratulations to upper school students for a job well done!

As we turn the page on the first semester, we reflect upon our student's accomplishments to date. This mid-year point in the school year also provides renewed focus for the second semester and great anticipation for what the future holds!

**Miss Lee**  
**Grade 5 Literature/LA**

Congratulations, 5<sup>th</sup> graders! We made it through our first set of Big Tests! Now that we're heading into the second half of the year, it feels like we've established a comfortable routine. Let's keep the momentum going!

Before the Big Tests, we spent some time back in our Literature anthology books, reading "The Circuit" (a short story) and "Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez" (a biography). This marking period, we are reading our second novel together, Esperanza Rising. The novel is written by Pam Munoz Ryan and was inspired by stories of her own grandmother's life. We will continue to discuss and explore literary elements such as setting, plot, characterization, and conflict. We will also be making connections between the novel and history, ourselves, and other literature we've read. This is another wonderful novel to read and discuss together at home as well! It is also timely as we are working on writing our own historical essays in Language Arts.

In Language Arts, we will also be continuing our grammar studies with a study of pronouns. Meanwhile, we'll continue to work steadily through our Vocabulary Workshop books. It's always exciting when we can find ways to

incorporate vocabulary in our writing and class discussions. Keep an eye out for vocabulary words in your pleasure reading books, too! Many students have been showing me vocabulary words found in their pleasure reading books, and many have also posted vocabulary sightings on our class blog. Our historical essays will be entered in the Monmouth County Historical Commission's annual 5th grade essay contest. I'm very excited about this opportunity for personalized learning through research. Students get to choose a topic that is interesting and important to them personally and learn more about it.

As always, you can keep up with our current studies by visiting the class website: [MsLeeLLA.weebly.com](http://MsLeeLLA.weebly.com).

**Mr. Bruckmann**  
**Grades 5 & 6 Math**

*Grade 5 Singapore Math*

Students have been working to complete Book 5A soon after Mid-term exams. Unit 4 introduced fractions and division as well as more multiplication. We learned a few riddles to help in the process. The students have since moved onto Unit 5 that concentrates on Perimeter, Area and Surface Area of various shapes both two-dimensional and three-dimensional. We then used this understanding and attempted to put it into use to solve various types of word problems. This took us into the our first "BIG Test" or mid-term in January where students needed to show their understanding of Units 1-5. Since our program is constantly integrating information from past Units, this was just a longer test. As the second semester begins, we are now moving into a short unit on Ratios in Unit 6 that will then complete our first book!! Then it will be on to Unit 7 and a very extensive unit that focuses on Decimals in our second book of the year (5B). Students will study addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of decimals by other decimals as well as multiples of tens, hundreds and thousands. Please remember that corrections of quizzes and tests is not optional and that homework is a very important step in the process of learning lessons of both that day as well as previous days. Also, please use my website as a tool to enhance learning as well.

[http://www.oakhillacademy.com/faculty\\_and\\_administration/bruckmann/mr\\_brickmann\\_s\\_5th\\_grade\\_math\\_class/](http://www.oakhillacademy.com/faculty_and_administration/bruckmann/mr_brickmann_s_5th_grade_math_class/).

*Grade 6 Math*

The sixth grade class continues to move through our Singapore 6A books. Unit 4 which included the study of percentages that included percent of a quantity;

percent change; Sales Tax, Discount and both simple and compound interest. Students then transitioned before the Mid-term and will complete their study of ratios and how they can be used to compare different numbers of quantities in terms of units of measure as well as different proportions in addition to putting all of these skills together in some rather challenging word problems. This Unit will transition into our study of Rate and Speed as we finish Book 6A. Remember that corrections for the tests and quizzes are due the day following when the test/quiz has been handed back. All students need to be prepared with a sharpened pencil, all three books and a desire to learn and increase their math knowledge. Also, please use my website as a tool to enhance learning as well.

[http://www.oakhillacademy.com/faculty\\_and\\_administration/bruckmann/mr\\_brickmann\\_grade\\_6\\_math\\_class/](http://www.oakhillacademy.com/faculty_and_administration/bruckmann/mr_brickmann_grade_6_math_class/)

**Mrs. Cotterell**  
**Grades 5 – 8 Math**

*Grade 5*

Even though this marking period is nestled between Thanksgiving and our winter break, we did manage to finish covering Unit 2 in great detail. The students took several days in class dissecting word problems and setting up the bars for them. While word problems can be very tricky, they made great progress. They also finished the lesson on long division – again a potentially challenging area. The students are currently allowed to write their remainders as fractions; however, very soon they will learn how to write their answers as decimals. We finished off the marking period by learning how to identify fractions from words, write fractions from pictures, turn improper fractions into mixed numbers, turn mixed numbers into improper fractions, simplify, compare and order fractions and finally add and subtract fractions with like denominators. This group of students are very hard working!

*Grade 6*

We started the marking period off by learning how to find the percent of quantity, we followed that with percent change and percent of change. The students took quizzes on each of these individual concepts to ensure they had complete understanding. Once the students finished these areas, we began our study of how to calculate simple interest (using the interest formula), how to calculate the sales tax (and resulting price) of items, how to calculate the discount (and the resulting price) of different items. We then progressed to more advanced topics such as finding the

original amount of something after taking into consideration the percent increase or decrease. This requires a good understanding of what is happening with the numbers and determining whether their resulting calculations are reasonable. Once the students finished their work related to percents, we moved onto ratios and proportions. The students did a terrific job reading the questions carefully and writing the corresponding ratios. We finished off the marking period studying more advanced topics such as comparing three items and having to find the least common multiple to make sure the comparisons were represented properly. This group of students are hard-working and a pleasure to teach.

*Grade 7*

We covered two chapters this marking period. The first chapter was on statistics and the second was on basic geometry concepts. For the chapter on statistics, we studied the differences between the various charts: frequency tables, bar graphs, line graphs, histograms, line plots, circle graphs and pictographs. We also discussed the advantages and disadvantages each of the graphs have as well as how they are constructed. We spent a good amount of time discussing how to obtain the data for a graph, what constitutes a good sample, how and where the sample should be taken. This chapter also covered the measures of central tendency: mean, median and mode. We also added range to our discussion as well. Measures of central tendency often appear on standardized testing so it is very important that the students understand what each of these measures are and how to calculate them. Chapter 5 focused on some basics in geometry. We spent the first day discussing various terms (and their corresponding symbols) used in geometry such as parallel, perpendicular, line, line segment, ray, angle. From there we moved on to the classification of angles within a triangle (acute, obtuse and right) as well as the classification of its sides (equilateral, isosceles and scalene). The students learned the difference between congruent and similar triangles and also learned how to identify corresponding parts between two congruent triangles. Finally, the students learned about symmetry in regular and not regular polygons and viewed a variety of Escher drawings. Homework is a very important part of our classroom. It is very important that all homework be completed thoughtfully and completely every evening.

### Grade 8 – Algebra 1

We completed Chapter 3 and began Chapter 4 this marking period. We began by completing multi-step equations. Multi-step means that the students had to complete 3 or more steps before reaching a solution. Some equations took more than 20 lines to complete! After mastering this, they added another dimension. They had to solve multi-step equations with variables on both sides of the equal sign, so they not only had to combine like terms on one side of the equal sign, now they had to worry about like terms on the other side of the equal sign as well! The students also learned how to solve equations with rational numbers i.e. fractions and decimals and they learned how to manipulate formulas. Though this lesson is short, it will play a big role in the next chapter when we start rewriting our equations in slope intercept form. The last two sections were a bit of a respite as they were on ratios, rates and percents.

We just got our feet wet in Chapter 4 when the marking period ended. We had a brief review of the coordinate plane and then worked on rewriting equations in terms of “y” so we could get ordered pairs and graph the equations. Although all of this was new to the students, they did not allow that to worry them. They did a terrific job on the corresponding homework. The last lesson we learned before stopping for midterms was on graphing horizontal and vertical lines. We will resume chapter 4 after midterms. I will let the students dictate the amount of time they need in the next several lessons as they are so fundamental in algebra.

This group is a joy to teach. I love their enthusiasm and their desire to learn new concepts. It is a great way to end the day!

### Grade 8 – Algebra 2

Since we only meet 3 times a week, we generally spend two days covering lessons and the third day for quizzes/tests. In order to cover the book by the end of the year, we generally cover two lessons per class, so there is very little time to digress from the subject matter. In this short marking period, we finished both chapters 5 and 6. Chapter 5 covered concepts such as graphing quadratic equations, complex numbers, and solving quadratic equations by factoring, finding square roots, completing the square and using the quadratic formula. Chapter 6 began with the properties of exponents, then we evaluated and graphed various polynomial functions, learned how to

add, subtract, multiply and synthetically divide polynomials, found rational zeros and used the Fundamental Theorem of Algebra to determine the number of zeros of a polynomial function.

We will begin chapter 7, Powers, Roots and Radicals immediately after the exams.

### Grade 8 – Geometry

Triangles and quadrilaterals dominated our lessons for this entire marking period. We started out with the very heady topics of perpendicular bisectors and circumcenters, angle bisectors and incenters, medians and centroids and altitudes and orthocenters. Unlike many other geometry courses where these vocabulary words are merely introduced, these students solved several problems relating to these concepts. They soon realized that to properly find an orthocenter may take an entire page of calculations!!! Once they completed these lessons, the rest of the chapter was a breeze! We covered triangle inequalities, indirect proofs, matrix logic and the hinge theorem. Chapter 6 explored the characteristics of the various quadrilaterals and how they are related. We began with parallelograms, worked through rectangles, rhombi, squares, kites and trapezoids. The chapter was a much needed respite after the intense beginning topics covered in chapter 5. We are right on target. We are exactly half way through the book and half way through the year. What a pleasure to teach this group of students!

### **Mr. Clapp** **Grade 5 Science**

Happy New Year everyone! I want to give a big thank you to all of the parents and students for their very thoughtful gifts. They were all very generous and well appreciated.

Over the last marking period our fifth graders have been learning about all of the different physical and chemical changes that substances can go through. We discussed the differences between the two types of changes and then we experimented with them, trying to see real-life demonstrations of each. They are all chemistry magicians now! They know some substances that will mix and create a brand new substance in front of your eyes. We also took a look at molecules and compounds so they now know much more about everything that is around them in their everyday lives.

After their big, half of the year test we will start to switch into space science to learn about the planets, stars, and maybe a

few other things that might be lurking in outer space!

### **Mrs. Vacca**

#### Grade 5 Tech

In keeping with our theme of **Cultural Diversity**, students now had the opportunity to research and learn how various holidays are celebrated around the world. The objective was to inform their classmates about the holiday traditions, foods, decorations, and even include music links. A map of the country was also included showing where this holiday is celebrated. This was a very colorful presentation and enjoyed by all!

#### Grade 5 Math Workshop

Students are in full swing now and working very hard on becoming more financially knowledgeable thru the program called **JA Biz Town**. Workbook pages give the students opportunities to do pretend spending, saving, recording bank deposits, calculating interest, endorsing paychecks, and balancing their checkbooks. Students will continue with much preparation for our site visit which will be on April 26<sup>th</sup>. More detailed information will be coming home about this exciting opportunity for both the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to attend.

### **Mrs. Vacca** **Grade 6 Tech/Math Workshop**

Students worked very hard together to complete the **“Radio Project”** and then presented them to the class. 13 second clips of 15 songs, and information such as weather of their location and a current event were included. These presentations showcased collaboration, time management and creativity. Most presentations were in slide format with video clips and music links and very entertaining!

### **Mrs. Duffy** **Grade 6 English/LA**

Sixth graders prepared diligently for the “Big Tests” this marking period. Learning to review a large body of material, to identify what is important in that material, and then to synthesize the information reinforces the study skills that Oak Hill students develop and carry with them into high school and college.

After completing a variety of short stories, the sixth graders are immersed in Israel Horovitz's play, *A Christmas Carol: Scrooge and Marley*, adapted from Charles Dickens's *The Christmas Carol*. The students rotate parts so that everyone gets a chance to exercise their 'inner 'drama.'

In the writing of their compare/contrast essay, sixth graders used their critical reading skills to analyze and synthesize material from the "Finding Your Place in the World" unit in their literature text and then created well organized and well thought-out writing pieces.

**Mrs. Daly/Mrs. Grier/Mrs. Scheuer  
Grade 6 Reading**

The sixth graders have been studying many different comprehension skills. Students have been utilizing the *Hero/Monsters* anthologies for main idea and inferencing. Some subjects have ranged from the Cardiff giant hoax to Florence Nightingale to amazing animal rescues. Students have been focusing on skill development as our *Read for Real* continues.

The classes did very well on their big tests. Looking forward, the fourth marking period will introduce many invention stories, while concentrating on skills. Students are challenged to report on the greatest inventions of the last 100 years. Lots of exciting stories to carry us through the winter!

**Mrs. Palamara  
Grades 6 – 8 Math**

Math 6

This marking period we continued to discuss interest, sales tax, and discounts where the focus was on problems where the students needed to find the original cost or value of a quantity given its final value after a percentage, increase or decrease.

In Chapter 5 we began our discussion of ratio and its relationship to fraction and percentage. Students compared two and three quantities using ratio and expressing these ratios in simplest form. Students then moved on to solving word problems using ratio and proportion.

Math 7

This marking period began our introduction into Algebra I. In Chapter 1 students reviewed variables, exponents and powers, order of operations, equations, inequalities, expressions, and problem solving models. A new topic introduced was functions. This material was mastered and now students are working on properties of real numbers in Chapter 2. Topics already covered in this chapter include the real number line, absolute value, and addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of integers. Application word problems for each concept have also been introduced and practiced.

Algebra I – Chapter 1 Class

During this marking period students learned how to solve linear equations and to use formulas, ratios, rates and percents. They learned to solve linear equations which involve multiple steps; to solve decimal equations; to solve a formula for a specified variable; and to solve real-world problems involving ratios, rates, and percents.

Students are using a variety of methods to explain mathematical reasoning, including words, numbers, symbols, and models and developing strategies that can be used with more complex problems.

Algebra 1 – Chapter 6 Class

In this last marking period the students learned to solve quadratic equations using square roots, graphing and the quadratic formula. They moved on to sketching the graph of a quadratic function to find the x-intercepts. They also explored the quadratic formula to solve quadratic equations.

OHA Math Team

Congratulations to the OHA Math Team on their 3<sup>rd</sup> place win at the St. Joseph High School Mathematics competition. Congratulations also to Alex Mitchell on his 4<sup>th</sup> place win and Aarya Doshi on her 6<sup>th</sup> place position. Over 19 schools and 230 students participated. The contest consisted of 16 challenging free response questions. No calculators were permitted. Rounding out the team were: Cakie Dym, Elizabeth Wright, Molly Jain, Justin Weber, Ansh Kulkarni, Grant D'Orsi and Rahul Kavuru.

Kudos to all for a job well done!

Math-A-Thon

Our annual fundraiser for St. Jude Children's Hospital is here again. Math-A-Thon is designed to be an educational learning experience for your child while raising money for the children at St. Jude who are counting on our help.

Last year 25 students participated and raised \$3,924.00. Aside from the prizes awarded by St. Jude Hospital, all participating students will receive a dress down day in the spring.

The Math-A-Thon Funbook is now available at [mathathon.stjude.org](http://mathathon.stjude.org) It includes games, hospital information and updated problems. Please decide if you want the online or the paper version of the Funbook for your child when turning in the permission slips. All grade levels are included online.

Look for permission slips coming home soon!

**Mrs. Billet  
Grades 6 & 7 Science**

The sixth grade class just finished a unit discovering patterns of heredity and how inherited changes can influence evolutionary trends. Both simple and Mendelian heredity patterns of multiple alleles and polygenic inheritance were explained.

Blood types were learned. DNA was investigated and made using twizzlers and colored marshmallows. Some lower school students came over to the Science Center and put it together with us. Our doggy DNA lab was interesting because it showed us that no two dogs were alike.

The seventh grade continues its study of physical science by studying electricity. Electricity not only provides us with light, but also heat, refrigeration and power to run countless electrical devices we use every day. Where does electricity come from? How does it get to our homes, schools and offices? And how can you control it by flicking a switch or pushing a button? We leaned the answers to these questions.

**Señora Dotto - Spanish**

Grade 6

This marking period, the sixth grade students have been immersed in learning a lot of grammar. We covered the verb "gustar", indirect object pronouns, how to clarify with the indirect object pronouns and how to answer questions with gustar. This is a very hard concept to understand and apply but students have mastered it. They have continued building vocabulary and expressions. Furthermore, the students have also learned the geography, history, and culture of Puerto Rico.

All this has been reinforced with power point presentations, audio CD's, videos, Smart board games, You tube videos, classroom interaction and by logging in to my sites, Weebly for visual and auditory practice.

I want to take this opportunity to let you know what a great pleasure it has been working with all of you these past few months. We have had a lot of fun and your enthusiasm has made my job easier. See you all in seventh grade!

**SIXTH GRADERS: SAVE YOUR  
TEXTBOOK AND WORKBOOK FOR  
NEXT SCHOOL YEAR.**

### Grade 7

In the seventh grade, we have progressed at a very nice pace. We have covered expressions and vocabulary about making plans, inviting someone to do something, saying what you have and what you need, talking about classes, body parts, expressions with the verb *tener*, the usage of the verb *venir*, conjugation of the verbs *salir* and *hacer*, expressions with the verb *hacer*, along with some irregular first person verbs. All this has been reinforced with power point presentations, audio CD's, Smart board games, Kahoot, You tube videos, classroom interaction and by logging in to my Weebly site and for visual and auditory practice.

Class, it was a great pleasure working with you. We had a lot of fun and learned quite a lot. I will miss you!

**STUDENTS TAKING SPANISH IN 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE. PLEASE KEEP YOUR TEXTBOOK AND WORKBOOK FOR NEXT SCHOOL YEAR.**

### Grade 8

In eighth grade we have been studying one of the most confusing irregular verb for a non-Spanish speaker to learn, the difference between the verb *ser* and the verb *estar* (both verbs mean "to be", but are used under different circumstances). The students have worked very hard with these verbs and I am pleased to say that they have mastered them. Also, they have been working with a good amount of adjectives specifically used with the verb *estar*, vocabulary on locations where people live, chores and responsibilities plus negation with *nunca* and *casi nunca*.

Furthermore, the students have also learned the geography, history, and culture of Chile.

All this material has been reinforced with power point presentations, videos, audio CD's, Smart board games, Kahoot, You tube videos, classroom interaction and by logging in to my site Weebly for visual and auditory practice.

### **Mrs. Tirella Grade 7 LA**

We have accomplished so many things this first semester. Our written work continues to develop as well as our vocabulary and sentence structure.

In Language Arts, we have just completed a unit on Verbs and will begin a unit on Modifiers: Adjectives and Adverbs. In vocabulary, we will go on with our units in *Vocabulary Workshop*

and continue to add to our list and understanding of new words.

We will also be starting on our Red, White, and Blue Compositions dealing with the topic of Community Service. We will be working on the complete writing process using our Google Docs accounts.

### **Mrs. Tirella/Mrs. Duffy Grade 7 Literature**

In Literature, we have just completed our in-depth novel study of *The House of Dies Drear* by Virginia Hamilton focusing on various critical thinking skills that will be beneficial for our standardized tests in the spring. To finalize our unit, the students created an illustration of the Dies Drear house (a station on the Underground Railroad) emphasizing the architectural detail, color, and design of the house. They will be on display in our Upper School.

In our next unit, we will embark on a new adventure into the world of William Shakespeare. We will learn about his life, as well as the Globe Theatre, and we will read a prose and play version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. We will end our unit with a live performance from the New Jersey Shakespeare Theater of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This will certainly broaden our horizons and provide us with a new perspective of the English language.

### **Mrs. Mayer Grades 7 & 8 History**

The seventh grade has been hard at work learning about early Spanish and English colonization of the Western Hemisphere. We focused on the hardships early settlers endured and analyzed the rigid class systems that took root. We studied the first local governments that were formed and how local rights gave colonists an independent spirit. We learned about how the atrocities of slavery started and followed its growth through The Triangular Trade and Middle Passage. We look forward to learning about the French and Indian War and how that conflict led colonists on the road to revolution.

The eighth grade has been hard at work studying the dramatic changes our country experienced between The Civil War and Spanish-American War. We analyzed the effects inventions had on our daily lives and how they transformed our country. We also took a close look at world-wide imperialism and discussed how this helped cause The Spanish-

American War. We also enjoyed following the Presidential election in both classes and are very excited to see our Constitution in action as the Senate reviews President Elect Donald Trump's cabinet nominations.

### **Mme Koar Grade 7A French**

We enjoyed reading two novellas in French, 'Pauvre Anne', et 'Le Voyage de Sa Vie'. Each novella includes a vocabulary of 300 words. Pauvre Anne is a story of a sixteen-year-old from Middletown, New York, a student of French who leaps at an opportunity to travel to Belgium for the summer. Le Voyage de Sa Vie describes a young boy, Richard, from Colorado who travels with his family to Geneva, Switzerland on vacation. While traveling Jean Luc Bartolin witnesses a crime which places his life in peril. It a brief but captivating story. Students also acquired the irregular verbs, être, avoir, aller, faire. We explored common idiomatic expressions using the verb, Avoir, and Faire.

### **Mrs. Larkins Grade 7 Math Workshop**

Seventh graders had some fun ordering virtual pizza over the internet. With such toppings as smiley faces, peace signs, eyeballs, and nails, it was easy to investigate such topics as area and best buy. We also finished up our project on the Interstate Highway System and the mathematics behind its numbering system.

Food was a great motivator in our latest math workshop project. First we used goldfish crackers in order to simulate a method called "tag and recapture" that is used by scientists to estimate the total number of sharks within a body of water. Then, groups used their data from the goldfish simulation to form proportions and find averages.

It was a pleasure having the 7<sup>th</sup> grade this semester. Good luck to them in Explorations!

### **Mrs. Daly Grades 7 & 8 Critical Reading**

The seventh grade students have been diligently working on skill development. Each *Read for Real* story provides students with key skill components for success. Topics have included endangered animals to adventurers. Using tech devices, students traced Lewis and Clark's expedition across America. Journal entries for Lord

Shackleton's journey included locations, weather conditions, and general facts. And, Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki* trip was examined using tech devices.

Our vocabulary program uses key tech programs such as padlet and kahoot for word reinforcement. Students collaborate on the white board to create vocabulary sites for test reviews. Student articles for our news summaries include endangered species, water found on Mars, homework guidelines, and many other interesting and thought-provoking pieces.

Students did well on the Midterm Exam!

The eighth grade classes have been reading many interesting stories. While working on their comprehension skills, students have been focusing on the historical extinctions and ecosystems of the world. Stories have included the dodo bird, the dinosaurs, the prairie dog and many other species. Using tech devices, timelines were created for the mass extinction periods. As we move through the series, time moves to the present and to the future.

Our *Hero* anthology has provided key skill developments while reading timely pieces. Some of the topics included have been a modern twist on *Alice in Wonderland*, immigration, athletic dreams, and a man who attempted to eat a bus. Student news summaries have been relevant to today's headlines. Focus has been on the presidential election, the refugee crisis, and other world affairs.

Our vocabulary program has used technology in the classroom regularly. Through the use of programs such as padlet and kahoot, students can collaborate on a chapter and publish it for test review. This has helped students perform well on the midterm exams.

Our tech-savvy skills are getting stronger every week as we tackle a review game sponsored by Scholastic. *Mapman* is an interactive game that quizzes on all the topics from our weekly news magazine, *Junior Scholastic*. Typically, we virtually travel the world using a Q/A approach. The more points a team scores, the higher the bragging rights. It has proven to be a great tool for test preparation.

### **Mr. Clapp** **Grade 8 Science**

Happy New Year everyone! I want to give a big thank you to all of the parents and students for their very thoughtful gifts. They were all very generous and well appreciated.

Over the last marking period our eighth graders learned all about earthquakes and volcanoes. We did many demonstrations to see what really happens during an earthquake such as seeing how all of the seismic waves travel throughout the Earth. After that we switched into volcanoes and took a deeper look into what actually causes volcanoes to form and erupt along with the main types of volcanoes and what makes them different.

After the midterm we will now totally switch gears and start learning about human biology. The first two organ systems we are going to learn about are the skeletal and muscular systems!

### **Mr. Pacelli** **Intermediate Algebra**

At mid-year we are right on schedule to complete our book by June. We finished up "Rational Expression" by the end of January and move on to "Radical Expressions." We will continue to have daily "do now" problems followed by a weekly quiz. Homework is very essential since each day builds on the previous day's work. Still to come will be extensive work on quadratics, complex numbers, and conic sections. We will also continue application problems and some geometry from time to time.

### **Mrs. Vacca** **Grade 8 Explorations**

Students selected some unique topics to finish out the semester with and were even more creative in their presentations. We had brochures, cartoon animation, movie clips, and even info commercials of their own invention, such as the "Bread Glove." Other topics were "Miracle socks," "Hawaii Chair," Recruiting for Outer Space, the Monster Power lines in Middletown, the Philadelphia Experiment, Biography of Steve Jobs, pros/cons to vaccines, and are aliens connected to the U.S. Government. The topics were all interesting and followed with an open discussion.

### **Mrs. Bordiuk /Mr. Rosenfeld** **Upper School PE**

The upper school enjoyed a terrific third marking period! Students in sixth and eighth grades remained in the gymnasium for Physical Education. During class they participated in learning the fundamentals of basketball which included dribbling, passing, and shooting. The students progressed well and displayed some real talent! In addition, students were able to enjoy a variety of games including continuing the play of Team Handball.

Fifth and seventh grade students left the confines of the gym for upper school classrooms and took part in Health class. Fifth graders learned about minor wounds, poisoning, self-esteem, and hygiene. Meanwhile, the seventh grade class was able to learn about burns, heat and cold related illnesses, and the human skeletal system! During the fourth marking period, fifth and seventh grade will head back to the gym for Physical Education and the sixth and eighth graders will be in health class. We are all looking forward to continuing a great year!

### **Mrs. Griller/Computer**

With it being the middle of the school year, it is time for those who have been in Computers to go to Art and for the Art students to begin Computer Class. In the first grade we ended our computer class by making NJ State Symbol books, participating in the Hour of Code, creating pictures in Tux Paint and Learning where the letters are on the keyboard. The second graders learned the parts inside the computer, participated in the hour of code and designed pictures using various software. The third graders created and presented PowerPoint presentations about themselves. While the fourth graders completed and presented their Google Slide Presentations, which they researched about from the Internet. In fifth grade students programmed EZ-Robots and created Infographics about technology. The sixth grade classes created riddles out of Bits and Bytes and programmed animated stories using Scratch animation. The seventh graders designed computer games using Game Maker software and programmed EZ-Robots. In eighth grade the students programmed an Information database in Microsoft Access and participated in the Hour of Code. In addition, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders attended a presentation about Computer Science studies and careers. That completes their computer classes for the year!

## Miss DiMaggio/Art

First grade drew a succulent still life, made a ceramic pinch pot, and painted a bouquet of flowers based on the work of Pablo Picasso. They also made beaded bracelets using a computer coding program.

Second grade drew a succulent still life, did print making using foam blocks and used the pinch method of ceramics.

Third grade drew a chameleon and colored it with oil pastels using the warm and cool colors. They also drew a succulent still life. Some of the student had time to work on weaving with our new loom.

Fourth grade drew a full body self-portrait using foreshortening as well as a succulent still life. They worked on a 3D printing project by collaborating with computers, science, and art to create their own animal.

Sixth grade made a ceramic vessel using the slab method. They used oil pastels to draw a silhouette of a tree, used sculpey clay, and drew a succulent still life using dry pastels.

Seventh grade painted a fish using a monochromatic color scheme. They drew sunflowers with oil pastels based on Vincent Van Gogh. They also drew an Op Art project, tie dyed t-shirts and drew a succulent still life that they traced with sharpie and painted with watercolor.

Eighth grade used the slab method of ceramics. They used concentrated watercolor and a straw to make creative blown watercolor pictures. They drew a succulent still life and shaded it using hatching, cross hatching and stippling techniques.

## Mrs. Tyma/Music

The December holidays were celebrated in the lower school music classes with Kwanzaa songs and dances accompanied by conga drums (2nd grade), Hanukkah and Christmas songs/dances (K-4<sup>th</sup>), and dancing to the *Nutcracker Suite* by Tchaikovsky (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>). Accompaniments appropriate to the skill level of each grade were performed with these songs, and the joyfulness of the season was experienced by all.

Songs and stories about wintertime provide opportunities to explore music concepts and to be creative. In **first grade** we are experiencing triple meter as we "skate" (on paper plates) to the *Skater's Waltz* by Waldteufel. We are

creating an accompaniment of sound effects for a snow song as we experience compound meter. In **Kindergarten** classes, we are singing songs about snow angels and snow children as we explore ascending/descending melodies and play games to develop our singing voices, beat competency and movement skills. The wonderful children's book *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen about owl watching in winter is being enjoyed again this year by the **first and second grade** classes. After reading the story, we listen to the composition *Cathedral Forest* by the contemporary composer Paul Winter in which he depicts the sounds of the forest, including the song of the spotted owl. Some of the classes may choose to interpret the music with creative movement. This unit gives us the opportunity to explore several areas: 1) the importance of protecting wildlife and their habitats and 2) for those older children for whom this is a second and third listening, an opportunity to apply newly acquired musical knowledge to a previously studied composition.

The **second, third, and fourth** grade classes are learning about the life of Martin Luther King Jr. through books, videos, songs and poetry. In **second grade**, we are learning a rhythmic poem about Dr. King's life that we are orchestrating for unpitched percussion instruments while experiencing syncopated rhythms and reviewing half notes. In **third grade** we are learning a song about his work, adding an accompaniment on the barred instruments and then expanding the form of the song by improvising a contrasting section. These improvisations are based on rhythmic patterns that each class creates. We are exploring the pentatonic scale and working on our compositional skills of rhythmic and melodic phrase building. In addition, we have begun to learn to play the recorder! (More on this exciting unit in the next newsletter.) In **fourth grade**, a rhythm piece about Dr. King is being orchestrated for drums by the class while gaining a better understanding of syncopated rhythms. A song and book about the Underground Railroad and Harriet Tubman continues our study of famous African Americans. The American spiritual *Follow the Drinking Gourd* will be accompanied on the barred instruments in order to continue our study of syncopation and to begin a study of harmonic progressions.

Experiences in syncopated rhythms and in new notes for recorder were had in the **fifth grade** with a song from the Caribbean in calypso style. The addition of drums and other percussion characteristic of calypso music rocked

the room with rhythm. Additional experiences in rhythmic syncopation were offered through a song in celebration of the winter solstice. Not only was choral singing highlighted, but also the class demonstrated their understanding of these more complex syncopated rhythms by improvising melodies on the barred instruments as a B section for the song.

After completing our study of a canon by Carl Orff for the barred instruments, the **sixth grade** classes decided to use it as a model for our own improvisations, giving us the opportunity to apply all the knowledge we gained from the study and to work on music composition. Using the rhythmic text (in compound meter) of the lovely book *Harvest Home* by Jane Yolen as a model, we improvised more melodies and created a melodic refrain to serve as an accompaniment to the reading of the poem. Finally, we enjoyed a drum piece that used almost every kind of drum we have in the music room, from congas to log drums, in a wonderfully rhythmical finale to the semester.

The Oak Hill Players and Music Makers did a performance for the Upper School Awards Assembly on February 3rd. The Chorus is excited to perform for the Parent Organization meeting on March 10<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to seeing parents at all of these performances.

Your interest in your child's musical education makes a difference. SING, SAY, **DANCE, PLAY**, LISTEN, CREATE! These are things you can do at home to enrich your child's musical interest and skills.

**DANCE or Move** to any music...just for the joy of it.

**PLAY** instruments if they are available, or create a "kitchen band" or use household items to create interesting, layered rhythms. Play music games like "Name that Tune: or "Sound concentration (matching unseen sounds).

Next time.....**CREATE and LISTEN.**

## Mrs. DeVivo/ Drama

During the month of December, Pre-K and Kindergarten enjoyed reading and acting out some familiar holiday stories, such as "*The Gingerbread Man*" and "*The Nutcracker.*" The students also watched a unique video of "*The Nutcracker.*" The performers were not ballet dancers, but marionettes! First & Second grade students took part in similar holiday activities. The students played pantomime drama games that

required them to act out holiday words and themes. Snowmen, snowflakes, Rat Kings, toy soldiers, Rockettes, and more visited the Drama room this December. They also had a blast acting out one of their favorite stories, "Mrs. DeVivo's Toy Shoppe." In this story, students become their favorite toys and each night when Mrs. DeVivo locks up the shop, the toys come to life!

The Third grade students created their own versions of "The Gingerbread Man." The students worked in groups and decided on a new runaway food to be the main character of their plays as well as a supporting cast, too. Some new runaway food characters included a croissant, a birthday cake, a carrot, a watermelon, chicken nuggets and so many more! The students made stick puppets of all of their characters, rehearsed their skits and then presented these unique and entertaining puppet shows to the class.

Fourth grade students enjoyed playing "Holiday Charades" and learning a new improvisation game called "Press Conference." The students also read a variety of holiday Reader's Theatre scripts such as "Red Headed Robbie's Christmas," and "Carol's Christmas" just to name a few.

The Seventh Grade read and acted out Charles Dicken's "A Christmas Carol" in Reader's Theatre style presentation. It took several classes to read through the play because, as the students learned, Charles Dickens was paid per word. Therefore, in order to make more money, his novels are quite wordy with a lot of repetition! The seventh grade also took a trip to McCarter Theater in Princeton to see "A Christmas Carol." It was a phenomenal production with superb acting, amazing technical effects and of course we all left the theater with that heart-warming Holiday spirit.

The Eighth Grade read several TYA plays this marking period. First the students read "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" by Roald Dahl. Then, we watch video clips of the live stage version appearing now in London. We discussed that the show will be opening in March on Broadway and what it takes for a show to go up in NYC. We also read "The Secret Lives of Toads" by DW Gregory which deals with the themes of acceptance and friendship. And finally, the students read an abridged version of "Hamlet" by William Shakespeare.

Congratulations to all of the talented students that auditioned for "**Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory.**" The performance date is Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>...only 9 weeks away!

#### **Mrs. Vacca/Mrs. Savarese Student Council**

First, a big thanks to all of our Oak Hill Academy families for their generous holiday donations, whether it was toys, specific items, or money/gift cards. All the organizations that we collected for were deeply touched by our generosity. We are certain that numerous smiles and happy faces were evident this past holiday season.

On **February 6<sup>th</sup>**, we will have our **RED DRESS DOWN DAY** for the **American Heart Association** and students are encouraged to dress in **RED** to help bring awareness to this important organization. Once again we ask that all students contribute at least \$1, and additional donations made out to the above mentioned will be gladly accepted. We also will be selling **RED DRESS** pins for **\$2** to show support for this organization in addition to brand newly designed **BLACK/RED/WHITE** bracelets for **\$5**.