



RICHMOND  
FRIENDS SCHOOL

# School News!

February

2009

*A good place to grow: —academics, self-discovery, and social development*

## RFS Faculty

### **School Coordinator**

*Marcie Roberts*

### **K Teacher**

*Laura Josephson*

### **1-2 Teacher**

*Jennifer Philpot*

### **3-6 Teacher**

*John Sheets*

### **Extended Care/Lunch**

*Kay Maurer*

### **Office Manager**

*Les Williams*

### **Bookkeeper**

*Melissa Sheets*

## School Coordinator: Marcie

The sun is out, the temps are above freezing, Kay is back from Hawaii, and the Readathon is in full swing, and I'm writing this on Groundhog Day! I don't know if the sunshine and warmer weather will continue throughout this month, but I do know that Kay and the Readathon are not going anywhere. It was great to see so many folks at our Readathon Pitch-In / Kickoff last week. I hope each family has a system of keeping track of your units read and sponsors solicited; your commitment and enthusiasm will go a long way in helping us reach our combined goal of \$10,000. We have a month full of activities and plenty of creative ways to infuse literacy into almost every waking hour. Have fun with it and happy reading!

In addition to the Readathon, we are kicking off our Wellness Center partnership this month. (Please see the column on page 5 for more details.) Conversations began with our board, faculty, and parents last year about the possibilities of enriching our physical education opportunities. We are happy that we are finally able to launch this program. We can't wait to get our heart rates up, learn new skills, and have fun at the Wellness Center. Please sign and return all of the necessary forms to your teachers by Monday, February 9.

Our Board spent this past Saturday participating in our Annual Retreat. There were many fine and exciting things discussed, including some potential committee and board restructuring, future board nominees, and marketing initiatives. There will be more formalized, related proposals brought to this month's board meeting, so stay tuned for more details to come. Faculty and staff will complete our emergency training with our First Aid Certification class on February 23, and there will be no school on Monday, February 16 in observance of Presidents Day.

We are moving into the height of the recruiting season. Re-enrollment applications will be in boxes within the next month or so. We are looking to shorten the application for returning families, you'll be happy to know! Prospective student inquiries and visits have already picked up. I hope you are all willing and able to discuss the things that excite you the most about our school with other families who may be interested in being a part of our unique educational community. You are our best form of advertising!

## School Calendar

**February 16:** No school;  
Presidents Day

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## K: Laura

### Happy Readathon February, everyone!

The students have finished another author study, this time Lisa Campbell Ernst's books. *Stella Louella and the Runaway Book* seemed to be the favorite. In fact, we had our very own runaway book situation until Ben saved the day and found the missing library book. And, like Stella, we returned the book to the library before we had an overdue fine. Phew!

Now that this author study is finished, we have started a new unit on International Flags and Fairytales. So far we have stayed in Asia. The students are enjoying getting to know Asia on the large world map in our back room. We have created flags for (and read fairytales from) China, Cambodia, Japan, and South Korea. The students are enjoying comparing the flags and the fairytales and are surprised by some of the common themes between the countries. If anyone has music from any of these countries, we would be very interested in hearing it.

The students are exploring their worlds through locating street signs. Each week we have had a different street sign to try to locate. We started with speed limit signs, moved on to one way signs, and this past week we looked for no parking signs. It's great to hear the kids having casual conversations and sharing (excitedly) that they have spotted a one way sign or something plaid (a recent adjective we've investigated) or an example of something that was "frozen solid, not just frozen on the surface."

Lunch Bunch has continued on Thursdays. It's been my pleasure to have lunch with 2–5 students who have excelled in some way (not interrupting, being helpful, using a quieter "inside voice", etc). They are really proud to have earned their time at Lunch Bunch. Each week I tell the students what behavior I'm particularly looking for. Feel free to ask them what each week's focus is.

We have continued reading *Little House in the Big Woods* each afternoon. The students are fascinated to hear about Laura Ingalls' adventures and how different things were back then. At least that was their initial impression. Now that we are continuing to read, the students are beginning to discover that life then isn't as different from life today as they originally thought. As one student said the other day, "Both times have family, so that's the same. And that's what matters the most." We've started a Venn diagram to compare life then to life now. It's gradually filling up. Feel free to come in and take a peek. There have been many extensions that have come from reading this book too, such as learning all about how and why sheep are sheared, how maple syrup is made, and how much we appreciate heat on a cold day. (*continued on page 3*)



*(continued from page 2)*

The students have been using cubes, dice, playing cards, buttons, and written numbers to compare quantities. We do most of this in the form of games, which are fun, but there is a ton of learning going on. It's been exciting to see students who say "I don't like math!" loving these games and asking when we can do them again. In the process of having fun, the students have been learning about odd and even numbers, adding by one, adding by two, finding patterns, gaining confidence in knowing more than and less than, etc.

The Readathon will have started by the time you read this. I encourage each of you to view the Readathon as a month-long excuse to carve out time to cuddle up and read with your child, take your child to the library and to plays, and to model an enjoyment in reading.

Happy Reading!

## **1-2: Jennifer**

The students did a mini project on strange creatures. This project was a spinoff of a Project Learning Tree activity that we did in class. The activity had the students look at different creatures and plants and decide whether they were real. All of them ended up being real creatures and plants, and the students were amazed. They each had to find out where their creature or plant was located in the world, what it ate, and any special features that it had. They also had to create a model or drawing and a diorama of the habitat.

We have started new centers during class. The students have to go into 2 centers per day and stay there for 15 minutes each doing the activities in the center. The new way of doing centers has been working out well,

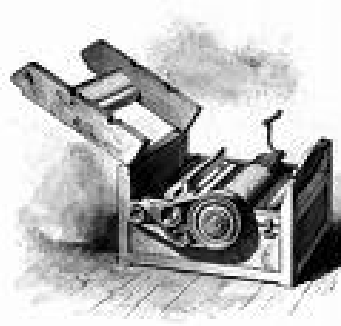
and the students seem to be happier and more eager to do centers. They have been creating stories in the writing center. They have written a book like Jan Brett and Dr. Seuss. In the poetry center they have created poetry folders that have poems that the students have written.

After winter break we started doing author studies. So far we have learned about three different authors. The first author we learned about was Jan Brett. She uses side panels to give clues as to what is going to happen next. She also used a lot of animals in her stories. Then we moved to Dr. Seuss. We learned that he uses a lot of rhyming words in his stories. Some of the words that he uses are silly, made-up rhyming words. Now we are learning about Eric Carle. We have only read a few of his books, but the students have realized that he uses animals in his books and also puts a face on the sun in each book. Soon the students will be doing their own author study as a project. They will be responsible for reading some of the books, learning about the author's life, and they will even have to write a story like the author that they have chosen.

The Community Food Pantry collection is going great. So far we have 37 cans of food. We are a third of the way to our goal of 100. At the end of each day, the leader of the classroom gets to count the cans brought in for the day. She or he colors in the squares on the graph to represent the number of cans brought in for that day. If you have not brought in three cans of food to help out the collection, please bring them in as soon as possible. When we reach our goal we will be taking a field trip to the Community Food Pantry so we can help sort and put the food away. Les will talk with the students and tell them how the volunteers at the pantry help feed our neighbors in need.

## 3-6: John

February finds the class beginning the arduous task of active participation in the Readathon. I have shared with the students some goals I have for the numbers of units to be completed by the end of the month. I adjusted the scale by making it a multiple of 100 to make for easy comprehension. Just take the grade of the student in my class and multiply it by 100. For example, a third grader will hopefully read 300 units and a sixth grader (sorry Spencer) should read 600 units. I know this a lot to ask of some, but remember that some units will be added in class, like today, On February 2, the students got five units through a combination of reading to pen pals and listening to my dynamic recitation from the book *Tunnels*.



Parents should also remember that they can help by reminding students to keep accurate records of how much they read at home, through helping to accumulate as many sponsors as possible, and through making sure that sponsor sheets and reading tally sheets are kept well protected. Our trip last Friday to Friends Fellowship was a great beginning as all of the students found sponsors after they shared one-on-one reading with some of the residents. There are many exciting events planned for the month, including a bake sale at Earlham (where we will have to read recipes), a tour of Lilly Library at Earlham, and several opportunities for pen pals to share reading with each other. Please ask me if you have any questions.

February finds the class preparing some projects based on learning about inventions and the evolution of those inventions. We will be doing timelines, writing reports, and making projections for how those inventions may continue to evolve. The reports will include accurate bibliographies to indicate where students got information from as we continue to work on proper attribution of other people's work.



The class is nearing the completion of this year's series of multiplication tests. As expected the older students have been doing quite well, but the younger students have also made progress. This year it was Spencer Lanman and Natalie Josephson who tied for the first students to complete the tests. At this point all of the older students (grade 5 and 6) have finish the timed testing series. A special note should be made of the rapid progress of Nick Buckmaster, a third grade student who has already mastered all the way up to multiplying by 12 and 13—great progress!

Finally, I would like to thank many families for their generous computer donations this year. These donations have allowed to me to replace an extremely old computer in Jennifer's class, replace two older computers in my class, add another workstation to Jennifer's class, and replace the ancient office computer with a newer one that makes Les's office work so much easier. Let extended family members know that their computer donations can help the school while also providing a tax benefit for them; however, the computers need to be in good shape and fairly new (less than three to four years old) to allow them to adequately run the programs that the classes use. It is a private goal of mine o eventually replace all of the energy-burning CRT monitors with much more efficient LCD monitors, so be on the lookout for them.

## RFS / Earlham College Wellness Center Partnership

We are thrilled to announce the start of a new partnership with the Earlham College Wellness Center. We begin next Wednesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, and our entire school (minus our half-day students) will walk over together after lunch so they can change clothes (as needed), rest, and be ready for 30 minutes of fitness. The Wellness Center is a beautiful facility staffed with experts who will assist our teachers in various physical activities.

RFS will be a guinea pig of sorts for the Wellness Center. We are the first school to attempt such a partnership. Since we are willing to help them work out the proverbial kinks, we have been granted a reduced rate. Even better news; money to cover these fees has been graciously donated by a board member, so this comes at no additional cost to our families.

We will be doing this every other Wednesday (February 11, February 25, March 11, March 25, April 8, April 22, May 6, and May 20) for the remainder of the semester. Each class will have three sessions of the same activity. See the following table for three-week example.

|                         | <b>February 11</b> | <b>February 25</b> | <b>March 11</b> |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Laura's Class</b>    | Yoga               | Yoga               | Yoga            |
| <b>Jennifer's Class</b> | Swimming           | Swimming           | Swimming        |
| <b>John's Class</b>     | Indoor Climbing    | Indoor Climbing    | Indoor Climbing |



Every class will have a chance to have a swimming rotation. John's class will be the only class able to use the climbing wall based on harness / height and weight constraints. Other rotations will include using the track and possibly having basketball and volleyball opportunities! General Wellness Center permission slips will be distributed this week as well as additional ones for the climbers.

Eric Drongowski (Michael's father) has offered his services to accompany everyone walking to and from school and serve as a floating assistant at the Wellness Center to provide additional coverage and support to whoever may need it. For instance, we will have adult male and female (teachers and Eric) take separate gendered students into different dressing rooms to change for swimming, etc. The Wellness Center and climbing wall staff will be assisting / teaching as well. The pool will be fully staffed with lifeguards. Our teachers as well as swim instructor, Jane Arnold, will be in the pool with the students.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your teachers or Marcie directly. I hope you will share in our excitement as we launch into this Wellness partnership.