



RICHMOND  
FRIENDS SCHOOL

# School News!

March  
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

According to outdoor updates from our youngest students, the ants have arrived, but no sign of the worms yet. Spring is slowly making its presence known, and I can't wait! February has been a cold and incredibly busy, industrious month for us. Thank you for all who have been supporting our Readathon. I know many students who anticipate achieving their lofty unit goals. Nice job reading!! students, parents, and teachers who have tracked daily classroom totals! It will be fun to see the thermometers rise as we collect our data and donations. **Please return all pledges (money and sponsor contact information) to the office by March 12.** Joann and Louise are planning a grand Readathon celebration with the students during an upcoming All-School Meeting. There may be a special, feathered guest in attendance and gifts for all.

Make sure to sign up for your Parent/Teacher conferences, which are scheduled at the end of this first week (half-day on Thursday and all-day on Friday). Our spring **Family Workday is Saturday, March 14 from 9 a.m. until noon. This is a half-day of school and an important community event.** Please make sure your child and at least one adult representative is able to be present and working. The following week there is another half-day of school for a teacher work day, and then spring break helps us put a nice close to March and open the beginning of April.

Please look for returning student applications in your boxes this week. As promised, they are quite a bit condensed from past years. Please feel free to discuss your enrollment decisions or any questions you may have with your teachers during conferences, and also feel free to talk to me directly at any time. We hope to have these returned by April 1. New student applications are available as well. We have already had some prospective visitors in our Kindergarten class; I am excited about some siblings who may be joining us next year. Our Pre-K/K classroom will be accepting students who are four years of age or older by June 1, 2009. While we are looking forward to having Marianne Cope back with us (!), I trust that I can speak for all faculty, staff, and current Kindergarten families in expressing our appreciation for all that Laura Josephson has brought to our school and specifically her students this year. It has been a seamless transition and a joy to have her with us.

It is with more gratitude and sadness that I announce Jennifer Philpot's departure from RFS at the conclusion of this semester. She has been with us since 2005 in a variety of capacities. *(continued on Page 2)*

## School Calendar

**March 5:** Half Day;  
Parent/Teacher Conference

**March 6:** No school;  
Parent/Teacher Conference

**March 14:** Half Day; Family  
Work Day

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She started teaching our Pre-K/K class, then spent some time with Marianne team-teaching, and has been our 1–2 grades teacher for the last two years. One of my favorite memories of Jennifer was her willingness to embrace new challenges, even during her first year as she helped us welcome two visiting students from Israel, Mai and Gev, who spoke very little English. They quickly came to love her and feel comfortable here, a tribute to her and her nurturing abilities as an educator. I have seen Jennifer grow more comfortable trudging through the creek beds at our Annual Creek Walk, not her favorite activity at first! She is loved by many, and we wish her only the best in her future endeavors.

Please stay tuned for more information about hiring decisions and summer camp opportunities here at RFS.

## Pre-K/K: Laura

There has been a lot of reading going on in the Pre-K/ Kindergarten classroom this month! The students have been enjoying sharing books during partner reading. When we first tried partner reading at the beginning of this school year, the students didn't focus much on the books. They started off looking at a few pages, and then their conversations turned to other topics. But now they look at books together and talk about the pictures, and some of them even help each other to read the words. They talk about what the book makes them think of and wonder about. It's really exciting to see.

We've also been doing silent reading each afternoon at day's end. We started out reading in silence for 6 minutes, and now we are up to 10 minutes! I'd like to extend a big thank you to Chris Nicholson for coming to our classroom twice to introduce new authors and their books. The students and I have enjoyed her visits, listening to her read aloud, and the way that she has taught us about the authors and their personal interests.

We have finished *Little House in the Big Woods* and the Response Journals the students had been writing each afternoon. The students are sounding out words using "invented spelling" to write down the thoughts they have about what they have heard in the story. The confidence they are each showing in their ability to communicate their thoughts, in writing, is growing by leaps and bounds.

We have spent considerable time with the book *Rainbow Fish*. We first read the book and talked about how the Rainbow Fish needed to learn about sharing and how to be a friend. The students made their very own Rainbow Fish, with one shimmery scale each. They are now hanging all over the classroom. In fact, some of the fish have become part of a pulley system. Pretty cool!

We then watched the short movie of *Rainbow Fish* and noted that there were some differences between the book and the movie. We also read the sequel and found it quite good. Thanks to Rebecca Ramsey (NaTonya's mom) we were able to attend the "Rainbow Fish" play at Civic Hall. We had a great time seeing such a big theater and getting to see the story come to life. Thanks, Rebecca! And thank you to the students who were SO well-behaved and to the parents who came along with us.



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The students have been learning about how big one inch is. We measured things that were about one inch with our fingers. We got rulers so see what an exact inch looks like and to see how 12 of them fit on a regular ruler. Then we took our rulers outside after a big snow and measured how deep the snow was in different places. Darius noticed that the snow was 4 ½" deep along the top of the fence. Cole measured a very deep spot under the tree in the backyard that was 11" deep! Cole made the comment that it was "a good thing it wasn't 13 inches deep or we would have needed to get two rulers!" The students noticed that there was very little snow under the "castle" in the backyard, and decided that was because the snow couldn't fall directly down from the sky to the ground. The conversations about measuring the snow were amazing.

A few other math-oriented notes: We have continued learning about comparing quantities both with hands-on materials and, for some students, by doing more abstract comparisons. We have also been adding 0, 1, and 2 to numbers. And, we have been counting together to see how far we can get before we get stuck. Each time we get further and further, and we're well past 100 now! Every morning each student writes that day's date on their personal calendar. It is remarkable how quickly, and how well, the students are able to do this now.

We've had fun in Spanish this month. The students have been learning the names of several fruits and vegetables. We've been practicing how to say whether they like a certain fruit or vegetable and how to say which one is their favorite one to eat. Katie, our Spanish teacher, even brought in a fruit salad as a treat while we learned a Spanish song about fruit salad.

Thanks to everyone for another great month.  
March...here we come!



## 1-2: Jennifer

Another month has past and spring is just around the corner. This month has been busy with all the Readathon activities, starting trips to the Wellness Center, and learning about Eric Carle. We have done an author study on my favorite children's author, Eric Carle. We have read his books and looked at how he creates his pictures. We also learned that this year he will turn 80, and that his book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* was written 40 years ago. At his museum in MA they are having a big birthday celebration. They are asking schools to send in birthday cards for Eric Carle. The cards will be displayed this summer when he comes to visit the museum. Also to celebrate his book students were asked to make butterflies to hang up at the museum. We made the butterflies in All-School Meeting and the birthday cards in class. The students have also written fan letters to him.

We passed our goal of 100 cans, thanks to a very generous donation from Eric Drongowski and Julie May (Michael's parents). We will be taking a field trip to the Community Food Pantry probably the second week of March. To all of the families that helped donate the food I want to say thank you! You have helped my class in this important service to our community.

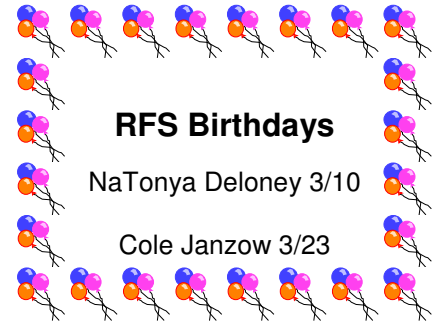
The Wellness Center trips have been fun. The students have really enjoyed swimming. We have one more session of swimming before we get to switch to yoga.

As you read in Marcie's piece, I am leaving at the end of the school year. I am hoping to find a job in a pre-school setting. I have really enjoyed getting to know the families, students, and staff here at RFS. I will miss all of you.

**Don't forget to sign up for Parent/Teacher Conferences!**



## 3-6: John



February has been dominated by the Readathon. The students have all been doing a very good job in accumulating units by reading as much as possible. I decreased homework in other subjects to allow for students to do additional reading, but look for more homework assignments once March arrives. We will see if the students reach my challenge level of units read; if so, we will be heading out to an eating establishment selected by the students for a meal on the teacher. I hope the meal won't actually be on me, but rather that I will pay for it. To maximize units at the end of February, the class held a lock-in (or as Sarah says, a lock-down) at the school on Friday, February 27 with a subtitled film from Iran and a silent movie with Charlie Chaplin (which require more reading) in addition to silent and communal reading times. To help some students with their concerns, the boys will be sleeping on one side of the room and the girls on another. For contributing to the Readathon, I would like to thank the members of the Parent Committee as well as Louise for the idea of the book swap and Spencer for putting it into action.

The students have been doing other work as well. They have been studying the evolution of different inventions by creating their own timelines with an additional invention projected for the future. They are writing a report about this evolution, with all of the students required to use a bibliography and the 4th to 6th graders required to use end notes to properly attribute where they got their information. These will be concluding in the first week of March as we turn our attention to some grade-specific projects to ensure coverage of some state-specific curriculum topics like local history, Indiana history, U.S. government, and the development and creation of the United States.

The class has begun preparation for a field trip in the middle of March to a Spanish language-only meal at La Mexicana, which is being coordinated by Katie, our Spanish instructor. Hopefully, the students will learn enough so that they won't go hungry. Look for permission slips the second week in March.

Finally, I would like to say that our time at the Earlham Wellness Center has been a huge hit in my class. Some students were very worried about climbing the wall, but the instructors' gentle reassurance, focus on safety, and allowances for each student's comfort level has resulted in excitement and satisfaction for all.

