

GARDINERS AVENUE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



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LEVITTOWN
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

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From Ms. Hendler's Desk...

Dear Parents,

Welcome to our April newsletter! Gardiners students are happy to welcome the spring season and all that it encompasses. We began the month with a celebration of Autism Awareness and are proud that all our children joined in to the many activities planned. The time of year has come again for our orientation for new kindergarten parents. Our meeting is planned for April 20th. We also look forward to a Cello Concerto for our third, fourth and fifth grade students during the morning of April 30th. As we culminate National Poetry Month in April, guest readers will be visiting us

on May 2nd, 3rd and 4th, to engage our children in a variety of poems. The Gardiners youngsters will be choosing their own poetry to memorize and carry in their "pockets" as they recite their poems to classmates, teachers and friends. Finally, our Grade Four and Five presentation of Mary Poppins will open at Salk during the evening of May 5th. We encourage you to purchase tickets for this outstanding production!

Enjoy the beautiful weather that has come our way!

With best regards,
Susan Hendler

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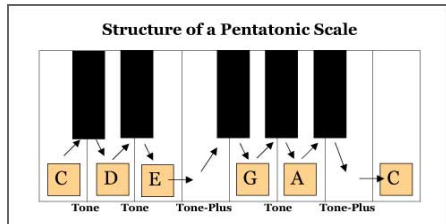


General Music/Instrumental Music/Chorus—

Mr. E. Martinez, Mrs. L. Koski

Mr. Martinez: Vocal and Instrumental Music—

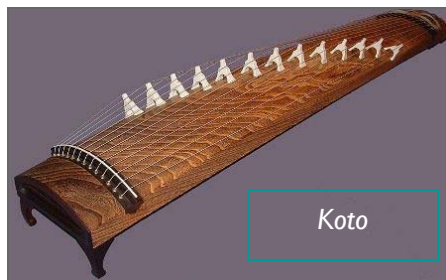
This month in Mr. M's music class, we continued our guitar study by learning the *pentatonic scale*! The pentatonic scale contains five notes and



forms the basis for many musical styles, from blues and rock 'n' roll to traditional music from eastern Asia. We also celebrated Irish musical traditions in honor of St. Patrick's Day (topics included the *uilleann pipes* and the *bodhran* and Ireland's most famous rock group, U2). We also



took our annual virtual field trip to Japan and learned about traditional Japanese instruments such as the *koto*, *shakuhachi*, and the *shamisen*. We ended the month



by learning songs about positive choices in honor of LEADD week and the March 29th visit of the Uncle Brothers!

Instrumental/Fifth Grade Chorus:

All beginning instrumental students should be at least up to page fourteen in their *Accent on Achievement* method books!

Our NYSSMA participants did a wonderful job at the NYSSMA music festival at Kellenberg high school on March 23 and 24! The students performed solos and sight-reading (plus scales/rudiments for instrumentalists). The Band members also did a fabulous job at the LEADD Walk on March 25, 2012!

Fifth Grade Chorus students are busy adding choreography to some of their Spring Concert selections, and the Gardiners Avenue Band is currently hard at work on their Spring Concert selections (which feature a Brazilian *bossa nova* tune, a rock classic, and a famous pop tune medley)!

Mrs. Koski: General Music, Strings, and 3rd & 4th Grade Chorus —

In March Mrs. Koski's music classes learned several songs by the "Uncle Brothers" to prepare for their special visit during LEADD week. We listened to their "Positive Choices" CD to try to figure out which instruments they



Uncle Brothers

would bring to our school for their performance. All of the songs had very important messages for the students. When the Uncle Brothers performed "I Can" at our assembly, the students were able to sing along!

The beginner string players are now reading and playing down bows and up bows. Some are even reading the D scale pitches while playing with the bow! The orchestra students are working on reading, counting, and playing eighth note rhythms. We are also working on switching from "pizzicato" (plucking) to "arco" (playing with the bow), and back again! Fourteen orchestra members played solos at NYSSMA this month, and they have all earned medals for their "excellent" and "outstanding" performances!

The Third and Fourth Grade Chorus is adding two-part harmony to our jazzy version of "Humpty Dumpty". We are working on fitting together our two parts in "Splish Splash", making "partner songs"!

Physical Education—Ms. R. Casey, Mr. Gattus

Well..... "Spring has sprung" early and we are taking advantage of every warm and sunny day!! K-5 students have been out running/walking the mile! Three laps around the large field in the back of the school is approx. ONE MILE!!! Students are able to go at their own pace as it is not a competitive activity. We have been learning how to throw a frisbee with partners during the leftover class time.

All students have been practicing hitting off of a Tee



with plastic bats and whiffle balls. Skills covered also include fielding grounders and catching fly balls, catching and throwing with a partner. Lead up games of Big Base kickball/whiffle ball are also utilized to promote good skills.

Students learned how to

throw and catch a ball correctly. They learned the importance of throwing correctly to prevent injuries and also the muscles involved in throwing and catching. Knowing this information students performed exercises to strengthen those muscle groups. Following these exercises and practice, students were able to participate in lead up games of trench ball. 3-5 grade students have started Lacrosse and are busy practicing stick handling, passing and shooting skills.

Reading – Mrs. R. Metzger, Ms. K. Quinlan, Mrs. K. Early, Mrs. Goldstein, Ms. Aramini

As spring approaches the children are making lots of observations about the change in the weather, the change in the season and the anticipation of longer days. To delve further into some of these observations, first graders have been reading books about time changes, spring,



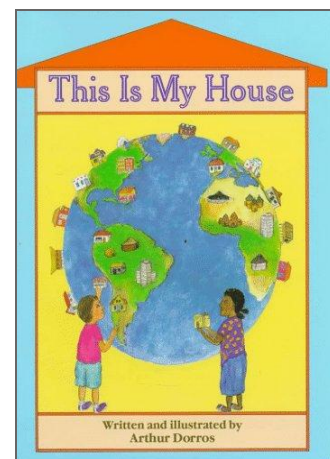
weather, planting, and sports. Some books

on those topics include: *Night and Day* by Adam Finnegan, *Weather & Seasons* by Tracy A. Zeiser, *A Bean Plant* by Vanessa York and *Soccer Game!* By Grace Maccarone.

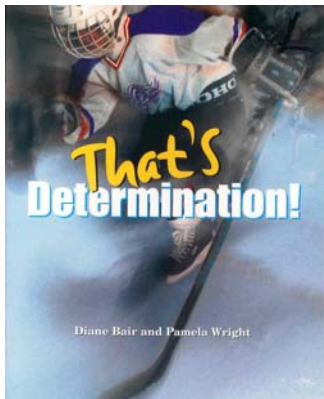
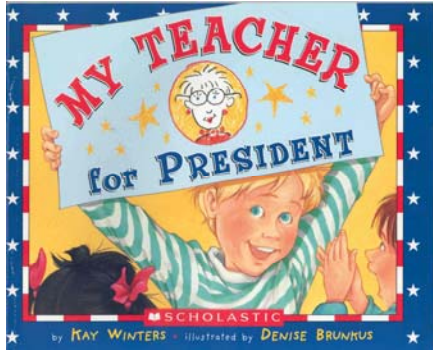
We have also been learning about long vowels and words with the silent e, as well as how to recognize and differentiate between words with blends and digraphs. We have also been reading sentences in isolation which have been "marked" in short phrases to demonstrate a more natural reading pattern and to build fluency. In addition, these students have also been introduced to two-syllable words and compound words.

In second grade, we have

been learning how to tell the difference between cause and effect in both fiction and nonfiction text. Students are learning to synthesize their understanding of a story and then internalize the cause/effect relationships that exist in a text and then write about these relationships on a Cause/Effect T-Chart graphic organizer. Some books



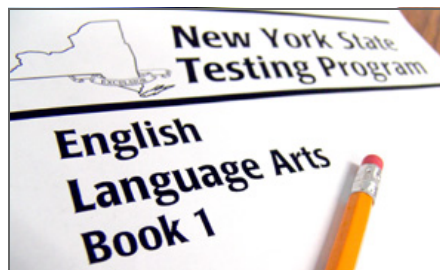
Reading – continued



we have read to develop these relationships are: *Special Clothes* by Ryan Fodus, *This Is My House* by Arthur Dorros, *My Teacher for President* by Kay Winter and *That's Determination* by Diane Bair.

Second graders have

also been expanding their understanding of how vowel teams combine to make words with long vowel sounds. Students have been introduced to a variety of spelling options that make the same sound, but have different spellings, and when to apply the appropriate spelling (for example: ai/ay, ee/ea/ey, oa/oe/ow, ou/oo/ue/ew, au/aw).



In third grade, students have been preparing for the New York State ELA. They have been learning to read informational texts in order to complete “hands-on” step by step procedural tasks and sequencing tasks to understand the importance of the terms “first”, “next”, “then”, “after that” and “finally”. Students have also been listening

to nonfiction and fiction passages to prepare for “note-taking” specifically; listening for character names, describing words, setting, problem and solution, and if there is one, a lesson or moral. Students are then using their notes to answer multiple choice questions and write answers to short response questions and longer essays.

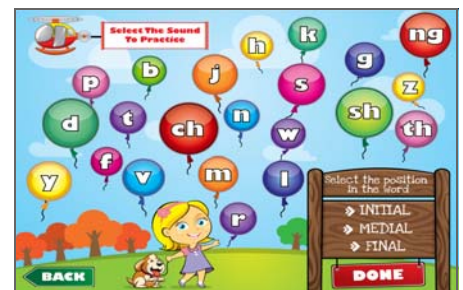
Third graders have also been expanding their vocabulary knowledge and their ability to read longer words with many syllables by learning to chunk words into smaller parts first, and then blending them so they can pronounce them. They have also been reviewing how to change the meaning of a base word by adding suffix endings and learning the principles behind dropping a silent e at the end of a word before adding the suffix ending or doubling a final consonant at the end of a word before adding the suffix.

Speech-Language Therapy—Mrs. S. Weller, Mr. R. Ognibene

During the month of March, language activities in speech-language therapy have included: reading stories, using conversational starters, telling stories and discussing favorite activities. Such activities provide the opportunity for students to master speech sounds, grammar and story telling skills.

Receptive and expressive vocabularies have been targeted through categorization tasks and language games. Articulation skills have also been targeted using various games and activities. While participating, students are encouraged to monitor their own productions and to self-correct to aid in the

carryover of speech skills to other situations.



Art—Ms. K. Fuoco

St. Patrick's Day Shamrock Fan—Grades K-2

Students prepare three medium size hearts out of green construction paper. Each student glues or tapes the three hearts in the shape of a shamrock, and glue or tape it onto a craft stick. Now you have a shamrock fan.

Q-TIP POINTILLISM Grades 3-5

Dot to Dot Seurat:
Learning about the style of art known as pointillism and the artist (Georges Seurat) who created it.

Begin by discussing Georges Seurat with students. Specifically, his use of dots to make paintings and his use of primary colors placed next to each other instead of mixing colors. Tape the edges of the paper with drafting tape. Students sketch basic landscape with a pencil. We dip a Q-tip in paint to create dots, instead

of using a paint brush. Pressing down lightly will make a small dot, more pressure will create a larger one. Students try to fill up as much of the paper as possible with color. Peel off tape for a finished frame.

Artist Biography: Georges Seurat was a painter who was interested in shape and pattern, but he approached these things in a very unusual way. He was the developer of a very scientific way of painting known as pointillism. He used tiny dots of pure color, side by side to build form in his paintings. These tiny dots of paint, when side by side, give the viewer's eye a chance to blend the color optically, rather than having the colors readily blended on the canvas. This was also known as divisionism.

Grades 1-5 Bus safety poster contest: "STAND BACK FROM THE YELLOW AND BLACK"



Also: Georgia O'Keeffe



Georgia O'Keeffe
Most famous for
paintings of flowers,
blossom edges
disappear right
off the paper.



Kindergarten—Ms. J. Margolis, Ms. M. Bergersen, Ms. M. Boneillo, Ms. J. Minogue, Ms. G. Kreutzberg

March came in like a lion! The children have been creating many spring crafts and projects. We have decorated lion heads and lambs to celebrate the coming of the spring months. Also discussed was how March is growly like a lion on its way in and how it leaves as quiet and easy as a lamb. As



we prepare for National Poetry Month the children continue to read and write poetry. Children wrote about comparisons using “like” and “as” supported and inspired by many comparisons found in Audrey Wood’s *Quick as a Cricket*. They have also enjoyed spring and St. Patrick’s Day treats. Rainbows and pots of gold have helped to make the hallways festive along with Shamrocks for St. Patrick’s Day. Guided Reading, interactive writing and skip counting by 2’s, 5’s, and 10’s in math, were also a large focus across the curriculum.

In Math, we have been reinforcing counting by ones, fives & tens and graphing. Learning and reinforcing these counting skills continue to help the children with other new concepts. The children have

been introduced to the various Math vocabulary words which are now key components to our Envision Math Program. These words include number story, addition sentence and the use of the word which indicates addition or plus. Ms. Kreutzberg created an intricate bulletin board display illustrating how many ways graphing can be utilized to share information about ourselves. The children are really enjoying many of these activities in math!

In addition, the kindergarten kids have been eager readers and writers! In preparation for LEADD the children have been writing about healthy choices. The children have been discussing their feelings and how they feel when they are treated nicely or how they feel when someone is unkind to them. They are actively using “Get a Voice” phrases each week. We are immersed in



reading and writing and continue to read and write about seasonal topics and ideas such as spring, rainy days, and planting. The children continue to use inventive spelling to share ideas and have been using “four square writing” to organize their thoughts.

We are making great discoveries in our Science Units! We have begun discussing the Five Senses and planting and observing the growth of various seeds as part of our life cycles units.

At the beginning of the month the kindergarten students read their favorite books from Dr. Seuss in honor of Dr. Seuss and “Read across America.” Following this, they discussed and wrote about their favorite books. During PARP week the



students were visited by Mac Arthur High School’s finest Peer Leaders as they shared their favorite literature with the children. In addition to the many planned activities for PARP the children enjoyed a wonderful musical storyteller assembly to kick off the week. They were eager to go home and read and write stories with their families.

The children continue to have fun while reading, writing, and exploring as they prepare for exciting first grade!

First Grade—Ms. P. Caputo, Ms. D. Ruppert, Ms. S. Phelan,
Ms. E. Cariddi, Ms. J. Donnelly

Literacy skills truly come to fruition this time of year in first grade. The strategies and skills that have been taught, practiced, and drilled are truly internalized by all children at different speeds and levels. They amaze us with their inference, and knowledge of main ideas and supportive details.

During word study, our first graders continued to identify contractions, nouns, verbs, synonyms and antonyms.

First graders are blooming as writers as well. We celebrated Dr Seuss' birthday with an in depth study of *The Lorax*. The children participated in many literacy activities centered around this timeless classic. The



children used the four square writing process to develop well organized, informative and concise pieces of writing.

L.E.A.D.D. Week began with discussions about leading a healthy lifestyle and why we are

self-image and non-bullying behaviors.

Math is challenging, but engaging and fun. We are working on place value, comparing and ordering numbers, regrouping and subtracting with tens and ones.



With our brand new Smart boards the students are now fully engaged in all aspects of daily work as they draw, move, slide, find, sing and dance as they learn. What an amazing gift this was to all teachers and students!

all stars. Our children strutted the Red Carpet, dressed like famous movie stars.

For our anti bullying program, we attended a wonderful assembly where the students sang songs promoting a positive

We are looking forward to our spring break!!! We will come back recharged and ready to finish our year in first grade with a bang! So much yet to teach and so little time left!



Second Grade—Ms. V. Netti, Ms. A. Poulos, Ms. J. Schadt, Dr. M. Nakelski, Ms. S. Bartlein

March has been a very exciting and productive month for our Second Graders. They had such a wonderful experience going to The Levittown Historical Museum. They were fascinated to see how much Levittown has changed over the years. They were enthusiastic to learn about the old fashion toys, appliances and ways of Levittown during the decades of the 1940's and 1950's.



Our 2nd graders continue to work on memorization of their basic addition and subtraction facts. These skills are essential to their success with three digit addition and subtraction problems. The children

worked vigorously on regrouping this month. In addition, the students were introduced to Geometry. They distinguished between plane shapes and solid figures and discussed flat surfaces, vertices, edges and angles. The students enjoyed working hands on with the pattern blocks during this unit.

In science, the students began a unit on life cycles. The children had an opportunity to plant seeds and observe their development through the plant life cycle. They discussed the structure of a seed and what seeds need in order to grow. The students are eager for their seeds to blossom into spring flowers.

The children honed their writing skills as they delved into a variety of topics. For example, they wrote about the activities they enjoy doing in the spring. Then, in conjunction with LEADD Week, the students composed a writing piece and



drew a picture that exhibited how they can make good decisions. Classes brainstormed slogans that promoted the “Lights, Camera, Action... LEADD” theme. March was a fun-filled month for our second graders.

Third Grade—Ms. D. Dunn, Ms. T. Vining, Ms. D. Furlong, Ms. N. Alt, Ms. P. Porr

Hooray for spring! Hooray for LEADD! This month the children enjoyed discussing ways in which they can “LEADD” by making good decisions. The children completed a writing piece

which was displayed in our third grade hallway. Each student wrote an essay depicting ways in which they have made good decisions at home and at school. Our children are ready to lead



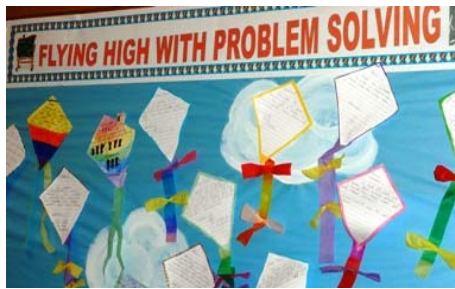
Third Grade—continued

the way!

In reading, students are practicing all the reading comprehension strategies they learned this year in preparation for the ELA. One focus this month was on listening comprehension. Students listen to a story, take notes, and, using only their notes, answer questions based on the story. We're so proud of our third graders as they fine tune their listening skills.

Our third graders problem solving skills are flying high! The students wrote spring word problems encompassing all four operations. Check out our

spring problem solving kites on the main bulletin board. Addi-



tionally, in math, students focused on fractions of a whole, fractions of a group, and mixed numbers. Another topic this month included measurement. Students practiced their skills by measuring length in inches and capacity in cups, pints, quarts and gallons. Students applied their learning to real world situations through

problem solving practice.

In Science, students studied the properties of matter. Through the use of everyday objects, students had opportunities to experiment with solids, liquids, and gases. Through various hands on activities, students observed how particles move in solids, liquids, and gases, how matter changes states, and the difference between physical and chemical changes in our world.

After a full month of learning, our students are looking forward to enjoying their spring vacation with their families.

Fourth Grade—Ms. B. Meltzer, Ms. A. Bisagni, Ms. J. O'Connell, Ms. D. Dunleavy, Ms. K. Ulmschneider, Ms. C. Penna

Students in fourth grade have been working diligently during the month of March in all areas.

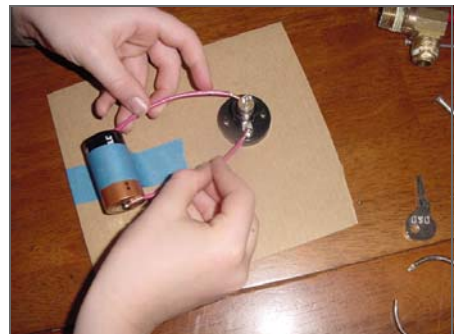
In Language Arts, students have been using the reading strategies and skills they have acquired throughout the year to actively engage in Guided Reading Groups and Independent Reading. Classes have been working on having the students analyze and interpret characters and themes in all text that they encounter.

March has been a busy month in the content area of

math. Classes have been working on Fractions, Geometry and Measurement. In addition, students have been reviewing all concepts learned since the beginning of the school year, in preparation for the State Math Assessment.

In Science, classes have been learning about magnetism and electricity. Classes have also begun conducting experiments using the "Electricity" ESP Kits. Students have discussed how to identify items that are attracted to different types of magnets, how to construct circuits and how electricity is used

in our world.



In Social Studies, the focus of study has been on the Civil War. This period of time includes learning about women gaining the right to vote and freedom for African Americans.

Fourth Grade—continued

Classes have also taken place in various activities this month in preparation for Levittown's LEADD Week. Students wrote creative writing pieces focusing on good decisions they have made and all work was displayed in the hallways.



Some classes have also participated in a contest sponsored by the Humane Society. Students have utilized their persuasive writing techniques to construct essays on behalf of some of their favorite animals, convincing people to treat all animals properly.

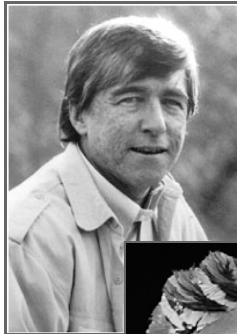
Fifth Grade—Ms. A. Fermature, Ms. N. Corron, Mr. J. Centonze, Ms. T. Lynch, Ms. C. Falcone, Ms. M. Madigan

Currently the 5th grade class is preparing for the NY State Math and ELA tests. Practice tests were given and graded by teachers. In Math the topics of shapes and the formulas of area/perimeter/volume and ratio/percent/decimals/graphing/word problems have been introduced and explored through child directed problems and even lessons!

Weekly Spelling lessons which incorporate new words into everyday writing/essays and letters of all types are implemented. Within vocabulary activities, the children are gathering an understanding of the root/prefix/suffix. The Industrial revolution, Civil War, our neighbors Canada & Mexico and even Famous Explorers were discussed and then made into power point presentations. Social Studies is also an area where the children learn note taking and study skills. Science this month was the wonderful ESP kit on Mystery

Matter. This entails experiments, safety techniques, making up a hypothesis and drawing conclusions. The Laws of Matter and Motion were also explored!

Novels for in depth study on the human condition and how it relates to the children's lives were: Jerry Spinelli, along with Helen Keller (related to a

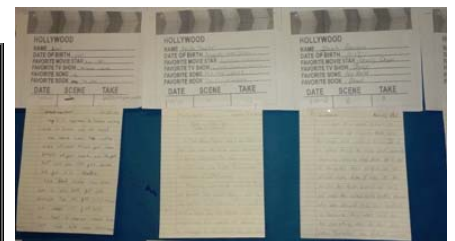


history of Braille). Character traits and author's purpose were developed more for a full understanding for the children. There is always guided reading, with advanced questioning. To practice for ELA

there was plenty of literary responses to paired passages. Fifth grade writing for the month of March included poems of all types, to be placed



on the hallway bulletin board, LEADD essays and activities, St.



Patrick's Day fiction, character traits and persuasive essay writing. Making good choices in your life were the topics for the month in health.

GARDINERS GAZETTE

Articles written by and for our students

Trying New Things Anthony Bacani—Grade 3

Trying new things is easy for the ones who are brave. Just like when I tried to ride my two-wheeler for the first time. I was so scared of falling, but when I learned to ride it by myself, it was such a great feeling! It takes courage to try new things. It can be scary, but not trying at all is losing out on the experience of accomplishing a great deal!



For the ones who are picky, trying new foods can be very hard. Trying new things is good for you, especially if it's food. When I tried carrots, it was good and healthy. I thought it would taste bad, but it tasted awesome! Don't be afraid to try new foods...it will amaze you at how great they taste, and it will make your mom and dad proud of you. I promise!

Another example is when I was going to my first swimming race. I was so scared and nervous that I didn't want to go, but my mom encouraged me and told me that it's just like practice, but a little more exciting! Last summer I won my very first gold medal, swimming the breast stroke. If I gave up and didn't try it, I would not have a medal to prove that I did my best!

Trying new things can be very hard, but knowing that the end result is great will make it easier to do it. So start trying new things, and at the end you will get a reward...it can be a very important medal; it can be eating healthy; or just a simple bike ride, but all in all, trying new things is the start of something great and unforgettable!

What makes a Good Neighbor?

Richard Neri—Grade 5



A good neighbor is someone who drives you to school when your car breaks down and picks you up from school when Mom and Dad are working or someone who watches you when mom and dad have somewhere to go. A good neighbor is someone who gives you back your ball when it goes over the fence, and someone who doesn't mind when your dog barks. A good neighbor is someone who is very helpful and trustworthy; someone who acts like a part of your family; someone who is there, just like State Farm. And, of course, a good neighbor is someone you can go to if you run out of sugar!!!



Articles written by and for our students

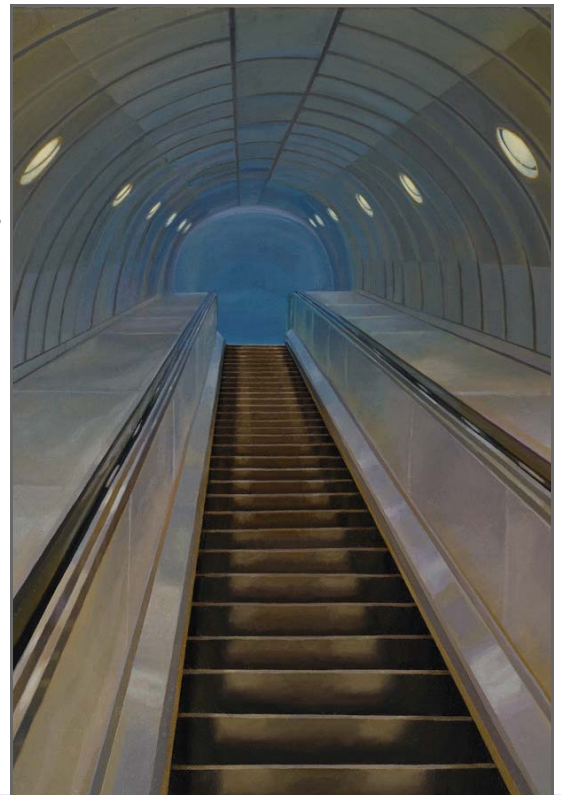
Escalator to the Moon Cristopher A. Cuestas - Grade 4

One sunny day, I was at the mall with my mom. It was yet another torturous shopping Saturday. We were going to one of her favorite clothing stores on the second floor. I knew it by heart. As we walked toward the escalator, I remember this very strange feeling, but didn't think anything of it. As we talked about my birthday coming, I took my first step on that escalator. All of a sudden, it turned as dark as midnight. I said to my mom, "Where are we going?" And she replied a little nervously, "I don't know".

I started to see stars, really bright ones - not the ones you see when you go outside at night, but REALLY bright ones. Was I in space? Then, in the distance, I started to see a big block of Legos. One block turned into two, and three and so on. They started building themselves. Were they building a house? As the escalator went up, I saw more and more colors. I saw pencils, markers, and crayons drawing a very nice picture. It looked like a scene from one of my favorite movies, The Titanic. I tried to reach my hand out to grab one of the crayons but it seemed that there was some sort of invisible wall blocking me from putting my hand out of the escalator. I kind of started to get scared, but all that changed when I saw a group of people playing in a band. They were playing one of my favorite songs that my mom used to sing when I was younger. Then I saw kids playing soccer, and I wanted to try to get out, but I remembered I couldn't reach my hand out of the escalator. I saw builders building a house, and it reminded me of my dad. He was a really good builder! I saw a kid jump off a diving board and fly into the air! He splashed into a humungous blue pool. I had to get off! I just had to get in that pool but it just didn't want me to go!

All of sudden, this little green creature with big eyes knocked on the clear wall. He smiled. He grabbed me by the hand and yanked me off that escalator! I was so excited. I was floating! He showed me the Legos had built a huge jet with the letters C-R-I-S-T-O-P-H-E-R on it. I got in. Magically, I knew how to fly it without ever having taken lessons. I stepped on the gas, full throttle! This was AMAZING!!! I heard a sound, I looked down. The red light was blinking. I was going down! All I could see was blue. CRASH! SPLASH!

"Cris?", "Cristopher?", "Cristopher!" I heard my name in the distance, far away. "Mom?" I said. I was in the mall, in the store. It's crazy how time flies when you're having fun! It's crazy how your imagination runs wild!



Playing with Pets Emily Foster-Grade 3

Do you have a pet and don't play with it? Then read this article! I will tell you about how it's good for you to play with your pet and how you can make a playground for you and your pet. But what if you don't have a pet to play with? Well, I will also talk about what kind of pet you might want to buy. Get ready, sit back, relax and read on!

Do you have a dog that you might not have the time to play with? Dogs think walking is like playing. Walking is also good exercise for you and your pet. Play on the playground with your dog. It's good for you because you're running around. Playing with your dog is fun and healthy for both of you!

Did you know you can make a playground for your pet? If you have a rodent like a hamster or a mouse, you can connect tubes to its cage. You can find tubes at pet stores or you can make your own by using the center of a roll of paper towels. Also, you can create an obstacle course for your dog by using hula hoops and jump ropes. It's fun watching your pet run through the playground that you made yourself. These are ways to have fun with your pet while also being creative!



Emily Foster's dog Bijou!

Now if you don't have a pet, read this: if you want a dog that you can bring to the playground, then you should get an active, fun loving dog. If you want a dog that can go through obstacle courses, get a small dog that will be able to fit through hula hoops (make sure that you can train it to go through the obstacle course too). If you want to a small animal that stays in a cage with lots of tubes, you can buy a hamster, gerbil or a mouse. These animals are all great options because you can have lots of fun playing with them or just watching them play. There are lots of toys available that are great for you and your pet to play with; some examples are balls, bones, ropes, chewy toys and squeaky toys. You could even give one of your stuffed animals to your pet to play with; think how much fun that could be!!

So are you thinking of playing with your pet now? I hope now you will have lots of new ideas for things you can do to play with your pet. If you don't think you can get a pet, you can always ask to play with your friend's pet, or volunteer at an animal shelter. Hope you can now have lots of new fun with your furry friend!

BACK PAGE NEWS

PARP Peer Leaders at Gardiners

As part of PARP Week, Gardiners Avenue School in Levittown hosted a special day of reading. On Monday March 5th, the PTA arranged for MacArthur High School peer leaders to read to students in their classrooms. During the readings, children in grades K-5 were engaged in listening for details, making predictions, restating story elements, and asking numerous questions. The peer leaders were excellent role models for the students at Gardiners Avenue. Many of them had attended here as youngsters. Pictured below are MacArthur High School peer leaders with Gardiners Avenue students in their classroom.



A Study of the Stars and Constellations at Gardiners Avenue

In an effort to encourage an appreciation of the night sky, Mobile Ed Productions navigator Derek McDonald led students at Gardiners Avenue Elementary School in the Levittown School District into an inflatable planetarium to study the stars, planets, and constellations. The presentation is called SkyDome, and with the aid of a laser pointer, the navigator took the budding astronomers on a tour through the solar system.

"The first astronomers did not go to school to learn about the stars," Mr. McDonald explained. "They simply enjoyed the stars and made up mythical stories about the constellations."

Mr. McDonald identified the stars and planets and introduced the students to the Greek mythological characters that can be found among them. He even explained how one can distinguish a planet from a star by the way a star twinkles. At the end of the presentation, the students were given a guide which detailed the sky at 7:30 p.m. that evening.

