

January 2018

Dear Families,

Happy New Year! We hope you all had a peaceful and relaxing vacation. We enjoyed the holidays with our families! We sure enjoyed seeing the children again!...until the big blizzard!

To ring in the new year, our class will be traveling to **Mexico!** (Well, *not really traveling to Mexico...we'll pretend!!*) We'll make our passports and decorate our suitcases! (During our study of Mexico we will read The Three Javelinas, a retelling of the familiar story, The Three Little Pigs, with a twist. This version is set in the desert. Instead of the traditional building materials, the javelinas (wild desert pigs) build with adobe, cactus ribs and tumbleweeds. Our study of the rainforest will include the story, The Umbrella, a rainforest version of The Mitten. This story will help us learn about interesting rainforest animals. Other books we'll peruse include: The Manana Iguana series, Mexico (nonfiction), Deserts and A Living Desert (nonfiction), Borreguita and the Coyote, Desert Giant, Rainforest (nonfiction), and The Cactus Hotel, just to name a few!

We will practice a bit of Spanish as part of our **Mexico unit**. We will learn a greeting, a color song, and other tunes in Spanish. We will also learn to count in Spanish! We will investigate some traditional Mexican art and crafts. Geography will also be included in our studies!

At the end of our **Mexico** unit we hope to have a **Fiesta!** Activities may include games, crafts, food, music, dance and more. Hillary will soon be looking for volunteers to help with this fun event which is scheduled for Friday, January 26, time to be announced soon!

Our last days before vacation were filled with the comparison of various versions of the Gingerbread Man. At the end of our study, the class felt their "favorite" version was Gingerbread Girl by Lisa Campbell Ernst...other favorites included Gingerbread Baby and Gingerbread Friends by Jan Brett. We had a chance to decorate a paper gingerbread person with all of the trimmings. We used wiggly eyes, paper lace, glitter, jewels, white crayon for details and doll hair. We mounted and framed them with colored paper and they are hanging on the wall in our hallway. They are displayed by pairs and we used the word "and" to connect each partner. We had a fun time creating our own gingerbread village, making a button wreath to hang on our tree at home and decorating a gingerbread cookie to eat! Thank you to the parents that popped in to help with these two projects and assist us with decorating our cookies! All of the extra hands were helpful and added to the holiday spirit!

During morning meeting time, the children have participated in locating the vowels (a,e,i,o,u and sometimes y) in our morning message. We have begun to learn the two sounds of each of the vowels and we know that each syllable in a word has a vowel. Wow! They certainly have surprised us with their knowledge and attentiveness to taking words apart by their sounds.

Another study of words has been talking and locating “compound words”. This has been fun with words like: snowman, snowflake, gingerbread (man). Many students started to recognize other words in the messages like: today, into, inside and outside. They know that a compound word is two words that go together to make up one word! When your child brings home the daily message ask them to locate some of these fun word skills.

This month we will be working on making our **writing** easier to read. For many students a challenge in writing is to remember to put spaces between words and to write with primarily lower case letters. Students will continue working hard at “kindergarten” spelling. Children will be encouraged to write beginning, middle and ending letters for the corresponding sounds in each word. In this way, young children are free to write words they can’t possibly know how to spell. Of course, we expect children to correctly spell the priority words we have already studied: (is, like, the, and, we, it, my) More words are coming! Any extra practice with your child in reading and writing these words would be great! These words need to be automatic and fluent when written. Making word tiles to put on the refrigerator is one way to practice reading the words and also an opportunity to make sentences using these priority words. All you need is some magnetic tape. It is so much fun for your child to discover their independence when forming sentences and reading them!

In **math**, we enjoyed the activity, “Ten Bears on a Bus” to generate combinations that add up to ten. We created a “Favorite School Activities” class graph. Students will play “Eye Spy Shapes” to strengthen identification of and descriptions of shapes, in addition to using positional words to describe their locations. The children will play Teen Partners and they’ll use fingers to explore the concept that teen numbers represent “10 and some more ones.” The children will solve a “comparative number story” and they will “prove” or justify their solutions. After, they will discuss and analyze different solutions. We will tell and solve addition and subtraction number stories using counters and we will write number models, or “number sentences.” (ie:  $5+3=8$  or  $8=3+?$ ...) Students will further explore addition and will represent addition symbolically using the plus and equal symbols. We’ll play “Growing Train” to link concrete and symbolic representations of addition to support students’ conceptual understanding. Students will also be recording their own data during our mathematics “daily information routines” for weather, the calendar, and the number of days in kindergarten.

**Day 100** will soon be a big happening in our class! We will celebrate Day 100 by doing “hundreds” of hundred activities and by enjoying “hundred day project” presentations. Be on the lookout for a fun **Day 100 homework project** for all students to complete coming soon! (This will be our February “share.”)

In addition, our school usually does a **100’s Day service-learning project**. Each class donates 100 items to the York Food Pantry. This is a great project as we’re all helping our fellow York citizens. More information about the 100’s Day service-learning project will follow in a separate correspondence.

Our students participated in the “The Hour of Code.” The Hour of Code is driven by the Hour of Code and Computer Science Education Week Advisory and Review Committees as well as an unprecedented coalition of partners that come together to support the Hour of Code — including Microsoft, Apple, Amazon, Boys and Girls Clubs of America and the College Board. Students utilize the app, “Kodable,” to begin the study of coding! We hope to continue utilizing Kodable on our chromebooks!

We plan to learn about mail and the post office during the month of February. **Please send \$0.50 in an envelope or ziploc baggie labeled with your child’s name (correct change only!)** Students will buy a stamp with the coins and they will send a special card in the mail to their family! We hope to receive a visit from a York Post Office employee who will allow students to buy a stamp! Stamp “change” is due on Friday, February 2.

It’s not too early to be thinking about **Valentine’s Day!** We encourage you to start choosing Valentine cards and/or make them early. It’s a lot of work to sign your name 14 times when you’re in kindergarten! We suggest breaking up this activity over a few weeks and have your child sign 3-4 valentines at a time. Then, the task is less overwhelming. *Children must bring a valentine for each student in the class. The valentines do not need to be labeled with classmates’ names unless you and your child choose to take this on.* A class list of names follows this letter.

The Valentine’s party will be low-key. We will enjoy some Valentine-themed center activities and open and read our valentine cards!

Please continue sending in labeled **boots, hats, mittens and snow pants!** We will go outside almost every day! If you choose, your child is welcome to keep a pair of snow pants and/or sneakers at school. Keeping extra snow pants and sneakers at school means less to pack for school each day. It is also very helpful to keep an extra pair of socks in a plastic bag in backpacks. Sometimes snow gets down inside our boots...brrrr. A change of socks will be a welcome treat. **If you do decide to send in extra clothing of any type, please jot us a note and tuck it in your child’s home/school folder so that we do not encourage your child to bring the items home!**

Thanks!

Warmly,  
Jen and Melinda (Please scroll down!)

**DATES TO REMEMBER:**

Monday, Jan. 15	No School: Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday
Friday, Jan. 26	Mexican Fiesta Date
February:	On your child's share day, send in "100 day" project (or before)
Friday, Feb. 2	\$0.50 "stamp money" due
Monday, Feb. 12	Valentine Cards due
Wednesday, Feb. 14	Valentine's Day party

**Valentine List: \*Due Monday, February 12**

1. Quinten
2. Aiden
3. Abrie
4. Ellie
5. Noah
6. Ashton
7. Jayden
8. Patrick
9. David
10. Makayla
11. Liv
12. Penelope
13. Andrew
14. Cooper

Optional: •Mrs. Lombardi •Mrs. Gallagher •Ms. Ellis

