



Grade 1 Class Newsletter

December 2011



"All great achievements require time." - Maya Angelou

Greetings everyone! We now bid goodbye to a very exciting unit of inquiry: Where We Are in Place and Time—We All Have Unique Personal Histories. Thank you to all you dear Parents for continuing to work collaboratively with your child by providing background information and answers to questions on their unit of inquiry homework, and lending us artifacts for show and tell. And speaking of show and tell, we deeply appreciate the time and presence afforded us by a number of parents who came to talk to the class about their hobbies, careers, growing-up experiences, family traditions, family trees, home countries, culture, and other very interesting subjects. Special mention goes to Mrs. Dana Matthews (Dasan's mom), Mrs. Eiko Oka Thompson (Airi Ann's mom), Mr. Lester Tan (Cayden's dad), Mrs. Kate Carey (Jemima's mom), Mr. Koo (Yumi's dad), Mrs. Uyanga (Dayan's mom), Mr. Gansukh (Oyundari's dad), Mrs. Uyanga (Richard's mom), Mrs. Rama Fagninou (Garcia's mom), and Mrs. Hulan (Amulya's mom). The grand finale was the Shibata Family three-generation show and tell on the last day of our inquiry week. Selina's grandparents, who were visiting from Japan and Mrs. Takako (Selina's mom) regaled the class with string magic, bean bag juggling, origami, top twirling, toy lottery, sweet sticky rice snacks and spicy rice crackers. Mr. Elya, Head of Primary, and Mrs. Faber, IBPYP Coordinator/Primary P.E., joined in the fun.

To deepen the understanding of the unit's central idea: We All Have Unique Personal Histories, the children wrote short autobiographies and timelines that focused on significant events in their lives so far. Your child also finished her/his family tree. Instead of sticking photographs to the tree, your child has illustrated carefully each member of your family. Great effort and creativity were put to action on these projects. The projects also cultivated the spirit of cooperation and camaraderie among the children, at the same time, the students proved that they were capable of working independently. Mr. Elya was so impressed by the children's attitude towards their tasks that he dedicated the whole Primary News on Medee Online issue #11/11-11-2011 to them.

Our third unit of inquiry is How We Organize Ourselves: Communities are Made Up of Different People. Our lines of inquiry will be directed towards the organizational set-up of a community, which in our case is the ISU school community. We will be meeting and getting to know the members of our school, learning about their tasks and responsibilities, and documenting their day-to-day activities. From there, the class will then move on to investigating the connections of the ISU school community to the outside UB community, and how these two communities are interdependent on each other. With this in mind, we are still soliciting suggestions or insider information from you regarding special venues for children's parties, parks, restaurants/bakeries or cafes, children's clothes shopping, party shops, pet shops, or contacts for our ongoing project, **UB Guide for Kids by Kids**. Please e-mail tips to g.durant@isumongolia.edu.mn Thank you.

For news about our e-pals, in addition to Mrs. Hargrove's grade 1 class, we are now pals with Mr. Ward's class from DCMOBOCES, Norwich, New York, Mrs. Mindy Wolf's grade 1 class, also from New York., and with Mrs. Christine Guerriero's KG class in Canada. Mr. Ward's class is looking forward to working with us on the Flat Stanley project. Both our classes have been reading about Flat Stanley, a story about a boy who was flattened by a bulletin board. Your child can tell you more about Flat Stanley. We will be exchanging Flat Stanley cut-outs (theirs is on its way to UB!) and each class will photograph Flat Stanley next to a city landmark, or take him to visit families. The children will then write about Flat Stanley's daily activities on his accompanying diary. After some time, Flat Stanley, his diary and photographs will be posted back to his home class. As for Mrs. Wolf's class, we will be writing e-mails, snail mails, and postcards to her students. Both Mrs. Hargrove's and Mrs. Wolf's classes have posted their Thanksgiving cards to us. With the KG class of Mrs. Guerriero, they are studying their local animal habitats, so they would like to exchange PowerPoint presentations with us on the same topic.

Furthermore on projects, our class is also collaborating with Mr. Thomas Beckett, a teacher of English in Hong Kong, and author of the Ming the Minibus book series and creator of the Ming the Minibus cartoons. His class is putting together a digital English-language book, Ming the Minibus Meets Interesting People, an e-book that will be distributed to schools in China to help with the teaching of the English language. Participating classes/schools like ISU will also get a copy of the e-book. You can watch his cartoons on youtube. There's even an episode titled Ming the Minibus Goes to Mongolia. For this Ming project, our class will make Ming the Minibus following the template that Mr. Beckett had sent us. The class has unanimously selected Selina Shibata as the Interesting Person that Ming gets to meet. We then take a photograph of the Interesting Person holding Ming the Minibus. The class then writes a short description of the Grade 1 Interesting Person. This digital book project is due for completion next year. Not to be outdone, the two grade 5 classes here at ISU have been requesting their teachers, Mrs. Covington and Mr. Herbison, to start their Reading Buddies program with us. We have tentatively set our first "reading together" day on the 6th of this month, to happen during the first two periods in the morning.

On another note, please be reminded that grade 1 will be performing in Alice in Wonderland only on the 9th, Friday morning, so they should not come to school on Thursday evening. Only the second to fifth graders are performing that night.

With the winter break fast approaching, I have started to compile worksheets that your child can take with him/her during the vacation, the Winter Break Companion: Learning is Fun series. Please remind your child to bring the binder back to class (if he/she has not done it yet) so I can start filling them with activity sheets. We will also provide them with extra reading books, just like before.

Before we close, we reiterate our great big thank you for your unwavering support of all our class endeavors. Thanks are also in order for our parent reading helpers, Mrs. Dana Matthews, Mrs. Kate Carey, and Mr. Amersaikhan, who have been patiently hearing the children read.

And now, let's eavesdrop on some normal conversation in our classroom. Just some of the reasons why being with this grade 1 class is so much fun.

Exchange A

First grader 1: "Mrs. Durant, what's this? What's this?"

Mrs. Durant: "What's this what?"

First grader 1: "Your clothes! Same as last week's!"

Mrs. Durant: "Oh, you noticed. This is my favorite one. I've got other clothes in my closet, but I really like this, so I keep on wearing it."

First grader 2: looking up from a mathematics activity, "Since you only like that dress, you should sell your other clothes. Then you buy new ones. That's what my mom does."

First grader 1: "Ya, mine, too. She's got lots and lots of clothes, then she sells some and then she buys more!"

Exchange B

First grader: "Mrs. Durant, Mrs. Durant, please, please help me with this magic squares."

Mrs. Durant: "Why?"

First grader: "My brain is so small I just can't figure this out!"

Exchange C:

Mrs. Durant: "Could you please read what you've written on your personal journal?"

First grader: "Yes. My topic was: What do you like about school? What don't you like about it? I wrote 'The good news is P.E. and I.T. The bad news is math!'"

Have a good week ahead!

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Greca Durant and Mrs. Tsatsral Mikhlai
Grade 1 Classroom Teachers

IMPORTANT DATES in DECEMBER

DECEMBER 8 – PRIMARY PRODUCTION – 19:00 – PERFORMANCE BY GR 2 TO 5

Primary Production - Mark your calendars!

This year all primary students are performing in the Primary Production so two performances of the musical, Alice in Wonderland, are scheduled.

On Thursday evening, December 8, the 7:00 p.m. show will include performances by the children in Grades 2, 3, 4 and 5. Students in Preschool, Kindergarten and Grade 1 will not be performing in the evening show.

Please note which day your child/children will be performing so that you can plan your attendance accordingly. Both shows will begin promptly at the stated times.

DECEMBER 9 – PRIMARY PRODUCTION -10:15 AM – ALL PRIMARY STUDENTS TO PERFORM

Primary Production - Mark your calendars!

On Friday morning, December 9, the 10:15 a.m. show will include performances by all primary students from Preschool through grade 5.

FRIDAY, 16 DECEMBER – EARLY DISMISSAL AT 12:00PM

MONDAY, 19 DECEMBER – START OF WINTER BREAK

Please note:

MONDAY, 9 JANUARY 2012 – SCHOOL RE-OPENS

Postscript:

This is something that I found in the Good Housekeeping magazine, p. 94, June 2011 issue. I would like to share it with you.

Graduation WISDOM for Grown-ups by Katie Couric

Be True to Yourself

“Remember Pinocchio? There is a Jiminy Cricket on your shoulder, giving the very best advice. It is you, *your authentic self, the one you were in first grade*, before you learned to massage your personality into a form that would suit others. Sometimes it’s hard to hear its message because all the external voices are so loud, so shrill, so adamant. Voices that loud are always meant to bully. Do not be bullied. Acts of bravery don’t always take place in battlefields. They can take place in your heart, when you have the courage to honor your character, your intellect, your inclinations, and yes, your soul by listening to its clean, clear voice of direction instead of following the muddled messages of a timid world. So carry your courage in an easily accessible place, the way you do your cell phone or your wallet. You may still falter or fall, but you will always know that you pushed hard and aimed high.” – *Anna Quindlen, author and journalist*

Great Grade One Links:

www.storytimeforme.com (for free online children's stories and personalized books)

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prerel.html> (child safety/for lists of product recalls)

<http://www.toytheater.com/visual-memory.php> (for games, art, music, reading, maths, puzzles)

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing (for Dance Mat typing practice and games)