



Grade 1 Class Newsletter

January 2012



*“If your plan is for one year, plant rice;
If your plan is for ten years, plant trees;
If your plan is for one hundred years, educate children.”*
- Confucius -

Happy New Year! May the New Year bring you good health, good fortune, and lots of opportunities to share happy moments with your child.

Just two more weeks to go for our current unit, “How We Organize Ourselves – How a Community Functions: A Community is Made Up of Different People.” Three weeks before winter break, the children learned about how the ISU school community functioned, with a school director for its head, a deputy director and two principals running the school. The class visited the office of Mr. Robert Stearns, ISU School Director, and the children interviewed him about his role and responsibilities. The children asked insightful questions such as why he chose ISU instead of other schools in the world; what is his day-to-day schedule was like; and many more. Mr. Stearns then showed the class a miniature model of ISU which indicated the location of additional classrooms and facilities. The next stop was the office of Mrs. Betsy Hanselmann, Head of Secondary. The children had a chat with her, with Mrs. Hanselmann explaining her tasks as the head of the older students. The final stop was the office of Mr. Elya, the Head of Primary, where the children learned more about his many duties that keep ISU moving smoothly.

To thank the ISU management and staff for jobs well done, the children also designed, built, and presented them with miniature ISUs made of candy sugar, marshmallows, gummies, fruit drops, crackers, pretzels, and peppermint candies, accompanied by handwritten thank-you notes.

At this point of our unit of inquiry, we are now viewing the outside community, and getting to know our Community Helpers. We are visiting the Central Post Office of Mongolia which is located near Sukhbaatar Square. We have selected the letter-sorting department since the children are writing letters to their worldwide pen pals, and would like to know more about the work of letter sorters, and how letters are processed. For this trip, we had the assistance of Miss Selenge, grade 3 teaching assistant and ISU Community Coordinator, who arranged the visit for us. Next week, on Monday, we are visiting the kitchen of the school cafeteria to observe their

morning preparation, from chopping vegetables and fruits to concocting sauces, cooking main courses, and baking delectable desserts. Thanks to M. Galamez for organizing the visit for us. As parents, you have been a big part of your children's education at ISU. We hope you like the special candy houses that the children made for you, as a sign of their appreciation for your continued support, collaboration, and care.

For news about our e-pals, our class received a colorful group picture greeting card from Mrs. Hargrove's grade 1 class from Georgia, U.S. A. Letters are also on their way from New York, from Mrs. Wolf's class. And remember Flat Stanley? He's finally arrived from New York City. The children are taking turns in welcoming him to their homes. Flat Stanley is accompanying the class on its trip to the post office. He will be going home to New York after he has visited everybody.

It seems like our class is attracting more and more friends from other countries. We will be holding a Skype session with Mrs. Catriona Morrison's Year 2 class from Hong Kong, in connection to their own unit of inquiry. They have been monitoring the weather, especially the daily temperature in Ulaanbaatar, and they would like to know how we survive in this below freezing environment. They are very, very intrigued. They could not imagine us going out into a -25C morning to play, while they are shivering at 15C and wearing thick jackets inside their classroom.

Furthermore on projects, our class has sent all materials needed for the digital book, 'Ming the Minibus Meets Interesting People in Asia,' with Selina Shibata as the chosen Interesting Person. Mr. Thomas Beckett, the author of the Ming the Minibus book series and creator of the Ming the Minibus cartoons, is very pleased with our contributions. His class is now putting together a digital English-language book and we will be receiving a finished copy, hopefully, before the end of this school year.

As for reading, we will be continuing with our Reading Buddies program with our two grade 5 classes. I would like to congratulate all grade 1 students for their performance in the latest reading assessment, which was administered last week. Thank you for the parent collaboration, with grade 1s having well-established reading routines at home and at school. And most of all, a great big thank you to our parent reading helpers, Mrs. Dana Matthews, Mrs. Kate Carey, and Mr. Amarsaikhan, who have been dutifully hearing the children read week after week. Well done everybody!

And now, for some light moments again from our classroom:

Last week, the children were deep in their work of writing letters to their pen pals in Georgia, U.S.A. One of our boys was writing to a girl. He was reading his words as he went along with his task.

Grade 1 boy: "...What do you do at school? I am really so happy that I am writing to you. You are my new friend and I am your new friend. I want to marry you now..."

Mrs. Durant: "Oh, my, she will not reply to you if you ask her to marry you now."

Grade 1 girl: "Ya, don't marry her now. Wait till she finishes uninersity!"

Mrs. Durant: "Did you hear that?"

Grade 1 boy: "Yes. OK, I'll just ask her what she likes to eat."