



CGS PTO Newsletter

November 2010

Coventry Grammar School

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A Memo From Marybeth Moyer, Principal

The changing leaves are now falling, and the weatherman promises colder days ahead. November is here! We will extend the home-school connection this month with parent-teacher conferences on November 16, 17 and 18. These will be early release days for the students with dismissal at 1:10 each day.

Conferences provide a unique opportunity to collaborate with your child's classroom teacher. The insights provided by these meetings can help both you and the teacher enhance your child's success in school. This year the teachers in K-5 will be piloting a standards based report card as the tool to share the information on your student's progress. A question that has been addressed at informational sessions and PTO meetings this fall is "How will my child's progress be measured on a standards based report card?"

A standards-based report card lists the most important skills students should learn in each subject at a particular grade level. Connecticut is one of many states that has adopted its own list of the standards that students should learn at each grade level from kindergarten through high school. These lists are the state content and learning standards. On standard based report cards students receive marks that show how well they have met these standards. The marks will indicate whether the student has consistently met grade level expectations, has demonstrated an understanding of skills and is working towards independence, has an emerging level of understanding or is receiving remediation for the skills that are being introduced. Students will also get separate marks for their demonstrated work habits in their classroom instruction as well as their art, music and physical education classes.

On traditional report cards, students received one grade for reading, one for math, one for science and so on. On a standards-based report card, each of these subject areas is divided into a list of skills and knowledge content that students are responsible for learning at their grade level. Students receive a separate mark for each standard. Standards-based report cards will provide more consistency among teachers than traditional report cards, because all students are evaluated on the same grade-appropriate skills. Parents can see exactly which skills their children have learned.

At CGS we encourage parents to take an active role at parent conferences. Report cards will be sent home on Friday, November 12. As you prepare for your child's conference the following guidelines may be helpful:

- Ask lots of questions! If there is anything about the report card that you don't understand or that is confusing, ask your child's teacher to explain. If you are not sure if your child is doing well, ask the teacher to explain the system. For example, if your child is emerging in some skills, ask the teacher if you should be concerned about his/her progress. Is he/she on track to meet the standard by the end of the year?
- Be sure you find out whether your child is completing assignments and developing good work habits. It is important for you to have a complete picture of your child's learning. If there is a problem with attitude, effort or study skills, parents and teachers need to work together to communicate and intervene as early as possible.
- Take advantage of the extra information. Standards-based report cards give you more detailed information about how your child is doing in each subject. You can use this information to help your child. If there is a skill you're concerned about, ask the teacher how you can help your child with it at home. You can also ask the teacher what additional support will be available at school.

Report cards are designed to communicate important information, and they need to be easy to understand and helpful to students and their families. If you have any suggestions about the piloted report card, please share them with the teacher and the principal. Your comments will provide the feedback we need to continue to present a very clear picture of the skill development of each student at CGS.

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Important November Dates

- November 2-Election Day-There will be no school for students. Coventry teachers will be involved in professional development.
- November 11- Veteran's Day- Schools will be closed to honor and pay tribute to veterans of all wars.
- Thanksgiving Recess- (Wednesday, November 24 will be an early release day. There will be no school on November 25 and 26.)

November is a time for thanks. At CGS, I am thankful for a dedicated and highly motivated staff, for the PTO that gives so much time and effort to support our students, for parents who are involved in their children's education and for their children who come to school, happy, healthy and ready to learn.

Happy Thanksgiving!



As Thanksgiving approaches, children will study the history of the pilgrims and the Native Americans who helped them settle into the new land of America. Part of our uniqueness as a nation is due to the Native American people who were here before us.



Our trip for the months of November and December is a visit to the Booth & Dimock Library.



As our fall months end, the children will continue to recognize the changes around us ...

Kindergarten News

Kindergarten Team

Teachers: Wendy Bayer, Terry Bitwinski, Heidi Bosco, Eileen Hosey, and Debbie Hurlburt

Para-Educators: Debbie Carroll and Sue Lewis

As Thanksgiving approaches, children will study the history of the pilgrims and the Native Americans who helped them settle into the new land of America. Part of our uniqueness as a nation is due to the Native American people who were here before us. Many of our foods (corn, squash and pumpkin), fashion (silver jewelry, ornamental beading), and arts (pottery, stone carving) have been influenced by Native Americans. In addition to teaching children about contributions to our culture, a study of the pilgrims and Native Americans can help young children think about the way people once lived in our country and the way we live now. Notions of "today" and "long ago" are difficult to grasp without concrete points of comparison.

Kindergartners will celebrate the spirit of the first Thanksgiving with a "sharing" feast in their classrooms. Specific information will be available from your child's teacher. There will be a sign-up for donations during November conferences.

In mathematics, we explore numbers 0-10 as well as review skills and concepts previously presented. Children will count to find the number of objects or pictorial items in a group; represent numbers 0 to 10; read the number words *zero* to *ten*; write numerals; match quantities, numerals and number words to 10; and, identify and name the ordinal positions *first* to *fifth*. Students will also sort, classify and compare data in whole group and learning center activities.

Our trip for November/December is a visit to the Booth & Dimock Library. The focus is on literature and storytelling. We look forward to visiting with Jennifer Needham, the children's librarian. If your child does not have his/her own library card, we encourage you to make the time to visit the Booth & Dimock as a family and take advantage of the opportunities available at our town library. Refer to the fall newsletter from the Booth & Dimock Library to get a glimpse of upcoming events. These newsletters are distributed quarterly and are a wonderful free resource for programs of all kinds from book discussion groups to new acquisitions to holiday celebrations to story times for children.

Children will continue to experience Enrichment Art classes. Ask them about the projects they bring home, as they have made props for If you Give a Mouse a Cookie and Flower Garden. Encourage them to share or "retell" these stories at home to the best of their ability.

We are looking forward to meeting with parents/guardians at conference time. Take some time before the conference to jot down any questions or comments to discuss with your child's teacher. This first quarter of school has been a busy time for your child. Our mutual efforts on their behalf can only enhance his/her learning experience in kindergarten.

First-Grade News

First-Grade Team

Teachers: Megan Babcock, Bruce Gale, Colleen Hamblett, Patricia Klaneski, Matthew Kyer, Cristy Rau, and Ginny Taber

Para-Educators: Laurie Darling and Jennifer Ray

The winds of November bring many new themes to our first grade. We begin the month with some discussion about citizenship and our responsibility as voters. We will vote for stories, favorite snacks and lunch choices. Our upcoming Election Day provides us with an opportunity to recognize and appreciate our freedom while Veterans Day is an opportunity to remember those people who protected our freedom.

(First Grade - continued)

Our country's history and traditions of Thanksgiving will also be a focus of study this month. We will include our study of nutrition and healthy food choices. Our first grades will gather together to share good food and friendship at our First Grade feast in November. Parents will be called for donations for our feast.

In our reading program, some of our stories will celebrate the sights and sounds of a river, a large city, and a desert. We will be reading about other environments, some familiar and some new to us. Retelling continues to be a very big part of our Guided Reading groups. When you read with your child, take time to think about the story and discuss what happened in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the story. We encourage the students to use characters' names and "retell" the story to check for understanding of what has been read.

Thank you for your continued support of our reading program. Sharing books from school and practicing vocabulary words benefits the children in so many ways. We are "thankful" for our CGS parents.

As our fall months end, the children will continue to recognize the changes around us - bare branches, geese formations, and other animal preparations for cooler weather.

We are all looking forward to conference days and the opportunity to share your child's progress, growth, and adjustment in first grade. If you have not signed up for a conference, please contact your child's teacher.

Second-Grade News

Second-Grade Team

Teachers: Carolyn Bennett, Jerry Craig, Nancy Gwozdz, Erin Hazzard, Heather McPeck, Nancy Plaster, and Angela Puccia

Para-Educators: Gloria Barry and Heidi Holever

November is a time of thanksgiving. We are so grateful each day for the enthusiasm of our students and the support of our parents. We have a very busy month ahead of us. This month will include the closing of the first marking period, conferences, report cards, and the Thanksgiving holiday.

In math we will be finishing our unit covering geometry and measurement. Children have been given the opportunity to become familiar with both standard and non-standard means of measurement as well as the identification of geometric shapes. We will then move on to study numbers to 1,000 including number patterns. Students will use their knowledge of place value and patterning to identify what is 1, 10, and 100 more/ less than a given 3-digit number. Starting with the second marking period we will also begin working on our basic facts. It will be essential for students to memorize these facts as we move on to more complicated math concepts. As part of your child's homework each week, he/she will receive a set of flashcards to practice. Then each Friday students will be tested to see if they can complete those facts in one minute. Please practice with your children in order to help them commit these facts to memory.

We appreciate your continued commitment to our WEB reading program. One of the areas we are working on in class is reading comprehension. This includes the ability to retell a story, summarize a story and answer more intuitive questions such as ...

What do you think the author is trying to tell you in the story? (What is the moral/ lesson?);

or

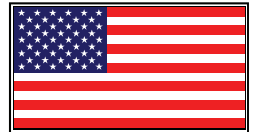
What do you think was the most important thing that happened in the story and why?

You can support your child's learning by asking your child some of these questions as you complete your WEB reading.

We look forward to meeting with you at conferences which will be held on November 16, 17, and 18. If you have not signed up for a conference please contact your child's teacher as soon as possible. Students will have an early dismissal on those days. Report cards will be issued the week prior to the conferences. You will notice that the report card looks a bit different this year. We have moved to a standards-based report card. If you have any questions about the new format, we would be happy to answer them at conferences. Our hope is that this format gives you a more detailed report of your child's progress.

Towards the end of the month, we will hold our annual Thanksgiving breakfast. We will be looking for parent volunteers to supply some of the ingredients for the recipes that the students will be preparing in school. Please look for more information to be coming home via classroom newsletters or room parents.

Second grade would like to wish all of you a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday!



Election Day provides us with an opportunity to recognize and appreciate our freedom ... Veteran's Day is an opportunity to remember those people who protected our freedom.



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From Our School Nurse ~ Mrs. Paula Curtiss

Staying Healthy

As we head into the late fall and winter months, we begin to think of the cold and flu season that will soon be upon us. Here are some general guidelines for promoting good health during this time:

- Make sure your children have a good night's sleep, drink plenty of water, eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly.
- Remind your children to wash their hands with soap and warm water frequently and always before eating.
- Remind your children to cover their mouths and noses when coughing or sneezing with the crook of their arm.
- Have your children throw out used tissues immediately.
- Keep your children home when they are sick to prevent spreading illness.
- Remind your children not to touch their eyes, noses or mouths as germs are often spread this way.
- If at all possible, avoid close contact with other people who are sick.



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**Have your children throw out used tissues immediately...
Keep your children home when they are sick to prevent spreading illness.**

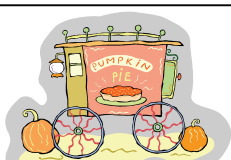
Some Food for Thought:

The Hygiene Council from the Royal London Hospital which includes global experts in public health and infectious disease released this list in 2009 of the 8 germiest spots in the home:

1. Kitchen Cloths and Sponges
2. Kitchen faucets
3. Tub and shower
4. Pet food dishes
5. Microwave touch screen
6. TV remote
7. Light switches
8. Baby changing tables

One more item that has gotten a lot of press for germs lately is our cell phones!
Stay healthy and feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Paula Curtiss
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Enjoy doing these problems with family or friends. Think of all the things you are thankful for this season.

From Our Math Corner ~ Mrs. Stephanie Wissler, ASSIST Program

Math Problem Solving: Complete as a family. Discuss your answers together.

-Are you going to add or subtract? How do you know?

1. Mrs. Jones baked five pumpkin pies on Monday, six pumpkin pies on Tuesday, and eight pumpkin pies on Wednesday. How many pumpkin pies did she bake altogether?
2. Jasmine made fourteen cups of butternut squash soup for Thanksgiving dinner. The family ate nine cups of the soup at dinner. How many cups of soup were left over?
3. Mary had two people come over for Thanksgiving dinner. Seven more people arrived after that. How many people were at the Thanksgiving dinner in all?

Enjoy doing these problems with family or friends. Think of all the things you are thankful for this season.

Stephanie Wissler
Math ASSIST CGS/GHR
swissler@coventryct.org



From Our Reading Room ~

Tips for Choosing “Just Right” Books for Independent Reading

Choosing a *just right* book is like the *Three Little Bears* story—just right for one child isn’t just right for another. Books may be too hard, too easy, or just right! How do you know if it’s just right?

Just right books:

- provide a challenge that is achievable.
- provide new learning opportunities.
- teach new strategies and skills.
- give just the right amount of challenge and support.

Too hard books:

- don’t allow children to grasp the meaning of the text.
- make the reading experience laborious.
- force children to read word-by-word instead of more naturally in phrases.
- may create frustration for your child.

Easy books:

- help children feel in control.
- are relaxing and enjoyable.
- help children practice fluency.

Find a “just right” book with the Five Finger Rule!

- Choose a book and read the first page or two.
- Put one finger up for every word you don’t know.
- If five of your fingers go up while reading, choose another book

- If only two or three fingers go up, you’ve found a “just right” book. Don’t forget the value of reading aloud to your child! (ideas taken from *Reading Connection*).

What a child wants to read may be too hard. Reading aloud to your child a book of his/her choice can create “quality” time together and encourage a love of books.

- Read regularly. Try to read to your child every day. You might aim for 10-15 minutes of bed-time reading for a peaceful end to the day. Tuck read-alouds into the time when dinner is the oven.
- Take turns choosing books. Your child may want to hear old favorites again and again. Use your turn for new titles and variety (nonfiction and poetry).
- Let your child participate. Ask your child to turn the pages when you read. Also, he/she can finish sentences that rhyme or fill in words he/she knows. Go slowly so he/she has time to understand the story and look at the illustrations.
- Be playful. You can use different voices for different characters (a high, squeaky voice for a chicken or a deep, booming voice for a horse). Substitute your child’s name for the main character’s name, use family names for other characters.



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- If only two or three fingers go up, you’ve found a “just right” book. Don’t forget the value of reading aloud to your child!



From Our School Psychologist ~ Mrs. Heather Zilora

In kindergarten and first grade *Second Step* lessons have begun. *Second Step* is a program by the Committee for Children. This program is designed to promote social competence and reduce children’s social and emotional problems. Research indicates that the school and family are the two most important social and emotional learning environments for children. We need to take advantage of the opportunities in the school setting to teach positive social and emotional skills.

The *Second Step* program focuses on empathy training, impulse control, problem solving and anger management. With the use of puppets, songs, videos, and picture cards the lessons give the opportunity for children to share and talk about feelings. As the lessons continue I will send home letters to inform parents about the topic being discussed and activities that can be done at home to transfer the learning from school to home. I am enjoying this opportunity to spend time with the students in their classrooms.

Heather Zilora
School Psychologist
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With the use of puppets, songs, videos, and picture cards the lessons give the opportunity for children to share and talk about feelings.



www.coventryecc.org

From Our Friends at the Coventry Early Childhood Center

Any major change in a child's life can cause stress. Common sources of stress are the birth of a new sibling or the divorce of parents. Stress also can be caused by the death of a relative or a beloved pet, a family move, separation from parents for extended periods, pressure to succeed, overly strict discipline, and natural disasters (even when the child has only seen them on television).

Not all stress can, or should, be avoided. Young children do not view the world as adults do. Misunderstandings or feelings of confusion can build up and leave children with stress they cannot handle alone. Young children cannot easily verbalize these feelings, so we adults must be aware of physical or behavioral changes: loss of appetite, sleep troubles, nightmares, headaches, stomach-aches, or regressive behaviors such as thumb-sucking.

Children often deal with stress through their play. They may act out events they find disturbing. One child may re-create an airplane crash after hearing about a real airline accident. Another may use dolls to have a conversation about divorce. This type of play helps children cope with events and feelings that might otherwise be overwhelming.

Adults play an important role in helping children cope with stress by providing a supportive atmosphere in which to talk about or play out concerns. We need to acknowledge and accept the feelings children express and give them our support, at home and at school. An attitude of love, understanding, and acceptance helps children get through difficult times.

The CECC Staff



Donuts With Donna

DONUTS WITH DONNA: The superintendent of schools is available for casual conversations with community members during the school year. "Donuts with Donna" is a way for you to greet your school superintendent, ask questions, and keep informed about education in our town.

Please feel free to stop by, where there will be an informal atmosphere with an open dialogue and no set agenda. The next session of "Donuts with Donna" is Wednesday, November 17, from 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. at Thymes Remembered, 1703 Boston Turnpike, (Route 44).



Weather-Related/Emergency Closings, Delays, and Early Release Notifications

Announcements regarding these closings, delayed openings, and early releases will be made via our ALERTNOW calling system. In addition to broadcasting this information on selected TV and radio stations, all student homes are now phoned by ALERTNOW. If families would like a list of the selected media outlets, please see the website at www.coventrypublicschools.org.

For an electronic copy of this newsletter, or for additional information about the Coventry Grammar School, please visit our website: www.coventryps.org/cgs/cgs.html



PTO News

We had another great turnout at our October meeting! Thank you to all of the parents who volunteered to chair and help out with some of our events; we couldn't do it without you!

Despite rainy, cold weather, we had a great time with the families that came to our Family BINGO Night on October 15. Thank you for coming to enjoy some family fun and for bringing lots of yummy snacks for everyone to share! We greatly appreciate the school supply donations which will be presented to Mrs. Moyer at the next PTO meeting.

The proceeds from the Scholastic Book Fair at the Open House will allow us to purchase books for CGS Dolphin Book Days, where each student will be given a free book to take home. The first Dolphin Book Day will be Friday, October 29 (in conjunction with Storybook Character Day).

Thanks to all the families that participated in the Lyman Orchards pie fundraiser and Original Artworks fundraiser. The pies will be available for pickup from 1:30 – 6 p.m. on November 16, which is an early release day for students and the first parent-teacher conference day. We are hopeful that the Original Artwork items will also be ready for pickup on November 16. All of the proceeds from these fundraisers will be used to support our Cultural Arts Program (the first presentation was the Sir George and the Dragon puppet show on October 20).

On Wednesday, November 10, from 4 – 8 p.m., Thymes Remembered Gift Shop is partnering with the PTO for an evening of early holiday shopping. Debbie Donati of Thymes Remembered is graciously opening her store (and staying open late) for this event. The store will host other home-based businesses run by CGS moms, including Leigh Lezotte (Dove® Chocolate Discoveries™), Julie LaFountain (Tastefully Simple), and Crissy Stinson (handmade jewelry). A portion of all sales from this event will be donated to the PTO in support of our school's Cultural Arts Program. Best of all, free babysitting will be available at Coventry Grammar School during this event! Come and browse the many handmade items from local vendors, made in USA products, environmentally friendly products, and products made from recycled items throughout the store. Debbie has a great selection of unique gifts and collectibles, gourmet gift baskets and area town keepsakes. Sample delectable goodies from Dove® Chocolate Discoveries™ and Tastefully Simple, and purchase beautiful handmade jewelry. See the display of Coventry Grammar School spirit wear and place your holiday orders for the kids. Shop locally, beat the holiday rush and support our school!

Upcoming Events:

- Monday, November 8, at 6:30 p.m. is our next PTO meeting (please note earlier start time). Free babysitting is available.
- Wednesday, November 10, from 4 – 8 p.m. is our "Beat the Holiday Rush Shopping Event" at Thymes Remembered Gift Shop. Free babysitting available at CGS while you shop!
- Saturday, December 4, Bake Sale at the town Craft Fair (Coventry High School). We need bakers and volunteers to work at the sale during various shifts on Saturday. If interested, please contact Samantha Kasulis at sammui619@gmail.com.

Look for the CGS PTO on Facebook and become a member today!

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PTO Treasurer's Report ~ as of October 19, 2010

September 29 - October 19, 2010

Treasurer: Camilla Byam

Please note: Proceeds received from the Lyman Orchard fundraiser will be reported in the December newsletter.

Beginning Balance:	\$1469.11
Income: ~ Book Fair start up cash returned after book sale - \$250.00 ~ PTO membership dues deposited - \$25.00	\$275.00
Expenses: ~ For babysitting at PTO meeting - \$50 ~ Reimbursement to Beth Hassett for PTO supplies - \$79.00 ~ Payment to Becca Osbourne for Fine Arts Babysitting - \$40.00	(\$169.00)
Ending Balance:	\$1575.11

