

TEACHER Talk

Fourth Graders Experience Immigration Through Researching, Role-Playing

COMING TO AMERICA: FIRST STOP ELLIS ISLAND

The students look forward to many new and different challenges at Franklin School every year, but probably the most popular unit of study is the immigration unit in the social studies curriculum. After learning about how we became a country and the type of government our country was founded upon, the unit of study changes to immigration. The fourth graders learn about how the United States became a melting pot and the great migrations that occurred in the late 1800s and early 1900's.

Then on Wednesday, January 21st, Ellis Island came to life in the Franklin auditorium. The students' costumes and props were excellent and looked so realistic. Sharply at 9am, the immigrants were transferred into the "Great Hall" and began to be processed by Inspectors, and Fourth Grade Teachers, Kennedy, Jones, Pankau and Belmonte. The first stop was at the legal station



Franklin School fourth graders study American Immigration in fun and interesting ways ways.

where passports and bags were examined. After passing through this station, it was off to the medical station to look for diseases like trachoma, which was a common conta-

rious eye infection in the early 1900's. Other health issues were also checked such as posture, strength, and skin ailments. The last stop was the mental station where immigrants

were tested on various puzzles and hands on activities to test their mental capacity.

Luckily, no immigrants from this year's group were deported, however there were a few passengers detained for some minor infractions. "I really loved being an immigrant, especially being able to dress up like one," said Paige Taylor a fourth grader in Mrs. Kennedy's classroom. At the end of the activity the 4th graders had a better understanding of how the immigrants might have felt going through Ellis Island and some of the difficulties they faced in a new country.

As a culminating activity, the 4th graders also took a field trip to the Swedish American museum in the Andersonville neighborhood of Chicago to visit their immigration exhibit. It was a great opportunity for the students to see some real artifacts that immigrants brought to Chicago from Sweden. Students also got the chance to live on a Swedish farm and complete some chores before packing up and sailing to America.



K-5 Art Teacher & PREA President, Fred Klonsky

A Message From PREA President, Fred Klonsky

I'm wrapping up my last term as President of the Park Ridge Education Association. I've served in the post off and on for the past ten years. It has been an honor.

I work with a group of teachers that make me proud to call myself a member of the teaching profession. All the research suggests that teacher quality is an important factor when it comes to student success. Certainly in Park Ridge, teacher quality, along with a supportive community of taxpayers, involved parents and extended families, provide the most positive atmosphere for District 64 students.

Teacher Talk is a yearly publication of the Park Ridge Education Association, which is the union that all District 64 teachers choose to belong to. We are affiliated with the Illinois Education Association and the National Education Association.

An early leader of the NEA was a Chicago educator named Ella Flagg Young. She was a graduate of the University of Chicago, an active suffragette and the first woman president of the NEA in 1910.

Young believed in both the role of teachers in deciding the curriculum and in the active role of women in society. She always encouraged teachers to stand up and be participants in school decisions. She believed that parents and teachers, those who are the closest and most knowledgeable about children, were the ones who could be counted on to make the wisest decisions about what went on in schools and classrooms.

I would like to dedicate this issue of Teacher Talk to Ella Flagg Young.

Not Just Dodgeball Anymore: D64 Physical Education Lessons Promote Health Awareness for Students

Franklin School Physical Education teachers have just completed a heart healthy unit for their elementary students. The unit began with a series of tagging games teaching the students the importance of fat, carbohydrates and protein in their daily diets. The students were also taught how their bodies utilize and burn fats, carbohydrates and proteins. This series started with the consumption and use of fat. Students would accumulate fat, represented by bean bags. This showed an understanding of how much more difficult and tiring it becomes when we tend to store too much fat. The students then participated in fat burning activities that would use the extra, accumulated fat.

Next, the students learned to read nutrition labels and identify all three forms of energy: carbohydrates, fats and proteins. If they were



Students in Physical Education classes at Franklin Elementary School enjoy the climbing wall as they learn about nutrition.



A Franklin student finds out that it takes a lot of heart to make it through the Heart Adventure Obstacle Course.

tagged by the “fat-tagger” they had to choose a label and were required to find out how many grams of fat were in the product and had to walk that many laps (low intensity, long duration activities burn the most fat). If they were tagged by “carbohydrate-tagger”, they had to jump rope one time for each gram found in the food (carbohydrates are the most abundantly used energy in our bodies). If they were tagged by protein they were to do crunches or push-ups (protein aids in building muscle).

The series was then taken to one more level. Fast food menus from a variety of restaurants were hung on the walls. This time when they were tagged they went to the menu of their choice and found an item they like to eat. They then found the fat, carbohydrate or protein content of the food and performed the appropriate activity to burn the extra energy off.

The unit then concluded with the students spending two days participating in the Heart Adventure Obstacle Course and climbing wall activities. Both the climbing wall and the Heart Adventure Obstacle Course were funded by ELF grants.

Franklin School is also participating in *Jump Rope for Heart* for the first time this year. The students will all participate in this program during their regularly scheduled physical education classes.

Parent Perspective: What District 64 Schools Mean to Our Family

by Linda Bruce
ROOSEVELT/LINCOLN PARENT

We have four children. Our oldest is a sophomore at Maine South, our second child is a seventh grader at Lincoln and we have a fourth and third grader at Roosevelt. The Bruce family has been in this District since 1998, eleven years, and I can say our experience has been nothing but enjoyable and successful.

I have watched my four children grow from young five year old students into confident, kind, capable children and the District has been a huge part of developing that. We as parents are the base for our children and the District is a close second. Being a parent can be very overwhelming. We all have areas where we feel competent and



Linda Bruce with three of her children.

areas where someone else’s expertise can go a long way. I have watched staff pick up on my child’s needs, fill a void and create a confidence in my child that was not there before. This is one of the things I value most about our District. It is a priceless gift.

The whole-child approach that the District has embraced is very successful. Academics are an obvious necessity in the developing of our children. I have seen the social and emotional aspects of students in District 64 valued as much as the academics. This is a triumphant and important value that I see put into practice every day.

I see the District, along with valuing each child as whole person, connecting with the parents and the community. In doing this, they have created a comfortable tight-knit neighborhood that make families feel important and a part of the system. I have volunteered and been involved with PTO over the past eleven years and feel that my thoughts and opinions are valued by the District.

Our family is a much stronger unit because of the programs and staff that District 64 has in place. I am sure that our children will grow up and be productive, amazing people and a huge portion of their success will be due to a solid academic and emotional foundation given to them by a fantastic school district. Our children will benefit from this excellent District for the rest of their lives.

Through Music, The Ambition to Help, Heal

There are not many things more important to kids than feeling like they have the power to change things. They are always testing to see what they can do to change their bedtime, if they can chew gum in school, or use iPods in the classroom. The power of making positive change can be intoxicating, even to a seasoned teacher.

In the past we had tried many different kinds of service learning projects. I have become more involved in different charitable organizations, and the students are asked to learn and see things outside themselves ...to see things change in positive direction – to make a difference. As a school we teach and discuss how one person can truly make a difference. As teachers, we also try to have the students see what wonderful things can be accomplished when we put our heads together. Sometimes the students take over and their energy makes it even more meaningful because their hearts are really in it.

Teaching 8th graders is often challenging, but the best part of it is their passion. They are passionate about so many things. Sadly, it is often not the topics being taught, and it is our job to make them curious and engaged learners in social studies or language arts – or even movie making. But this past school year, we were the learners, and the students were the teachers. We saw what kids are capable of when they want to. Our students decided to study the effects of Alzheimer's Disease and it led to connecting with a local organization called "Without Warning" that supports families with early onset Alzheimer's. In the process, the passionate musicians in the grade decided to have a concert to raise money for "Without Warning". The concert included many local teen bands and raised money for this organization that gets no government or business grants. Without Warning arranged to have a man and his wife come and speak who struggled with early onset Alzheimer's



Music students reflect on using their skills to help benefit the health of others.

Kalo Foundation Visits Emerson, Shares Artistic History

As an Art Department goal, Emerson Art teachers, Cindy Davies and Erich Marx were looking for a meaningful presentation to bridge their Crafts and Printmaking elective classes with community resources. Enter Kalo Arts Foundation presenters, Burt Olsson and Herb Zuegel who graciously shared their knowledge of Park Ridge's rich artistic history during two separate elective periods for 7th and 8th graders on Monday, February 9th. Highlighted were some photos, drawings, stories, silver jewelry and tools from a handwrought silversmith tradition dating from the turn of 20th century from the well-reknowned Kalo Shop that made its home in the Park Ridge community.

Herb Zuegel started the presentation with several pictures pulled from Digital Past, a website which highlights several Park Ridge historic homes, schools, municipal buildings and businesses. It was interesting for the students to recognize several of these buildings, among them the Carnegie Library (now housing a hair salon/spa), corner of Prospect and Northwest Highway, the original bank building (now the Chase Bank), their existence today in Park Ridge, and the main street area around the Pickwick Theater.

Burt Olsson brought many beautiful samples of silver jewelry and copper repousse' created by his father, Yngve Olsson, as well as the tools used to create the silver pieces by hand in the Kalo Shop. Kalo jewelry styles were mostly Art Nouveau with some Art Deco influences, depending on the artisan. Necklaces, buttons, brooches and cuff links were passed around for the students to see and touch. Mr. Olsson explained the way silverware utensils would be cut from a template and then hammered into shape. Silversmiths would use a pitch pot, a large open metal bowl filled to the brim with a black, tar like substance used to hold the silver pieces as they were being worked, as well as provide a soft, cushioned surface so designs could be tapped. A large copper repousse vase with vines and grapes impressed the students as it was a 'school' piece created when Mr. Olsson's father, Yngve was around 18 years old. A large binder containing many de-



Mr. Burt Olsson shares his unique knowledge and experience of art architecture and history with Emerson students.

tailed pencil sketches was on hand to show the wide variety of jewelry created by Yngve Olsson. Burt pointed out that frequently the drawings were often folded to create symmetry in a design. Popular silver pieces that sold well at the Kalo Shop usually were made from a die cast mold out of brass.

The Kalo Shop was in existence from about 1908 until the 1970's when no one was left to take up the tradition of hand wrought silversmith work. The Kalo Shop at one time maintained a sales location downtown in Chicago on Wabash. Kalo silver jewelry is a collector's item nowadays, eagerly sought for its beautiful handwork and rich patina.

and the kids were moved. Then the kids simply took over.

We helped organize – because that is what teachers do best – but they kicked out the creative ideas, designed the t-shirt – the logo, and made tickets, raffled off prizes, and the students even pressed their parents into service. So, the total amount raised for the organization was over \$7,000. I don't

think the kids even realize they were working. I think they mostly thought it was fun, because this is what *they* wanted to do. So even the kids who sold tickets at the door took their job seriously. The kids who organized all the guitars backstage and found a fog machine, and got other teachers involved (thank you Mrs. Broeker!!) did so on their own time and because they were eager to help. This was my first experience at seeing what the passion of an 8th grader could do. Too often getting the students engaged is like pushing a boulder up a mountain. This was more like hanging onto the tail of a runaway thoroughbred. It was exhilarating.

Now, almost a year later, those former 8th graders (currently freshman at Maine South) are trying to come back to Emerson and get our current 7th graders involved. This year's Tiger 7th graders selected Without Warning to be the organization to work with in our service learning. They are starting to learn about Alzheimer's and its devastating effects. The concert is scheduled for February 27th. Hopefully it will be as profitable for the Without Warning group that helps so many families in the Park Ridge area and far beyond. We also hope it is the kind of event that makes kids see the power of what can be done to help other people when a group puts their minds to it. This is the kind of event that everyone gets something meaningful from. We are ready to hang on for the ride.

Emerson Students to Perform 2nd Annual Spring Musical



“We’re all in this together!” What a perfect description of Emerson’s first-ever musical last spring. In May 2008, Emerson students and staff, for the first time in District 64’s history, staged a full-scale musical production. All three performances sold out last year. What a testament to Emerson students supporting their classmates! The 2008 production of *High School Musical* proved to be so successful that this year Emerson is once again coming together to produce our second musical production, *Music Man, Jr.*

On April 17 and 18 2009, Emerson will present the middle school version of the Broadway hit, *The Music Man, Jr.* With the full support of Dr. Mogil, students, staff and parents have come together to stage this wonderful story of what happens to a small Iowa town when a con man arrives in River City. All students who auditioned were cast in the musical. This year over 140 students from sixth, seventh, and eighth grades are participating as leads, Pick-a-Little Ladies, Grecian Urns, townspeople, and of course, the seventy-six trombone band members. For the second year in a row, Terry Broecker and Mike Kennedy, Emerson music teachers and choral directors, have teamed up to stage the production.

Performance Times:
April 17th, 7pm
April 18th, 2pm & 7pm



For Tickets and Information, Contact Ms. Viscuso @ Emerson Middle School

Is there trouble in River City? Not with the help of Emerson’s parents, faculty and staff. Again this year, parents and staff have stepped up to help with props, costumes, choreography, lighting, sound, ticket sales, make-up, and as stagehands. The time, energy, and ingenuity of parents and teachers come together for an amazing experience for every student at Emerson. So, with the roles cast, the parents and staff helping in the wings, and the entire Emerson music department on board, you can bet that Professor Harold Hill and Marian the librarian will dance and sing any trouble right out of River City!

Emerson MS Introduces Student Led Conferencing

On December 27, 2008, The New York Times published an article about student led conferences that stated, “researchers have long hailed the benefits of such conferences — anointing students as the main stake-holders in their education, accountable for their performance during the school day and responsible for their academic future.” The Turtles, an eighth grade core at Emerson Middle School, are hoping to see these benefits first-hand when they conduct their first round of student led conferences in March.



Students will take the initiative in outlining their progress to their parents when student led conferences begin this school year.

Rather than a traditional parent-teacher conference, each student prepares to meet with his or her parents to share examples of work that represent self-identified areas of strength and concern. The students evaluate their work, their effort and behavior, set goals for the future, and they simultaneously develop their presentation skills. The Turtles use their advisory minutes (generally, twenty minutes each Wednesday) to choose their work, organize their portfolios, and rehearse their conference. Meeting in the neutral setting of the Learning Resource Center, families will listen to their son or daughter’s presentation and discuss how they can help their child reach their goals and maintain

momentum into high school. Of course, if parents desire a traditional parent-teacher conference, they are able to contact the core teachers to schedule a meeting.

Although it takes a lot of preparation, the Turtle team believes that going through the process of student led conferences puts the responsibility for students’ success on the students themselves. This perspective is especially important as students prepare to transition to high school.

JEFFERSON PRE-K PROGRAM

ELF/Teachers Bring StoryBus & Literacy to Pre-K Students

On January 13, 2009 the Kohl McCormick StoryBus spent the day at Jefferson School. The StoryBus is a 37 foot Winnebago museum-on-wheels, filled with interactive exhibits based on classic children’s literature. The theme on this visit was The Three Little Pigs. Children from Jefferson Special Needs Preschool and Jefferson Extended Day Kindergarten Program had the opportunity to build houses of straw, sticks, and bricks. They also dressed up in clothing and assumed the roles of the pigs and the wolf. In addition they were able to go fishing, pick apples from a tree, and simulate blowing the pigs’ houses down. The day before a professional storyteller, Oda-William King, told all of the children the story in a very dramatic and interactive way.



This experience was made possible by a grant from The Elementary Learning Foundation written by Susan Luif, a special needs preschool teacher at Jefferson. The grant will fund 2 visits from the StoryBus and two half days of professional development at the Erikson Institute in downtown Chicago.

The mission of the StoryBus is to build enthusiasm for literature and learning to read among young children. The StoryBus teaches emergent literacy skills to children by encouraging the development of phonemic awareness, communication, expression, sequencing, listening, speaking and writing.

“Our children had so much fun on the StoryBus. Some of them cried when it was time to get off the bus to allow another group to come on,” said Susan Luif. “We are grateful to the Elementary Learning Foundation for making this experience possible for the children. They actually felt like they were living the pages of the book, The Three Little Pigs.”

Washington Students Organize/Give to Soldiers



Student Council members at Washington School work together to gather items for "Operation Give".

For the first service project of the year, Washington School's Student Council, with the help of *Operation Give*, sponsored "Stuffing Stockings for Soldiers." We collected items to send to our soldiers to brighten their holidays. Each grade level was assigned different items to bring in. Some of the items collected were microwave popcorn, hot cocoa, candy canes,

council members who helped remind everyone about this project, as well as those who helped stuff the stockings, not to mention the generous donations from all of the families at Washington," explained Mrs. Benjamin and Ms. Smaha, student council sponsors. The project was a great success!

Chapstick, granola bars, travel games, trail mix, crossword puzzles, and many others.

After organizing all of the items, we stuffed 173 stockings and sent an additional four 35lb boxes of leftover items to the Operation Give headquarters. In all, we shipped 15 boxes containing 550lbs. of goodies to our soldiers! "We couldn't have done this without the help of the parent volunteers that helped stuff and pack stockings, Mr. Dziwulski who helped drive and carry boxes to FedEx, the student

Second Graders Honor Army Specialist

Last spring, Lillian Ludkowski's second grade class at Washington School wrote letters and collected six large boxes of snack foods, candy, games, books, and other items and sent them to Army Specialist Kevin Clarke who was serving in Iraq. Clarke, the son of Mrs. Ludkowski's neighbor, was thrilled to receive the boxes, and he shared the contents with his fellow soldiers. He was particularly happy to receive a bag of Doritos. Snack foods such as these are made in Turkey for the soldiers, and according to Clarke, they just don't taste the same. Clarke wrote back to the class, sent photos, and told the class about his job driving vehicles for the Army. Earlier in the year, Clarke had been injured when an IED exploded and destroyed the Humvee he was driving.



Clarke returned to the area after fourteen months in Iraq in July.

Mrs. Ludkowski organized a 21st birthday party for him on the grounds of Washington School so that he and the class could meet. The students, their parents, Senator Dan Kotowski, Mayor Howard Frimark, Principal Kim Nasshan, and other well wishers attended the party. Clarke told the children about the extreme heat in Iraq and pesky camel spiders, and he showed the students pictures taken during his tour of duty. After presenting Clarke with a 21st birthday present, cake and punch were served. Specialist Clarke is expected to return to combat in June after eleven months of duty at Fort Lewis in Washington.

"Our district is in the business of educating hearts as well as minds," said Mrs. Ludkowski. "Although the students are only seven and eight years old, their actions can have a profound impact on the lives of others. This project not only improved their letter writing skills; the students also had the opportunity to experience the rewards of empathy and responsible citizenship."

LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Lincoln Middle School LRC Receives Award

Lincoln's LRC received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, in conjunction with the American Library Association, highlighting titles in honor of Lincoln's 200th birthday. These titles focus on Lincoln's belief that all men are created equal.

This program is made possible by a major gift awarded to the library through the We the People Bookshelf national grant project. Lincoln's LRC was one of 3,000 libraries across the country selected to receive a We the People Bookshelf grant, which provided free hardcover editions of 17 classic books on the theme of "Created Equal," Spanish translations of four of the titles and supporting educational materials. The books and the educational materials align well with Lincoln's Social Studies curriculum and with our goals for Civil Behavior.

Industrial Technology (INTE) Department Still on the Cutting Edge

District 64's Industrial Technology Department is still a hands-on program (where students actually use hand tools and machines to create and build projects they can take home), as compared to other Industrial Technology module programs (where you sit at a test station or cubical, and learn theory, and are not able to choose or take home a project). As a matter of fact, District 64's Industrial Technology Department has more to offer than some high school programs.

According to Richard Szaflarski, the Industrial Technology Department Teacher at Lincoln Middle School, "I feel we out perform module learning, and still have one of the best programs in the area, and possibly the state. The elective programs offered in District 64 are much more numerous and advanced compared to other schools. We take pride in our elective programs. Students do not realize the diversity of offerings. After all, what is better than hands-on learning?"

District 64's Industrial Technology Department articulated with Maine South's Teachers and Department Heads earlier this year, and found that District 64 graduates are better prepared than other district's students for continuing Industrial Technology programs, their new engineering program, and other basic life skills.

Maine South's Department Chair of Applied Arts and Technology, Pat Duggan, Ed.D. stated, "We are excited about our new Engineering Program and wanted to introduce it to District 64 middle school teachers. We were surprised and overjoyed about the middle school Industrial Technology program in District 64. We find District 64 student are better prepared and excel in our engineering program. District 207 students do not realize how advance our school systems are and how well prepared they are for college, careers, and life." Therefore, don't be left behind, *be on the cutting edge* with Industrial Technology.

Teachers, Students Reap Benefits of Student Teachers

High expectations for teaching and learning have always been the norm at Roosevelt Elementary School. Perhaps that is one of the reasons that prospective teaching candidates often request to student teach at Roosevelt. But Roosevelt third grade teacher, Tracie Thomas, sees the many benefits of having a student teacher. "It's not just

that you have an extra set of hands to help. It's a growth opportunity for the students as well as the teachers," explained Mrs. Thomas.

While observing Mrs. Thomas' classroom, it becomes clear that the role of the student teacher can improve learning in many ways. For example, students are often exposed to new teaching practices currently taught in university teaching programs. Student teachers, bringing these practices into the classroom for the first time, expose the culture

of the classroom to innovations designed to engage student interest.

But there are often benefits for the classroom teacher as well. "It's also an opportunity to reflect and build upon on my own current teaching methodology. While my role is to communicate and guide the student teacher through lessons, it also serves as a learning opportunity for the teacher - not to mention the many positives for my students," stated Mrs. Thomas.



Roosevelt third grade teacher, Tracie Thomas, assists in a lesson with her student teacher.

D64 Art/Industrial Tech Program: Not Just 'For the Birds'

It was a sunny day in Hodges Park. Hundreds of District 64 families were enjoying the Spring day and marveling at the creative work of their children. Hanging on every tree or displayed on tables scattered around the park were birdhouses. Each one was unique. Each one was the creation of a third grade student from one of District 64's five elementary schools.

The Birdhouse Project was funded by a grant from the Park Ridge Elementary Learning Foundation, also known as ELF.

Art teachers Tara Marolt, Kathy Hurley, Georg Luxton, Michaela Sorensen, Erich Marx and Fred Klonsky supervised the designs. Emerson Industrial Arts teacher, Steve Senf supervised the preparation of the 3500 pieces of wood that were needed for the Project.

Some observers compared it to the famous "Cows on Parade" that brought thousands of tourists to Chicago's Michigan Avenue a few years back.

But these creations, aside from the fact that they were made by all the talented third grade students in District 64, were different. Not only did they add a festive atmosphere to Uptown Park Ridge on that sunny afternoon, they also are now hanging in backyards and front porches all over town, providing a warm home for a feathered friend.



A third grader poses in Hodges Park while admiring her birdhouse that was completed for Art class.

At Field, Students Promote Being Green

It's quite easy being green at Field School. Students and staff, led by the school's Music, P.E. and Art teams, have spent this school year finding a variety of ways to be "green." Setting up bins for recycling cans and bottles, recognizing students and staff for their green behavior, creating holiday cards and bulletin



Field students perform in the "Wintergreen Sing."

boards out of recycled items, and having a green word of the week are just a few of the activities participated in by Field School students. Eugene the Field Mouse, donning a green t-shirt, has even made appearances in the Field lunchroom to congratulate students who are saving the Earth by using reusable containers and cutting back on waste. "Students are even taking things out of the garbage that could be recycled," said Matt Masari, Field 3rd grader. "Everyone is doing something to help."

The holidays are a time when Field has made an extra effort to be green. At Halloween, the PTO set up a booth where students could swap costumes. All costumes left over from the swap were donated to a children's charity. Every child in the school was part of the Field School Wintergreen Sing. Kindergarten through Grade 2 performed many green themed holiday songs while *Santa Goes Green*, written by John Jacobson and Mac Huff, was performed by Field's third, fourth, and fifth graders. Joani Heavey and Dave Govertson reworked several holiday classics including *I'm Dreaming of a Green Christmas* performed by the Field teachers (a holiday sing tradition), *Deck the Green Halls*, and *Be a Green One, Mr. Grinch*. The finale, *Our World*, a song about protecting the earth, was performed by all Field students and included both singing and sign language.

With months of school left, Field students, staff and parents will continue to find ways to make it easy to be green.