



MR. BENTHAM AND THE 45s

OCTOBER NEWS – WHERE WE’VE BEEN AND WHERE WE’RE GOING

Incredibly, we are already through the first month of the school year. We have had a fantastic start in Room 7 getting to know each other as well as ourselves, and how we are a strong contributing member of our classroom community. I am hopeful that each parent or guardian had an opportunity to read through the Dear 45s letter and personal message I sent home two weeks ago. The letter outlines the culture of accountability, trust, and respect for self and others that will be pillars for the 45s throughout the year. The personal message identifies what I see as student strengths and areas for improvement. If you have not yet had a chance, please take a moment to discuss these pieces with your student, what they mean to them, and how they reflect our classroom expectations.

STONE FOX

Beginning this month, we are beginning a longitudinal study of the novel “Stone Fox”. This is a fantastic, short story about a ten-year-old boy who, through compassion and determination, must save his family farm in Wyoming. After finishing the reading as a class, students will be working independently and in small groups to produce a well-rounded, cross-curricular project focusing on literacy, but also bringing in visual arts, drama, media and social studies. For more information, please look to the “Guide to Reading Stone Fox” package that each student received this week. There are numerous entry points where I would encourage you to get involved in your student’s learning.

MATH

James Hillier staff are working collaboratively towards building a stronger foundational understanding of mathematics fundamentals – not simply

the how of math is done, but also the why. To reflect this approach, an emphasis in room 7 will be on allowing students opportunities to *explain their math thinking* in conjunction with the *doing* of math. We have methods in our room for achieving this goal – Estimation 180, Bansho lessons (collaborative, group based problem solving), and number talks. Ideally, in combination with three-part math lessons, students will be exposed to different, peer-demonstrated strategies for approaching math problems, with the end goal being to expose the class to as many ways to be mathematicians as possible. We have begun this process in Number Sense and Numeracy, and I am encouraged by the level of student engagement and enthusiasm.

COMMUNITY CIRCLE

Some of your students may have come home telling their families about community circle. I thought it might be helpful to give you some insight into what this process looks like. On a nearly daily basis, we gather together as a class to discuss a topic of significance pertaining to what we are learning at the time, or a significant issue that is relevant to their citizenship in the classroom. It has become a safe space where the students can openly share their feelings and experiences, and has been foundational in building respect, trust, and listening skills in our room. In some instances, students have chosen to pass on commenting on the topic of the day, and this is their right. However, as they grow and mature into young adults, I am confident this process has allowed them to have their voice heard on a daily basis in what can often be a very busy class. Community Circle will be used to inform my assessment of oral

communication, and I am very pleased with student response and participation so far. If you have any questions about what Community Circle looks like in the classroom, please get in touch with me.

TERRY FOX WALK AND GARRETT RILEY

Our class played a hugely significant role in the Terry Fox Walk this past September, and I can honestly say that I have never been prouder of a group of young men and women. I asked them to take on a central role in promoting our event, fundraising, and learning how Terry Fox can be an example of integrity and perseverance in our room. They rose to the occasion, and exceeded my expectations. Our class was the highest contributing in the school, donating \$357 of a total \$1100 raised by James Hillier. Way to go 45s!

In their own way, each student has internalized the message of COURAGE. We were fortunate as a school to have Garrett Riley come to our school on the day of our Terry Fox Walk, to speak to our students about his experience with osteosarcoma.

Garrett is a young man who was diagnosed with the same cancer that afflicted Terry Fox, but has demonstrated tremendous courage in the face of a life-changing illness. Garrett is the embodiment of COURAGE – for myself and our class, he represents everything Terry Fox stood for, and continues to stand for. In recognition of Garrett’s gift to our school, our class produced a COURAGE mosaic and 27 individual letters to Garrett, detailing how he demonstrated courage to them. To say that the class worked extremely hard to make this gift a reality would be a massive understatement, and I encourage you to both talk with your

<p>student about Garrett and what they learned about him, and to visit the James Hillier Facebook page to witness what we created as a class.</p> <p>One of the best aspects of this “gratitude project” was the level of academic and character building activities that were built into the completion of the COURAGE mosaic and letter to Garrett. We discussed elements of art, how to write a proper paragraph, how to plan, revise, and edit your own writing and the writing of your peers, and how to think deeply and reflect on their own experiences with adversity.</p>	<p>GETTING IN TOUCH</p> <p>As you know, the push within James Hillier is developing Executive Functioning within our student population, and a critical component of this is communication via student agenda. I am very direct in the classroom about what needs to be written in their agenda on a daily basis, and I expect students to be accountable to their own home-based learning needs and expectations.</p> <p>As a parent of school-aged children myself, I greatly value the positive and collaborative relationship I have with my</p>	<p>daughter’s teacher. If you wish to reach out to me outside of the agenda, you can email me at anytime (craig.bentham@granderie.ca).</p> <p>Although I may not respond immediately, I will do my best to follow up as quickly as possible. The feedback I have received from several parents in the class has been entirely positive thus far, and reaffirms the goals I set for myself and the class at the beginning of the year. I look forward to a fantastic October!</p>
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The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago.

The second best time is right now.