

The Amherst-Regional Public Schools
English Language Education Program Newsletter

Vol. 1 No. 4 March - April 2009



*Give me the splendid silent sun
with all his beams full-dazzling.*

From Leaves of Grass, Walt Whitman (1819–1892)

A Light exists in Spring
Not present on the Year
At any other period —
When March is scarcely here

A Color stands abroad
On Solitary Fields
That Science cannot overtake
But Human Nature feels.

It waits upon the Lawn,
It shows the furthest Tree
Upon the furthest Slope you know
It almost speaks to you.

Then as Horizons step
Or Noons report away
Without the Formula of sound
It passes and we stay —

A quality of loss
Affecting our Content
As Trade had suddenly encroached
Upon a Sacrament.

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)



From the Editor:



Spring is here... and we are almost finished with the MEPA testing. The MEPA, which stands for Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment, is a mandatory test, given to all ELLs in grades K-12 every spring. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website posts that, "Federal and state laws require that limited English proficient (LEP) students be assessed annually to measure their proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, English, as well as

the progress they are making in learning English. In keeping with these laws, LEP students must participate in the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA), which consists of two assessments (...)". The two tests assessments are the MEPA –Reading and Writing and MELA–O (Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment–Oral). The MEPA test results will be available to us in September of 2009. You may already know that many of our students will have to take the MCAS tests as well. Thank you one and all for helping us with the assessment process, which could be very challenging at times.

With our students' and our hard work on the MEPA all completed, we are looking forward to longer and warmer days of spring, during which both prosaic and inspired learning will continue to take place. No matter what challenges are around and ahead of us, we, as educators, are always trying to catch the teachable moments and share them with our students. Of course, our students, too, never cease to bring joy and fresh ideas to us. In this newsletter, we are proud to present many wonderful pieces of writing created by our English Language Learners from the Fort River Elementary School. We are certain that they will bring a smile to your face. Enjoy!

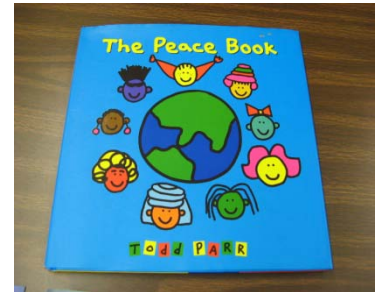
Renata S. Pienkawa, ELE Program Liaison

Fort River Elementary School

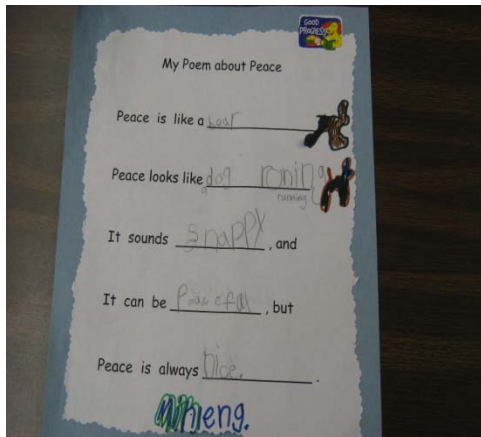
The ELL students' work below has been submitted by Carolina Rothkegel.

January 2009

A group of ELL students in 1st Grade listened to the story, "The Peace Book" by Todd Parr. They were able to discuss each page and, based on the story, have a deeper understanding of the meaning of "peace". They were also able to appreciate the beautiful illustrations. They created their own poems about peace. Check out their amazing writing and expression!



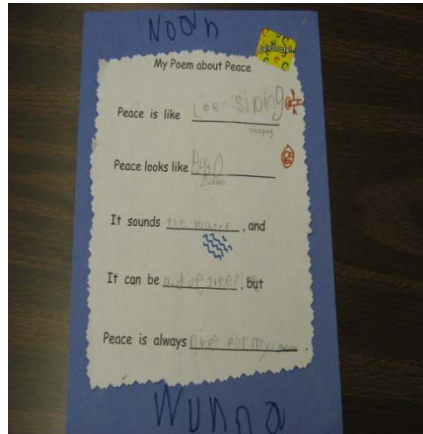
Minleng



Ayala



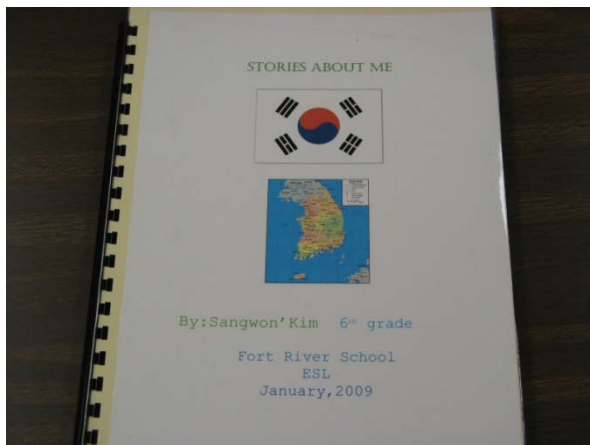
Wunna



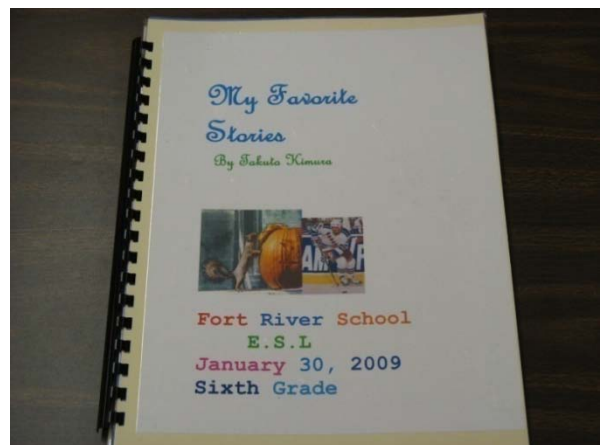
September to January 2008-2009.

Beginner English Language Learners in 6th grade wrote narratives based on the vocabulary units that they were studying. For each story they used the writing process. As a result of their work they published a collection of their stories. See the covers of the stories below!

Sangwon



Takuto



February 2009.

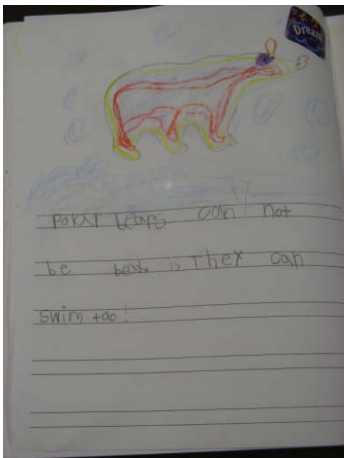
Through non-fiction books, students studied the life of polar bears and panda bears. This is the work of Intermediate English Language Learners in 1st grade.

Only first names are being used.

Wunna



Minleng



Ayala



The ELL students' work below has been submitted by Torie Weed.

Fort River ESL students in second grade have been learning to revise and edit their writing to make their compositions more interesting and easier to read. Here is a "small moment story" from K.S.

Students' names have been changed or initials used.

Cambodian New Year

At Cambodian New Year we did a dance. I felt nervous. I was talking to Sothea. I was laughing. "Sothea, I see my dad."

I heard people clapping. I saw my dad and aunts and uncles. And they were monks. That was at school in first grade. "Clap, Clap, Clap, Clap," the audience clapped.

"Yeah!" they cheered.

"Whoooo!" the audience hooted.

It was funny and fun. We ate at the music room and my dad brought soda and chips. I was playing with Sothea. We played tag. Saiyha tried to tag us. We were screaming, "OOOOOOOO!"

That day was a fun day. I love it so so so much. My mom saw me on the newspaper. She kissed me on the cheek. I hugged her.



Fort River ESL students in third grade have recently completed a study of paragraph structure. They learned to use topic, detail, and conclusion sentences to create well organized and clear paragraphs.

When My Basement Flooded!

By K. Y.

When my basement flooded my family was surprised. It flooded at night. Our carpet got soaking wet. We had to move the stuff out in the garage. We had to dry the carpet. I was sucking the water with my water gun and shot it outside. Then we put the heater in the basement. The carpet started to dry. I hope it floods again.

Third graders did research on an animal as part of the animal adaptation science unit. Using the picture book Diary of a Worm as a mentor text, the third graders then wrote imaginary entries for their animals. Can you find the science fact and humorous idea in each entry?



Diary of a Crocodile

By C.A.

June 29, 2000

Dear Diary,

Today I just turned 8. I am going to take my first swim. My name is X-Ray. I'm a crocodile and I am 5 feet long.

Bye,

X-Ray the Crocodile

June 30, 2000

Dear Diary,

Today I went to school and I tried to eat a zebra, but he got away. If I wasn't so fat, I would have chased after it.

Bye,

X-Ray the Crocodile



July 1, 2000

Dear Diary,

Today I am having a sleepover at Lion's house. He said he was going to give me a toy. Before I go to sleep I am going to show him my three eye lids.

Bye,

X-Ray the Crocodile

July 2, 2008

Dear Diary,

Today I saw a tiger and he was 6 feet long and he looked really good. So when he came to take a drink, I jumped up on him and he jumped too. He was my friend, so we played.

Bye,

X-Ray the Crocodile

July 3, 2000

Dear Diary,

Today I was at the beach and I got hot. So I opened my mouth to keep me from getting to hot and mom said that we might move to the beach.

Bye,

X-Ray the Crocodile

July 4, 2000

Dear Diary,

Today I'm going to my first hunt and dad's going to bring me to it. I bet will be fun I got a fish dad give it to me.

Bye,

X-Ray the Crocodile

July 5, 2000

Dear Diary,

Today I went to a zebra eating party and I eat all of zebras . It was fun and I saw tiger and lion and then zebra run away and we all like to eat zebras

Bye,

X-Ray the Crocodile

July 6, 2000

Dear Diary,

Today me and lion played lions and crocodiles. Lion won the game. We went to the pool because I like the water. Then went home to play.

Bye,

X-Ray the Crocodile

July 7, 2000

Dear Diary

Today I went swimming and I saw all 18 types of crocodiles. It was fun seeing all of those crocodiles.

Bye,

X-Ray the Crocodile

July 8, 2000

Dear Diary

Today I'm getting a toy! I'm so happy because I am going hunting all day. I really like it a lot.

Bye,

X-Ray the Crocodile



6th Grade Holiday Essays

Submitted by Laura Dombrowski

Intermediate level 6th graders worked hard on their essays about a favorite holiday. They fused personal experience with information they found through online research.

**Students' names have been omitted.*

Greek Easter

Easter is a Greek Christian Orthodox holiday. It started almost two thousand years ago and it celebrates Christ's resurrection. The Greek celebration of Pasha (Easter) begins on a Sunday two months before Easter Sunday with Apokria (carnivals). The next day, Monday, is called Kathara Deftera (clean Monday). That Monday Greeks go out to picnics and fly kites in the country side. That's when Lent begins. It ends with Easter Sunday.

The Holy week is the week before Easter Sunday. People go to church and they spend the week remembering Christ's life with rituals and symbols. On Easter Sunday Greek families get together for a feast. The main part of the feast is the lamb. The lamb is roasted. Another important part is the red eggs. Families color boiled eggs red to represent the blood of Jesus Christ. There is a tradition where people hit each others' eggs for good luck for the year.

Some things about the celebration of Greek Easter have changed .
In the old days there were no bakeries so you had to make tsoureki by yourself. Tsoureki is a sweet bread that Greeks eat for dessert. In the old days they used their hands to turn the lamb but now they have motors that turn it by itself. To buy a lamb they now go to a butchers in the old days they asked a shepherd for one .

The Holy week is a great time for me. I go to church every day and I keep Lent. That is the giving up of meat and dairy. I do not listen to music and I try to think of how Christ lived in those days. Saturday night I go to church with my family and at twelve o'clock fireworks go off and we light candles and say Christos Anesti (Christ has risen). Sunday morning our family and friends come over and we have a party. We break the red eggs ,and eat the lamb.

I would like to keep the tradition of celebrating Greek Easter the same and pass it on to my children. I will teach them how to make tsoureki take them to church and make them try to keep Lent. I will try to do my best to teach them and I hope they will teach their children.

Chuseok

Chuseok is a major Korean holiday and the biggest holiday for lots of people. Chuseok is like Thanksgiving for American. It is a harvest festival. However some people don't celebrate it. In Chuseok lots of people go either to their parents' or their grandparents' house to celebrate their ancestors. So on Chuseok there is lots of traffic.

Many people believe that Chuseok originated from an ancient shamanistic celebration of the harvest moon festival. Also a lot of people believe that Chuseok is the harvest celebration of their ancestors.

Lots of Koreans still use the lunar calendar for holidays even though there are more holidays on the Gregorian calendar. Koreans started to use the Gregorian calendar when Japan conquered Joseon (the country that existed before North and South Korea were split) and used it until World War II (from 1910 to 1945) ended. Koreans still use the Gregorian calendar for business and international issues.

Nowadays Koreans celebrate Chuseok by going to the home of oldest male person on the father's side of the family. On Chuseok lots of families have a feast and pay respect to their ancestors. I don't know why we celebrate our ancestors. Now people have to celebrate Chuseok unless they are in the part of Korea that does not celebrate Chuseok (that part is mostly the Christian part of the Korea). Chuseok and lots of other holidays are Buddhist. Before American people came to Joseon, Joseon was completely Buddhist. Christianity came to Korea about 50 years ago. So old people mostly believe in Buddhism

My mother's parents and my father's parents are still Buddhist. My parents, my brothers and I are Christian. So it was very weird when I first celebrated Chuseok but it got better. My family celebrates like this (I think lots of people celebrate like this also): First we make food or cut the food. Next we set the table. Then we pray. Finally we eat the food unless we play games. There are a lot of Koreans games to play but only some Koreans play those games on the holidays. There are some people who still play Korean folk.

I'm not sure if I will keep celebrating that holiday. It takes lots of time to do it and I don't really remember how to do it (Well I never saw how my family did it). Also there are lots of rules you should follow (you don't have to do this but it is very disrespectful not to follow the rules) for lots of people who came to your house for that holiday. Those are the reasons why I do not want to do it but it is pretty good when you celebrate Chuseok. You get Korean rice cakes (There lots of different kind of Korean rice cake) and more stuff food that tastes good and you might get to play Korean folk games which is fun (I have two games that Korean play for fun).



~Fort River ELE Staff~

Torie Weed -- Torie has been a teacher at the secondary and elementary levels in Amherst, MA for 24 years, and for 18 years has taught ELL students and worked with their families at Fort River School. During her time at Fort River, Torie has been committed to improving the educational outcomes for students from Amherst's Cambodian refugee community. Torie currently has students in grades 2-6 and particularly enjoys working closely with second and third graders in ESL inclusion classrooms.

Seiha Krouch -- Seiha is an ELE paraprofessional at Fort River School. He works with students in grades K-6 during the school day providing English language support. Seiha also runs a well attended and exciting after school program for Cambodian American students. The after school program provides our Cambodian students with academic support as well as opportunities to learn about Cambodian culture and to develop their heritage language: Khmer. During the month of April the Cambodian children are busy preparing for the annual Cambodian New Year celebration at Fort River.

Carolina Rothkegel -- Carolina has been an ELL teacher in the Amherst School District for the last six years. She was a classroom teacher before for six years in her country of origin, Chile. She graduated from the Bilingual/E.S.L./Multicultural Program of Study at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. While finishing her Master's Degree she worked at Crocker Farm Elementary School for two years. Since her graduation in 2005, she has been at Fort River School working with English Language Learners from Kindergarten to 6th grade. She works with students who come from a variety of countries and very diverse in terms of their languages, background experiences, academic skills and English proficiency levels. Recently Carolina was trained in Reading Recovery. She uses part of her instructional time working with students to improve their literacy levels, particularly English language learners who need reading and writing support.

Ken Pransky -- Ken has worked with ELLs with great dedication and insight for over 30 years and has been teaching at Fort River since 1987. Ken has recently published a book in the field of ELE titled Beneath the Surface (Heinemann, 2008). He is on leave this year.

Laura Zoe Dombrowski – Laura is the newest member of the Fort River ELE team. After teaching a self-contained ESL class in Brooklyn, NY for the past three years she now teaches both inclusion and pull-out ESL at Fort River. Laura is making connections with students and families and building relationships that support students in their school experience

ELE MEETINGS AND TRAINING SCHEDULE: SPRING 2009

New Teacher Training – Thursday, April 30, 3:30-5:00pm, Professional Development Center, Middle School

Meetings with Tutors -- Wednesdays, 2:30-3:30,

Professional Development Center, Middle School

March 18 April 8 May 13 June 10 CELEBRATION

SEI (Sheltered English Instruction) TRAINING SCHEDULE for 2008-09 --

Please note that the April 13 and June 1 dates are different from the dates provided in the fall:

Category II

- a. **Secondary (7-12) Dates:** Dec. 19, Feb. 6, **April 13, June 1 (CF)**
- b. **Elementary (PreK-6) Dates:** Oct. 24, Nov. 7, Nov. 14, Dec.5 **COMPLETED!**

Category IV (APPROVED by the Mass. DESE)

- a. **Secondary (7-12) Dates:** Jan. 9, Feb. 27(WW), **May 15.**
- b. **Elementary (PreK-6) Dates:** **March 27 (WW), April 17, May 1 (WW)**

Unless noted otherwise the trainings take place in Professional Development Center, in the Middle School.

ELE Dept. Meetings with our Director, Dr. Marta Guevara

ELEMENTARY ELE PROGRAM MEETING TIMES (Wednesdays,12:00-1:15pm)

March 11, 2009 -- Fort River

April 8, 2009 -- Wildwood

May 13, 2009 -- Mark's Meadow June 10, 2009 (make-up date)

SECONDARY PROGRAM MEETING TIMES (Wednesdays, 2:45-3:45)

March 11, 2009 – Middle School

April 29, 2009 – Marta's Office

May 27, 2009 – Marta' Office June 17, 2009 (make-up date)

ELE Retreat Day – April 28, 2009, Professional Development Center, Middle School, 8:30-3:30 pm



THANK YOU FOR VISITING THE PAGES OF OUR ELE
NEWSLETTER! WISHING YOU A PEACEFUL AND HAPPY SPRING!

Many thanks to Tygii and Nina Koch for their help with putting
this Newsletter online. E-mail Renata with any questions or comments
at <mailto:pienkawar@arps.org>