

The Amherst-Regional Public Schools
English Language Education Program Newsletter

Vol. 1 No. 5 May - June 2009



This newsletter is dedicated to our colleague, Cheng Hue Lin, who is retiring after many years of dedicated service to our children and community

Enjoy our May-June 2009 Newsletter!

Enjoy the upcoming long, summer days..The summer vacation is upon us, but our work, as parents, teachers, staff, and of course learners, is never quite done... Enjoy the poems below that celebrate work, learning, love and nature...

Woman Work

I've got the children to tend
The clothes to mend
The floor to mop
The food to shop
Then the chicken to fry
The baby to dry
I got company to feed
The garden to weed
I've got shirts to press
The tots to dress
The can to be cut
I gotta clean up this hut
Then see about the sick
And the cotton to pick.

Shine on me, sunshine
Rain on me, rain
Fall softly, dewdrops
And cool my brow again.

Storm, blow me from here
With your fiercest wind
Let me float across the sky
'Til I can rest again.

Fall gently, snowflakes
Cover me with white
Cold icy kisses and
Let me rest tonight.

Sun, rain, curving sky
Mountain, oceans, leaf and stone
Star shine, moon glow
You're all that I can call my own.

By Maya Angelou



Two Children

Two children (small), one Four, one Five,
Once saw a bee go in a hive,
They'd never seen a bee before!
So waited there to see some more.
And sure enough along they came
A dozen bees (and all the same!)
Within the hive they buzzed about;
Then, one by one, they all flew out.
Said Four: 'Those bees are silly things,
But how I wish I had their wings!'

Spike Milligan

Sonnets XVIII: Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? by William Shakespeare

**Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade**

**Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.**



From the Desk of the Director

“Hope is a thing with feathers that perches in the soul;
And sings the tune without words and never stops at all”

Emily Dickinson

“Hope kept me alive so I could work 18 hours every day to keep a roof over my family and food on the table for them to be healthy. Hope gave me the strength to keep my children focused on school so they could have the freedom to think I never had. Hope put you and other teachers on my path so my children could have the opportunity to learn and succeed.” I heard this testimony from one of our mothers, as she embraced me and cried a few days ago. Her youngest son, a senior, had just received an academic award during our Third Annual Latino Achievement Night. It seemed ironic; she said to me, that this joyful moment brought up the years of sacrifice, abuse, memories of war and other painful memories to the surface.

Hope is being celebrated by our nation, our community and our schools. It was the hope of many that made possible the election of our first African American President, a child raised by a single mother and grandparents. It was indeed hope that brought the mother in my story to this country. An undocumented woman who walked for days, inspired and carried solely by the dreams that filled her soul of opportunity, education and dignity. Her hopes, and that of many of us, bring us to the wonderful reality of her son; headed to an Ivy League school in the fall with a full scholarship, feeling confident he can succeed and continue to work towards becoming an immigration lawyer. What is his hope? That he can help others achieve what he has.

As this academic year comes to an end, let's come together to celebrate all of the work we have put into cultivating hope and providing the skills and support our students need to keep hope alive. It is because of the dedication of teachers, counselors and many others that our kids succeed, make us proud and give back. Thanks for all you do to make stories like this one possible.

By Marta Guevara

From the Editor:

The rich, intense cycle of New England's four seasons with its school year 2009-2010 is coming to a close. Another year of learning, making friends, of discovery and wonder, of significant challenges and everyday triumphs is quickly passing. Another year of testing and being tested has almost come to a close.

What next? Children and adults alike need some time to simply rest and play in the summer. Yet many students lose some of their newly gained skills through the summer months. So we are proud to offer a summer program for our elementary level English language learners. About 89 children signed up! A group of six dedicated ELE teachers came forth to teach these ELE summer classes and are now in the planning stages to combine learning and having fun during the hot mornings of July. For others, not participating in summer programs, both children and adults: keep on reading for pleasure this and every summer!

This has not been an easy time for any of us with the budget crunch, locally and on the national level, yet our students are the forefront of our thoughts and plans. They have grown academically and socially in many small and not-so-small ways. It is easy to lose hope while watching what happens in the world of big business, such as the dishonest practices by some banks and some large corporations, but what always sustain us are our students, their love of learning and their zest for life, as well as our community and the many of the same ideals and goals we share (even when we disagree on how we should go about reaching them).

In this last newsletter for the school year 2009-2010, we are very pleased to present two schools and their ELL programs: Mark's Meadow and Crocker Farm. We also have a piece written by one of our tutors from Wildwood School. Many thanks to all of them for their contributions as well as for their daily work with the students.

We also would like to thank our community – children, parents, administrators, tutors, teachers, all our colleagues and co-workers, for their unfailing support, day in and day out, so we can do our job well, teaching and guiding our wonderful children and their remarkable, older counterparts: teenagers.

By Renata S. Pienkawa



My experience as a Tutor at Wildwood School

I started helping students at Wildwood school last December. At the beginning, I was confused about the timing of translations and how much should I help him/her in class. Even though I had been teaching many years at various institutions including public schools, being a tutor at an American school was a first experience and quite different for me. But luckily, all students who work with me are eager to learn and are well-behaved.

After a few weeks, I have gotten used to talking to students in a friendly way, not only about studying but also their life in general, including about their families and friends. I believe it is a good chance to get to know each other in order to build up a better relationship at school. Through this experience, I reflect on young children's peak cognitive ability to learn a language as well as their mental resilience to be able to learn in a foreign school. It is also a good opportunity to understand the well-organized ELE programs at the Amherst Regional Schools.

By ST

The 2008-2009 SEI Trainings

- There were two Category II Trainings (Sheltered English Immersion and the SIOP) completed this year (one elementary and one secondary).
- There were two Category IV Trainings (ELLs and Reading and Writing) completed this year (one elementary and one secondary).
- There was an all day ELE Staff training in MELA-O (K-12) administration completed this year.
- About 70 Amherst Teachers were trained in various categories this year.
- Thanks to all the Teachers who participated, their administrators and staff, Maria Geryk, Marta Guevara, Fran Ziperstein, Mike Hayes, and all the Middle School Staff, as well Wildwood School Staff, also Sharon Gross, Mildred Martinez, Jennifer Ryan, Terry Ominsky, IS Staff, Custodians, and so many others, who made these trainings possible and productive, creative and enjoyable.
- We are hoping to add Category I next year and are in the process of Writing or proposal to the Mass. DESE.

Thank you for your great support!

By Renata S. Pienkawa and Torie Weed

Mark's Meadow

English Language Education (ELE)

Literacy and language development continue to be the focus of the ELE program this year. Whether we pull our students out or stay in the classroom, we work closely with classroom teachers to define common goals, reinforce concepts taught in the large group, and ensure our students' full participation in the classroom. We are lucky to have a group of students with such a large cultural spectrum to enrich our lives at Mark's Meadow.

Our **kindergartners** are budding writers! In addition to learning how to speak and understand English (at this time of the year we're marveling at just how much they have learned since September!) they are becoming experts at composing three-page personal narratives and sounding out words.

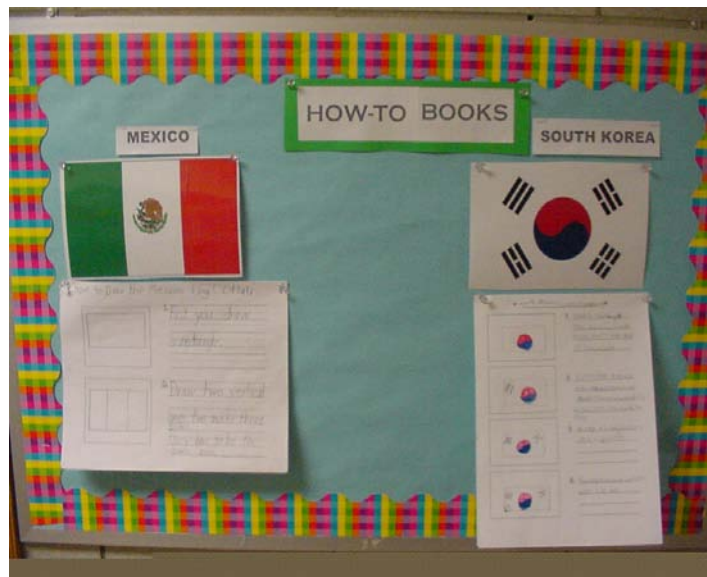


There are two groups of **first graders**. Both these groups focus on vocabulary development and oral language skills in addition to developing reading skills. Phonemic awareness is woven through our instruction with varying frequency and intensity as determined by students' needs. Interactive read alouds from a variety of genres provide ample opportunity for small group discussions.



The **second graders** recently completed a unit of study on fables. The culminating event was a whole-class presentation of several fables. The ELE students performed "The Boy Who Cried Wolf" to a standing room only crowd. A main focus of the group is vocabulary enrichment and oral language development. We begin each session with oral language drills that focus on grammar and vocabulary. These are followed by interactive read alouds and small reading groups.

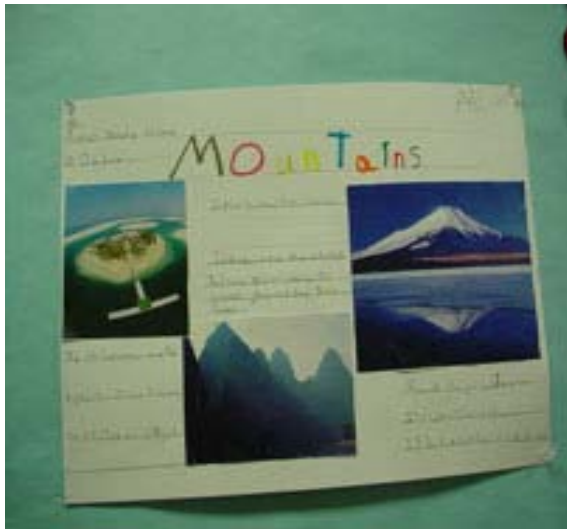
The second graders wrote step by step how-to books (Lucy Calkins) about drawing their flags



Third graders recently created posters after reading informational books. If you have questions about thunderstorms or how to care for a pet cat, be sure to check out the posters outside of the ELE room.

We have **two groups of fourth graders** with varying levels of proficiency in English. The beginner group has focused on building vocabulary and comprehension with some attention to phonemic awareness with the students who need it. All fourth graders have covered many genres and learned various comprehension strategies. Students are learning to respond to a text by making observations in writing about characters, plot, and setting. Some of these fourth graders return in the afternoon for a modified Unit Study curriculum. The focus during that time is on developing vocabulary and supporting comprehension while maintaining the essential ideas of the unit.

Fourth grade beginners read non-fiction and practices getting the important facts and paraphrasing them. Here are some samples of their work:



The **fifth graders** receive writing support in the regular classroom. They have covered many genres. Currently they are working on short fiction and carefully creating believable characters and plotting their stories.

The **sixth graders** come to the ELE room for reading. Our main focus is vocabulary building, especially words with multiple meanings. The group recently read two information selections. Ask them about the life of a salmon or the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens. Therese Chehade, Molly Watkins

Crocker Farm

English Language Education (ELE)

Our ELLs at Crocker Farm can receive instruction from ESL teachers and SEI teachers.

The ESL program at Crocker Farm provides English instruction for grades K-6. The program follows the Massachusetts guidelines (ELPBO), the state L.A. curriculum guidelines and the Amherst public schools L.A. curriculum. Both pull-out and in-class models are used for instruction. In some cases ESL staff teaches collaboratively with grade-level teachers. They also are available for consultation with building staff to support their work with English language learners.

Our Sheltered English Immersion program serves ELLs from K to 6th. Two SEI teachers deliver instruction in Math, Science, Social Studies and Health using sheltered instruction. This instruction is based on the Amherst curriculum for each grade level and the State Standards for each of these content areas. The sheltered instruction is done in both the SEI classroom and grade level classrooms. In some cases the SEI teachers work cooperatively with grade level teachers.

Bios

Lucia Spiro has been in the field of second language acquisition for twenty-five years. She has enjoyed being an ESL teacher in the Amherst Public Schools for the past seventeen years, working with children in grades K-6. Most recently she is getting Reading Recovery training.

Lea Abiodun taught ESL in West Africa and Canada before moving to Amherst. At Crocker Farm, she focuses on teaching early literacy skills as she works with first and second grade English learners.

Eileen Madison has been a bilingual and World Language teacher for the past 25 years. After teaching in Northampton, Springfield, Chicago and Framingham, she has been an Amherst Public schools Bilingual and Sheltered English Immersion teacher for the past 8 years.

Marilyn Martinez has been working for the Amherst Public Schools for 9 ½ years. She started as an instructional paraprofessional, completed her Master's degree in the BEM (Bilingual/ESL/Multicultural) program at UMASS and has been one of the Sheltered English Immersion teachers for the past 5 years.

Marta Lev has taught special education, adult literacy and ESL. She has been honored to be an ESL teacher at CF.

- *Leyendo Juntos / Reading Together*

Thanks to the generous support of the Amherst Education Fund, Latino families at Crocker Farm Elementary School have come together for the *Leyendo Juntos/Reading Together* program. Each of the past three years, evening meetings have been held for parents/guardians and children, at which we share food, songs and ideas. Adults' separate meetings for part of the session have been dynamic, enthusiastic and moving conversations. Children take part in Spanish literacy activities—learning a song, a poem or doing artwork. The evening ends with the children sharing these activities with their families. This program is a validation and celebration of bilingualism and the members of our school community who share this cultural heritage and language.

We are also establishing a lending library of Spanish and bilingual books, to be available to all families at a twice-monthly gathering. This gathering is organized in collaboration with the Outreach Project of Crocker Farm staff. During these bi-monthly events, parents are invited to drop in, browse the library, ask questions about school or socialize with each other. It is our hope and our experience that events such as these increase the involvement in our school community of parents who are otherwise too often marginalized.

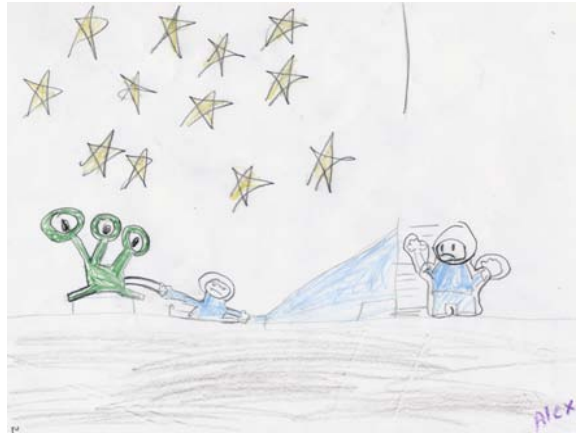
- Our 3rd grade ELL Group at CF wrote stories to participate in the Reading Rainbow Young Writer and Illustrators Contest. This is a contest supported by WGBY. It was for student from Kindergarten to 3rd grade. We submitted the stories and illustrations last week so keep your fingers crossed and wish our student good luck!

Here are some samples of their beautiful work.

E.M.



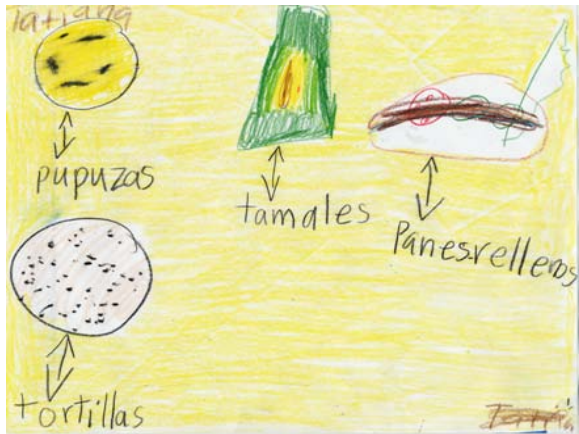
A.M.



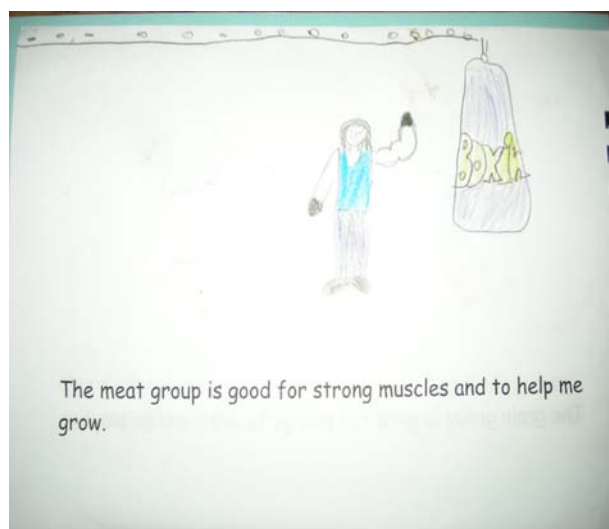
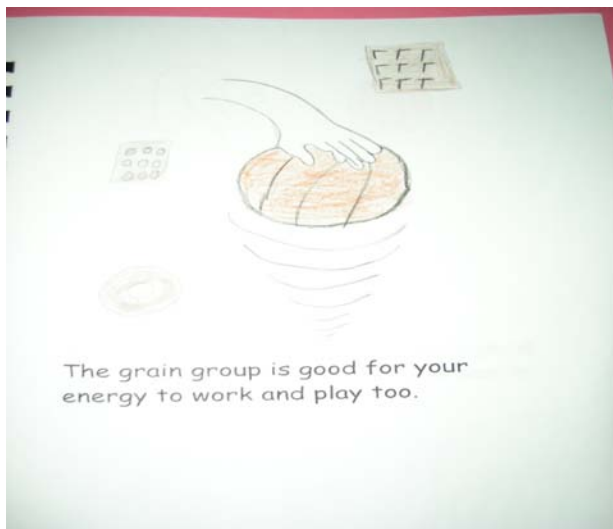
J.O.



T.H.



- CCS – Connection, Care and Support After School Program – For the second year the 3rd grade student (mostly ELLs) at Crocker Farm are participating in an after school program that is a collaboration effort between the Amherst schools and the University of Massachusetts. We meet two times a week and work on reading and literacy skills as well as mentorship and leadership activities. Students work closely with mentors (UMASS students) crating a strong connection.
- ESL Beginners – Pages from books written and illustrated by beginning level ELL students after a food unit.



ELE MEETINGS AND TRAINING SCHEDULE: SUMMER 2009

Meeting with Tutors -- June 10, 2009 2:30-3:30 Professional Development Center, Middle School

We are thanking our tutors for their work with the students. Please join us!

Please bring a snack or dessert to share.

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

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

Category II

a. Secondary (7-12) Dates: Dec. 19, Feb. 6, April 13, June 1 **COMPLETED!**

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. **COMPLETED!**

b. Elementary (PreK-6) Dates: March 27 (WW), April 17, May 1 (WW) **COMPLETED!**

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

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

Most are done, but there are also:

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

June 10, 2009

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

June 17, 2009

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

ELL Picnic for the Secondary Community – June 12, 2009

Groff Park, 3:00-6:30pm Please bring a dish to share!

*****ELE REVIEW DISCUSSION – June 11, 2009 3:15pm in SSO *** All the ELE teachers are invited.**

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION ELEMENTARY PROGRAM SUMMER ACADEMY

The Summer Academy for English Language Learners (ELLs) is a FREE three-week summer program for ELLs entering grades 1-5 next school year in the town of Amherst. It will be housed at Crocker Farm Elementary School, but ELLs from all of the elementary schools in Amherst were invited. We have 89 students enrolled. Registration has closed by now.

Where: Crocker Farm Elementary School

When: June 29th to July 16th

Days: Monday-Thursday

Hours: 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Students will receive 12 contact hours per week of English Language Arts, focusing on the acquisition of all the English language skills: listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing.

Breakfast and transportation will be provided to qualifying students. If you have any questions, please call Ms. Mildred Martinez at 362-1871 or write to her at martinez2@arps.org

ATTENTION SECONDARY STUDENTS --- THERE IS AN ELE COURSE CALLED "ELE LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND COMPOSITION" FOR ELL STUDENTS ENTERING GRADES 9-11 IN OUR SECONDARY SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM. Please contact Mr. Nate May with any questions. His number is: 413-362-1788 and e-mail: mayn@arps.org

THANK YOU FOR VISITING THE PAGES OF OUR ELE
NEWSLETTER! WISHING YOU A VERY RESTFUL SUMMER !

*Many thanks to Tygii and Nina Koch for their help with putting
this Newsletter online. E-mail Renata Pienkawa with any questions or
comments at pienkawa@arps.org*