

# FORT RIVER PARENT NEWSLETTER

## SUCCESSFUL LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

January 22, 2010

Dear Fort River Families,

As many of you know, on the evening of January 14th, Anne White led the 5th and 6th grade chorus in their Winter Concert - what a performance! The enthusiasm of 105 children singing, dancing, playing instrumental accompaniment and having fun was an absolute thrill. They deserved and received a standing ovation for their performance. Anne White continues to do incredible work with and for our students, and she deserves many thanks and appreciation. I was impressed with last year's performances, and I wondered, "How could this get better?" If you were present last week, you know what an incredible performance it was. Thank you, Anne White!

This past Tuesday, our Assistant Principal, Dr. Susan Kennedy Marx, led our staff in a refresher of the "*Second Step*" program, which is a violence prevention curriculum from the Committee for Children. At Fort River, teachers routinely guide developmentally appropriate responses to their students' behavioral choices each and every day. We are well known for the strong and highly effective community that we've built across the grades! *Second Step* ensures that we share a common language as we support problem solving that results in respectful connections among all our students. Please contact Susan Kennedy Marx ([marxs@arps.org](mailto:marxs@arps.org)) if you would like to know more!

Next week, we are quite fortunate to have Christine Holley, an educator/trainer from Teachers College, visit our K-2 classrooms and help us on our way with a new writing program at Fort River. Christine will spend two days (Monday-Tuesday) here next week, consulting with teachers, modeling effective writing lessons, and helping us get started with the "Units of Study for Teaching Writing" (developed by Lucy Calkins and her staff). This program is a K-5 program, and we feel quite lucky to be getting started with the K-2 components this spring. Christine will also visit us for three additional days in April to support our new initiative.

Soon enough, we will be entering the MCAS testing season (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System). Our MCAS testing schedule will be on the school's website during the week of January 25<sup>th</sup>. The school's calendar will inform you, grade by grade, of content areas being assessed and of the specific days on which that testing will take place.

Please make note of the following, and you can check the website next week for more detail:

**English Language Arts:**

- Assessed in Grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 between March 22 and April 12<sup>th</sup>

**Mathematics:**

- Assessed in Grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 between May 10<sup>th</sup> and May 27<sup>th</sup>

**Science and Technology:**

- Assessed in Grade 5 between May 11<sup>th</sup> and May 27<sup>th</sup>

**Mepa – R/W** (for all LEP students) March 3<sup>rd</sup> – March 17<sup>th</sup>

**FUTURE DATES**

School Committee Meeting...Tues., Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>...High School Library...7:00 pm  
 School Council Meeting...Thurs., Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>...5:00-6:30...FR Conference Room  
 REPORT CARDS DISTRIBUTED.....FRIDAY, JANUARY 29<sup>TH</sup>  
 Band & Orchestra Concert...Monday, Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>...7:00 pm...Fort River Gymnasium  
 Coffee With A Principal...Friday, February 5<sup>th</sup>...8:30 am...FR Cafeteria  
 Parent Council Meeting...Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup>...8:45 am...FR Cafeteria  
 Winter Recess.....February 15<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> .....NO SCHOOL  
 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Parent/Guardian Orientation Evening... Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>...  
 7:00 -8:30 pm

**FYI - Spring Chorus Concert Date:**

- Thursday, May 6<sup>th</sup>...7:30 pm...Middle School Auditorium

**Nature School Vacation Camps at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment, Amherst.**

**[www.hitchcockcenter.org](http://www.hitchcockcenter.org) Call 413-256-6006 to register.**

**WINTER VACATION CAMP**

Young Naturalists, ages 6-8

Nature Explorers, ages 9-11

Monday-Friday, February 15-19, 8:30am-3pm

Members: \$45 per day/Non-members \$55 per day

Pre-registration required; please call 413-256-6006.

Join us for your choice of from one to five days of winter exploration. We'll spend time indoors focused on animal tracks and signs, snow geology, evergreens or winter weeds. And we'll go outside every day to experience both the excitement and peace of nature in winter. Songs, crafts, games, and live animal observations will all be a part of our days.

**SPRING VACATION CAMP**

Young Naturalists, ages 6-8

Nature Explorers, ages 9-11

Monday-Friday, April 19-23, 8:30am-3pm

Members: \$45 per day/Non-members \$55 per day

Pre-registration required; please call 413-256-6006.

Join us for as many days as you wish and enjoy nature discovery at its finest. We'll go outside every day and experience the changes and excitement of spring (be prepared for varied weather). Songs, crafts, games and live animal observations are all part of the learning experience. Just choose the day(s) you want to participate and pre-register.