

Falcon Flyer



Fletcher Elementary School

340 School Road, Cambridge, Vermont 05444

October 2019

BE RESPECTFUL BE RESPONSIBLE BE SAFE BE CARING SOAR LIKE A FALCON

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 17
Early Release Day
Noon Dismissal

October 18
Vacation
No School

October 26
FOFE
Halloween Party
4:30-7:00PM

November 6
FOFE Mtg.
6:15PM

November 25-26
Teacher Inservice
No School

November 27-29
Thanksgiving Break
No School

December 23—
January 1
Break

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Media!!!**

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@FletcherFalcon**

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Fletcher Elementary
School**

Fletcher Elementary Students Dig Into Learning

By Chris Dodge, Principal

Students at Fletcher Elementary School really dug into their learning on Sept. 20 as they supported archaeologists from the Northeast Archaeology Research Center at a dig site just miles from the school. The adventure was part of a year-long theme that focuses student learning on Vermont's past and present.

Third through six grade students from the school learned about the techniques and equipment used to conduct a professional dig, how to catalog their findings, and the many reasons individuals and groups participate in the work. In this instance, the group is helping Green Mountain Power meet its legal requirements as part of a permit renewal process. As the company raises and lowers water levels at their nearby dam, the question remains if important historical objects underground are being lost.

See Archaeology, Page 2



Students from F.E.S. sift through soil excavated as part of an archaeological dig by the Northeast Archaeology Research Center. Participation in the dig was part of the students' study of Vermont, past and present.

Third and Fourth Graders Write Honor Flight Letters

By Tracey Godin, Grades 3/4 Teacher

The third and fourth graders have just finished writing friendly letters to WWII and Korean War Veterans here in the North Country. These veterans will be flown to Washington D.C. to visit the war memorials and will receive these letters on their way home from D.C. This wonderful project centers around President Truman's promise to these heroes that, "America will never forget their sacrifices."

See Letters, Page 2



Science on the Green

***by Lorrene Palermo, 5/6 Teacher
Sarah Tucker, K-6 Special Educator
Denette Locke, Instructional Coach***

On Thursday, September 26, our 5th and 6th grade students had a wonderful day of learning outdoors. They participated in an event sponsored by the Agency of Natural Resources and the Agency of Education called, *Science on the Green*.

See Science, Page 2

Archaeology, From Page 1

Students reviewed objects found at the site like arrowheads, earthenware and fire-cracked stones from about 1500 years ago before getting their hands dirty by helping to dig and sift the soil and watch for new discoveries.

"Getting to see the old stuff, like the firestone and the arrowhead and part of a tool from a long time ago, was the best," sixth grader Justus Cota said. "It was great to be learning about history in an all-hands-on way."

"We actually got to help," sixth grader Eli Tinker said. "We learned how and why everything was happening and really got to understand it way more than we would from a book or a video."

"It was just really fascinating," sixth grader Colin Wolfe said. "It was like history coming to life before our eyes. The soil was telling us a story and I couldn't wait to hear the next part."



Fletcher Elementary School students learn the techniques necessary to carefully and precisely conduct an archaeological dig. The students joined a team of archaeologists from the Northeast Archaeological Research Center as they conducted a dig along the Lamoille River in Fletcher.

Letters, From Page 1

To find out more about this amazing project, please go to

<http://www.northcountryhonorflight.org/about.html>.

Donations are welcomed as these flights, which fly 3 to 5 flights a year, include a caretaker for each veteran, medical personnel, wheelchairs and medical equipment and are costly. Our letters are certain to make a lasting impression on these veterans and brighten their day.

Science, From Page 1

Science on the Green allowed our students to explore science, the environment and the actions we can all take to protect our planet. The event provided hands-on opportunities for students to engage in environmental science and learn how science plays a critical role in environmental protection. The workshops were led by Agency staff and Vermont State Employees and they were specifically designed to empower our young people to be stewards of the environment by taking environmental action in our school and local community.

Even with the wet weather, our learners were very engaged in learning more about habitats and ecosystems. With our community teaching partners the students worked on tree identification, learned about invasive plants and worked with a forester to experience a day in the life of a forester.



Forester Dan shows students how to use a Biltmore stick to measure the diameter of the trees and uses a boring tool to determine the age of the tree.

Farm-Based Learning Teaches History, Math and Science to Fletcher Students

By Chris Dodge, Principal

Fletcher Elementary's third and fourth graders visited West Farm in Cambridge on Sept. 23 as part of a partnership between the school, Northeast Organic Farming Association and Healthy Roots Collaborative. The group participated in five rotating experiences that included harvesting potatoes and other vegetables that will be used, in part, for a family nutrition class at the school. In addition, students practiced mapping and creating scientific sketches of the farm's crops. Students learned about the challenges some families face with food insecurity and the strict guidelines that are important to organic farming. The students will make several trips to the farm this school year through a project that will culminate in the design of a teaching curriculum that informs students on Vermont history through farming.

From Tree to Treat!

Kindergarten students carried on a longstanding tradition of visiting Chapin Orchard earlier this month and returned to school with apples that they transformed into applesauce for serving at Open House. Along the way, the kindergarteners learned to make cider, all about bees and the importance of pollinators, and lots of fun facts about apples!



What Are These Children Doing Anyway?

By Blythe Baskette, Preschool Special Educator

These Pre-K children are playing! They are playing in a puddle with buckets. Children develop through play, particularly sensory play with water. As they bend, scoop, and dump the water, gross and fine motor muscles are coordinated. When this type of play occurs, children negotiate body space, take turns, and measure the volume of water as they pour one bucket into another. Through such a simple game, children develop their physical body, social language skills, and cognitive problem-solving skills. It is important for children's

healthy development to allow them time to play, especially outside. Next time there is a rainy day, grab some rain gear and a bucket and go out to play with your little guy. Most importantly, have fun together.



Developing Habits of Reading

By Nancy Hurt, Grades 1/2 teacher

During Reading Workshop we have been working on building good reading habits. A recent focus in Mrs. Hurt's 1/2 class has been building reading stamina. Students are working hard on reading more books for longer periods of time. We have enjoyed challenging our whole class to read silently for uninterrupted periods of time, adding a little more time each day. After reading silently for forty minutes one day, many children reflected on that experience.

"It felt really quiet so I could concentrate."

"It felt really calming and it helped me read a lot of books."

"It was really quiet so I could read a chapter."

"It was so quiet so we could read all of our books. There was no interruption."

"It felt really good to get to another chapter."

"It was so quiet I could read almost five books."



Exploring the Library

By Rebecca Cardone, Academic Interventionist/Librarian

Students are continuing to learn the layout and organization of the Library as we began student checkouts! The first day of checkout was an exciting milestone, which we celebrated with a Library scavenger hunt. This fun activity allowed students to explore the Library a bit and browse categories or books that may not have been familiar to them.

FES Library Student Checkout Procedure:

- K-2 students may check out 2 books each week
- 3-6 students may check out 3 books each week
- At least one book that students check out must be a "Just Right Book"
- Students may not have more than the maximum number of books out of the Library at a time
- Books are due back the week following check out, but may be renewed for a longer time if desired
- Students may return books at any time during the week prior to their Library day
- If a student misses the opportunity to check out a book because they were absent or forgot to return their Library books, they may check out books on a different day
- Students are encouraged to check out at least 1 book each week

You may access the Library catalogue from the FES website! There is now a 'FES Library' tab at the top of our school website (see picture below).

By clicking on that tab, you will be directed to our online Library catalogue. From there you may search our Library by title, author, keyword, or subject. I encourage you to check it out!

Second Step Lessons: Skills for Learning

By Lisa Coale, School Counselor

Fletcher Elementary School utilizes the Second Step curriculum to teach a variety of social and emotional skills to benefit and promote student learning and engagement. Every class has one Second Step lesson a week. To start the year off right our first unit of study has centered around understanding the utilizing specific skills that help students learn. Check out what each class is currently talking about during their Second Step lessons!

See Second Step, Page 5

Second Step, from Page 4

Kindergarten

Kindergarten students are learning the skills for active listening. Ask your child if they can name and demonstrate the four listening rules: eyes watching, ears listening, voice quiet, body calm. Kindergarten students are also learning how to focus their attention and follow multi-step directions. Check out these cute friends with their “attentoscopes” that they use to keep their focus on one object at a time!



First and Second Grade

Students in first and second grade have spent their first few Second Step lessons learning about what it means to be respectful. They brainstormed a variety of ways they could show respect at school and then picked one that they would like to try. First and Second graders are also learning skills for active listening and focusing their attention.

Third and Fourth Grade

Third and fourth graders have also started the year off by talking about respect as well as what it means to have empathy for others. They have also been practicing their active listening skills through a variety of team challenges that require students to listen, follow specific directions and communicate clearly with one another. Speaking of clear communication, third and fourth graders have also been learning about communication styles. Specifically we have been focusing on assertive communication when they are faced with a challenge or problem.

Fifth and Sixth Grade

Fifth and sixth graders have been learning about their growing brains. We have spent a lot of time talking about how the brain grows and changes during adolescence and how they can actually make their brains grow stronger by practicing a specific skill for just five minutes a day! Ask your child if they know what happens in their brains when they practice a new skill. Hopefully you'll be impressed by their knowledge of neurons and axons and the pathways and connections that form when you practice a new skill!

Health Office News

Tara McMahon, School Nurse

Thank you to all who have returned the Annual Health Update form. If you haven't returned the form for your child and you need another copy just let me know. I need all of the forms back by Monday 10/21.

I will be doing vision and hearing screening starting at the end of October. I could use 1 or 2 volunteers to help me with this. Please contact the school if you would like to help.

Drug Take-Back Day is Saturday, October 26 from 10 AM - 2 PM at Kinney Drugs, S Main Street in Cambridge. The National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day aims to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of prescription drugs, while also educating the general public about the potential for abuse of medications.

FES Staff had our annual Flu vaccines at school earlier this week. Please consider getting the flu vaccine for all family members as advised by your physician. Influenza can be a serious respiratory illness that can lead to lost work and school time as well as greater risk for other respiratory illnesses. It is highly transmissible from person to person. Flu shots are an effective way to reduce your risk of contracting the flu and the risk of transmitting to your family.

Special Announcement: Concert Dates

Fletcher Elementary's two concert dates for this year have been set. They are December 19th at 6:00 PM and May 26th at 1:30 PM. Students are asked to arrive 15 minutes before the start time. Each show will last about an hour. Please mark your calendars!

Whole-School Gathering Coming Up!

Our first student-run Whole-School Gathering will take place on Tuesday, October 15th, at 8:00 AM, in the gym. Mrs. Palermo's fifth and sixth graders will facilitate. The topic of focus will be respect. Other Whole-School Gatherings are scheduled as below:

Wednesday, 11/13 - Grades 3/5 (Ms. Godin)
Thursday, 12/19 - Grades 1/2 (Ms. Pellegrino)
Monday, 1/5 - FES Leadership Team
Tuesday, 2/11 - Grades 1/2 (Mrs. Hurt)
Wednesday, 3/18 - Kindergarten (Ms. O'Brien)
Thursday, 4/30 - Preschool
Monday, 5/18 - FES Leadership Team

We hope you will consider joining us for one or more of these Whole-School Gatherings. They will all begin at 8:00 AM in the gym and last about a half hour.

P.E. News

By Doug Young, PE Teacher

I am again reminding everyone about the importance of being prepared with safe shoes and comfortable clothing. Sweatshirts are great for outside P.E. time in the Fall. When students arrive at the gym ready to go it makes the transition go smoothly. Bathroom and drink breaks should be done before entering the gym.

It is also important to send a note with students who are not feeling well or are injured and might not be able to participate in P.E. class.

This month most classes will be working on soccer skills as well as circus skills.

We are still looking for used sneakers if anyone has a pair they no longer need or have outgrown.

One CORNY Party!

F.E.S. students earned a total of 1,250 positive behavior tokens for following our school-wide expectations of being respectful, responsible, safe and caring. They celebrated with a very "corny" whole-school popcorn party last Friday!



Razzing Our Kids

By Kathleen Pellegrino, Grades 1/2 Teacher

Mrs. Locke has been working relentlessly to get Mrs. Pellegrino's class set up on iPads to use RAZ Kids and DreamBox. Accounts are now set up and available to use at school AND home if you have a device available! Check your child's folders for the login information if you wish to use these tools at home!



Global Goals Project

By MC Baker, Art Teacher

As Fletcher artists began their year, I was busy getting involved with a one month special project called the Global Goals Project (#GoalsProject). It was a great experience to connect the art curriculum with almost 900 other classes in 69 different countries. I signed up for this project in May and we are just wrapping up a month of sharing and integration. My team's facilitator was a teacher in Uruguay, South America. We would correspond weekly and share ideas of how we were supporting the Global Goals. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals were developed in 2017. The 17 goals outline ways to make the world a better place. What better way to teach those strategies than through art.

Turn on the Tunes!

By Phyllis Quarles, CCC-SLP

We all know how enjoyable listening to music is. Virtually all cultures in the world have and celebrate music. It is a universal feature of being human. But, did you know that besides just being fun, music is actually vital to the development of language and speech in young children? The presence of rhythm, rhyme and repetition in music stimulates important connections in the brain that enhance language learning.

A 2016 study at the University of Southern California's Brain and Creativity Institute found that musical experiences in childhood accelerate brain development, particularly in the areas of language and reading skills. Numerous studies have shown how music increases connections between the language and literacy centers in the brain.

As a speech-language pathologist I use music regularly in my work with children. It is fun and engaging and I see how it helps their progress in learning to communicate effectively.



*Kindergarteners read *The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree* by Gail Gibbons. Then we made our own trees in each of the seasons.*

YMCA Programming on Early Release Days, and More !!!

As a reminder, October 17th is FWSU's first district-wide early release day this year. Dismissal at Fletcher will be at noon. The Y Afterschool Program at Fletcher will be offering a half-day camp that day and on the other early release days, beginning at dismissal time, for children who normally attend the Y program. Please contact Site Director Hallie Wolklin (hwolklin@gbymca.org) for more information and to register. There is no school on October 18th, and no YMCA programming.

Did you know that children who participate in YMCA childcare programs (like Fletcher's Afterschool Program) are now YMCA members at no additional cost? Benefits include discount rate swim lessons, youth sports and dance programs, Friday and Sunday Family Gym Time, movie nights, member rates for Kids Night Out, and more. Visit www.gbymca.org/membership to read more.

If your child is scheduled to attend the Y Afterschool program at Fletcher and that plan needs to change, please notify the school AND the Y Program.

Substitute Teachers and Paraeducators Needed

The Fletcher Elementary School seeks substitute teachers and substitute paraeducators for on-call work. An unconditional respect of children and families, strict confidentiality, strong organizational skills and a positive attitude are all requirements of this work. An online and fingerprint-supported background check is required. Interested candidates should provide a resume and three current references to Chris Dodge, Principal at cdodge@fwsu.org or drop these materials off at school.

Custodial Substitutes Needed

The Fletcher Elementary School seeks custodial substitutes for on-call work. Duties include routine cleaning such as vacuuming, mopping, cleaning restrooms, drinking fountains, etc. The work requires an online and fingerprint-supported background check. Interested candidates should provide a resume and three current references to Chris Dodge, Principal at cdodge@fwsu.org or drop these materials off at school.

Magic Number and More in Preschool!

By Rebecca Jackson, Preschool Teacher

The preschool children have been getting to know each other and learning about our classroom and our routines as we settle in to our year together. We learned about counting our “magic number” of children present each day, and have been singing many songs together to help us transition through all the different parts of our day. Children shared the rocks that they brought in from home and some decided to contribute their rocks to our classroom nature museum. On Wednesday we had the excitement of thunder and rain, and had to wait to go outside, and on Thursday we saw many spiders and a snake outside! We have been exploring our wonderful playground, learning how to pump on the swings, practicing rock climbing skills, and creating mud, berry, acorn and apple pies.

Using Email

Email is a convenient and efficient way to communicate. In schools, however, it can be challenging to use email while maintaining student confidentiality and giving proper attention to difficult conversations. For these reasons, F.E.S. staff members are encouraged to limit the use of email with families to scheduling and very generic communications. More in-depth conversations should take place by phone or in person.

Additionally, the school cannot accept changes in routine for a student via email. We simply cannot verify the sender. Without doing so, it could be potentially unsafe to accept changes in plans for students electronically. Please call the office for last-minute changes, and send expected changes in to school in writing.

We appreciate your understanding with both of these matters.

Fletcher School and Cambridge Fire Department Partner For Student Safety

October is Fire Safety Month and Fletcher Elementary School has teamed up with the Cambridge Fire Department to bring fire safety lessons to students both at school and at home.

According to firefighter Kristy Wykoff, who is also the department’s treasurer and chair of the fire prevention committee, teaching fire prevention at an early age is essential because it creates connections between the children and firefighters that help students not be afraid of the firefighters in the event of a real emergency.

“Fires can be scary and we want the kids to know that we are there to help,” Wykoff said. For several years, Wykoff, along with a team of firefighters from the all-volunteer Cambridge Fire Department, have taught fire safety lessons at the school during a designated fire safety day in October. The lessons include a discussion about creating a home fire escape plan, the importance of smoke detectors and their maintenance, and fire

prevention. Students interact with firefighters who don nearly 50 pounds of protective gear that makes them virtually unrecognizable in an effort to dismiss any fear the students might have about their unusual appearance.

“My main goals are for the kids to learn something new each year,” Wykoff said. “Our biggest components are learning about smoke detectors, including when to change the batteries and when to replace the entire detector. We also focus on escape plans and meeting places, encourage getting out and staying out during a fire, and sleeping with bedroom doors shut.”

In addition to Fire Safety Day, Fletcher Elementary created a smoke detector giveaway this year. Cambridge Fire Department and J&L Hardware each donated smoke detectors to be given away to Fletcher families. Students were asked to complete at least two of three suggested fire safety activities at home with their families. Once done, students and their families documented their work and were entered into a drawing for a free smoke detector. The school is giving one smoke detector away each day during October, Fire safety month. The daily drawing takes place during school-wide morning announcements.

“The smoke detector giveaway is a great way of getting detectors into our community. And, projects like this are important because it brings the learning home in a practical sense,” Wykoff said. “Most people are unaware that smoke detectors expire after ten years. The fire department bought the detectors using funds from our yearly fundraising events. We feel it’s important to get unexpired detectors into homes. Our hope is that it will inspire families to check the dates on their own smoke detectors to ensure they are not older than ten years.”

According to Wykoff, students have responded with great enthusiasm and an eagerness to share what they have learned in previous years.

“Their favorite part of fire prevention is Rollie, our robotic fire truck,” Wykoff said. “Their response to Rollie has been overwhelmingly positive. Rollie

adds a new exciting way to learn about fire prevention.” Using robotics, firefighters can speak through rollie’s speakers, squirt water, and control flashing red lights.

During fire safety day, students received junior firefighter helmets and backpacks filled with fire prevention goodies like pencils, trading cards, notebooks and pencil sharpeners and erasers.

“I’ve learned fire safety from the firefighters for five years now,” fourth grader Donovan Austin said. “Every year there is something different. You have to remember to test your smoke detector batteries once a month and change them every year. That is one of the most important things you can do. You can also feel a door before you open it to see if it feels warm. If it does, don’t open it because there may be fire on the other side.”

“When there is fire you have to stay low,” fourth grader Will Mauck advised. “Gasses, heat and smoke all rise. You don’t want to be breathing those in. Also, if your clothes catch on fire, stop, drop, cover your face and roll like mad. That puts the fire out.”

“Something new I learned this year is that smoke detectors all beep three times in a row to tell you that there is smoke and maybe a fire,” third graders Lorelei Sloan said. “You need to get out quickly and go to your family meeting place. Make sure you have a fire escape plan ahead of time.”

“There are so many mutual benefits to engaging with Community Partners like the Cambridge Fire Department,” FWSU Director of Curriculum Linda Keating said. “Such partnerships allow schools to expand their education efforts, raise community awareness of such efforts, and most importantly, with this project, support the safety of children and families.”

“Nothing gets the attention of young elementary students more than firefighters and firetrucks,” first and second grade teacher Kathleen Pellegrino said. “These men and women are great role models to show our students just how important it is to give back to your community and make responsible decisions.

Being safe is one of our four schoolwide expectations and the firefighters' visit is one more way to reinforce how important that is."

For more information on fire safety and Fletcher's smoke detector giveaway visit www.fletcher elementary.org or read our [family smoke detector giveaway letter](#).

