

# University of Hartford Magnet School

## Newsletter

February 17, 2012

Issue 3

### Brachman and Barber Blab



Since our holiday break we have been very busy at UHMS. All students are focused on their goals and making great progress. We are preparing for this year's Connecticut Mastery Test. Our third, fourth and fifth graders are motivated and ready to embark on the test. The entire school has been supportive and will celebrate the efforts of our students. We wish them all the best of luck!

Sincerely,

*Dr. Brachman and Mr. Barber*

#### **REMINDERS:**

##### **No school**

**February 20<sup>th</sup> – Presidents' Day**

**April 6<sup>th</sup> – Good Friday**

**May 28<sup>th</sup> – Memorial Day**

##### **1:00 Early Dismissal Days**

**March 21, 22 and 23**

**April 25<sup>th</sup>**

**May 30<sup>th</sup>**

##### **Spring Recess**

**March 26 – March 30**

##### **Last Day of School**

**(If no more snow days)**

**June 18<sup>th</sup> – 1:00 dismissal**

##### **Saturday Academy Grades 3-5**

**February 25, March 3, March 10**

## Pre K NEWS

We are well into winter and the weather is cold!!!! The Pre-Kindergarten classes continue to learn about the winter season. We have looked at snowballs and measured the amount of water they fill in cups after they melt. We talked about the right clothing to wear during the cold weather, the animals we see and the ones that hibernate during this time of year.

Pre-Kindergarten learners are working hard in their classrooms on their Literacy and Mathematical skills. Some students made a graph out of snowballs to count how many snowballs make up their name and talked about math words such as more, less and same.

Students are reading stories about winter in their classrooms and working on sequencing and re-telling. We have a variety of songs and finger plays to help us appreciate winter and all it has to offer!!! Students have made some wonderful winter creations that are displayed throughout the pre-kindergarten classrooms.

Students have painted with nature, decorated hand-made snowflakes with glitter and paint and used sticks to embellish their snowman art. There are no "Winter Blues" in Pre-Kindergarten.

# Kindergarten News

The kindergartners are exploring the world through books. Books have facts about the world and some books teach us "how to" do things.

The kindergartners were lucky this month to have first grade authors share their "how to" books to help kindergartners understand books that teach. Then, they can be authors, too!

Kindergartners loved reading with their families on Family Reading Day. Moms and dads who could get in to read sent the kindergartners a great message about enjoying reading. University of Hartford baseball players showed us that athletes love to read, too!



# 1st Grade News

The first grade classes are doing really well building their reading, writing and math skills!

In reading, we have been learning about non-fiction books. We have learned about their features like headings, labels, captions, photographs and drawings and how to read them.

They seem to love books about animals!

In writing, we have taken what we have learned in reading and have begun writing non-fiction pieces. Each student has written a "How To" book to teach how to do something. We then met with our kindergarten friends to share them.

In math, we are learning how to add and subtract two digit numbers. We are also playing with the 100's chart. We can now identify 10 more and 10 less of a number, skip count by 2's, 5's and 10's, count passed 120 and identify how many tens and ones are in a given number. We can also tell which number in a pair is larger or smaller and why.

Please keep sending in a snack for your child every day and reading every night!

# 2nd Grade News

The second graders have been exploring Social Studies units. During the month of January we investigated the topic *Our Communities*. We explored community workers and the jobs they perform. For our culminating activity we participated in Junior Achievement activities. Each classroom had two volunteers from Pratt and Whitney who came and led the learning tasks for us. We learned about communities and their workers, how businesses and people in a town support each other, how money can travel through people and business, and how town governments use taxes to pay for services for townspeople.



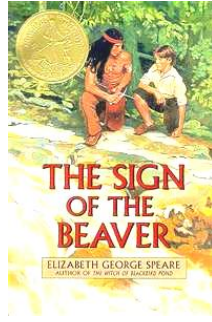
During the month of February we are focusing on Maps. We are exploring the world, the United States of America, and Connecticut using Google Earth. We have learned the name and locations of the seven continents and the major oceans in the world through an interactive Smartboard website. ([http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/World\\_Continents.html](http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/World_Continents.html))

We can even identify land formations and boundaries on maps. We can read a compass rose, the directions N, S, E and W, how to read a map grid (A1, A2, A3, A4, B1, etc.). So if we are ever lost, I can help you read a map!

# THIRD GRADE

We continue living our reading lives with the study of biographies. Third graders are getting to know the subject of their biographies in a variety of ways. Each class is using the text, *Wilma Unlimited*, a biography about Olympic track and field athlete Wilma Rudolph. We've learned that biography readers notice their

subject goes through some kind of struggle or hardship in their lives. We've noticed the positive and negative relationships Wilma Rudolph had and how they helped shape her life. Through the reading of nonfiction texts, students will learn about the time period when their biography subject lived. We will continue writing about connections we make to our biography subjects and supporting our responses with details from their lives.



In writing, students are continuing to work on writing personal narratives and realistic fiction. Students use their writer's notebooks to gather ideas for writing with strategies learned during our writer's workshop. We continue to work on writing with a clear beginning, middle and end. By rereading their pieces students are learning, to notice where it may seem clunky, awkward, or doesn't sound right. Writers are also noticing that revising is not just adding more words to the page, but removing words that don't stay on topic or make sense to the reader.



In math, third graders are continuing to work on important concepts of multiplication and division. We are busy learning our multiplication and division facts through a variety of math strategies and games, including fact triangles to learn fact families. Through the study of geometry, students are investigating segments, rays and lines. They are also working to explore, identify and construct polygons, including triangles and quadrangles. Students are working on recognizing irregular and regular polygons and identifying shapes that are not polygons. Third graders are hard at work in science, learning about the properties of matter through an assortment of activities and experiments. Through these experiments, students will compare and contrast the properties of solids, liquids and gases. They will also demonstrate that solids, liquids and gases are all forms of matter that take up space and have weight. Third graders will make predictions and carry out simple tests to determine if materials sink or float in water based on their properties.

# 4th GRADE NEWS

## Literacy

Students have been enjoying the classic, *The Sign of the Beaver*, written by Elizabeth George Speare. As students began reading this historical fiction text, they created a mental bulletin board filled with details about the setting (time and place), characters, and problems. This complex text has helped students to examine the story through the perspective of another character and to grow theories about the characters. Students have thought deeply about small changes that occurred in Matt and Attean's relationships and bold moments that caused them to form new theories. Ask you child to share this terrific tale with you.

## Writing

In writing, students have been working to write small scenes that can be put together to form a story. In this fashion, students focused on elaboration while maintaining an organizational structure. Students have also explored the CT state writing website and learned how to score their own writing using a student friendly rubric. Then, students compared their scores to the teacher's and set a personal goal for the week. Ask your child to share their goal with you.

## Mathematics

Students have used their understanding of the relationship between multiplication and division to help discover the partial quotient division. Ask your child to find the quotient of  $436/3$ .



Students are also focused on CMT prep. Strand specific stations help to individualize practice and maintain numeracy stamina. Please help you child prepare by practicing the following life skills: telling time, finding elapsed time, money, and basic math facts.

## Science



In Science students are investigating the world of force and motion. Students learned that a force is a push or pull that can change the direction of an object and the speed of an object. Motion happens when an object changes position.

Friction and gravity also affect the movement or speed of an object. Students enjoyed a special visit from Mrs. Newton, (*Ms. Kane*), who helped the students explore her husband's laws of force and motion. Have your child share her visit with you.

## **Fifth Grade News**

The fifth grade students have been exploring historical fiction during the literacy block. Each group of students has read a novel from different time periods. As they have read, the students noted the setting and its importance. The students explored the setting and the impact it has on the tone and characters. Students identified the important moments, jotted them down on "Post-it" notes and created a timeline of events. These strategies help students to dig deeper and have a more meaningful understanding of the text.

In math the students worked on fractions, decimals, and percents. At first the students felt somewhat intimidated by these tasks, but by the end of the unit the students were confident mathematicians. During the next few weeks the students will be working with measurement. They are estimating and then finding actual measurements. The students are excited about this unit because it is very "hands-on."

During science, the fifth grade classes have worked on investigations to find out about the senses and sensory organs. They explored the senses of sight and sound more in depth. Now, the students are working on tracking the phases of the moon. They have started by exploring the moon's phases using moon models. As the students continue to investigate they will be able to answer some of the questions they generated.

## **THE "SCOOP" ON THE INTELLIGENCES**

### **Music - Lillie Feierabend**

PreK students have been busy singing Simple Songs, an actual category in our curriculum. These are the first songs that a child can sing on their own. They are usually short, repetitive, and have a limited range of four or five notes. These are songs that a young child can easily sing successfully. Songs that have eleven verses, or an extended range of eight or nine notes are difficult and not as accessible. Some of our favorites are *Hot Cross Buns*, *Frog in the Meadow*, *Muffin Man* and *Mulberry Bush*. An added benefit of these Simple Songs is that there is plenty of opportunity for creativity. Ask your child to create new movements, new rhymes, or new verses.

Each week, the Kindergarten and First Grade students are given the opportunity to sing Arioso, another important category in our curriculum. These are songs that are spontaneously created by the students. Sometimes our topic is *What I Had for Breakfast* or *What I Had For Lunch*. Soon, we will use *I See a Song*, a wonderful picture book by Eric Carle, as the catalyst. It has the most beautiful pictures and no words. The students' imaginations are free, not only to create their own stories, but through arioso, to sing their stories. The goal of arioso is to help the students create longer and longer phrases with more ideas and more details. As the student develops, these arioso songs grow from two and three notes to gradually include more complex musical content. This may include song-like characteristics such as repetitive melodic passages and rhythms that imitate the rhythm of the words. The more sophisticated Arioso even end on a resting tone. Ask your child to sing about something. Also ask your child about the "Singing Chair". When the Singing Chair is occupied, everyone must sing everything they wish to communicate. Find a place in your home where you can do the same thing. It's easy. Your child will show you how.

Second grade students have been introduced to the literacy component of our music education curriculum. They are currently learning to write rhythms (quarter notes and eighth notes) and solfege syllables (Do, Re, and Me). These are important tools to help them convey their

musical thoughts. We use manipulatives as an intermediary step before they actually write on manuscript paper. They are also learning increasingly more complicated play parties. All cultures are rich with these rollicking singing/dancing and singing/clapping game songs. They all require not only musical skill, but also bodily/kinesthetic ability, interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills to be successful. Ask your child to teach you *Dr. Knickerbocker*, *A Sailor Went to Sea Sea Sea*, *Miss Mary Mack*, and *Long Legged Sailor*. Have fun!

### **Music – Laura Deutsch**

What do Arban's "Carnival of Venice", Cailliet's "Pop Goes the Weasel", and Gould's "American Salute" have in common? They are all in "theme and variation" form. In Grades 4 and 5, we have been learning how composers take a musical theme and vary it, much like Cheerios now have frosted, honey nut, strawberry and multi-grain. Students have learned that composers most commonly vary the tempo, rhythm, volume, instruments, pitch, melody or style in order to change the melody, but maintain the main idea. They have created their own movement, dance, speech and rhythmic variations. We have also been studying the instruments of the orchestra and most students can hopefully recognize a solo instrument within an instrumental piece. The next time you are listening to the radio, or a Cd, and hear an instrument featured, ask your child what instrument it is. With the help of the internet, we can now view orchestras playing the pieces we are studying and students can get a close up view of the instruments and the players. In addition to the above pieces, we also listened to and watched Benjamin Britten's "Young Person's Guide to The Orchestra", which was written specifically for students to learn about the different families of instruments.

Third graders have learned five notes on the recorder and are finally beginning to feel like recorder players. We have been working hard on our music literacy (note reading and writing), and working on beginning to improvise melodies using rhythmic patterns. In our repertoire this year, we are working on a Reggae piece and a Cajun folk song. Third grade families will soon get a date for our end of year recorder program. In addition to recorder playing, we are also working on our Integrated Arts unit on matter.

Each class is writing rhyming verses to describe experiments done in their classes. We look forward to sharing their creation with you.

### **BK – Patti Mascetti**

The students in grades Pre-k, K, 1 and 2 are keeping busy and active in the climbing room swinging on ropes, climbing on ladders, rolling on mats, walking on balance beams, bouncing on a trampoline and sliding down Oscars' slide. If you were able to attend the Family Fun night you know first hand how much fun our climbing room is and we are in there everyday until the end of March! What a great way to spend the winter months! The best part is that each task is done at their own level. However there certainly are challenges if they would like to take them. Before we finish our time in the climbing room each child will participate in an upper body challenge where they may earn a "Snake" or a "Monkey" certificate. Check the backpack around the middle of March!

And thank you to all of the parents who brought their children for our Family Fitness Night. It was a huge success especially with the grand finale Zumba class! (Hope you weren't too sore the next day☺) Thanks Sistah Anyango!

### **BK – Elizabeth Kane**

We have been very busy this winter in bodily kinesthetic class! We spent time learning in the Climbing Room where we put skills such as teamwork, cooperation and communication to work to complete challenging and fun tasks. Throughout these tasks, we used upper body strength and endurance on the climbing ladders and ropes as well as trust in ourselves and others to work at our highest capacity.

After the Climbing Room, we moved back into the Agora, where we have been moving a LOT and focusing on adding minutes to our daily activity. Our goal is for everyone to play actively for at least 60 minutes a day! We have also been learning about good food choices and why it is important to fill our plates with vegetables, healthy grains, lean proteins, fruits and low-fat dairy! Students and families can find more information about this as well as fun games on the website [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

Finally, a big “THANK YOU” to all of the families that came to our first UHMS Family Fitness Night! We had a great time with the Fitness Face-Off Challenge, family hula hoop, jump bands and Climbing Room obstacle course! And of course, a huge “THANK YOU” to Sistah Anyango (mother of fourth grader OmoladunNandi Battles and founder of FLYY Fitness) for an amazing Zumba experience!

## ***News and Notes from the UHMS Library***

UHMS students amaze me everyday with their enthusiasm for reading and for being read to – yes, even the 5<sup>th</sup> graders enjoy hearing a great story! But our students are not just passively listening or reading; at all levels, from PreK to 5<sup>th</sup>, I am seeing wheels turning, minds processing and the thinking and feeling that comes from being actively engaged in stories. Our students are working on making sense and making meaning of what they are hearing and seeing – in short, they are LEARNING. It is truly an awesome sight and I couldn’t be more proud of their efforts! Here’s a quick run down on what’s going on in the UHMS Library:

**PreK:** Speech Pathologist Julie Phillips and I are continuing to partner efforts with our Read It Again-PreK! curriculum. Our youngest students are enthusiastically “reading” stories (i.e. retelling) to **me** – ask any PreK’er about *Bear Feels Sick*, *Lunch, Monkey & Me*, or *Some Smug Slug* and I’ll bet they can do some storytelling of their own just for you! This year I am also working with each PreK teacher & class for an additional 10 week time frame guiding these students to act out and perform one of our favorite stories, complete with props and theatre-style narration.

**Kindergarten:** Since our holiday break, Kindergartners have enjoyed such favorites as *The Recess Queen*, *Tacky*, *Hooway for Wodney Wat*, and *Don’t Fidget a Feather!* (They should all know what it means to fidget!) Very shortly, our K students will be learning about the Caldecott medal (an award given to the illustrator of a book for outstanding or unique illustrations) and will enjoy such winners as *The Hello, Goodbye Window*, *Joseph Had an Overcoat* and numerous winners from Mo Willems. As we look at numerous medal

winners, students will not only view different illustrative styles and techniques, they will begin to understand the importance of pictures in the books they read.

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade:** For 1<sup>st</sup> grade, this year is devoted to the fun of fractured fairy tales and we are right in the thick of things with a steady emphasis on developing comparing/contrasting skills. The pattern is predictable; we read or discuss a classic fairytale and then explore other versions or variations of the story, coming back to share similarities and differences. Students are quickly learning how to identify connections and look for differences. Ask a 1<sup>st</sup> grader about our different Red Riding Hood stories, especially *The Wolf’s Story* where the Wolf actually gets to tell his side of the story!

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:** Students this age love a really funny story or a story that mixes things up a bit, especially one that surprises them or has unexpected and unpredictable parts. *Once Upon a Cool Motorcycle Dude* is one of our recent stories that has all of the above and then some. Ask a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader about *The End* – and enjoy hearing about what happens when the end is really the beginning! We have also spent a bit of time exploring our collection of Margie Palatini stories – if a student asks for a funny book, we often start with her books! I love showing off examples of very creative storytelling!

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:** After a brief revisiting of Caldecott medal winners, we will soon begin our unit on Heroes; we will brainstorm about the characteristics, physical traits or qualities that make someone a hero and then delve into some great biographies and historical fiction. It is important for students to see that heroes don’t have to be adults and they don’t have to be famous. Heroes come in all ages, sizes and colors – even 3<sup>rd</sup> graders can be heroes. This focus compliments what is happening in our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms as students learn about biographies as part of their Literacy curriculum.

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade:** 4<sup>th</sup> graders are currently listening to *Three Good Deeds* by Vivian Vande Velde – a “just right” chapter book that humorously explores the idea of deed-doing, both good and bad. The class discussions that follow when we

reach the end are always the best part for me; there's nothing like talking about good deeds!

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade:** If you have a 5<sup>th</sup> grader, ask them about the book *Schooled* by Gordon Korman, our funny, outrageous read-aloud. Appearances are so deceiving in this story and students are wondering who exactly it is who gets "schooled!" Set in a middle school, this is a great book for our soon-to-be 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

**NUTMEG NEWS:** First, state Librarians have tallied the votes from 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders all across Connecticut and the 2012 Nutmeg winner is (drumroll....) *Stolen Children* by Peg Kehret. Not surprisingly, for our own 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> graders, the UHMS favorite was *Dying to Meet You* by Kate Klise (Dr. Brachman's personal favorite!)

Next, on March 1st, Dr. Brachman and Mr. Barber will be hosting a celebratory pizza lunch for 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> graders who read at least 7 out of the ten 2012 Nutmeg books by February 1st. Students are encouraged to keep reading the Nutmegs because there will be another pizza lunch in June for those students who read ALL 10 by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Our Nutmeg readers have already joined Dr. Brachman and Mr. Barber in the Library for book discussions on *Dying to Meet You* and *Extra Credit*; a discussion on *Stolen Children* will take place on February 28<sup>th</sup>. I am very proud of our participating students; the thoughts and ideas shared by all have been outstanding.

And lastly, if your student is reading Nutmeg books, please remind them to visit our Nutmeg Wiki and log in their thoughts and comments!

Whew! I hope everyone gets a chance to "March into a Good Book" this month!

## Fundraising at UHMS

For those of you who are new to our community, you will find that we do fundraising a little differently than many other schools.

For example, **we will not ask you to try and sell things to your neighbors. We will only ask that you help UHMS when you follow your normal spending routine!**

We have seven ways that your existing spending habits could possibly help UHMS. Each is described below. If you have any questions about these fundraisers, or if you would like to volunteer as a parent fundraiser, please do not hesitate to ask in the office, or to contact our parent coordinator:

Kristi Larson at 860-426-0745 or Fundraising4UHMS@gmail.com.



the difference  
1 can make.

Box Tops is all about the difference 1 can make. This

year, our goal is to raise \$870 in Box Tops dollars. With just three box tops per student per month, we'll make our goal. On the fourth Wednesday of every month, the Box Tops will be collected and the classroom with the most Box Tops wins an extra recess! Be on the lookout for Box Tops, but please do not purchase products that would not otherwise be purchased.

Here are three easy, everyday ways you can collect Box Tops::

**Clip** — Clip the Box Top from hundreds of participating products and send them to school. Each one is worth 10¢ when our school redeems them from Box Tops for Education.

**Shop online** — Do you shop online at stores such as JCPenny, Walmart, Kodak Gallery and Travelocity? Why not do it at The Box Tops Marketplace® ([boxtops4education.com/marketplace](http://boxtops4education.com/marketplace))? For every \$10 you spend on qualifying purchases, UHMS will receive 15 eBoxTops™ at no additional cost to you. Plus, you'll get exclusive Box Tops deals and discounts!

**Sign up** — It's easy and free. Sign up to support our school at [boxtops4education.com](http://boxtops4education.com), where you can:

- See how much our school is earning with Box Tops
- Enter online promotions for chances to win Bonus Box Tops and other prizes
- Print money-saving coupons for your favorite Box Tops brands
- Make mealtime easier with family-pleasing recipes

And finally...spread the word. Aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, friends and neighbors can join you in your box top mission by clipping, shopping online, and signing up on the Box Tops website as a University of Hartford Magnet School supporter.



Sign up your Stop & Shop customer card and choose the University of Hartford Magnet School as your school of choice to benefit from the A+ School Rewards Program.

Registration is easy – visit [www.stopandshop.com/aplus](http://www.stopandshop.com/aplus) and choose the "Parents & Supporters - Register Your Stop & Shop Card" link from the menu on this page. Or simply call the A+ School Rewards Hotline at 1-877-ASK-APLUS (1-877-275-2758).

Look for Bonus Points on specially marked items at your store. With each Bonus Points item purchased using the Stop & Shop Card, you can earn DOUBLE or TRIPLE A+ School Rewards for the University of Hartford Magnet School.



Register your Advantage card and select UHMS as your school of choice.

Visit

<http://www2.pricechopper.com/toolsforschools> and enter code 50262.

Or you can stop off at the customer service desk at your next shopping trip and ask them to update your card so that the University of Hartford Magnet School can earn points from your future shopping trips!



It's easy to help raise funds for UHMS at ShopRite. Purchase at least 5 participating Box Tops products and ShopRite will match up to 10¢ per Box Top item purchased.

Register your Shop Rite store card at [www.ShopRiteShopOnceGiveTwice.com](http://www.ShopRiteShopOnceGiveTwice.com) and enter your ShopRite Price Plus Club Card

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OF EDUCATION\***

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If you have a Target REDcard (Target® Visa® Credit Card, Target Credit Card or Target Check Card), then you can earn cash for our school! Every time you use your REDcard at Target or Target.com, Target will donate 1% of your purchases to UHMS. All you

need to do is designate UHMS as your school of choice!

You can do that online at <http://www.target.com/tcoe> or by calling 1-800-316-6142. Target does not release the names of participants to the school. Target pays out donations directly to the school in September.

UHMS has joined My Coke Rewards for Schools program. That means by drinking the Coca-Cola products your family already enjoys (including Dasani water!), you can get My Coke Rewards points and donate them to help our school.



It's easy to participate:

- Purchase your favorite Coca-Cola products to get codes
- Go to [mycokerewards.com/school](http://mycokerewards.com/school) & sign in (register if you aren't a member).
- Enter your codes to collect points – then search for our school to donate points.
- Enter the amount of points you'd like to give, then click "Donate".



Every year you are offered the opportunity to purchase pictures of your child. A portion of your purchase price goes directly to UHMS!

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