

January, 2007

Buena Vista Elementary School

Tiger Times

Vision: We will create a community where each child is safe to explore and learn.

Mark the Dates!

January

- 8 First day of 2nd Semester – Students Return
- 12 Restaurant Night Fundraiser, Location TBA
- 15 No Students - Martin Luther King Day
- 22 BAAC meeting, 6:30 pm in Gym
- 23 Parent Literacy Evening, Healthy Bodies & Minds

February

- 12 PTA Meeting, 6:00 pm in Gym
- 19 No Students – Presidents Day
- 26 BAAC meeting, 6:30 pm in Gym

Parent Literacy Evenings

On Tuesday, December 5th parents gathered in the gym for some great chili and help with reading and writing for their students. Information was given out that covered picking out the best book for a student, internet safety and other parent homework hints. Comments from parents include:

- ✍ Resource books a big help!
- ✍ I thought I already knew how to help my son with his reading, but each speaker taught me something new. Great program
- ✍ (Hints for) Choosing a “just right” book
- ✍ Lots of great information. Thanks for the extra hints.

Information has been posted on the BV website at www.d11.org/buonavista and clicking on “Our School” then “Literacy Resource.” There are links to some of the handouts and internet sites that were covered. Mark your calendars for other meetings after the holidays.

?January 23: Healthy Bodies & Minds (Science, Math & PE)

?April 17: Art & Pie Night (Fine Arts programs)

March Montessori Presentation

Angeline Lillard, the author of “Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius,” will be speaking Saturday March 17, 2007 from 9:15 am to 4:15 pm in Denver at the Auraria Campus. If you are interested in registration, please check the Buena Vista web site at www.d11.org/buonavista.

KUDOS to Joseph Nunez for winning 1st Place (beginners division) in the West Middle School Chess Tournament in December. Izzy Nunez also participated in this tournament.



Dear Parents & Guardians,

January is already here and we are getting close to the annual CSAP testing period. We encourage you to make sure your student is at school every day so they will not miss any important instructions.

The faculty has been very busy working on the policies and procedures for discipline, alignment of curriculum to state standards, implementing new reading materials, and designing opportunities for parent training. Look for more information on upcoming training for primary Montessori parents and the entire school for Family Literacy Evening. We had a small but well feed set of parents and children at the last literacy evening and the comments were very positive. I would encourage all of you to attend them in the future.

The school accountability report from the Governor’s office was sent home in December. This report showed that Buena Vista was rated as an “average” school and showed “increase” trend in student achievement. We will review the report and additional assessment information at the Building Accountability and Advisory Committee in January. If you have any questions feel free to contact the office at 328-4100.

Sincerely,

Brenda Smith Barr, Principal

Positive Behavior Support (PBS)

Last year 3 members of the Buena Vista staff went to the district training on response to intervention (RTI) and positive behavior support. RTI is a way for the staff to collect information on students that can help inform how a teacher instructs a child. Positive Behavior Support (PBS) has been explored this year. A committee of staff has been working since the beginning of the year to develop a way to positively impact the behavior of children. PBS is being used throughout the country and is a reflection of best practice in a behavior system for schools. The focus of PBS is to stress “front loading” or teaching students the behaviors expected at school just as we would academic skills. The emphasis is also put on conflict resolution and natural consequences for students. The development process took place during the first several months of this school year. We have received marvelous input from teachers and parents that have helped to guide the process. We will be sharing the plan in future Tiger Times submissions, on our web site, and through our Parent Literacy evening in the spring.

PTA Message, Ruth Roland, president

Thank you to the 22 parents and children (not all pictured here) who participated in ABC clean up day on Saturday, Nov. 18th. After the trash from the school grounds and around the neighborhood was picked up (then properly



disposed of), everyone washed their hands and enjoyed a meal at Cy's Drive-in. Thank you to Cy's also for providing coupons, each good for a free junior ice-cream cone. The owner of Cy's has left the choice of distribution to the teachers' discretion.

Another thank you to those of you who have participated in BV restaurant nights. So far this year, Pita Pit and Meadow Muffins have sponsored BV by contributing a portion of the evening's proceeds to Buena Vista PTA for student enrichment. The plan is to continue Restaurant Night every 2nd Friday, monthly. Our next Restaurant Night will be on Friday, January 12. The funds raised from Restaurant Night in January have been designated for the Nate Miller Fund (restaurant choice to be announced). This is a fun event that helps BV students, as well as builds community with our local businesses! Add food to that mix...well, it is a recipe for success!

Yet another thank you to all our volunteers and teachers who make so many special events happen. Just to name a few of the most recent; Reflections Art Program, Movie Night, Holiday Gift Shop, Cool Science, Manitou Arts Theatre presentation, Family Literacy Evening, and Holiday Gift Basket Program. Each of these has benefits for our children in distinct ways, and we are grateful to everyone who helps to make it all possible. Join us at our next PTA meeting on Monday, January 8, starting at 6:00 pm. We are usually adjourned by 7:15, and childcare is provided. So come to get informed, as well as to make a difference!

Primary News

School District 11 will be providing free full day Kindergarten to a select number of schools next year. Data is being collected and will include issues that surround certain schools, Buena Vista included, that will receive one tuition free kindergarten. Because Buena Vista will not be a Title 1 school next year, primary classes will be charging tuition. We will need to formulate a plan for the free full day kindergarten within the parameters of district regulations. A parent meeting will be called in order to keep everyone informed once we have more details.

BAAC Flash; Lynn Casebeer, President

The Building Accountability Advisory Committee met on November 27, 2006, with 23 people present. The primary topic of discussion was student safety and discipline. Many questions were raised regarding Buena Vista's discipline plan, including policies and procedures, and the past and current use of District 11 disciplinary referral forms. Two Recommendations for Administration were motioned and approved by those in attendance. The BAAC recommends that the current school discipline committee review the District 11 Discipline Referral Form in conjunction with the new Positive Behavioral Support process under development, and that such action is taken prior to the holiday break. Ms. Smith-Barr requested a representative from the BAAC serve on this committee. The BAAC also recommends to the administration of BV that they solicit District 11 training on the use of the Discipline Referral Form annually.

The agenda item concerning current and future utilization of existing classroom space and plans for the relocation of the school office using bond funds was tabled until the January meeting, scheduled for Monday, January 22, 2007 at 6:30 p.m. in the Teachers' Lounge. In addition to a follow-up on the school discipline discussion, items to be discussed at the January meeting include the School Accountability Report for last year and current assessment data from the Terra Nova and DIBEL testing completed thus far. All are welcome to attend.

Parenting Tips from Love and Logic - MANNERS MATTER

Maybe you've noticed that manners seem to be a rare commodity these days. What a great opportunity for your kids! Since the rarer the commodity the more valuable it becomes, we can give our children a powerful advantage in the workforce...and in life...if we teach them. Listed below are some tips:

Model good manners

You can say when you are frustrated, "What a bummer. This is the hardest part for me!"

Set enforceable limits on behavior by describing what you will do or allow.

You may say, "We will stay at the restaurant as long as you guys can sit in your chairs, use quiet voices, and follow directions," is an example of an enforceable limit.

Follow through with empathy and logical penalties.

One mother wasn't afraid to get serious: "I'd been practicing table manners with my three ADHD boys, and I decided to take them out for a practice session. As soon as we ordered our meals, they started acting horrible. I guess they didn't believe I'd do anything about it. I said, "How sad, we need to go," and I took them right home. Now they get frequent compliments from others when we go out in public. The cost of that uneaten meal was sure worth it!"

Program News

Media Center Focus; Jeff Moser, LTE

Buena Vista is now using a great new math program that is designed to be utilized in conjunction with classroom instruction. The program is from Pearson Digital Learning, and the program name is SuccessMaker Math Concepts and Skills (K-8). This program's focus here at BV is to bring students up to their grade level by supporting the development and maintenance of essential concepts, strategies, and skills in mathematics. I've already seen student improvement through the data provided by SuccessMaker. The students really enjoy spending 15 minutes on the program at a time, 3 times a week. I even have students asking me if they can come to the library media center to use this program in particular. SuccessMaker is a success here at BV.

Adventure Club; Debby Jennings, Director

December is a time of celebration for members of the Buena Vista Adventure Club. The children raised money to buy a farm animal for a family in Africa. The gift will be used for food and as a means of earning a living. Thanks to the generosity of the children, their families and the BV community that contributed to our campaign. We see ourselves as world citizens and aim to make a difference! During "school out" days in late December, club members will spend a day at Mr. Biggs and at Art Sports. We will also have a toy day, hat day and pajama day where the kids can let loose and wear their favorite things or bring a new toy. What better way to pass the time during the holiday break than spending time with your pals and having fun!

News from the Gym...

Fitness Gram Report Cards... are yet to come!! As I write this, I am in the midst of phone calls to tech support! We were able to update our version of the Fitness Gram software this school year. The challenge has been importing last year's scores from the old program into the new program... so that students can compare scores over time. Things aren't as easy as they seem. Just like home improvement projects... there always seems to be a 'glitch' that requires three more trips to Home Depot! I feel sure the 'glitches' will be worked out, and Fitness Gram Reports will be coming home soon!

Younger students continue to work on movement challenges with balance... balancing their bodies, and objects as well... all while in motion! Older students continue challenges with our large (4 ft. diameter) pink "Kin Ball". Some of the challenges require teamwork to succeed, some involve experimenting and refining creative movements, and some of the challenges are leading up to learning the sport of "Kin Ball". All the challenges are great fun!

McCort's Musings:

As we prepare for this edition of Tiger Times our minds are whirling with the end of a semester upon us. Half a year has passed! Take a serious look at the growth your child/ren made in that half of a year (which is really only four months~~s~~).

Heading into the second semester, our hearts and minds (okay, maybe just our minds) are beginning to think "CSAP." CSAP stands for Colorado Student Assessment Program and is only one measure of a student's performance. Students are asked to perform by explaining their thought process when responding to: prompts in writing, questions about reading passages and answers to mathematical problems. While it is a major assessment and very high stakes, it is only one measure of a child's work at one specific time. We do want to make sure that each child does his/her best while not feeling pressure to perform beyond their capabilities. We do our best here at Buena Vista to accommodate the needs of individual students so that they are able to present their best work.

So...how do we all make this the best experience for children? As teachers, we provide the best instruction we can during the year. As time approaches, we teach the genre of test taking. As parents, reading, writing and practicing math in the context of your home life (reading labels, writing thank you notes and counting how many items will be needed for dinner) are perfect ways to help. When your child answers a question, ask the all important question, "How do you know that?" That question helps children to internalize and then verbalize what they know. It cements their knowledge. If they can't tell you how they know something, share with them how you know that. You'll then be teaching them a process that will help with all aspects of their lives.

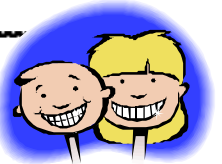
Finally, CSAP fever does little to help anyone. We need to make the most of each teaching moment and know the direction in which we are heading – know the goal...to know ALL we can know at a given time and age.

(Speaking of which, if you haven't seen the movie *Akeelah and the Bee*, it's a wonderful story.)

So as CSAP time approaches, do as Tony suggested – put a TIGER in their tank, so that well fed and well rested, they will come and do their best work.

Give Kids A Smile

There will be a free Dental Clinic for children ages 6-17 by participating Dentists in the Colorado Springs area from January 29 thru February 2, 2007. Please call Cindy at 227-1018 or Sharyn at 598-5161 for an appointment.



Classroom News

Primary Classroom News (Miss Paula, Miss Catherine, Miss Carolyn)

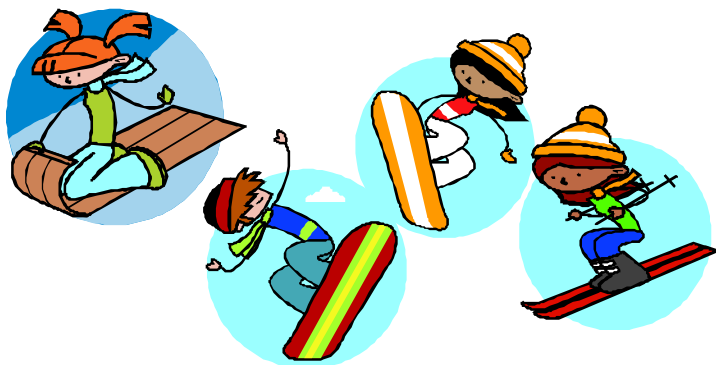
Thank you to all the parents who have participated in the catalog gift orders. It's so appreciated! Also, Parent Night will be scheduled the end of January or early February – date to be determined. Have a wonderful winter break.

In **Ms. Ruth's Lower Elementary** classroom, we have started studying European countries. Besides studying the geography of Europe, we are learning about customs and traditions. After the holidays each child will pick one country, which he/she will research extensively.

During the month of December, we also have a class tree on one of our bulleting boards. It consists of the hand prints of all students. Every time one of our children observes someone else being kind, he/she gets a star, writes the student's name on there and the kind act that was observed. Our tree is starting to be interspersed with yellow and our class is focusing more and more on kindness.

In November, **Ms. Weakland's 2nd grade** worked really hard on reading and just started double digit addition. Our class spent a lot of time learning to count money and making change. We had a wonderful Thanksgiving feast with Ms. Leigh's class. This month we have been working on writing letters to family and friends. After typing up the letters, we learned to address envelopes. We enjoyed a wonderful nature walk to the post office with Ms. Leigh's' class, where we mailed all the letters. We hope to continue writing at least one letter every month from now on out.

We are working with Ms. Garsoe's class on an ornament exchange. The students are really enjoying getting to know students in other classes. After the holidays we are planning to finish up our Balance & Motion Science Kit. We have also been working really hard at making big strides on the Successmaker computer program. Hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. A special thank you to all of our parents, we appreciate you taking the time to read with your child, sign the planners, and make sure that homework gets completed each night.



In December, **Miss G.'s 3rd grade** class put on a play called "A Teddybear Christmas." All students had either a part or were props coordinators. It was topped off with Christmas cookies and hot chocolate for the parents. In Math, they finished measurement and are starting their times tables. that is exciting for all. We all hope everyone had a "honey of a holiday."

Science Fair is the next exciting event on **Ms. Garsoe's 5th Grade** class agenda. The tentative date for the Fair is Tuesday, February 27, at 10:00 in our fifth grade room. In preparation, we are studying "The Brightsville School Science Fair Mystery," which teaches us the scientific process while solving the mystery of the missing science fair boards. Watch for unfolding events. We are writing letters, persuasive essays, and as always, poetry. Mrs. Eva McGeehan, whose mother was a poet, came to read poems to us in December, and that was a very special day.

Student Work

Being Outside, By James Finsterwald; Ms. Garsoe's Class

Birds chirping as gliding through the skies
Everything shining on the ground
I see the beautiful mountains
Nothing dry but soaked
Grass just damp.

Odd smell in the morning
Under the dirt, worms are crawling to the sky
The flag as still as soldiers
Sirens going on and off
I see cars driving frequently
Dead leaves left to crunch
Everything just waking up in early morning.

(Read all the first letters in the lines.)

Parents and Students, please check the lost and found box which is located on the stage in the gym. It is over-flowing with coats, etc. Smaller items such as keys, glasses, etc. are located in the office.