

PRECIOUS BLOOD SCHOOL—STEP NEWSLETTER

February 22, 2008

Dear Parents,

More than half of the year has passed and I need to touch base with you as to what your children are working on and studying in the STEP program thus far.

The newer **third grade** class started after the holidays and has nine students from Mrs. Kawai's and Mrs. Carver's classrooms. They meet once per week for one hour on Friday's. They are involved in a winter unit of study involving many aspects of animals and humans and how we survive winter in addition to the holidays we celebrate this time of year. There are many activities that are creative outlets for writing, drawing, and imagining. The SCAMPER activity is one where imagination is guided through a series of visual descriptions and one has to follow along in one's mind to come up with new ideas and inventions. Critical thinking, reasoning, and deductive thinking are also explored through analogies, Dr. DooRiddles, and Connections puzzles. Sharing of ideas and individual work is encouraged. We cover many areas in class and usually there is some homework for the next class. Each child has a STEP folder and should be bringing it home each week. We will talk more about planning for a weekly class.

The **fourth grade** STEP group contains five students all from Mrs. Hildebrand's classroom. We meet for two hours on Thursday afternoons. They have been involved in the multi-disciplinary study of whales, oceans, marine research in various areas, many math and related science activities. This all takes place in the video series called The Voyage of the MIMI. In addition, they have been working at reasoning and deductive thinking activities with "Perplexers", problem-solving and language/vocabulary development with "Plexers", and "Red Herrings—Science" related stories to stretch minds. They have also been involved in some research this past quarter on different whales. They had to research a whale and incorporate specific facts into a visual and a written presentation of their choice. This study of the ocean and related areas has also been enhanced by the field trip to the Pirate Exhibit in Cincinnati last October.

The **fifth/sixth grade** also meets on Thursdays (in the morning) for two hours. This group also went to the Pirate Exhibition and found many things related to their current study of Archeology, especially underwater archeology. The "Second Voyage of the MIMI" includes the multi-disciplinary study of archeology, ancient Maya culture, Maya hieroglyphs, Maya Math,

scuba and study of pressure, and many other related science, math, and story related episodes. They will be involved in some research on a particular related topic in the next few weeks. This group also challenges themselves in sorting out “Red Herrings”, social studies related “Plexers”, mind-bending “Perplexers”; and they are also studying beginning French with “Madame, Merci, et Mou”. The hardest thing is getting the accent/pronunciation as much of French is close to Spanish. We hope to enjoy some French food in the near future in our own little café.

I hope this has been informative and helpful in getting you up to date on our STEP groups and their classes. Some of our students are also involved in the creative problem-solving competition called “Destination Imagination”. This year we have two teams who will compete on March 15th at Sinclair Community College.

Please feel free to check in with me at any time if you have any questions or would like to have a conference. STEP fees are due each quarter and checks should be made out to Precious Blood School. (\$45 for grades 4, 5, and 6 and \$25 for grade 3).

STEPfully,

Mrs. Fraser