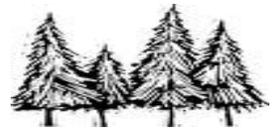




# SCHOOL IN THE WOODS FIELD NOTES

## DECEMBER 2019



### Dear Parents:

We are very pleased with the progress our students are making in language arts. Each reading group read either a biography of a well-known American naturalist or a book written by one. Students then selected another naturalist of particular interest to read and learn about. Some of the chosen naturalists are well-known while others are lesser known. Our naturalists have become quite knowledgeable about the naturalist they read about. Many students have given a short presentation about their naturalist in an oral/speaking form called "chautauqua". A chautauqua is a presentation done in the first-person. Each student presents their chosen naturalist as if they were that person. This does not involve acting or trying to look like the person. Instead, the presenter simply tells a little about "their" life and how "they" became a naturalist. The presenter may then step out of character and answer a few questions as a historian would. Our naturalists tend to become very interested in this aspect of their naturalist studies as they become more intimately acquainted with the person they have been learning about. We find that the chautauqua experience is one of our school's unique learning opportunities that promotes deeper thinking and self-confidence building.

During Winter Break, we strongly encourage you to have your child continue to regularly practice basic math facts. This is a great activity for long car or plane trips. Extra practice on keyboarding is also highly recommended. There are a variety of Internet sites that are free and provide "fun" practice. Students will be using computers more frequently during our second semester, especially with their Spring Field Projects.



### Pueblo Raptor Center Visits

We were fortunate to have some very special visitors come to our school. A great-horned owl, peregrine falcon, and golden eagle arrived at our school one morning with their handler. How wonderful it was to see these magnificent raptors up close. We learned quite a bit of information about these three kinds of raptors and what it means for a bird of prey to be defined as a raptor. Our naturalists wrote thank you cards as part of a follow-up activity that focused on letter writing and expressing appreciation. You may want to visit the Pueblo Raptor Center.

### Volunteers Needed

In January, naturalists will be making pine needle baskets. We will need a number of adult hands to help students work on this unique art project. If you would like to help and are available any

afternoons Wednesday, Jan. 8 to Friday, Jan. 17 from 1:30-2:45, we would love to have you. Please watch for a SignUp Genius email with the dates. No previous experience making these baskets is necessary. Come early for training on your first day.

### Library

We are so impressed by the number of books our naturalists are checking out from our library and the bookmobile! Our check out limit is three from the SITW library and a "reasonable" number from the PPLD Bookmobile. We hope to foster life-long readers. In preparation for the fifth grade Battle of the Books program, we urge our students to read books from this high-quality literary section in our library. SITW has many copies of most titles. They would be great for reading during the Winter Break. Providing interesting book reading options is another way to reduce your child's screen time.

### Turkey Trot

Wow! We earned 11,882.06 in our 8<sup>th</sup> annual Wild Turkey Trot! The funds came from our current naturalists, the HSA TRACKS program, and our alumni! We are THRILLED that we now have more of the much-needed funds for interactive classroom projectors. Thank you so much for your generosity!

### Holiday Time and Gift Giving

We want you all to know that the greatest gift you could ever give us has already been given: your naturalist. We are privileged to share them with you for an entire school year. You have also been so generous with your financial donations. We encourage all our families to forego buying individual gifts for the SITW staff. If home baked goods are a tradition or cards expressing appreciation are created, they would be welcome.

Our naturalists will be creating cards for local non-profit organizations that provide help and support in a variety of ways in our community. Cards will be created with messages and sent to places like the Black Forest Fire Department, Wild Blue Cats, Black Forest Trails, Slash and Mulch Program, and others. A special way we will be able to think about others during this special time of year is in connection with Heifer International. This organization provides animals and training in sustainable agriculture and business to create the opportunity for the individuals and businesses with whom they partner. Watch for information about how we will help Heifer International.

### Planning Ahead

Report cards for second quarter will be available for viewing online in early January 2020.

Spring conferences are scheduled for March 18 and 19. They are followed by Spring Break on March 23 to March 27. We deeply appreciate your help in making family plans, so your child and you are able to attend a naturalist/parent/teacher conference on one of our conference dates.

***We want to wish you and your family an especially warm and peaceful holiday season.***