

# MAP Newsletter



Winter 2010

## Featured Upcoming MAP / PTA Event: Wreath Making December 8, 2-7pm

Join the whole Manor community! We provide the materials, you provide the artistry. Featuring live music... Let us provide dinner of warm soup, homemade bread and specialties from local restaurants.

If you would like to help provide greens or dinner items, contact Grace DelValle: [gracedelvalle@mac.com](mailto:gracedelvalle@mac.com).

If you can volunteer to help, please contact Danielle Fogel: [d.fogel@comcast.net](mailto:d.fogel@comcast.net)



## Community Discusses Shared Values

Thanks to all who participated in the MAP Community Meeting on October 14. In addition to spending some time getting to know each other with a fun “speed-dating” style game, the meeting included a visioning exercise to share our ideals for the skills and abilities we want our children to develop during their educational experience in MAP. The list was varied and comprehensive. In addition to desiring a strong academic foundation for our kids, many of the traits mentioned related to social and emotional skills: self-confidence, integrity, sense

of adventure; willingness to take risks and ability to think independently. It was remarkable how aligned we all are in what we want for our children. RVSD has a Strategic Plan that embodies many of the values shared at the meeting, and RVSD Trustee Conn Hickey, who participated in the meeting, stated that one challenge the RVSD is presently grappling with is to figure out the most effective way to measure our progress toward achieving the social and emotional components of the Strategic Plan (available on the MAP section of the Manor PTA web site). We hope that the meeting was just the beginning of a longer discussion about how we can best facilitate the development in our children of those skills we value most.

**FOR MORE ON THE COMMUNITY MEETING, UPCOMING EVENTS, THE MAP BOARD AND GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE MULTI-AGE PROGRAM, VISIT THE NEW MAP SECTION OF THE MANOR PTA WEB SITE AT**

**[WWW.MANORPTA.ORG](http://WWW.MANORPTA.ORG)**

# CLASS NEWS

Our teachers and kids have been busy this Fall! From program-wide camping trips to cool projects to the amazing Winter Faire, this has been an action-packed season. Check out what has been going on across MAP.

## Ms. Rebecca's K/I Class



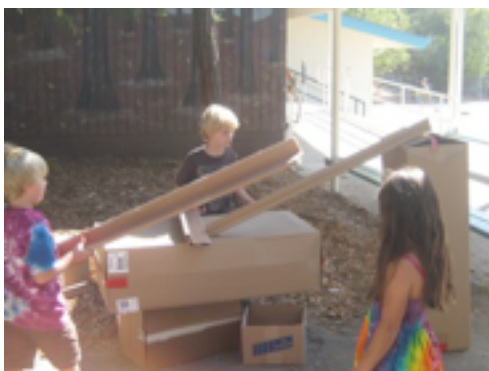
I am so happy to be back in this MAP community. It was certainly a warm welcome back with a doorway graced in fairy garlands and then find out it was from families five years ago; it was so touching. Thank you for appreciating me. I am grateful to Chris Lyons for taking over my class when I left to become a new mom. I see her incredible teaching through the first graders' enthusiasm for learning. I feel so lucky to have such wonderful Kindergarten and First Grade children and families.

We have gone out in small groups to observe the vultures in our area. So far, according to our observations, there are more vultures flying about in the afternoons than there are in the mornings. It has been fun discussing why we think this is. We have also been practicing important social skills such as how to give and receive a compliment or appreciation. Most of the 1st graders have gone around to the other MAP classrooms to independently give surveys, asking questions such as "Did you like the Halloween Assembly?" or "What is your favorite color?" They are utilizing their new math skills to count, collect data, and graph out the results.



## Mr. Tim's K/I Class

Our main focus so far has been local animals. We started with crows as they are the most common animal to observe in Marin. We were able to do a number of experiments with the crows that show up at recess. Our first experiment was to place different foods from kids' snacks out on a table then observe which foods the crows ate. We found out that they are just like kids. They ate everything from cheetos to popcorn to bread and meat but shunned fruit and vegetables. This year we have also studied bats, owls and vultures. At least once a week the kids go outside and graph the number of different kinds of birds they see.



Our cooking center has been busy two days a week with Martyne and the kids making sweets and amazing soups. The kids have been working on building big things, such as an airport and the Golden Gate Bridge, out of cardboard and paper and toilet paper tubes. One person comes up with an idea then others volunteer to help. In the garden the kids harvested last year's wheat, hammered together planter boxes and sent them home filled with flowers. Our holiday performing season is coming up. We are working on "The Christmas Carol" and "The Nutcracker." See you at the show!

## Ms. Emily's 2/3 Class



Have you been to any great National Parks lately? Room 5 has! We've been taking "virtual" adventures from the comfort of our classroom to discover all of the wonderful things our National Parks have to offer. In our travels, we have been learning important map skills to help us understand our surroundings in a different way. We've also been learning about important people, like John Muir and Teddy Roosevelt, who have helped pave the way for the National Park System. In our travels, we have seen many wild animals, taking particular notice of rodents in the parks.

We started off the school year with an in-depth study of rodents, and now we can spot evidence of the creatures everywhere we go! Although we don't travel by airplane on our National Park adventures, we are learning all about the forces of balance and motion required to move objects of all kinds, including planes. Kaden's mom, Carolyn, has been visiting Room 5 each week to teach hands-on science lesson. We love her visits because we experiment with something new every week. Another thing we've been doing a lot of around here is sharing. We share our personal stories and treasures at our daily Morning Meeting. We share memorable moments in our writing. We listen to stories our parents have sent to our classroom about their visits to National Parks. Of course, we also listen to the silly stories Ms. Emily shares with us about her dog, her husband, and all of her adventures. We even share our classroom experiences on our blog, "Adventures in Room 5". Check it out—we are sure to have a lot more to tell you as the year goes on! <http://maproom5.blogspot.com/>

## Ms. Erika's 2/3 Class

Since the Critter Carnival, we went on to observe the entire life cycle of the silkworm. We watched as our silkworms spun cocoons, emerged as moths, mated, then laid their eggs. It was fascinating! Now that they have all died (with eggs safely put away to wait for springtime) we will be getting some pet fish for the class.

We have been learning about biographies lately, too. We read about Elvis Presley, and even mapped out all of his concerts. In the process, we learned how to read maps, from grids and coordinates to a map's scale, the key, and the compass rose. Then we read about Cesar Chavez, and all the work he did for migrant farm workers in America. Our new classroom chant is "Si se puede! Yes, we can!" As a service project, we collected money for UNICEF, bringing in from Room 6 (drum roll, please?) \$94.38! This will help buy clean water and medicine for kids around the world who can't afford it.

For math, the second graders go to Ms. Emily and the third graders go to Ms. Erika. This has been going very well. Both groups have a rich environment in which to build their skills and understanding, at appropriate levels, with extra support for some and extra challenges for others. It also allows our students to mix with their same-grade peers in an important way, every day.

We just started an exciting science unit about balance and motion, and the kids are really jazzed. The FOSS science kits provide great hands-on activities to explore concepts and have kids discover for themselves how things work. Speaking of creativity, a favorite time of the week in Room 6 is Maker Time. Each child is working on making any number of things from the materials in class - egg cartons, paper towel rolls, pipe cleaners, etc. Please stop by to see all the amazing things the children have been making! Also check out the self-portrait each child made with bright colored paint on black velvet (thanks, Danielle!)

## Ms. Chris's 4/5 Class

Our year-long study of U.S. History started with the big picture--what is the land like? The kids looked at maps and decided how they would split up the land into regions if they were in charge. Then each student wrote letters to people they knew in different states, requesting a post card with information about the climate and geography. We took the information we learned about the land, and imagined what it would be like to live there long ago. Then, groups of kids chose a region and did research on a tribe in that region focusing on how they used the natural resources.

Our next focus will be the explorers who came to our shores, and how the land and the people who were already here influenced their experiences. To kick off the idea of being on a sailing journey long ago, we spent a beautiful day on a sailboat in the bay, learning about bay ecology and trade routes and navigation, and watching lots of sea life, including porpoises near the Golden Gate Bridge.

The kids have done wonderful personal narrative writing--telling stories with a focus, and including an inviting lead, dialogue, inner thinking, and setting. We recently had a celebration of our writing, sharing finishes pieces with classmates.

This week the kids are focusing on gratitude--being grateful for all we have and being willing to share with others. Each student has committed to doing an act of kindness for someone at school.



## Ms. Nina's 4/5 Class

Our major focus has been learning about United States Geography and the ways of life of various Native American tribes throughout the country. Students, working in tribe groups of their choice, have been researching the way their tribe used the land and how European explorers and settlers changed their way of life. On November 30th our class will have a Powwow to show off the different projects: posters, village dioramas, art, and dance. During our productive personal narrative writing unit, each student has produced a story of their life that they've crafted, and then revised using mentor texts (other writing and writers we LOVE to learn from).

The class finished up a Teamwork simulation challenge. During this unit, students were in small groups learning to work together and deal with conflicts. They were given various challenges along the way and plenty of time to reflect. Hopefully, we can carry the working together and conflict resolution strategies into all we do.



### Mindfulness in Emily's class

My name is Alice and I am the mother of Miles, Ella and Max. I meet with Ms. Emily's class every other Friday to practice Mindfulness techniques and positive communication skills.

Mindfulness is about cultivating more focus and awareness of the present moment. Some of the many benefits are; improved memory, concentration, self control, self regulation and self awareness. Being Mindful helps slows down racing thoughts and breath, and it teaches us to pay attention to the present moment by noticing what our minds are doing and what is happening in our environment. It takes us off auto pilot!

Everything we do, think and say in our lives is a reflection of our sense of Self. This sense can be cultivated using Mindfulness. Our children are very open and receptive to self discovery and new ways to relate positively to the world around them. We want to empower our children with skills that can help them relax and stay grounded so that they can meet life challenges with success and a strong sense of who they are and how they fit into their world. A wonderful way to introduce Mindfulness into our lives is to cultivate awareness of our environment, our bodies and our minds. If you hear students talking about growing roots and energy balls, these are some of the activities that we do to bring Mindfulness into our daily lives.

If you would like to know more about my background, the activities we are doing in Ms Emily's class, or contact me about bringing Mindfulness into your own life or classroom, please go to [www.ajna-om.com](http://www.ajna-om.com) or email me at [aliceebc@comcast.net](mailto:aliceebc@comcast.net).