

## THMS

## Around the World Cookbook



The Newcomer class at Thomas Harrison Middle School decided to turn their health and nutrition unit into a Project Based Learning experience. Students enjoyed talking about their favorite dishes from their home countries. They spent time examining the different nutritional value of ingredients and then categorized them into the different food groups. Students used what they learned about ordinal numbers and U.S. customary measurements to write recipes. Then they edited the handwritten recipes using a writing workshop process, and then practiced typing and technology skills by making a page for a recipe book.

Once the recipes were completed, students decided that just writing about them wasn't enough - they had to cook! It fit perfectly with their next unit on

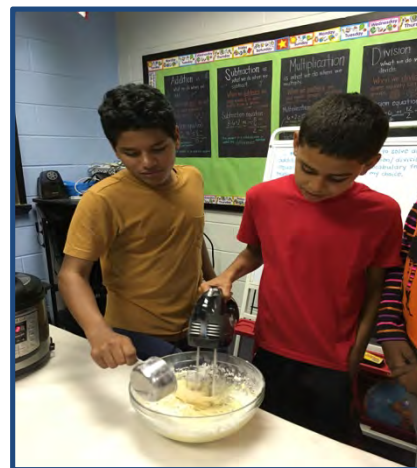
scientific thinking using the five senses, so that following week the upstairs hallway smelled wonderfully of different countries' foods. Students cooked in the afternoon and spent time the next morning discussing whether they liked the food, what they could have done differently, how it tasted and smelled, etc.



Enough teachers and other staff at Thomas Harrison poked their heads in to ask what that wonderful smell was or to try to score a taste that the Newcomer teachers and students discussed publishing an "Around the World Cookbook." Students loved the idea and even suggested selling them to raise money for field trips or to donate to Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. Enter a quick lesson on voting, and an almost unanimous vote, and students are prepared to donate all funds to Puerto Rico once cookbook sales go live. Look for information coming in February on how to get your very own

"Around the World Cookbook" and contribute to the Newcomers service project!

Enjoy!  
Buen provecho!  
Bon appétit!  
بالهناء والشفاء  
Ufurahie chakula chako!



## KES *Student Voices Make a Difference*

“Kindness Matters at Keister” is the motto for the new Keister Ambassador group. Ten 4th and 5th graders have come together monthly this school year to identify ways to make Keister a safe and happy place to learn. After brainstorming at their first meeting in October with the principal and assistant principal, students identified a theme as they discussed issues they were seeing in their classrooms and around the school setting. Kindness became the focus for this group. In the November and December meetings, these students began to discuss the different ways we could demonstrate kindness in school, including this group modeling kindness, creating a motto and recognizing students on morning announcements. In December, these students began a Google slide presentation that they will share with their classmates during a class meeting in January.

Listening to students’ voices and perceptions is powerful and can help improve the school setting. Students have the ability to make a positive impact on their school environment. Our student ambassador group is one way we get to hear from our students and include them in decisions that are being made in our school. Each month, we look forward to meeting with this group to learn from them as we continue to create a positive experience and friendly environment at Keister.



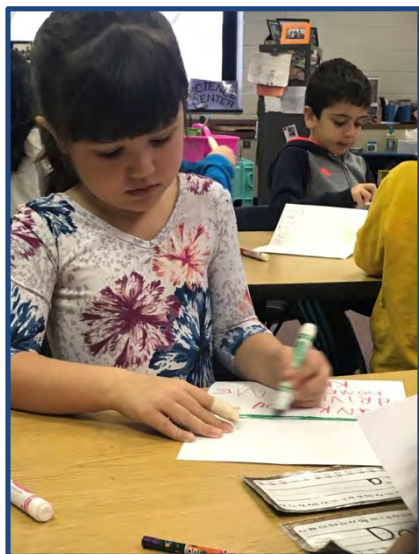
We talked to a couple of Keister Ambassadors and here is what they had to say about the program:

*Evelyn, 5th grader: “Kids get to help make decisions about Keister and have some ownership.”*

*Luis, 4th grader: “I like that we talk about how to make Keister the best place possible for all students.”*

### Upcoming Events

- Jan 15: No School for Students
- Jan. 16: School Board Work Session – School Board Office – 5:30 pm
- Jan 22: No School for Students
- Feb. 6: School Board Meeting – City Council Chambers – 7:00 pm
- Feb. 9: Early Release Day
- Feb. 22-25: HHS Musical - *Cinderella*

**SSES**
***Thirteen Days of Kindness***


Kindergarten students spent the last few weeks before Winter Break learning about kindness and completing activities to demonstrate kindness to others in our school community. To introduce the 13 Days of Kindness, the class had a Grinch Party. They learned about the Grinch and how Cindy Lou believed in the Grinch even when he wasn't being kind. This helped the Grinch as he decided to be kind and his heart grew. Each student was given a basket of hearts. Each time someone did something kind, a student would write the name of the person who was kind on a heart. The hearts were then taped to a Grinch display. They then celebrated with Grinch Kabobs and Punch!

During the other days of kindness, students learned about new acts of kindness during class meetings. They practiced these acts throughout the day. For example, Day 3 was all about taking turns and letting others go first. On Day 5, students wrote thank you cards to their bus drivers. The drivers were completely surprised getting their cards and were very touched! On Day 7, students wrote cards to send to members of the military. On Day 10, they donated books to send to a school in Texas that was impacted by the flooding from hurricanes. Students also wrote cards to the school's custodians, included others that were by sitting by themselves, complimented others, and picked up trash they found around the school.



It has been really exciting seeing the students learn to appreciate each other and the kindness they can use to build up their classmates. Even though the Thirteen Days of Kindness are finished, students continue to show kindness to others – proving that you don't have to be a Grinch to learn how to be kind.

## Elon Rhodes

### *Making Good Use of Space*

Preschool is all about introducing children to new experiences. At Elon Rhodes Early Learning Center, we have been busy making the most of every square inch of the space we have available. In addition to our nine classrooms, we also have other indoor areas that we can use to provide opportunities for gross motor development and the arts. This is especially important during the cold winter months when outside play is limited at home and at school. At Elon Rhodes, we do not have traditional elementary specials like music, art, PE, or library. But we have worked hard to creatively integrate all of those learning opportunities into our new environment.

For example, we have had a visit from the giant who lost his shoe as he quickly climbed back up the beanstalk. We searched everywhere for that Giant and talked about this experience for weeks. Also, the Massanutten Regional Library visits us weekly to provide interactive storytelling from yet another caring adult.

Any Given Child puppet theater provided a wonderful puppet show and then we made our own puppets and performed our own puppet shows. Elsa came all the way from Arendelle to sing and dance with us, providing a wonderful musical experience. We also baked gingerbread cookies and made gingerbread houses. We walked all over Elon Rhodes and Smithland Elementary as we looked for our runaway gingerbread boy. He sure can run fast. We did not give up and we were so proud when we finally caught him!



Gross motor development is vital for preschool aged children. Gross motor skills are those that require whole body movement and involve the large muscles of the body to perform everyday functions. Working on gross motor skills helps children gain strength and confidence in their bodies. It also helps them get exercise and physical activity, which is important for a healthy lifestyle. It gives them improved self-esteem that comes from successfully being able to take part in games with other children, release of stress and frustration through physical activity and improved school skills. We have created an obstacle course of sorts to practice jumping, balancing, hopping, climbing through tunnels, and other large motor fun.

**SMES**
***Little Leaders***

***“What structures can we create to allow for student expression, leadership, and power?”***

Our administrative team attended the July 2017 EMU Restorative Justice Academy and sat mesmerized as we listened to Dr. Johanna Turner share. Her talk was entitled, “New Paradigms and Possibilities.” She challenged us to create spaces where students can gather and their leadership can emerge. Her thought-provoking ideas and questions led us to a discussion on creating a Smithland student leadership panel.

We shared this with our Instructional Leadership Team and each K-5 teacher gave a name of a responsible student. In October, we invited students to our first meeting to discuss our hopes and dreams for SMES. At that initial meeting, we talked about our “why.” We shared that we want our students to have a voice in our school and be leaders. We explained how they had been chosen by their teachers to represent their classrooms and how we would all work together to make Smithland an AWESOME, SAFE, and HAPPY place to be. We then discussed the following questions: 1. What should we call ourselves? 2. What does joy look like to you? 3. Where can you go where you feel safe?

From this first meeting, we learned that the students love our school-wide meetings and that they wanted to present at the next one. They also shared that sometimes the school has an odor and we may need to purchase air fresheners. They requested shade on our playground and asked about why it was sometimes too hot or too cold in the building. There was also a request for buddy classes to read together more often. The students were encouraged to return to their classrooms, share in their class meetings what they had learned, and gather ideas for our next meeting.



At our December 11 meeting, students were asked: 1. What suggestions do you have for making our school a better place? 2. What are some jobs that you think we should have at SMES that haven't been posted on our job board? Their thoughtful questions and responses showed their classmates and teachers also took their positions very seriously. Students shared the following ideas:

- Start a school store
- Hallway monitors, morning greeters, and safety patrol
- Turn our courtyard into a garden, take better care of the gardens we have
- We would like to visit other classrooms to make more friends
- When teachers feel frustrated or sad we should give them compliments
- Water fountain outside
- More clubs, such as Garden Club, Spanish Club, Harry Potter Club
- Can we have a computer for every student in every room?

**Highlighting Excellence in Harrisonburg City Public Schools**

- A window for every class
- We should have more empathy and help people
- Solar panels
- More class pets
- A pond for ducks
- New things for our playground
- Cheerleading squad, sports teams
- After school clean-up so janitors don't have to work too hard
- More time for specials, recess, math, reading ... Can we read in the hallways?
- Do more school projects
- Say thank you to people who work hard

We are excited to ensure that some of these initiatives begin second semester.

Initially, our Little Leaders will share ideas and work together for improving our school environment and climate. This team's role could transition to that of a "student justice panel" where they share their thoughts on student behaviors, giving them an opportunity to "channel their righteous indignation into reflective and strategic action." Little Leaders could be asked, "What core value of the school mission did she/he violate?" They could also be given opportunities to share in their class meetings as well as our school-wide meetings on behavioral expectations at Smithland.

For now, let's get that duck pond dug...



Photos by  
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