



# Homestead Holler

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2011



Propel Homestead is pleased to announce that we will again be participating in the Box Tops for Education Program this school year. This program will allow students and faculty to

## A Word From Our Principals

Greeting Parents,



We are off to an amazing start here at Propel Homestead! If the first week of school is an indication to how well the school year will be, we are confident that we will make history! We are so proud of all our talented students for adhering to the uniform policy, learning **Sit up Listen Ask** and answer questions **Nod your head and Track the speaker (SLANT)**, and being the polite young people you have raised them to be. We are strongly emphasizing time on task this year because research has informed us that the more time a student is engaged in academic activities the better the student performs on assessments. Therefore, we are demanding 100% compliance from your child this year because we have a saying at Propel Homestead that goes like this, **“What we do, we do right!”** Our outstanding teachers understand this belief and are doing a tremendous job instilling this belief in your child. We truly believe there is a brilliant student inside your child and it is our mission to motivate, educate, and cultivate their minds and teach them how to think!

We thank you for entrusting your child with us this school year. Please contact or email us at any time should you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to your best year here at Propel Homestead!

Dates to Remember:

Propel Afterschool Program:

Begins Tuesday,

September 6th from

3:30—5:30

SCC Meeting:

Tuesday, September

13th 5:45—7:00

School Closed:

Friday, September 16th

Market Day Pick-up

Tuesday, September 27th

Mr. Robert Bishoff - Principal  
[rbischoff@propelschools.org](mailto:rbischoff@propelschools.org)

Dr. Exley Horton Warren – Associate Principal  
[ewarren@propelschools.org](mailto:ewarren@propelschools.org)

## Make a Minute for Math

Hello families-

Welcome to another wonderful year at Propel Homestead! We are off to a great start already with all students k-8 engaged in wonderful math activities throughout the day. Included in this month's Homestead Holler are some fun Math activities to do at home. Check back each month in the Make a Minute for Math section for new websites, books, activities and math updates!

Thank you for all that you do to help your student be successful. Lets have a marvelous mathematical year!! -Ms. Mahon—Propel Homestead Math Coach  
4sight testing- A benchmark test that is given 4 times a year to see how well our students will perform on the PSSA. We will begin our first round of 4 sights Tuesday and Wednesday,

September 6th and 7th. Ask your student if they made the 80% club! Any students who score 80% or higher on the test will have their name posted in the halls as a member of the 80% club!

Fun math computer sites to play at home

[www.mathplayground.com](http://www.mathplayground.com)

[www.coolmath4kids.com](http://www.coolmath4kids.com)

[www.funbrain.com](http://www.funbrain.com)

Math Author to check out this Month: Greg Tang

Math For All Seasons by Greg Tang (ages 5-8)

The Grapes of Math by Greg Tang (ages 8-12)

and MANY more!! check your local library- OR check with your local Math Coach! :)

Math activity to do at home-

Make a trailmix snack to work on fractions and measuring!

Have your child use measuring cups to measure each ingredient. Dump them all into a bowl and 'mix' with a wooden spoon. Divide evenly into 5 ziploc baggies. ENJOY!

1/2 cup Cheerios toasted oat cereal (honey nut, plain and apple cinnamon work equally as well)

1/2 cup goldfish crackers or 1/3 cup other cheese crackers

1/4 cup raisins

1/4 cup peanuts

1/3 cup miniature M&M's chocolate candies (or other chocolate candy)

1/3 cup miniature pretzel twists or 1/3 cup pretzel stick



## Ridiculously Rad Reading



Hello families-

Welcome to another year here at Propel Homestead! This year is already off to a fabulous start, with students participating in a variety of reading activities in grades K-8. Included in this issue of the Homestead Holler are websites, reading activities, and updates on what your child is doing at school.

Thank you for your continued support in your student's education.

Christina Frazier—Literacy Coach

HBC- All students are now involved in Hundred Book Challenge, where they read any material of their choice (book, magazine, newspaper) and log the time. For every 15 minutes spent reading, your child receives a "step" which is logged. Students are then able to earn incentives based on the number of reading steps they have completed! Be sure to ask your child to show you their reading log! 4sight testing- We will take our Reading 4sight test on Wednesday, September 7th. Be sure to ask your student if they made the 80% club! Author Studies- Each month our students who are in grades K-2 study a different author, which is aimed at enhancing students' passion for reading. Each month students will explore the life and literary works of a different author. Students will read several books by a selected author in their classroom and have the opportunity to respond to the author's work through a variety of hands-on activities. The month culminates with an exciting celebration of the author! This month students are reading books written by Eric Carle.

Fun reading computer sites to play at home

[www.spellingcity.com](http://www.spellingcity.com)

[www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com)

Bookworm- a spelling game that can be found on [www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com)



## The Counselor's Corner



### CreativeArts Program

The CreativeArts Program is one of Propel's Six Promising Principles as a Fully Valued Arts Program. Artistic expression and creativity are essential components of a complete education. Our Powerful Practices consists of:

Teaching Artists in residence provide extended experiences.

Full-time Art and Music teachers integrate learning.

Arts Education is provided to every student, everyday.

Culminating Celebrations of Learning highlight student accomplishments.



The variety in arts programming provides an excellent way to tap into children's multiple intelligences, and gives the students an opportunity to express themselves through words, pictures, music, drama or dance.

**Come join us for our first Celebration of Learning for the 2011-2012 school year on Wednesday, September 28, 2011 where we will feature Hip Hop on L.O.C.K. and Staycee Pearl Dance Project**

### Improve Your Childs Homework Habit:

1. Schedule daily homework time. Your child should have a specific time each day to do homework.
2. Set up a study area. Your child needs a quiet space in which to study. Nobody can do their best work in the middle of family commotion.

### Counselors Section

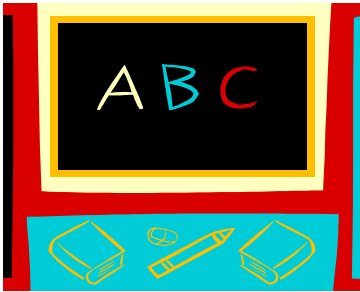
3. Create a homework survival kit. Find a container, such as an old shoe box or lunch box, to all of the items your child would need to complete homework. Such as pencils, pens, crayons and/or markers, rulers, calculator, scissors, glue, and paper.
4. Talk to your child about the importance of homework. Homework is used to practice skills that are taught during the school day. Homework will help improve your child's skills, and indicate when your child needs additional help from teachers.

5. Praise your child. Words of praise will motivate your child to do their best work on all assignments.

### 7th and 8th Grade Boys and Girls Club:

Our first Boys and Girls Club meeting will be held on Thursday, September 15th. Look for permission slips, com-

## Kindergarten



Kindergarten is starting the year excited about being in school and learning! They are working very hard to learn all the new faces and names, new schedules

and new rules that keep them safe, responsible and respectful. We begin each morning in the cafeteria for breakfast and our Whale Done ceremony, then return to classrooms to plan for a busy day. Kindergarten loves listening to stories – finding rhymes and patterns – using play-doh to practice cutting and rolling, solving puzzles and “cooking” for friends in our housekeeping center. The Kindergarteners at Propel Homestead are enthusiastic and

very energetic! Each day is a new adventure and a new opportunity to make discoveries. We are looking forward to a wonderful year of learning in Kindergarten.

### Kindergarten Team:

Ms. Perrin  
Ms. Knauer  
Ms. Hudson  
Ms. Smith

Please let us know if you are interested in volunteering

Don't forget to send a note with your child if he/she will be absent from school.

Remember to check your child's Thursday Red Folders for weekly communication

### 1st Grade

First graders have been busy learning! We have been practicing our letter sounds and are focusing on the short a sound. We have also been reading stories together and are learning about what a character is and how we can describe one! In the next weeks, we are looking forward to learning about good sentences and writing our own this month! In math, we are working on number sense so that we know our numbers from 1-100. We also learned about patterns and created our own patterns! We have Monarch caterpillars growing in our rooms! We are currently watching the caterpillars grow and change into butterflies and learned all about a butterfly's life cycle.

Please remember to read with your child for at least 30 minutes every night! It is a great way to help them progress as readers. Also, please practice our weekly spelling and sight words with your student every night. Be on the lookout for our First Grade Weekly Newsletter that is sent home with your student every Friday - this lists the spelling words and sight words for the upcoming week and also gives you a weekly update on what is going on in First Grade! We look forward to becoming partners in learning with you as your students grow in First Grade!

### 2nd Grade & 3rd Grade

Welcome Back! We have gotten off to a great start in second grade! Students are learning and working on classroom expectations and procedures. Here are a few 2nd grade reminders:

Please sign and return the National Board permission slips!

Weekly homework packets will be sent home on Monday and are due back on Friday.

Please remember to sign your child's planner nightly. This is a great two way communication tool between home and school.

Don't forget to check out our website: [www.wix.com/skoschi9/secondgrade](http://www.wix.com/skoschi9/secondgrade)

Upcoming News:

Our author study for September is Eric Carle!

We will be celebrating this author on Friday, September 23rd!

Second grade is now using Pearson Envisions math resources! You can learn more about this program at [www.pearsonsuccessnet.org](http://www.pearsonsuccessnet.org)

We look forward to having a productive and positive 2011-2012 school year! Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns :) Mrs. Breisinger & Ms. Koschik

### 3rd Grade

The past two weeks we spent time reviewing school wide 3B's and our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom expectations. We've begun incorporating our test taking strategies into daily classroom work. We are embedding into our students that there is no time to waste in our school day. Every minute counts!

Please remember we do have homework every night! Our homework is a reflection of what we have been working on in class. It is essential for students to continue to review to develop into successful learners.

We look forward to watching your children develop into lifelong learners.



#### 4th Grade

Greetings Parents!!! As we move forward in this school year, the most important thing your child can do each night is read! Reading 30 minutes, or "2 Steps" each night, is crucial to their reading development. If you have trouble finding books that are just right for your child, try using the "Five Finger Rule." It's simple: have your child open a book to the first page, and read the whole page. For every mistake they make while reading, they can hold up one finger. If they get to five fingers, the book is probably too difficult for them at this point. If they breeze through it without blinking, it may be too easy for them. If they hold up one to four fingers, that book is probably "just right" for them. Good luck and happy reading!!!

Mr. Laughton

4th Grade Language Arts & Humanities

Hooray for arrays!!! We are starting this year studying multiplication and developing the understanding that multiplication is "fast addition" because it's equal groups of items. In order to organize our equal groups we use arrays, so we think of these equal groups organized into rows and columns. To relate this to real world situations, the next time you're out and about, see if your child can spot any arrays and tell you the multiplication problem that goes with it. I'm sure you'll see them at the movies (rows of seats), in the grocery store (rows of apples), or around your neighborhoods. Happy array hunting!

Mrs. Wilson

4<sup>th</sup> Grade Math & Science

#### 5th Grade

The 2011 - 2012 school year is off to a great start for our 5th Graders. During the first few weeks, we spent a great deal of time practicing our routines and procedures. Our hard work is paying off. Learning centers are in full swing in the humanities and math classes. Students are having the opportunity to learn using a variety of resources. Some students have even earned VIP status and are learning using the iPad!

Just as a reminder, every Thursday students bring home B Cards. B Cards detail student behavior for the week. Please remember to sign the bottom of the paper and have your child return it the following day. In addition, Thursday Red Folders contain graded work. Every grade that goes into Skyward (our grading system) will be sent home in the Thursday folder. That way you know exactly how your student is doing academically and behaviorally. Please take the time to review the work with your child so that you are aware of how they are performing at school.

If you have not had the opportunity to send in the following supplies please do so as soon as possible.

- 2 packages of pencils
- 1 package of paper
- 2 boxes of tissues
- 1 bottle of hand sanitizer

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns. Have a great day!

Ms. Brill: [bbrill@propelschools.org](mailto:bbrill@propelschools.org)

Mrs. Soeder: [isoeder@propelschools.org](mailto:isoeder@propelschools.org)

### Nurses' Corner



Welcome back! Hope everyone is in good health!

Many of the Emergency Care Cards (the half sheet in bright yellow) have been returned but we are still missing quite a few. Please return them, as soon as possible, so that we have the most complete and updated information and phone numbers. I will be sending a second copy home in case you have lost or misplaced yours.

I will be completing the vision/hearing and scoliosis screenings on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. Letters will be given to you during your first parent/teacher conference in November letting you know the results. Cough and Flu season will be upon us quickly-please remember:

The Allegheny County Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have provided the following guidelines:

- Your child should not be sent to school hoping that he or she will feel better after arriving.
- Your child should be kept home following a night time bout of nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea and watched for further symptoms.
- Your child should remain home if he/she has had a temperature of 100 degrees or higher. A child should have a normal temperature for 24 hours without fever reducing medicines before returning to school.



Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss any questions or concerns that you may have.

Wishing you a healthy school year,

Mrs. Victoria Myser RN

#### 6th Grade

Welcome back to Miss Adrienne Baker, 5th year veteran teacher at Propel Homestead and new teacher, Miss Arlene Hanna. Miss Hanna joins our team after several years working with our 3rd and 4th grade team. In Math we are reviewing Numbers and Operations before we move on to the Wonderful World of Fractions. Scientifically speaking, our lab technicians have been learning about the Scientific Method while conducting chemical reactions. We have executed some amazing experiments with eggs, different acids, pennies, and surface tension. Please inquire about their Claims and Evidence as they become more familiar with the life and role of a scientist. In Humanities, which is Reading/Writing/Spelling/Social Studies, we are beginning our first novel study of the year. 6th grade is reading "39 Clues," expanding our author study from last year. Don't forget to read 2 steps per night (30 minutes) and our weekly Spelling tests each Friday.

We are very excited to embark on our journey through 6th grade.

#### 7th & 8th Grade

The school year is off to a strong start in the 7th and 8th grades. Students are working hard to meet our very high expectations in behavior and academics. We have all been extremely pleased with the way things have begun and are very excited to work with your child throughout the 2011-2012 school year. Below are some highlights in each subject area.

Science: The students dove in to their first lab activity studying the properties of each of the Great Lakes. Mr. Hengelbrok prepared a very hands-on activity that had students working collaboratively and analyzing data. Ask your child about the Great Lakes and you'll be surprised how much knowledge they've absorbed about this geographical feature.

Math: It's been all about centers in math class. Mr. Keesecker and Ms. Riley have been helping students practice transitions within the room to ensure that the classroom is running quickly. It's AMAZING how much math this allows the students to learn in one day, and also teaches them how to work with others and complete tasks in a timely manner. Mr. Kees and Ms. Riley also spent some time teaching the students about TIME! Ask your child how much time is wasted every day and how they plan on using their time more wisely.

Humanities: This year, English and social studies have been combined to create humanities, which focuses on crafting well-informed, well-rounded citizens. Students have been working on Flocabulary, which infuses vocabulary and hip-hop for a more engaging experience, and the students LOVE to sing along! Seventh grade has been working very hard in geography learning about the regions of the United States, while eighth grade is learning all about Pennsylvania. Eighth grade is reading The Hunger Games and they're really enjoying it, and seventh will start their first novel in a few weeks, so be on the look-out!