

the Sousa

Notes

December 2021

The
HOLIDAY
ISSUE!

the **Sousa**

Notes

December 2021

As we prepare for the upcoming winter break, I would like to extend my wishes for your family to enjoy a relaxing, reflective and restorative time together.

May each day bring you the opportunity to spend precious moments with those you love filling your hearts with joy and laughter. For many, this time of year is a time of deep reflection and an opportunity to be grateful for the little things in life that we may take for granted. Which is WHY, we have continued the tradition of an “Attitude for Gratitude” at Sousa this year.

Each day during the month of December, we ask staff and students to focus on beginning their day with a grateful heart. We encourage all members of our school to collectively demonstrate an attitude of gratitude for all that we have experienced throughout the year despite our individual challenges. Over the loudspeaker each morning, a 5th grade leader reads a gratitude prompt. That prompt allows each of us to take a moment to internalize and record or even share the response with those around us. Together, we have considered sounds,



smells, traditions, talents, accomplishments, and even our mistakes or shortcomings. In the coming days, I encourage you to join us in this practice (if you have not done so already) by asking your child to share with you their response and for you to take a moment and share your response in turn with them.

When we start each day with a grateful heart for even the smallest moments in life, the day becomes a little brighter even in the midst of these challenging times.

For our families who have completed their Holiday celebrations, I hope that they were a bit closer to “normal” this year and filled your soul with warmth and light. For our families who will be celebrating, may the warmth of the season fill your hearts and homes. As we look toward the New Year, I would like to express my gratitude to each of our staff members, families and students for your tireless support, encouragement, commitment and partnership to ensuring that our school community remains Kind, Confident and Compassionate. Together, we are stronger than ever before!

**Until next time,
Mrs. Sheehan, Principal**

Unity Day

Unity Day is a district-wide celebration promoting anti-bullying and inclusion. At Sousa, the day kicked off with our Fifth Grade Leaders, decked out in orange “Be Kind” t-shirts, chalking inspiring messages of kindness on the front walkway, and greeting the buses with their handmade signs. Students penned messages of kindness and inclusion on orange post-its, which were arranged to spell the word “Unity” on the bulletin board. Lessons focusing on inclusion were featured in each class, and Mrs. Anzalone’s class even received a visit from “Unity Man.”

& Dance-Fit Boosterthon

This year, Unity Day coincided with the Dance-Fit Boosterthon, giving the children a fun opportunity to “unite through dance.” The Boosterthon was the HSA’s main fall fundraiser this year, raising approximately \$28,000, thanks to the efforts of all of our parents and staff who donated time, money and effort to achieve this remarkable goal.



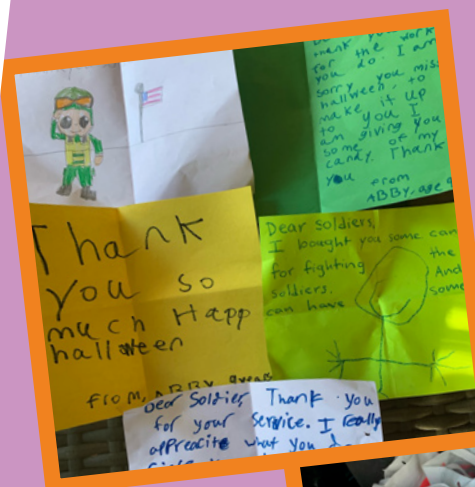
Halloween

The Friday before Halloween saw a welcome return of the Halloween parade. Students were thrilled to be able to wear their costumes to school and show off their creativity to family and friends.



& Treats for Troops

Students came back from the weekend to share their trick-or-treating bounty – Sousa donated a whopping 305 pounds of candy and chocolate to benefit Ronald McDonald House and Soldier's Angels, along with sweet handmade cards to the troops.



Sousa Gives Back

Sousa's generosity abounded this fall! On National Food Day in October, everyone in the district was asked to bring just one piece of fresh produce to school. It is amazing to see how those donations add up. This year, Sousa families alone provided enough fruit and veggies to fill up an entire SUV trunk. The produce was donated to food pantries run by St. Peter's, Our Lady of Fatima, Littig House and the PW Adult Activities Center.



Families were also more than generous in donating winter clothing, accessories, costumes, sporting equipment and blankets to the district winter clothing drive. The clothing drive, organized by the Parents' Council, provides a vital service to local families, and everyone was glad to see it return this year. The next clothing drive is in March, so start collecting those outgrown or unneeded spring and summer clothes!

The generosity of the Sousa community continued into November, as our community collected provisions for Thanksgiving baskets to benefit the Our Lady of Fatima food pantry.

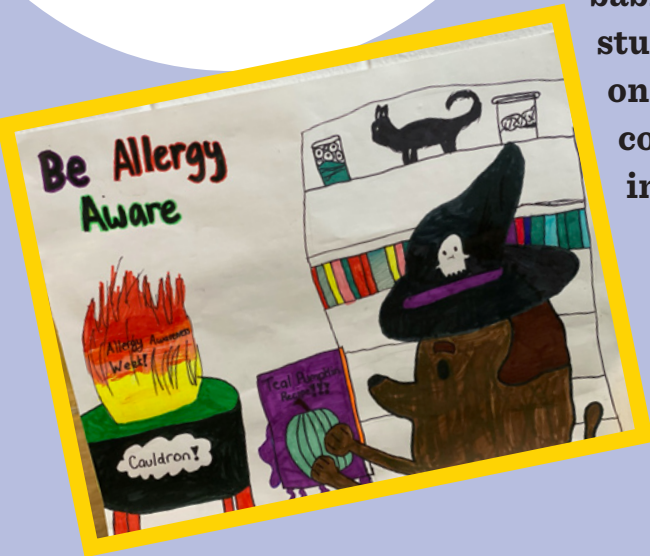
And finally, the district holiday gift card drive exceeded their goal, and raised \$13,000 to ensure that happy holidays were had by all in our community.



Allergy Awareness Week

Students learned how to be a “PAL” to friends with allergies through a number of activities organized by the HSA’s Allergy Committee.

The committee set up an interactive bulletin board and provided each classroom with age-appropriate allergy-related books. The halls were decorated with student posters, third graders once again took care of beanie babies with specified allergies for the week, and older students received a special lesson from Nurse Judy on how to use an Epi-Pen. Thanks to our amazing committee for once again putting together a fun and informative week about this important topic.



Mrs. Cangiolosi is again leading the Scrabble Club for 4th and 5th grade members. Every Tuesday at 7:15am, students learn Scrabble rules and strategies through small group games. They are having fun honing their skills in anticipation of an end-of-year tournament against other elementary school clubs.



Scrabble Club



Fall Harvest

The Garden Committee guided students in the harvest of fall crops such as potatoes, and the “Three Sisters” - corn, beans and squash. Children love getting outside and getting their hands dirty in Sousa’s amazing, newly renovated garden.



The Sousa Pizza Workshop was a big hit this year, as budding chefs from 113 Sousa families cooked up personal pizzas and calzones from the comfort of their homes. Linda from Frank’s Pizza provided the ingredients and the instructions, this year over video. The HSA thanks Linda, who is now newly retired, for her many years of service to Sousa and the entire community. Thanks also to the committee volunteers and all the families who participated!

Pizza Workshop





Kindergarten

In science, Kindergarteners are ending our unit in Weather and Climate. The children enjoyed learning all about meteorology. We are excited to begin our unit on “Forces and Interactions: Pushes and Pulls” in the new year!

In writing, the children are learning all about being “Growing Writers.” We are completing our immersion lessons and getting ready to begin our “Narrative Writing Piece.” In Social Studies we are continuing our unit on “Myself and Others.” We shared our many traditions when it comes to celebrating our birthdays and discussed how families are the same and different. We are currently reading and learning about “RESPECT.”

What We're Learning In Our Classes!

First Grade

First graders just published their first process writing piece, a personal narrative story. They worked really hard generating, selecting, collecting, drafting, revising and editing. First graders went to the Cradle of Aviation to tour the museum and see “The Night Sky” show which was the culmination of the Sun, Moon and Stars unit.



Second Grade

Second graders have been busy in math working on place value, addition, and subtraction! We have learned what it means to be an active citizen in Sousa and our community. The second graders have also become engineers and are designing a piece of playground equipment using their knowledge of the properties of matter. Students have been reading their “just right” books while being active readers. Lastly, second graders are publishing their first writing unit of the year!

Third Grade

After enjoying the Halloween parade and creating keepsake frames, third graders were ready for a busy November. In science we completed our Forces and Motion unit. This was complemented by our visits to Mrs. Zeh in the PEP room for an aeronautical engineering experience. The entire grade created a salute to the “Veterans We Know” display. This was posted outside the cafeteria for all to enjoy. In Social Studies we have begun our study of the United States with a deep dive into the symbols representing our country. As mathematicians the students are working on subtracting larger numbers. In reading students are improving their reading skills with lessons on “What Good Readers Do.”

Fourth Grade

The fourth grade has started their unit on Native Americans. We just wrapped up our multiplication unit and have moved onto area. Our students are so excited to start our next novel, *The One and Only Ivan*.

What We're
Learning
In Our
Classes!

Fifth Grade

The fifth graders have culminated their study of science - vs - engineering with a STEAM project of creating Thanksgiving Parade floats. They paraded throughout the school displaying them.

The fifth graders have also become members of Book Clubs. They are all reading Gordon Korman books and discussing them to build greater understanding. The geography of the Western Hemisphere is the focus of their social studies work. In math, the students have concluded all their whole number multiplication and division work, and are moving on to fractions.



Kindergarten

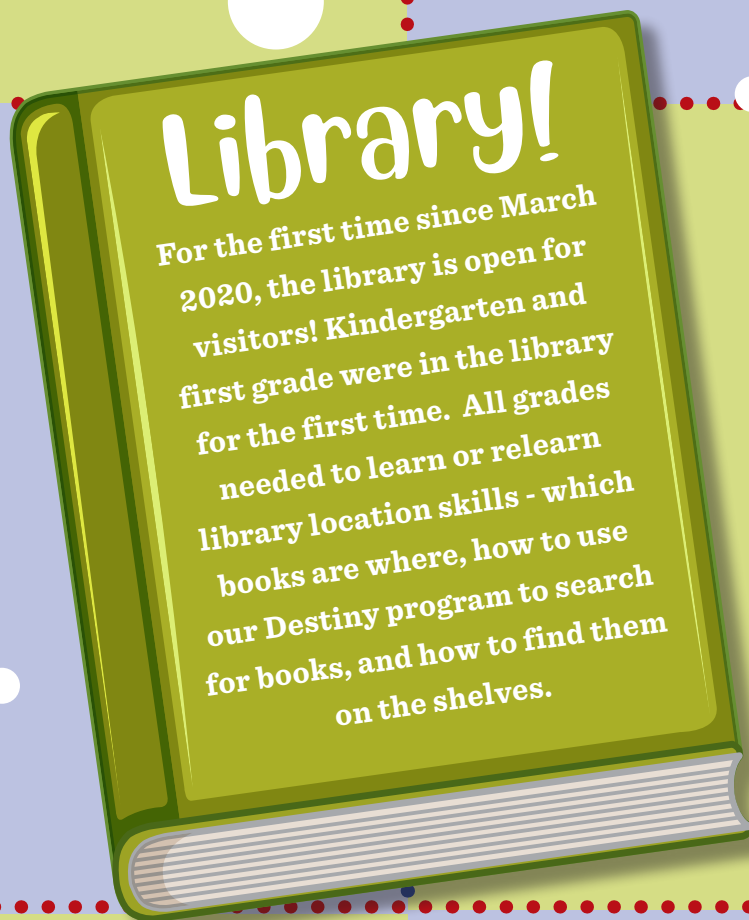
After learning about book care, kindergarteners learned about folktales - the stories of the people. We started with nursery rhymes and are now enjoying folktales.

First Grade

First grade now selects from the entire library collection but learned some strategies to help select their “just right” book. We are just completing a Martin Waddell author study.

Second Grade

Second graders enjoyed a Robert Munsch author study. We are now learning about Digital Citizenship with a lesson on who is in our online community.



Third Grade

Third graders practiced their library locations skills before enjoying our Chris Van Allsberg author/illustrator study. We enjoy his books so much, it is hard to move on to something new!

Fourth Grade

Fourth grade really kicked up their library location skills by identifying an information need, searching the catalog for appropriate resources, and finding the selection on the shelf. We are now learning about media balance as part of our Digital Citizenship curriculum.

Fifth Grade

Fifth grade also mastered their library location skills before moving on to Digital Citizenship lessons. This week, we are discussing the seriousness of cyberbullying and what we can do about it.

PE:



Currently in PE we have transitioned into our exciting gymnastics unit.

This is very special for our students especially after not being able to participate in this last year. We began the unit on the floor practicing a variety of tumbling skills.

As we are progressing each week, we are introducing different equipment for students to learn and practice on. Equipment includes climbing ropes, balance beams, the rings, the uneven bars, and the vault. The students are being safe, learning, and having fun!



PEP at GouSA:

Each grade level has either completed or is currently working on a PEP Whole Class Enrichment unit with Mrs. Zeh.

In general, PEP Whole Class Enrichment units are six sessions with classes visiting the PEP room once a week. Below is a description of some of the enrichment activities that have already taken place.

More enrichment activities are available to 4th and 5th grade students in the PEP Whole Class Enrichment Google Classrooms for their grade level. Third grade students will soon have access to a PEP Whole Class Enrichment Google Classroom as well.



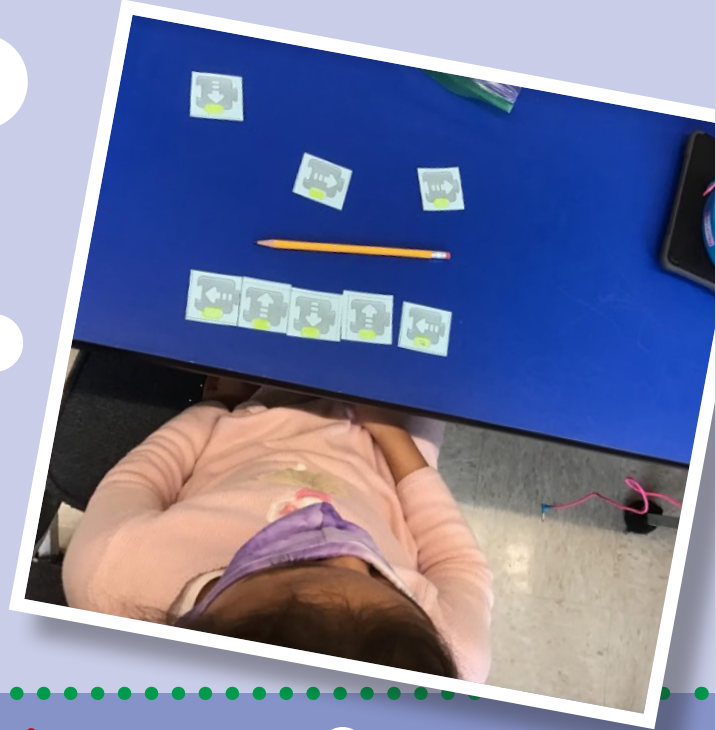
Kindergarten

Kindergarten classes visited the PEP room in the beginning of the year for an enrichment lesson using the book *Beautiful Oops!* by Barney Saltzberg. Also, the Kindergarten classes are now halfway through a PEP Whole Class Enrichment unit on observation skills. Is it a duck or a rabbit? We read the book *Duck! Rabbit!* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal, illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld and discussed how adding details to a drawing can really help us decide more about it - for example: whether it is a duck or a rabbit. We also learned how to focus on smaller areas of an animal to see more details. This past week we used a magnifying lens to look at tiny letters and tiny buttons to see more detail.



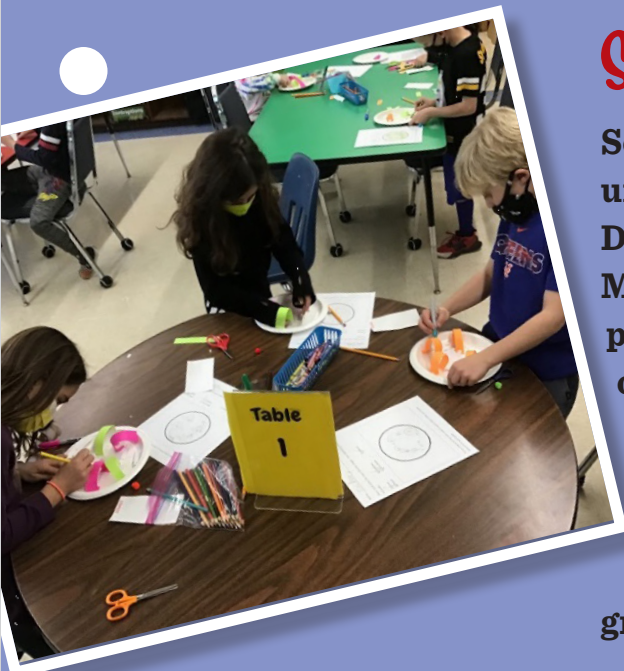
First Grade

First grade classes visited the PEP room in the beginning of the year for an enrichment lesson using the book *Beautiful Oops!* by Barney Saltzberg. Mrs. Zeh also did a Pumpkin Logic lesson at the end of October. In December, the first grade classes started a PEP Whole Class Enrichment unit on coding. We will be doing several coding projects using the Scratch Jr. app on the iPad. The first project we worked on was coding a setting sun by making it move in the sky and then disappear.



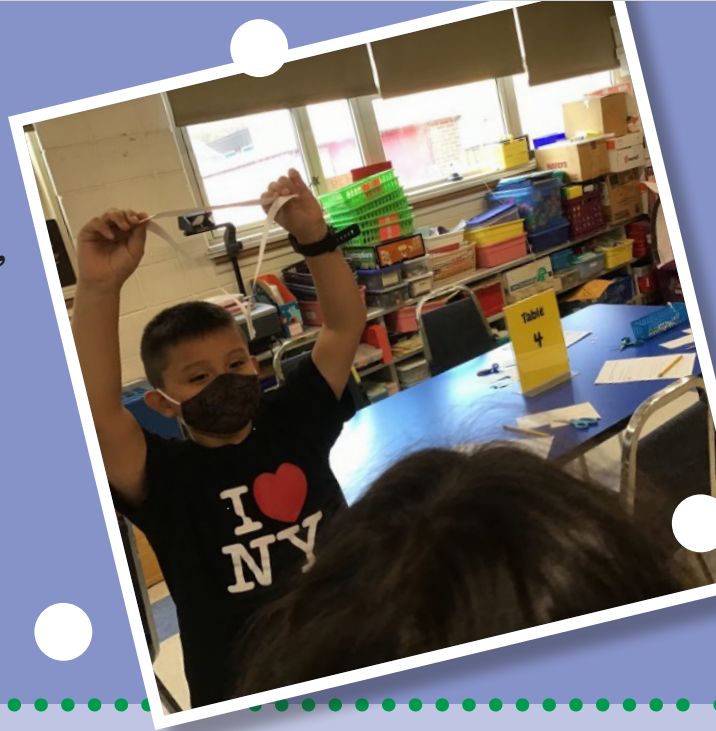
Second Grade

Second grade just completed a PEP Whole Class Enrichment unit which introduced the students to the Engineering Design process. We began by reading the book *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires. Each week the students participated in an engineering activity that was based on Asking a question, then the students would Imagine, Plan, Create, Test, and Improve their ideas. The activities ranged from building towers with sticks, blocks, and cups, creating structures with index cards, discovering how many books a paper column can hold, and designing a gravity maze.



Third Grade

Third grade students completed a PEP Whole Class Enrichment unit on Aeronautical Engineering. Using the Engineering Design Process we made whirlybirds, dropcopters, and hoop gliders. We also had many discussions on air and gravity. Ask your students about our Bernoulli Bonanza day where we saw how faster moving air could bring two objects together. Also, starting this week, the third grade classes began another enrichment unit on Visual and Spatial Learning.



Fourth Grade

Fourth grade students completed a PEP Whole Class Enrichment unit on Visual and Spatial Learning. We began by reading the book Not a Stick by Antoinette Portis, and then we brainstormed our own “not a stick.” Each week, students were able to experience different types of activities to strengthen their visual and spatial learning skills.

Fifth Grade

Fifth grade students are now halfway through a PEP Whole Class Enrichment unit on Space Systems. We began with some gravity experiments, then rotated through stations helping us learn about our sun and other stars. This week we explored what causes day and night and why we have time zones.



Welcome back to the RULER corner. There has been a lot going on at Sousa regarding RULER. In November, Dr. Koo and Mrs. Biblowitz ran an outdoor RULER 101 workshop for some very enthusiastic parents. This was the perfect (a little chilly) exchange of ideas regarding implementing RULER at home.

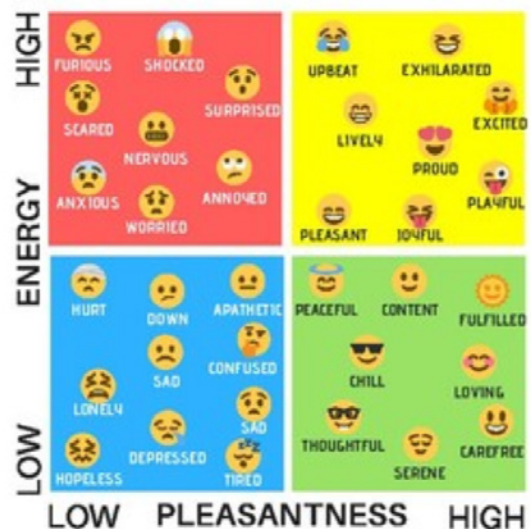
Some of our classes are taking a deep dive into the mood meter and learning that feelings change frequently throughout the day.

They are also increasing the variety of emotion regulation tools in their toolbox. Practicing these “tools” (also referred to as strategies), often in the classroom with the help of Go Noodle or mindfulness lessons helps our students to better implement the tools “when they are in the moment.”

As a school community, we are doing a word study of the word grateful for the month of December. Every day on the morning announcements we have one of our fifth grade leaders read a writing prompt, “what is a [different item is used everyday] you are grateful for?” Each day the students write in their gratitude journals or discuss the prompt. The process of learning to be grateful for the things we take for granted like a smell, or something in nature, has been proven to improve a person’s outlook and state of mind. We are cultivating an attitude of gratitude at Sousa!

RULER
Corner

Mood Meter



We wish all our
Sousa families
a happy and
healthy holiday
season!

