

EARLY WINTER 2020/2021 NEWSLETTER

Chebeague Island School

www.chebeagueschool.net T: 207-846-4162

A LETTER FROM OUR PRINCIPAL/SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Parents and Friends of Chebeague Island School,

Last school year ended in a very unusual way. There was no end of the year field trips, no class walks to the Hook or beach clean ups. However, in true island fashion the 5th graders and Yarmouth High School Senior were celebrated with a reverse parade from the Fire Department and island parents and residents! It was amazing the people that came out to make these students feel special!

Chebeague Island is a very special place to live and learn. At the beginning of the pandemic the town formed the CART and the school formed SORT. The purpose of the teams were to make sure that the island and the school stayed ahead of the news and protocols to keep everyone safe. The number of cases and the communication are indicators of the diligent work of all the people involved.

At Chebeague Island School, we worked hard during the summer to make the school a safe place for the staff and students to learn. Due to the unique characteristics of Chebeague Island School, we were able to start the school year right on time, full time and in person. Ms. Nancy set up an outdoor classroom for her Prekindergarten and Kindergarten students. The halls are marked for social distancing. Every student has their own water bottle and box of school supplies. Mrs. Klein has the students outside play kinesthetic math games. Lunch time has stayed the same with students eating outside at the picnic tables.

One of the biggest highlights of the school year is Forest Fridays. The students are in 2 or 3 groups for the day. There is a theme; harvest, orienteering, mapping, Halloween and walking school bus, Thanksgiving and being grateful. The day is filled with hands-on activities and writing workshops.

Being on Chebeague Island, we can almost forget that COVID is all around us. The in person learning has gone so well we had to schedule a time to practice our remote learning. On Thursday, November 5, 2020 all students went home with either a laptop or an IPAD. The next day, they practiced remote learning. The teachers had a 2 hour window for support if the students or parents needed help.

The staff at the school has a mantra; simplify, stay focused, go slow and support each other. In following this mantra, along with the support from the school



UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 23 – JANUARY 3

Holiday Break

JANUARY 18

MLK Day -No School

FEBRUARY 15 - 19

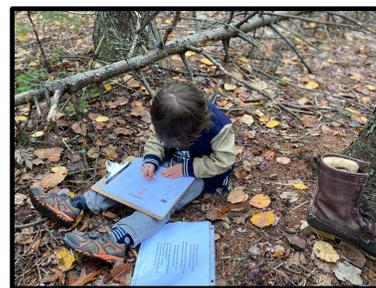
Winter Break

APRIL 16

Teacher Workshop – No School

APRIL 19 - 23

Spring Break – No School



committee, parents and community, we believe the students are getting the very best education and the staff is ready to work through anything that 2021 hands to us!

Thank you to everyone who makes Chebeague Island and Chebeague Island School a wonderful place to live, work and learn!

Ann C. Kirkpatrick; Superintendent/Principal



A NOTE FROM MS. NANCY

The year for PreK/K students started with us spending as much time as possible in our outdoor classroom and in the school gardens using the natural world as tools for learning. There was a little mouse that made a few appearances, once very timely while we were reading a Leo Lionni story with mice as the characters. Needless to say, it was very exciting. Wind was often a challenge but we persevered until some big storms and cold temperatures moved us indoors.



This year's COVID protocols have them learning to share and collectively care for their classroom in different ways. They each have their own shelf area of works. The need to be patient to have a turn with a special work is one of days, not minutes. Their work on independence is also more on them as individuals. Children intuitively want to help one another but this year that too is on hold. An often-repeated phrase is, "you are a can do it kid, a little bit of help and a lot of practice".



We try to provide works of interest to challenge them the just right amount. At this age all works are geared to help develop their concentration, coordination, independence, and sense of order within curriculum goals. This year some topics have been: living/non-living, plant/animal, essential needs of plants, insect life cycles, fire safety, and simple machines. We learn about history, time and social studies through our monthly calendar and stories. Music and art are a regular part of our classroom routines. Once a month we face time with the Island Commons. Tucked into all this fun are works focused on number sense and works that grow our skills for reading and writing.



IN THE COMMUNITY

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

All community members are welcome to attend School Committee meetings. The School Committee will hold a Meeting by Teleconference on **Tuesday, January 5, 2021**

On your computer:
<https://zoom.us/j/326962753>

On your landline phone:
+1 929 205 6099

Meeting ID: 326-96-2753
Password 175989

On your cell phone: +19292056099
Meeting ID: 326962753#



School Committee members (left to right) Carol White, Jeffrey Putnam (Chair), Suzanne Rugh, Jen Belesca and Leah Guay

Forest Friday's are a special time when we come together as a whole school working in mixed groups of students Pre-K through 5th. This has grown leadership in the older students and flexibility in the younger. In efforts to avoid redundancy please read Mrs. Klein's recap of these special days in her news blurb. They are special days in so many ways.

A NOTE FROM MRS. KLEIN

This year certainly has been interesting. To start the year our biggest worry was how the kids would do with wearing a mask throughout the entire day. As usual, they took us all by surprise and have become comfortable with the new mask mandate within the first week of school. They can take mask breaks at any point throughout the day but in general, they have made mask wearing, hand hygiene and daily temperature taking something as routine as morning meeting. While we are unable to welcome any visitors or volunteers into the school, we have been learning as independent classrooms as well as a whole school and getting creative by having guests zoom into the classroom to share with the students. It has been wonderful to see the Chebeague Island School community of learners working and growing together.

As we move into the new year we are ready to go remote if necessary but feel very fortunate that we have been in person learning, five days a week since August. COVID has forced us to change some details of our days. New phrases like 'airplane arms' (arms out help the students judge how close they are to their peers) are now normal and assigned seating at lunch is necessary but it has been our goal to keep life in the school as normal as possible.

Grades 1 & 2

The 1-2 classroom has been having a great year. It is exciting to see the kids being fast friends, good listeners and excited about what they are learning. They are making great strides in their reading as we focus on short vowels, blends and diagraphs. They are improving their hand strength and letter/number writing and it is thrilling to see their confidence build in reading. In math we are working with 10 frames, dice, dominos to learn addition, subtraction and solving word problems. Through games, sorts, and manipulatives, the kids are learning and having fun at the same time.

Grades 3-5

In 3-5 the students have tackled some difficult new math concepts, continue to work on their multiplication facts and multistep word problems. We had a large increase to our classroom library over the summer and it's a good thing too! These 3-5 students are consuming books and constantly strengthening their reading skills. In writing we have just completed our poetry unit and tapped into the creative minds of all the students. Their expressive writing through poetry has been very impressive. Cursive is also a focus of 3-5 and they are becoming proficient at reading cursive and working on letter formation themselves. As the older students, it is wonderful to watch the 3-5 class step up as leaders during Forest Fridays and other all school activities.



IN THE COMMUNITY

A SPECIAL "THANK YOU" TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

In this very different year of COVID, we have had to do things differently at the school. One of the big changes is that volunteers cannot come into the school. But that does not mean that we haven't been graciously supported in creative ways by those in our community. Thank you to Bob Earnest and Sarah Hopkins for bundling up and stoking the pizza fire on Friday's. Thank you to Tina Runge for encouraging and editing the Daughter's of the American Revolution essays over the phone. Thank you to Donna Damon for providing such great information about Chebeague via zoom. Thank you to all the parents for helping with the fundraisers that we have held this past semester.

The school is a richer, more dynamic place because of all of you and your support of our students.

FOREST FRIDAYS



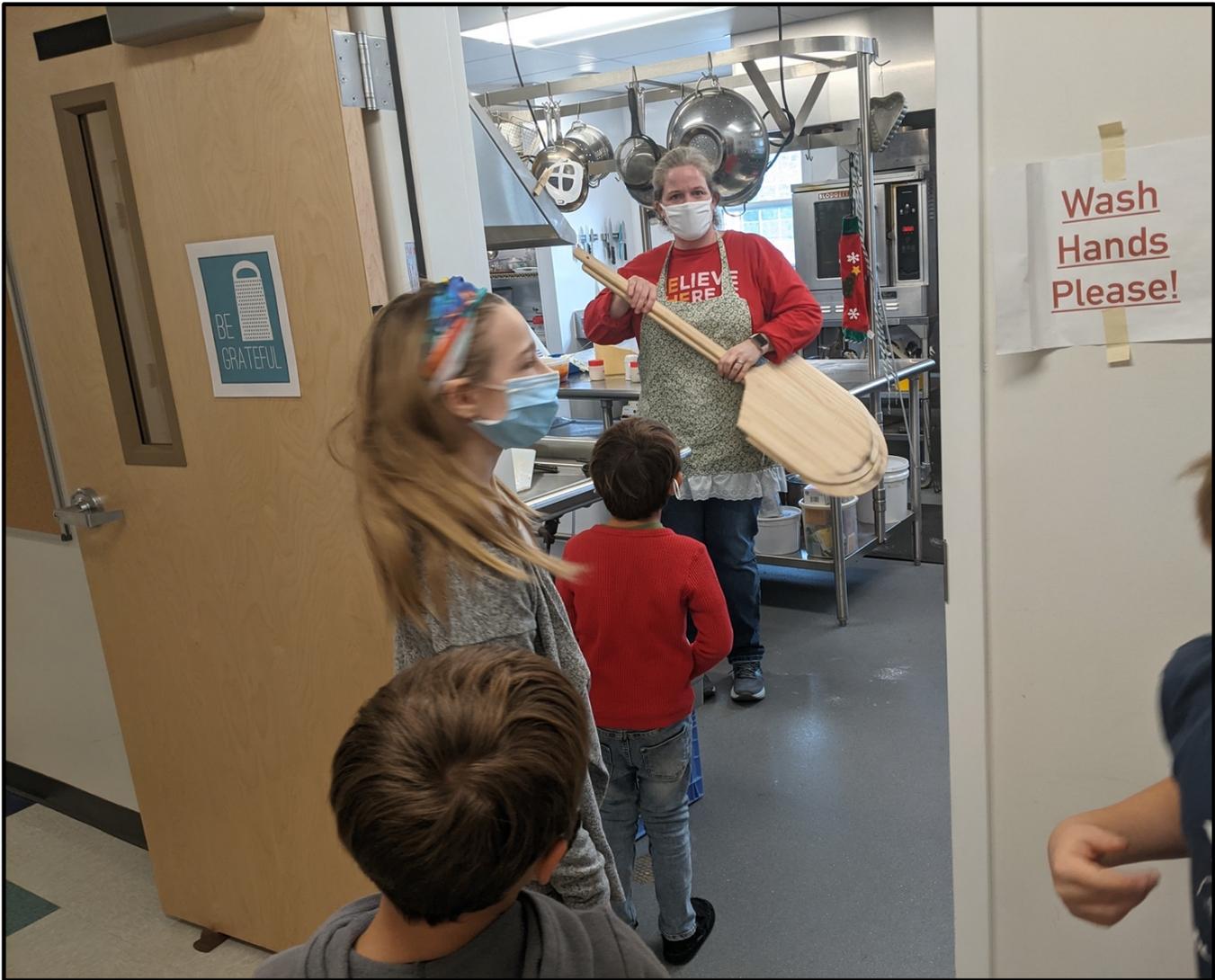
Forest Friday's has quickly become a staple of our week and a favorite day of experiential learning for all the students. On Fridays, all the preK-5 students spend the day learning alongside each other. Our focus is on science, social studies and hands-on activities that typically take us outside, as the weather permits. Some of the topics we have covered are Native American's and making corn dolls after cleaning out our school garden, maps and charts, traditional Thanksgiving foods, simple machines, and holiday STEM experiments. Each Forest Friday we also aim to go on a forest walk and simply observe. To slow down the pace of the day and simply take in

our surroundings. We write down our observations of things we see, hear and feel while in the woods.



This time together as a whole school community of learners has many benefits. We observe the older students leading the younger and all learning the different ways to explore a topic. It has been a beautiful way to feel we are growing a next generation of compassionate Chebeaguers.





Well, this year certainly is one to remember...

I have to say I terribly miss the ability to cook, really cook, for the kiddos at the school. It is something that I realized pretty quickly when I started culling through all of the emails and recommendations from the CDC and the Maine DOE this past summer. This school year was going to look so very different and cleaner than ever!



Opening the school safely was so much more important, and a lot to get used to. The kids have truly amazed me with their willingness to step up and follow all of the guidelines that have been put into place. Masks (all day, even outside), physical distance (6ft when eating and 14ft if singing outside) and hand washing/ sanitizing (in and out of the building/ classrooms and before eating) have almost become second nature. As adults I think we all sometimes could take a page out of the kids book. The laughter and sounds of their happiness is helping us all keep the hope of better days alive.