CLASSROOM SPOTLIGHT:

MRS. THORSON, 1st GRADE, ROOM 14

Welcome back from winter break! Room 14 has jumped right into 2015 ready to learn. We have been learning about Natural Resources in Science and have a presentation coming up all about reducing, reusing, and recycling. We have wonderful things happening in our reading centers and are making big progress in Writing. First grade students are learning Math through the use of manipulatives and song, I love singing while learning and so do my students! Miss Thorson’s first grade class is always ready for a visit from any guest so come on in and read a story to the class or take part in any of our learning activities. Happy New Year!

Launch Leadership Opportunity

Launch promotes leadership development for junior high and high school students. Launch is excited to offer our JAM MLK Leadership Retreat. This is a new JAM Leadership Retreat that will promote and focus on service learning and community leadership. Delegates will participate in a culminating service learning project after doing some hands on activities that explore volunteerism and service learning. Here are some details:

Who: Open to students 5th-8th grade who want to continue to strengthen their leadership skills and get involved in their community

When: January 31, 2015, 9:00-3:30 tentatively

Where: University of Nebraska-Omaha

Cost: $15 (Cost pays for lunch, a Leadership Guide, and materials for the day.)

Transportation is not provided. Parents are responsible for transporting their child.

Register online at http://www.launchleadership.org
A great teacher can turn a geography lesson into an exciting adventure, or make a passing conversation become a life lesson. And the Omaha Public Schools community is fortunate to have so many great teachers. It’s why the Alice Buffett Outstanding Teacher Award was created more than 25 years ago—to recognize those teachers who have gone above and beyond to help their students in the classroom and in life.

Nominate an OPS teacher for this award, and tell us what he or she has done that has made a difference. Make your nomination before January 15, 2015.

Notes from the Nurse!

Influenza is now widespread across Nebraska, and more specifically here in Douglas County. Influenza is a serious respiratory illness. (It is not the “stomach flu”.) Symptoms of influenza usually appear quickly and usually include a fever, headache, body aches, cough, fatigue, and decreased appetite. While these symptoms may seem similar to a cold, they are more severe and can have serious complications for those who have underlying medical conditions. Prevention is always best:

- Get a flu shot, if you have not already received one. This is the single best way to protect against the flu. Immunity does take a couple weeks to build up, so do not delay. Even though the strain you may be exposed to is not totally covered by this year’s vaccination, the shot still gives some protection, and even if you get sick, it will not be as severe.
- Cover all coughs and sneezes. A tissue is best, since it can trap the germs and then be tossed in the trash, but next best is the inside of your elbow.
- Hand hygiene is essential. Wash hands thoroughly and often. Make sure to use soap and scrub all fingers and parts of your hands for at least 15 seconds, and then rinse under running water. If soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer gel.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth. Any germs that do get on your hands can directly infect you as they get transferred into your body through touching mucus membranes.
- Clean touchable surfaces (counters, door knobs, handles, faucets, etc.) routinely to wipe away germs that may have landed there.

If you or a family member does get sick, here are some important considerations:

- Stay home! This means to stay home until you are fever-free (temperature less than 100 degrees) WITHOUT fever-reducing medication. (Medications may take down the temperature and make you feel better, but until you are fever-free without them, you are still contagious.)
- Try to separate sick members of the household from others as much as possible.
- Contact your Health Care Provider to review symptoms. Anti-viral medications may be prescribed.
- Seek immediate medical attention for severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing/shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, bluish skin color, not drinking enough fluids (especially if not urinating regularly), not waking up or interacting, being very irritable or confused/resisting touch or being held, symptoms that seem to improve but then return and worsen, or fever with rash.
SCHOOL CHOICE FOR THE 2015-16 SCHOOL YEAR

The Student Assignment Plan for the 2015-16 school year supports the direction of the Douglas-Sarpy County Learning Community as well as the priorities of the OPS Board of Education—every school should reflect the socioeconomic diversity of our greater community.

Under the Student Assignment Plan:

Elementary students may attend the Home Attendance Area (neighborhood) school assigned by residential address. To find your HAA or neighborhood school go to www.ops.org/schools/findmyschool.

Current OPS students now in grades KG—5 may continue to attend their current schools (with limited exceptions). Families may apply for their child to attend any OPS school. Approval of a request depends on the availability of space at the student’s grade level in the school and these priorities:

- The first priority for approval is for a student whose sibling now attends and will continue to attend the requested school. Approval requires available space in the student’s grade level at the school and is not guaranteed.
- The next priority will be given to a student whose socioeconomic background will enhance the diversity of the requested school.
- A student who will not enhance the socioeconomic diversity of a school may be approved if space is available.
- Parents of Kindergarten-eligible children who now attend Pre-K or Head Start programs that are not located in their child’s neighborhood school may apply for the child to attend the same school or another non-neighborhood school. Approval is based on the stipulations shown above and is not guaranteed.

Transportation:

Transportation provisions included in the Student Assignment Plan are designed to support the goal of increasing socioeconomic diversity in every school and to assist families whose children attend the neighborhood elementary school but live more than 1.5 miles from the school.

SCHOOL CHOICE APPLICATIONS will be distributed at school in January, 2015 to all incoming KG children now enrolled in Head Start or PK and to children in the last grade level of their school (GR 4, 5, or 6). Families of children now in other grades (KG–5) will receive a postcard by mail in December. Those wishing to participate in School Choice may return the postcard by December 12 to receive a School Choice Application in January. Generic School Choice Applications also will be available at every school and in the Student Placement office at TAC during the month of January.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL RECRUITMENT LETTERS will be mailed in December to families of students currently in the last grade level of their elementary school. The letter includes information about middle schools and their respective Open House dates. Children may attend the neighborhood middle school or parents may apply for their child to attend a middle school through School Choice. Approval of requests occurs as described for elementary schools.

KINDERGARTEN ROUND-UPS will be held in January, 2015. Please attend Round-Up at your home attendance area school based on your residential address. School Choice Applications will be available at Round-Up and throughout the month of January for families who wish to request a non-neighborhood school(s). Round-Up dates will be publicized or check the date with your neighborhood school.

SCHOOL SELECTION occurs by lottery. Results are mailed to parents by April 1, 2015.

If you have questions about the Omaha Public Schools Student Assignment Plan or School Choice, please contact the Student Placement Office at 557-2710.