

THE STEWARD SIGNAL

NOVEMBER 2021

“Steward School District Continues to Offer High Quality Education with a Small Town Approach”



LESSONS OF THANKSGIVING

BY STEVEN SIMPSON

In the United States we have developed a strong tradition of celebrating thankfulness during the month of November. Each November 11th, we observe Veterans Day- a day to honor our veterans and express our gratitude to all who have bravely and thoughtfully protected our lives, our nation, and our liberty. Then, on the fourth Thursday of November, Americans gather together to celebrate our abundant blessings on Thanksgiving Day.

As adults, we are quite familiar with the storied tale of our courageous Pilgrim ancestors who came to these shores seeking freedom from religious persecution, braved a brutal and deadly winter, learned the agricultural crops of this continent from the local Native American tribe, and celebrated a harvest of plenty with the first Thanksgiving in November of 1621. Yet, on this 400th anniversary of that historical event, we must remember how crucial it is to not only pass along to our youngest generation the story of the first Thanksgiving, but to emphasize the American values of bravery, perseverance, hard work, faith and appreciation for the blessings of liberty it represents. At Steward Elementary I have seen these valuable lessons being taught, shared and learned in many ways.

STEWARD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Superintendent's Message • P. 1-2

New Staff • P. 3

Kindergarten • P. 5

1st-2nd Grade • P. 6

3rd-4th Grade • P. 7

5th Grade • P. 8-9

Music Classes • P. 9

6th-8th Math/Science • P. 10-11

PE Classes • P. 11

6th-8th L.A./Social Studies • P. 12

Art Classes • P. 13

Honor Roll - Grades K-2 • P. 14

Honor Roll - Grades K-2 • P. 15

Board Members • P. 16

Key Dates • P. 16

Student Council • P. 16

Lessons of Thanksgiving cont...

We began the year by having our students showered with the generosity of community donations that purchased air conditioning units for our classrooms. In a year that saw many very warm days well into late September, these units, and those that made them possible, were a true blessing. Additionally, the safety of our playground has been vastly improved through the blessings of local donations of labor, equipment and material for the installation of landscaping timbers to make a new perimeter and tons of pea gravel to fill it. In October, our volunteer fire department planned a very educational fire prevention day for us when we visited the firehouse to learn valuable safety information and see the equipment and vehicles that are used to keep us safe. It was another opportunity for us to learn about and be thankful for the thoughtfulness of those who are willing to protect us.



Most recently, through the efforts of an Eagle Scout candidate and his Boy Scout troop, we have had a light installed on our flagpole and further improvements made upon our grounds. Moreover, our student council gave our student body the opportunity to exercise their own appreciation for abundance by sponsoring a November Food Drive to benefit the Rochelle Christian Food Pantry and the N.I.C.E. (Neighbors in Christ Ecumenical) Center in Lee. Our students and families showed a tremendous amount of effort by donating a total of 363 items- what a wonderful expression of generosity!

I have highlighted only some of the examples of giving and caring that have been taught and learned at Steward Elementary this fall. All of these lessons I count among my blessings each day. I feel truly blessed to be the principal/superintendent of a school served by sincere and dedicated faculty/ staff in a building filled with students whose families and community teach them the value of education by supporting their school through their many gifts of resources and labor. School and home are places where we should endeavor daily to teach the value of hard work, perseverance, thankfulness and giving. At Steward Elementary it is certainly not difficult to do so because of the many kind and caring acts that abound amongst our citizens. Such citizens seem stubbornly devoted to teaching these lessons to our youth through their own tirelessly devoted examples. Again, for this, I am truly grateful.

May you and your loved ones enjoy a blessed Thanksgiving,
Steven C. Simpson
Principal/ Superintendent



Welcome to our new staff

We have seen quite a change in the staff here at Steward School this past summer. We have 9 new staff members who joined the 6 returning staff from last year. Here is a list of our new staff members.

Steven Simpson: Principal/Superintendent

We welcome Steven Simpson as our new principal/superintendent. He comes with many years experience at Indian Creek and has been a terrific fit running the school thus far.



Michelle Esposito: Kindergarten teacher

Mrs. Esposito comes with many years' experience teaching elementary school. She can brighten the mood of any day, engage in intellectual conversation with ease, and make everyone she encounters feel a sense of comfort.

Katelyn Kalata: 5th grade teacher

Miss Kalata is just beginning her teaching career. She stepped right in this year and coached our volleyball team. She is always ready to adjust or revise her lessons to meet the needs of her students. She has been very flexible and is always willing to work with her students.



Kevin Larson: PE teacher

Mr. Larson is returning to Steward school after teaching here in FY2014. He comes with many years' experience teaching elementary school. He has the students moving and staying active, which is just what they need to recharge.

Deanne Aldridge: Special Education

Mrs. Aldridge is just starting out her teaching career but has a lot of experience working with children. She has shown that she can make quick decisions in the heat of the moment and is still able to treat her students respectfully and uphold their dignity.



Jakob McCormick: Music teacher

Mr. McCormick is just beginning his music teaching career. The school hasn't had music for almost a year and half so Mr. McCormick has many new instrumentalists to work with. He is doing a great job trying to keep the kids socially distant and learning at the same time.

Sarah Loeffelholz: Art teacher

Mrs. Loeffelholz comes with many years' experience as an art teacher. She brings kindness, flexibility and patience into her classroom which leads to happy, well-functioning students. The students have really enjoyed having her for an art teacher two times a week this year.



Shawn Bullock: Custodian

Mr. Bullock has been a great addition to our school. He is a hard worker and is willing to help wherever he is needed. There is a lot to learn around the school building and Mr. Bullock has been learning everything he can. He has figured out the boiler and installed our air conditioning units.

Sarah Malcolm: Cook

Mrs. Malcolm joins us with lots of cooking experience. She has been a very hard worker and has kept the kitchen extremely clean. She prides herself on providing food that the kids will look forward to eating. Her goal is to have every student have hot lunch on the same day.



Student/Teacher Swap Day



Western Day



Student/Teacher Swap Day



Starved Rock Field Trip

Mrs. Esposito's Kindergarten Class

by: Mrs. Esposito



Dear Steward Families,

The kindergarteners have come a long way since the beginning of the year. Most came in knowing little to no letters or sounds. We have introduced all the letters and their sounds with a class average of 23 out of 26 letters and sounds that we are able to identify. We also started on sight words and have 13 words memorized. They are applying their phonics skills along with sight words to read books. We are still working on how to sound out words, but we are trying very hard.

Math has been an adventure. We started identifying numbers 0-10, the number words, and how to make them with objects. We worked through identifying 2-dimensional shapes and even went on a hunt through the school to find our shapes (so much fun!) Currently we are working on numbers 11-20 and doing simple addition.

Science has been a complete blast. Most of us love science and all the exploring we get to do. We have finished two units so far with pushes and pulls and lastly, matter. Any time we can apply what we learned in class, we get the most excited.

Social Studies is a little more challenging for us, but we always put our minds to it! We have talked about communities, families, community helpers, and even took a trip to the firehouse. We loved looking at all the tools they use for their job!

We can't wait to continue on with our learning and hopefully can show all the older students in the building that we can read, too!!!!

With lots of love!
Mrs. Esposito

Patriot's Day Commemoration



Mrs. Hayes's 1st & 2nd Grade Classes

by: Mrs. Hayes

First and second grade are busy learning new things every day. **READING** is one of the main focuses in the early grades. During reading class, we focus on reading “just right” books that are neither too easy nor too hard. This gives the students the best opportunities to grow in their reading skills. The students learn and practice vital reading skills throughout the year. Three of the most recent skills we have covered are fact versus opinion, point of view, and cause and effect relationships in a story. All of these skills help students be able to understand and discuss their books in a meaningful manner.

LANGUAGE ARTS is a major part our day. It includes spelling, handwriting, phonics, and writing. In spelling, students have their own set of words to work on that are at their perfect level for instruction. They are neither too challenging or too easy to spell. In handwriting, the first graders are just finishing up their lower-case letters. We go slowly through the letters with an emphasis on letter formation and legibility. The second graders are very excited that they are finally starting cursive writing.

Another area of focus in language arts is **PHONICS**. In phonics we are continuing to work on vowel patterns with both grade levels. The second graders are also working on their blends, silent letters, and digraphs. The students also read easy phonics booklets each day to practice our phonics sounds. As they continue to learn our phonics patterns, reading becomes easier and easier. Phonics also helps the students develop their skills in writing. At Steward School, we teach writing by focusing on the six main traits of writing. We are currently finishing up our second trait: Organization. Students have written comparison stories as well as narrative stories in time order. They are learning that there are multiple ways to write a story so that it makes sense to the reader.

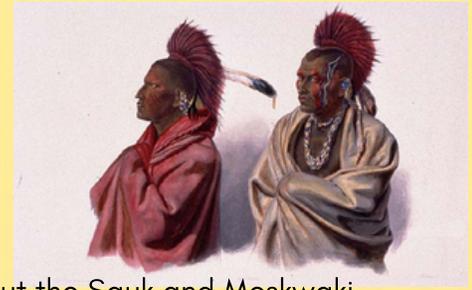
In **MATH** both grades are focusing on subtraction and addition skills at different levels. The first graders are learning how to find missing parts in a problem, count backwards, solve word problems, as well as look for multiple way to solve the same math problem. The second graders are learning to carry in addition and borrow in subtraction. The new math term for these processes is regrouping. The students love using dot math to count on and count back. Both groups also use lots of hands-on tools like round counters, clothespins, and linking cubes to help compute numbers. In order to work on math fact memorization, the students complete Rocket Math each day. Rocket Math sheets are timed fact tests that help the students practice and memorize their basic math facts. The more basic math facts that are memorized, the easier all math becomes.

In **SOCIAL STUDIES** the students have been learning about communities as well as learning practical skills such as how to use maps, charts, and graphs. They also learn about historical figures that were impactful to their communities. The students were able to see a new community when we took a field trip this fall. Kindergarten through 4th grade went hiking at Starved Rock State Park and had an amazing day learning about maps and communities through nature.



Mrs. Swartz's 3-4 Grade Classes

by: Mrs. Swartz



Mrs. Swartz's Third and Fourth Grade class has just finished learning about the Sauk and Meskwaki Native Americans who once lived where we do now. We have compared their lives to ours, pretended to hunt for animal skins, and learned about the leader Black Hawk. Our next project will be a Pilgrim Simulation. We have practiced looking at artifacts like a historian and reading primary sources to learn more about the first Harvest Feast we now call Thanksgiving.

In **MATH**, both grades are learning about the properties of multiplication. We have mastered the distributive property, which states that factors can be broken up into smaller numbers. They are doing an impressive job understanding and using this idea to solve complex problems. We also practice our basic math facts daily. Ask your student to sing one of our skip counting songs for you.

The students have grown tremendously as **WRITERS** this year. They are planning their writing with focus statements and examples to support their ideas. They have strategies for writing bold beginnings to catch the reader's attention. We use our word wall time to talk about spelling patterns and guidelines that our language usually follows. We have decided that English is hard; but we can do hard things. We have recently begun working on our keyboarding skills. If your student would like to practice at home, we are currently using Dance Mat Typing.



Everyone in our class has become a better **READER** this year. The students have even asked if we could have a whole day when we just read! My favorite part of the day is when I get to read aloud to them. We are just about to finish the novel Three Times Lucky. Ask your student what their favorite novel has been this year. This past month we have been practicing the skills of comparing and contrasting, identifying facts and opinions, and determining point of view while we read.

Perhaps the most important idea we are working on this year is that of having a **GROWTH MINDSET**. Science has proven that we can actually grow our brains. The best way to do that is through challenging ourselves, learning from mistakes, and trying new things. Ask your student to tell you about the power of "yet."



Mrs. Kalata's 5th Grade Class

by: Miss Kalata



Here is a summary of topics that our class has been working on:

MATH: We began the year learning about volume and how 3-dimensional shapes vary from 2-dimensional shapes. From there, we identified vocabulary terms related to volume and applied the formula of length x width x height to shapes. Our second unit asked students to describe the relationship between numerous place values by identifying if the listed number was 10 times greater or 1/10 of the other number listed. Students became proficient in comparing number values, reading and writing decimals, rounding, and writing numbers in expanded form. Next, students learned how to add and subtract decimals. We are currently working on multiplying multi-digit factors by decomposing numbers, plugging them into an area model to find the partial products, and adding together our final answer. In other words, we are using different multiplication strategies to find our answer to a multiplication problem. Students also spend time on IXL for Math, and have been working on skills they need improvement on once a week.

SOCIAL STUDIES: Students began the year focusing on the 5 themes of geography and were asked to explain how each of these traits appear in Illinois and the Midwest region. Students have studied the Native Americans of the Midwest region and the impact that the fur trade, French and Indian War, and the Revolutionary War has had on the area we know today as Illinois. The most recent project in our classroom has required students to choose a historical figure from the Revolutionary War to research. Once we have obtained enough research, students will pretend to be this person and will be interviewed by their peers in the "hot seat."

SCIENCE: Our class started the year learning about Energy and Motion. Through vocabulary comics, critical thinking questions, and labs, students learned that energy can be transferred from place to place by sound, light, heat, and electric currents. Our next investigation led us to compare renewable and nonrenewable energy resources. Students created a slideshow presentation about different energy sources and were able to describe each of them in depth. Most recently, we have begun to learn about the transfer of energy in waves. We completed a lab that showed how waves carry energy using a jump rope, string, and slinky.

SPELLING: Several weeks ago, students began working in their spelling groups. These groups were determined through a spelling test that assessed the spelling rules that students had or had not yet mastered. Each group is on a different day which allows me to meet with groups one on one. Students begin the first day by taking their spelling test from the previous week. After the test, I work with that group and we discuss the vowel-consonant patterns, we define each word, and we sort through the words using their sounds. Throughout the week, students practice working with their spelling words independently and with their partners by sorting the words onto their spelling mat, practicing their words through games, and completing activities on the spelling menu.

Miss Kalata's class continued...

LANGUAGE ARTS: Throughout the year, we focus on improving our writing through using the 6-traits of writing framework. Students have learned how to create strong ideas and found useful ways to organize their thinking through the use of graphic organizers. Students have expressed their thoughts through creative writing pieces, and in October we began writing persuasive essays. For two weeks in November, students wrote a persuasive essay that convinced the reader to travel to a destination of their choice. Students spent their time researching and incorporating facts that supported their point of view. After this essay, students have begun writing another persuasive paper from the perspective of a turkey who should not be eaten for Thanksgiving.



Mr. McCormick's Music Classes

by: Mr. McCormick



All the students have been working very hard from recovering from the past year with having no music and they have done an excellent job at learning many new things.

Kindergarten through 4th Grade

Recently we have been preparing for an upcoming music concert. I have gotten two songs for each group of kids that I see. Kindergarten has two songs, 1st/2nd grade has two songs, and 3rd/4th grade has two songs. They are doing very well on singing the music that we have and we still have a month until the concert. These students have also learned about the various musical instruments that are in concert bands and orchestras. Also, every Thursday the students enjoy learning about a new musical composer. The most recent one we talked about was Antonio Vivaldi.

5th Grade

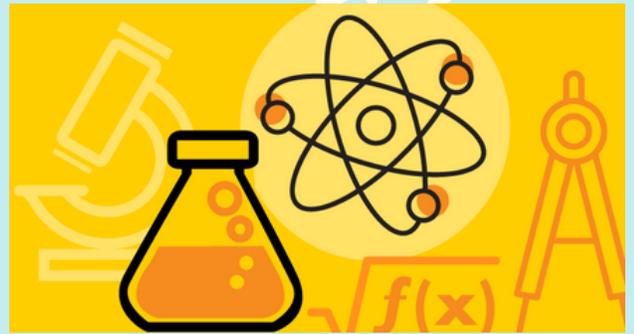
These students have been working on learning about their instruments and how to play them. Learning the instruments has proven not to be a challenge for the students so they also have been working on a music piece for the concert which they will perform. These students will perform a few short pieces as well as show what kinds of things they have learned.

6th, 7th, and 8th Grade

The 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students are all focused on playing a music piece together. They will also play a few short songs. They have been working very hard at understanding all the musical concepts on how to play the music and instruments that they have. There are a few students that are not in the band. These students have been working on understanding a general history of music and noting the major things that happened in the musical time periods.

MRS. ODLE'S MATH AND SCIENCE CLASSES

BY MRS. ODLE



During the past few months, the students have been working on many skills during their various classes. A big push in my math and science classes is to work on student development of higher level thinking skills. Some of the skills we'll be focusing on include application of knowledge to new situations and examples, analyzing problems and "taking things apart" or breaking things down into its pieces, synthesizing pieces of information and putting them together to create a bigger picture, and evaluating information and our knowledge by considering evidence and using it to support or disprove a conclusion. We will be working on these skills throughout the year as the students encounter more complex situations and problems.

Here is a brief summary of topics that each class has been focusing on:

6th Grade Math: We began the year with ratios and learned that it's just a fancy word for fractions. From there, we moved on to relating ratios (fractions) to decimals and percentages. The students learned how to convert from one form to the others. In the last chapter we completed, we revisited our skills in the basic functions of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with emphasis on completing these computations with decimals and fractions. Between now and Christmas Break, we will be introducing rational numbers (numbers that can be written as a ratio) and coordinate planes.

7th Grade Math: We began the year with proportional relationships and how they relate to tables, graphs, and equations. Then, we moved to different forms of percentages and how they are used in real life. Next, we reviewed the four basic mathematical operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) with an emphasis on fractions. Our latest test will be on rational numbers and how to convert between decimals and fractions to compute the problem in the most efficient way possible. After this test, we will be turning our focus to exploring algebraic expressions and how to simplify them.



Mrs. Odle's class continued...

8th Grade Math: To begin the year, we jumped right into exponents and scientific notation. We learned how to use exponents within the basic math operations. From there, we moved to learning the differences between rational numbers and irrational numbers and how they connected with different roots. Our next topic reviewed equations. We also learned how to solve equations with variables on each side. This led to our next topic of identifying linear equations and slope. We related this knowledge to proportional relationships as well. In the following topic, we will broaden our understanding on linear and nonlinear equations.

6th/7th/8th Grade Science: As some of you may have noticed, our science curriculum works heavily on the higher level thinking skills I mentioned before. We spend a lot of time in class discussing the text and extending our understanding beyond what the kids read in the text. Throughout this process we have been covering what makes something a living organism, the different parts of a cell system, how those cells work together to create different tissues, organs, and organ systems, and how those organ systems work together to make our bodies work properly. Our latest chapter will dive into reproduction and how different traits are passed onto offspring for all types of organisms.

MR. LARSON'S PE CLASSES

by: Mr. Larson



P.E. News and Notes for November. First off I would like to say how impressed I am with all of the students K-8. Everyone has been working hard and treating each other with respect.

In November our K-3 groups have been working on basketball skills, hand eye coordination games and 'playtime' at the end of class that involves following rules and showing empathy to their classmates.

Our 4-8 groups have been playing dodgeball, matball and basketball this month. I have really been impressed with their growth both athletically and socially. Keep up the great work Steward Elementary!



Coach Larson

Mrs. Stroh's 6-8 Grade Classes

by: Mrs. Stroh

Reading:

Students have enjoyed a variety of short stories already this year including "An American Childhood" by Annie Dillard and "All Summer in a Day" by Ray Bradbury. We have put a huge focus on being able to "dig deeper" into the stories that we are reading and being able to discuss them together. Students are enjoying the opportunity to teach other classmates skills that they have mastered. As a group, we have worked on how settings affect a story, how characters change throughout stories, and how perspective and points of view often limit what the reader gets to know. We will be getting into small groups to focus on specific novels and learning how to think critically about what we are reading to complete the second quarter.



Social Studies:

8th graders have completed and passed with tremendous scores both the Federal Constitution and the Illinois Constitution. We have moved into their textbook and will cover topics such as expanding westward, the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II. Students are eagerly anticipating snow so that they can have their turn trying to construct trenches out in the snow after our winter break as part of our World War I simulation.

6th and 7th graders are focused on world geography this year. We are busy learning where some countries are located around the globe and working our way through the continents. We have started to learn about people who were nomadic, wandering the globe, until they started villages that turned into civilizations with culture. Students are doing a variety of projects like starting their own village, making a walking tour of their own pyramid, and making a travel brochure for a civilization that we have discussed. Because we are focused on world geography students have begun to watch short video clips at the beginning of each class period which shows important things going on in the world at the current moment.

Language Arts:

Students are working on crafting masterful pieces of writing. The creativity during our free writes is phenomenal with students often wanting to share their writing. We are working our way through the six traits of writing. We have gone through how to find good ideas to write about and how to organize those ideas. In the future we will be working on word choice and voice in our writing.

We are working on many techniques to properly fix sentences working in both small groups and whole classroom instruction. We are also slowly working our way through other concepts like synonyms, antonyms, analogies, spelling, and vocabulary. Students worked and completed a unit on nouns and are currently working on a unit all about verbs.

Students have completed a few short projects already and are looking forward to more. We will be completing a podcast with multiple endings to display voice in our writing. We will also be working on writing a thank you letter to someone in our lives and mailing those out shortly before break.

Mrs. Loeffelholz's Art Classes

by: Mrs. Loeffelholz



Welcome to our world of Art! In **Kindergarten**, our smallest students have read *Rainbow Fish* & discovered patterns of "scales" as they painted with watercolor! **1st & 2nd graders** have been studying the Color Wheel & made paper umbrellas using primary & secondary colors.



Our **3rd & 4th graders** uncovered another culture as they sculpted "sugar skulls" & marigolds to celebrate Dia de los Muertos! In **5th grade**, our students learned about artist Roy Lichtenstein & his Pop Art techniques. Ben-Day style dots helped the kids create their own imagery from small circles! Artist Alma Thomas was our inspiration for **6th grade** mosaic art. She made abstract paintings using little sections of different colors!



Lastly, our **7th & 8th grade** students experienced eraser stamping with a process utilizing "relief." They designed a tiny image & made prints after subtractive measures were taken from each eraser! I love being a part of such talent demonstrated here at Steward School!



Steward School

Honor Roll



1st Quarter 2021-2022



Grades K-2nd

Exceptional

(97%-100%. No individual grades below 90%)

Ronald Becket Kraemer
Lucas Blusiewicz
Camila Lopez
George Miller

Amazing

(94%-96%. No individual grades below 85%)

Hannah Gittleson
Levi Mathey
Lucas Mendez
Grayson Connolly
Aiden Connolly

Impressive

(90%-93%. No individual grades below 80%)

Mackenzie Erickson
Brooke Barber
Finnigan Powell
Sapphire Bates

Steward School

Honor Roll



1st Quarter 2021-2022

Grades 3rd-8th



Highest Honors

(97%-100%. No individual grades below 90%)

- Brynndyl Mellor
- Ben Hayes
- Lizzie Hayes
- Derik Maertz
- Barbara Palmer
- Reese Wells
- Tenley Ramsey
- Tilly Gonser
- Evi O'Rorke

High Honors

(94%-96%. No individual grades below 85%)

- Gavyn Foster
- Morgan DeLille
- Diana Lopez
- Jamie Riddell
- Derek Swartz
- Alayna Smardo

Honors

(90%-93%. No individual grades below 80%)

- Joshua Pena
- Isaac Gittleson
- Raylan Davis
- Sam Overton
- Ryley Ginn
- Tyson Pavlak
- Braylon Wells
- Molly Kedzie

Board of Education

- President:** Christina Cardott
- Vice President:** Julie Lovett
- Secretary:** Marcy DeLille
- Board member:** Dean Svela
- Board member:** Nate Ramsey
- Board member:** Chele Wells
- Board member:** Joseph Powell



Key Dates

- Nov. 30th:** Boys b-ball Cornerstone here
- Dec. 2nd:** Boys basketball Kings here
"8th Grade Night"
- Dec. 3rd:** SIP day early dismissal 11:30.
- Dec. 7th:** Boys basketball tournament
- Dec. 16th:** Christmas Program
 6:00pm
- Dec 23rd-Jan 5th:** Winter Break

Student Council

We've been busy little bees over the last few months. Highlights of our work include an all school scavenger hunt. The students were grouped together with students young and old working together to find important places around our school grounds. The staff was very proud and impressed to see the way our older students stepped up to assist the younger students in learning about our school.

We also planned a spirit week dress up day schedule to help boost school spirit for the week of our Meridian Conference Volleyball tournament. Spirit days included School Spirit Tuesday, Western Wednesday, Student/Teacher Swap Day on Thursday, and Class Color Day on Friday.

In October, we organized a school wide game of hide and seek. During the month of November, the students have organized a food drive for the Rochelle Christian Food Pantry and the NICE Center in Lee. Student Council Members will be delivering the donations from the food drive to the pantries just in time for Thanksgiving.

They will also be touring the Rochelle Christian Food Pantry facility to see how a food pantry works. We have also started planning for a new mural in the school. We can't wait to share it with everyone and are excited to spruce up one area in the school!

Hide and Seek

