

THE STEWARD SIGNAL

October 2022

STEWARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



ENTERING A SEASON FOR TEACHING LESSONS OF GRATITUDE

by Superintendent Steven Simpson

*"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think **with deep gratitude** of those who have lighted the flame within us."*

— Dr. Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965)



Although the importance of showing and speaking gratitude to others is one to which young people should be exposed throughout the year, November is an especially “ripe” time for schools, families, communities and churches to join together in teaching lessons of being thankful. The autumn beauty of changing colors, being surrounded by world-leading farmers and agricultural abundance, as well as the upcoming celebration of our national Thanksgiving holiday are all opportunities that we can use as starters to engage school-aged children in conversations about the need, art and purpose of practicing gratitude. *(continued...)*

Conversely, a person, of any age, if they do not internalize a spirit of thankfulness to and for the many others who contribute to their overall well-being, can develop an anti-productive self-centeredness that will prevent such a person from ever realizing their full potential as a citizen or family member. When we engage our young people in thinking about the value of many others in their lives, we help to make them aware of the vast array of caring relationships and supportive assets for which they need to be thankful. The practice of gratitude has been found to be a core feature of a positive attitude toward life and good mental health. Steward Elementary is committed to building such a culture.

Much media attention has been directed toward self-engrossed “victim mentality” individuals who lash out in heinous criminal actions in extreme cases. Oftentimes, such coverage ends with an unanswered question of “why?” Part of what seems to be lacking on the part of some groups or individuals that develop “victim mentalities” is a heart of gratitude and appreciation for the value of others. Together, we can strengthen our nation’s youth and, consequently, produce a healthier society, by promoting a culture of thankfulness and gratitude, caring and understanding, empathy and kindness.

Historical Note: Our first national declaration of a Thanksgiving holiday came from the Continental Congress during the challenges of our early Revolutionary War experiences in 1777. Knowing that our nation’s founders were in the midst of a desperate struggle for their lives, it seems especially inspirational that they felt the need for us to pause, as a wholly united group, to give thanks. Although their 18th century wording may be slightly odd compared to our modern prose, it is well worth reading and discussing. You may find the full text at:

https://pilgrimhall.org/pdf/TG_First_National_Thanksgiving_Proclamation_1777.pdf

School Board Meeting

Wednesday
Nov. 16th
6:00pm



New Board members needed starting next May. If you would like to be on the school board you will need to file a petition at the Lee County Courthouse by Dec. 12-19 of 2022. For more information you can contact the Lee County Courthouse or the Steward school and we can help guide you in the correct steps.

Kindergarten News

by Mrs. Esposito

What an amazing start to the year so far!!!! This is my 20th year teaching students. So far this year we have covered 22 of the 26 letters and know at least 20 sight words. The class got to use shaving cream to make letters and even though it was a mess, they loved it!!!!



This year we are starting a new program for social emotional learning. The students earn a key after each unit. So far we earned three new keys: the **self-concept key**, the **physical key** (taking care of our bodies), and the **intellectual key** (taking care of our minds).

The students are doing such a wonderful job at learning our school rules and procedures. Most of them set up materials and move our calendar around so that it is in the correct spot for each subject area. I am so proud of them.



Our magical mathematicians have been working on numbers 0-15. They are also working on how to sort things into groups. Our class has some great critical thinkers.

The first grade and kindergarten classes went on a field trip at Woody's Apple Orchard and it was the best time. Although it was a little chilly, they had the best time!!!!



1st Grade News

by Mrs. Hayes

The first grade students have been learning so much this first quarter. In **READING**, we have been working on learning our phonics patterns as well as hundreds of sight words! We practice our sight words and phonics by reading small books and using flashcards that focus on a specific pattern. Our sixth grade reading buddies have been a huge help to us by helping us practice our sight words and read our phonics books every afternoon. We have also been learning about some important reading skills during class. So far we have covered fact vs. opinion, fix-up strategies, and predicting. We are currently learning about main ideas and details, plot, characters, and setting.

LANGUAGE ARTS is a large part of our day. In handwriting we are learning how to make our lowercase letters the correct way. In spelling, we are all learning spelling patterns by looking at the first, middle, and last sound in a word. Every day we try to write. We use our spiral journals to write our own stories each day. We also have been focusing on the area of organization in our class writing. We are learning to use transition words like first, next, then, and last to keep our thoughts in order.

In **SOCIAL STUDIES** we are learning to read maps, use charts, put things in order, and identify types of jobs in a community. On Thursday afternoons, Katie Pratt (on the right) from Lee County Ag in the Classroom has been joining us to share about apples, pumpkins, and corn. Those lessons have been both fun and interesting.

In **MATH** we started the year by learning about counting patterns and place value. We are just beginning our unit on addition strategies. We use these strategies every day when we do our Rocket Math. Rocket Math is a series of timed addition tests that will help us memorize our facts. We also have been getting extra help with addition during guided math groups.



This year we have started using a new **SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING** curriculum. The first graders have focused on how our positive actions lead to positive thoughts. Those positive thoughts lead to positive feelings. We have also discussed how to live a healthy life by having healthy daily habits.



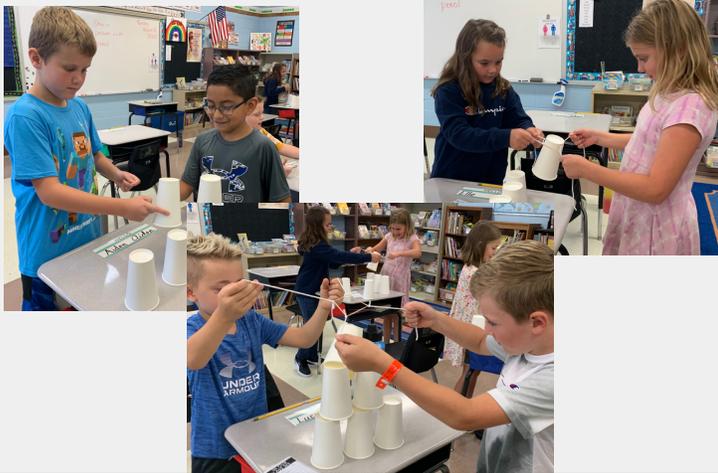
2nd-3rd Grade News

by Mrs. Swartz

The second and third graders have been very busy this fall. We have practiced "Real Reading" using metacognition (thinking about our thinking). We have learned what to do when we don't know a word, and what to do when we don't understand what we are reading. Right now we are discussing main ideas and details, characters, settings, and story structure.

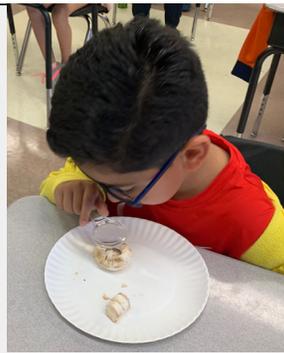
We are using graphic organizers to plan our writing. We have written stories and informational paragraphs. We are learning to look for errors and learn how to fix them. We have learned several spelling rules that we practice when we write our word wall words.

We have just started understanding multiplication and how it relates to addition and division. We have learned the rules for the "easy" multiplication facts. We even learned some poetry about them.



It was fun to see our school and homes from above using Google Earth when we worked on our map skills. As we get nearer to Election Day we are learning about the three branches of government and how elections work. We are also learning to name and spell our continent, country, state, county, and village.

The best part of the first quarter was our weekly visit from Mrs. Pratt with Lee County Ag in the Classroom. We joined Ms. Dietze's class and learned all about pizza. It was an interactive and delicious learning experience!



4th-5th Grade News

by Ms. Dietze

The fourth and fifth grade class has been working so hard through the first quarter of school! They have done a fantastic job jumping back into learning and continuing to try even when something seems difficult. In **LANGUAGE ARTS** we have been focusing on how to make our writing stronger with interesting ideas and organization. There are so many creative and thoughtful stories that have already been written! We have also been working more on making revisions to what we wrote to make it the best it can be. I cannot wait to see what the next quarter has in store for these writers when we focus on word choice.

In **MATH** we have focused on so many topics already. From place value and number patterns in fourth grade to volume and working with decimals in fifth grade. Both classes have been tackling each new topic and growing their knowledge in such impressive ways! They make great connections and have helped each other work through any challenges they might face. Fourth grade will be moving on to multiplication patterns and fifth grade will be focusing on multiplying decimals.

We had such a great time in **SCIENCE** this quarter! We focused on matter for this quarter. We discussed how it makes up everything around us and what kind of changes can happen with it. Experiments were a big part of science this quarter. Their final experiment took what they had learned and they created their own recipes for modeling dough. Katie Pratt from Ag in the Classroom also led us through a fun four weeks of lessons about pizza and where the ingredients come from. We worked with the second and third graders and even had a pizza party at the end. Mrs. Pratt will be joining our classroom again in November for more Ag in the Classroom lessons. This quarter we will be moving on to social studies starting with geography and our states!

We have also started our work with **POSITIVE ACTION**. Our first unit focused on how to build a positive self-concept and how to feel good about ourselves. The class had some great ideas about how to help themselves and others stay positive. We will continue to work on ways to have a positive view of ourselves.



Dissecting mushrooms to find their parts



Finding out how dish soap and milk react to each other

6-8 Math/Science News

by Mrs. Odle

AG IN THE CLASSROOM

Katie Pratt from the Lee County Ag in the Classroom program has been joining several of our classes monthly to teach our students about different agriculture based topics and how they relate to our everyday lives. The 6th-8th grade classes will be learning about corn during the 1st semester of the year. So far, we've had two lessons with Mrs. Pratt. First, she taught the kids about the different types of corn and how they are used throughout the world. She even brought a stalk of sweet corn to show the kids (see the attached picture.) The students finished this lesson with a messy experiment involving oobleck which is made with corn starch. Our second lesson involved an experiment with four different powdery substances. Students predicted how many mL of water each sample would require before it was completely dissolved. They were surprised to find out that the corn-based substance continued to "slurp up" more than 100 mL of water!



STUDENT COUNCIL

The month of October has been low key for the Steward Student Council. The kids planned their second all-school event. Our kindergarten through 8th grade classes split into two teams and played a game of mat ball. This is a variation of the traditional kickball, but batters can choose to kick the ball fair or foul or not at all. They also get to choose to run to one base or multiple bases or keep running around the bases as many times as they can. It sounds a bit crazy, but the kids love it! My favorite part about the whole event is watching our older kids help the littles that didn't even know how to play. A 7th grader held a kindergartener's hand as they helped them kick the ball and run to first. On the defensive side, an 8th grader "threw" the ball completely off target so the kindergartener could reach 1st base safely. The two sided goal of these all-school events is to give everyone a bit of a break from classes and to teach empathy and understanding to all the students as they learn to work with and accept everyone for the level that they are at. In November, the entire school will participate in our annual food drive. The proceeds will be split between the Rochelle Christian Food Pantry and the NICE Center in Lee.

6-8 S.S./L.A. News

by Mrs. Stroh

READING

The first quarter in my class has been busy. In reading, we have been working on our poetry unit and trying to answer the question “what is the best way to communicate?”. Students favorite poems have been “Highwayman” and “Sarah Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the Garbage Out.”



LANGUAGE ARTS

In Language Arts, we have been working on grammar through small group lessons on IXL. We have also been working on our writing skills. Students have been working on a personal narrative that has taught them a lesson while focusing on our six-traits of writing.

SOCIAL STUDIES

In Social Studies, **6th graders** have been working on world history. We have been working on memorizing Asian countries and will soon work on African countries. We have really enjoyed learning about Egypt most recently. Students have been enthralled to try to solve the mysteries of where Neferiti and Cleopatra might be buried. **7th graders** have been working hard establishing and growing their own colonies based on the original thirteen English colonies. All **8th graders** have successfully passed the Federal Constitution Test and are currently working on learning about the Illinois government.



Art News

by Mrs. Loefellholz

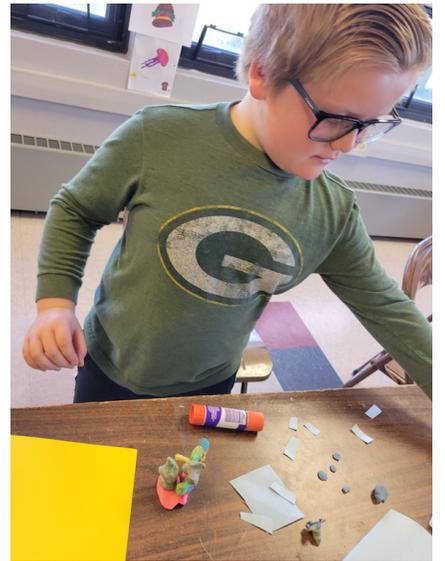
I love seeing what your kids can create in art class!

In **Kindergarten**, our smallest students are finishing up with texture as they make yarn fiber spiderwebs!

In **5th grade**, our students are learning about artist Roy Lichtenstein & his Pop Art techniques. Ben-Day style dots help the kids create their own imagery from small circles!



2nd & 3rd graders are using modeling clay to envision artist Keith Haring's active portraits of people & animals! They can tell you what a good noise line or movement line might look like!



Our **4th graders** are uncovering another culture as they cut papel picados to celebrate Dia de los Muertos! They demonstrate care & patience while designing paper-thin colored tissue.



1st grade is exploring what life may have been like in cave dwelling days! They use charcoal & paper bags to tell their own cave stories.



Art News

by Mrs. Loefellholz



Ryley Ginn was our Artist of the month!

Aztecs are our inspiration for **6th grade** self-portraits. Using typical Aztec figure silhouettes, students created their own colorful cut-out designs specifically about their individuality!

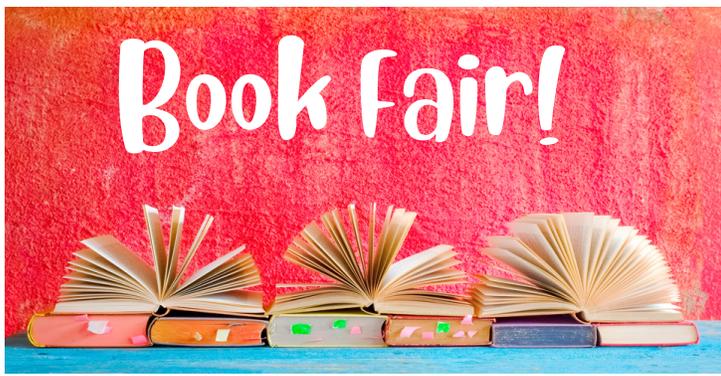


7th grade is using embossing & relief methods to bend & flex copper tin in the beautiful hojalata style from Mexico!



8th grade is discovering artist Claes Oldenburg as they hand sew soft sculptures with fabric & thread! Each day brings such talent demonstrated here at Steward School!





Thank you for your support of our school book fair. Your purchases provided over **\$700** worth of new books to our school!



STUDENT COUNCIL OFFICERS



Congratulations to our officers:
Morgan DeLille - President
Isaac Gittleson - Vice President
Tenley Ramsey - Secretary



Booster Club Meeting

Tuesday, Nov. 8th
6:00pm in the cafeteria.

All parents and interested community members are encouraged to attend the meetings, which are held once a month during the school year. It's rewarding and fun to work together, share ideas and implement plans to help make our school a great place for our children to grow and learn!



Conor O'Rourke Memorial Tournament Dec. 3-4

Hundreds of people have come together the first weekend in December for nearly two decades to enjoy our annual Conor O'Rourke Memorial JV Basketball Invitational Tournament. Conor was 10 years old when he died of complications from cancer treatment in 2002. To keep the memory of Conor alive, we dedicated this tournament to him and a game he loved to play. Contact the school if you would like to help out during this incredible weekend.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November

4 SIP Day: School gets out at 11:30am

8 Election Day: No School / Booster Club meeting 6:00pm

10 Vision/Hearing Screening at the school



16 School Board Meeting

17 Family Reading Night!



23-25 Thanksgiving Break



December

2 SIP Day: School gets out at 11:30am

3-4 Conor O'Rourke Tournament



13 Holiday Music Concert

