

## **Winter News from Michael F. Stokes and J. Fred Sparke Elementary School**

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Winter has been a season filled with hard work and giving for students and staff members at J. Fred Sparke and Michael F. Stokes Elementary School. Throughout the months of December and January, fundraisers and toy drives were hosted, after-school clubs began, and holiday activities were hosted for students and their families throughout both buildings.

At J. Fred Sparke Elementary School teachers hosted a 50-50 collection, raising over \$3,400. This collection was intended to support Colleen Truono, a beloved friend and former staff member of Island Trees. Christine Bergamino, a Middle School teacher, won the collection and graciously donated her winnings to Colleen's family. Throughout the holiday season, students and staff members at Sparke Elementary School were actively involved in spreading holiday cheer by participating in a collection of new toys for the John Theirssens Toys for Tots program. Holiday Cheer filled the halls during the annual Kindergarten Holiday Sing-A-Long. The children worked hard practicing their songs and movements to help family members, students and staff members in the holiday spirit. Mrs. Kern, Mrs. Minotto, and Mrs. Kennedy enjoyed hosting staff members from the Seaford School District. The staff members at Sparke showcased the school library, and led an open discussion about the EnVisions Math Program. Their positive impression highlights the dedication and quality education at Sparke.

At Michael F. Stokes Elementary School, staff members collected items that were donated to Mommas House, a local mother-child residence that provides a caring, supportive environment for young mothers to acquire the tools necessary to lead independent lives. Throughout the holiday season, students participated in festive activities celebrating different cultures and holidays around the world. Students in Ms. Egert's class made homemade holiday gifts for their classmates. Students in second grade enjoyed building gingerbread houses with a special guest and experiencing Polar Express Day. Students listened to the book *The Polar Express*, and worked on activities before watching the movie in their pajamas while enjoying hot chocolate.

Making learning exciting, enjoyable and memorable is always a priority for the teachers at Stokes Elementary School. Students in second and fourth grade enjoyed their field trip to *The Levittown Museum*, where they learned about the history of Island Trees. Students in third grade enjoyed their field trip to *Safety Town*, where they learned about road safety. Students enjoyed riding two-wheeled bicycles and go karts on a pretend roadway, where they had to follow traffic and safety rules. It was a memorable

experience for all. Stokes librarian, Mrs. FitzGerald, hosted *Hour of Code* for all students. Over the course of two library periods, Mrs. FitzGerald introduced students to the basics of computer coding using fun games and activities. The *Hour of Code* introduced students to the basics of computer coding using fun games and activities. *The Hour of Code* built an interest in computer science for young children. During computer education week, students in library collaborated with the high school computer science students. The high school students created tutorial videos about algorithms and ASCII code using Flipgrid. The students at Stokes watched the videos and followed the tutorials, then had the opportunity to make a video back revealing their completed work.

Over the winter, third grade students celebrated their hard work on the narrative writing unit. Students selected a small moment that had significant meaning to them. Students chose to write about topics such as a family trip, the start of a new school year, or meeting a new friend for the first time. Students celebrated a job well done during the end of the unit writing celebration. Ms. Lahti and Ms. Radcliffe's class enjoyed a star studded red carpet and invited their parents and loved ones in to share their published piece. As a culminating activity to third grade's first Reader's Workshop Unit of Study, students watched the movie *Stone Fox*, which was the read aloud of the unit. Students enjoyed comparing and contrasting the book to the movie. Finally, students in third grade have enjoyed many hand-on experiments in science. Students have been learning about how acid rain affects living and nonliving things in the environment, and how salt from the roadways can affect plant life. Students are looking forward to the next science unit (forces and physics).

The elementary school teachers of Island Trees cannot wait to share the exciting events planned for students and the community throughout the remainder of the school year.