

Dear Parents,

How can it be March already?! This week our Orphans of the Storm service project is coming to a close and we have collected an amazing amount of donations. Today we brought all of the items inside our classroom and spent our math time estimating the amount of the various items and also the weight of the newspapers. After we wrote our estimates on the board we broke into teams to determine the specific number of treats, blankets/towels, cleaning supplies, toys, cans of cat food, bags of dog food, etc., as well as the weight of all the newspaper we collected. Last year we collected 75 lbs. of newspaper and were hoping we would collect even more this year. The same three girls who sorted and weighed the paper last year volunteered to do it again. I brought in a scale and they placed pile after pile on it and wrote down the weights. After the very last batch was weighed, they added all of it together and determined that we had collected 214 lbs! We were all super excited! We also collected: 1 cat bed, 19 cleaning supply items, 16 cat/dog treats or bones, 34 cans of cat food, 44 cans/bags of dog food, 28 dog/cat toys, 41 blankets/towels, and 28 rolls of paper towels. Tomorrow a volunteer is coming to visit us to collect the donations and give a presentation about the shelter, letting us know how pet adoptions work, their off-site adoption events, community outreach, feline friends for seniors, their satellite location in Highland Park, and much more.

I want to sincerely thank you for all of your donations and support for our service project. The children have been invested and engaged in the entire process and their enthusiasm is contagious! Having children get involved in community service helps them to expand their worldview, develop empathy and realize how their actions can have a positive impact. They can see first-hand how their efforts can help their community and beyond. This experience empowers them and illustrates that even little people can make a big impact on our world.

We finished our novel study of *Tale of Depereaux* last week and watched the movie version on Friday. It was quite a bit different from the novel and we created a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting the movie and the book. The children were surprised how the movie version had some drastic differences in story lines,

relationships, missing characters, and even different outcomes. Our chart is posted outside of our classroom. Check it out when you're in the building.

I had the students write in their journals about whether they liked the book or movie better and why. Most of the students liked the movie better because it was "animated, fun to watch, showed the characters, has lots of different details, etc." One student wrote that he liked the book better because it was longer. I asked him about it and he said that he enjoyed listening to it over the days/weeks. That made me so happy! I also enjoy watching a movie based on a book but almost always like the book better. Books leave room for the imagination and we can interpret a book in our own way. We will be starting our next novel study shortly and will be reading *Charlotte's Web*.

This week we picked parts to perform a reader's theatre version of *Stone Soup*. Each student chose a part and received a script. I will be keeping the scripts at school because the children don't need to memorize any lines - they read them as they perform. We will be practicing it at school and hopefully will have the chance to perform for other classes. Reader's theatre is a fun way to promote fluency, build confidence, and enhance reading skills.

Finally, this week we ended our Matific math games competition. The students enjoyed playing the games and all enthusiastically took turns on the few laptops we could get our hands on. :) Working together with all the classes we helped Plato make it to #8 out of all the schools participating in the nation. Very impressive!

Have a wonderful weekend and as always, thanks for sharing your amazing children with me.

Ms. Leslie