

Community Partnership All School Read Program Activities
Shabbat Shalom Newsletter excerpt from December 2016

In Ms. Newman's fifth grade, students were talking about whether or not being in a community together meant that you only had agreements and not disagreements. One student said, "If we all had the same ideas, it wouldn't be interesting. In a community you're allowed and can feel safe to disagree." The fifth grade is also coordinating the school book drive as part of this project. One student explained their view on this: "It's a responsibility we've never had before. We are confident we can do well."

Mrs. Woloshin's classes also talked about different communities, and the idea emerged that "You are something bigger than yourself." To demonstrate this artistically, students in grades K-8 were each given part of a circle to design using patterns and words that fit together to create a colorful collaborative community quilt.



In music, Mrs. Wyatt is teaching every class a song about community called "A Little Bit of Light" by John Farrell. The song talks about how each of us can make our world better; no one can do it all by themselves. Each person has "a little bit of light, a little bit of hope and a little bit of love" that can help all of us. We are learning sign language in our song, so we also talked about how learning to talk with our hands helps us communicate with others in our community.

Ms. Amber's class of three-year olds talked about community and tzedakah. "Teaching tzedakah to 3-year-olds is about teaching concrete ideas," Ms. Amber says. She told her class, "Not all children in our community have full tummies, not all children have coats to stay warm. In a community, we all live in one place, but we don't see everyone. How do we help these children if we don't see them?"



A bus created to be like the one from "Last Stop on Market Street."

Mrs. Weisberg reports that "After the third grade class read *Last Stop on Market Street*, each student wrote a short paragraph in Hebrew telling about their favorite scene in the book. They noted that, though CJ wished for things he did not have, he was a happy kid with a happy future. 'You can find beauty in unexpected places,' said one of the third graders, and everyone liked that idea."



Mrs. Capozzoli's students have also participated in All-School Read activities. "First, second and third grades have been busy writing to our pen pals," she says. "This is our first letter so we are really in the introduction stage. The children have lots of questions for their new pen pals and they will be eager to get a response back. Hopefully this is the beginning of broadening our community through friendship." Indeed, Mr. Patrick Wilde, the second grade teacher at Hays Porter, said that when his students received their first letters, they were immediately struck by things they have in common with their new Rockwern friends most notably that, although we may celebrate different holidays, everyone is looking forward to holiday festivities and winter vacation!

8th Graders in Mrs. Levine's class began the All School Read by diving into *The Rhino Who Swallowed a Storm*. Students looked at the concept of community and what makes up a community. The class investigated the idea of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) and looked to see how the characters worked together to figure out how to fix their community, which had been torn apart by a terrible storm. Students have carried over this work into their unit on *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

The sixth grade read *The Rhino Who Swallowed a Storm* in Mrs. Kaplan's class, and they compared the themes in this picture book with those in their shared text, *Home of the Brave*. They were surprised to find many common themes in the two books.

Dr. Finell is also participating enthusiastically in this year's project. "I am so excited to be partnering this year with Hays Porter for our annual All-School Read," he says. "With this year's theme of Intersecting 'Circles of Community', I can think of no better way to connect with other people in our community. Visiting Hays-Porter last week with Hays Porter's Principal, Ms. McClain and Rockwern's Librarian, Mrs. Weinstein, gave me a sense of this wonderful school and the amazing work they are doing with their students under very challenging circumstances. I saw that while our schools are different in many apparent ways, we are also the same in even more fundamental ways. I feel honored to have Rockwern partnering with such a fine school and for our students to have the opportunity to make new friends with our neighbors at Hays Porter."



Evidence of our All School Read is visible all over Rockwern, and we are looking forward to the additional events that we have planned, including visits from the authors of both of our books as well as joint experiences involving both Rockwern and Hays Porter.