

Forest Ranch Charter School

April 7, 2011

EVENTS



UPCOMING EVENTS

* These events occur at school unless otherwise noted.

4/8/2011: Charlotte's Web held at FR Community Center 2pm & 7pm

4/9/2011: Charlotte's Web held at FR Community Center 2pm & 7pm

4/12/2011: PTP Meeting 2:45

4/13/2011: 4/5 & 5/6 grades Field Trip

4/14/2011: Board Meeting 6pm

4/22-4/25/2011: NO SCHOOL – Easter

4/26-4/29/2011: Shady Creek 6th grade camp

5/7-5/8/2011: Music Festival

5/12/11: Board Meeting 6pm

5/13/2011: NO SCHOOL – Staff Development Day

5/17/11: PTP Meeting 6pm

5/30/2011: NO SCHOOL – Memorial Day

Director's Report

It seems like the year has moved so fast. We are three weeks into the final trimester of the year and are still really working to keep things lively and engaging. Student passion and interest increases when studies from school are emphasized at home. Please get involved and help us to make things come alive! We have many events still to come. This weekend will be our Spring Musical, "Charlotte's Web". Students have been working very hard and are excited about raising much needed funds for a local family and earthquake/tsunami victims in Japan. Young Author's Day, Earth Day, the Music Festival and Spring Concert/Open House are some of the year's final events. We also have many field trips left, including 6th grade camp. Please let us know which of these you can help with. We can always use an extra set of hands.

We received a mini-grant from the Chico Horticultural Society to continue developing our garden. We will be expanding and also planting some fruit trees. The Butte Rose Society is donating several rose bushes, which will be planted in the next few weeks. Families are always welcome to come plant with us!

Election for Parent Representatives

We have two Parent Representative Board positions (one three year position and one two year position) currently up for election. Elections will be held in May and the positions will be effective as of June 2011. For additional information regarding this important volunteer opportunity and/or an application, please contact Mel Fune at 891-3154 by April 30th or attend our April 14th Board meeting.

Motherhood

Motherhood has turned me soft in more ways than one, but the way I would like to share with you today is my tendency to cry at the littlest things. When I see a coach give kind encouragement to a child or when I see a student experience an "ah-hah" moment, I am truly touched. So I guess I shouldn't have been surprised when my eyes teared up while I read the recently released FRCS SARC report. We have classroom sizes far below the average for other schools, suspensions and expulsions are nearly non-existent, and remarkably, we do more for students, with less money, than both the district and the state. Our elective offerings are impressive, and our teachers *and* aides are extremely well-qualified. Finally, our academic performance index (a school 'score' for academic success) is up there with the best schools in the state. In a time and place where most schools are under program improvement mandates, ours is a model of success. I feel grateful and proud to have my children benefit from this wonderful community of learning. Funny thing about gratitude and pride...sometimes they make you cry!

Mom of Knox, grade 3

Budget Woes

This is extra tough to talk about following the Motherhood article - the 2011-12 budget is on the agenda for the FRCS Board Meetings for the next three months. Last week state-level discussions about putting the tax extensions on the June ballot fell apart. Therefore, we are facing even more cuts to K through university education. So far, FRCS has avoided having the low funding levels affect our classrooms. Through fundraising, use of part-time administration and parent volunteers in many key positions we are able to fund

small class-sizes, aides in the classrooms, free busing, field trips, music, arts, electives, our partnership program with the Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve and more.

These things are in jeopardy. Over the last couple of years education funding has been cut approximately 20%. For next year, the legislature is discussing reducing ADA funding from \$350 to \$1000 per student and possibly eliminating class-size reduction funding. FRCS could be looking at deficits from \$78,000 to \$143,000, up to another 20% of our budget. Please join us in the process over the next three months, addressing ways to increase funding and decrease expenses, affecting classrooms as minimally as possible.

Please feel free to contact me at the school (I may not get right back to you as I am part-time to save money!) or by email (this is usually faster as I check it from my other job) at

lspeegle@forestranchcharter.org.

Lisa Speegle

Congratulations

FRCS is happy to send out congratulations to some of our students this month. We are very proud of 6th grader Nathan Sheffield for placing 9th in the Butte County Spelling Bee. Way to go, Nathan! We are also very proud of Ms. Lyons' 2nd graders for placing 1st in the Chico Science Fair with their project "Milk Gone Bad." It was a smelly, but worthwhile adventure. Please stop in and check out their project hanging in the After Care Room – the stinky stuff is gone now so it is safe.

Heard Around Campus

Mrs. Palmarini (K) - The kindergarten class is beginning a unit on subtraction. Miss Minus is coming to class to tell "minus mysteries" for our students to solve.

Learning sight words is fun with activities such as sight word stomp and word art. We are returning to our "communities all around" units with an art project based on the folk tales of Sweden.

Mrs. Stearns (1st/2nd) - Grammar and the parts of speech are big right now. The kids love their "Grammar Slammer" books. We went on a noun walk and played noun-I-Spy. Action verb charades had us in stitches. A cooking lesson began with looking for describing words and ended with writing sentences and paragraphs filled with adjectives. To wrap up we created a mad lib story, which the class loved!

Ms. Lyons (2nd/3rd) – The class is very proud to present their first PowerPoints on Native Americans this week. Next is a unit on the local history of Forest Ranch and Chico. If you are a history buff, we are looking for local talent! Second graders are observing their science experiment, "Milk Gone Bad," for the Chico Science Fair. Weekly book club is a hit in reading.

Ms. Matoes (4th/5th) - Literature circle groups are the big thing now; we are reading Where the Red Fern Grows, Shiloh, The City of Ember, Hatchet, and Bridge to Terabithia. The class has really enjoyed preparing two different plays related to Early Colonial Settlements to present to the other classes.

Mrs. Jimmerson (5th/6th) - Punctuation sound effects (for you older folks think Victor Borge) and using punctuation pasta is really spicing up grammar. Continuing the theme of 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, the class is fully immersed in their work creating an underwater ocean scene that includes marine fish, mammals, jelly fish, and flora.