

# Wolf Times

Volume 11, Issue 6

February , 2014

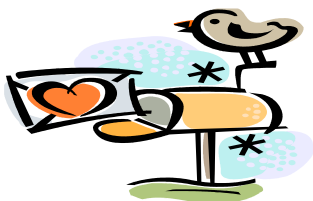


## From The Desk of Jacqueline Norcel...

Dear Frenchtown Families,  
Our February theme at Frenchtown is "American Heroes." Our theme will permit our teachers to investigate the lives, teachings, values, and principles of great Americans whose birthdays are celebrated in February – George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, John Glenn, Marian Anderson, and Thomas Edison. During February we also celebrate Black History Month. With our students, we will share the lives of Frederic Douglass, orator and writer; Elijah McCoy, inventor; Phillis Wheatley, poet; Benjamin Banneker, mathematician and scientist; Ralph Bunche, peacemaker; Thurgood Marshall, Supreme Court Justice; Guion Bluford, astronaut; and Barack Obama, 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. We will celebrate by telling our students about these and other contemporary Black Americans whose knowledge and skills benefited others.



At Frenchtown, we will all "Have a Heart." Valentine's Day will be celebrated on Friday, February 14, 2014. Our school postal carriers are readying themselves for an abundance of valentines.



Besides making and writing valentines with your child, discuss people they admire and why they admire them. Ask them to write a sentence on each person's outstanding qualities. This is an authentic way to utilize our T.R.A.C.K.S. principles. trust, respect, accountability, cooperation, kindness and safety.

Happy Valentines Day to someone. Celebrate Valentine's Day by sending your friend, teacher, parent or someone a special candy gram.



Each candy gram will be for sale for \$1 starting Monday, January 27<sup>th</sup> through February 7<sup>th</sup> with delivery to be on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Look for "special instructions" on the flyer to be sent home soon.

Our Country of the month is China. Chinese New Year will be celebrated on January 31. It is the Year of the horse.

The first American Mardi Gras was celebrated near modern-day New Orleans on March 3, 1699. It wasn't until the mid-1800's that official parade organizations started to form with the Mystick Krewe of Comus in 1856 and the Krewe of Rex in 1872. In order to organize and stage the enormous Mardi Gras carnival every year, many New Orleans families have belonged for generations to krewes, groups that create elaborate costumes and floats for the many Mardi Gras parades in the two weeks leading up to "Shrove Tuesday or Fat Tuesday" on March 4<sup>th</sup>. The tradition is still carried on in New Orleans today with many other krewes represented on floats in a myriad of parades. The official colors of Mardi Gras are purple, green and gold (representing justice, faith and power).

The Frenchtown staff prides itself on the warm, nurturing environment that we are able to provide to the children as they grow and learn. The focus of our work is the academic growth of your child; however, we also work on social and emotional issues. Like any school, Frenchtown

does have discipline issues. As children grow, they need to learn the rules which govern our community and society. Children learn that they are to follow these rules. If they choose not to follow the rules, there are consequences for their inappropriate choices. Most of our classroom issues are minor in nature; children make mistakes, they learn from their mistakes, and they go on. **We do not notify parents of every little discipline issue and will, of course, notify you and ask for your assistance if a child is having an undue number of problems, or if his/her actions are hurtful to another.** It is extremely rare for me to become involved in a classroom discipline issue. Supporting our classroom teacher with these issues are Mrs. Bree Prezioso and Mrs. Stacy Atkins -School Psychologists, Mr. David Weitzman and Mrs. Ellen Lacko-School Social Workers, and Mr. Ethan Ruber-Behavior Specialist. For our SRP program, Leigh Westberg-Social Worker, Darsi Baer-Psychologist and our BCBA's help support our student's needs. My primary goal is to sort out what happened, and to help the child understand his/her role in the problem and the solution.

Children generally start their explanations of a situation by stating what someone else did. I try to help them examine what they did, and get them to understand that if they had done something differently, they might not have become involved in a problem. We ask our students to complete a think sheet appropriate to their age.

You can use this list of skills to teach your child how to resolve normal conflict:

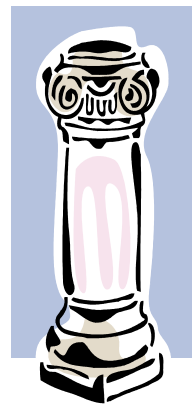
1. **Talk** about problems before they become conflicts. When little things are ignored, they can grow into major disputes.
2. **Listen** Children can never see another person's point of view if they do not listen to what that person has to say.
3. **Use "I-Messages"** Help your child(ren) learn to talk about his/her feelings, not the other person's mistakes. Instead of, "YOU always leave my bike out in the rain," your child could say, "I feel angry when you leave my bike out in the rain because it may rust. If you are going to use it, please put it away."

4.



4. **Be willing to cooperate and compromise** If two people have a conflict, they both have a problem. To solve it, they will probably both have to make some changes.
5. **Talk to adults** Sometimes children think they have to solve all their problems themselves. A trusted adult – parent, teacher or counselor – can sometimes help children see solutions they had not thought of themselves.
6. **Practice** Just like learning to ride a bike or read a book, learning to solve conflicts peacefully takes practice. Help your child role-play different ways to resolve conflicts.

Please refer to our PBIS consequence list on our website and in your child's wolf folder.



Character Corner—

Mr. Weitzman,

Social Worker

T.R.A.C.K.S

*Safety*

We will focus on "safety" for the month of February. Please wear pink on February 27<sup>th</sup> to culminate our month of study.

1. **Always check first** with a parent, guardian, or trusted adult before going anywhere, accepting anything, or getting into a car with anyone.
2. **Do not go out alone. Always take a friend** with when going places or playing outside.
3. **Tell a parent, guardian, or trusted adult** if you feel sad, scared, or confused.
4. There will **always be someone to help you**, and you have the right to be safe.



## Kindergarten News...

**Mrs. Alves, Mrs. Bershefsky,  
Mrs. Buswell, Mrs. Capone/  
Miss Bennette, Mrs. Crawford**



January's chill is in the air! Our Kindergarteners have been working very hard learning how to retell stories in reading,

gathering ideas for writing in writer's workshop, measuring and combining numbers in math, learning about our weather, magnets and shelters in science and learning about Martin Luther King Jr. in social studies.

In reading this month, the children have been exposed to a variety of stories to practice our comprehension strategy of retelling. When listening to the story, the children have been looking for the characters, the setting and the problem. After they listened to the stories, they did a beautiful job of recalling the book by using the pictures to help retell what happened in the story. The children are also doing a wonderful job of tapping out words and using the picture clues to help them figure out unknown words. These two strategies are extremely important in building a reader. As the year is continues, so is our learning. We also need the children to practice reading their little books every night and to practice all of the kindergarten words that have been sent home. This is imperative for academic growth this year. The more we work together, the better reader your child will become!

In Foundations, the children are working on writing upper case letters, tapping out the sounds of cvc words and then blending those sounds into words. When reading at home, have your child practice tapping words out in their little books.

In writing, the children are gathering ideas to create their own little story. They are doing a beautiful job of tapping out the sounds of their words and drawing pictures to match their words. They did a beautiful job of drawing pictures and writing sentences with capital letters at the beginning and a period or end mark at the end. We cannot wait to see what how our little author's progress over the next few months.

In science, the children have been learning about the weather, homes, animal shelter, and exploring magnets. The students were so excited to learn about the different animal homes like a burrow and even how some animals that live on land, build nests and that nests are not always found in trees! We have been graphing the weather every morning and recording our information on a bar graph. The children have learned about how the weather changes with the different seasons. In our magnetic unit the children learned about which items are magnetic (a paperclip) and which items are not (eraser). They had such a wonderful time exploring and completing science experiments in the classroom!

Our little mathematicians have been working very hard! They are doing a beautiful job of measuring, counting and combining numbers together. The children have learned to count and combine numbers to 15 and they have even learned how to add one and take away one. At home, you can practice addition skills by playing double compare with regular cards at your house.

Finally, we culminate our month in social studies with learning about Martin Luther King Jr. The children listened to stories and watched a short movie about Martin Luther King Jr. and how life was when children were segregated because the color of their skin.

We are so happy that we have had a joyous January and we cannot wait for more learning growth in the upcoming months.

## Grade One News...

**Mrs. Gambardella, Mrs. Mordecai,  
Mrs. Rodrigues, Mrs. Tuohy,  
Ms. Grunow**

Happy New Year from First Grade! We came back to school and started 2014 eager to continue our learning! January is a great time to reflect on our learning so far in first grade and continue to strengthen our reading, writing and math skills! Believe it or not, we are nearing the second half of first grade as we start to gear up and prepare with second grade in mind! Wow! We kicked our reader's workshop off in 2014 with "visualizing" as our meta cognitive strategy. We listened to poems and made movies and pictures in

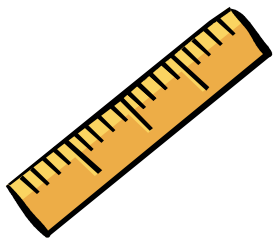


our head. We began our new science unit, "Investigating Water." This was a huge success as we identified properties and characteristics of water. Students were fascinated by water that they see and use everyday but still learned so much! Our new math unit brought sorting and identifying characteristics of shapes, buttons and other objects. We practiced counting as high as we can and became familiar with the hundred chart. Many light bulbs went on as we noticed patterns on the 100 chart! We also learned how to take a survey and represent our data! As you can see, we have started 2014 with some wonderful learning and continue to make strides and gains in first grade!

### Grade Two News ...

**Mrs. Alfano, Mrs. Angon, Ms. Hull,  
Mrs. Pereira, Ms. Sansone,  
Mrs. Buswell, Mrs. Shinnick**

Happy New Year! We hope you had a wonderful break! January was an interesting month! We had a lot of days off with all that snow! In reading we are continuing to work on the strategy of WONDERING. The students practiced this skill by asking questions before, during and after reading a selection. The students also learned to determine whether the answers to their questions can be found in the text, or whether they will need to infer the answer from the text, their background knowledge (schema) or an outside source. We practiced this skill with both fiction and non-fiction books. In social studies we have focused on getting to know your family and the contributions ancestors make to our families. This unit provided an opportunity to explore how familiar people (parents, grandparents and other ancestors) make a difference in our lives. This helped to develop a sense of history and an understanding of what life was like long ago. Our end of unit project was the family tree. We can't wait to see how these projects turn out!



In math we began a unit called "Measuring Length and Time," We began using a variety of nonstandard units and indirect comparison to measure and compare the lengths of

different items. The students discussed what happened when they measure with different units and then they shared strategies for measuring accurately. The students also developed strategies

for finding the difference between measurements. We then moved onto standard measurement tools. They used rulers to measure familiar objects and various lengths, and located benchmarks on their bodies that they can use to estimate lengths. Students were introduced to centimeter and meters and found objects that were about equal to these units. Students were introduced to timelines as a way to represent time. Don't forget to practice math facts nightly!

### Grade Three News...

**Mrs. Atwood, Mrs. Cretella,  
Mrs. Makoski, Mrs. Martins,  
Mrs. Carley**



We can't believe that it is February already! In reading, third grade continues to focus on close reading in fiction and non-fiction texts. Students continue to practice responding to questions with evidence from the passages they read.

The children are also increasing their stamina during independent reading.

Students are focusing on opinion writing during language arts time. They form their own opinions. Then, they write an essay which includes their main idea, supporting evidence, and a conclusion. Students are always eager to share their points of view!

In math, we are moving from the study of perimeter, area, and geometric shapes into the study of multiplication. This is a very exciting unit! Students will develop strategies for solving multiplication problems, such as repeated addition, skip counting, drawing circles and stars, making arrays, etc. Continue to remind your children to practice their addition, subtraction, and multiplication facts. This will help students master their multiplication products up to 100.

In science, some classes have completed their research on birds and actually built a bird feeder! It is amazing as to how much research and planning goes into building a bird feeder that will attract local birds and keep unwanted animals away. Other classes are finishing their study on bones, joints, and muscles. Our human body is such an amazing machine!

In social studies, we have moved into our study of Native Americans. Students will learn how



Native Americans used natural resources from their environment to serve their basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter.



As always, please remind your child to dress appropriately during the winter. Remember the thick winter coats, scarves, gloves, and hats. We also appreciate any tissues, since we tend to run low during the winter.

## **Grade Four News...**

**Mrs. Weinstein, Mr. Fiore,  
Mrs. Gaspar, Ms. St. John,  
Mrs. Wolfe**

We are well underway with the new year. With the colder temperatures upon us, we are enjoying many indoor recess days. Now that the cold and flu season is here, please continue to encourage your children to wash their hands often, have plenty of liquids to drink and cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing. This will help to prevent the spread of germs. Your continued donations of tissues and hand sanitizer/wipes are always greatly appreciated.

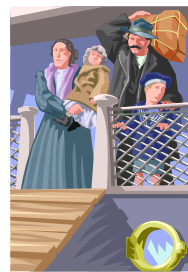
In reading, our Making Meaning focus has been on making inferences. During this unit, students are exploring differences between explicit and implicit meanings in texts read. Students are using visualization to create mental images from both narrative texts and poetry in order to make inferences to better understand texts. Students are also continuing to use questioning and understanding text structure to further make sense of narrative texts read. Students continue to identify specific evidence from texts read in order to support their thinking. During your child's nightly reading, ask what inferences they have made. Such questions will further enhance the home-school connection.

We have completed Unit 5, *Landmarks and Large Numbers*, in math. Students studied place value by adding and subtracting multiples of 10 and 100 to numbers in the thousands. Our current investigation is Unit 6, *Fraction Cards and Decimal Squares*. In this unit, students are naming and writing fractions, exploring mixed numbers, identifying and writing equivalent fractions, and ordering fractions. Students will develop ideas

about fractions by identifying fractions of an area ( $\frac{3}{4}$  of a rectangle), fractions of a group of objects ( $\frac{3}{4}$  of 24), and decimal fractions (.75). They will compare fractions of different wholes ( $\frac{1}{3}$  of a  $6 \times 4$  rectangle and  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a  $10 \times 10$  rectangle), and combine fractions using models and reasoning. Students will use  $10 \times 10$  grids to represent, compare, and combine common decimals in the tenths and hundredths. Your continued support at home to encourage the daily practice of math facts is so important for your child throughout the year. Multiplication and division facts practice will help your child strengthen his or her skills and lead to stronger mastery, which is needed in so many areas of the math that we study.

In science, students are learning about atoms and how they relate to electricity and eventually magnetism. Students have learned about the basic structure of atoms, as well as the specific properties they possess. This foundation paved the way for students to learn about how electricity works and how it is an important facet of our daily lives. They also explored what materials are effective conductors by doing hands-on experiments testing out their hypotheses. Using their prior knowledge about atoms, students learned how current electricity works and how electric energy is created.

Now that we have completed our study of early Connecticut history, we have started our journey through the regions of the United States. Our journey begins in the northeast, which includes our home state. Students are getting a better understanding of how the natural resources of the coastal states helped mold the region into a trade center. In addition, while learning about how the influx of a large number of immigrants impacted the cities, children have made connections to the book, *Italian Americans*, which we read earlier in the year in our reading classes. Students are comparing and contrasting the qualities of life in an urban vs. rural environment.



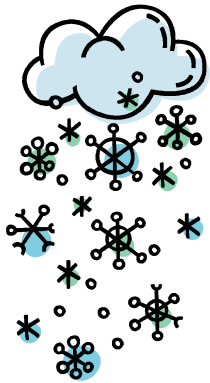
Students are working diligently to further develop their persuasive and argumentative writing pieces by accessing the Connecticut CBAS Writing website. Students are using non-fiction texts to evaluate differing positions on a topic in order to support which opinion they more fully support. Students are becoming more adept at reviewing comments provided on their pieces and using

specific feedback to revise and enhance their writing. We are eager to begin our Endangered Species project, which is our research-based learning project.

Students are working hard and we are proud of their efforts. As always, your continued support at home helps foster our home-school connection.

## **Grade Five News...**

**Mrs. Carley, Mrs. Russo,  
Mrs. Ferraro, Mrs. Windsor,  
Mrs. Demshak**



January was a very snowy month with two snow days, and early release and a delay. Add that to the two snow days we enjoyed in December and now our last day of school is scheduled for Wednesday, June 18<sup>th</sup>. Snow days will continue to be added to the end of the school year until we reach 7 and then we will need to start taking away from February

vacation. February vacation is scheduled for February 17<sup>th</sup>-February 21<sup>st</sup>. Many of you are asking about the upcoming testing in March. Science CMT will be held on Tuesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>. We start SBAC testing the following day, March 19<sup>th</sup> and the testing window will extend until Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup>.

In science, we are learning about energy and sound. Students are studying how sound is a form of energy and explaining how sound is produced. They need to explain what is needed for sound to be heard and through what medium it travels the fastest or slowest and why. Your child is also exploring volume and pitch and realizing through experimentation how to alter pitch by changing tension or length. Mark your calendars, we are planning a special Invention Convention event on the afternoon of Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup>. Look for details coming your way soon!

Tim says a figure is a rhombus, Joss says the same figure is a parallelogram, but Caitlin says it is a square. Who is right? Could they all be right? How is that possible?! Your child is learning about polygons like quadrilaterals and exploring angles in math this month. We are also working with perimeter and area of rectangles. Maybe your child can plan out your garden this year. Ask them how

to find the perimeter and area of the rectangle you want to be your garden. Then ask them to draw a different rectangle with the same perimeter but different area or the same area but different perimeter. Find out which configuration will get you the most vegetables this year.

In social studies, we are studying United States colonization. Students are exploring New England, Middle, and Southern Colonies. They learn about how they were settled, the ways that the colonists depended on, adapted to, and altered the physical environment to survive. They gain an understanding of the fact that where people live determine to an extent how they live and how political, religious, and geographic differences created specific regional identities in each colony.

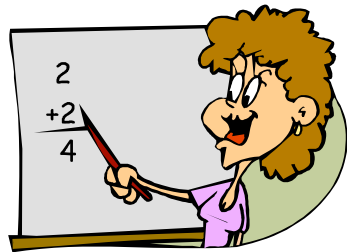
We encourage your child to read to you and have you read aloud as often as possible to improve fluency. Reading aloud with your child gives many opportunities to advance literacy. It builds understanding of concepts of print such as punctuation, enhances vocabulary, increases word recognition, expands understanding of writing progress and story structures, and demonstrates the value of reading. During the read aloud it is important to read expressively, talk about how the story's characters would talk, vary the pitch of your voice, and even include sound effects. Encourage questioning about why the characters are doing what they are doing, what is the problem and how are they handling it, why the author wrote the way he/she did, or why the setting is so important. Definitely ask: "What makes you think that?" and encourage them to prove what they are stating with supporting text. Talk about how the story or characters remind them of situations or people in their own life. Sitting with your child reading aloud together may become your favorite part of the day.

## **Math News...**

**Mrs. Gidwani, Mrs. Cannon-Axtell,  
Mrs. Sansone**

Grade K: Students have been making arrangements with 6 square inch tiles. They are learning how to describe their arrangements using numbers. They also have been playing the game "Toss the Chips" with 2 color counters to explore the different number combinations that make six. Ask your child about the different ways you can make six using two or three numbers.

Grade 1: Students have been learning how to take surveys and how to represent their data in an organized way using labels, numbers and pictures. They also have been doing a great job at interpreting data in different representations. They



are beginning their measuring unit. They will measure a variety of objects with cubes, tiles and paper clips. Continue to practice addition and subtraction facts up to

ten as part of their bear math fact practice. Students will be expected to know these facts fluently by the end of the school year. Go to [www.mathfactcafe.com](http://www.mathfactcafe.com) to find on-line practice and printable flash cards.

Grade 2: Students should be practicing their subtraction facts weekly. Students are expected to know their addition and subtraction facts by the end of the school year. The focus in grade 3 will be multiplication and division facts. Go to [www.mathfactcafe.com](http://www.mathfactcafe.com) to find on-line practice and printable flashcards.

Grades 3 – 5: Getting ready for SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium)  
Students in grades 3-5 will begin preparing for the new SBAC testing that will take place this year. Students are learning new math skills daily that are part of the Common Core Math Standards. These skills are what the new test questions consist of. This new test will also be taken on the computer. Throughout the month of February and March, students will be visiting the computer lab to practice questions that are very similar to the ones they will see on this assessment. Teachers will also be modeling these questions in the classroom on their smart boards. Below is a list of websites you can visit to obtain more information regarding The Common Core State Standards and the SBAC test.  
[www.CommonCoreWorks.org](http://www.CommonCoreWorks.org)  
[www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)  
[www.smarterbalanced.org](http://www.smarterbalanced.org)



## From the Nurse's Office... Mrs. McCullough



February is heart disease awareness month. We all know that to have a healthy heart, we need to be at a healthy weight, so this month I thought we could talk about BMI. What is it? Why is it important? How do we measure it?

BMI or Body Mass Index is a measure of your weight in relation to your height. It is a good indicator of body fat and an easy to perform method of screening for weight categories that may lead to health problems.

For children and teens, BMI is age and sex specific and is called BMI-for-age. Age and sex are considered for children because the amount of body fat changes with age and amount of body fat differs between boys and girls.

So how do we measure for BMI?

The mathematical formula is:  
 $BMI = [\text{weight in pounds}/\text{height in inches}]^2 \times 703$   
This number would then get charted on a CDC growth chart that gives a percentile.



Weight Status Category	Percentile Range
Underweight	Less than the 5th percentile
Healthy weight	5th percentile to less than the 85th percentile
Overweight	85th to less than the 95th percentile
Obese	Equal to or greater than the 95th percentile

You can get a growth chart at [www.cdc.gov/growthcharts](http://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts)  
 BMI can overestimate body fat in certain cases. For example, very muscular people can be overestimated while the elderly or people who have lost muscle mass can be underestimated. An actual diagnosis of overweight or obesity should be made by your primary care provider.

Here is a sobering statistic: In 1976-1980 5.7% of children 6-17 were overweight. In 2005-2008 16.5 % of children 6-17 are overweight. This number has more than tripled!

So keep an eye on your children's BMI and keep them healthy and free from coronary heart disease, high blood pressure and Type II Diabetes.

## From the Library...

### **Mrs. Bilangi**

My fifth grade book club listens to audio books in the library during lunchtime. The advantages of audio books are numerous. The obvious benefit is an improvement in listening skills. Children today are bombarded with visual stimuli; listening to a story and letting their imagination create the images in their mind is a rare treat for some students. Selecting popular books encourages close listening and allows a weaker reader to enjoy the same literature that friends may be discussing or one that is soon to be released as a movie. Another value for audio books is exposure to proper grammar, elocution and new vocabulary words. We often stop to look up unfamiliar or "cool" book club words. Audio books may just spark the interest of a reluctant reader who will go on to read a sequel, or more titles by the same author. As a parent, if you find the right book, another advantage is peace and quiet on a long car

ride. Trumbull Library has a large selection of audio books available.

### Here are the 2013 Reflection winners:

Visual Arts, Primary: 1. Jack Geraghty  
 2. Anna Geraghty  
 3. Aidan Brunt

Visual Arts, Intermediate: 1. Ella Jane Cook  
 2. Olivia Ray  
 3. Ashley Russell

Literature, Primary: 1. Hannah Daniel  
 2. Ashley Carley  
 3. Yashas Kulkarni

Literature, Intermediate: 1. Brian Essing  
 2. Ryan Frate  
 3. Caitlin Carley

Photography, Primary: 1. Aidan Brunt  
 2. No winner  
 3. No winner

Photography, Intermediate: 1. Joey Sabato  
 2. Matthew DiJoseph  
 3. No winner

Music, Primary: 1. Henry LaVoie  
 2. No winner  
 3. No winner

## Gifts to School



5 Magnetic USA Maps

1 Magnetic World Map

4 Flower Baskets





**Grade 5 TAG Hunger Action**  
**Raffle Winners**



Benefits Connecticut Food Bank

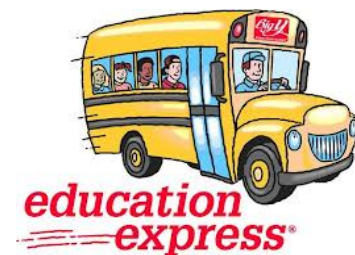
Raffle run by:  
**Hannah Bershefsky and Joelle  
Nutter**

1. Overnight stay at the Stamford Marriott and golf gift basket with computer bag. Winner: Ryan Carroll
2. Pizza Lunch for you and 3 friends with Miss Hull  
Winner: Olivia Rocco
3. Foccacia Gift Certificate  
Winner: Jenna Bershefsky
4. Melissa and Doug Gift Basket  
Winner: Brianna Buda
5. WWE Goody Bag with Triple A Autograph  
Winner: Domenic Murolo
6. Melissa and Doug Gift Basket  
Winner: Medha Bhatnagar
7. Complimentary Spa Facial  
Winner: Vickie Pagliarini
8. Melissa and Doug Plush Cocker Spaniel  
Winner: Shannon Wilk
9. Bag with Foot Therapy Kit  
Winner: Mara Room 128
10. Micro Fleece Wolf Throw Blanket  
Winner: Ivy Graham
11. WWE Goody Bag with John Cela Autograph  
Winner: Brian Essing



Thank you to all Frenchtown families that registered their Stop and Shop cards. 269 families have signed up. 2013-14 Program YTD total earned: \$2,955.91

**I just purchased a new camera for \$900 to replace our 12 year old camera so we can continue to have a Technology Club, video our chorus products and fifth grade graduation and offer ASE movie classes. It's not too late to register your card!**



***Big Y point program has ended. Frenchtown as earned 129,000 points. We ordered a Multimedia Player and a Wood Scraper and Shaker. Thank you for signing up!***