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AE/MS Holiday Shoppe Set For December 9

By Jane Slayton
AE/MS Principal

Holiday Shoppe is a favorite tradition that students look forward to every December. It is a one-day event when students are able to purchase gifts at very affordable prices for their families.

The Holiday Shoppe is on Friday, December 9, in the music room at AE/MS. Each class is assigned a half-hour slot in which to do its shopping.

Audrey Pellegrino has coordinated the shop for years and years, and although she recently retired, she will return to run the Holiday Shoppe again.

The AE/MS PTO offers huge help and support with Holiday Shoppe, and they are already making plans to do even more this year. The local ladies from the New Hampshire Circle of Home and Family also provide great

assistance, taking shifts during the day, contributing items, and decorating bags. Hundreds of community members donate items every year. People bring in trinkets, jewelry, hand-knit mittens and hats, etc. Many people think of AE/MS when out shopping.

Please consider sending in new or almost new items. If you are shopping and see a bargain and are able to, please pick one up for the Holiday Shoppe. Last year there were over 2,000 items purchased by the children.

The children absolutely love the opportunity to surprise their family members with gifts they shopped for, selected, and wrapped all by themselves. One of my favorite afternoons is watching students board the school bus with their carefully wrapped and concealed treasures. They couldn't be more proud!



New Program At AE/MS Builds Reading Skills

By Julie Gaudette
AE/MS

Here at AE/MS we are in the second year of implementing Wilson Foundations, a program designed to reduce the number of at-risk readers by providing all students with solid, systematic instruction.

Foundations is implemented in grades kindergarten through three for 30 minutes per day. It teaches the critical skills for both reading and spelling. Even students who are early readers can later develop struggles with spelling if they are not explicitly taught the basics behind reading.

Those basics are what educators call phonemic awareness and phonological knowledge. Simply stated, it means understanding sounds and being able to use them. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate sounds (a.k.a. phonemes). A few examples of this are knowing how many sounds are in a word like "dog," which has three sounds; where a sound occurs in a word (the beginning sound in "dog" is "d"); or even naming another word that begins with the same sound, such as "dog" and "dime."

These skills are strong indicators of future reading success. It is estimated that at least 80% of poor readers struggle with phonemic awareness. By teaching these skills to all students at an early age and in a systematic way, we can ensure that the basic foundational skills are intact.

Foundations also incorporates a monitoring and intervention piece. If a teacher notices a student struggling with the

skills, a "double dose" is provided to that child. Double-dosing occurs in addition to the whole class lesson. Assessments given to the students provide teachers with meaningful data and help us determine individual progress.

At home or in the car, you can help! There are some simple activities that can be done to boost phonemic awareness. A good, old-fashioned game of "I Spy" can develop the phonemic skill of Onsets and Rhymes. You tell your child, "I spy something that rhymes with 'tan,' but begins with 'v.'" The hope is your child will see and say "van." Playing "I Spy" with just a beginning sound can be fun, too: "I see something that begins with the sound 'b.'" These quick but fun games work on the skills that we know build strong readers.

Please visit our Web site at Andover.K12.nh.us and click on "Phonemic Awareness" to download or print some other ideas. There are some advanced activities for older students and some basic games for little ones. Even preschool-aged children can do these activities!

In closing, I'd like to share that at a recent staff meeting teachers in grades kindergarten through three met to review the first month of instruction for the 2011-2012 school year. Teachers who are beginning the second year of implementation were very positive about the program, making statements such as, "The results speak for themselves," and "I've noticed a positive impact on spelling." When walking through the classrooms during Foundations time, the excitement is contagious!



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