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giving and have picked up the pace since then. Coach Jim Tucker and the AE/MS fans are looking forward to another great season for the Andover Eagles.

It was winter concert season! The first holiday program was on December 6 and included students in kindergarten through fifth grades performing with their classes. The second holiday program on December 13 was more of an instrumental evening for the bands and individual musicians. Community members enjoyed both winter concerts!

It's always fun to see the kindergarten students take the stage at the holiday concert for their first time! This year was particularly cute, as the kindergarten students wore glowing Rudolph noses. We have a morning and an afternoon kindergarten class, and they don't rehearse together, so when they walk onto the stage for the first time, anything can happen! Often they'll scan the crowd, maybe sing, and when family members are noticed in the audience, there is lots of waving and excitement.

The Holiday Shoppe will be held on Friday, December 14. This is the much-anticipated shopping day for all students. It gives the students an opportunity to surprise their immediate family members with gifts they pick out all by themselves. Due to the generosity of the community, we are able to have a bountiful Holiday Shoppe every December. AE/MS School Nurse Christine Frost will be coordinating the special day again this year.

Congratulations to the large number of Andover students who were named to the Honor Roll at MVHS for the first quarter! We continue to follow their progress after AE/MS and are justifiably proud of their accomplishments.

We are always looking for musical instruments. If you have an instrument in good shape that you no longer use, please consider donating it to the school. Contact Paul Hubert, AE/MS music teacher, if interested. Playing an instrument can be unaffordable for some families, so we try to have instruments available for students.

We are already looking ahead to next year. Our enrollment is on the rise, and we will need an additional teacher

for fourth grade.

At the same time, we are again exploring the option of full-day kindergarten. Four years ago we brought it to the attention of the Andover School Board. Now, with the pressing expectations of the Common Core State Standards, we have again brought forth the need.

The Common Core State Standards have been designed for a full-day kindergarten. One thousand eighty hours of instruction are needed to address the standards, which is difficult to squeeze into our present 540-hour half-day program.

Certainly a kindergarten day will never be all work and no play, as it is always important to remember that kindergarten students are only five years old. Our present three-hour day already limits what we are able to teach, and the Common Core State Standards will only increase our concerns. More and more school districts in New Hampshire have implemented full-day kindergarten.

Ski Program

The Town of Andover is once again generously making the ski program available and affordable to Andover families. The first ski day is Friday, January 4. Students have the opportunity to alpine ski or snowboard at Ragged Mountain. Any questions regarding this program should be directed to Ellie George.

Participating students will be dismissed early on Friday afternoons to participate in the Town program. Those students who do not ski on Friday afternoons will have the opportunity to skate at the Proctor Academy rink. Skating also starts on Friday, January 4. Students must have skates and helmets. We have acquired a pretty good collection of skates and helmets at school, so please feel free to borrow.

As I write this during the Thanksgiving break, I can't help but think about all we have to be thankful for in our school community. I am grateful to be part of such a caring, supportive, and generous school community. We are fortunate to have excellent, dedicated, and caring professionals who work with enthusiastic students.

Learning at AE/MS is thriving! I appreciate the town of Andover and all it does for our children.



Rehearsals have started at AE/MS for *Alice in Wonderland*. The play will open in late March. Here, Jacqui Morris, Alexis Cate, Cope Makechnie, Vienna Marcus, and Tori Braley freeze in character for a picture.

Photo: Jane Slayton

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