

## Global Awareness Day Brings the World to AE/MS

Event caps an on-going effort

By Jane Slayton, AE/MS principal

This year, AE/MS has made more of an effort to bring the world into our classrooms. Global connections are made within the curriculum wherever and whenever possible. The world is more connected and interdependent than ever. It is critical that students have the ability to understand issues globally, learn from each other, work collaboratively with people from diverse cultures, and understand the cultures of other nations.

We were able to make a wonderful connection between our school and the Concord School District. Anna-Marie DiPasquale works closely with new American students – from Nepal, Bhutan, the Congo, Afghanistan, Somalia, Russia, Iraq, Pakistan, Egypt, Jamaica, and 15 other countries. Once the connection was made, e-mails and phone conversations went back and forth as we excitedly planned a day for Anna-Marie's students to spend a day at AE/MS. This would be Global Awareness Day.

Students and staff members did a lot of work to increase the global competence of our school community. First grade classes did an extraordinary amount of studying and projects. Everyone – students and adults – contributed.

First and sixth grade students partnered up and worked collaboratively on PowerPoint presentations to share, featuring many different countries. The facts that the first graders learned were absolutely amazing. The students shared their work at Global Awareness Day.

Three eighth grade boys took on a significant project to share with the school. Jim Lloyd, Brandon Babbitt, and Brandon Richardson read *If the World Were a Village* by David Smith, then took the information and shared it in a presentation that would make it easy for all to understand. They computed data and took many photos. The presentation converts the more than seven billion people who live on earth into a village of 100 people. From there, it pictorially shows who we are, where we live, how fast we are growing, what languages we speak, what religions we practice, and more. This was shared at Global Awareness Day.

Global Awareness Day began with a welcome breakfast hosted by the eighth grade class for our Concord friends – Anna-Marie, Ms. Eno, Mr. Timsina, Claufy, Halima, Deepesh, Amelia, Belee, Sabita, Clinton, Chandra, Tiba, Azra, Rebecca, and Sapana. After breakfast, there were class discussions in all the classrooms as the Concord students visited each grade level.

Grades one through five read *The Crayon Box* as a discussion focus, which is a simple story creating harmony through diversity. Grades six

through eight talked about stereotyping, immigration, and language – spoken and written. The middle school students from AE/MS and Concord enjoyed lunch and recess together, and then the whole school came together for an afternoon assembly. AE/MS students took turns telling the Concord students what they had learned from them today and what they hoped to learn more about in the future. The Concord students shared a video and then answered questions. Students and staff were sad to see the day end.

The class discussions were extremely interesting, yet hard to understand for our students. One of the Concord students told our middle school students that when he was two years old, his family, along with many other Bhutanese from mostly one ethnic group, were forced out of Bhutan by the king. His family fled to Nepal, where they settled in a refugee camp. After many failed attempts to work out a solution to return the Bhutanese home, several hundred were resettled in New Hampshire.

Anna-Marie asked our students to imagine President Obama kicking people out of the United States because they ate different foods, dressed differently, and spoke a different dialect. Our students were shocked.

Our students were also amazed that the Concord students spoke many languages fluently. Seven or eight different languages, including English – wow!

AE/MS students had an opportunity after the assembly to do a written reflection and share their thoughts on Global Awareness Day. I will share a few thoughts collected from the older students:

"People will create stereotypes if they are ignorant of other races and cultures. When people start to learn these things, the stereotypes will diminish."

"I liked Global Awareness Day. It opens our eyes, and since we live in a predominantly white community, we need more cultural experience."

"Maybe we could play games together next time – like kickball or something. Or they could teach us how to play their favorite games from their countries."

"We need more time to get to know each other and play games."

"I think it's important, because kids need to learn that stereotyping is bad and that the world is a big place, but at the same time it is small."

"I think that every one of the new Americans is brave by coming to the US. We now know how lucky we are to live here."

As we plan for next year, we will make a school-wide effort to broaden the horizons of our students to the world around them. Our new friends from Concord will continue to be included in our school community, and other outreach efforts will be explored.



**A Morning with Muffins for Mom:** Mrs. Witt's morning kindergarten class at AE/MS is pictured singing a Mother's Day song for Mom. The moms were invited to school to share muffins, and their child gave them special gifts they made including a flower they started growing in April. The children performed a song and read a Mother's Day book. The fifth grade students taught the kindergarten about measuring and fractions, then helped them make the muffins. The kindergarten class also took a trip to the Post Office to mail Mother's Day cards and get a tour.

Photo and caption: Laura Witt



**On May 8, AE/MS staff and families participated in National Bike to School Day.** Organized groups met on the Rail Trail at Potter Place Train Station, the East Andover Fire Station, and Plains Road. The Andover Police and AE/MS teachers helped cyclists cross the roads safely. It was an energizing and fun way to start the day. Check out all the photos at [AEMSeagles.org](http://AEMSeagles.org).

Photo: Cathy Mayne

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