

Friday, March 21, 2008

Dear Parents:

We have finished our three-week unit: **Konnichiwa: Hello Japan**. Your child should have brought home his/her Japan Journal. Please take the time to have your child "read" some of the things he/she wrote. Remember, with emergent writers, the writing may look like scribbles or letter-like forms, but your child has attached meaning to it and should be able to "read" it to you.

We read a wonderful book about Japan this week. It was a wonderful folktale, Dorobo, The Dangerous. The Big and Little Book was A Bunny Tale. We did another Barbara Saul book The Easter Surprise. The Phonics Library Book was Zig Pig and Dan Cat. Our Alphafried this week was Edna Elephant who taught the children about the short e sound as in pet.

Open House is on Wednesday, March 26. There will be Book Fair in the library starting at 6:30 PM where you can purchase books if you wish. Classrooms will be open from 7:00 – 8:00 PM. I hope to see you there. This is a wonderful time to go and look at the first grade classrooms. I expect to see lots of 4 year olds inspecting my class too!

We have watched two excellent videos about Japan. The first was Big Bird In Japan. It was the story of Big Bird from Sesame Street and his companion Barkley, the dog, who get lost and have many adventures and learn much about Japan. The second was an enchanting story set in post-war Japan called My Neighbor Totoro. You might consider renting these from your local video store and watching them together as a family.

Here are some statistics you might find interesting: If daily reading begins in infancy, by the time the child is 5 years old, he or she has been fed roughly 900 hours of brain food! Reduce that experience to just 30 minutes a week and the child's hungry mind loses 770 hours of nursery rhymes, fairy tales and stories.

Therefore... 30 minutes **daily** = 900 hours; BUT only 30 minutes **weekly** = 130 hours

A kindergarten student who has not been read aloud to could enter school with less than 60 hours of literacy nutrition. No teacher, no matter how talented, can make up for those lost hours of mental nourishment.

Please remember that there IS school next week. We will be starting a unit about Transportation. Spring Break will be from April 14 – 18.