

Summer, 2009

Dear Parents,

It seems hard to believe, but a new school year will be upon us sooner than you think, so I want to take this opportunity to welcome back all returning students as well as the students who will be new to the Peaks' Upper Elementary family. Each year brings new opportunities; some that are planned and some that are . . . well, unplanned. Teachable moments happen, so sometimes the daily plan must give way to current events! For instance, students react to the first snow of the season as if they have never seen snow before! It happens every year. So, if there's a history lesson going on, guess what's going to be more important at that particular moment! Who's to say that learning how snowflakes form is not equally important! I have learned to never fight Mother Nature – she always wins! Besides, what could possibly be happening in the classroom that can equal the magic of our planet doing her thing!

When it's not snowing and if the hawk in the field outside our window is not swooping down on his dinner, we will follow a plan, of sorts. I say "of sorts," not because there is no plan, but because the plan could very well be different for every child. The beauty of an individualized learning program is that there is always something to learn and always something to teach. Each of us in the classroom is a teacher and a student. The students do much of the teaching in our class. Over the years, I have found the old adage to be true: You never really understand something until you've taught it to someone else. Kids should have the opportunity to do that on a regular basis.

This year, we will explore the Middle Ages during the first half of the year and early American history during the second half. The children voted, and that's what they want to do. Language Arts and Math instruction will continue to be individualized – based on what each child needs. The very best prep for math is to have the multiplication tables firmly in place before school starts. Instant recall of these facts is critical to success with all higher math! Summer is the perfect time for this, so remind your student to get a wiggle on! We will explore literary genre in depth to gain awareness of the many types of literature available for each of us to enjoy. Hopefully, your 5th and 6th graders are working on their summer reading assignments! The Paragraph-A-Week homework program will continue, as will Study Island weekly assignments. Remember, Study Island is available all summer for currently enrolled students. Developing and refining research skills will play a big part in each student's learning this year.

Helping each child fulfill his or her potential is my most important job. I welcome and encourage your involvement in your child's education and I look forward to working with each of you to help your child be all that he can be!

Tamara and I are looking forward to an exciting year full of learning and snowstorms!

Most sincerely,

Anne