

**Russian Hill School**  
**Parent Newsletter**  
**January/February 2007**

February is a wonderful time to visit Russian Hill School, which is in the midst of a colorful display of Valentine's Day projects. First, upon arrival or departure from the school, do take note of the adorable love bugs that are hanging in the windows for all to delight! Teacher Rachel created this love bug project, a 4-step process involving, painting of the bug, assembly, a heart cutout (for the wings), and patterning. Additionally, for Valentine's Day, the backyard is adorned with vibrantly decorated pumpkins that were created using a sponge print technique or jewels. These pumpkins appear luminescent and add a jubilant feel to the backyard.

**Completed Projects**

For Valentine's Day, in addition to the love bugs, the children were immersed in their "post office" in the backroom. This is an annual tradition at RHS where a post office is assembled and each child has an opportunity to make a weekly valentine for a school friend. This format allows the children to make a valentine of their own design and write both their name and the addressee on the envelope, complete with a stamp they "purchased". The child then "mails" the valentine and by the end of the week all children will receive at least one. On the topic of Valentine's Day, the children are also working on multi-colored paper chains. This project is a community effort in that each child completes 5 different chain links, which are used to assemble a larger chain. The creation of the chain links involves pre-math and concentration skills.

**Current Projects**

The multi-cultural unit study is currently focused on the North and South Poles, which is beautifully depicted in a large mural decorating the walls of the classroom. This unit study is meant to teach the children about the many unique qualities that differentiate the North and South Poles. Each child chose an animal (land or sea) to incorporate into the mural. Don't miss the magnificent tactile polar bears of the North Pole and the children's interpretation of the Northern Lights. Also, penguin puppets are being created to represent the South Pole. The children will make a small book that is their own penguin story to accompany their penguin puppet.

As always, the backroom constantly evolves into different themes. In addition to the post office theme, the backroom has recently transformed into a "Museum of Africa" to celebrate "Black History Month," an annual celebration in existence since 1926. Teacher Ivonne has shared some of her own family traditions, including displaying an exquisite cloth that depicts amazing fabrics made in Africa. Additionally, the children have been learning about some of the great leaders of Africa who made a significant impact on civil rights. Look for artwork from your children showing the leaders they are learning about, so that you can reinforce their understanding at home.

The older children continue to work on their Numbers' Books, which are stunning to see on the walls of the school. Those involved love being a part of this project, which will be completed over the next several months leading to graduation.

**Upcoming Projects**

The children are excited to learn more about Teacher Christin's trip to Africa, which will be explored as another "destination" in the backroom. The culture and traditions of Tanzania will be highlighted and the children will participate in the creation of an East African flag.

“Spring Forward to Cinco de Mayo” is the next RHS fundraiser and the teachers and children are busy creating one-of-a-kind artwork, six in total, to be auctioned. Teacher Lyvette is designing a mosaic mirror, which will include individual patterns by the children resulting in an elaborate work inclusive of everyone! Additional artwork will include 2 quilts, one each for the am and pm programs. More details will follow on the remaining artwork. The Fundraising Committee is in the midst of planning the event; however, the success of the event will be dependent on everyone’s participation. As noted in the 1/17 letter, the Development Committee needs help with donations for auction items and underwriting of the event. Please contact Melissa Toteda, Fundraiser Chair, to find out how you might be able to help.

### **Other News**

The RHS Room Parents received thank you notes from the RHS teachers indicating how much they appreciated the holiday gifts from the parents. The Room Parents, using a portion of the money from the Sunshine Fund, delivered a special gift of money and wine to all of the teachers prior to the holiday break. Additionally, the Sunshine Fund covers birthday flowers and monthly treats for the teachers. Next, the Room Parents are planning a teacher appreciation gift in the summer. Thanks again to all of the parents who generously gave to the fund so that we could continue to show our amazing teachers how wonderful they are!