Happy Friday the 13th!

 I hope that you all had a great week. We had some glorious weather for a couple of days, and now I am sure that we are all itching for springtime to hurry up and get here. The time change has been nice as well, however, it was certainly a rough start to the week when we all lost an hour of sleep. I think on Monday I had a class full of half-asleep 1st graders! Once we all became used to the new sleep pattern, we all felt much better.

 In ELA this week, we kept working very hard on blends. We have moved on from the S blends to the L blends now. Students are really using these blends in their writing, and in their reading. Our awareness of blends has been astonishing. We will be learning about R blends next week. We also learned how to have a collaborative discussion with one another. This meant that we had to watch a video, make rules, practice, grade the teachers, reflect, practice, grade our peers, and practice many times on how to have a focused conversation with one another. It is completely unbelievable how the students used language such as: make eye contact, stay focused on the topic, etc. Students were then held responsible to report on their peer evaluations, which required them to tell their peers what they think they need to work on when they are talking, and what they think they did really well in their conversations. Some students were even able to watch a video of their own conversation and evaluate themselves. This is huge for 1st graders to be able to do.

 In Math this week, we have been working on understanding that 32 is really 3 tens and 2 ones, as well as 32 ones. We also started to learn that 32 can be written as an addition sentence in the format of 30 + 2 = 32. This is vital for students to understand, so that they can be successful later on in their school career with place value concepts such as adding and subtracting within 100, multiplying, and dividing. We are still working on combinations to 10, subtraction, and word problems as well. We continuously build upon information that we learned early in the year so that we do not forget it.

 In Science this week, we of course monitored our trout. We even used the collaborative discussion format that we have been practicing to help us brainstorm information about our trout this week. They are certainly developing. We learned about the tail fin last week, and now we are looking at the other fins, the eyes, and the parr marks along its body. We also went on a tracking adventure with the AMC yesterday. We learned about the different types of patterns that animals walk in. For example, an animal can be a perfect walker, waddler, hopper, or bounder. We learned how to walk in snowshoes, which can actually be very hard if it is your first time, and we also learned about how to read animal tracks to understand the story that these animals have left us. A group followed some deer tracks to find a deer bed and where the deer had kicked around the snow looking for food. Of course we also saw something very sad, but it was an interesting way to talk about how nature works. Someone had found the tracks to a bounding animal, and when we looked more closely around the area, we spotted a very sick, or dying owl on the ground. Of course, the first instinct is to take the owl, but we had the conversation that you cannot do that because we have to let nature take its course. Some of us even talked about what Leave No Trace means, and why we need to respect nature. Overall, the tracking and snowshoeing experience was cold, but it was an absolute blast! We were able to use this experience to start writing a thank you letter to Amelia and Lucy, our two AMC guides, and we used the knowledge that we learned yesterday to connect to our Scholastic Weekly Reader, which was about animal communication.

 This week was certainly full of connections, ideas, and new concepts. Students rose to the challenge, learned some really important skills, and even got to experience a different type of learning, one that involved being outside learning real life skills that can be applied immediately! I sincerely enjoyed this entire week, and I cannot wait for next week and the adventures we have in store for us.

Ms. LaCasse

**Parent Reminders**:

* No School Friday, March 20th, 2015
* Progress Reports came out today, Friday, March 13th, 2015 – if you would like to schedule a time for a conference, please contact me.
* Book orders are due on Friday, March 27th, 2015