Elementary Board Report

A Paws-itive Community Learning and Playing Together
Our theme for the month of April is respecting the environment. When we have respect for the environment, we honor nature. We show we are grateful by keeping living creatures, the land, water, and air clean and protected. We do our part to protect the environment for now and for the future. The following shares just a bit of what has happened and is happening in the near future of our Paws-itive learning community.

Walking School Bus
We have many nearby students who ride the bus to and from school. Many of those same students are also missing out on a great opportunity to walk to school so that they may get exercise and socialize.

With this in mind, we will start an informal version of walking school buses. This is where groups of students walk to school together with an adult rather than taking the bus. Our hope is to start walking school buses the month of May. I plan to lead a group of walkers on either Wednesdays or Fridays, to and from school. Living in the neighborhood near the wetlands above Stone Creek, I would start mornings walking with a group from the park near the upper wetlands. From there, other students would join us on our walking path. After school, those wishing to walk back home with the group would meet near the cafeteria before we start our walk home.

We are in need of adults who are willing to lead walking school buses to school and/or home from school. We need an adult each day to lead one of three main groups. The groups would come from the main part of town, the development above Stone Creek, and the development near the post office. Adults leading will supervise for student safety. They will mainly act as caring community members and get some exercise in the process.

We will be having a meeting for those interested on Thursday, April 26, at 6:30 in our library. There will be discussion on such things as what is expected of adults, scheduling days and zones, etc.

After the adult leaders meeting, we will send a letter home to families giving further details as to how the walking school buses will work. Though we are starting small, I look forward to experiencing what our walking school buses become.

Food Advisory
As you may remember, fifth grader Nate Beer, was invited to attend the April meeting of the District Food Advisory Committee to recognize his work to gain a water dispenser in the cafeteria. Another fifth grader, Sean McHugh, had requested to somehow help with food choices for our district and was also invited to the recent District Food Advisory Committee meeting. Both Nate and Sean attended along with the support of their parents. I appreciated how well the committee members listened and were open to feedback from our students and parents. I was also impressed by how our students and parents were sure to speak up and share their thoughts. They showed how they are contributing to our Paws-itive community of learners. When the meeting was over, they were invited to come back again and were encouraged to invite others. The day after the meeting we already had three students and a teacher who had spoken with me sharing their interest in participating in the next Food Advisory Committee meeting.

2012 Watershed Contest

Our fifth grade students made an impressive showing in the 2012 Watershed Reflections Contest. There were four judging categories open to grades 3-6 in Clark County; traditional media, photography, recycled materials, and written word. We recently learned that at least four of our fifth graders placed in the given categories. They are as follows:

Traditional Media:	1st Place	-Nick Denman
Photography:	1st Place	-John Boynton
Recycled Materials:	1st Place	-Emily Graham
Written Word:	1st Place	-Catherine Peterson

Their work will be shown at Salmon Creek Regional Park/Klineline Pond on Earth Day, Saturday, April 21, 10:00-2:00. Parking is free for the event. Congratulations! Our students were able to show just a small part of what makes this a Paws-itive community.

E-Books

Natalie Chisholm wrote a letter and made a proposal recently regarding e-books being allowed at school. While we do have concerns regarding students bringing electronics to school, allowing e-books to be used under the right conditions does make sense. Under the following guidelines developed with Natalie, students may bring and utilize e-books (like Kindle, Nook, etc.) in classrooms:

-Use in classrooms only, in backpacks otherwise
-With teacher permission only, just like reading books
-Only used for reading, not playing games or using internet (unless teacher permits and supervises for learning purposes)
-E-book must have the student's name on or in it
-School is not responsible for any damage or loss of equipment

Our middle school is using similar guidelines. I look forward to seeing how e-books might further impact our students' learning.