



CONNECTIONS

JOHN DE GRAFF SCHOOL

1020 Louelda Street

Winnipeg, MB R2K 3Z4

Phone: 204-669-1280

Fax: 204-668-9413

Email: jdg@retsd.mb.ca

Webpage: www.retsd.mb.ca/schools/jdg

OFFICE HOURS: 8:15 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.

PRINCIPAL

Ms. Christi Qua

VICE-PRINCIPAL

Mrs. Andrea Ilchena-Carlson

SCHOOL TIMES:

School Bell Rings 8:50 a.m.

School Starts 9:00 a.m.

Lunch Begins 11:45 a.m.

Afternoon Bell Rings 12:40 a.m.

Afternoon Begins 12:45 p.m.

School Dismisses 3:30 p.m.

REMINDER: NO PARKING

YELLOW BUS ZONE 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL...

Dear John de Graff Families,

As we close out the school year, I want to take a moment to reflect on what a wonderful first year it has been for me as the principal of John de Graff. It has truly been a joy and a privilege to become part of this vibrant, caring, and dedicated community.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this year has been the opportunity to connect with so many of you. Whether it was a quick chat during drop-off, a conversation at a school event, or a meeting about your child's progress, I've appreciated each moment. Your insights, support, and partnership have meant a great deal to me.

Most importantly, I thoroughly enjoyed spending my days with your children. Watching them learn, grow, and support one another has been the highlight of each day. Their curiosity, kindness, and enthusiasm are constant reminders of why the work we do in education is so meaningful.

The first day of classes will be September 3, 2025.

Our staff is undergoing a few changes that I would like to convey to you. These are:

Farewell and best wishes to the following teachers: Mrs. G. Kaur, Miss Davidson, Mr. Wyrha, and Mrs. Savard.

Welcome to the following teachers, Mrs. L Smith, Ms. Quitlig, Mrs. Lotey, Mrs. Mills-Johnston and welcome back to Miss Fehr.

As we head into the summer, I wish you all a season of rest, joy, and time with loved ones. I look forward to welcoming everyone back in the fall for another exciting year of learning and growth together.

Warm regards,

Ms. Christi Qua



Your River East Transcona School Division Trustees

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For more information about the Board of Trustees, visit: www.retsd.mb.ca > Your RETSD > Board of Trustees
Scroll down to *What it means to be a trustee* to watch an informative video

Professional Staff for the 2025/26 School Year	Grade	Room
C. Qua	Principal	
A Ilchena-Carlson	Vice Principal	
E, Quitalig	K	1
M. Estafanios	K	1
J. Meads	K	2
B. Houston	K	2
M. Ponce	1	19
K .Gilfillan	1	18
S. Anderson	1	17
J. Mazor and C. Spiers	1	16
J. Rudd	2	18D
S. Bargan	2	15
B. Beamish	2	14
B. Kaur (am)	2	13
A. Lotey (pm)	2	13
S .Samcartier	3	9
K. Nelson	3	9
C. Wong	3	12
A. Dallmann	3	11
L. Smith	3	10
N. Smith	4	8
L. Rennie	4	22
R. Mills (Peltz Jan. 2026)	4	7
K. Boutang	4	3
C. Buscemi	5	24
B. Van Alstyne	5	21
J. Arnal	5	6
J. Korb	5	5
D. Tuck - even days	PE (.5)	
J. Feir	PE	
T. Madec di-Bartolo	PE	
C. Fehr – odd days	Music (.5)	
A. Klassen	Music	
L. Cessford	Teacher Librarian	
K. Lachuta	Resource	
C. Bullis	Resource	
H. Fraser	Resource	
M. Estafanios	Resource (.5)	
B. Kaur	Reading Recovery (.5)	
E. Haid	Guidance Counsellor	

John de Graff School 2024-2025 Report to the Community

Mission Statement

At John de Graff School we provide inclusive, innovative, and engaging educational programming in a safe and caring environment.

About John de Graff School

- ◆ We are a K-5 English school in the River East Transcona School Division. As of June 2025, we have 525 students.
- ◆ Our school was built in 1977. It continues to maintain strong community links with an active Parent Council.
- ◆ John de Graff School provides English Language programming, Basic French, and specialists in Music, Physical Education, Library, Resource and Guidance. We maintain a strong Reading Recovery program.
- ◆ We also have access to RETSD clinicians (psychology, social work, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech and language) as well as behavior and reading specialists

2024-2025 Priorities

Our school plan had 3 priorities this year. They were:

Literacy

Numeracy

Well-Being

Highlights of the year:

Literacy – This year, our school focused on setting high expectations for all students, promoting inclusion, and encouraging critical thinking. Teachers built on professional learning from Regie Routman's *Optimal Learning Model*, helping students understand what strong readers, writers, and learners do.

Classroom practices included celebrating student work, encouraging reflection and goal setting, and using texts that inspire deep thinking. Students shared their learning through writing, speaking, and technology, building confidence and independence.

We also made literacy more meaningful by using diverse, culturally relevant books that reflect a range of backgrounds and experiences. With support from our Indigenous Consultant and Inclusion Teachers, students explored topics like cultural identity and anti-racism through projects and writing.

We are proud of the progress made and will continue to grow our literacy practices while supporting new staff in this important work.

Numeracy – This year, our school placed a strong focus on building and strengthening foundational numeracy skills across all grade levels. We developed a new collection of open-ended problem-solving activities tailored to each grade, helping students think more creatively and flexibly when approaching mathematical challenges.

We also reintroduced the popular "Messy Maths" approach—an engaging way for students to explore math in hands-on, real-world contexts that spark curiosity and deepen understanding.

As we look ahead, we are committed to continuing this important work. Ensuring consistent use of open-ended problems, integrating "Messy Maths" across classrooms, and making the most of math manipulatives will remain key priorities in helping every student develop confidence and success in mathematics.

Community Report—Continued

Well-Being - This year, our school focused on promoting student well-being through cultural awareness, inclusivity, and engagement. We recognized important events such as Orange Shirt Day, Remembrance Day, Pink Shirt Day, and awareness months for Anti-Racism and Autism. Students took part in meaningful learning experiences through an Indigenous residency, classroom treaties, and activities centered on identity and culture. We encouraged student voice and leadership through morning announcements, diverse clubs like Diwali, Ramadan, and yoga, as well as cross-grade connections such as Reading Buddies. To support social-emotional growth, we introduced problem-solving wheels, transitioned to the Zones of Regulation, and enhanced our school environment with calming sensory spaces. Our ongoing commitment to equity and excellence was reflected in our use of diverse literature, inquiry and play-based learning, and an emphasis on responsibility and positive relationships. As we look ahead, we will continue deepening our understanding of play-based learning, anti-racism, and positive behaviour support to ensure every student feels valued, supported, and ready to thrive.

2025-2026 Priorities

Literacy

By June 2026, student achievement will be enhanced through authentic and appropriate literacy instruction and assessment to help all John de Graff students at all grade levels develop the skills, attitudes, and knowledge to live the good life—Mino-Pimatisiwin.

Wellbeing

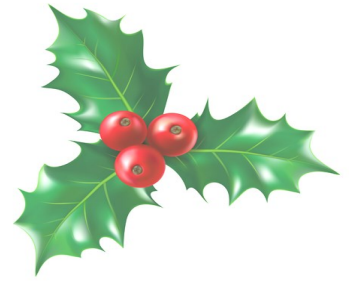
By June 2026, school climate, culture, and inclusivity will be enhanced by deepening understandings, building partnerships, and engaging the community through a comprehensive school health framework that reimagines teaching, learning, and wellbeing, providing supports for the whole child to develop the skills, attitudes, and knowledge to live the good life—Mino-Pimatisiwin.

Numeracy

By June 2026, student achievement will be enhanced through authentic and appropriate mathematics instruction and assessment to help all John de Graff students at all grade levels develop the skills, attitudes, and knowledge to live the good life—Mino-Pimatisiwin.



Christmas at JDG



A Visit from Santa's Helpers



The Kindergarten and Grade 1's were given quite the surprise when Santa's elves came to school sharing treats and good cheer!





Christmas in Kindergarten at JDG

A Holiday tree card sounds like the
perfect gift for families to celebrate
the Kindergarten class's first Winter
Break!

The Grade 1's worked with the Kindergarten class to
understand their numbers a little better with a
snowman drawing game that often makes some
wild looking snow creatures!



I Love to Read!

The Grade 2's in Room 15 had some special parent guests to share about their passions for I Love to Read Month!



Abigail's mom, Mrs.L, helped us to learn about refugees and how we can make all people feel welcome in Canada, through her read aloud, "Questions and Answers about Refugees."



Owen's dad, Officer Brad, taught us about community safety tips and hockey when reading about "Officer Buckle and Gloria" and "First Hockey Skates."

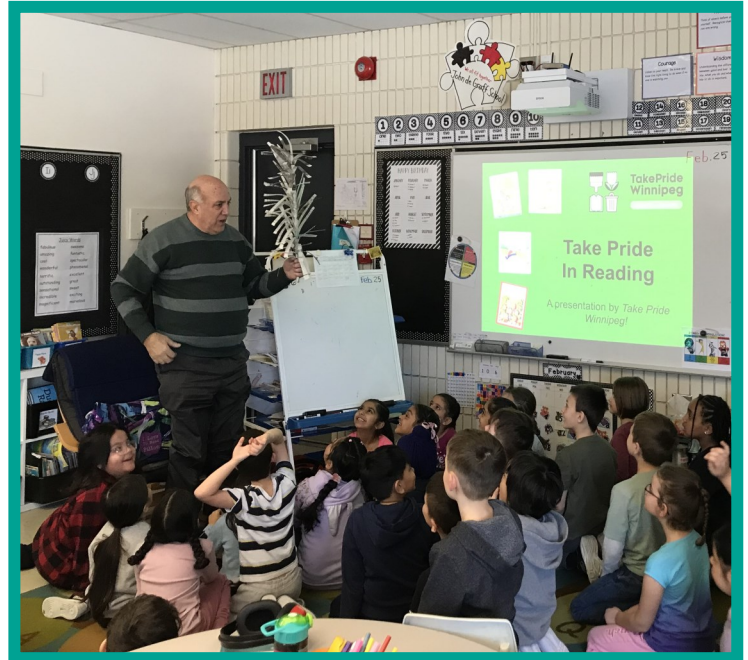
Thank you so much for taking the time to share your love for reading and learning!

John de Graff RECYLES!

Please remember that we have our John de Graff Recycling Depot in the library. We recycle:

- ♦ Pop tabs
- ♦ Dead batteries
- ♦ Old markers

We are making a difference!



Tom Ethans shared recycling tips and inspiration from **Take Pride Winnipeg** and read "Franklin Plant's a Tree."

TABS FOR WHEELCHAIRS

LAILA



Laila is 13 years old and will be entering Grade 8 at École George McDowell in the Louis Riel School Division.

At the age of two, Laila was diagnosed with MLC1, which is a rare form of Leukodystrophy that affects her balance and mobility.

Laila loves cats, listening to K-Pop and in her free time likes to swim, attend theatre classes and play Volt Hockey. Most recently, with assistance from great instructors at The Hive, she started Bouldering, which is like rock climbing but without a harness.

Laila is excited to be the 2025 Tabs for Wheelchairs recipient. Her new power wheelchair will give her the independence and "Power" to challenge each and every day.

It will be our great pleasure
to present Laila with her very own
specialized power wheelchair
in June 2025!

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/winnipeg/video/2025/06/16/student-receives-new-wheelchair/>

Grade Two: An exciting class project!

Grade 2 students crafted boats from **recycled materials** like plastic bottles, cardboard, and straws. Not only did they use their creativity to design unique boats, but they also learned about the importance of recycling. After building their boats, the students tested them in a water tray, discovering which designs floated the best. It was a fun, hands-on way to promote teamwork, problem-solving, and environmental awareness!



Green Team



Hello Earth lovers! We are the GREEN TEAM! We are the Grade 4 students in Miss Rennie's class, and we want to tell you about an important job that we do to help the earth. At lunch on Monday's and Thursday's we collect all the blue beverage bins and recycle the containers inside of them. It's not always a pleasant job because sometimes the bins are smelly and disgusting! But we do it because we love to take care of the earth. We know we are making a difference in the world in which we live. Go Green! Go Team! Go Green Team!

Written By The Grade 4 Students in Room 22

The Meaning of Home

A Habitat for Humanity Project



The students in Grade 4 and 5 are working on their pieces for the Habitat for Humanity fundraiser, The Meaning of Home. Students across Canada in grades 4-6 are invited to submit a piece of writing sharing what home means to them. Each entry raises \$10 for the local Habitat for Humanity. We have more than 200 eligible students in our school and we are hoping to raise at least \$2000. Last year there were more than 15 000 entries across Canada raising \$327 000. Our students can extend an act of kindness to others through this contest. John de Graff students have participated in The Meaning of Home contest for many years and raised thousands of dollars. For more information visit [Meaning of Home Student Contest - Habitat for Humanity Canada](#)

Check our page 8 & 9 of our newsletter to read some of our student submissions!

For This Is My Home

As I rise from my bed, I soak up the beams of glaring light coming from the sun. This is where I live. For this is my home. Walking through the hallway, I see pictures displayed upon the wall and I feel my soul brimming with joy and pride. This is where I cherish memories. For this is my home. Entering the kitchen, I catch the delightful smell of breakfast hot on the table and take a seat, waiting to devour the meal after me and my family have said grace. This is where I spend quality time with the people I love and value. For this is my home. Time flies as we go about our day, and before I know it, the sun has set, and the sky is challenged by the darkness of night. I slip into the cozy warmth of my bed, and that is when my head starts to ponder with questions. What would it be like not having a place to call home? The thought makes me wonder, but then I realize that no matter where I am, if I feel and believe it, I have home deeply within me. It is my symbol of safety and refuge. It is where I am fully known and acknowledged. For this is my home. Thank you to Habitat for Humanity as well as the founding sponsor, for your hard work and endless dedication to ensure that each family has a place to call home.

Lidya

Grade 5

Ms. Korb—Room 12

Home is not just a place to sleep in, home is a place to love in

The love for my home is strong and there are many things I adore about it. In my room I have a desk covered in art, a bed to rest in and a very messy closet. On the weekends I love the smell of burning candles and the afternoon light. It makes me so joyful when I hear laughter and music playing.

A home has history so here is mine. My mom has a cabbage patch kid from her childhood and every now and then I will go to the basement and check on the doll. My mom used to live in a country called Paraguay but one day my mom and her family moved because they wanted to start their life over and moved to Winnipeg. And then they called it home and they will keep calling it home forever.

But now let us talk about the beautiful food creations my parents make. My mom can make an amazing banana cake, and my dad can make lovely steak that is so juicy and delicious. Dinner is like heaven.

Speaking of food, my auntie has two adorable dogs. Food is their life. They will always beg for food, and I have to close my eyes because they are too cute to look at. As you can tell, my home is beautiful, and I never want to leave it.

So you see, home is not a house.

Emily

Grade 4

Ms. Smith—Room 8



What Home Means to Me: Ukraine and Canada

In Ukraine my home was not just four walls. It was warm and filled with love. I had friends and other family there. There was love and my cat - "meow". I loved my home so much but ... on February 24, 2022, when I woke up, I was trying to play my PS4, I saw my mom watching news on the tv and I heard that Russia was dropping bombs in Ukrainian cities. That night, I was hiding under the blanket in the corridor. I was crying because there was a siren, there were flying bombs. I thought everything was good but then next day I saw the news of bombed houses with over thousands dying all over Ukraine. We left our city, but a year later, we left the Ukraine because we wanted to be safe. First, we went to Poland where we stayed in a house that my dad's friend helped us with. Then we went to Toronto, then to Winnipeg which is where I live now.

Now I live in Canada. I have my mom, dad, grandma, and my cat with me. My home is still full of love. I love my family so much, but it is too cold here in Canada. In Canada, I have a new school. I made friends with another boy from Ukraine when I started, and we are still friends today. I have great teachers, and I have learnt a lot. I am happy to have a home in Canada because I feel safe, and I love my family so much. THE END

Kiril in

Grade 5

Ms. Arnal—Room 16





Guess what? All the grade ones went on a field trip! We went on a yellow school bus on January 28 to the Children's Museum. We learned about keeping our planet healthy. A staff worker showed us four awesome stations. They were:

- ◆ A water wheel for energy, a remote car and a solar powered bug
- ◆ Sorting a big container of things into compost, recycle, garbage and upcycle
- ◆ A doll house showing ways to live energy efficient
- ◆ Small fans that powered wind turbines

Then we got to try the stations out. After that we went to explore around the museum. Our two favourite things were lasagna lookout and the train. The students were there for a long time . . . we even had our delicious lunches there! We had an AMAZING time.

Have you been to the Children's Museum?

Grade 1A, Room 23

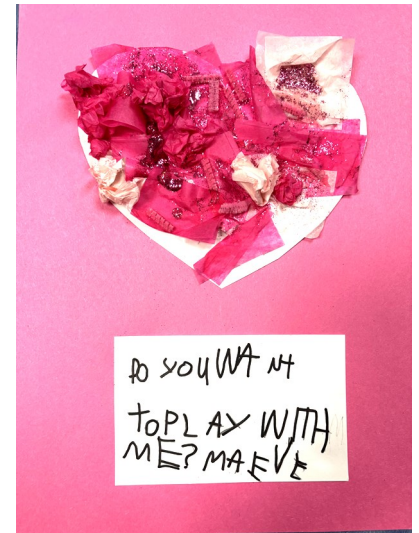
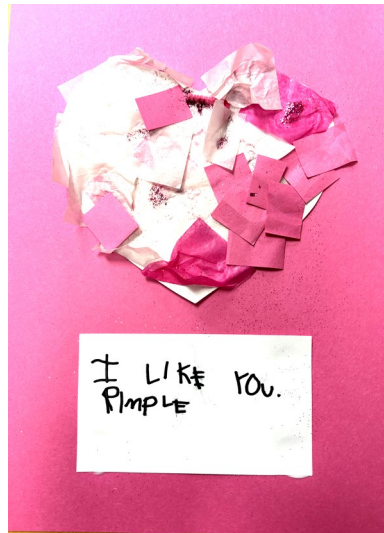
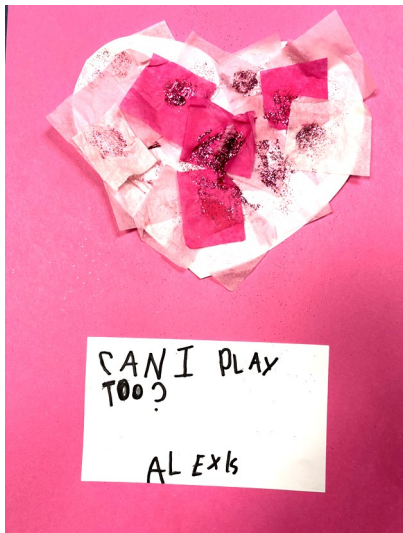


Celebrating I Love to Read Month with a Special Visit!

On Friday February 21st the grade 3-5 classes had a special assembly to celebrate **We Love To Read** month. Mr. Jeff McWhinney, Keeper of the Cup, brought the Grey Cup and a special book *Not Without My Teammates* that he wrote about as a special tribute to his father. Mr. Jason Schreyer, Elmwood city councilors joined him along with Al Simmons and other special guests.

A copy of Mr. McWhinney's book, *Not Without My Teammates* was given to each student at John de Graff School as a gift.





Pink Shirt Day is a day when communities in Canada and the world can unite to celebrate diversity and raise awareness to stop all forms of bullying.

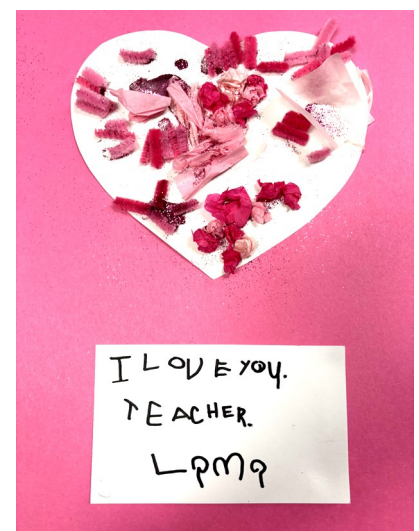
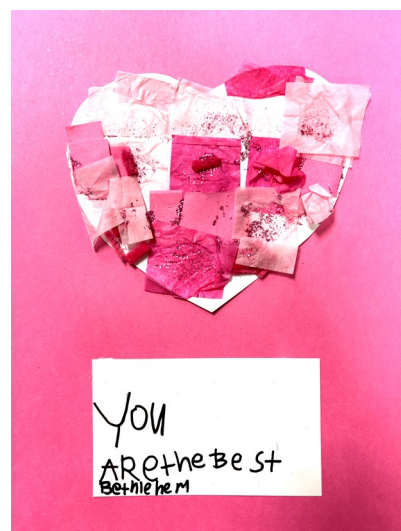
On February 25, we wore pink to say, “No to Bullying” and “Yes to Kindness”.

We read books and had conversations on how we can spread kindness.

We created our collage hearts by overlapping different materials in shades of pink to create texture. We added words of kindness to share with our audience.



KIND WORDS MAKE HAPPY HEARTS!



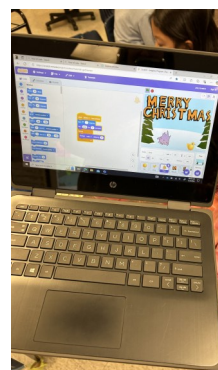


Our Grade 1 - 5 students were part of the International Hour of Code event in December. We know the importance of computer science skills and are proud to introduce computer coding to our students from the beginning of their educational journey. Our Grade 1 explored the Talebot robots and practiced using directionality arrows to code the robot around the Zoo and Community mats. The students were amazing coders and had a lot of fun. Our Grade 2 - 5 classes logged into Hour of Code activities and further developed their block coding skills. The skill development and positive attitudes towards the challenge were incredible. Congratulations to our incredible students here at John de Graff! Check out the free activities on the website www.hourofcode.com



Grade 1 coding Club

Mrs. spiers and Ms. Cessford ran our first ever Grade 1 Coding club over the lunch hours in January. The Grade 1's had the opportunity to learn more about the Talebots. It was a lot of fun and very impressive to see their learning. We were very impressed with how well they worked together. Congratulations to our Grade One students!



Drumming in Grade One!

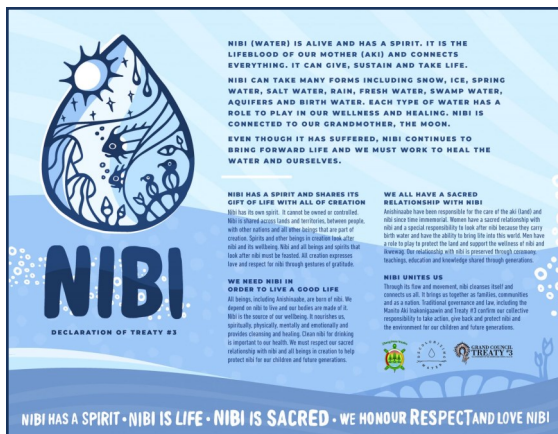
Room 23



Ms. Yvette came to our classroom to teach us the **Nibi** song on the hand drum. We got to drum on our own drum and sing! We loved singing and drumming.

Do you know where we get our clean **water** from? We get our clean **Nibi** from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation.

Thank you for **Nibi!**



PHYS ED at JDG



**Holiday
Gym**

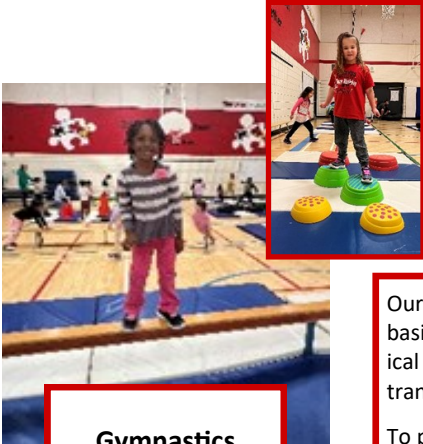
December always brings excitement to our school, and the gym was no exception! Every year, students eagerly anticipate our Holiday-themed gym classes, where we transform the space into a festive and active winter wonderland. Through a variety of movement stations, students got into the holiday spirit while staying active and engaged.

Some of the most exciting activities this year included throwing snowballs down the chimney, hopping around the Christmas tree, tiptoeing over Christmas presents on the balance beam, feeding Santa sugar cookies with frisbees, scootering under the northern lights, tossing Christmas oranges into Santa's buckets, ringing the jingle bells on Candy Cane Mountain and taking a swing at Candy Cane Golf.

It was wonderful to see so many smiles and hear so much laughter as students participated in these festive activities.

After returning from winter break, we jumped right into one of our students' favorite units- Basketball. Throughout the month, students had multiple opportunities to work on their ball-handling skills, shooting skills, and gameplay strategies. It was amazing to see their progress and enthusiasm on the court!

**Basket
Ball**



Gymnastics



Our Gymnastics unit is underway, and many students are eagerly taking the opportunity to develop basic gymnastic skills. This unit focuses on Fun, Fitness, and Fundamentals, helping students build physical literacy and confidence in movement. These skills are not only essential in gymnastics but are also transferable to other sports and activities, encouraging lifelong participation in physical activity.

To provide extra opportunities for skill development, we are offering Gymnastics Club for Grade 3s on Mondays and Grade 5s on Thursdays during January and February lunch hours.

A **Tumbling Rally Club** is running for Grade 4 students on Tuesdays and Wednesdays at lunch hours which will conclude with a divisional performance in the evening later in March. More details for participating Grade 4 students will be sent home in the coming weeks about the performance.

Thank you to our amazing coaches, Mrs. Bargaen, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Boutang, Ms. Rennie, and Mr. Tuck for assisting us with the Grade 4 Tumbling Rally club.

Thank you to all our students and families for your continued enthusiasm and support for our Physical Education program. We look forward to more exciting activities ahead!



Mr. Feir & Mrs. Di Bartolo

Physical Education Team

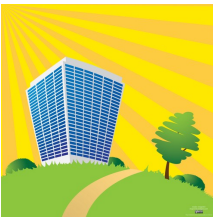
WINTER FUN at JDG!



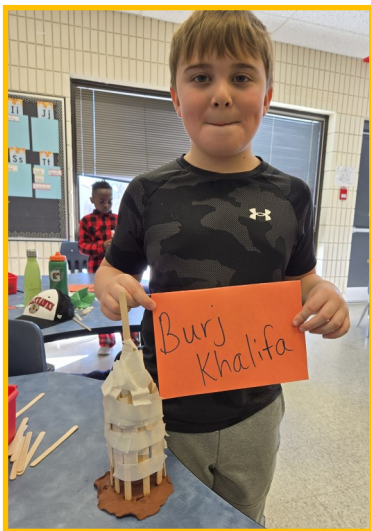
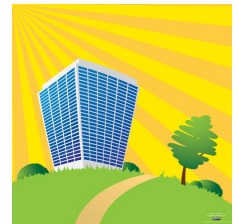
This winter has certainly brought some chilly temperatures! Due to some extreme cold this past month, both our scheduled Snow Day and our alternative backup day had to be cancelled. While we were hopeful and prepared to spend time outdoors, the safety of our students always comes first.

Fortunately, we had a block of nice weather that followed and allowed us to bring our Snow Day activities into our Phys. Ed classes. Students had a fantastic time being active, playful and engaging in creative winter-themed fun. It was wonderful to see their enthusiasm and energy shine through, even with the changes to our plans. A huge thank you to the families for ensuring your children were dressed appropriately for the weather. Your support helps us keep students warm, comfortable and ready for fun outdoor learning experiences.

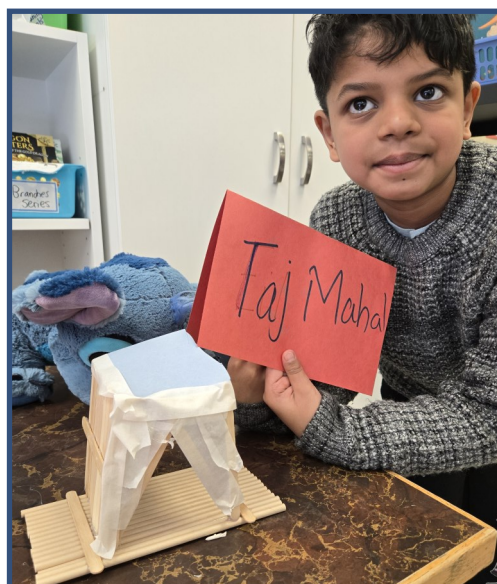
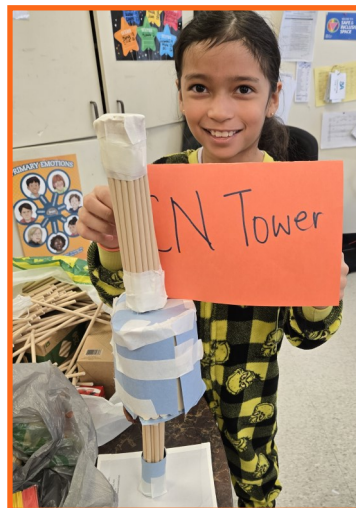




Grade Three Building Project

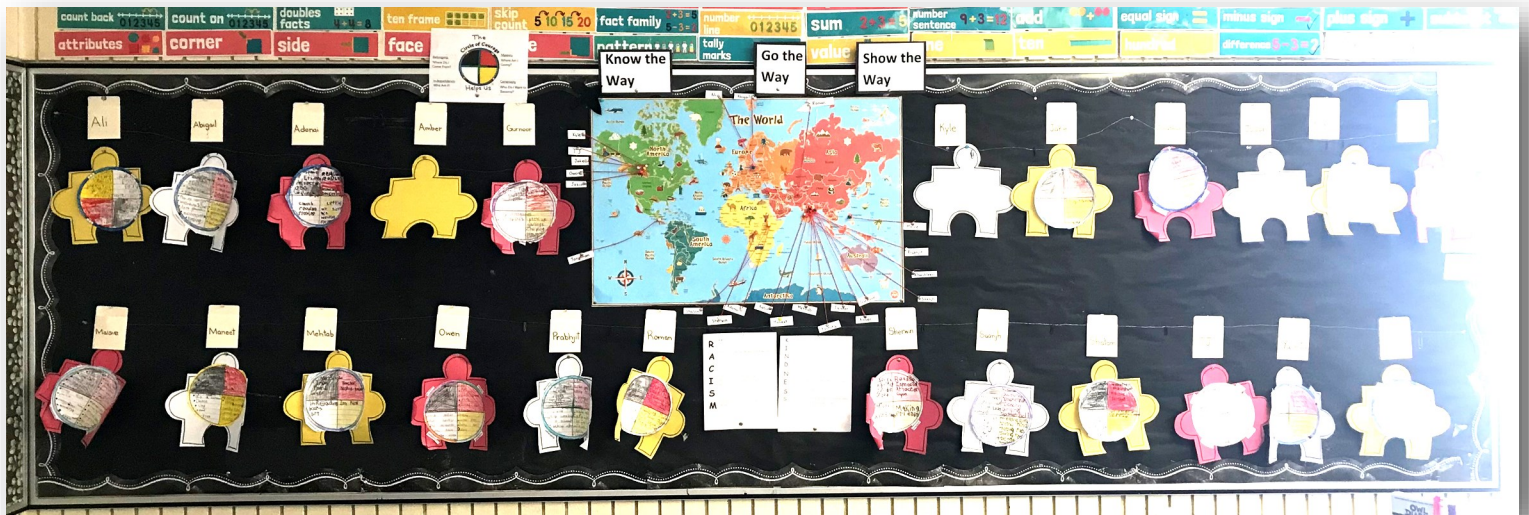


Grade 3 students in Room 6 engaged in a wonderful hands-on activity of building structures. They gathered information from various sources, including books, Pebble Go, and Explore, and selected a well-known structure to recreate. After designing their structures on paper, they discussed the materials required for construction. Working independently, they used all the provided materials to ensure their structures were durable, stable, and visually appealing. The process of researching different materials, designing on paper, and then physically building helps develop a variety of important skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and teamwork.



better **Know the Way, Go the Way and Show the Way!**

M adness is not love, kind, or good, sharing is caring



No Difference

Small as a peanut,
Big as a giant,
We're all the same size
When we turn off the light.

Rich as a sultan,
Poor as a mite,
We're all worth the same
When we turn off the light.

Red, black or orange,
Yellow or white,
We all look the same
When we turn off the light.

So maybe the way
To make everything right
Is for us to just reach out
And turn off the light!

- by Shel Silverstein (revised)

River East Transcona School Division is located on the original lands of the Anishinaabeg, Ininiwak, Anishininiwak, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Red River Métis. We recognize our part of the Treaty relationship and, as acknowledgement of the harms done, we commit to collaborating with Indigenous communities in the shared spirit of Truth and Reconciliation for the healing and inclusion of all who share this Land.



SEPTEMBER 2025

2 Co-ordinated Day, NO SCHOOL (Day 1)
 3 First day of School (Day 2)
 9 John de Graff OPEN HOUSE, 6 – 8:00 pm
 PAC meeting, 6 – 7:30 pm
 25 Terry Fox Run
 30 NO SCHOOL, Truth & Reconciliation Day

OCTOBER 2025

9 (Thursday, Day 3) Co-ordinated Day, NO SCHOOL
 10 (Friday, Day 4) Co-ordinated Day, NO SCHOOL
 13 Thanksgiving, NO SCHOOL
 21 PAC meeting, 6 – 7:30 pm
 24 (Friday, Day 1) Co-ordinated Day, NO SCHOOL

NOVEMBER 2025

11 Remembrance Day, NO SCHOOL
 18 PAC meeting, 6 – 7:30 pm
 20 Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences – by appointment
 21 (Friday, Day 2) JdG PD Day, NO SCHOOL
 21 Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences – by appointment

DECEMBER 2025

10 Christmas Concert, 10:30 am & 2:00 pm
 11 Christmas Concert, 10:30 am & 2:00 pm
 (More information will be shared in the Fall)
 16 PAC meeting, 8 – 7:30 pm
 19 Last Day Before Winter Break, Early Dismissal (2:30 pm)

Winter Break, December 22/25 – January 2/26

JANUARY 2026

5 School Re-opens (Day 5)
 20 PAC meeting, 8 – 7:30 pm
 30 (Friday, Day 6) Co-ordinated Day, NO SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 2026

2 Co-ordinated Day, NO SCHOOL (Day 1)
 16 Louis Riel Day, NO SCHOOL
 17 PAC meeting 6 – 7:30 pm

MARCH 2026

17 PAC meeting 6 – 7:30
 19 Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences – by appointment
 20 (Friday, Day 4) Co-ordinated Day
 20 Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences – by appointment
 27 Last Day before Spring Break (NOT an early dismissal)

Spring Break, March 30/26 - April 3/26

APRIL 2026

6 (Monday, Day 4) School Re-opens
 10 (Friday, Day 2) Co-ordinated Day, NO SCHOOL
 21 PAC meeting, 6 – 7:30 pm

MAY 2026

18 Victoria Day
 19 PAC meeting, 6 – 7:30 pm
 28 Kindergarten Orientation, 6 – 7 pm

JUNE 2026

16 PAC meeting, 6 – 7:30 pm
 22 (Monday, Day 4) JdG School PD, NO SCHOOL
 30 Last Day of School - Early Dismissal (2:30 pm)

REMINDER: E-memos will be sent out weekly, so make sure to take note of updates! Also, check out the John de Graff Website.



*RETSD is on Facebook and X (Twitter)!
 Follow us to stay up to date on what's
 happening in the division.*

