

WHITE RIVER SCHOOL
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Sheila Powers, Principal
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November 10, 2016

Dear Families:

Two upcoming requests: for our in-school Thanksgiving Feast that all students and staff will enjoy on Tuesday, November 22, each class contributes something. First grade will once again make cornbread for the whole school. I will be getting some eggs and milk and other necessities. If you are able to purchase and ***donate a box of Jiffy corn muffin mix*** for us to use, that would be most helpful. We will be making the cornbread on Monday, ***so please send in any cornbread mix by the Friday before, Friday, November 18***, then I will know what, if anything, we still need before baking day! Students always enjoy this little project. Thanks in advance.

Separately, we are now collecting donations of ***canned peaches and pears*** for the Hartford-Norwich Holiday Basket Helpers program that gives fresh and canned fruit as well as gift cards for groceries to area families around the holidays. Thank you if you can send in a can or two to help.

In writing workshop for the next few weeks, we will be writing poetry. In her book *Kids' Poems: Teaching First Graders to Love Writing Poetry*, Regie Routman discusses many advantages of teaching poetry, which include the following:

- Extends students' understanding of poetry beyond rhyme to free verse
- Incorporates all five senses into the writing
- Requires fewer words to create a meaningful message, which in turn helps kids stay focused while writing
- Invites children to write about compelling content and to capture strong feelings in a poem
- Focuses students' thoughts on careful and creative choice of vocabulary
- Encourages kids to play around with language and form
- Challenges students to be specific and innovative with their use of language
- Inspires a love of poetry (a good thing since many adults are intimidated by it!)

Poetry is a great way to narrow in on all the things we want first graders to learn about writing in general: when they learn to write a poem, they are learning to experiment with language, choose a good title, focus on a main idea, include detail, use imagery, think about good beginnings and endings, create a mood. They realize that they can write about anything, that they as poets can make choices about things including how their poems look on the page, often writing one or two or more complete poems in a session. The students have been having a lot of fun with poetry. At the end of this writing unit, your child will bring home an anthology of poetry written by the students in our class, as well as all of their own poems they have written. I expect you will enjoy reading or listening to them!