

FRIDAY



FLASH

EDMUNDS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

299 Main St, Burlington, VT 05401 • 864-1791

Date and Volume Number

May 3, 2019

Up Coming Events:

May 5 - Ramadan Begins

May 7 - Community BBQ 4:00 - 7:00 PM

May 9 - Early Release 11:30

May 17th - Mayfair Spring Carnival

From the Principal's Desk

I was able to visit Cuba last week with a group of BSD educators. We were welcomed into every school and were able to visit with children and adults proudly showing us their school and answering our questions. Where our schools must be tightly locked, their doors can be wide open all day because the country is very safe. There are no guns, and no drugs. (Even those who had done military service said they were issued guns, but never shot them.) Education is highly respected and valued in the country which is shown in the way students arrive at school. The children all wear uniforms, and every one we saw during the school day throughout our time, was wearing crisp, clean, ironed uniforms - regardless of where we saw students throughout the city. It was impossible to tell which child had more advantage than another. The crisply ironed white shirts were notable because they had to have been washed by hand. Laundry hanging on lines was visible throughout the neighborhoods but not one laundromat. Students walked to school, as cars are a luxury and difficult to get. Once inside the schools, we learned that every child in Cuba has equal access to the same level of education. The curriculum affords all the same opportunity to access a free University education, entrance to which is based upon the national exam in 12th grade, which is written longhand. The scores of that exam, in conjunction with their class standing, is the basis of the program they are accepted into of the three choices they make. Children are not allowed to work until they are 18, and have the option to attend trade schools rather than go on to the University. Students were happy, respectful, and we got a sense of community in every school we visited. Students stay with the same teacher from Kindergarten through 6th grade and the elementary teachers have to teach everything - including PE, Music, Art and Library. Their resources are very thin as evidenced by the computer lab in the elementary school with only 8 older computers for a school the same size as EES. Chalk boards, copying

Whole School Assembly

May 9, 2019

Volunteer Appreciation - Lean on Me

(cont)

down the questions and responding in cursive, and crowded rooms were the norm.

So how were the students doing? According to the World Bank and UNESCO, Cubans have a literacy rate of 99.8%. Vermont's literacy rate is 93%. Only 18 U.S. States have a literacy rate above 90% and some have a rate below 80%. According to an analysis by UNESCO, among 17 Latin American countries, Cuban students take first place in all subjects, possessing at least twice the knowledge and skills of the average Latin American student. So how do they do it? First and foremost, education and educators are respected, honored and valued by the entire society. Students are taught from the beginning that it is their responsibility to contribute to their society and their responsibility to learn so that they are better able to contribute. We were told multiple times that Cubans "share what we have, not what we have left".

I'd always wanted to go to Cuba and have been perplexed at our long standing embargo against the small island nation. Growing up during the Cold War, I got the whole political thing, but let's face it, we're working with larger communist or socialist nations that are far more capable in terms of military might than little Cuba. Perhaps some may not want us to see that it is possible to put the needs of people first and to have people work together for a common goal, while still honoring individual effort and entrepreneurial spirit. People can start private businesses; the tax rate is 10% of their profits. The country puts more of it's

GDP into education than any other country in the world; more than twice as much at the U.S. The top priorities of the country are education and health care. Everyone is given one home but if they want to move, that's up to them to figure out. There is a lot of crumbling infrastructure because of the impact of the embargo that the U.S. is insisting be carried on; an embargo that is being pushed on the third generation of Cubans for daring to reject the U.S. colonialism and control that occurred 60 years ago (and yes U.S. owned assets were confiscated in the process). There are those who would have us believe that there is a reason to fear Cuba, but my experience says that we can learn a lot from Cuba about how to better take care of each other. The contrast between the Cuban culture and where we have arrived couldn't have been more starkly illustrated than the news report on my flight home, where I learned of yet another shooting at a synagogue.

FOR PARENTS OF 5TH GRADERS:

We are collecting photos of 5th Graders when they were around age 5-6, for a slide show during the Celebration of Learning in June. If you haven't already sent in a photo, please do so **by May 12** if possible. Please give the photo to your teacher or email it to Pam Moreau at pmoreaulawvt@gmail.com. or call at 999-4590.

PTO NEWS

PTO LEADERS: Jenny Sullivan, Pam Moreau & Stacey Kelleher PTO CONTACT: pto@eespto.org

SIGN UP TO HELP WITH MAYFAIR

It's almost time for Mayfair 2019! The Mayfair Spring Carnival takes place this year on **Friday, May 17th**. This event is one of the PTO's largest fundraisers and an Edmunds tradition! Dollars raised during Mayfair help to fund enrichment activities, such as art, language, and science programs, that would otherwise be unavailable to Edmunds kids. Funding is also given to teachers to provide basic but essential classroom supplies. It takes many volunteers to pull off Mayfair. If you would like to volunteer in any way please sign up below. Thanks in advance. We couldn't do it without you! [Sign up here to volunteer for Mayfair 2019!](#)

FROM THE COMMUNITY:



Join the BPD, Mayor Miro, city departments, and our community partners to welcome in spring, May 7th at S. Union, adjacent to Edmunds Middle School. Check out cruisers and trucks from various agencies, activities and information shared by our community partners, a K9 Demo with our newest recruit "Bully", a Drone Demo by UVM's Spatial Analysis Lab, Ben & Jerry's ice cream, street games, a visit by CHAMP, and of course a BBQ! We hope to see you there.



New American Safety Festival

Join us for
Saturday, May 11 9 am - 12 pm
Winooski School District
60 Normand Street, Winooski, VT

Rain or Shine



- Car and Booster Seat Inspection and Installation: 9am - 11am
First come, first serve. Car, children and current seats must be present.
- Bike Helmet
Bike helmet giveaways, child must be present for fitting.
- Interpretation
Donated by the Language Access Services at UVM Medical Center
- Sign Up for Camp SPLASH — Free Swim Lessons This Summer
Available for children and teens, ages 3 - 18.

Questions? Email Abby.Beerman@UVMHealth.org

