



# Hillel Highlights

September 2, 2011

**GRAETER'S IS GREAT FUN** - Many thanks to Shari Jacobs for organizing a sweet event for Hillel families and friends. Scoops of ice cream, hand prints on canvas, friends and families relaxing on a warm summer eve - a fine way to say good-bye to summer.

**IN THE SWIM** - They arrived! One tank of goldfish varieties; the other with tropical fish. Lots to look at and learn when comparing the two schools, two aquatic communities. How are they alike? How are they different?

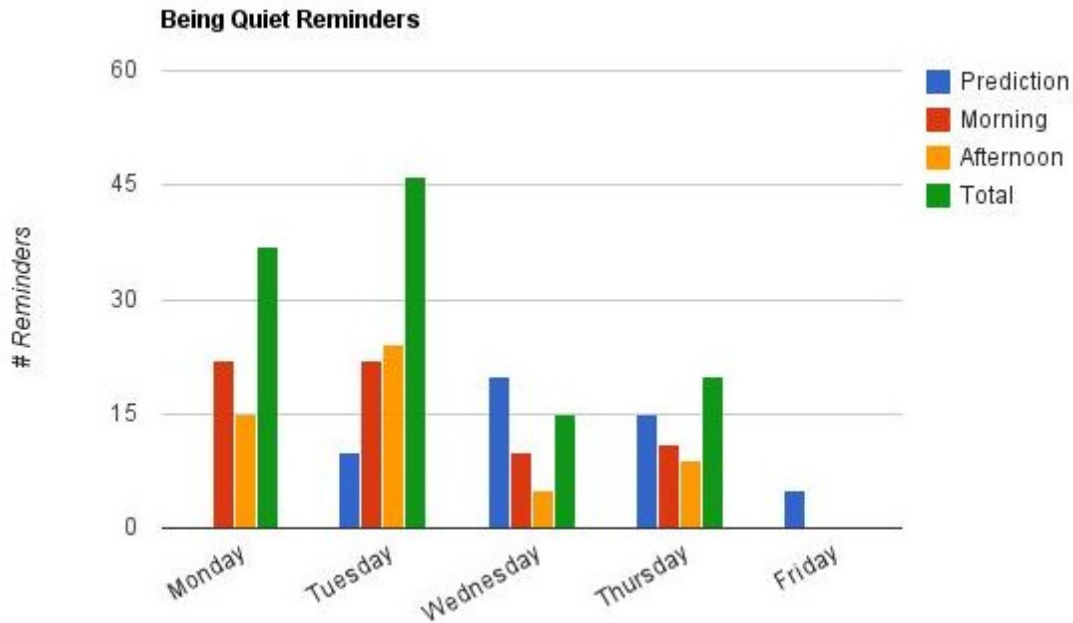
**COMPARING COMMUNITIES** - Speaking of comparing communities, students in grades 1-4 have been talking about the rural, suburban, and urban environments around us. They worked with Venn diagrams to organize how those communities are alike, how they are different. All of this is in good preparation for our first field trip of the year to Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm Thursday, September 8th. There, students will identify and learn about natural communities and how they are linked together. The trip is rain-or-shine, so take a look at the weather that day and dress appropriately. Unless there is thunder and lightning, we'll be on the trails. We're planning to eat lunch there before returning to the school at 1:30. Since everyone packs lunches anyway, it shouldn't affect your morning routines.



**FIRST ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM** - As mentioned last week, immediately following the Aullwood trip, Chris Rowlands will spend an entire week in residence with our students. Under his direction, students will use the content knowledge they've gained at Aullwood and here at Hillel to compose original songs about nature. The students have already begun work on writing the lyrics for our school song, so they are already developing the skills needed for the nature songs.

**GETTING TO KNOW YOU** - Teachers have been and will continue doing a variety of formal and informal assessments so that we can get to know every child's areas of academic strength and areas to be targeted for growth. These assessments are a normal part of schooling so there is nothing special (other than making sure that the children always get plenty of rest) that needs to be done in preparation. When we have a more complete picture we'll work to develop individual learning goals.

**DANCE HILLEL, DANCE** - We are pleased to announce that beginning next week our students will get to learn traditional, Israeli dance right here at school. Many thanks to Mrs. Christie Bealer, a member of our local Jewish community, for volunteering to teach dance on Monday afternoons during September and October. Dance is one of the most important ways that we celebrate and pass on our cultural heritage. Mostly, it's fun!



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WE'RE CHARTING - Early last week we talked with the children about things we might want to focus on so that we could be a strong learning community. They thought (and we agreed) that there were too many interruptions because of people talking out of turn. So, we charted how many times things had to stop because an adult had to say, "please be quiet". The first day there were 22 interruptions in the morning, 15 in the afternoon. On Tuesday, students predicted there would only be 10 reminders all day long ... but we actually got worse. Discussion on Wednesday resulted in a more reasoned prediction of 20 reminders... determination led to a total of only 15 (that's for all classes!). As the children improve their efforts, we've noticed a positive difference in the amount and quality of work being done. Not where we need to be, but high marks to the kids for getting us on the right path.



