



### ***School Focus:***

## **Vine Street School, a Great Place to Grow**

by Lynn Coy-Ogan, Principal

Since its opening in 1951, Vine Street School has been a “great place to grow”. Vine Street is currently a K-3 school nestled in among neighborhood housing on the west side of the city. Our current school enrollment is 220 students. The School first began as a K-6 school and has housed as many as 600 children at one time. The profile of the school is ready for another change as we pilot a pre-kindergarten program during the upcoming school year, in addition to our current classrooms.

Vine Street is fortunate to have an outstanding staff whose experience in education totals 450 years of expertise. This spring we honored two of our faculty members as they prepared for retirement. Together Maria Brontas, grade one teacher, and George Gorham, guidance counselor, have devoted three quarters of a century to educating Bangor students. The Vine Street staff commits many hours far beyond the school day to enrich the educational experiences of our students. As our school philosophy highlights, we are committed to working together to make school a positive, successful and safe experience for every child.

This past year, our school, along with the others in the system, participated in developing a comprehensive school improvement plan. Our goals currently focus on improving math and writing performance. The work of our school team has encouraged extensive reflection on student data trends. This reflection has led to professional development experiences that promote the most effective instructional practices.

Each year, as Vine Street School opens its doors to a new class of children who are eager to begin their school experience, we renew our commitment to nurturing the intellectual, social and physical growth of each child entrusted to our care. *We strive every day to ensure that Vine Street School is a great place to grow.*

## ***Growing Through Professional Development***

by Peg Walsh and Dianne Johnson

The staff at Vine Street School considers professional development an important aspect of their teaching. Long after students have gone home, the staff can be found working on various challenges that face Bangor teachers today. They may be at grade level team meetings or attending classes to meet the challenges of the No Child Left Behind legislation and the Maine Learning Results. *(Continued on page 15)*

## ***Growing Through Extended Learning Opportunities***

by Shelly Tennett

At Vine Street School learning opportunities extend well beyond the regular school day and even through the summer. Vine Street’s after-school program has numerous offerings such as our writing program for second and third graders.

This program supports the school-wide goal of improving writing mechanics and topic development. *(Continued on page 15)*

## ***Growing with PTO Support***

by Kelly Mead

The students and staff at Vine Street School benefit from the work of a dedicated Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Each year, the PTO sponsors many events at our school. The goal of each activity is to foster the educational and social growth of our school community.

Some of its contributions can be seen even before entering the school building! The flowers for the beautiful outdoor gardens and the lovely signs at the school are generous gifts and represent hard work by our parent group.



**GEORGE:** When Vine Street families visited the spring book fair, they were greeted by Curious George who encouraged them to read every day.



**MATH:** Vine Street second and third grade students enjoyed the opportunity to engage in a variety of math activities and games at Family Math Night on May 20, 2004.

it. The hands were then displayed as a rainbow. This has remained on the hallway wall as a reminder of the teamwork of the Vine Street School community.

The PTO continuously demonstrates its support of the Vine Street School staff in thoughtful ways. Each day throughout Teacher Appreciation Week, parents provide special treats for the staff. The school year concludes with a staff luncheon provided by our PTO. *Thanks to the efforts of our Parent Teacher Organization, Vine Street School is truly a great place to grow!*



**HANDS:** The “Rainbow of Kindness” project was sponsored by the Vine Street PTO as part of the National Random Acts of Kindness week. The colorful display of student handprints represent multiple acts of kindness performed by the children at Vine Street School.





## Growing Through Community Involvement

by Carolyn Bower

At Vine Street School, we believe that children grow through community involvement. By going out into the community, and by inviting the community into the school, children develop a broad base of knowledge.

Food and nutrition was an instructional focus this year. Students went to a supermarket to learn about food groups and get "behind the scene" facts about food. Students also visited Chef Cheryl Wixson's home. They prepared pizza, made fruit kabobs, sampled fresh vegetables, set tables complete with linens and flowers freshly picked from the garden and shared a meal together.

Nutritionist Lynn Bolduc visited second grade classrooms. She discussed food groups and how to eat well. Mrs. Bolduc conducted an experiment that demonstrated the high sugar content of soda. Mrs. Bolduc also emphasized that serving size was an important food label indicator for children to learn how to check.



**BUGS:** A Vine Street student examines a scorpion brought to Vine Street by "The Bug Guy" from the Discovery Museum.

Creatures who "share our world" are always topics of interest for children. The "Bug Guy" from the Discovery Museum visited Vine Street School this spring. He gave an informative talk as well as offered real live bugs to see and hold. Children had the opportunity to handle a large millipede, a tarantula, an African cave cockroach and a hissing cockroach.

Kindergartners were treated to a show at the Bangor Auditorium that featured two somewhat larger creatures - elephants! An elephant trainer shared information about the animals and even showed off a couple of the elephants' skills. The children's favorite was the elephant who played a harmonica!

Firefighter Shellie from the Bangor Fire Department is a regular visitor at Vine Street. She enthusiastically shares vital fire prevention information with each grade level.

Community Reading Day brings readers from the local community into every class in the school. All the readers share their love of reading and deliver a message about the importance of reading.

And of course, every week there are many community members who volunteer at Vine Street. All of them bring their own special gifts to the children, enriching their lives. Whether students go out into the community or whether the community comes to school, children benefit from the many resources in the Bangor community. *Thanks to extensive and generous community involvement, Vine Street School is truly a great place to grow!*



**PIZZA:** Chef Cheryl Wixson demonstrates the art of making nutritious pizza. After learning the technique, visiting Vine Street kindergartners were eager to create and sample their own.

## Growing through the Arts

by Sara Cox

In conjunction with our strong academic program, Vine Street students are provided with many cultural experiences throughout each school year. The funding for these performances is supplemented by grants from our Parent Teacher Organization. The following are highlights of experiences featured at Vine Street School this year.



### Visiting Author

To the delight of his many Vine Street fans, Scott Nash, illustrator of *Flat Stanley*, spent May 7th at our school. Mr. Nash has illustrated many books and designed for ABC Saturday Morning, PBS and Nickelodeon. Readers of *Child*, *Parents* and *Nick Jr.* are also familiar with his work. Nash read his book *Tuff-Fluff* to enthralled youngsters. Mr. Nash also demonstrated his sketching techniques and answered questions about just what an author-illustrator does. Meeting a talented artist and writer was a horizon-expanding experience for all our students.

**FLAT STANLEY:** Author and illustrator Scott Nash captivated students at Vine Street School by demonstrating his sketching techniques. *Flat Stanley* is one of his most popular characters, known by elementary children everywhere.

### Bangor Symphony Orchestra Youth Concert

"The timpani drums are really big!"  
"I liked the shiny brass instruments."  
"I want to play the bass when I get taller."  
"I would like to be a conductor when I grow up."

These are comments made by third graders after attending the Bangor Symphony Orchestra Youth Concert in March. This year's program, "I Know That," featured music by Offenbach, Copland, Verdi, Grieg and Sousa. The students spent many weeks learning about musical instruments, the symphony orchestra and concert etiquette. They created individual symphony packets filled with descriptive writing, vocabulary words, music, listening maps and drawings. They made the most of this opportunity to hear great music live, a wonderful and enriching experience for everyone.



**OCEAN GUY:** Phil Averill delighted Vine Street students with grade level presentations about the deep blue sea and the many creatures who live in its waters.

### Ocean Adventure

So close to home and yet so far away; an apt description of the ocean for many Vine Street students until Phil Averill visited our school. Known throughout New England as "The Ocean Guy", Mr. Averill delighted students during his daylong visit in April. Kindergartners were introduced to some of creatures that inhabit the deep blue sea. First graders had a hands-on experience with animals in a touch-tank that had been on display in the school lobby throughout the day. Second grade students learned the economic importance of commercial fishing to our state. They also experienced the sensation of being "caught" in a large net! The focus for third graders was on the whales, dolphins and porpoises that live off the coast of Maine. Learning about the ocean was lots of fun, even if no one got wet!

*As you can see, through ongoing exposure to enriching academic and cultural experiences, Vine Street School is truly a great place to grow.*



## Asian Art Theme

(con't. from page 4)

turtle and butterfly.

In their graphic arts unit, Art 1 students carved linoleum blocks with an illustration of a Chinese character. Each student made enough prints so that every student in the class could have a class set. Students then glued the blocks into an accordion-style book they had made. In the sculpture unit, students learned about the significance of dragons in Chinese culture and made Chinese dragon tiles. With visiting artist Jan Owen, students created another accordion book using a simplified brush drawing combining the image of a bird with words.

For the second year, Drawing and Painting students learned the techniques of Chinese brush painting. They studied the four treasures of Chinese painting: bamboo brush, ink stick, ink stone and paper. They watched a video on Chinese brush techniques and then practiced the four gentlemen of Chinese painting: bamboo, orchid, plum blossom and chrysanthemum. These four incorporate the basic brush strokes found in traditional Chinese brush painting. Students ground their own ink using an ink stick and stone, and painted a Chinese landscape painting. These were incorporated into a Chinese-style scroll using paste paper in the place of the traditional silk to complete a very successful unit.

**SONGBIRDS:** Art I students created the brush painting of birds on this page. Miri Kim's painting is above right; Ed Ricker's appears at below right. Art I students employed Asian brush techniques they had studied as part of this year's Asian art theme.

## Art Club

(con't. from page 4)

and cleaning-up. Students enjoyed ownership of their meetings. Participation has been strong right up to the end of the year. We will continue this format next year.

We started the year off with our traditional T-shirt tie-dye and the designing of the official Art Club logo. It was then silk-screened onto the shirts. Club members also painted a ceramic tile mural, which will be donated to a lucky BHS Department. We have made books with traditional Japanese binding techniques, folded origami, macramed jewelry and other activities too numerous to list. We are looking forward to another eventful year with new art adventures to explore!

## Arts, Economics, Achievement

(con't. from page 5)

Many students find that their involvement in the arts provides an important outlet for creative expression. The skills cultivated by participation in the arts help students to look beyond the commonplace to find new ways of seeing and thinking. More than simply enrichment, the arts provide an avenue for self-discovery that reaches hearts and minds in meaningful ways.

Of late, Maine government leaders have begun to speak of "the creative economy". Governor John Baldacci has stated, "The creative economy is a catalyst for the creation of new jobs in Maine communities. People who create jobs want to live in places that have a diverse cultural mix and an innovative and educated workforce. Maine will be competitive economically if we continue to capitalize on the synergies between entrepreneurship, education, the arts and quality of life." Creative and innovative people help build the economy and make communities strong. Supporting the arts in schools also enriches Maine's cultural economy and ensures a productive future for its citizens.



## Public Art

(con't. from page 5)

Students design a public artwork for Bangor High that reflects an important experience from their time at BHS. They can choose to design a tribute to a specific teacher, or to focus on a discipline that inspired them. This assignment helps them work through the emotions associated with their transition from high school.

In the past, excellent examples of public art have been hung in the halls of Bangor High. One small mural illustrates the Class of 2003 class motto; another celebrates a student's interest in music. Several murals in the past have been designed as tributes to works of literature; these have been hung in the English department. One student's work was so admired by the teachers in the Multiple-handicapped room that the mural was hung there for those teachers and students to enjoy.

Advanced art students are excited about the possibilities this project allows. They make numerous exploratory sketches and develop a specific plan that must be approved before beginning their projects. The completed projects become something that they can be very proud of.

This unit provides a way for students to give something back to the school and to the community. The project helps them understand the purpose behind public art and allows them to establish their own public art legacy in the halls of Bangor High School.

## Vine Street Professional Development

(con't. from page 10)

During the previous year, the School Core Competency Team reflected upon the school's data trends and determined that student writing should become a focus at each grade level this year. Support for achieving this goal came from many sources. The system-wide Writing Committee provided direction for expanding the writing curriculum. Access to an expanded professional library and the acquisition of writing resources were also critical elements of the staff's growth.

Vine Street teachers targeted professional development in literacy, particularly writing. Teachers welcomed the opportunity to participate in a staff development course entitled, "An Exploration of the Writing Workshop in a Balanced Literacy Program". This program helped staff members establish consistency in writing expectations at each grade level.

Other outcomes of teachers' professional endeavors can be seen throughout the school. Teachers have a great deal of expertise, interest and enthusiasm for student writing that is evident in their classrooms and infects their students. Teachers now have a clear focus on key writing traits that current research indicates improves writing skills. *Thanks to effective professional development, Vine Street School is truly a great place to grow.*

## Vine Street Extended Learning

(con't. from page 10)

Students who require assistance are identified with diagnostic academic data. These children attend weekly classes to further develop their writing skills.

The sign language and art after school programs offer hands-on discovery. Participants in sign language learn to converse with each other as well as to sign words and poems. The art program introduces children to a variety of mediums including braided reed, paint, beads, decoupage and glaze.

All incoming kindergarten children are invited to attend the week-long pre-K summer program. This experience allows children and families to meet their kindergarten teachers and to become familiar with the routine of the regular school year.

Our summer school program is offered to first, second and third graders. This program enables students to practice and improve literacy and math skills in a small group setting.

The Parental Involvement Project is an examples of Vine Street's commitment to extending learning opportunities into the homes of its students. During this spring's kindergarten orientation, Principal Lynne Coy-Ogan gave parents an overview of the kindergarten instructional program and highlighted ways that school and families can work together to enhance children's learning. At the conclusion of the meeting, each family was given a packet of readiness materials - a children's book, magnetic letters and a list of learning activities.

Family Math Night for second and third grade students provides parents with an opportunity to see "math in action." During this experience, parents see the math concepts taught in school and learn ways to reinforce these concepts at home.

The staff at Vine Street embraces the belief that quality educational experiences for students and their families continue beyond the typical school day. Learning is a lifelong process. *Thanks to these extended learning opportunities, Vine Street School is truly a great place to grow.*

