

February 21, 2012

## **From the Principal — *Lynn Main***

Last Friday afternoon, the Lafayette cafeteria was invaded by over 100 famous American heroes. For the past six weeks the second grade has been studying heroes in literature and American history. They have been reading stories in reading class and non-fiction biographies in social studies. After getting an overview of what a hero is and what a hero does, the children picked out a famous American for individual research. They had to answer the W's of their heroes. The who, what, where, when and whys. Some classes made timelines, others posters. We even have hero trading cards hanging on team two. And then all this information needed to be distilled into a short, personal statement that would need to be memorized and recited at the American Hero Wax Museum which took place last Friday.

And while that sounds like a lot, that was only the beginning of the project. With the help of parents, costumes were created for each hero. We had beards and top hats. Lots of boys in suits and girls in "period" dresses. In music class, Miss Stinson taught the students some songs with heroism as the theme and those were practiced in class and rehearsed on the stage. Speeches were memorized and practiced with other classmates the willing audience. And when everything was ready, invitations were made and sent home and parents arrived to see their children in action.

Several years ago, our music teacher Mrs. Stump, coined a new word for Lafayette, informance. Not just a student performance like a play or music concert had been in previous years but an opportunity to inform parents and other classmates across the work we have been doing across the curriculum. We should have filed for a copyright for our word. Recently we heard it used at the Kennedy Center when the education director was giving us examples of how schools in the metro area share student learning with parents. It seems they are having informances, too. We have already had a few informances this year. The first grade Patriotic Celebration was the first one in November. Next came the fourth-grade Native American Powwow. And last week's second-grade American Heroes Wax Museum. But that is only the beginning. In March come the kindergarten plays, the fifth-grade 20th century music, art and writing night and the third-grade DC Theater Café.

All chances for Lafayette students to let you know what they have been learning in so many different areas of the curriculum. So we'll be learning civil war songs, jazz from the Roaring Twenties and Woody Guthrie folk songs. Studying the art of Jacob Lawrence and photography of Dorothea Lange. We have so much to learn this year at Lafayette. In science and social studies, in art and music. Our informances give us a unique way to tie everything together. To help our

students make the connections that make us better at critical thinking. So when you get that invitation to an informance, come to Lafayette and see what it is all about. I think you will be impressed with how much your children are learning everyday. And the fun they are having while they are learning.