Library
During the second half of the school year, Grade 4 students refresh and deepen their understanding of the library’s organizational system, particularly focusing on the subject categories of the Dewey Decimal System, and practice independently locating library materials. In April, during National Poetry Month, students are exposed to a wide variety of poetry forms and styles, and given the opportunity to explore the library’s diverse poetry collection. As the year draws to a close, students are asked to reflect on their experience over the course of the year as readers and researchers, thinking about how their reading and research habits and abilities have evolved and grown.

Literacy
In literacy, the fourth-graders end the year with an examination of the concept of Justice, through the lens of reading and discussing books with social issues embedded, and writing to make a difference using journalism and poetry as vehicles. Before this, the students explore the genre of Historical Fiction through reading and talking in Book Clubs and by writing their own historical fiction in the form of diary entries, letters or picture books. In both of these large scale reading projects, students work to consolidate a variety of reading comprehension skills including envisioning, empathizing and synthesizing, and push themselves to prepare for conversations through noting and marking their ideas down on post-its and other materials. They also acquire experience with listening to class read-alouds and responding through talking and writing, in order to grow deeper thinking through group conversations. Students study the specific genres of historical fiction, journalism and poetry and work through the writing process in order to create original pieces, using self-chosen perspectives or topics as their focus. During the study on Historical Fiction, they work to weave together facts from the time period with fictional anecdotes and details in multiple scenes. Using mentor texts, including the class read aloud “Blood on the River,” students use specific craft techniques to make their writing come alive and remain authentic to the time period. The two last writing projects allow students to consolidate their understanding and independence with the writing process. Students use specific revision techniques as they go back to weave through both fact and fictional details in their entries, and make sure their entries connect in thoughtful ways. They use the lens of revision to continually go back to add in or change details as they go from initial stages of brainstorming to the final drafts. During the editing stages, students work to apply their ongoing knowledge of spelling patterns and grammatical rules and are encouraged to continually reread their own writing, looking for one thing at a time to independently edit.

Mathematics
Grade 4 was filled with a variety of authentic investigations designed to solidify whole number operations. Students explored the relationship between number of students, faculty members, and project groups involved in Integrated Project’s Week (IPW) at The School. They applied their understanding of division by using the partial quotients strategy. Students transitioned from whole number operations into fractions by investigating their connection to division and remainders. They also explored the connection between fractions, decimals, and percents using a variety of math models in authentic contexts connected to the concept of Justice. As they continued throughout the semester they examined classification systems and uncovered more sophisticated relationships between two-dimensional shapes using measurement to prove their properties. Students were also asked to reflect on their problem solving mindset and were given
opportunities to develop their strategies for tackling more complex problems. Most of all, fourth-graders were encouraged to be critical thinkers, efficient, and effective communicators of their ideas.

Performing Arts: Dance
The concepts of Exploration and Justice have been integrated into many of our dance lessons. Students begin the semester immersed in a study of modern dance. Not only do they learn the fundamentals of the technique and vocabulary, but they are also introduced to the history. The children research several modern dance pioneers and compile their information together to create a class dance history website. This study is especially enhanced by a partnership with New York City Center’s Education Department, and the opportunity to see Ailey II perform live. The very next day, two of the dancers come to our school to give each Grade 4 class a master class. As the semester comes to a close, students are engaged in a wonderful integrated music and dance performance of “The Frog Prince.” The children work very hard to learn, rehearse, choreograph and perform concert repertory connected to the story. Their performance is truly the highlight of the year!

Performing Arts: Music
The Grade 4 students learned many songs and musical games relating to the theme of Country. The repertoire included a medley of games from around the USA and a variety of play parties. Play parties provided a vibrant form of socializing and entertainment across the country from Colonial times onward. On the recorder, the students continued to work on developing fluency with B, A and G, and D and E in both octaves. The students developed increased mastery on the barred instruments using alternating hands at quick tempi. They also worked creatively with the magical story “The Frog Prince,” which included body percussion, instrumental work, dance and speech, along with mastering a variety of songs related to the curricular theme of Justice.

Science
As part of their study of the concept Exploration, the students learn to program with sensors using Scratch, LEGO WeDo, and MaKey MaKey, a physical computing input board. Sensors including motion, distance, volume, conductivity and touch are programmed to construct experimental musical interfaces. The culminating project involves programming chance activated artwork and music. As part of their study of Justice, fourth-grade scientists explore the incredible diversity of marine life through a variety of experiments and readings. The hands-on study of salinity and temperature currents, fish and squid anatomy, and seashell classification as well as marine food webs helps students understand how organisms adapt to thrive in their environment. Each student researches a specific marine animal of her/his choice. Throughout the unit, the students ask questions, gather evidence and communicate their ideas orally and in writing.

Social Emotional Learning
In Grade 4, social and emotional learning skills and objectives were imbedded in the children’s study of Country, Exploration and Justice. By examining the impact that exploration had on native peoples, children gained an appreciation for the impact that one group of people can have on another, and began to consider questions of responsibility and equity. Working in large and small groups, the children also developed SEL skills by practicing different constructive strategies for handling upsetting situations, continuing to show cooperative behaviors in group settings, and, in general, advocating appropriately for themselves and their peers in a variety of social interactions.

Spanish Language/Literacy
This second semester and in connection with the Library’s Leo’s Choice Award, we held our own Leo Lee award, where students were introduced to the concept of Justice through the reading of Sonia Sotomayor’s
biography. They continued working on their yearlong theme of country by reading “Estrelita se despide de su isla” and finally they explored the typical food and traditions of Hispanic cultures reflected in “El Sancocho del sábado.” In conjunction with the study of Native Americans and their fiber arts in Grade 4, students learned about native textiles from Central America and the cultures they represented. They learnt more about the Mayan culture and some of their most outstanding achievements and heritage to today’s Mayan indigenous groups. They explored the concept of nationality through the study of food, traditions and symbols that represent a nation and its people, practicing subject-adjective agreement in descriptions of people, clothing and objects. Finally and connected with their exploration of marine wildlife, students studied land and marine animals native to Central America and described animals using physical characteristics.

**Visual Arts**

Grade 4 students begin the semester practicing their observational drawing skills by looking closely at objects from nature. Then, in connection with the Grade 4 study of Colonial crafts, the students explore the weaving process with paper and yarn. Following spring break, we undertake an in-depth painting project based on the cross-disciplinary study of marine life. Students use their skills in color mixing, composition, and brush techniques to capture results of their Science research. Finally, we end the year with a set design project that culminates in a performance integrating the students’ work in dance, music and visual art.

**Wellness**

During the second half of the school year, Grade 4 students work on striking with an implement. They use a racquet and a shuttlecock to practice skills related to badminton. Students not only practice skills, but are also able to discuss the need for rules and regulations within the sport of badminton. Students participate in singles and doubles games as well as a small tournament with modified rules. Students learn about the history and creation of the sport of basketball, as well as essential skills for the sport. Students demonstrate understanding and knowledge gained throughout the basketball unit by displaying learned skills in several drills and game-like situations. Students are also introduced to the sport of rugby, learning some history, rules and regulations of the sport, and then making connections to sports they may be more familiar with. Connecting to the Grade 4 theme of Justice, students debate the need for justice in sports, and discussed how sports have affected justice in society throughout history.