

# *The Blue Jays' News Nest*

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## Welcome Back!

Welcome back to the 2007-2008 Gillen Brewer School year! We have established ourselves as the Blue Jays and are ready to take flight into the new year. There are a lot of great things in store for the Blue Jays this year such as fun field trips, projects and of course, lots of learning.

We are excited to have the privilege of participating in Asphalt Green's sports program this year. The Blue Jays have swimming Monday mornings, soccer on Wednesdays and basketball on Fridays. The instructors at Asphalt Green are all very

knowledgeable and energetic. The Blue Jays seem to be having a fantastic time running, playing and learning new skills. The sports program will also be a great opportunity for the Blue Jays to work together as a team and interact with other Gillen Brewer children.

We are also pleased to have a science and technology specialist this year. Andrea Oliver, formerly an assistant teacher at Gillen Brewer, will be teaching science and technology to the Blue Jays. In science the children will be exploring a variety of topics through classroom discussions and hands-on science labs.

The Blue Jays have begun the year learning about sound waves.

In technology, students will be learning about different types of technology. They will be working on laptops, which are an exciting new addition to Gillen Brewer and very highly motivating to our students.

We are looking forward to a great year!

**Gillen Brewer  
School**

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## Reading Groups

This year in reading the Blue Jays will continue to work in leveled groups for lessons on spelling and reading comprehension. We have started with the PAF program along with the Merrill readers as in

previous years. However, we will work to move on from this program and focus on reading comprehension with chapter books geared more towards the students' interests. Spelling words throughout

the year will be a reflection of spelling rules the students are learning in their groups as well as vocabulary words from social studies and science lessons.

## Math

This year in math the Blue Jays will work with the Saxon math program at the second and third grade levels. Math will also be incorporated throughout the day during other activities. Students will work on mapping skills, money, counting and other everyday math skills.

The Blue Jays are learning how math carries over into other areas such as art. They have been exploring lines in art with our new art teacher Kate. They have been experimenting with vertical, horizontal, oblique and curvy lines and how these lines can make different types of shapes when used in combination.

## Writing

In writing this year the Blue Jays will really focus on the different parts that make up the bigger piece of writing. The children will work on writing letters, personal narratives and writing creatively. The Blue Jays have begun by working on parts of grammar. They are working hard at identifying nouns, proper nouns, verbs and adjectives. In October the students will begin to focus on sentence formation and structure and eventually will begin to focus on paragraph formation.

## Social Studies

This year in social studies the Blue Jays will be following the New York State Standards for fourth grade social studies curriculum. We will focus on American History with a concentration on New York state. This month the Blue Jays studied the Algonquin people. The children made their own class wigwam and painted pictures inspired by an Algonquin legend, complete with captions writ-

ten in the Algonquin language. The children learned that the Algonquin people were "caring and sharing" people. Ask your child what a wampum is, what it is made of, and how it was used!

In October we will be learning about the Iroquois and will then compare the two tribes.

## Classroom News

The Blue Jays are already gearing up for some fantastic field trips! In October Gillen Brewer's art teacher Kate will be leading the Blue Jays on a tour on the Museum of Modern Art. We also plan on taking a trip to the Museum of Natural History to check out the exhibit on east coast Native

Americans.

The Blue Jays also have the pleasure of project making with Gillen Brewer's fabulous volunteer Don Pearlstein. Don will be joining our classroom on Thursdays to help us build projects related to our social studies lessons. The Blue Jays have already made a diorama of an Algonquin village

and a model of an Iroquois longhouse. We are happy to have Don be a part of our class!