



# FARMINGTON RIVER ELEMENTARY FAMILY NEWS

01/09/2025

**Dear Farmington River Elementary Families,**

Happy New Year! I hope this message finds you well and that you had a wonderful holiday season filled with rest and quality time with loved ones. As we step into 2025, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude for your continued partnership and support. Together, we've created a strong and vibrant school community where students can learn and thrive.

The start of a new year is always a time of renewal and fresh beginnings, and we are excited to see what the remainder of the school year will bring. As we return from the holiday break, we are focused on helping students settle back into routines, reconnect with their peers, and dive into engaging learning experiences.

We have many exciting events and initiatives planned for the coming months. From academic programs and extracurricular activities to community events and celebrations, there will be plenty of opportunities for students to shine and families to get involved. Be sure to mark your calendars, and stay tuned for updates through our biweekly newsletter and notices from the front office and our teachers.

This month, we are also emphasizing the importance of setting goals. Whether it's mastering a new skill or improving a behavior, we encourage students to reflect on their progress and set personal goals for the year ahead. By fostering a growth mindset, we can help our children embrace challenges and celebrate their successes, big and small.

Thank you for being such an integral part of our school community. Your involvement and support make a world of difference in the lives of our students. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas as we move forward together.

Wishing you and your family a happy and healthy start to the new year!

Sincerely,  
Laurie Flower, *Principal*

**"Challenges are what make life interesting, and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful."**

**- Joshua J. Marine (Author)**

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

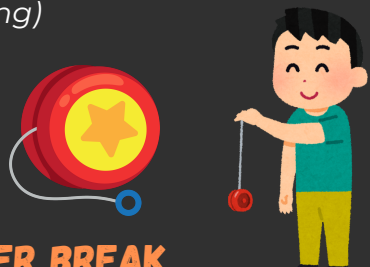
**SCHOOL COMM. MEETING**  
MON., JANUARY 6, 7:00 PM

**SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING**  
THURS., JANUARY 9, 3:15 PM

**DENTAL CLINIC**  
TUES., JANUARY 14  
*(Please contact Nurse Grace for more information)*

**MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY**  
MON., JANUARY 20  
NO SCHOOL

**THE NED SHOW ASSEMBLY**  
WED., JANUARY 29 @ 9:00 AM  
*(Inspires students with mindset, perseverance, and character-building)*



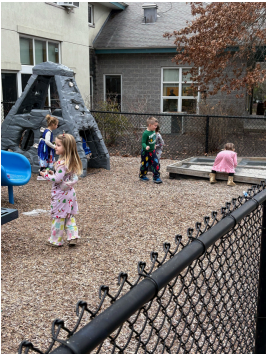
**WINTER BREAK**  
MON., FEB 17 - FRI., FEB 21



## RESPECT AND DRAGON EGGS: A SCAVENGER HUNT CELEBRATION

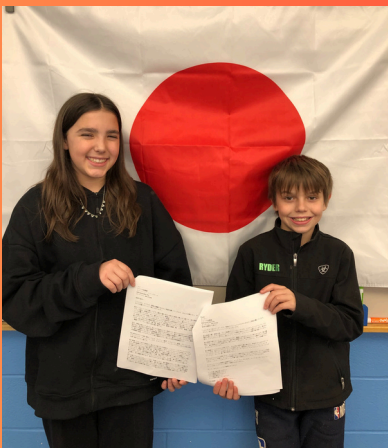
The day before vacation, our students celebrated an incredible accomplishment through our positive behavior incentive program! After weeks of showing respect — our focus theme — and earning dragon cards, they filled the Dragon Tube and earned the reward they voted for: a scavenger hunt on the playground.

Excitement filled the air as students eagerly searched for hidden prizes, laughing and working together to discover the treasures. It was the perfect way to wrap up the focus on respect and start the break on a high note. We are so proud of their hard work and can't wait to see what they'll achieve next!



# GRADE 6 WRITES LETTERS TO THEIR JAPANESE PEN PALS!

Grade 6 students show the Japanese translations of pen pal letters they created this week in Mr. Keller's class. The detailed letters are being mailed off to an international elementary school outside of Tokyo, in hopes of creating school-based pen pal friendships.



エマ  
アメリカ合衆国  
アーモントン リバースクール  
555 North Main Rd.  
オーティス, MA 01253

日本の友人へ

こんにちは、エマです。学校の課題であなたに手紙を書いています。あなたが書かなら、あなたと交流したいという思いもあります。

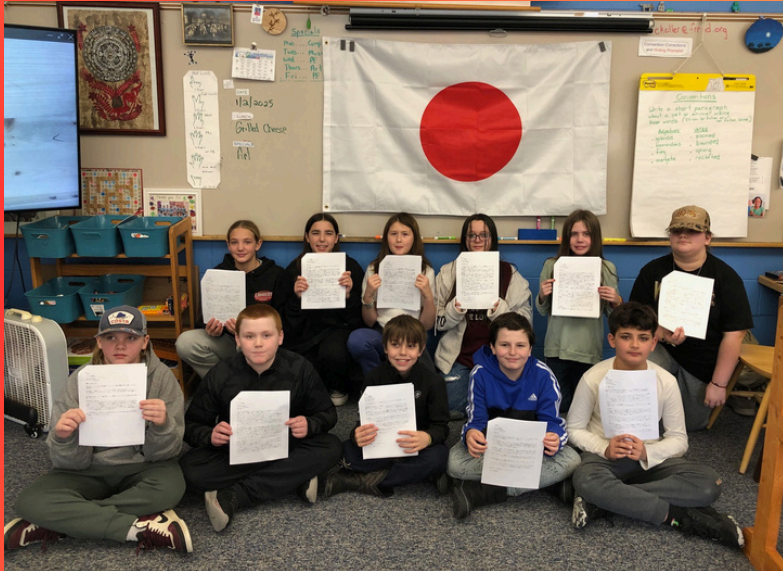
私のことをいくつかお話しします。年中の真ん中まで仲のいい茶色と黒い髪です。目は茶色です。身長は5フィート1インチです。服装は、スウェットパンツとパーカーにコンパースを履いています。また、僕のネックレスと髪梳きブレスレット4つ、僕のブレスレット4つとリストバンドを大切にしています。1つはUMASS (UMASSはマサチューセッツ州立大学の略で、大学です) で、もう1つはBTSのもので、私はマサチューセッツ州に住んでいて、劇的な映画を見て、さまざまな動物を観ています。私の隣人はノナとハバ (祖父) です。兄弟がいます。私の好きなものは、食べ物、動物、BTS、家族や友達、馬、うさぎ、音楽、YouTube、韓国ドラマ、そして好きな色は黒と緑です。

次は、学校の変わった点です。私たちがケララ先生です。私たちはほぼすべての科目を学びます。私の好きな科目は数学です。今年これまでのところ、私の一番好きな教科書はUMASSへの通信です。私たちは音楽機一行き、とても素敵なお祭りのパフォーマンスを演じました。私は親友と仲良くしています。彼女が夜間授業に行かなくて、私はそれが嬉しいです。彼女は幼稚園で出会ったところからずっと私の親友なので、私たちは約10年間親友です。

私の好きな食べ物や飲み物は、パスタ、ラーメン、餃子、レモネード、魚、ブリッフェル、ステーキ、アイス、チョコレート、ピザ、チキンステーキ、ジュースです。これらは私の好きな食べ物のほんの一部です。

私の家族で有名な晩飯は、私たちが約72歳の誕生日は、ハロウィンとクリスマスです。また、私の家族がクリスマスに新年を祝うことをお話しします。クリスマスは24日には、お祭りでみんなとみんなの家族と一緒に夕飯を食し、お気に入りのクリスマスソングをみんなでお聴きします。家族の新年、祝い、そして新年の朝には家族と新年の挨拶をみんなでお聴きします。朝晩、私は11歳の時を過ぎて、肉體の距離に到達して約72歳まで待たなければなりません。私が肉體を食し、肉體の距離に到達して約72歳まで待たなければなりません。私はみんなとクリスマスが来ることを楽しみにしています。その間、最も大切な瞬間はクリスマスです。みんなが家族と一緒に過ごす時間です。それはとても大切な瞬間です。みんなが家族と一緒に過ごす時間です。それはとても大切な瞬間です。

私が読んでいるのはハロウィンです。年間を通じて、僕の家族のみんなと一緒に読むことができます。私はみんなとクリスマスで、僕と家族のみんなと一緒に読むことができます。僕はみんなとクリスマスで、僕と家族のみんなと一緒に読むことができます。僕はみんなとクリスマスで、僕と家族のみんなと一緒に読むことができます。



## BUS REMINDERS



As we continue to prioritize safety and respect in all areas of our school, I'd like to take a moment to remind our students about the importance of positive bus behavior. The bus is an extension of our school community, and following the rules prevents the driver from being distracted and helps ensure everyone has a safe and pleasant ride.

Here are the **five most important** rules for positive bus behavior:

1. **Stay seated while the bus is moving to keep yourself and others safe.**
2. **Use kind and respectful language with peers and the bus driver.**
3. **Keep your hands, feet, and belongings to yourself to maintain a peaceful environment.**
4. **Listen and follow the bus driver's instructions—they're there to ensure everyone gets home safely.**
5. **Enter and exit the bus calmly and orderly to avoid accidents.**

Thank you for reinforcing these expectations at home. Together, we can make every bus ride a positive experience!

## GRADE 5 BOOK CLUB PROJECTS

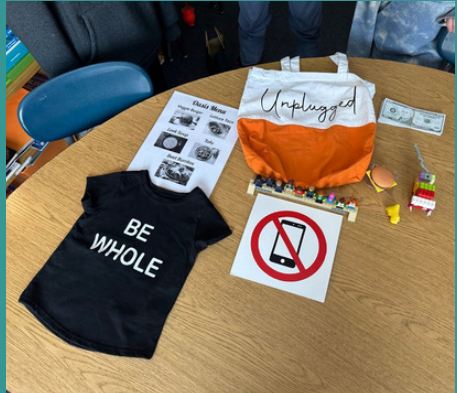
This past month, our 5th-grade book clubs wrapped up an exciting series of projects that showcased their creativity, teamwork, and love for reading. Students worked together in small groups to dive deeper into their chosen books and share their insights in fun and imaginative ways. Groups were tasked with putting together a reading schedule, answering questions about the books, and finally creating a project to represent their books.

One group brought the classic tale *Old Yeller* to life with a beautifully crafted diorama. The students recreated a pivotal scene from the book, *Old Yeller* saving Arliss from the bear. The attention to detail in the diorama was remarkable, from the carefully molded figures to the tiny trees. It truly captured the heartwarming and emotional essence of the story.

Another group tackled *Unplugged* by Gordon Korman with a "Book in a Bag" project. The students filled a bag with symbolic objects representing key moments and themes from the story. Items included a smartphone picture to symbolize the book's tech-free environment, figures to represent the characters in the book, as well as a healthy menu. During their presentation, the group explained how each item connected to the book, sparking interest and discussion among their classmates.

These projects were just a glimpse of the wonderful work happening in our 5th-grade classrooms. Thank you to all the students, teachers, and families who supported this creative journey. We can't wait to see what the next book club projects will bring!

Happy reading, 5th grade!



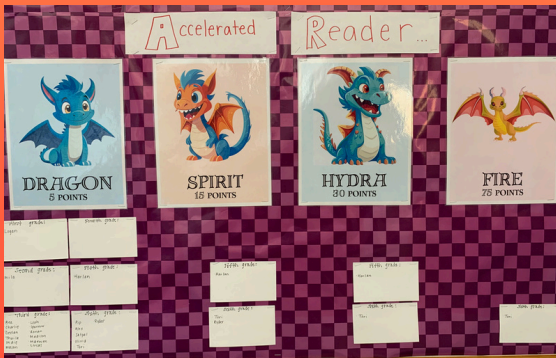
# PREK: LEARNING PATTERNS AND HEALTHY EATING

Preschool has started off the new year by exploring AB and ABC patterns. Using vegetable and vitamin pattern cards,



students worked independently and together to create sequences, reinforcing their pattern recognition skills. This fun activity also sparked conversations about the importance of healthy foods for our bodies. It's been a great week combining math and wellness!

## ACCELERATED READER AWARDS!



Students who have earned recognition (as of Tuesday 1/7/25 at noon):

### DRAGON (5 PTS):

- Logan W. (1st)
- Mila A. (2nd)
- Beatrice B. (3rd)
- Charlie C. (3rd)
- Declan C. (3rd)
- Thaila F. (3rd)
- Indica S. (3rd)
- Mason T. (3rd)
- Leah F. (3rd)
- Sparrow K. (3rd)
- Ronan S. (3rd)
- Madison T. (3rd)
- Maewen W. (3rd)
- Lucas W. (3rd)
- Harlan K. (5th)
- Tori R. (6th)
- Ryder S. (6th)

### SPIRIT (15 PTS):

- Harlan K. (5th)
- Alex G. (6th)
- Tori R. (6th)
- Ryder S. (6th)

### HYRDA (30 PTS):

- Harlan K. (6th)
- Tori R. (6th)

### FIRE (75 PTS):

- Tori R. (6th)

**THERE IS STILL TIME TO READ AND EARN POINTS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR OUR FIRST REWARD ACTIVITY!!**

**HAPPY READING!**

## FROM THE FRRSD SCHOOL COMMITTEE: PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE REGIONAL DISTRICT AGREEMENT

In 1992, a Regional District Agreement (RDA) was approved by the towns of Otis and Sandisfield, to form a new two-town regional school district. The RDA and the formation of the district made it possible to continue to educate our students close to home with local control through the School Committee.

Beginning in 2022, the School Committee took on the critical task of reviewing and revising the original RDA. In that review, a disparity was found between what the towns can afford to pay (according to the state) and how costs are currently divided between the towns. Recommended changes to the document include a new apportionment model to ensure continued financial sustainability of the district. This apportionment model is grounded in the Combined Effort Yield (CEY), a number calculated by the state using income data and property valuations to illustrate what each town can afford to pay in school operational costs.

What will this change in the apportionment methodology mean to the taxpayers of Otis and Sandisfield? Under the current RDA, the portion of the average single family tax bill in Sandisfield budgeted to FRRSD is about \$600 more per year than what it is in Otis. The proposed apportionment methodology will make the portion of the average single family tax bill that goes to FRRSD nearly equal in both towns.

On September 23, 2024, the School Committee unanimously voted FOR the amended RDA. Additionally, the Farmington River Regional Educators Association wrote a letter of support for the amended RDA, noting "the essential role that BOTH towns play in fostering a positive learning environment."

Soon voters of both towns will be asked to endorse the new agreement. A positive vote will preserve a nurturing community for students and families and maintain local oversight of our children's formative education.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit our website at the link <https://frrsd.org/district-information/frrsd-regional-agreement/>

Feel free to reach out to one of your elected School Committee members:

**Denise Hardie**  
School Committee Chair  
Otis  
dhardie@frrsd.org

**Deb Fogel**  
Otis  
dfogel@frrsd.org

**Melissa Bye**  
Sandisfield  
mbye@frrsd.org

**Carl Nett**  
School Committee Vice Chair  
Sandisfield  
cnett@frrsd.org

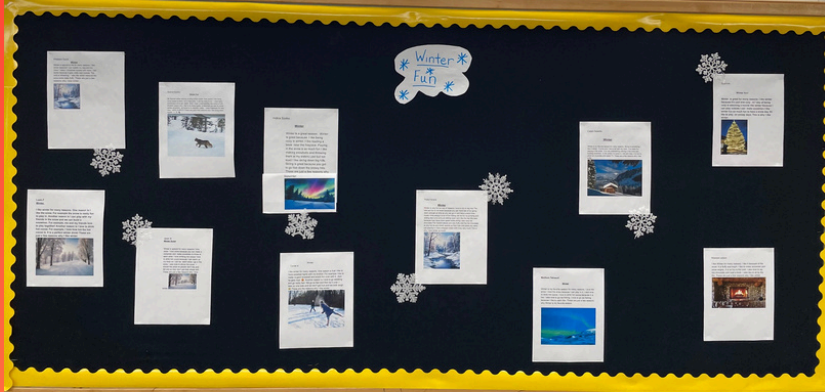
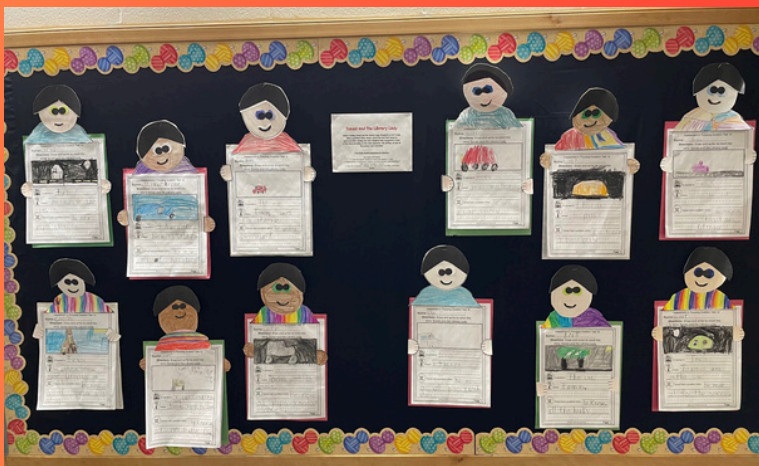
**Phil Magovern**  
Otis  
pmagovern@frrsd.org

**Douglas Miner**  
Sandisfield  
dminger@frrsd.org

**Stacey Schultze**  
Otis  
sschultze@frrsd.org

# BULLETIN BOARDS AROUND THE SCHOOL!

Our school is filled with vibrant bulletin boards that showcase the creativity, achievements, and spirit of our students. These boards are exciting opportunities for students to showcase their hard work and creativity. Featured here are a few of the many beautiful bulletin boards that decorate the hallway, including kindergarten counting with gingerbread men, first grade writing about “Thomas and the Library Lady,” celebrating Early Kindergarten’s classroom family, “Hats off to 2025” with PK/EK/K winter hats in art class, a resource board reminding students how to cope with their feelings, and a 3rd Grade writing excerpt on winter fun! Be sure to take a moment to explore them as you move through the halls!



## REMINDER:

### APPROPRIATE RECESS ATTIRE

Students will have outdoor recess if temperatures **feel like 20 degrees** or above.

Please ensure they arrive at school dressed appropriately with coats, hats, and gloves.

**Younger students (grades PK-3)** eager to explore the snow beyond the cleared blacktop will need snow boots and pants.

Boots and snow pants are recommended for students in **grades 4-6**; however, we trust our older students to make responsible choices, ensuring they stay warm and dry while enjoying their time outside.



THE NED SHOW ASSEMBLY

JAN. 29TH  
9:00 AM





# JOIN OUR TEAM AS A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER!

Are you looking for a rewarding opportunity to make a difference in our school community? Farmington River Elementary is seeking enthusiastic and dedicated substitute teachers to support our students and staff. Whether you're a retired teacher, a recent graduate, or someone who loves working with children, we'd love to hear from you!

Substitute teaching offers flexibility and the chance to be part of our vibrant school community. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact us at [frontoffice@frrsd.org](mailto:frontoffice@frrsd.org) for more details.

## SCHOOL-SPONSORED: FREE DANCE WORKSHOPS WITH PULSE GRADES 1-6

Thanks to a generous MCC grant, PULSE Dance Studio of Great Barrington will be hosting dance and movement workshops for students at FRRSD. The workshops are free and open to all students in grades 1-6 and will introduce students to many styles of dance including jazz, hip hop, and contemporary. All Workshop Sessions will be held on Tuesdays starting in February, 2025 from 3 until 4:15. Space is limited so be sure to sign up now! A permission form will be sent home to all interested parents!



**Tentative Workshop Dates:** Tuesdays: February 2, February 11, March 4, March 11, March 18th and March 25th, April 1, and April 15th

<https://massculturalcouncil.org>



## LOCAL EVENTS

**SWE@SMITH PRESENTS**

**INTRODUCE A GIRL TO ENGINEERING DAY 2025**

# SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

**March 8, 2025**

**Curious about Engineering?**  
Come join an engineering workshop facilitated by Smith College engineering students and learn how you can make a sustainable future!  
(Grades 6 - 8)

For more information, email [swe@smith.edu](mailto:swe@smith.edu)

Register Here!

**SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE PUBLIC HEALTH COLLABORATIVE**

# WINTER FLU & COVID VACCINE NO COST CLINIC

**St. Ann Church**  
**Sat, Jan 11, 2025**  
**12:30-3:30pm**  
**134 Main Street, Lenox**  
**Please Bring Your Insurance Card**

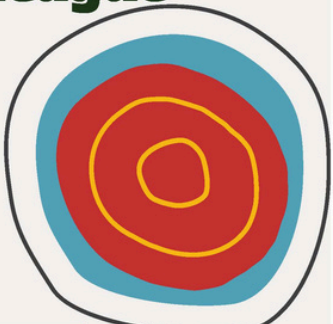
**Pre-Registration is Encouraged.**  
[home.color.com/vaccine/register/tritown](http://home.color.com/vaccine/register/tritown)

**NEED HELP?** Call (413) 243-5540 x109 for assistance registering or to see if you are eligible for an in-home vaccination

Standard (6 mos.+ ) and senior (65+ yrs) flu and COVID vaccine (6 mos+) will be available

[www.southernberkshirehealth.com](http://www.southernberkshirehealth.com)

## Saturday Youth Archery League



Lee Sportsman's Association  
865 Fairview Street, Len, MA 01228

## Lee & Otis Join the Saturday Youth Archery Program. If you're 6 years old, you're ready

Youth are taught the fundamentals from target shooting to 3D archery in the indoor range at Lee Sportsman's Association. The 10 week program is led by certified USA Archery instructors who have been COBI checked and all share a love for the sport.

**Jan 4th-Mar 8th**  
**Session 1 9-10am,**  
**Session 2 10:30-11:30am,**  
**Session 3 12:30-1:30pm**

**Registration** Cost is \$40 per participant. Registration required on Saturday, December 16th, 2024, 10am-12pm & Sunday, December 15, 2024, 2-5pm. Youth borrowing USA equipment must attend in person. For forms and additional information [leesportsmans.com/youth](http://leesportsmans.com/youth)

**Includes** Archery range use, bows, arrows, targets, and t-shirts for new students

**Coach** Head Coach Charles Minkoff, USA Archery Level 2 Instructor

**Location** Lee Sportsman's Association Clubhouse  
565 Fairview Street, Len, MA 01228

**Questions?** Please contact LSA Youth Programs Co-Chair Stephanie DuPont at [youth@leesportsmans.com](mailto:youth@leesportsmans.com) or call/text (215) 668-7808 with any further questions or concerns.

## Otis Library StoryWalk



A book about a young girl, her friend, and her grandmother who enjoy the sights and feelings of a snowy day. Through lyrical writing and beautiful art this book will inspire you to enjoy a snowy day with loved ones.

WHEN: Throughout the month of December

WHERE: Behind St. Mary's of the Lake, 48 N. Main St. Otis.

**YOUTH BERKSHIRE KIDS**

**South Berkshire Kids**  
CCE Grant  
**December 2024**  
Program Schedule

**Monday**  
Babies & Books @ Lee Library, 10:30am-11:30am. Drop in. \*No program 12/23 & 12/30

**Tuesday**  
Otis Explore & Play @ Otis Town Hall, 10:00am-11:30am. Drop in. \*No program 12/24 & 12/31

**Wednesday**  
Lenox Play @ Lenox Community Center, 10am-11am. Drop in. \*No program 12/25

**Thursday**  
Brain Builders @ Lee Library, 10:30am-11:30am. Registration required. \*No program 12/26

**Friday**  
Lee Gym Crossways Gym, 10am-11am. Drop in. \*No program 12/27

**\*All programs are free & open to the community!**

- Babies & Books with Jess @ Lee Library, 100 Main St/Lee, Mondays 10:30am-11:30am. This program is for infants, ages birth to 12 months. Join us as we sing, play and chat about the joys & challenges of being a parent/caregiver. Drop in.
- Otis Explore & Play with Aniso @ Otis Town Hall, 1 North Main Road/Otis, Tuesdays 10am-11:30am. This weekly playgroup will include play, songs, stories, and crafts. Drop in.
- Sing & Dance with Michelle @ Bushnell-Sage Library, 48 Main Street/Sheffield, Tuesdays 10:30am-11:30am. This program will include music, movement, and dance. Drop in.
- Lenox Play with Michelle @ Lenox Community Center, 65 Walker Street/Lenox, Wednesdays 10am-11am. Join us for this center-based playgroup with tabletop activities, free play, crafts & more. Great for toddlers & preschoolers. Drop in.
- New Marlborough Storytime with Jess @ New Marlborough Library, 1 Mill River GB Road, Wednesdays 10am-11am. This program includes a circle time with stories and songs, followed by a craft. Drop in.
- Brain Builders with Michelle @ Lee Library, 100 Main St/Lee, Thursdays 10:30am. This program is for ages 3-5. Registration required by emailing Jess at [jess@berkshireriverside.org](mailto:jess@berkshireriverside.org)
- Richmond Reads with Jess @ Richmond Library (located in the new town building), 1751 State Rd/Richmond, Thursdays 10:30am-11:30am. Join us for a storytime and craft. Drop in.
- Lee Gym @ Crossways Gym, 21 Crossways Street/Lee, Fridays 10am-11am. Join us for this gym time playgroup with balls, blocks, books and more! Drop in.

WHEN: Throughout the month of December  
WHERE: Behind St. Mary's of the Lake, 48 N. Main St. Otis.

Visit us online for additional resources & information  
[www.SouthBerkshireKids.org](http://www.SouthBerkshireKids.org) [www.Mass111.org](http://www.Mass111.org)

## 2023-2024 FRES NEWSLETTER ARCHIVES