



November 4, 2010

Dear Grade Two Parents,

Our current PYP Unit of Inquiry is called “*Everyone Has a History*” and our Central Idea is: *Ancestors make contributions that shape what future generations understand about themselves and their families.*

The students are inquiring into:

1. Significant events and experiences of family members that influence our personal and family histories.
2. Significance of keepsakes and heirlooms within families.
3. How knowledge of family history helps us to understand present day life.

This unit allows students to explore the concepts of family history and heritage to understand how their lives are shaped by the experiences of their ancestors. The curriculum areas of focus in this unit are Language Arts, Social Studies and Information Technology.

In order to complete the activities in this unit and to facilitate discussion, some extra work at home will be required. Please look for related homework and letters from school in your child’s agenda and PYP folder in the coming weeks.

**Two important activities that will require help at home are:**

### **Timeline of Significant Life Events**

In class, we have been discussing the fact that the students’ lives have been shaped either by recent family experiences or those that occurred generations ago. Several excellent picture books from our library have been used to help the students understand this concept. Any time parents can give to discussions about specific family traditions would be appreciated.

Each student will be asked to create a timeline of **6 – 10 significant events** in her life from birth to age seven. Parental assistance in identifying these life events would be appreciated. Some of the events that you and your child include should be able to be linked to family ancestry and experiences. For example, losing a first tooth may be a significant event on the timeline but it is not one that is linked to family ancestry. Of the **6 – 10 events** on the timeline, at least half should show this link. Below are two examples that demonstrate this link:

#### **Event 1**

**Year** 2004

**Event** taking my first violin lesson

**Why is it important?** This event is important because violin music was played and enjoyed by my grandfather and many other family members. Now my mother and I play music together. I play the violin and my mom plays the piano.

**Event 2**

**Year** 2005

**Event** I made the swim team

**Why is it important?** This event is important because I wanted to swim with my friends. I wanted to learn how to swim competitively. My mom was a competitive swimmer when she was my age and now she coaches in a swim club.

Please note, the year in which the event happened should be included, along with **3 – 4 detailed sentences** telling why the event is important. **The events and supporting information should be recorded on the pages set up for this purpose in the students' red PYP folder.**

The students should have **two** significant events completed by **Monday, November 8, 2010**. They should also begin to gather photographs and/or artifacts (i.e. a letter, an airplane boarding pass) to attach to their timelines. The **remaining events** should be completed by **Friday, November 19, 2010**. On this date, please send any photos and/or artifacts to school to support the timeline events. Photos may be emailed to [bhuggins@elmwood.ca](mailto:bhuggins@elmwood.ca). Scanned photos and photocopies are acceptable as they will be glued onto the timeline.

**“Treasure Hunt”**

1. Go on a “*treasure hunt*” around your home or the home of another family member (i.e. grandparents).
2. Find a treasured object that has sentimental meaning to your family, or that gives some information about your family history. Suggestions could include family quilts, antique toys, photographs, clocks, tools. The students will be asked to provide a picture of the item and to interview a family member to learn about the treasure and the family story connected to it.

***More detailed information about this activity will follow as our unit progresses.***

Each of our families is unique. Parents or grandparents who have an interesting family history are invited to share their story with the students. Please contact me if you would like to give a brief presentation to the Grade Two class. ***I would like to arrange times for these presentations during the next two weeks.***

Thank you for supporting our learning with your help at home. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me through the agenda or email at [bhuggins@elmwood.ca](mailto:bhuggins@elmwood.ca).

Sincerely,

Brenda Huggins  
Grade Two Teacher