

Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Communities Then and Now.”

In this unit, we’ll be reading about different communities and looking at what they all have in common. Each is a place that people call home. As we study communities from Florida to Vermont, and from South Carolina to New Jersey, our children will be exposed to new traditions and will also recognize more familiar ones. In addition, we’ll travel to the late 1800s and look at a prairie family’s community. Our selections include a variety of genres, from personal narratives, memoir and journal entries to realistic and historical fiction as well as informational social studies texts. It’s a very thought-provoking and informative unit, and I hope you’ll continue our discussions at home.

As usual, please don’t hesitate to contact me should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress.

Communities Then and Now

In this unit, we read about many different kinds of communities and think in depth about the question “What is a community?” Here are some activities designed to continue the conversation about community and to build on the skills and concepts your child has learned in school. Hopefully you’ll even have some fun, too, as you work together!

Topic Connection

Home Sweet Home

To explore the concepts we’ve learned in class, consider making a study of your own community. Undoubtedly, some facts—like location and climate—you and your child already know. However, there’s probably more to learn. When and how was your community founded? What kinds of jobs do people hold? Where have most people come from? What are some local traditions? You can find much of the information online and you can also talk to real estate agents, local newspaper reporters, community leaders, and neighbors.

Vocabulary Connection

Mime My Words!

As we read this unit, we learned several new verbs, including **gazing**, **transform**, **tucked**, **shuffling**, and **squawk**. Here’s an activity to help support students’ word knowledge. First, write each word on a scrap of paper. Then put all the words in a hat or paper bag; mix them up. Take turns picking one of the words and then acting out its meaning. See if you and your child can guess each word!

Comprehension Connection

Summing Up

In school, we’ve been learning how to summarize the main idea and important details of the material that we read. One way to reinforce this skill is to ask your child to tell you about a story he or she has read or a program he or she has seen. Encourage your child to relate just the highlights—the main idea and key details.

Word Study Connections

Fun in the Sun with Your son

In our word study instruction, students are learning about homophones, or words that sound the same but have different meanings -- for example *sun* and *son*. Here’s a game you can play to practice. Fill out an index card for each word from the list below, then shuffle the cards. Lay them out on a surface, and try to match the homophones. The top row includes words from the unit.

passed/	knew/	so/sew	eight/ate	two/
past	new			too/to
tale/tail	sale/sail	knight/	see/sea	pear/
		night		pair