To Flu or Not To Flu

by Kathy Raymond

It has become increasingly noticeable that something has arrived in schools. It’s not the perfect student. It’s not even that teacher that everyone wants to be with. You may have already received it in your school already. I’m talking about that thing at school we all just hate for our students to get. It is called “the flu” - that annoying coughing, aching, stuffy head, sneezing, thing that comes this time of year.

My school has recently experienced several days of high absences contributed to the flu. So I thought I would do a little research on the internet to find out what I could about the flu. This way I can give everyone a little reminder on what symptoms to look for and how to prevent possibly getting the flu.

The flu is a very contagious respiratory illness. The influenza virus causes it. It is commonly spread by coughing and sneezing as well as person-to-person contact, which means we get it from someone else or touching something that they have touched. You can give someone the flu before you even know you have it, and for up to seven days after you get sick.

When you get the flu you may experience several different symptoms that include:

- Fever (usually very high)
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Diarrhea and vomiting can occur but it is more common with children.

Don’t give up hope if you get the flu. There are some things you can do. A doctor can prescribe certain antiviral medications that can be taken within the first few days of flu-like symptoms. There are also over the counter medications available. If you do get the flu, you should get plenty of rest, drink lots of fluids, and take your medication as prescribed.

The best thing to do is not to get the flu to begin with. So here is a list of ways to prevent you from coming down with the flu:

- Eat healthy. Maintaining a healthy diet sometimes can be one of the best defenses.
- Cover you nose and mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough. Remember to throw it away!
- Wash your hands frequently especially if you have sneezed or coughed. If you do not have water and soap available use a hand sanitizer.
- Stay away from sick people. They can’t give it to you if they can’t find you.
- If you do get it don’t give it to someone else –stay home, don’t go to work or school!
- Try to keep from touching your nose, eyes or mouth. This is the quickest way to spread germs.

Good Luck at your service sites. Stay healthy and hopefully this visitor will soon leave.
No doubt about it, Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) is a great program for our community! What child wouldn’t want to participate in fun learning activities and get free books too? At East Coloma School, two different second grade classes participated in RIF. The kids especially enjoyed the last two RIF events of the year, focusing on the themes of Family and Holidays and the other, Diversity and Tolerance.

In December, the kids made a sand paper gingerbread ornament for a member of their family. First, they cut out their pre-traced gingerbread men. Next, they scraped a cinnamon stick over the sand paper to make it smell sweet. The gingerbread men were carefully decorated with scraps of ribbon, yarn, beads, paint, and rick-rack. Finally, a loop of yarn was glued to the top. The kids were very creative and took great care in making their projects. They were excited to give these nice presents to their families.

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday, the kids completed a project called, “Hands Around the World in Peace.” I introduced their project by having a short discussion about the meaning of our theme, Diversity and Tolerance, and focused on King’s accomplishments. I wanted the kids to understand that they should always respect other people and their differences. Also, they should remember to treat others as they would want to be treated.

For their project, they traced and cut out their left and right hands on different skin tone colored construction paper. The hands were fastened together thumb to thumb, “I will love others as myself” were written across them, and they were decorated with symbols of peace.

The kids told me how much they enjoyed the projects and couldn’t wait to read the books they got to pick out. The purpose of RIF was achieved – motivating kids to read!!

**Quotable Quote:** "We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope."

Martin Luther King, Jr.
their own ideas about what they want their children to learn at school.

Some AmeriCorps members enjoy working with preschool-aged children. We have a good time supervising these Head Start children and their siblings while their parents are in the meetings. The children usually have a craft to complete that enhances a previous concept learned in class or just doing something fun. Some of the activities they have completed in the past are: collages, picture frames, magnets, safety boxes, and using stencils and foam pieces to make their own original projects. After the meetings, everyone is invited to enjoy a nice meal with their family and friends.

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**Do We All Really Know Second Year Member: Kathy Raymond?**

by Justin Swift

We’ve been to Wayne’s World. Now we get to learn a little more about Kathy, a second year member of the ABC AmeriCorps group. I emailed her a quick little questionnaire and this is what I can tell you:

- She is from the Thomson, IL area. Born and raised there.
- Her site is in Thomson; she is in the same school that she went to when she was a student many years ago. (Same building, same classrooms)
- Kathy has worked side by side with teachers that taught her when she was a student going to school there.
- Kathy joined AmeriCorps to improve her abilities to be an aide. The education award was also a plus to her.
- Kathy enjoys her site. She has been with the same class now for two years. Students have really shown her how important having extra help can be. (“I am constantly getting hugs and asked if I will help them, be their partner, and even play games. It really makes you feel appreciated. The fun part is getting recognized, so to speak, at Wal-Mart.”)
- The change from being in a small group to being in a much larger group was an adjustment. The group she was with her first AmeriCorps year consisted of only fifteen members. This year she said it has been a little harder to remember something about everyone like last year. Kathy enjoys getting to know everyone though. She hopes to come away at the end of the year with several newfound friends.

**This will be Kathy’s last year with AmeriCorps. The experience has been a pleasant one for her. She said she would suggest AmeriCorps to anyone who is interested. To her the AmeriCorps program is a plus for any school or location it is in. The last two years have been a challenge, but she attributes several changes in herself to her time spent being an AmeriCorps member. To quote Kathy: “Getting things done, meeting new people and being part of a volunteer program was something this shy, little girl would never have done without stretching her comfort zone. Thank you AmeriCorps for the opportunity to stretch!”**

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**The Corner Book Review**

by Erin Hartman

**What Do I Do?**

*Hui Hui Su-Kennedy*

Sadly enough, I found this book buried amongst others. *What Do I Do?* by Hui Hui Su-Kennedy is a charming book with beautiful watercolor illustrations. It’s multi-ethnic cast of children and some friendly animals shows young readers what kids do, how they eat, drink and sleep, how they play with friends, and how they learn to care for each other and share with one another. I read this book with my son several times and he absolutely adored it. I would highly recommend this book for children ages 2 and up.

**Teddy’s TV Troubles**

*Joanne Cantor & Tom Lowes*

A must have for any parent. This book assists parents in helping their children deal with the
violence we see all over the television. It features an adorable teddy bear who, with the help of an adult, works through his fears brought on by television. It offers many ideas for activities for children, such as drawing pictures and creative play, that help them overcome their fears. I would recommend this book to anyone who is concerned about the way their children perceive the monstrosities they see on television every day.

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Reflecting and Teambuilding at Reflection Retreat I

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Sights and Sounds of AmeriCorps
by Kathy Raymond

As an AmeriCorps member we have all come to realize as part of our service to community we may be doing some interesting things. That was definitely true this past December when several AmeriCorps members could be found at the local Sterling mall. The event: Sights and Sounds, the location: Northland Mall, Sterling, the reason: to help the L.I.F.E. Program, where children living in Whiteside County receive a free book a month from birth to age five.

We had an opportunity to be kind of like Santa’s elves (of course some of us chose to dress the part somewhat) wrapping gifts for holiday shoppers for a donation. It gave us a chance to get in the holiday spirit as well as help out some people who really needed gift-wrapping support. We got it done for the holidays.

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