

Date: _____ Student's Name _____

Dear _____ Parents:

Our class is beginning a new Unit of study titled Stitches in Sign. This is a thematic unit designed around the stories and legends of quilts and the Underground Railroad. Quilts and quilt making have a unique place in the African American culture, historians have debated the stories and legends that claim quilt's patterns were used as a secret code system to aid fugitive slaves on their journey of escape via the Underground Railroad. Stitches in Sign is a set of lessons using 'hands on activities' to honor these stories passed down through the generations and to motivate students to learn more about our African American Heritage. We will look at quilts to explore the geometric patterns, the beauty of a handmade object, the patterns of the sun and moon in the sky, and the power of repetition in stories.

As an introduction to our unit and to better understand the struggles of slaves in our country, we will introduce some of the experiences of slaves in simple activities such as requiring some students to do menial work while others do not. At home you can help by listening to their comments about these activities and even writing your child's complaints down for them to share with us later. We do not expect this to be a fun activity, but the knowledge and compassion each of us learns during our time spent as "pretend slaves" will allow us to truly respect and honor a group of people whose unpaid labors helped make our country great.

If your family has any handmade quilts or special family stories you would like to share with our class, please contact me. A genuine handmade quilt would be a wonderful sharing item for students to touch and see up close. Thank You for your support.

Sincerely:

