

# Chapter Twelve : Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft People at Work

## What's Cooking at Happy Heart's School? Pizzaburgers, Yummmm!

New Directions, Winter 1992

by Sue Lillie and Linda Porcello



*Joyce Stasko and Lorraine Bean cook delicious meals in the Happy Hearts cafeteria. Photo by Doug Mead.*

As you turn down the hall of Happy Hearts School and walk toward the cafeteria, you can smell the aroma of pizza burgers, a favorite of both students and staff at the school. Thoughts come in mind about Joyce Stasko and Lorraine Bean, the two

unique individuals who are responsible for all of the food prepared and served every school day.



In order to work in the cafeteria of any school you must really love to cook. You just also love children. This is especially true if you are preparing meals for approximately 100 children and staff daily. But to work in the atmosphere of handicapped and disabled children AND cook, you must be very talented and be a special person as well.

In addition to cooking skills, Joyce and Lorraine have a great deal of knowledge about diets and nutrition. Because of the special needs of the handicapped students, special diets are the norm. Many students of Happy Hearts School cannot tolerate milk or eggs. Some need their food pureed or chopped. Some have diabetes. Some have to count every calorie so that one food might have to be substituted for another, depending on the individual child. Joyce and Lorraine are always making special accommodations for students and staff. Just one example is when a field

trip is planned for a class and a student does not bring a lunch they'll whip one together. No child goes without lunch!

Cooks have to be bookkeepers, too. Part of their duties include ordering, taking inventory, making up monthly menus, and keeping records of free, reduce, and paid lunches.

Joyce and Lorraine participate in a job training program for students, too, Students in the advanced class learn all about the kitchen process. Joyce and Lorraine say they couldn't get along without their student help. "The skills our students learn are often used in jobs in the community. One former student who was trained to work in the kitchen at Happy hearts School now works at the truck stop in Kingsville," they say proudly.

Most of all, they are experienced cooks who do their job with pride and honor. They are greatly appreciated by students and staff alike!

## Follow Your Nose to These Happy Hearts Cooks

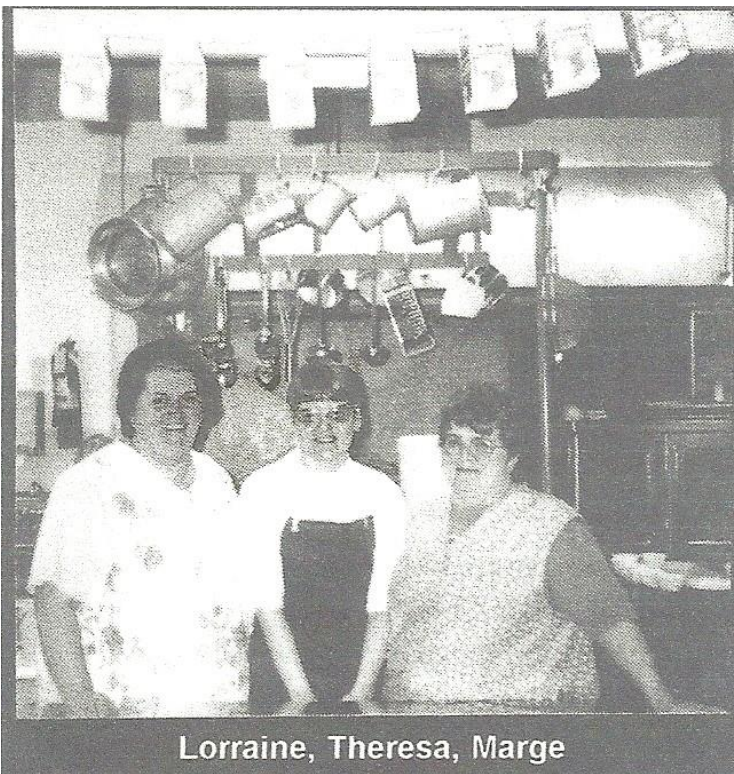
*Lorraine Bean (right) Marge Lemmo, and Theresa Spang are waiting for you in the Happy Hearts Cafeteria.*

Happy Hearts Cooks

by Patti Davis, bus driver

New Directions, 2000

It's not hard finding Lorraine Bean, Marge Lemmo or Theresa Spang during the hours of 7:00 a.m. through 1:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, from August through June. All one needs to do is enter our Happy Hearts School and follow your sense of smell and the aroma fills the halls to the cafeteria area where these



Lorraine, Theresa, Marge

ladies work to make sure that no one leaves school daily without a nice full stomach. These ladies are our Cafeteria staff. Lorraine has been working in the school kitchen since 1986.

Theresa comes to us as a graduate of Happy Hearts School and employee at Ash/craft Industries to being hired full time for the past five years. Marge has been cooking professionally for many years and we are lucky to have her now working with us since 1998.

It doesn't take long to see that these three ladies all have various jobs to do and little time to complete them, so they all work together very well. You can see that they take their job seriously and yet really love what they are doing.

Breakfast begins at 7:00 a.m. sharp and Lorraine and Marge begin preparing this meal together; however, halfway through breakfast, one of them has to begin preparing for lunch. On most days 50 breakfasts are served. Theresa does the entire kitchen clean up so the cooks always have a clean and sanitary working area. Lunch usually begins at 11:00 a.m. with the first class coming to the cafeteria area. The last class is served at 11:45 a.m. and 55 lunches are served daily. This is a full day's job with no down time for the ladies that work in the cafeteria. While interviewing the ladies (while they were cooking, of course!) I found out the following information:

2 oz. of protein/meat or fish

3 services of grain (rice or pasta)

1 cup of vegetables or fruit – ½ cup vegetables and fruit usually is used

Bread/butter/crackers

8 oz. milk

Lorraine says that some of the students require special menus due to their inability to chew or because of allergies to certain foods. The needs of these students are taken into consideration daily. All of the components that normally go into the daily menu are either pureed or alterations are made for substitutions. The most common allergies are those to orange juice, corn, or sugar.

Three classes eat in their own classrooms daily. These classes eat “Family Style” and this food is also prepared by the cafeteria staff. All three of these classes are Early Childhood (children 3 to 5 years of age).

The menu for the month is prepared in advance and our cafeteria staff will take requests as input to their making up of the meals as long as they are within the guidelines of the State requirements.

All dairy products are ordered from Dairymen's in Cleveland, with milk being delivered twice weekly. All bread products are ordered from Schweibles in Erie, Pennsylvania, again delivered twice weekly. All meat is ordered from Maplevale Farm in New York. All produce is ordered locally from Mike's Farm Market in Ashtabula and delivered once a week. Northern Haserot out of Cleveland is used for all other inventory needed.

I asked the ladies about dessert, knowing that Marge is famous in this area and they all smiled and said if time permits they add this to the menu, and on special occasions always an extra touch is added. At Thanksgiving time, a full meal is prepared for the students and they are permitted to have their family members join them for this special lunch. This is done several times a year as something a little extra that these ladies do for the children and their families.

Upon leaving the cafeteria, I asked several students what was their favorite meal and they all said, “Macaroni and Cheese.” I also asked the staff and they also agreed. When I asked the kitchen ladies what was their secret, they looked at each other and began to laugh. They all said at the same time, GOVERNMENT CHEESE!”

## Ash/Craft Greenhouse Gazing



*Workers of the Ash/Craft Division of Happy Hearts School arrange potted plants for display in their greenhouse in Kingsville. They offer a wide variety of plants on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Assisting in the arranging are (left) Kim Covert, Danny Brunell, and instructor John Buchtinec. 1960s*

## Business is Blooming at Ash/Craft Greenhouse



Richard Stewart (left) and Beth Fogle work at the Ash/Craft Industries Greenhouse. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Warren Dillaway.

by Ellen Kolman, Ashtabula Star Beacon

April 28, 2008.

Business is beginning to bloom at Ash/Craft Greenhouses, part of Ash/Craft Industries, 5959 Green Road.

“Plant kindness every day” is the slogan posted on a crossbeam inside the greenhouse completely filled with lush, flowering plants.

While gorgeous foliage is not unique to greenhouses, what makes this greenhouse so special are the workers, known officially as consumers, due to their MR/DD (Mental Retardation/Developmental Disability) status as verified and defined by the state of Ohio.

Ash/Craft Industries is a non-profit organization that serves the MR/DD adult population with vocational and social skills training, sheltered workshop, community job training and placement services, and an adult day activity program, said Lynda Perry, who is the director of adult services.

“We have great support from the community in the greenhouse, every year it gets better,” Linda said. “We have customers that have been coming for more than 20 years; we appreciate the support very much.”

There are 14 consumers working in the greenhouse and they complete a variety of jobs, depending on their individual skill level, said Park Mukina, who has been the greenhouse production manager for 12 years.

“Our consumers range in ages from 23 to 60-years old and they all have individualized plans,” Park said. “They have to be able to interact appropriately around the public and we give them a try to see how they do.”

The jobs at the greenhouse include: planting plugs, transplanting, watering, fertilizing, removing bad foliage, carrying items to cars for customers and assisting customers.

This year we are trying something new with a couple of our consumers. We are giving them a chance to serve in the retail end with job coaches,” Director of Adult Services Perry said.

“Being around growing things is always a pleasant, peaceful place to work,” Park Mukina said. “It is very satisfying to watch the consumers doing a good job and they are very happy and successful doing it.”

What will customers find at the Ash/Craft Greenhouse this year?

Annuals by the flat, including ageratum, balsam, forget-me-nots, impatiens, pansy, zinnias and much more. Assorted perennials including butterfly bush, catmint, daisy rose red, sandwort and more.

Assorted herbs including cilantro, Italian basil, Italian parsley, oregano, rosemary, sage, and thyme.

Assorted vegetables, including tomatoes in varieties of big boy, cherry, early girl and yellow pear; cucumber, buttercup squash, summer squash and zucchini; peppers in varieties of California wonder and Hungarian hot.

The greenhouse also has available geraniums in colors of red, pink, lilac, salmon, violet, white and ivy; as well as specialty items like hanging baskets, window boxes, urns, combo pots in five different sizes, hanging bags, saddle bags and moonflowers in one gallon pots.

“Marcia Palm is the supervisor in the greenhouse and she goes above and beyond to make sure we have a successful year and that the consumers as successful and participating to the best of their ability Park Mukina said.

I’ve got the best job. I love my people and running the greenhouse,” Marcia Palm said.

## Ash/Craft Workers Add Special Touch to New Greenhouse

*There is a new greenhouse and store front at Ash/Craft on Green Road in Kingsville. Left to right are Eddie Cook, Beth Fogle, Sam Riggs, Tiffany Mordarski, Hans Stoltz, Tammy Shaw, and Lee Shultz. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Bill West.*



March 3, 2009

Tiffany Mordarski loves everything about her job at the Ash/Craft Greenhouse.

“I like to work with the plants and flowers, and I carry flowers out to the customer’s car,” Tiffany said. She has worked at the greenhouse for five years.

Ash/Craft Greenhouse is part of Ash/Craft Industries, located on Green Road in Kingsville, and “Plant Kindness Every Day” is the slogan posted at the entrance of the new Ash/Craft Greenhouse and Garden Shop located just south of the Ash/Craft Industries building. Growing foliage is not unique to greenhouses this time of year, but what makes this greenhouse so special are the workers like Tiffany, known officially as consumers, because of their MR/DD (Mental retardation/developmental disability) status as verified and defined by the state of Ohio.

Ash/Craft Industries is a non-profit organization that serves the MR/DD adult population with vocational and social skill training, sheltered work shop, community job training and placement services and an adult day activity program with Lynda Perry, who is the director of adult services. “We have great support from the community in the greenhouse. Every year it gets better,” Lynda said.

This spring season customers will have something new to peruse and purchase: arts and crafts made by consumers along with unique garden décor and gifts in the new greenhouse shop, and more vegetable plants, hanging baskets, and flowers to choose from in the new larger, greenhouse for their gardens.

“We moved the greenhouse so we can have room for expansion. Now we will be able to offer gift items and seasonal plants all year,” Lynda said. “I am so excited.” Ash/Craft will have a display at the 2009 Ashtabula County Home Show this weekend and will offer a preview of what is new and coming at the Ash/Craft Greenhouse and Garden Shop.

## Happy Hearts and Ash/Craft Helps Them Discover Themselves

*November 11, 1962. These members of the Happy Hearts School for Retarded Children are doing their share for charity. Teachers Mrs. Margaret Dunkin and Mrs. Jean Allds supervise their students stuffing envelopes with Christmas Seals to be sold for charity work at a later date. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo.*



*Planning the special program to be held at the Happy Hearts School on "Understanding Mental Retardation" are (left) Miss Alyce Lange, Geneva, president of the Ashtabula County Teachers of Trainable Retarded; and Mrs. Marta Triozzi, Ashtabula, chairman of the professional growth committee.*





*State Representative Robert Boggs (right) discusses legislation for the mentally retarded with parents and faculty at Happy Hearts School. Mrs. Barbara Seaman (left), social chairman of the Association of Ashtabula County Teachers of the*

*Mentally Retarded, James Conroy, acting administrator of Happy Hearts, and Betty Hartley, President of the Association, discuss current bills in the General Assembly with Representative Boggs.*



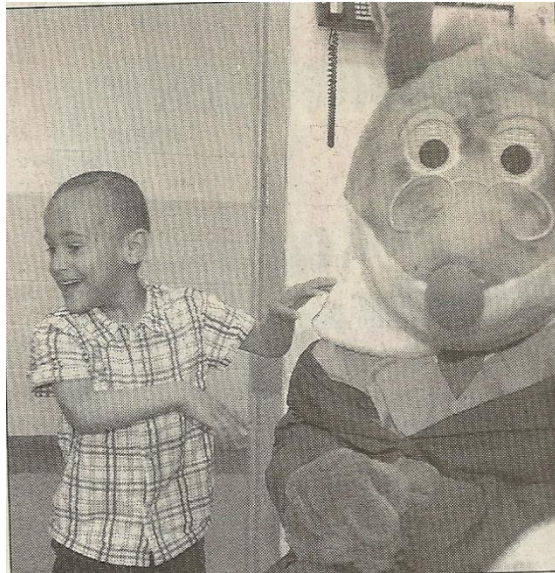
*A new coiffure for Barbara Weddle and 16 other girls from the Happy Hearts School is part of a Valentine Party given at Francine Beauty Salon by owner Mrs. Hazel Rogers, Broughton Beverages, and Frank Nappi Supermarket in*

*connection with National Beauty Salon Week. Teacher Mrs. Vincent Bishop watches and salon manager Mrs. June Deitz cuts Barbara's hair. Frank Nappi holds the mirror.*



*Craig Schwartz, the son of the Happy Hearts School pre-shop teacher, clearly thinks the best part of the Happy Hearts Open House is the ice cream parlor. Mrs. Walter S. Foy hovers on hand to bring him seconds. The Open House featured a bazaar, including Ash/Craft and other handmade items, live plants, and a general store.*

*Ben Howard, 4, greets Geronimo the mouse, Tuesday evening during the Ashtabula County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities program at Happy Hearts. The children and their families participated in a book fair Tuesday evening at Happy Hearts school. Thursday April 17, 2008. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Warren Dillaway.*





## Early Workshop Days B.A. – Before Ash/Craft



Margaret Dunkin, director of the Goodwill Happy Hearts Workshop, teaches reupholstering methods to students. She spends her time teaching them trades which they might step into when they reach 21. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo.

April 16, 2006

## **Working Together at Ash/Craft**



*Workers at Ash/Craft Industries (from front left) Jerry Russell, Ernie Hall, and Lee Schultz create brackets in the Ash/Craft Industries greenhouse in Kingsville. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Warren Dillaway.*

### **Sheltered Workshop Provides 170 Jobs**

by Warren Dillaway

For almost forty years, Dan Custead, 60, has been coming to work five days a week, 12 months a year. Dan works at Ash/Craft Sheltered Workshop where clients perform a variety of stages of assembly and packaging jobs. The adult services program provides employment and habilitation to more than 250 Ashtabula County residents. Some people in the program work in the community at Thomas Fence Company or the Ashtabula Mall, said Ash/Craft Industries director Lynda Perry. The facility operates in conjunction with a nonprofit board and the Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

According to background information that Lynda Perry provided, "Ash/Craft Industries as we know of it today began in 1967 with the change in state legislation establishing county boards of mental retardation." She said the legislation also mandated creation of non-profit advisory boards to employ and pay mentally retarded adults in a sheltered workshop setting. A small training

center previously existed from 1963 to 1967 in Jefferson and then moved to the new Happy Hearts School in 1968.

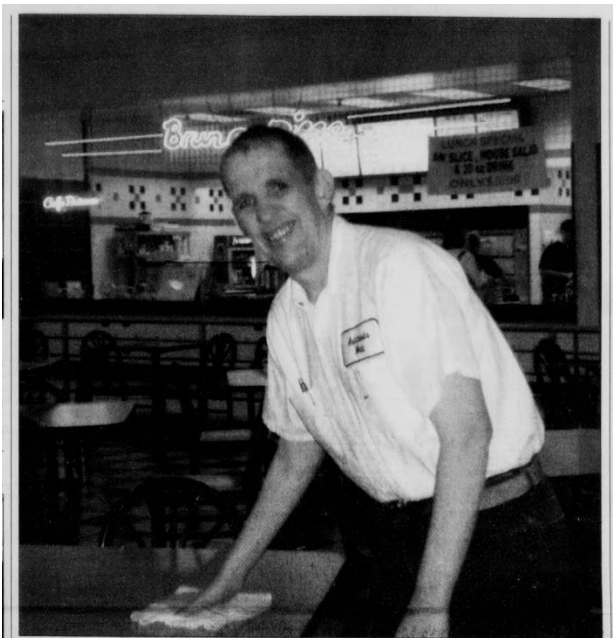
The background literature continues the history of Ash/Craft when it states that the size of the program “grew steadily between 1968 and 1975,” when a Stevens Road greenhouse was built. In March of 1978, the 20,000-square foot Ash/Craft Industries building was completed. “We have a total of 170 employees in the workshop,” Lynda said. She described some of the jobs at Ash/Craft. Each week clients assemble 250,000 jewelry boxes, and a variety of other small assembly-type projects are done for clients who contract with Ash/Craft to perform work for them.

Park Mukina who came to Ash/Craft Industries from the private sector, has been a workshop production manager for 10 years and he tries to maintain as close as possible a work environment found in a regular workplace. “What surprised me was all the same problems that confronted me in the private section, I found here,” but he said he believes that the Ash/Craft workers have a greater appreciation for their jobs and tend to cooperate more with co-workers.

He added that the workers (clients) are paid at a piece rate related to their ability and they contribute payroll taxes and provide income to their families. “They need that money to survive. They are living with elderly parents,” he said about some workers.

Marcia Palm, Workshop Specialist in the Ash/Craft Industries greenhouse, said she loves almost everything about her job. “I love my folks. They are like family. We really get along well. We look for the good in each other. They really do a wonderful job,” she said.

## **Ron Cole Not Sheltered After 17 Years at Mall**



*November 10, 2009. Ron Cole has been keeping things clean at the Ashtabula Towne Square since it opened. Ashtabula Star Beacon photo by Jamie Davis.*

He was a pioneer when it comes to working outside of Ash/Craft

by Tom Harris  
for the Star Beacon

There was excitement everywhere when the Ashtabula Mall – now Ashtabula Towne

Square- opened in 1992. No one was more excited about the Mall's opening than Ron Cole. And, it could be, no one was more apprehensive about it than Ron Cole.

The day the mall opened. Ron Cole's name went on the payroll. Then in his early 30's, Ron had worked in the Ash/Craft Industries Sheltered Workshop since graduating from Happy Hearts School. He was living in a large residential facility where he had resided since his teenage years after spending several years at Apple Creek State Hospital.

"Ron was scared to death when he started at the mall," Ashtabula County Board of Developmental Disabilities Community Employment Specialist Jan Church said. He was just so nervous. He was always on the verge of panicking."

Seventeen years later, Ron Cole is still wiping tables and mopping up spills in the food court. The list of mall employees who can match his longevity is very very short.

"Now he's the face of the mall, Ashtabula County Board of Developmental Disabilities Community Employment Specialist Debbie Nelson said.

Debbie was also there when the mall opened. Working for Goodwill Industries at the time, she was Ron's job coach. In her job with the ACBDD, she continues to provide support for Ron and other ACBDD consumers working in the community.

"We always try to match people with the best chance of success at the available job," ACBDD Adult Services Director Lynda Perry said. "Still, you just never know how it will work out. But Ron just blossomed in this job."

Ron's life is now filled with all the mundane things that occupy the lives of most people. He shares an apartment with three roommates, he commutes to work on public transportation, and he punches a time clock when he gets there. Some of the everyday tasks were harder to learn than others and he still receives support from the ACBDD and his residential provider, but most of the tasks are second nature to him now.

"I have to get our cart ready when I come in," Ron said. "Then I bus tables, sweep, pick up stuff off the floor and mop up spills."

Debbie makes sure Ron gets his work schedule.

"Me," Ron said when asked who arranged his transportation. "And I pack my own lunch."

"Ron knows exactly what he needs to be doing in the job," Lynda said. "He's just so dependable. He's there every day. I can't recall the last time he called off."

"Ron has been good for the mall and the mall has been good for Ron," Jan Church said. "Ron is still a man of few words, but if a shopper has a question he will answer it if he knows the answer. And if he doesn't know the answer he will point the shopper toward someone who does."

"He just loves his job," Jan Church said. "He's always smiling. He knows everything that goes on at the mall and he knows the other employees and a lot of the regular shoppers."

Ron is a seasoned veteran now and he looks like one going about his job in the food court. When he started his job 17 years ago, Ron was something of a pioneer, Community jobs for ACBDD consumers were very rare in the early 1990s. Now 40 or so consumers work outside the Ash/Craft Workshop. Some, like Ron Cole, work directly for their employers. Others work in enclaves, remaining employees of Ash/Craft, but working at the outside company's site under the supervision of ACBDD community employment specialists. “

The mall opened a lot of doors for us,” Lynda Perry said. “People were able to see our consumers working, and that they could do the work just as well as anyone else. And of course, our consumers had a chance to talk to people and make friends.”

Community employment begins with the ACBDD assessing the consumer's abilities and matching him or her with an available job. Once on the job, an ACBDD job coach trains the consumer in his new job. As the consumer learns the job, the job coach fades into the background. Eventually, the job coach comes in just once a week to check with the consumer and the employer. The job coach works to make sure little problems or misunderstandings don't become major issues. If the consumer experiences difficulties with some aspects of the job or if the job duties change, the job coach returns to do the necessary training.

“People with disabilities do so many things. They have various talents and abilities just like everyone else,” Lynda Perry said. “Our goal is to help them achieve the best they can achieve. To help them do that we provide the necessary experts along the way. We've built good relationships with employers. They know that we provide quality employees and if a match isn't working, it isn't working and we move on from there.”

“Ron has seen a lot of people come and go at the mall,” Jan Church said. “It's hard to imagine he ever worked at Ash/Craft.”

*Tom Harris is a freelance writer from Ashtabula Township.*



## Special Story



### **A Cooperative Learning Experience Between the Students of Happy Hearts School and Ashtabula Catholic Middle School**

April 1995

Notes from the teachers

The initial idea of having a cooperative learning experience between Happy Hearts School and Ashtabula Catholic was the brainchild of Jodi Fowler, a teacher at Happy Hearts; who in turn called me to see if Ashtabula Catholic Middle School would be interested in a joint learning experience. With both schools eager to participate in such an experience, organization meeting began, creative juices were flowing and the energy and enthusiasm were high. The name of this learning experience became "Come and Journey With Me," taken from the song written by David Haas that we were teaching the students.

None of this could have happened without the support and encouragement of our principals, Sister Mary Laurel Smith, H.M. and Mary Ellen Higley. Teachers involved are Jodi Fowler, Molly Matthews, Elissa Bundy, and Sindy Sowery from Happy Hearts and Angela Ackley and Marilou McClimans from Ashtabula Catholic Middle School.

The "journey" is just beginning. Thank you for sharing your children with us; they are finally here!

After weeks of preparation, the students from Happy Hearts arrived at Ashtabula Catholic Middle School.

The day started out with our special friends arriving at about 12:30. They went directly to the library where they paired up with fifth grade buddies. They began their visit with a tour of the library, Miss McCliman's room, Miss Ackley's room and the Gym. They divided into two groups and went their separate ways. The group that I went with went to Miss Ackley's room where they listened to a story called "The Plant Pet," by Elise Primavera. They then had the opportunity to make their own plant pet and they seemed to enjoy that!

They again moved, but this time they went to Miss McCliman's room and planted flowers in milk cartons. When they were finished they cleaned up their messes – that is, with a little help! Next, they listened to a song called "Everything Grows," sung by Raffi.

The students ended their day by returning to Miss Ackley's room where they heard the song "Come and Journey With Me," while the fifth graders played the bells. They will hear this song every time they visit. The students returned to the library, where they got their coats and left. All in all, it was a fun day for everyone. A.M.T.