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Message from the President

Grace Velchansky

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Message from the President

BY GRACE VELCHANSKY

The events at Shady Brook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut, shook many of us to the core. It is impossible to make sense of such an unconscionable act. Unanswered questions will linger and the healing process for those affected will continue. We will never be able to measure the impact of what occurred; however, we know that from darkness often comes light.



Velchansky

America had the opportunity to learn that teachers do more than teach. What they found is that teachers will do whatever necessary to protect students from harm. As I listened to students, parents, and fellow educators share stories of heroism, I was reminded that contrary to the view of some, education is more than just test scores. It's about community. We build that community class by class and school by school. Students understand they are coming to a place where they learn about friendship and caring for each other. Teachers build lasting relationships with their colleagues where weddings, births, and milestones are celebrated. They also come together to console and help one another heal. Yes, a school is more than a building. It is a place we feel a part of.

The Michigan Reading Association believes in the power of community. We know that together we can change the face of education.

Warmly,

Grace B. Velchansky, Ph.D.

Grace Velchansky is a consultant with the Macomb ISD in the areas of language arts, instruction, and teacher leadership. Dr. Velchansky has taught special education and Reading Recovery. Grace served as the director of special education, pre-school, and at-risk programs prior to working at the county level. She holds master's and education specialist degrees in leadership and a doctorate in K-12 Studies in Education.

About the Cover Winter 2013

Top: Ana Howrani Heeres and students at University Preparatory Academy, Detroit, MI admire their artwork inspired by the book *Mrs. Spitzer's Garden* by Edith Pattou (Harcourt, 2001).

Left Column, top to bottom: A kindergartner uses beginning letters and sounds to match words to pictures and complete the sentences in Kelly House's classroom in Ann Arbor, MI.; a vocabulary word wall for science content area literacy at Angell Elementary, Ann Arbor, MI; one of Ed Spicer's first graders working in her science journal, North Ward Elementary, Allegan, MI.

Middle Column, top to bottom: Writing response as part of a guided comprehension lesson at University Preparatory Academy, Detroit, MI; Janelle Magyar, of Canton Charter Academy, Canton, MI, and student decode word clues for an after-school literacy game night; an illustration created by a student in Ed Spicer's classroom after a read aloud book about Rosa Parks and the bus boycott.

Right Column, top to bottom: Visitors to Ed Spicer's classroom share Mo Willems' *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* (Hyperion, 2003) with none other than Pigeon; Mr. Spicer's students proudly display their artwork; creating silly sentences at the pocket chart is even more fun with a friend in Kelly House's classroom.