

December 21, 2001

Dear Parents,

In the end of January, we will begin our Oral History unit in the language arts portion of our Viewpoints class. In past years this has been a very meaningful activity for students as they have developed their academic skills while at the same time learning about and connecting with family members. Through this unit students will learn about oral tradition, and a series of technology skills.

Students are asked to conduct an interview with an adult who is important to them, preferably someone over 60 years old. Students will then transform that interview into a presentation using technology (iMovie, Power Point or Hyper Studio). Students may need help from their families to coordinate the interview. If the student's interviewees live in the area, students have the option to conduct their interviews at school and record the interview on digital video, or to conduct it at home and use other forms of technology to record it. Because many students have family members who live far away, students may also choose to conduct their interview by phone, email or letter. Many students will be conducting their interviews in languages other than English. This is an added benefit to the project and we will use technology to incorporate an element of translation to accommodate both languages. If a student is not able to arrange to interview a family member or important friend, then we would like to work with you in advance to coordinate a suitable interviewee from the Watertown community. A planning questionnaire is attached to help us assess which technologies we can accommodate.

Because this project requires advance planning, scheduling with the interviewee, and possibly the use of equipment at home (telephone, tape recorder, etc.), we would like to ask your help in working with your child to plan ahead. Interviews need to be scheduled during the last two weeks of January. Students do not need to begin their interviews now. They will receive instruction on how to conduct an interview and will be given questions to focus their project in early January. All interviews will need to be completed by February 1.

Thank you for your assistance in planning for this project.

Sincerely,

Ms. Fitanides, Ms. McDonagh, Ms. Levit, Ms. Beller, and Ms. Picceri