



## DESERT CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

*Empowering the Mind, Engaging the Soul*

Summer 2011

Dear 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Student,

I hope that you are having an incredible summer and excited to start fourth grade! My name is Mrs. Stiff and I will have the privilege of being your teacher this year in 4A. This will be my third year teaching at Desert Christian Academy and I can't wait to start another year on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. I am already planning a wonderful school year full of learning.

Before I tell you more about me, I would like to give you some fantastic news about 4<sup>th</sup> grade this year! I am delighted to welcome a new Teacher's Aide to our classroom. Our school leadership has been interviewing candidates to make sure the fit for our class is perfect. The aim is to have an extra instructor as an additional resource for the students, the teacher and you as a parent. Our low student-to-teacher ratio is very important, and this Aide will help Desert Christian Academy continue this commitment.

Now, let me tell you a little about myself. First, I love teaching and I love traveling! In fact, I have had the privilege of teaching children in four different countries (Taiwan, Honduras, Germany, and the United States), on three different continents. Can you find these countries on a map? I also love living in one of California's most beautiful deserts. For the last six years, I have been teaching students in our desert. So, this will be my seventh year teaching – and I can't wait to work with you as a fourth grader! Before I moved to California, I went to college at the University of Northern Iowa where I graduated with my Bachelor's of Arts in Education and my Iowa Teaching Credential. I currently hold my California Teaching Credential and look forward to starting my Master's degree in Education. When I am not teaching children during the school year, I love going on mission trips. Over the last three years I have traveled to the Philippines and Ecuador to tell people about Jesus. My husband's parents live in Ecuador as missionaries and we love visiting them and seeing what God is doing in South America.

Fourth grade is an amazing year and there are many extraordinary things planned for you! It is a year full of challenges and exciting adventures – so get ready to learn about California and have a blast! We will travel to one of the California missions and go sailing on the Gold Digger's Express where we will learn about the sea otter trade along the California Coast to the East Coast during the late 1700s. We will also take an exciting overnight trip to our state's capital, Sacramento, where we will visit the State Capitol Building and experience life as a California Gold Miner. We will culminate our year of learning about California's amazing history with a trip to Disney's California Adventure. Wow! As you can see, there is a lot to look forward to in fourth grade!



Students, I am sure you are busy reading your summer reading book, The Tale of Despereaux, by Kate DiCamillo (ISBN #076361722-9). Isn't it an exciting book, full of adventure? As you read, I suggest that you keep a reading journal (a thin spiral notebook will work perfect for this). In this journal you should write a paragraph about the main events in each chapter. This journal will help you when we discuss the book and complete a special project in class after you return to school. Another very important way you can prepare for fourth grade is by reviewing your multiplication facts.

Did you know that we have a class website? Our class website is a very important place designed just for you and your family. Our weekly letter, spelling words, and a lot of other very important information is located on our site and updated daily. In fact, there is a little assignment on the site called SUMMER QUESTIONS that will help me get to know you. Please visit the following web address to see our class website:

<http://teacherweb.com/CA/DesertChristianAcademy/MrsStiff/>

Remember to get your parents permission first! Parents, there is even a place for you on this site. I hope you find it to be a helpful tool.

I am looking forward to meeting you on August 22<sup>nd</sup> and beginning the school year. Since I am purchasing your supplies, all you really need to bring on the first day of school is a sturdy backpack and a positive attitude to be ready to learn and have fun! Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions ([jstiff@desertchristianacademy.org](mailto:jstiff@desertchristianacademy.org)). I hope you enjoy the remainder of your summer vacation.

Serving Him,  
Mrs. Jonna Stiff