***Gan Anavim* Kevin Henkes Toys**

When Kindergarten went to local libraries, they saw many toys on display that related to beloved children’s books.  It was decided to create our own toys for the new South Campus Community Library based on favorite characters in Kevin Henkes books.  In *Gan Anavim,* the children decided to create Lilly, Chrysanthemum, and Owen – all characters from their very favorite Kevin Henkes books.

The children signed up for different committees that met and worked in similar ways. They were asked to think of the details of their character that made each one unique. The children drew individual pictures using a simple outline of a mouse as the starting point. The details were then added on their individual drawings followed by a collaborative picture to use as a plan for the project. For Lilly, the committee wanted to make sure the toy had a purple purse, a crown, red cowboy boots, a cape, and movie star glasses. The Chrysanthemum committee said there should be a flowered dress, red shoes, a bow on her head and a giant chrysanthemum. The Owen committee planned a toy with red overalls and a square, yellow fuzzy. Each committee member decided what detail they wanted to add to the final project and then made a list of materials was compiled.

Each committee began making their toy by deciding if the wanted the shape to be like “a taco mouse” or “an up and down” mouse (horizontal or vertical). Felt was cut out and sewn together with each child taking a turn. After it was stuffed, the children added the details they had planned to do. Throughout the creation process, the children referred to their drawn pattern as well as pictures in the books which helped remind them of important elements to add such as “lines at the end of the smile” on Owen which Aviv noticed.

As the toys were completed, each committee shared their toy with the rest of the class. There was a great feeling of satisfaction and happiness as the toys were admired by the classmates. The children hope that future students at the South Campus will admire the toys, too, as they sit on the shelves of the library.