



CTL CORNER

Center for Teaching & Learning | 26131 Kuykendahl, The Woodlands, TX 77375 |



Important Dates

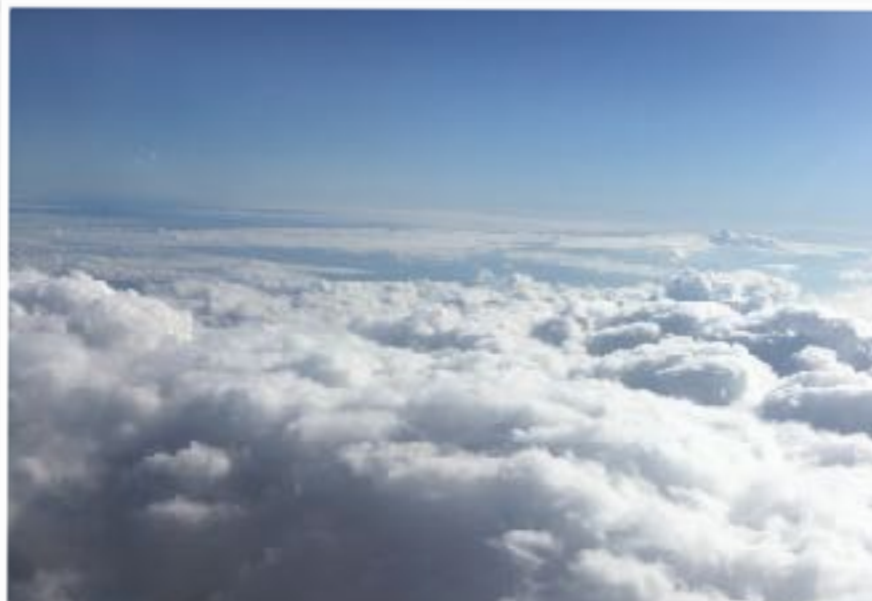
November 5-8 - CTL Scholastic Book Fair in the CTL Library. Please join us from 7:00-8:00 a.m. and 3:00-4:00 p.m. to purchase and donate books for your children and their classrooms.

November 8 - Community Open House in the CTL Enrichment Room, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Please invite parents and students who may be interested in enrolling at CTL to come and learn more about our school!

November 5-9 - CTL Trimester 1 Club Showcases during Morning Meeting in the Enrichment Room. (Monday - Construction Club, Tuesday - Board Game & Garden Clubs, Wednesday - DIY Club, Thursday - Craft & Yearbook Clubs.

November 9 - Staff Workday. No School. Trimester 1 Ends.

November 12 - Trimester 2 Begins.



Heart-to-Heart

When I traveled to Burbank recently to visit my newest grandson, Buzz, my heart was happy and my mind drifted as I flew along the coast from San Francisco to Burbank. All I could see were blue sky and billowy, white clouds as I anticipated holding Buzz in my arms. I felt a sense of gratitude as my mind drifted to my own childhood--looking up at the clouds, wondering what was on the other side, reflecting on the purpose of life. I have been forever grateful for the reflective opportunities I had growing up in an unhurried world. As John Dewey, an educational philosopher, once said, "We do not learn from experience...we learn from reflecting on experience."

Reflection was the foundation upon which CTL was built and is celebrated every day at CTL--it is at the heart of everything we do. Conferencing is a natural and direct extension of reflection between teachers and students, students and students, and the entire CTL team. With this multi-layered process that promotes in-depth



Important Dates

November 12 - CTL Veteran's Day Celebration in Morning Meeting. Please join us as we salute and pay tribute to all Veterans.

November 15 - CTL Thanksgiving Feast. Please join us as we eat a family-style Thanksgiving lunch from 11:00-12:00. *Early Dismissal at 12:00 p.m.*

November 15-16 - CTL Student-Led Conferences. Please be sure to sign-up via SignUpGenius to reserve your conference day and time with your child's teacher.

November 19-23 - Thanksgiving Break. *No School.*

November 26 - Interfaith Toy Drive. Coordinated by Mrs. Lipar and the Grades 1-2 Class.

November 27 - We will be adding Spanish to our list of After-School Programs for Trimester 2. Mrs. Bethy Meixeiro, the instructor, will provide a 10-minute demonstration lesson for Morning Meeting. Interested parents are welcome to attend.

November 30 - Early Literacy Workshop for Parents with Mrs. Annie Manning, CTL's Kindergarten Teacher.



review and reflection at each and every layer, it allows us to set goals to assess learning and plan for future learning for students, for the entire CTL team, and for the school. It is an organic process.

The heart-to-heart conference between teacher and student is at the heart of teaching and learning at CTL. It is the time where the teacher facilitates learning and guides each child through decision making as an independent thinker and increases the child's confidence to the max. They are connecting with the voice inside each child. And the voice of your children is what leads the discussion. A teacher knows whether or not to ask questions, to think of something differently, to discuss whether or not they are having challenges. It is a time where the teacher is working alongside the child to facilitate learning. It builds confidence, and confidence is what keeps learning progressing. It is what makes them jump out there and take those risks with their learning. The more that confidence grows, the more a learner will take risks. Teachers know each child's likes, their dislikes, their strengths, their challenges, their accomplishments, and their goals. This collaboration builds a caring and safe environment and a belief in the children that they can be and become whatever they want. As a wise philosopher once said, "Children don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." We know your children and this is what continuously ignites *their love of learning*.

Children are the curriculum at CTL, and their voices are the compass that leads our instructional decisions. Conferences guide their work with their teacher, it guides their work with other students, and now it will guide their conference with you. So when you sit down with your child in the conference this week, who better to tell his/her story of learning than your child. They have selected their work that goes in the portfolio, they have evaluated their work and set goals, and now they are presenting that learning to you--the parents. No better form of accountability. And they get better and better at doing this each trimester each year because they care.

We encourage you to continue this learning journey with your child. Each piece in the portfolio represents where they are in their development, and it also shows how far they have come. And it prepares them for the real world. It is a collection of experiences that showcase their creations, their thinking, their dreams and aspirations, and their progress with their goals. We encourage you to continue your conversations during the next week over the portfolio and continue throughout the year as you continue to promote conversations about their learning and about their thinking. Learning is a journey, not a destination.

Linda Ellis



Important Reminders

*Please have your child at school by 7:55 a.m. every morning so he/she does not miss our Morning Meeting that begins at 8 a.m.

*Please make sure your child has a snack, lunch, and water bottle every day, a jacket on cold days, and tennis shoes on PE days.

*Invite your child to show CTL school spirit by wearing his/her orange CTL t-shirt on Fridays.



The Little Things In Life

I believe that the practice of appreciating the little things in life involves focusing our attention on what is pleasurable, revering, and sustaining in our lives. At times it can become easy to take the little things for granted or overlook them.

It helps to intentionally and purposefully notice the things we are grateful for and keep a record of them. Maybe try thanking someone, complimenting someone, appreciating our families, and always practicing living in the moment.

Life is full of obligations such as taking the kids to school, going to work, running errands, cooking dinner, and then finally heading to bed. Then, we wake up and repeat. Before we realize, another week has passed. We finally ask ourselves, “Did I find any time for myself in there?”

Throughout the routines of our week, sometime you can find yourself asking, *Where did that week/month/year go? Do I actually remember anything from it that will serve me well, mentally or emotionally?*

It's been uttered numerous times before, but we all need to take time to stop, breathe, and just value the world around us. This can come in many forms. Perhaps we enjoy a memory, a thought, our favorite restaurant, a special place we like to visit, or just spending time with that special person.

It takes a while to wire our brains to think like this. When these little things are happening, the trick is to not simply let them pass and move on to our next task but to look, listen, and absorb what we are seeing.

Once we've mastered it, we'll find ourselves taking a deep breath and feeling grateful for taking the time to digest all of these precious moments. Everything else disappears and becomes irrelevant. For those few minutes, it's only us and those little things in the entire universe. Our thankfulness for the moment forces us to slow down and realize we have no need to feel rushed or stressed.

At CTL, we focus on the apparent little things that are actually the most significant in our students' educational lives. We place emphasis on our mantra of “keeping things simple” which allows us to focus on the whole child. *We celebrate diversity and instill integrity, compassion, and confidence in each of our students.* We provide an intimate, personalized environment tailored to each students' needs.

Our school environment is led by people who value others, their voices, and their need for choice. We have teachers who are knowledgeable, care about student learning, and adapt their instruction to meet the needs of their learners. These are the simple things that allow us to fully appreciate what we typically take for granted. I am happy to be a part of it!

Ryan DuFour



Pre-K Class

Welcome Fall! We have been waiting for you patiently, and we're glad you are here. October was filled with lots of fun and exciting units. During reading workshop we are discussing the parts of a book and how the author and illustrator are sometimes different people and how they must work together to make the book come alive. Also, that the front cover design can give you clues to what the book is about. Some of our favorite books are *Room on a Broom*, *Scarecrow Boy*, *Pumpkin Hill*, *The Very Busy Spider*, *Buster Bat*, and *The Gruffalo*. We also took advantage of our cloudy and rainy days this month by going on an ABC ghost letter hunt in CTL's library. With a special black light and pen, students had to shine the light on the ghost to reveal the hidden letters in their name.

This month in science we started by talking about the life cycle of a spider, why spiders are not insects, and the difference between the two. In our bat unit we explored how bats are helpful to our environment by eating lots of mosquitoes for dinner each night which seem to be in abundance this fall. Both units were closed with making a fun snack with Oreo cookies, pretzels for legs and savory Doritos for wings. Our celery science experiment began with rainbow-colored water. After a few days we were able to see the celery and celery leaves change color. The celery sipped up the water like a straw and moved the colored water throughout the celery. We also noticed the celery with more leaves *drank* more of the water than the ones with fewer leaves. We concluded that leaves need water, too. Pre-K was fortunate to have a fresh farm pumpkin. With a recent trip to Michigan, Mr. Billings brought a large pumpkin and small pumpkins for each student to conduct our pumpkin investigation. They counted and measured the pumpkins and then predicted a sink-or-float conclusion for their pumpkins.



After reading *Five Pumpkins on a Fence*, our pumpkin STEAM challenge had the Pre-K build a structure to hold five pumpkins and not allow them to roll away. In addition, we have been practicing our one-to-one correspondence and ten-frame activities.

We had a great time at our annual Halloween Carnival. Everyone looked fantastic dressed in their favorite Halloween costumes. A big thank you to our room mom, Sarah, for organizing and designing the Witch's Ring Toss for the Carnival.

In November we are looking forward to presenting our portfolios and participating in all the Thanksgiving activities.

Becky Billings



Kindergarten Class

October FLEW by in kindergarten! The holiday season is officially upon us. In language arts we continue to intensify our love for reading. We are devouring books weekly and keeping a log to share with our parents during the upcoming student-led portfolio conferences. I am amazed by the rapidly developing reading skills in our classroom. We have started partner reading in our room, and I look forward to watching and listening during that time each morning as my students share their books with each other. They are building wonderful fluency and great confidence as readers. In writing workshop the students continue to hone their craft as authors. Some students have recently shared their writing pieces during morning meeting. As we read big books together during the week, we look closely at what authors and illustrators do in those books so we can try new things in our own writing. I have noticed some recent experimenting with exclamation points, speech bubbles and the use of questions in our personal narratives. I have a hard time getting some of my students to come to a stop at the end of writing workshop each day. Some would write all day if given the option!



In math workshop we have a strong focus on building deep number sense, unlike mass-marketed math programs outside of CTL. This is vital to future math success. When young children practice math through rote memorization, workbooks and constant skills testing, they miss out on developing the crucial building blocks of number sense. I often find that young children who are performing double-digit addition using an old-fashioned algorithm they have been drilled to memorize have difficulty with the basic concept that the number 9 can be made in multiple ways. If you were unable to attend our CTL math workshop, please make plans to attend any that are offered in the future. We place a strong emphasis on number sense and problem solving. These are necessary skills for algebra, geometry, calculus and beyond. Trust the process! My students enjoy a variety of daily math activities to strengthen their number sense. Our math talks are a daily favorite along with roll and record and work with our rekenreks. We engage in real world problem-solving skills that bring math alive.

In science workshop we spent extra time on our life science storyline about humans and the needs of organisms, animal needs and plant needs due to an overwhelming interest in these topics. That is the beauty of CTL. We don't teach curriculum, we teach kids. Therefore, we can spend extra time on topics of interest rather than pushing ahead to the next topic on a rigid schedule. We will be shifting our focus to reducing human impact before moving on to our next storyline about dealing with weather, weather conditions,



measurement of weather and weather hazards.

The highlight of social studies workshop was our peek into the customs and traditions of Halloween. We had a fantastic time at the Halloween Carnival on Friday, October 26, 2018 right here at CTL! We dressed up in our costumes and enjoyed fun carnival games, and plenty of CANDY! I am proud of my students as they have gained an understanding of what it meant to pledge to our American and Texas flags. We are working on memorizing the words to each pledge as well. We are experts concerning our self concepts, family and neighborhoods. Our amazing kindergarten students have been hard at work developing good citizenship skills. We have put a strong focus on kindness and integrity. I am amazed by their teamwork and kindness as they fill each others' buckets on a daily basis.

We are looking forward to our annual CTL Thanksgiving Feast on Thursday, November 15, 2018 from 11am to 12pm followed by student-led conferences that afternoon and Friday, November 16. The children are eager to share their learning with you! We will enjoy Thanksgiving Break during the week of November 19-23.

Annie Manning

1-2 Class

The fall season is in full swing and the month of October quickly whirled by. The Explorers had many exciting discoveries in October. We explored pumpkins, read fun Halloween stories, participated in a school-wide carnival with many fun activities and snacks, but most importantly, we welcomed two new friends to our classroom family. It is wonderful to see their relationships building.

During reading workshop the class has settled in and become familiar with the procedures. They now know how to quickly choose just-right books and get right into their reading. They have become familiar with characters and setting in the books they read. They are beginning to see the importance of choosing books for their book bags each day and how it impacts their reading success. Through our reading conferences I have found the students using many of the strategies taught to figure out words they don't know. I



have noticed many kids reading with more expression, often using voices to emphasize dialogue in the story. We will continue to work on the strategies and look at the different ways authors write throughout our author studies next month.

During writing workshop conferences I am seeing how the kids are incorporating some of the writing strategies they see in the writing I have been modeling. I am seeing quotation marks for dialogue, more punctuation and longer stories with more detail. During author's



chair, the class has shown that they are beginning to read their pieces with more expression and are always excited to share the writing they have created. I am impressed with the comments and connections made by their peers as well. In November I will introduce ways to add the five senses into their writing and the effect it has on a reader. The kids will begin to see how incorporating the senses enables them to make connections to their own lives as well as providing an opportunity to visualize a story.

Our number talks are proving to be effective in math as the class has begun to express their math thinking more freely. They are understanding that talking about the way they think about math is a great way to share strategies and revise thinking when needed. Math Congress is another way to do that as well. We have been enforcing the importance of showing our thinking on paper when working with partners or in groups during our explorations. The class has created posters with drawings, number sentences, grouping and tallying to show how they work through a problem. They are learning that mistakes are okay as they show how the thinking changes and revising happens. We have focused on doubles, near-doubles, using a number line, comparing numbers, estimation, making tens, grouping, making graphs and sorting and extending number sense. We will continue those topics and include number patterns, money recognition and counting, bar graphs, and fractions.

The class explored pumpkins during our week-long pumpkin investigation. As we continued to study the parts of a plant, we carved pumpkins, gutted them and looked at the seeds. As a math connection we estimated the number of seeds in each pumpkin and counted the seeds by grouping them into groups of ten and then exchanging them for hundreds. We recorded our actual amount. We also estimated the weight, number of lines and circumference of our pumpkins and then worked together within our groups to find out how close our predictions were. We also continued our study of plants with a look into plant adaptations, characteristics and survival. We also completed some STEM challenges that involved constructing a tower with toothpicks and creating boats from aluminum foil that are able to float and hold weights without sinking. Next month we will move on to study animal adaptations.

In social studies workshop we focused on learning about the State of Texas. The class worked with a partner to create a brochure of Texas with the goal to persuade people to visit our great state. They presented to the class with great excitement and creativity. Each brochure included our state flag, symbols, parks, monuments, attractions and sports teams. It was awesome to see the enthusiasm in their presentations. We will move on to learn more about the United States in November.

November will continue to be a time of learning and growth as we explore new topics and ideas. I am, as always, eager to observe the creativity, thinking, sharing, reading, writing and learning this group will produce. It is magical to see the development unfold before my eyes! I am lucky to do what I do...best "job" on the planet!

Lisa Lipar



3-4 Class

Third and fourth graders are amazing learners! We enjoy discovering new things each day. As we move through the first trimester, we will continue to explore new topics in each subject area.

In reading workshop students are charting their reading progress and documenting books they have completed. We have so many avid readers! Students are encouraged to think about the story elements as they read. This includes the setting, characters, problem, and solution of the story. We will begin to discuss character traits within their selected texts and explore how this adds to the plot. This goes hand in hand with writing workshop. Students have been immersed in fiction and personal narrative writing. As portfolio assessment time gets closer, we will be analyzing our writing to select pieces to showcase in student portfolios. During this process students will also edit and revise some writing for publication.

In math workshop students will continue learning and understanding multiplication and division. We explore these math concepts in many ways. Students utilize math skills to solve real-world problems and share different ways to come to the same answer. Students also practice specific multiplication facts through math partner games created for each multiplication fact. We will continue to discover how, like addition and subtraction, multiplication and division work together with related facts. This concept opens up the knowledge that if you know one fact you can use it to solve other facts. Our mathematicians have fun learning more about the connections in math and numbers.



In science workshop we will be moving into a new topic of how organisms change over time. Within this unit we will explore plant and animal extinction, fossils, and survival of the fittest. We will complete each topic through project-based learning and student group presentations.

During social studies workshop our focus will be on government. Aligning with current events we will begin with voting and elections then move into specific parts of government city, state, and national government. I am amazed daily at the brilliance and uniqueness of each student. As always, thank you for sharing your child with me each day!

Corrie Sheldon

5-8 Reading Writing Workshop

It has been a busy time in language arts. We have been thinking about the *So What?* of our writing and wondering what the point of our piece is and why we are writing it. We have been examining



what we actually want to express and what our readers might take away from our writing. We have been thinking about the Robert Frost quote, "*No tears in the writer; no tears in the reader.*"

In grades 7-8 reading workshop we have been really enjoying the read-aloud book, *The Boy from Tomorrow* by Camille DeAngelis—the perfect book for Halloween! Children who live in the same house are communicating with each other, despite being 100 years apart. It is certainly keeping us guessing. In grades 5-6 we are on tender hooks as we near the end of *The Northern Lights*, aka *The Golden Compass* by Philip Pullman. Will Lyra escape and save her father?! All students are lost in their own choice books! I am excited about our second round of book projects. Book projects are a wonderful way for students to recommend and interest their peers in the books they are reading and enjoying.

Caroline Harrison

5-8 Math Workshop

Fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade mathematicians are showing significant growth during our daily mental math time. We are laying the groundwork with mental math addition and subtraction strategies with whole numbers before moving on to mental computations with fractions and decimals. The students are strengthening their number sense by focusing on number relationships rather than memorized procedures.

The fifth graders wrapped up an investigation involving electricity meters, discovered why electricity is measured in kilowatt-hours, and calculated the wattage of appliances based on electricity used and time. We have extended this context into comparing, ordering and operations on decimals. Upon completion of our decimal unit, we will begin investigating with fractions.

In sixth grade the mathematicians have used fraction circles, Cuisenaire rods, fraction strips, illustrations, and a variety of other tools to dive deeply into fractional relationships. We have discredited common misconceptions about fractions and strived to understand fractions as an extension of division. We are going to continue this line of thinking as we move into a unit exploring ratios and rates.

Seventh grade math students have been exploring fraction and decimal operations as well as percentage calculations. We have investigated commission, sale price and markup of products, tax, tip and total at restaurants, measurement conversions and much more! Connecting fractions, decimals and percents





to our real lives has led to great math conversations between students about applying these concepts outside of school.

Eighth grade mathematicians tackled solving equations imbedded in real-world contexts. Based on a monthly budget, students examined what car, television, computer, and refrigerator they could afford by creating and solving equations. Building upon our knowledge of equations, students constructed proofs for the Pythagorean theorem. This investigation launches us into our next unit of angles and triangles.

Claire Want

5-8 Science Workshop

Fifth grade science workshop class just finished our exploration of mixtures and enjoyed hands-on labs involving mixtures. Now, the fifth grade CTL scientists are beginning their unit on Organisms Use of Matter and Energy. Our first topic will be Energy Transfer. Our guiding question will be: Where does the energy in a food chain originate? During this unit the student is expected to use models to describe that energy in animals' food (used for body repair, growth, motion, and the maintenance of body warmth) was once energy from the sun. Up next, we will dig deep into plant structure and Organization for Matter and Energy Flow in Organisms. We will finish off Matter and Energy with units on Food Webs, Basic Needs, Ecosystems, and Matter cycles.

Sixth grade science workshop students have had a BLAST exploring chemical reactions and can now recognize the signs of a chemical reaction from their hands-on labs in class. We are now moving onto Changes in Energy on the Molecular Level. Our guiding question will be *Why do temperatures stay the same while a solid is melting?* The students are expected to develop a model that predicts and describes changes in particle motion, temperature, and state of a pure substance when thermal energy is added or removed.

Seventh and eighth grade CTL scientists have just finished a great unit of the body systems. I am proud of the amazing 3D models they created and presentations they did to teach their classmates about their system of choice. We are now starting our unit on Growth and Development of Organisms with exploring the Reproduction in Plants and Animals. Our guiding question is *How does the location of a population impact its reproductive success?* The students will be expected to use argument based on empirical evidence and scientific reasoning to support an explanation for how characteristic animal behaviors and specialized plant structures affect the probability of successful reproduction of animals and plants respectively. Looking into the future, the students following unit will be Growth of Plants.

Laura Wellbrock

5-6 Social Studies Workshop

In social studies workshop the students have been pursuing a research assignment learning more about the first 13 colonies. They have been working in pairs or groups of three. The main research



report was a collaborative piece and then there were a number of hands-on activities for them to compete individually with the help and advice of their peers. Most groups have made board games that deal with the trials, tribulations and successes experienced by the first settlers. Some examples include the following:

- Have you contracted malaria? Go back 5 places
- You successfully raid a Spanish galleon, move ahead 4 places
- You make contact with friendly Native Americans, and they help you plant vegetables. Move forward 3 places.
- Plus, many more.



This activity has helped the students explore and evaluate the experiences of the first settlers in a fun and informative way. I have been really impressed by their determination as well as how they apply

knowledge and problem-solving to make these games fun and educational. I looked forward to playing the games with the students when we finished the assignment.

James Milner

7-8 Social Studies Workshop

In grades 7-8 social studies we have been studying colonial life in 17th and 18th century America. We have been engrossed in the lifestyle people had then and imagining the hard work and labor of their daily existence. We have been shocked by the extreme forms of punishments used in order to keep people under control and surprised by the lack of rights for women and the treatment of young girls and boys. We have also spent time thinking about how slavery came about within the colonies and have been genuinely upset by the idea that people once felt that it was morally acceptable to own another person. We all agree that we are glad we are living in present day America!

Caroline Harrison

PK-8 Art Workshop

A true artist is not one who is inspired, but one who inspires others.
—Salvador Dali

This month we explored the musical compositions and associated works of art as presented by author William Lach in his book, *Can You Hear It? The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. Students Pre-K





through grade 2 listened and acted out the sounds they heard in various compositions then illustrated their own drawings and paintings based on personal inspiration. Grades 1-4 created camouflaged masks, supporting their studies in animal behavior. Grades 3-8 designed and created scroll-like works inspired by the composition *The Carnival of the Animas* by Camille Saint-Saen. All students were introduced to the festivity Dias de la Muertos as observed in Mexico in early November. As an additional source of inspiration, Jose Guadalupe Posada's *The Calavera of Cupid* was shared with grades 1-8. Each class practiced their designs on 2D skulls before decorating their 3D sugar skulls in various colors and textures.

November welcomes the study of Dale Chihuly, famous American glass artist. After introducing Chihuly, students will create works as inspired by his artwork. All grades will contribute to a collaborative piece by designing and "blowing" water bottles. Pre-K-K will create individual works utilizing plastic straws and coffee filters. Grades 1-8 will explore bowl making, mobile structures and elongated wall art using plastic cups and sheets of plastic.

Abby Salazar

5-8 Drama Workshop

Rehearsals are underway for our end-of-year drama and music showcase. The students are rehearsing and working hard to memorize their lines.

The first play is set in a school where strange and mischievous things happen to the students, and our second involves a futuristic descendant of Sherlock Holmes who is plunged into the middle of a crime that requires her skills of deduction to solve the mystery.

If you have children in 5-8 drama, please offer them help to work on their lines and also assist them in finding costumes that will help them transition to their role.

We look forward to showing you their finished product on December 4 on our stage in the garden here at CTL. Make sure you're here as our first play will begin promptly at 4pm.

James Milner

PK-8 Music Workshop

Catch the beat, clap the rhythm, dance the tune, and play the fiddle! Music class continues to jive with emphasis on the beat, rhythm, and pulse of music while adding melody and movement to our skill set.

In Pre-K we assembled our own percussion band to the book and song *The Cat Goes Fiddle-i-Fee*. Each student played a different instrument to represent his/her animal's sound, and together we created a barnyard howl. We've also been experimenting with body percussion: clapping, tapping, stomping, jumping, and even a little snapping to the beat of songs we have learned so far this year. They are doing a fantastic job! Coming up, we will be learning more movement patterns with scarves, bells, and beanbags to solidify beat and rhythm and in preparation for our upcoming *Night of Mystery*



and Music!

In kindergarten this week we were coming off our musical unit *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*. To give the students a chance to create their own musical number, we learned the famous folk song *Turkey in the Straw* and then added the Virginia Reel dance to it. The class performed the reel with surprising flair and finesse—I was really proud of them! We will definitely be doing more dances in the future. On that note, I have selected some mystery-themed folk songs and dances to use in the coming concert. We will also enjoy the cooler weather and changing season by practicing rhythm chants to autumn-inspired songs and poems. Check out the music bulletin board in the hallway for a taste of these fall beats.

First and second grades experienced a treat as student Danielle Gauntt helped introduce our newest folk song from Russia entitled *The Song of the Volga Boatmen*. Danielle read the song for us in Russian—from the Cyrillic alphabet no less—and then added some historical background she knew about the song. After learning some added historical context and vocabulary, the class began learning the tune and will be adding movement and percussion to it in the coming week. We also reviewed body percussion movements and plan to form our own individual body percussion ensemble.

Third and fourth grades also practiced body percussion: clapping, snapping, tapping, stomping, and jumping this week using quarter notes, quarter rests, and eighth notes. Next week each student will compose his/her own body percussion piece. You will see them displayed in the hallway and in their portfolios. But their highlight of the week was definitely our review of our John Williams listening unit by using light sabers (pool noodles and duct tape—we kept it safe!) to duel in time to the beat of the *Imperial March* and the *Star Wars Theme*. The students loved it and demonstrated remarkable aptitude in adding spins and turns while keeping the beat. Next were Halloween-themed activities and song preparations for our concert.

Finally, grades 5-8 students are beginning to blend as a band. We have been running beat and rhythm drills in all kinds of ways: with body percussion, bucket drumming, non-pitched instruments—you name it! It's easy to perform solo but quite another to jive with the group, but these students are working hard to come together as a team. My original inspiration for the class was the British percussion group Stomp, but I came across a bit of history I was able to share with the students. In the late 1800s in New Orleans, groups called spasm bands composed of homemade and found percussive instruments became quite famous and were instrumental in the advent of jazz in the city known not only as *The Paris of the South* but also as *The Birthplace of Jazz*. We read the book *Stalebread Charlie and His Razzzy Dazzy Spasm Band* as an example of the most famous of these N'Awlins bands. The students are working to bring in found instruments to build an outdoor percussion wall that is sure to be something the younger students aspire to to play! We're also learning several rat-a-tat, skit-skat, blow-your-mind-that musical numbers that we can't wait to perform for you on December 4 at CTL's *Night of Mystery and Music*!

Sommer Trebilco



PK-4 Physical Education Workshop

We had a ball playing kickball this October inspired by our Astros! Of course, we had to get those heart rates up first, so they ran several laps first followed by some stretching. The kids are understanding the importance of stretching to keep those muscles flexible. They are also building up their endurance and are requesting to run more laps. Yes, they are actually requesting MORE laps. Each grade has shown enthusiasm for kickball this month. While I pitch the ball to them, they have quickly picked up how to play and are realizing how similar it is to baseball.

All students have been practicing catching and throwing the ball and understand what I mean when I say get in your *ready position*. It's been fun watching them play the game and seeing their confidence grow. On rainy days we are inside practicing our yoga poses and breathing exercises to relax those minds. I've also introduced zumba to our 3rd and 4th graders which was a hit! They all loved the dance movements. I don't think they even realized they were exercising because they had so much FUN dancing.

Sarina Eckhardt

5-8 Physical Education Workshop

Grades 5-6 PE workshop students have been making great progress in their soccer skills. They have worked hard and focused on the individual goals they created. They also worked hard and enjoyed the practices every Monday and then seeing progress themselves during their mini games every Wednesday. Next trimester they want to focus on various traditional PE games before ending the year focused on volleyball third trimester.

Grades 7-8 PE workshop students have been focused on the more traditional PE games such as capture the flag, skittles, kickball, gaga ball, and more. Next trimester we will be focusing on several sports, spending two to three weeks on each sport.

Laura Wellbrock