



# CTL CORNER

Center for Teaching & Learning | 25925 Budde Road, The Woodlands, TX 77380 | 832-474-8214

## Important Dates

### Friday, February 5

Brother's Pizza Friday Lunch

Harvest Home Musical Performance at 2:00 p.m.  
followed by a Picnic at Mrs. Kinzel's home

### Wednesday, February 10

Grades 5-8 Field Trip to Main Street Theater to  
see *Bridge to Terabithia*

### Thursday, February 11

Parent Council - Grades K-8 Math Night at 6:00  
p.m.

### Friday, February 12

Quiznos Friday Lunch  
Class Valentine Parties at 12:00 p.m.

### Monday, February 15

No School - Presidents' Day

### Tuesday, February 16

Grades K-2 101st Day of School

### Friday, February 19

Chick-fil-A Friday Lunch  
Staff Appreciation Lunch

### Friday, February 26

El Chaparro Friday Lunch  
Go Texan Day

## Important Reminders

\*Please ensure your child is at school by 8 a.m.  
All students arriving after 8 a.m. will be marked  
tardy.

\*Please ensure your child has a snack, lunch,  
and water bottle every day and tennis shoes on  
PE days (Mondays and Wednesdays).

\*Please encourage your child to wear his/her  
CTL t-shirt each Friday.

\*Please check your child's teacher's RenWeb  
page for class announcements, homework, and  
resources.



## We Love you, CTL!

*The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot  
be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the  
heart.*

*-Helen Keller*

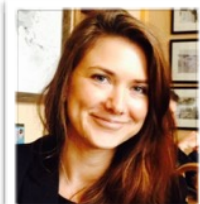
January brought us much sunshine, literally and figuratively—a rich and exciting month filled with spring-like days, change, and promise for the future of CTL. Many of you have driven by the property at 26131 Kuykendahl Road and have seen the spacious blue building that will be our future home. We are beyond thrilled that Harris County finally cleared the building permits during the holidays. The modular is nearing completion, and work is underway to complete the road and landscaping. Our long-awaited move is closer as we are scheduled to take possession July 1. Thank each of you for your patience through this process.



We are planning for next year in other ways, too. We are currently taking new student applicants for next year, and our wait pool is growing. Re-enrollment began this week, and March 1 we will begin acceptance of new students. We are also excited to be expanding to Pre-K and grade 9 next year! In anticipation of our growth, we are excited about the new additions to our CTL team,



Christina Callaway and Paige Hayward, our new Associate Principals, who will be assisting with leadership roles including preparation for our May accreditation visit, enrollment, spring assessments, our new Pre-K and high school programs, and school-wide initiatives in planning for next year. In addition to assisting with the





leadership of CTL, Christina and Paige bring much needed teaching expertise—Christina as a Spanish teacher and Paige as a teacher of history and social studies. Both Christina and Paige come to us with rich international experiences in teaching and leadership, are philosophically aligned, and are learners who will fit in beautifully with our current CTL team. We welcome them with open arms, and we know you and your children will also.

We also welcome Ricky Johnson as an assistant teacher in our grades 6-8 math/science classroom. Ricky has a M.A. in Computer Science & Bioinformatics and a M.S. in Biology from University of Houston and a graduate certificate in applied statistics from Texas A&M. Aside from his experience as a high school science and computer teacher, Ricky has taught graduate level cell biology, proteomics, and bioinformatics at University of Houston and currently teaches anatomy and physiology and biology at Lone Star College. He also currently teaches Java programming, computer hardware, and middle school science at Extraordinary Education. Ricky has a rich background and is a great addition to our support team.

In addition to adding new faculty, we have made facility changes at our current location. Even though we didn't receive the permissions needed to lay mulch and pine needles on the playgrounds, the students are enjoying playing on and in the dirt. Marci Murphy and put up four-square bars during the holidays, adding to the activities the children can choose from at recess. The lease of the house in January for two days a week was a smart move. The two rooms provide Mrs. McKissic and Mrs. Kinzel much needed space and a place to call home for their art and music classes and allow Mrs. Bailey's and Mrs. Dos's grade 5-8 students to spread out for math, science, language arts, and social studies, giving them more room to work. As of February 1, we now have the house five days a week which allows us to bring all K-8 students together for Morning Meeting—a joyful experience to have our entire CTL family together again to begin the day and to build our school-wide community. We have had beautiful weather; however, the house will also serve as a refuge from the rain for Mrs. Murphy's Monday and Wednesday PE classes.

Our school-wide community is also benefiting in January and February from a review of the 7 *Habits of Happy Kids* (Sean Covey and Stacy Curtis) in Morning Meetings throughout the week and in Council on Friday. Please ask your CTL student the meaning of each and the implications for relationships at home and at CTL. We are reviewing habit 5 this week.

We anticipate many exciting celebrations yet to come this month including Valentines Day, Presidents Day, and Random Acts of Kindness Day/Week. Thank you for sharing your children with us!



*Linda Ellis and Jennifer Chamberlain*

### *Kindergarten*

Kindergarten welcomed a new classmate in January! We are so excited to have Finja joining us from England. It has been fun for her and Ava to teach us about the similarities and differences they have noticed between England and here. They are teaching us new words as well!

In reading we have been enjoying reading stories about winter. We read many





stories by our Jan Brett as we continued our author study of her. We especially enjoyed *The Mitten* and the songs we learned to go with it. It was a fun story to act out as well! We have used these read alouds to work on comprehension skills



including making inferences and asking questions. Because of the students' current interest in non-fiction books, we are studying Gail Gibbons for our next author study. She has written many books that will help us learn about nonfiction writing and the huge variety of subjects about which one can write.

In writing the students had shown an interest in *all about* (nonfiction) books, so we have been looking at published *all about* books, and our mini lessons have helped us see how we can write our own *all about* books using topics on which we are experts. Several of the students

have decided to try this genre in their own writing this month. The discussions we have had about nonfiction text in WritingWorkshop this month are really helping us out in science as we have just begun research projects about animals.

In math we have been working on concepts including measuring weight and capacity, understanding teen numbers, finding and representing shapes, and representing addition and subtraction with pictures, objects, and symbols. Some of our favorite math activities this month were using beans to compare capacities of different containers, making shape robots, and cooking snow dough. Next month we have some special days to celebrate that will lend themselves to some great math activities: Groundhog Day and the 100th (and 101st) Day of School. We will also be focusing on 3-dimensional shapes and measurable attributes such as weight, height, and capacity.

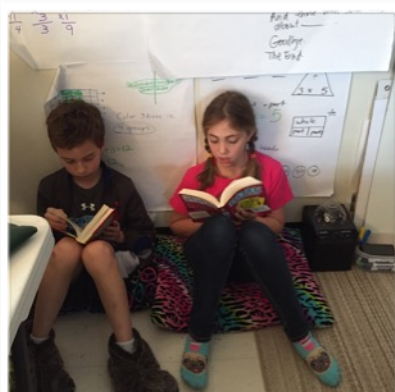
In science we began our study of life science. We have learned about the characteristics of living and nonliving things and the basic needs of living things. We have looked at ways to sort and classify animals as well. We have just begun our first research project which we are really enjoying! Partners selected an animal to study and will be using books and Internet resources to learn about their animal's diet, habitat, and much more. After we complete these projects, we will turn our focus to plants, their needs, and their life cycles.



In social studies we have been learning about what is in our neighborhoods, including different types of buildings and outdoor places. As we continue this topic in February, we will work on map skills and even create our own neighborhood which they have already voted to name "BFF Town." Then we will begin our next unit about where we are in the world. We will learn that our neighborhoods are in cities in the state of Texas and in the country of the United States. We will also learn some state and national symbols.

I've always said that January is when kindergartners "take off" in their learning, and this group has done it again! They have routines down, they've built foundational skills, they've made it through the holidays, and now they are making huge strides. I have been amazed by the growth I've seen this month even though I knew it would be coming. They are clearly heading toward being first graders which is all at once exciting and sad for me. Fortunately, I get to keep them for a few more months!

[Stephanie Phipps](#)



### Grades 1-2

January was a great month for new beginnings! The class came back ready to jump start the new year. We began a new structure for our math program. The class learned how to work in a Math Workshop setting. The class works in teams and rotates through four different centers each day. They complete 12-16 activities in math every two weeks. This offers them choices each day as well as the opportunity to challenge themselves with the many different activities that are available. They are able to work at their own pace. This style of math also gives them the opportunity to work in a small group of 4-5 with the teacher each day as well. Make sure you ask them about it.



In science the class presented their animal research projects and did a fantastic job! The class participated with many questions and comments to their presenter each day and gathered a wealth of information on 19 different animals. It was an awesome unit. I videoed each child as they presented and will be sending each family the video.

Reading and writing is really improving across the board. Each child has shown much growth in their writing and reading stamina as well as their writing content. I am excited to conference with them to see where they will take their writing next. I had the opportunity to meet and participate in a teacher conference session with Carl Anderson at the 30th Annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference, and it was amazing. I felt fortunate to have gained even more knowledge about Writing Workshop. He is one of the best mentors in his field.

The class is excited to start our February activities. We will have a Valentine's Day party. Our room parents are already planning that so check emails for anything you may want to help with. We will also be celebrating the 101st day of school with the kindergarten class, so look for information on that as well.



Lisa Lipar

### Grades 3-4

January was an exciting month for the Discovanners. In reading workshop, we were able to rearrange the room, and students are able to spread out, finding comfortable reading spaces to cozy up with their books. We now have several large pillows for students to choose from, and students have also brought their own pillows to class. If you were to spy in our class during reading time, you would find many students tucked away in nooks and crannies around the room, lost in their books of choice. We also revisited our individual reading goals in the beginning of January. We timed ourselves reading a page or two and calculated how many pages we could possibly read during our reading workshop time. Students have become more proficient at monitoring their progress each day. We also voted on a new class read aloud. After each student suggested a book, I formulated a list of the books with a picture of each cover and a brief synopsis of the story. As a class, we read through each suggested title's summary and voted on our favorite. The top votes went to *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, *The One and Only Ivan*, *The Lost Hero*, and *The Raft*. In the end, *The Raft* by S. A. Boden, a story of a young girl surviving a plane crash over the ocean, won out. One of the best qualities of our class is the growing knowledge our students have of books. They know what books they like, what authors they





love, and what genres they find most appealing. Kallie Rees, one of our classroom moms, is graciously compiling a wish list students created of all the books they would love to have in our classroom library. Be on the lookout for the list to come home. If you are able to donate or let our class borrow any of the books on the list, we would be grateful— and excited!



Writing workshop has picked up steam in January. Several students published their writing which was submitted to the Dana Kay Barber Writing Awards contest held by Abydos Learning. Several students submitted poems while others submitted stories. Although not all students submitted their writing for the contest, all students have experienced the writing process from beginning to end. Many students have taken advantage of their flash drives and the use of our laptops. Lots of conferencing with the teacher and peers has taken place. Students are getting the knack of using Pages on the Mac laptops, and they are enjoying seeing their writing being published.



In math we completed our review and practice of all the multiplication facts. We followed the sequence of learning and practicing our facts in the following order: the twos, the fives, the nines, the squares, and the teasers (all of the remaining facts). Along the way, we also practiced the inverse of multiplication and included division facts in our daily routine as well. Students extended their individual facts knowledge by multiplying two digit factors times two digit factors. We learned at least four different ways to multiply larger

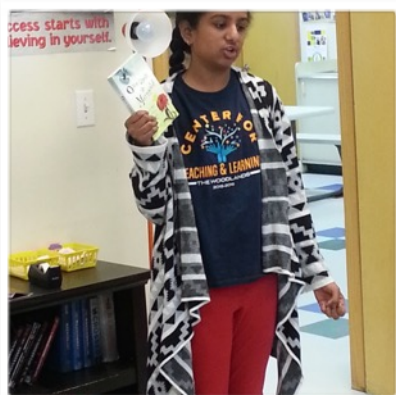
numbers together. Multiplication is more than memorization and students have been practicing finding factors and multiples of numbers. This has led us to dividing numbers both with and without remainders. Students have played many hands-on games to help them concretely conceptualize the multiplication and division concepts. The board game *Race to the Moon* and a game with counters and dice called *Leftovers* were just a few of the ways we reinforced multiplication and division concepts. We will be revisiting rounding and estimation next as we add that step to multiplying and dividing larger numbers.

In science we have moved into our study of life science. Our research of “weird animals” kicked off our study of animals. Students have researched a weird animal, collecting facts about their habitats and other characteristics. Looking back at their weird animal research, students are beginning to classify their animals as vertebrate or invertebrate and sharing whether their animal is a bird, reptile, amphibian, mammal, or fish. We will be conducting experiments to discover how animals’ traits help them collect and eat food. Connecting our study of animals to social studies, we will research the animals that are prevalent within our community because of the geography and natural resources that surround us.

In social studies we are making dioramas to display our knowledge of our communities’ climate and geographic attributes such as trees, rivers, and lakes. We are understanding how our daily lives are impacted by these physical features. In February we will focus on Texas history beginning with a look at a few of the important key figures in the early settlement of Texas including Stephen F. Austin and Sam Houston.



Melanie Smith



### Grades 5 Language Arts

Students enjoyed the conclusion of our read aloud book, *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*. Historical Fiction is a genre that hasn't been explored by most, and it offered a great introduction to the genre. Some students have already expressed an interest in reading books from the genre on their own. Our next read aloud will be *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson in preparation for our field trip to Main Street Theater's production on February 10. Students have read many great books since the holidays and have begun to give book talks that have inspired their classmates to add titles to their *Books I Want to Read* lists.

Dr. Joyce Armstrong Carroll, Founder and Director of Abydos Learning, was a guest teacher in class this month. She introduced students to Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains as it related to the books they were reading. Students created *Transformers* to demonstrate their analysis of their own books. We all enjoyed learning from Dr. Carroll and look forward to her next visit!

In writing workshop students are busy taking their pieces through the writing process. Many have already completed more than one final draft this trimester, and others will have their first final drafts completed in the coming week. We have discussed the importance of finding the *so what?* in writing pieces, being sure to show the reader our thoughts rather than just telling the story. It's exciting to see the progression of pieces as students work to find the meaning in what they are writing!



### Grades 6-8 Language Arts

Students enjoyed the conclusion of *Ship Breaker* and are ready to begin *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson as our next read aloud in preparation for our field trip to see Main Street Theater's production on February 10. Through the read aloud, students have been analyzing flat and round characters. Our Reader's Roundtable discussion of the characters in the books students are reading independently raised more questions regarding the effect of these characters on a story. We will explore this topic further in our next roundtable discussion.

In writing workshop most students are typing the final draft of their current pieces. Many are exploring a new genre in writing and are enjoying the challenge. The strategy called *so what?*, or reason for writing a piece, has helped students find a focus for their writing. Students enjoy sharing their thoughts in the author's chair and are willing to listen to the great ideas offered by classmates. It's exciting to see the progression of student writing as their confidence grows and they experiment with different techniques and genres.

### Grades 6-8 Social Studies

Students have enjoyed researching a topic in Ancient History. They are gathering facts about their individual topics and have been excited to share many strange and interesting discoveries. They will present the information they gather in the form of an expository essay introduced to students by Dr. Joyce Armstrong Carroll, Founder and Director of Abydos Learning. We're grateful to Dr. Carroll for also allowing us to borrow many beautiful books about a variety of subjects within Ancient History. Dr. Carroll introduced students to a new strategy to assist them in organizing facts and presenting them in their own words. They will present their final drafts to the class the second week in February.

[Angela Bailey](#)





## Grade 5 Math and Science

This has been a busy and exciting month for our 5th grade students. In math we have covered volume, area, surface area, powers of 10, and representing numbers in exponential notation. I have been proud of the effort they have put in and the enthusiasm they show each and every day.

In science we have been working on understanding the different properties of matter, including density. The 5th graders designed boats using their understanding of relative density and buoyancy (sinking and floating) to construct a boat, using limited resources that would float under the weight of five passengers (marbles). It was great fun, and this led to a discussion about the importance of the Archimedes Principle of Displacement.



## Grade 6-8 Math and Science

This month the 6th through 8th graders dove into the periodic table and all things chemical from making incredible 3D models of the elements to *Adopting an Element*. We are covering a wide range of topics under the main focus of matter such as differentiating between pure substances and compounds, identifying the components of organic compounds; and balancing chemical equations.

We have broken into three separate content groups for math. It has been wonderful being able to concentrate on each and every student at each and every grade level. We are working through the *Connected Math* books in class, and I will be setting up each student's account in order for them to access at home their specific ebook that correlates to what we are working on in class.

Next week Thursday, February 11th, is the next Parent Council evening. The theme for the evening will be K through 8 Mathematics. We have been working meticulously together as a math/science team to form a concise and collaborative curriculum framework that progresses throughout all grade levels. We welcome you to join us at 6 p.m. for a fun and informative evening.

## Grade 5 Social Studies

In social studies, 5th grade students have been exploring four different Native American tribes, namely the Iowas, Makahs, Taos and Senecas. Students worked on presentations over the past two weeks and presented toward the end of last week. They were absolutely fabulous, and we all learned a tremendous amount about America's historical culture.

### Chantal Dos Santos

## Grades K-8 Physical Education

PE in January! It's been cold, hot, wet and dry – sometimes all in the same day! We never know quite what we'll get. Students have been amazingly accommodating even when it involves relocating in the middle of a class. Most everyone has also been dressed appropriately for the changing elements. A big kudos to all!

January was all about catching and throwing. The younger grades began with bean bags, foam balls and scoops, while the upper grades experimented with flying discs. Thanks to volunteers from Woodlands Lacrosse Association, students then had plenty of opportunity to learn and practice lacrosse. I was impressed at how well they all did. Hearing, "Ms. Murphy! Ms. Murphy! I CAN do it!" was music to my ears. In many ways it was a lesson on perseverance. It wasn't easy, but with practice it was possible to finally scoop up that ground ball



or catch the ball you thought was heading towards your face. As I said, I was extremely impressed with all students throughout the grades. The kindergartners deserve a special mention, as I think the sticks were bigger than they were!

Next month we will pull on our cowboy boots and team up with Mrs. Kinzel for square dancing. Mix in a little tumbling and balance and I think February will have lots of laughs!

*Marci Murphy*

### *Grades K-8 Art*



## ART CLASS

Artist Technique Mini-Lessons...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with Art to Remember Paper</li> <li>Using Light Strokes to Sketch</li> <li>Turning Mistakes Into Purposeful Art</li> </ul>
A Few of Our Art-Creating Experiences...	<div> <div> <p><b>Art to Remember</b> Art to Remember Planning and Creating Time</p> </div> <div> <p><b>Making Valentine's Day Cards</b></p> </div> <div> <p><b>Learning the History and Creating Zentangles</b></p> </div> </div>
Community-Building, Empowerment Questions and Topics We Have Discussed...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintaining Expectations with Consistency and Excellence (Continued)</li> <li>Maintaining Respect and Community as a Class Family</li> <li>Not Wasting Trees—When to “Start Over” with a New Piece of Paper</li> <li>How to Not Compare Your Work with Others (Continued)</li> <li>How to Celebrate Your Own Creativity (Continued)</li> <li>Thinking of Your Audience as an Artist</li> <li>Creating Art That Speaks from Your Heart</li> <li>Finding a Stopping Point with Unfinished Art</li> <li>How to React and Think If Another Artist Uses Your Idea(s)</li> </ul>

January 2016 has been a month teeming with contagious energy and creativity! Every CTL student has been engaged in creating art pieces to be submitted to Art to Remember. This has been our focus for the entire month of January, as each child has engaged in creating art they feel represents who they are as an individual.

Art to Remember is an art fundraising company that helps school art programs raise money, and the CTL Parent Council is spearheading this fundraiser for us this year. Your child's art will be printed on quality products like lunch kits, bags, coffee mugs, calendars, magnets, and more! This experience will be one of a kind, allowing your child to be an officially “published” artist! Be on the lookout for more information on how you will be able to purchase products with your child's art on them from a CTL Parent Council Representative soon.

Besides creating Art to Remember artwork, students in grades K-8 also constructed friendly Valentine's Day cards to give to the senior citizens of





Harvest Home Retirement Home in Tomball. They will be singing and passing out the cards they made to spread joy to all. Please check your email for more information.

With eager anticipation, February 2016 will be the month where students will be exposed to a plethora of new mediums and innovative art techniques. Also, CTL students will get to engage in “inventing” and creating abstract art based on themes and individual interpretations. This is always an energetic time because they get to learn from each other and teach their teacher and peers.

As a reminder, students in grades 6–8 will be able to sign up to teach “CTL Young Artist Mini-Lessons” during art class, with guidance from Mrs. McKissic. During student-led minilessons, students will be able to share a favorite art technique or skill with the class and provide their peers with real-time modeling skills. All students in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 will be participating in Artists’ Investigations during Trimester 2, where students will be able to research an artist of their choice to discover more about their childhood and lives as artists. All details are forthcoming.

[Trevia McKissic](#)

### *Grades K-8 Music*

January has flown by as all the music classes have been preparing to perform for the residents at Harvest Home. Every class has learned a handbell piece as well as five songs with choreography that will be sure to entertain and spread some smiles. It is always a joy to perform at the nursing homes. Please remember to wear your blue CTL shirt with jeans. Students should also wear sneakers.

Immediately following their second performance, we will caravan to my house for an afternoon of fun, friends, and food. There are numerous activities for the kids including soccer, horse rides, pony carriage rides, trampoline, horseshoes, a playground, and tractor train rides. For those who want the spotlight, there will be karaoke in the music room. Hamburgers and hotdogs will be served around 5 pm.

[Debbie Kinzel](#)