



CTL CORNER

Center for Teaching & Learning | 26131 Kuykendahl, The Woodlands, TX 77375 | 832-474-8214



Important Dates

March 7 - Early Dismissal @ 12:05 p.m.; Student-led conferences from 12:30-4:00 p.m.

March 8 - *No School* - Student-Led Conferences

March 11-15 - Spring Break

March 20 - Grades 1-4 field trip to the Health Museum

March 18-22 - Registration for Trimester 3 After-School Programs and showcases of new programs in Morning Meeting

March 27 - Living Wax Museum, 2:00-3:00 p.m., presented by Mr. Milner's 5th-6th grade Social Studies Workshop Students

March 28 - CTL Community Open House, 6:00-7:00 p.m. at the CTL Library

April 1, 2, 3, 5 - 8th Grade Moving-Up Celebration Week; 7th graders will be joining them

April 4 - 5th-8th grade field trip to George Ranch Farm



Confidence Breeds Self-Efficacy

I love the seasons of the year. March is here and the azaleas in my yard are almost in full bloom. I worried this week that the freeze would kill the blossoms and that the plants would have to start over to produce those beautiful spring-time flowers; however, I think they are going to survive. Azaleas are resilient plants. No matter the circumstances, the environment, the weather, they are resilient. If the freeze kills the blossoms, I know they will come back.

Our children at CTL are resilient, too. We are getting many tours of the school all year but especially at this time. I have recognized how much I bring up the word confidence in our tours. CTL is committed to promoting and providing the atmosphere for confidence to organically blossom within each student.

I am so happy that early in my teaching career I was introduced to many theories of learning that resonated with my beliefs as a teacher and a mother. At the same time I was teaching middle school



Important Dates

April 5 - CTL Parent Council, 12:00-1:00 p.m. at the CTL Library

April 11 - CTL Spring Musical at New Hope Christian Church, 7575 Alden Bridge Dr., The Woodlands, starting at 6:00 p.m. Please drop off your child at the church by 4:00 p.m.

April 15-18 - Stanford Achievement Test, 10th Ed., Online, Grades 3-4

April 19 - No School - Good Friday

April 22 - Earth Day at CTL

April 25 - CTL Community Open House, 6:00-7:00 p.m. at the CTL Library

April 22-25 - Stanford Achievement Test, 10th Ed., Online, Grades 5-6

April 29-May 2 - Stanford Achievement Test, 10th Ed., Online, Grades 7-8

Important Reminders

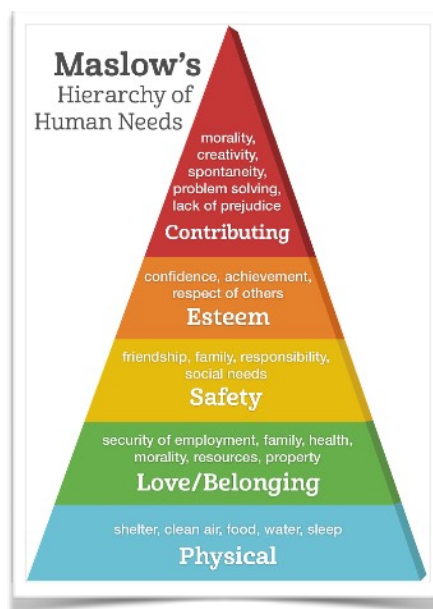
*Please have your child at school by 7:55 a.m. every morning so he/she does not miss our Morning Meeting that begins at 8 a.m.

*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.



students who had been identified as “struggling readers.” These experiences shaped my teaching and my life as I desired to learn more. Not only was I taking courses to know how to teach reading, but I was also introduced to many theories of human developmental psychology that resonated with me because of my experiences. One of those theories was Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow identified basic human needs—physiological, love, belonging, safety, esteem—that must be met before students are ready to learn. I also learned that *Success Breeds Success* and rethought my definition of *educated* with an article entitled, *When is a Person Educated?* The epiphany hit me—we are only truly educated when we realize there is so much to learn we will never learn it all. My journey had just begun, and I couldn't wait to learn more! With this new knowledge and more to come, I learned to teach reading and writing in a classroom environment where my students felt safe, loved, confident and successful.



All these experiences have shaped my dream for CTL students as well. We aim for our students to leave each day with a sense of caring and belonging and feeling they can be and become whatever they want because the future is in their hands. We do not even know what jobs we are preparing our students for, but we do know if they can leave confident in their abilities to make decisions, if they can leave as problem-posers and problem-solvers, if they can leave as creative thinkers who think outside the box, if they can leave as life-long learners--learners who know there is so much to learn they will never know it all, if they can leave our classrooms with more questions than when they arrived, if they can leave as readers and writers and mathematicians, and scientists, and historians, with a love of the arts and fitness, if they can leave with confidence and self-efficacy and resilience, they can accomplish whatever they choose to accomplish as long as they are following their passions. Our students may change jobs many times in their lives, but they will be equipped with the skills to tackle whatever comes their way, to have the confidence to know they can continue to learn what it takes to do well in whatever direction their passions take them.

The research behind confidence and self-efficacy abounds because they are life skills every human being must have to be successful. My experiences as a learner and a teacher led me to my masters and doctoral programs because I couldn't quit learning and to my dissertation study on how to bring about change in schools. Through

THE POWER OF STUDENT LED conferences



SETTING GOALS

Building RESILIENT STUDENTS FROM THE INSIDE OUT



STUDENT VOICE

my research and my experiences, a theme emerged. Self-efficacy, or the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior and social environment, emerged as the one underlying factor at the root of any success story. Confidence breeds self-efficacy and self-efficacy breeds confidence. It is when we reach that point where we hold ourselves responsible and accountable for problem solving and progressing and moving forward, of knowing we don't have to have someone else tell us what to do every step of the way and when we take responsibility and do not blame someone else for our lack of progress or success, we reach the point of self-efficacy and through my own tangible experience as a student and then a teacher, and then a teacher of teachers that it is only when we as educators reach that point of self-efficacy that our students can reach the point of self efficacy where they have confidence in their own ability to learn and grow and make decisions and take risks. In other words, we have to talk the talk and walk the walk.

By now you too have experienced the power of student-led conferences. You have noticed that at CTL, students do a lot of self-evaluating and goal setting. They take responsibility for their own learning. In student-led conferences parents are able to witness their child's confidence through words, facial expressions and body language. It is our sincere hope that after your conference you and your child are so energized that the conversation will continue long after. This is our time to let them shine. This is what sets trimester reports apart from traditional report cards. It's the child's voice you hear, and this is the voice that matters. This process allows each child to grow confidence in his/her own voice. It is an authentic, rich experience to watch your child in action, to own his/her learning experience. It is a more formal reflection of what should be occurring daily when you are asking your child, "How was your day?" "What did your learn?"

Linda Ellis

Confidence Is Contagious

We as teachers have a powerful influence on our students, and we can help them feel confident and proud of themselves and their accomplishments. We can help them feel secure enough that they are willing and able to learn new material and move out of their comfort zones.

Giving our students the opportunity to choose what they learn--what they read, what they write, how they explore – helps build confidence and also keeps them motivated.

Here at CTL we are always sure to express a positive attitude to all of our students. Our teachers are always sure to remind our students that learning should be driven out of intrinsic motivation.

Our entire staff exudes confidence as well. Our reading teachers love to read, our





writing teachers love to write, our math teachers love finding different ways to reach the product, our science teachers love exploration and experimentation, and our social studies teachers love history and all it entails. When we truly love what we do and are passionate, confidence is extremely evident. Confident learners self-direct themselves in their own learning. They tend to speak more and know how to get their point across.

Confident students take every learning experience and run with it! They shift from “What does the teacher want me to do?” to “What’s most interesting about this content and how does it connect to me and my world?” This mindset is what’s constantly promoted here at CTL to build and increase confidence. Confidence is truly contagious. We inspire each other every day!

Ryan DuFour

Pre-K Class

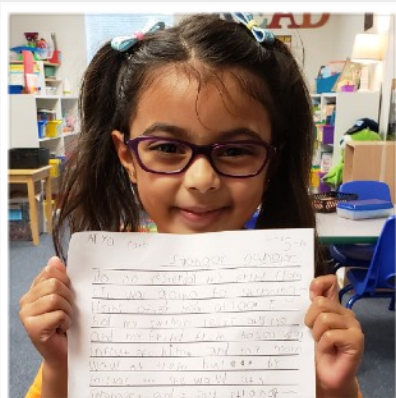
February has been a busy month for Pre-K with lots of celebrations. Our first celebration was Groundhog’s Day. We learned that the tradition has German roots. In Germany the animal predictor was a hedgehog. When the settlers came to Pennsylvania in the 1700s, they didn’t find hedgehog but did find groundhogs. They decided the groundhog was a sensible intelligent creature that would be wise enough to scurry back inside its burrow for six more weeks if it saw its shadow. We read the book *Wake Up, Groundhog!* by Susanna Hill.

We started our celebration of Chinese New Year by reading the book *Dragon Dance* by Joan Holub. We explored the traditions that are celebrated and the special meaning behind each tradition. We made paper lanterns and had our very own special parade throughout CTL.

Our next celebration was 100 Days of School. Some of our special events included making a special hat for all to wear and reading the book *The Chicken Problem* by Jenifer Oxley and Billy Aronson. In math we counted 100 pieces of cereal and then made a yummy necklace to wear and to eat later. In science we estimated how much 100 drops of water would be. Our actual amount was much less than our prediction.

Presidents Day was celebrated by reading the book *President’s Day* by Anne Rockwell. We made a three-corner hat that resembled what our first president wore. We learned that some of the presidents are on our money. In math we played head or tail game with pennies.

Our next celebration was our Valentine Party. Pre-K students enjoyed handing out cards to their friends. We read *The Love Monster* by Rachel Bright and made a love monster bag to hold our Valentine cards. We played several Minute to Win It games at our party which was followed by our fabulous fruit chocolate fondue.



Go Texan Day was our last celebration for February. We all dressed up as cowboys and cowgirls to celebrate. We read the book *I Spy in the Texas Sky* by Deborah Kadair. This book made it simple and fun to learn the symbols of the Lone Star State.

We are ending our month preparing for our portfolios. Pre-K can't wait to share our hard work with our parents. Coming up in March we will be talking about spring, insects, and animal life cycles.

Becky Billings

Kindergarten Class

This month in kindergarten has been a time of growth and independence. Reading Workshop is a cherished part of our day. Each Monday students select their new books for the week. As time has passed this year, the children have become more thoughtful in their selections. As authors they have learned to grab the reader's attention with interesting titles. As they browse the book selections at the beginning of the week, I see them gravitating toward titles that spark their own curiosity. They are now reading more quietly "in their minds" rather than aloud as they mature as readers. Many of the children are becoming drawn to particular authors like Mo Willems or Joy Cowley. Others are developing an interest in book series such as *Puppy Mudge* and *Mittens*. Most importantly, they are learning what topics motivate them to read, and that is quite an accomplishment at the age of 5 or 6.

In Writing Workshop, the authors have made strides toward more independence. Our time during writing conferences is spent more on the author discussing where he/she plans to go next with his/her piece as opposed to me nudging them to add more details. Most arrive at school each day with a topic in mind for writing already. We are honing our handwriting neatness as we work toward writing and publishing our own books in the final trimester of kindergarten. Time is flying by too quickly. It is truly hard to fathom that we are in the last few months of this school year.

In Math Workshop, we are digging deeper into subtraction. The children have mastered addition and enjoy working on more difficult story problems. There is a great interest in measurement and graphing, so we will turn our attention to those areas soon. The students amaze me with their mental math abilities and their pure enjoyment of our math talks. Many are noticing that math, like reading and writing, are used throughout our daily lives.

During Science, it has been difficult bringing our study of hazardous weather to a close. I have never had a group of students more interested in this topic! We are moving into some engineering activities that have sparked their interest. As we look ahead to pushes and pulls, magnets and other physical science topics, there will be some fun and exciting discovery going on in kindergarten. Due to constant requests from my little scholars, we will revisit plants as the weather warms up and do some planting of our own.



We will also raise some insects before the year comes to a close.

Finally, in Social Studies we spent time discussing Presidents' Day around the time of the holiday. We read about and focused on George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. The class took a deeper interest in President Lincoln's ending of slavery, so we spent some extra time discussing that. We then delved into a study of the many community helpers who are essential to our daily lives. Some of the service providers we discussed included fire fighters, teachers, police officers, nurses, sanitation workers, dentists, soldiers, doctors, stylists and farmers. As you are out and about in your neighborhoods, please point out where some of these important people work. This will be a wonderful topic for deeper discussion with your child.

Annie Manning

1-2 Class

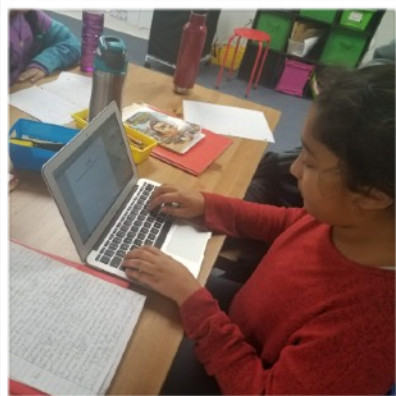
February was such a quick month and was filled with more exciting activities. Thank you to those of you who helped out with our Valentine's Day party. It was quite a hit. The kids had a blast playing all of their games. A big shout out to Anne Peebles for organizing this and making it a great celebration for the class!

Our Reading and Writing Workshops continue to guide the children to challenge themselves to read more difficult books and write longer, more detailed pieces. I have seen such growth in all of the students since September! We have been busy conferencing and discussing ways to strengthen our reading and writing skills. Please make sure that your child is reading for at least 20 minutes every night as this really does strengthen their skills as well.

The class is working on mapping skills in social studies and is learning about the various ways to read a map. They learned their cardinal directions and the importance of a compass rose. They also learned how to read a map legend to locate different geographical areas on a map. We also studied various US presidents in honor of President's Day. You can read their research and view their portraits of the presidents by checking out our hallway display.

Math Workshop has been busy as well. We have been working with fractions, money, addition and subtraction up to three-digit numbers, measurement and also many fun 100th Day math activities highlighting 100. We completed our mid-year math assessment. The class did well on both the first- and second-grade math. We are continuing to use many math manipulatives to work in our math stations. We have used Cuisenaire rods to show parts of a whole and compare fractions. We also used our unified cubes as a non-start form of measurement for our new unit. The class has been vocal during our discussions in Math Congress to explain their thinking.

Science has included many STEAM activities this month as the class completed many 100th-day STEAM challenges throughout the 10 stations. They built structures using 100 Legos, stacked 100 cups,



made designs using 100 pattern blocks and much more. They worked hard to complete the challenges and recorded their designs which they shared with the class. We also looked at the various patterns in the sky. We discussed the importance of the sun, moon and earth and the role they play in our seasons. The class began their study of the moon phases and should be recording their observations nightly at home. Our moon phase experiment was a big hit as well as we participated in a mini model of the moon phases in action with a flashlight and two spheres serving as earth and the sun.

The class also celebrated the 100th Day of School by dressing as an old version of themselves. It was so fun seeing them dressed up as well as completing all the fun activities that go along with the celebration. All of these are also posted in the hallway. The Explorers showed their Texas spirit as they dressed for Go Texan Day on February 22. I saw many of our CTL families at Dickie's Barbecue that evening as we celebrated the day with our family fun night and fundraiser to support CTL. Thank you to all who participated.

As March approaches, we are planning for our first school field trip for grades 1-4. We will be heading to the Health Museum after spring break. The paperwork and forms were sent home last week and are due back by Monday, March 18. There are labs, a video and an experiment planned during our visit. We look forward to a fun month of exploring in March.

Lisa Lipar

3-4 Class

Spring is here! I can't believe we are embarking on our third trimester! All 3rd and 4th grade students are working well and learning more every day.

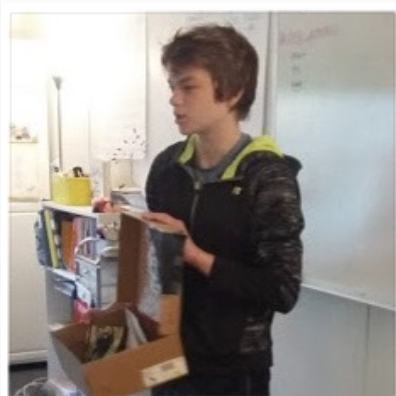
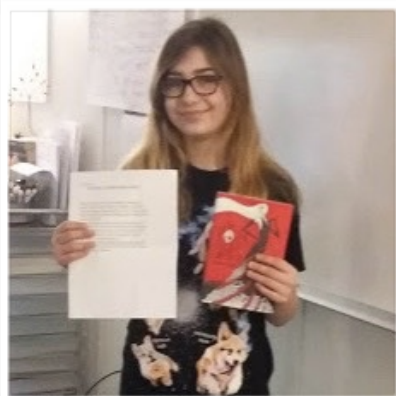
For the month of March in reading workshop, students will continue to grow in comprehension and stamina when reading. We will start learning how to recommend a book to a friend and develop a summary to explain the book's plot.

During writing workshop students will add to their writing skills through practice, conferencing, and sharing with peers. Students will write among different genres while adding new learned strategies within content, grammar, and punctuation.

As mathematicians students will begin learning mental math strategies for multiplication. We will also review fractions (parts of a whole) and equivalent fractions. This will provide the base to add and subtract fractions.

In science workshop students will begin to explore physical science with objects in motion.

For social studies we will apply our knowledge of landforms to Texas geography and regions. We will spend time to learn and



understand Texas symbols and important historical facts.

Corrie Sheldon

5-8 Reading Writing Workshop

We have enjoyed a very productive February in ELA. In Reading Workshop, students all enjoy reading and beg for more time. They love to choose their books and share with each other. We have enjoyed presenting and listening to our classmates' book projects. Book project week saw everything from animations to board games being created and presented. The aim of these presentations is to encourage our friends to read a book that we have loved and to spread a passion for reading throughout our community. On speaking to the students, I hear how much they enjoy book project presentations and oftentimes children tell me that they are reading a particular book because so-and-so did a book project on it.

In Writing Workshop, we celebrated our fourth Publishing Day. On this day students were able to share their finished piece of writing with their classmates and receive positive feedback about their work. This is one of the highlights of our trimester, when all of that hard work of drafting and revising pays off. In the run up to Publishing Day we undertook a 'clocking' editing exercise which the students really enjoyed. This was their opportunity to act as editor for their classmates work, picking up those missed periods etc. Everyone took this job seriously, and it ended up being a beneficial exercise that we will repeat before each Publishing Day.

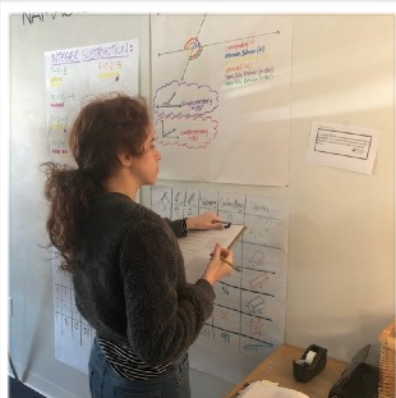
In our final week of the trimester, we completed our reflections and have been working hard to put together our portfolios. The children are now prepared and looking forward to sharing all of their hard work with you.

Caroline Harrison

5-8 Math Workshop

Fifth and sixth grade math students have been hard at work exploring the order of operations to solve expressions. This was a great unit to review all operations of rational numbers. Students identified strengths and weaknesses with whole numbers, integers and rational numbers. These students also entered into a unit on 2-dimensional geometry. We cut paper to investigate how formulas for area are derived and manipulated those formulas to solve multi-step problems. After trimester two portfolio conferences, fifth and sixth graders will wrap up our geometry unit and start exploring equations.

Seventh and eighth grade mathematicians completed investigations on slope and y-intercept and discovered applications of slope in various situations. Students worked to construct meaning behind the slope in a linear relationship. These students developed this concept from concrete data and moved to abstract thinking to deepen their understanding. This unit gave students an opportunity to review solving equations and identify strengths and weaknesses. After



spring break, seventh and eighth graders will continue graphing and analyzing data and will explore scatter plots and trend lines.

The students' mental math ability is still constantly surprising me. Grades five through eight have had experience with multiple strategies for adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing mentally. Students are encouraged to first think critically about the numbers rather than immediately stacking and solving procedurally. We have now turned our focus to applying some of our strategies for whole numbers to fractions, decimals and percents.

Claire Want

5-8 Science Workshop

In fifth grade science workshop, our next unit of study is Observations of Patterns in Objects in the Sky with the following modules: Observing the Stars, Objects in the Sky, and Earth's Rotation. The students' expectations are to support an argument that differences in the apparent brightness of the sun compared to other stars are due to their relative distances from Earth. They will represent data in graphical displays to reveal patterns of daily changes in length and direction of shadows, day and night and the seasonal appearances of some stars in the night sky.

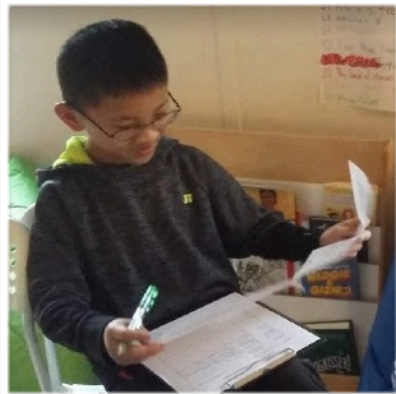
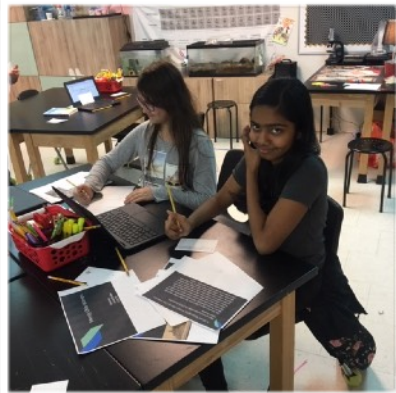
In sixth grade the students are focused on their unit about Force Fields. The students are expected to conduct an investigation and evaluate the experimental design to provide evidence that fields exist between objects exerting forces on each other even though the objects are not in contact. After this unit we will be moving on to our unit of study about energy including units on Kinetic Energy and Energy Transfer in Motion. Students analyze the relationship between kinetic energy and mass and kinetic energy and speed by graphing provided data. Students analyze the data and use it as evidence to demonstrate that an increase in the speed of an object affects the kinetic energy more significantly than does a change in the mass. Students will write a scientific explanation to support the claim that when the kinetic energy of an object changes, energy is transferred to or from the object.

Seventh and eighth grade are finishing their unit about ecosystem relationships such as competition and predation. Next we are focusing on dynamics in ecosystems with units like The Dynamic Nature of Ecosystems, Ecosystem Biodiversity, and Changes in Biodiversity. The students will be an arborist that cares for the trees at a botanical garden where an invasive vine species has been growing. The students are asked to review, evaluate, and recommend an effective removal system that impacts biodiversity and the ecosystem as little as possible.

Laura Wellbrock

5-6 Social Studies Workshop

We have just wrapped up a fantastic in-depth research project on a founding father or patriot that contributed to the founding of



America. This assignment was our first in-depth project-based, solo project for the year and the students excelled. They gathered information from a range of primary and secondary resources. We used library books, school textbooks, videos and the Internet to explore the reasons for independence and the men and women and their contributions.

We learned more about Paul Revere's midnight ride. Danny explained Benjamin Franklin's life and his diplomatic efforts in England and France and Maripaz told us he invented swim fins. Jaye told us why John Hancock signed the Declaration in such huge letters—because he wanted the king to be able to see his name without needing his spectacles. Morgan told us that George Washington's favorite subject at school was math. On Wednesday, March 27 from 2 pm, the students will be showing how much they've learned about founding fathers when we have our Living Wax Work Museum, and you are more than welcome to visit us.

After spring break we begin our in-depth look at the battles of the Revolutionary War.

James Milner

7-8 Social Studies Workshop

In social studies, we have been studying the first Government of the United States under George Washington. It has been interesting to discover the challenges that he faced at this time. It has also been interesting to discover the history of the divide that has opened up between the Federalists and the Republicans. Our next unit will be focusing on the foreign affairs of the New Republic.

Caroline Harrison

PK-8 Art Workshop

We felt the warmth of kindred friendship as we crafted valentines for our CTL bulletin board, inspired by artist Yayoi Kusama. Students grades Pre-K through fourth enjoyed the readings from a variety of books with themes of friendship and love. After each book classes discussed both theme and how the illustrations supported the story with the use of texture, color and visual energy. They then created their own artwork as they were inspired by the various artists.

Pre-K through second graders enjoyed a lively movement exercise introduced by the children's book *Monsters Love Colors* by Mike Austin while learning and illustrating their new knowledge of color theory.

Students in grades 5-8 completed Yayoi Kusama inspired self-portraits and on the one gorgeous day dashed outside to do a little Plein Aire drawing.

All students had the opportunity to support the development of the CTL Yearbook with conceptual drawings themed, "My favorite



things about CTL.” We’ve also been very busy with the backdrop and props for the upcoming CTL Spring Musical.

We will launch Trimester 3 with a study of Albrecht Dürer and his works in printmaking. We will explore the basics of printmaking as well as stamp making and calligraphy.

Abby Salazar



5-8 Drama Workshop

Grades 5-8 drama students have been busy rehearsing and assigning roles and lines for our school production in April. I'm pleased to announce the rehearsals are going well and things are coming together, and I'm already really excited about how much energy and enthusiasm the students are showing toward this show. The rest of our class time has been spent creating original script ideas for our next plays. In the past I have written the plays we have performed, but we have amazing students who have an impressive portfolio of original stories and also so much creativity that we are working hard to develop their ideas into longer pieces with more characters. There are some excellent scripts floating around our class, and I really hope our end-of-year drama showcase will be the performance of original plays created, directed and performed by our own talented students!



James Milner

PK-8 Music Workshop

Hello, parents! I would like to introduce myself, Ms. Garcia, as the new music teacher! I am a piano teacher with Lessons On The Go, but I am so honored to now be included in the Center for Teaching & Learning family of educators. I have been getting to know my new music classes over the past few weeks, and I am incredibly impressed with the amazing enthusiasm that I have seen. Every student is so eager to learn about music!



My piano background makes me a firm believer that music is most fun when we get to apply what we learn. This is why I strive to include a musical game that utilizes the theory that we learn right before I introduce the game. Not only do we get to learn about how music works, but we also feel the satisfaction of using that



knowledge to make music ourselves. We have focused on Rhythm, the heartbeat of music, the last few weeks because rhythm allows musicians to work together. After spring break we will move on to learning about pitch. We will cover the concepts of high pitch vs. low pitch, melody vs. harmony and the Grand Staff. Rhythm and Pitch will certainly be key elements in our upcoming program, especially with all of the singing and dancing that we have been practicing.

I encourage you to download the music for the program and play it as often as possible. The tunes are catchy and the core messages truly inspiring. You can even challenge the kids to show you the dances for "Discovery," "An Adventure," and their grade's song. They know the songs and dances pretty well and would probably love to share them with you.

Melanie Garcia

PK-4 Physical Education Workshop

February has zipped by, and March is already here! Sadly February's cold and rainy days forced us to remain inside. I think it's fair to say everyone is ready for the SUN to return. In the meantime, the kids were cozy inside having fun doing Zumba and Yoga. Both are a great way to work up a sweat, strengthen the core and improve flexibility.

When the weather cooperated we were outside. Grades 1-4 students played several different tag games, dodgeball, basketball and kickball. We are all looking forward to springtime so we can enjoy some fresh air and more outdoor activities.

Sarina Eckhardt

5-8 Physical Education Workshop

We have finished our unit of Flag Football. Every grade did a great job and took a different level of interest in the sport. Next, we will be focusing on our last team sport of sand volleyball. Grades 5-6 voted to end the year with jump rope skills by working through skill levels at everyone's own pace. The 7th and 8th graders are still deciding on what they would like to end the year with.

Laura Wellbrock

