



# CTL CORNER

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



## Important Dates

**January 11** - CTL Parent Council Meeting in the CTL Library. Please join us from 12:00-1:00 p.m. and meet Sir Ken Robinson via his TED Talk video "Bring On the Learning Revolution". Join us in rich discussion about the schools our children need and how CTL matches that call.

**January 17** - Come join us for a CTL Family Fun Spirit Night at Fuddruckers, located at 8510 Creekside Forest Drive, The Woodlands, between 5:00-8:00 p.m. When you order, tell them you are from CTL and 20% of all proceeds will go to CTL. Invite your friends.

**January 21** - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday. *No School.*

**January 24** - CTL Community Open House for Prospective Parents at the CTL Library, 6:00-7:00 p.m.



## Moving Forward

Happy New Year! It's wonderful to be back from the holidays and with your children again. From their sharing in morning meetings, through their writing, and through our visits with each of them and you, we know you had a great time with your families during the break. Vacations feed our spirits! So should education!

The building is once again filled with the excitement of learning that brings happiness, joy, anticipation, discovery and passion. The last two Fridays many of you have gathered with us in the library to view and reflect on Sir Ken Robinson's TED Talk videos *Bring on the Learning Revolution* and *Do Schools Kill Creativity?* Parents experienced council as your children were experiencing it in their own classrooms. We felt the energy that comes from sharing from our hearts in a risk-free environment and respecting the ideas of others. We certainly didn't want to leave the discussion when our time was up. That kind of energy we left with is exactly what we strive for with your children every day in every classroom at CTL.

The energy that is now coming from the collaborative planning of our new high school is moving us closer to the next phase of our vision as we engage all voices--students, teachers, parents and



## Important Dates

**January 24** - CTL High Parent Night at the CTL Library from 5:00-6:00 p.m. Shannon Oliver, Program Manager of School Partnerships & Outreach for Lone Star College-Montgomery will discuss LSC's partnership with CTL and will host a Q&A session for parents. All are invited!

**January 31** - Deadline for contributing to the CTL Parent Fundraiser for an additional swing set. Please send donations in an envelope to Mrs. Maia. All donations are tax deductible since CTL is a 501c3 nonprofit and tax exempt. Thank you for being a part of the CTL family!

**February 15** - CTL Re-enrollment Forms are due. Hard copies are available from Mrs. Maia in the office.



## 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.

community. Looking forward with anticipation, last May we purchased Inspiration Ranch, a tranquil, natural oasis at 25902 Glen Loch Drive at the edge of Panther Creek and negotiated a

contract for a building, construction to begin later this year and to be completed prior to the fall of 2021. Now we are working with an innovative and dynamic architect who has taken our vision for CTL and run with it. The CTL Team is excited to unveil these plans in the near future.

As Sir Ken Robinson has reminded us, education should be about following our dreams--discovering our passions--engaging in the joy of learning. We invite you to join us on Fridays from 12 to 1 in the CTL Library. Bring a sack lunch or order from the Friday menu. Sit with us at the feet of many of the giants who have fed our spirits and who have provided the rich philosophical foundation upon which CTL has been built—giants like Sir Ken Robinson, Daniel Pink, Alfie Kohn, Richard Allington, Frank Smith, Ken Goodman, Donald Graves, Janet Emig and many others. Experience what your children experience--immersed in a community of learners. We are in for a real treat! Thank you for joining us on this journey!

**Linda Ellis & Ryan DuFour**

## Pre-K Class

November went by quickly as Pre-K put together their portfolios and reflected on our fun classroom activities so far this year. Part of our Thanksgiving celebration included reading *Balloons over Broadway*, *The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy's Parade* by

Melissa Sweet. The author shares the story of Tony Sarg, the inventor of the huge balloons that we enjoy each year in the Thanksgiving Macy's Day Parade. Pre-K decided we would have a gratitude parade of some of the things we are thankful for. We colored, cut and attached our gratitudes to helium balloons and paraded through the classrooms and hallway of CTL. They had so much fun with their gratitude balloons. Part of our social studies was learning about the Pilgrims and their voyage to America. Pre-K

Dreaming & Working  
Together





enjoyed dressing up in Pilgrim costumes for our CTL annual Thanksgiving feast with our parents. Thanks to everyone who volunteered and brought so many lovely dishes to share.

For the month of December, we decided to celebrate with the twelve days of Christmas in the classroom. The first day of Christmas in the classroom was Elf Day. We received a special delivery from the North Pole—our elf who we named Bell. On the second day, we celebrated Gingerbread Day. We read *The Gingerbread Man*, conducted a gingerbread cookie science experiment, did gingerbread math, painted and decorated a gingerbread and sampled a gingerbread cookie. The third day was Candy Cane Day and we received a special delivery of candy cane seeds along with some North Pole special soil. It took most of the day to grow, but in the afternoon we had grown candy canes. In math we made candy cane patterns. On the fourth day, we celebrated Kindness Day by taking a goody bag to all the teachers to let them know how much we appreciated their hard work. The fifth day was Ornament Day, and we made several ornaments to decorate our classroom Christmas tree. The sixth day was Reindeer Day. We learned about the reindeer habitats and lots of fun facts. The seventh day was Christmas Tree Day. We made a book about evergreen trees and conducted a pine cone science experiment. On the eighth and ninth days we worked on our gifts to our parents. The tenth day was Polar Express Movie Day. They had so much fun riding the train to the north pole, drinking hot chocolate, and eating popcorn and cookies. On the eleventh day we talked about the history of the Christmas stocking. The twelfth day was the long-awaited Grinch Christmas class party. There were lots of fun snacks for all to enjoy.

Looking forward to the New Year, as Pre-K explores polar bears, penguins, and snow!

**Beckey Billings**

### *Kindergarten Class*

Greetings from CTL Kindergarten! We hope you enjoyed the holiday season with your family and loved ones. December was a whirlwind at CTL! We explored holidays around the world in social studies. We were able to create Venn diagrams to help us compare and contrast the various customs and traditions. We discovered that when it comes to celebrating, we often have more in common with different cultures than expected!

In science, we began a deep dive into our study of weather. As we move toward







our exploration of weather hazards, we will also learn about measurement of weather.

In math, we have been working with tally marks, ten frames and graphs. We have also been working on tricky teens and counting on.

The kindergarten students have increased their independent reading stamina exponentially. They get lost in books for long periods of time during reading workshop daily. They continue to enjoy buddy reading and are perfecting story re-telling.

In writing workshop, the authors are learning to focus on small moments in greater depth. They are beginning to add details to their pieces and consistently add titles. We have been discussing how to choose a topic when there are several things to write about and we have discovered that it is usually best to write about what we have the most **energy** for that day. This is usually a struggle on Mondays after a weekend full of exciting activities. We are learning to write about the experience we are most excited about on our first day back and save the other topics for different days.

As we settle back in to school after the long winter break, please be sure to return to the routine of reading to and with your child every day. There is no greater predictor of reading success! The holidays are behind us now, but you can always give your child the gifts of time and independence. Allow your little one time to play and be a kid, but also the freedom to try things on his/her own. Independence at home (think dressing, bathing, eating, simple chores) translates to academic independence at school. First grade is on the horizon and the gift of independence is priceless.

**Annie Manning**

### *1-2 Class*

Our class exited 2018 with a bang! We definitely explored to our heart's content. Our days were filled with excitement as the holidays approached. We observed all go the fun adventures brought to us by Holly and Jolly, our elves, enjoyed our Polar Express/PJ day and celebrated with our holiday party which was over-the-top fun from start to end! It was a month of sharing, giving, love and laughter. The class was eager to organize and participate in our school-wide toy drive for Interfaith of the Woodlands. We collected over 100 toys for grateful families in need. It is always so heartwarming





to see the class get involved to make a difference in the lives of others. Thank you to all who donated and thank you to your students for all of their heart-felt help. Also I would like to thank all of the parents involved in making our holiday party epic! The kids thoroughly giggled their way through all the festivities.

Reading workshop continued with Christmas-themed read aloud books as well as read aloud books from other holidays celebrated around the world in December. The class was able to make many connections to their own celebrations as well as compare the similarities of celebrations between different countries. We continued with our usual classroom expectations, and the kids were reminded to remember to exchange books in their book bags each day, as I noticed the excitement of the holiday season sometimes got the better of them and they forgot. Nonetheless, I am confident they were reading at home from their own personal books. I am noticing growth from every student in reading. Congratulations to all!

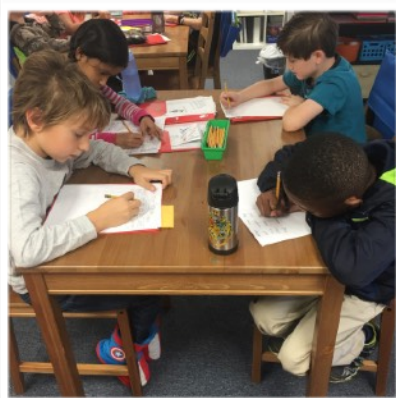
Writing workshop continues to display the growth in writing as well. I have seen each student use what they are learning in our mini lessons as well as in the stories read in read aloud in their own pieces of writing. The focus was to remember to use periods for full stops and question marks, exclamation points and capitals where needed. There has been much improvement. All of the kids are enthusiastic to share the pieces and receive feedback from their peers.

During math workshop in December, we were able to incorporate fun math games with a holiday flare. That was novel and fun for the class as they practiced recognizing, naming, adding and subtracting money. They also worked with money exchange in our *Pennies and Dimes* activity and our *Making Quarters* game. We began to look at fractions and how they are used in real-world experiences though food-share (eating fractions) activities and paper folding. We compared halves, thirds and fourths. Our number talks continue as we use them to introduce new material as well as review material previously taught.

Science labs were focused on the caring and protection of the young as we studied animals. We completed exhilarating games to get the class moving as we played animal needs charades. The class had to find their offspring and its needs based on their partner's sounds and movements. They had fun with this lesson. We looked at physical traits and how that relates to heredity. We also continued our STEM activities to keep our engineering piece going and a variety of experiments (including using candy canes) to look at the way matter changes.

Social studies is always a fun subject, especially during the holidays. The class spent the month of December learning about the various ways different countries celebrate Christmas. We also studied Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Diwali (in November), and Rosca de Reyes. They were involved in crafts, games, reader's theater and food related to a variety of international customs and their celebrations in





December. The class presented some of their "souvenirs" from around the world at one of our morning meetings as well. Fun was surely had by all!

As we move into the new year, the class will be reviewing some of the curriculum from the week before our break and moving forward with extending those topics and adding on new ones. We will continue our daily reading to improve and use skills taught. Our goal is to keep moving on up to more challenging books throughout the rest of the year and to make great choices in book selection. In writing we will strengthen our writing by focusing on punctuation, rereading our pieces for understanding and clarity, adding on to extend our ideas and sharing our pieces weekly.

January will also include fractions, number sense and place value to 1,200 using addition/making landmark numbers, making tens with more than 2 addends, and double/near doubles with larger numbers. Science will focus on finishing up our unit on animal/plant traits/inheritance and variation and will move on to patterns in the sky/seasons and space.

We will continue learning about the United States and its national symbols, the capitol and some US facts. We will incorporate the study of Presidents.

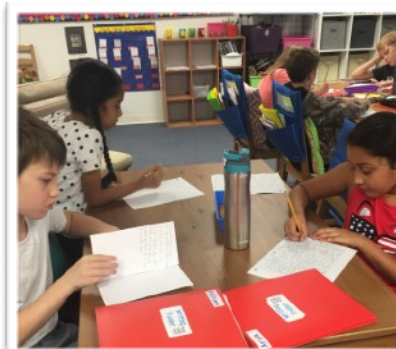
I am looking forward again to another successful month filled with excitement about learning and enthusiasm for exploring!

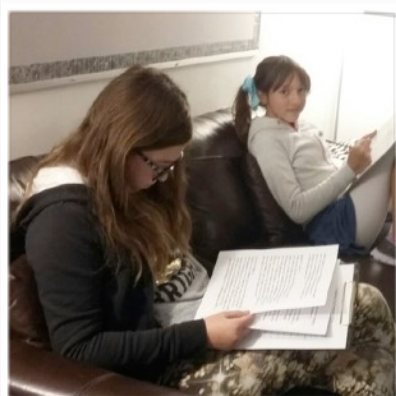
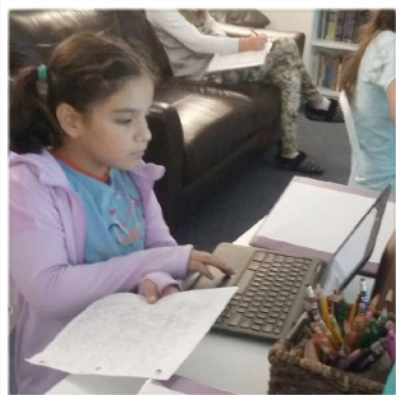
***Lisa Lipar***

### *3-4 Class*

It has been a wonderful holiday break, and I am excited to get back to learning and growing with my class! For the month of January we will be diving deeper into the writing process. Students will begin a narrative writing piece and take it through each phase of writing. These pieces will be formally published and students will type their amazing pieces to complete the process. We have so many incredible writer's, I can't wait to watch and guide them as they grow in writing. For reading we will focus on different genres of books. We will do a quick study of each genre in January, then explore in depth on each genre in the following months. Genres to study include: poetry, fiction (realistic/historical and science), traditional literature, and informational/nonfiction.

Math this month is place value to hundred thousands place. We will represent and compare numbers using our understanding of place value. We will be playing math





games and working in groups on this topic to use and solidify their understanding of this concept.

As scientists our class will be reviewing fossils and complete a fossil dig group project.

In social studies we will begin with New Year's goals/resolutions for school and home. Then we are going back to government with a focus on the three branches and how they work together.

As always my main goal is for each student in my class to LOVE learning and continue as lifelong learners throughout their lives.

**Corrie Sheldon**

### *5-8 Reading Writing Workshop*

Throughout this second trimester we have been focusing on thoughts and feelings in our writing. We built heart maps by writing down all of the areas of our lives that are important to us. Using our heart map as a starting point, we have taken several of these important topics and used them to create personal narratives or short stories. Students have focused on inputting more of themselves into their writing by asking themselves if they have fully explained what they were thinking or how they felt at that point in their lives. Including thoughts and feelings within our writing elevates it from a list of events into an engaging piece of writing. As we have discussed, readers need someone to care about as they read, and including thoughts and feelings in our writing is one way to have readers empathize and care about our narratives and stories.

In reading, 7th and 8th Grade students have been really enjoying the read aloud Charles Dickens' *Christmas Carol*. Dickens is an expert in showing and not telling, and he has taken us on a journey to Victorian England by painting vivid scenes in our minds. Dickens has also provided us with plenty of lively classroom discussion in order that we may translate and piece together what is happening in the story and why.

5th and 6th Grade meanwhile have been enjoying another seasonal classic, *The House Without a Christmas Tree* by Gail Rock. This story has kept us guessing, and the children have been desperate to read on when read aloud time has come to an end!

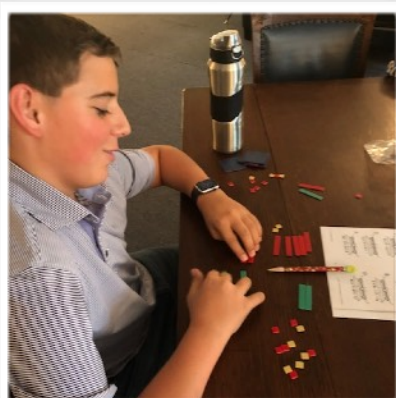
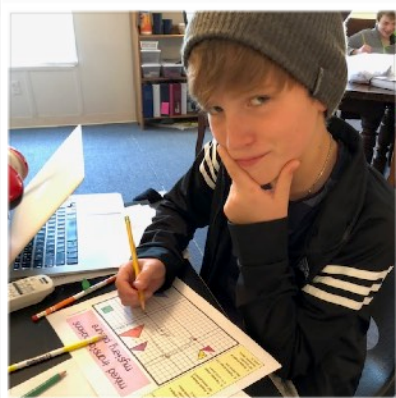
All grade levels loved watching the movie adaptation of their story and seeing the characters they had pictured in their heads come to life!

**Caroline Harrison**

### *5-8 Math Workshop*

Fifth- through eighth-grade math students are making great strides with our mental math strategies. Students are perfecting mental math multiplication of two and three digit numbers. By continuing to





introduce new strategies, students are better equipped to choose the most efficient strategy for any problem. We will be moving into mental math division strategies before transitioning into mentally operating with fractions and decimals.

Fifth grade mathematicians have been mastering the manipulation of fractions. They completed hands-on fraction workstations to develop the concept of fractional parts before tackling a real-world investigation involving a field trip and sub sandwiches. Building upon their fractional foundation, fifth grade students will be adding and subtracting fractions and investigating ratios and rates.

The sixth grade math class investigated patterns to construct rules for all operations of integers. They tested their rules, revised as needed, and defended their proofs. They also mastered the concepts of ratios, rates and unit rates through many hands-on investigations. Point out unit rates at the grocery store and ask the students what it means! We will begin the new year by exploring fractional rates and proportional reasoning.

Seventh and eighth grade math students worked through a geometry unit involving parallels, transversals, angles and triangles. Students completed investigations, produced theories, and then defended and/or revised theories after comparing with the class. The students were responsible for developing rules for Pythagorean Theorem, similarity of triangles, and angle sums of polygons. Seventh grade students mastered solving equations and will be moving on to solving inequalities before beginning our unit on linear relationships. Eighth grade mathematicians will continue their study on geometry with dilations, transformations, surface area and volume. Students are enjoying the concrete aspect of the geometry study. The hands-on investigations are sparking deep thinking and conversations about the math.

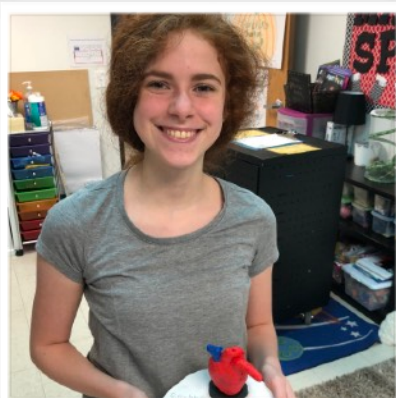
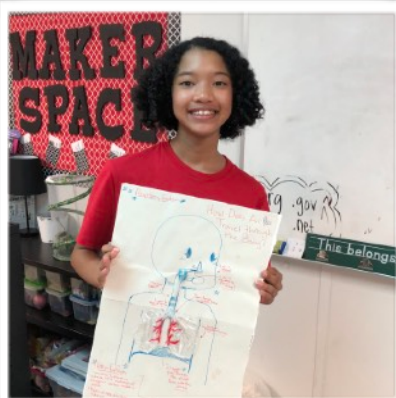
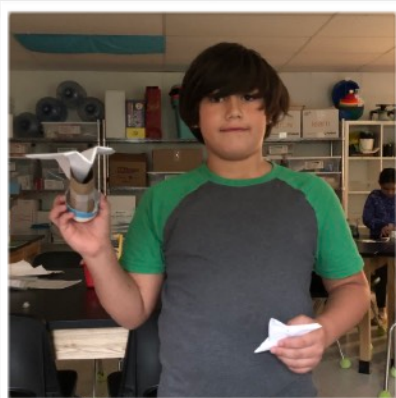
### ***Claire Want***

### ***5-8 Science Workshop***

Fifth grade soared through their unit on Energy Transfer and had a blast reviewing the basics of how and why energy transfer is important. We are now moving into our unit on food webs. Our guiding question will be "How is energy transferred among producers, consumers, and decomposers?" The students' performance expectations are the following: The students are expected (1) to develop a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment, and (2) to generate and compare multiple possible solutions to a problem based on how well each is likely to meet the criteria and constraints of the problem. After food webs students will be moving onto basic needs, ecosystems, and matter cycles.

Sixth grade is doing a fantastic job with their current unit on Newton's Third Law of Motion. We are coming back from holiday





break and kicking off our Rube Goldberg projects. Students will have a week with their group before presenting their final product. After our projects we will move in to studying Changes in Motion-Force and Direction. Our guiding question will be "How does the mass of an object affect its motion?" The students' expectation is that the student is expected to plan an investigation to provide evidence that the change in an object's motion depends on the sum of the forces on the object and the mass of the object.

Seventh and Eighth grade are wrapping up our unit on Plant Growth. To move us into January we will be starting our unit on Introduction to Photosynthesis. The guiding question will be, "How do plants receive the energy they need to grow and live without eating food?" Our expectation will be that the students are expected to construct a scientific explanation based on evidence for the role of photosynthesis in the cycling of matter and flow of energy into and out of organisms.

**Laura Wellbrock**

### *5-6 Social Studies Workshop*

The students writing skills have improved dramatically so far this school year and their ability to gather information and use it to explain historical events is improving every day. They are undertaking some challenging tasks and doing really well. Just before the holidays, we finished our studies on slavery and the events that lead to the civil war.

This year we have leapt into the lead up to the Revolutionary War, and very soon they'll be immersed in a founding fathers' project.

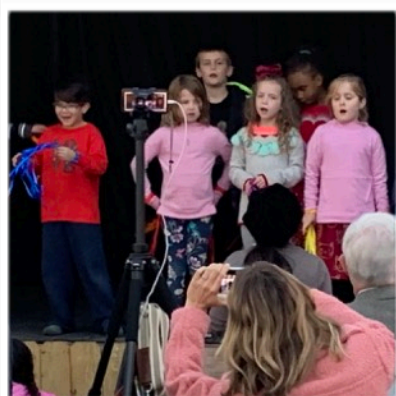
**James Milner**

### *7-8 Social Studies Workshop*

In social studies we have been exploring the American Revolution. We have gained an understanding of the set of complicated events that led up to the war, as well as examining the Declaration of Independence and the four principles of government that it contains. In January we will focus on the long war itself and what the lasting impact has been.

In the run up to the holiday break we spent a number of class periods exploring holiday traditions from around the world. The children were given a country to investigate and had to present their findings to the whole school during morning meeting time. The purpose of this exercise was to promote cultural understanding within our students, as well as to develop their research and presentation skills - not to mention the ability to work within a tight deadline!

**Caroline Harrison**



### PK-8 Art Workshop

*"I never met a color I didn't like." —Dale Chihuly*

I have to say artistically CTL students finished 2018 strong! We decorated bags in support of our community service project for **Meals on Wheels**, exhibited artwork at **CTL's Night of Mystery, Music, & Art** and were inspired by the artistry from various holiday books to create whimsical decorations for our CTL Christmas tree. In addition, all classes were introduced to Dale Chihuly, most famous for his work with glass. His works fueled our creativity as we explored how light enhanced color. Our string of 'Chihuly' lights was showcased on the front bulletin board, bringing a little illuminated Christmas magic to our 5-8 class Christmas tree. We will launch 2019 with a collaborative project inspired by the artist Yayoi Kusama. Her use of vivid colors and organic shapes will serve to inspire CTL artists as they support the CTL Yearbook committee with designs for our 2018-2019 yearbook. Drawings will be integrated into a painted mural depicting "My favorite things about CTL." This mural will be available for exhibition later this school year.

**Abby Salazar**

### 5-8 Drama Workshop

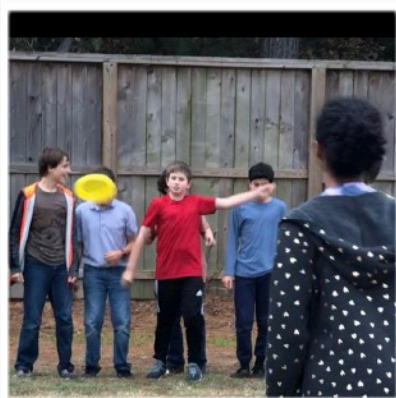
Thank you all for coming out and supporting the drama students with such enthusiasm. The students worked incredibly hard to memorize their lines and stage the productions. As the colder weather starts to bite during January, our drama class will retreat inside and work on video production. The students will be writing some scripts, filming some interviews and editing and mixing a range of performances and there is a chance you'll be called on for a special cameo!

**James Milner**

### PK-8 Music Workshop

Many thanks to all the parents and community members who came out to support all music students during CTL's Night of Mystery, Music, & Art in December! We are excited to announce that plans and practice are underway for our upcoming musical showcase! In collaboration with CTL's Drama and Art Departments, our fine arts students will be presenting the musical *Discovery: A Celebration of the Quest for Knowledge* for our fine arts Spring performance! Our CTL students have exceptional talents, and we look forward to having them showcase their singing, musical abilities, acting, and artistic skills for this musical. This performance will highlight concepts such as discovery, learning, inventions, explorations, innovation and more through songs, skits, and art! For the next weeks, we will be practicing and preparing for a wonderful





performance. Stay tuned for more!

***Sommer Trebilco***

### ***PK-4 Physical Education Workshop***

Movement was the focus in November and December. We continued either running, jogging or walking around the sandpit area. Afterwards we stretched our legs and arms before doing our warmup exercises which include jumping jacks, cross toe touches, arm circles and squats for 1st-4th grade classes. After warmup exercises we played a game of kickball, dodgeball or soccer. Each grade level, including kindergarten, has improved tremendously on their team player skills. They are focused, have demonstrated an understanding of the game and shown me their "ready position" when engaging in a game of kickball. Pre-K completes a different warmup routine and are improving on their personal space, eye hand coordination and throwing a ball to a target. They really love the "tooty ta-ta" dance and "Going On a Bear Hunt" yoga routine, as it's been too cold most mornings to go outside.

When the rain and extreme cold weather conditions forced us to stay inside we were moving to the music. All grades were introduced to their appropriate grade level Zumba fitness. Students had fun moving to the music while working and improving on their coordination. After Zumba we cooled down with some yoga to stretch our muscles in addition to breathing exercises to help relax the body and mind. This month I plan to introduce them how to pass and set a volleyball to the 1st-4th graders. In Pre-K and kindergarten we're going to work on improving our eye-hand coordination.

***Sarina Eckhardt***

### ***5-8 Physical Education Workshop***

WOW! 5th-8th grade really blew me away with how well they learned and played Ultimate Frisbee. The game of actual ultimate Frisbee does have refs and is based on the players learning to be a true sportsman. We learned how to play with honesty, fairness, and sportsmanship. We are now moving onto our next unit which will be 6 weeks long - Flag Football. Flag Football is another game of no contact, teamwork, strategy, and fitness. I am excited to see how our students take what they learned with Frisbee and apply it to Flag Football.

***Laura Wellbrock***