



# CTL CORNER

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

## Important Dates

**Tuesday, January 3:**

Staff Workday

**Wednesday, January 4:**

Students Return to School

**Friday, January 6:**

El Chaparro Friday Lunch

**Wednesday, January 11:**

Parent Council ELA Workshop at 8:30 a.m.

**Friday, January 13:**

Jason's Deli Friday Lunch

**Monday, January 16:**

No School (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)

**Thursday, January 19:**

CTL Community Open House from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

**Friday, January 20:**

Chick-fil-A Friday Lunch

**Friday, January 27:**

Papa John's Friday Lunch



## Happy New Year!

Welcome back to an exciting New Year! We loved greeting your children as they returned from the holidays full of energy, excitement, and a thirst for sharing. They greeted each other as family! After much celebrating and sharing of their holiday stories, they got right back into the learning groove. The hallways were quiet again, and the week ran so smoothly. Thank you for returning them to us ready to learn.

Thanks to all of you who made December a special month of celebrations and gift giving. Congratulations to our students, teachers and parent volunteers who made our Holiday Music Program such a success.

A special thank you to Reina Bozeman for the beautiful handmade gingerbread house she donated to raffle off, and congratulations to the Shupe family for winning it. Thank you for all the toy and pajama donations. Ms. Phipps delivered the 61 pairs of pajamas to the Scholastic Great Bedtime Story Pajama Drive, and Ms. Lipar delivered over 200 toys to the Interfaith Toy Drive. These donations went to needy families in our area, and our CTL students enjoyed the true spirit of giving. Thanks also to our parent volunteers who coordinated and assisted with our Holiday Treasure Shoppe and for all of you who donated. Our students loved shopping for their



## Important Reminders

\*Please ensure your child is at school by 7:55 a.m. All students arriving after 7:55 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 ensure your child wears his/her CTL t-shirt each Friday.

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

\*We invite you to email any of our CTL team members by clicking on their addresses. names in this newsletter which are linked to their email.

\*Please check out our CTL Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/CTL.TheWoodlands/> and subscribe to our CTL Parent Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ctlparentcouncil/> for updates about our students, classrooms, and school!



families, and our Parent Council earned \$1,463.20 that will go back to supporting our children. Thank you to the Pre-K and K-1 parents for the delicious Staff Appreciation Luncheon, and thanks to the parents who coordinated the holiday parties on our last day before the break. A huge thanks also to Dr. Joyce Armstrong Carroll who was all dressed in fur from her head to her feet and came bringing books for every boy and girl. Her "ho ho ho" greetings down the CTL hallways and in and out of classrooms brought the last breath of Christmas greetings as we headed out for the holidays. Thank you, Dr. Carroll, for your love and support of CTL!

January is a month for planning new beginnings. Ms. Phipps opened January in Morning Meeting last week with a focus on celebrations and goal setting. The students chose a word that represented their goals. Those goals will soon be displayed on the CTL grounds in an interesting and exciting way. We will be announcing it in the Wednesday Bulletin when the celebration day arrives to unveil their creations. Ms. Billings opened Morning Meeting this week with *Only One You* by Linda Kranz with a message to comfort and guide our students as they go about exploring the world this new year. She will continue with an encouraging theme throughout the week.

We look forward to seeing interested parents at our January informational and idea gathering sessions. We enjoyed the visits today at the Parent Council English Language Arts Workshop. Thank you for your suggestions for more reading and writing workshops for interested parents. On Thursday, January 12, we are hosting a meeting to begin planning for our first CTL Gala in the spring. And looking ahead, the February 1 Parent Council meeting will be devoted to gathering feedback from parents on the future CTL High School. The high school information sessions will continue for interested parents throughout the spring.

CTL also continues in our goal as a Professional Development School. We are welcoming Desiree Corbin as a student teacher beginning January 18. Desiree is completing her master's degree at Houston Baptist University. She chose to visit all CTL classrooms in a weekly rotation during the fall and found what she was expecting after visiting our website—a mesh between theory and practice between her classes at University of Houston and Houston Baptist University and what was happening in CTL classrooms. Desiree is an enthusiastic learner, and we are glad she has chosen us once again for her student teaching experience.

We look forward to new families joining us in the spring and the fall of 2017. We will host our first Open House for the year on Thursday, January 19 from 6:30 to 7:30. We encourage you to spread the word and welcome you to attend the information session with interested families. You may pick up postcards in the office for distribution. We have families already on the wait list, and we will be hosting many tours this month with numerous international and local families.





It excites us to see so many families finding us from all over the world as they search for a cutting-edge school for their children. The CTL vision and philosophy resonates with parents who are searching for a school where their children can and will fall in love with learning.

Have a wonderful January, and enjoy the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on Monday, January 16. In honor of the holiday, there will be no school. Have fun with your children!

*Dr. Linda Ellis, Jennifer Chamberlain, and Paige Lewis*

### *Pre-Kindergarten*

Happy New Year! Pre-K had so much fun in December. They were very busy traveling the world. The fun began with a Polar Express train ride to the North Pole in our pajamas. They enjoyed the holiday lights, sparkling snowflakes but mostly the hot chocolate and popcorn.



Pre-K also had fun exploring our Holiday Around the World unit. Our travel adventure began with a trip to Mexico. We read *The Legend of the Poinsettia* and learned about the Las Posadas Christmas celebration. We packed our swimsuits and headed to Australia where we discovered that Santa gives the reindeer a break and uses kangaroos to deliver the presents to the boys and girls. One of our favorite adventures was the visit to Germany. They are known for their beautiful gingerbread houses and cookies. We decorated gingerbread cookies and then we were able to eat our design. Next, we headed to Russia. We were a little early for Christmas as they celebrate Christmas Day on January 7. Ded Moroz (Father Frost) brings the children Christmas gifts on New Year's Day. In France, we sampled La Bûche de Noël (Yule Log) then we were off to Sweden for hot chocolate and cinnamon buns. We also learned that Tomte, the Christmas Gnome, delivers the gifts to the children. His sled is pulled by a team of goats. Next was Buone Feste Natalizie, or Merry Christmas in Italian. We read about *The Legend of La Befana* and how she brings gifts to all the children. We opened Christmas Crackers in England, and everyone received a hat to wear along with a trinket. Finally, it was back to the United States just in time for our class Christmas party. Everyone enjoyed opening their presents, decorating our edible Christmas trees, and eating all the delicious snack foods. What an exciting time we had in December!

Coming up in January, we will be exploring winter, polar animals and snow.

*Beckey Billings*

### *Grades K-1*

December was such a fun month! We enjoyed sharing holiday traditions, *Polar Express* Day, our class party, and running the third annual pajama drive. Thank you so much for showering me with gifts and treats for Christmas! I truly appreciate your kindness.

In reading workshop, I read several versions of *The Gingerbread Man*. We enjoyed comparing the books to see what elements the authors had in common and what elements they changed. We also read a lot of stories related to Christmas and learned how the countries our families are from celebrate Christmas. Next month, the students will be continuing their growth as readers as we conference about the books they are reading. It is exciting to see them move into more complexity in reading as they apply the strategies they are learning.



In writing workshop we all completed an "all about" book about an animal we had researched. We went through the process of researching our animals, recording important and interesting facts on a web, and writing a book that can teach readers about our animal. In January, we will revisit the personal narrative.

In math we have been working on strategies for subtracting larger numbers including double digit numbers for those who are ready. This is a challenging skill, but we have found that if we take the time to use manipulatives or draw pictures, we can handle the challenge. We're also learning how important it is to think about our answers and whether they make sense. Next month we will focus on place value to the 100s and 1000s and then begin to work on strategies for adding and subtracting double digit or triple digit numbers.

In science we enjoyed some STEAM challenges with a Christmas twist. We are finding that often our biggest challenge is not the STEAM challenge but rather working as a team. We are exploring ways to work together more effectively. We also continued our study of plant parts and how they help plants survive. Next month we will be learning about animal adaptations with an exciting "Who Would Win?" project at the end. We will follow that with a study of plant adaptations.

In social studies we studied several different Native American tribes. Each student studied one tribe with his/her group, becoming experts on that tribe. Then each group had the opportunity to teach another group of students about their tribe. Next month we be learning about America's economy.

*Stephanie Phipps*

### *Grades 1-2*

Happy New Year to all the Explorer families! December was a short month at CTL. Our elves, Holly and Jolly, arrived. They brought some fun and excitement to our classroom each day with their snowball fights, game playing, candy cane sharing and even some holiday "decorating" with toilet paper. We had quite a few activities that were full of fun and learning. We celebrated the holiday season with our Diwali celebration, holiday concert, *Polar Express* celebration, Grinch Day activities, holiday crafts and gift making for parents, treasure shop, and finally our international themed holiday party— WHEW! All of this would not have been possible without the awesome help from all of our parents. Thank you so much for your continued support in making CTL a great place to learn and grow.

In reading and writing workshop the class has been focusing on making connections, expository text, personal narrative, author study of Eve Bunting, and word study. We are working toward the editing process as we continue our lessons in writing.

Our STEAM challenges were festive as we geared them around Christmas. We created a shelf for an elf, a parachute for Santa, and a gumdrop engineering activity. The class continues to build on the skills in math as they practice reading and creating math word problems, learning new math vocabulary, working with the different properties of addition. double digit addition and subtraction, money recognition/ adding/subtraction, equal groups and repeated addition. We will focus on rounding to the nearest ten/hundred, estimating, fractions, organizing/graphing data and data analysis.

In science the Explorers studied the parts of a plant and how people use them as well as the characteristics of animals and their habitats. We will continue to study animals and how they adapt and survive before we move on to look at inheritance and variation of traits.

The class learned about the Native American people and their lifestyles during



their settlement in the Americas. They watched a series of videos created by Scholastic to learn what life was like for these people, their struggles and triumphs. Next we will be learning about the economy. Students will understand the difference between goods and services and producers and consumers. They will do this through activities and projects as they put these concepts into action.

January will be a full month as we start new concepts and activities. We will work to create classroom and individual projects. Please check your emails and calendars weekly for upcoming activities in the classroom and school-wide events. I have extended the Secret Reader Calendar through the month of April. If you would like to sign up, please go tour our Shutterfly site.

I am looking forward to a great 2017 in the Explorer classroom.

[Lisa Lipar](#)

### Grades 3-4

Welcome back and Happy New Year to all of our CTL families! December was a whirlwind of a month loaded with weeks of not only academics but also woven in were tons of Christmas crafts and holiday art along with celebrations. I would like to thank you for all of the wonderful gifts, and I am especially grateful for the amazing Amazon gift card presented from the class. A special thanks goes to Aimee Shupe for planning our fabulous class party, Maria Bane for helping coordinate, Nichole Buckman for the yummy sugar cookies and decorations, and the many parents who helped the day of the party making it a fun way to end school before the winter break.

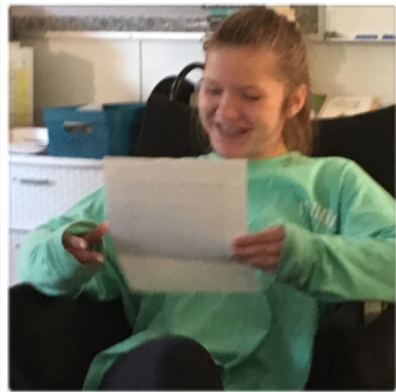
In reading we finished our heartfelt autobiography *Ugly* by Robert Hoge. Students enjoyed hearing about the trials and triumphs of Robert, born with no nose and deformed legs. Rich and personal discussions centered around Robert's experiences, and students felt empathy and wonder as we explored ideas of how to deal with life when all odds are stacked against us. Always having a book of choice continued to play a vital role in workshop. Students shared books more often and read stories based on recommendations from friends. Our next read aloud, *A Handful of Stars*, is a Texas Bluebonnet nominated book by Cynthia Lord. She has us travel to Maine and the fields of blueberries to join in the adventures and friendship between Lily, her blind dog, and Salma, the daughter of a migrant field worker.

In writing workshop we published several pieces. Using Google docs and being able to share and edit with our peers has streamlined our writing process. Besides writing personal narratives centered around sacrifice after reading and exploring this topic embedded in *The Legend of the Bluebonnet*, students continued to freewrite within a variety of genres ranging from narrative, to fantasy, and to poetry. Up next, beside writing pieces of choice, we will also explore writing with documented research.

In math we tackled multiplication and division simultaneously. Third graders explored the concept of multiplication as repeated addition while inversely learning that division is repeated subtraction. Fourth graders reviewed multiplication facts and immediately began using them to multiply two digit times one digit while also relying on their facts to help them solve long division. Next, we will move into fractions and decimals and explore their close relationship.

Science brought Christmas themed STEM activities our way as we grew





crystalized Christmas trees and challenged ourselves to construct the tallest structure using gumdrops and toothpicks. We also began exploring life cycles in plants and animals which we will further study in January.

In social studies we discussed and researched at length early settlers to the Americas and reasons why the colonists wanted to break free from their European ties. We will move into the timeline of the original colonies, early America, and eventually how economics shaped our country.

Melanie Smith

### *Grades 5-8 Language Arts and 7-8 Social Studies*

December was a busy month at CTL! We enjoyed many special activities while continuing to be immersed in reading and writing in the classroom.



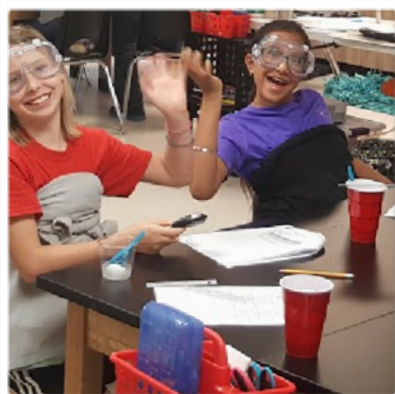
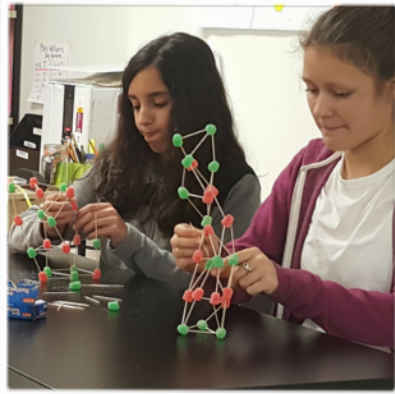
I was thrilled to hear about the many books students read and/or received over the holidays. We are all looking forward to the book talks that will occur in the coming weeks. These book commercials spark an interest in students giving them additional titles to add to their "Books I Want to Read" lists. In 5-6 reading workshop we have noticed Aha! Moments as well as Contrasts and Contradictions in the behavior of characters in the books we are reading. Our read aloud, *The Inquisitors Tale* by Adam Gidwitz, has offered many great examples for students. They have successfully identified these qualities in their own books and have enjoyed sharing them with the class. We will begin to notice questions a character raises that reveal his/her inner struggles and advice or insight offered by a wiser character in the books we are reading. The 7th and 8th graders enjoyed the conclusion of *Ghost* and have begun a new read aloud, *SYLO* by D. J. MacHale. Students are consistently looking beyond the text in order to discover clues and meaning. Each student has a clear understanding of the books that capture and hold their interest, yet they are eager to listen to classmates discuss books from genres other than those they read most often. Many students have chosen to read books they would not normally consider after listening to a classmate's book talk. Students should continue to read for a minimum of 30 minutes each night. This not only improves their reading fluency, stamina, vocabulary, and comprehension, but it creates avid readers.

After reading many examples of free-verse poetry, students in grades 5 and 6 began writing their own poems about a special moment or memory. They have enjoyed learning to choose words that express thoughts or feelings in a concise manner, and many have found that they are natural poets. Students are always eager to take the author's chair and share their work with the class. The quality of writing is impressive! The 7th and 8th graders are drafting their own memoirs after being immersed in quality examples from others. They enjoy reliving a special memory through their writing. Students are learning from their peers through sharing and discussions about pieces of writing. The quality of writing in this group continues to improve and amaze me!

In 7-8 social studies students are solving "The Case of the Missing Teacher" using primary and secondary sources. In teams of three, students must sift through 12 pieces of evidence in order to determine who kidnapped the student teacher. This review of sources will prepare them to begin their next project-based activity. In December we studied the United States Constitution. This week students will begin a constitutional issues project in which they will consider both individual rights and the common good while describing how a constitutional principle logically supports their position on the issue.

Angela Bailey

### Grades 5-8 Math and Science and 5-6 Social Studies



December was a month full of learning and celebrating! In 5-6 math students worked hard mastering multi-digit multiplication and division. We learned four different ways to complete a multiplication problem: traditional method, lattice method, box and cluster, and partial products. Students used the mnemonic device, Does McDonalds Sell Burgers? to help them remember the steps of division. Things got even more exciting when we dropped a decimal into our problems and learned how to correctly multiply and divide with decimals. In the upcoming weeks students will be applying their decimal and fraction operation skills by setting up their own cupcake shops.

In 5-6 science we split our time between studying the changes in energy on a molecular level and circuits. Students worked in pairs to create a light box by wiring together Christmas lights. When all of the boxes were put together they spelled Merry Christmas. In January students will be using their knowledge about energy, heat, and energy transfer to design their own insulated container!

Social studies for grades 5-6 focused on government and voting. Students learned about the U.S. Constitution and how it created the three branches of government. They also surveyed two adults to learn more about the process of why people vote. We then graphed that information to look for trends in our data. We are now turning our focus to World War I.

The 7th graders were introduced to rates and ratios, while the 8th graders focused on systems of equations. The students finished their life-size cell replicas and gave tours to the other students in the school. The Illuminators spent many hours on this project and it was great to see all their hard work come together in a way that allowed them to share their knowledge of cell anatomy with others. We also spent some time reviewing series and parallel circuits. In January 7th graders will be continuing their study of rates and ratios as well as learning about exponent operations. 8th graders will be focused on quadratic equations.

Our class loved being involved in the Holiday Treasure Shoppe! Whether is was shopping, helping other students wrap presents, or drinking hot cocoa, the Holiday Treasure Shoppe and *Polar Express* Day were class favorites. Ms. Bozeman, Ms. Wright, and Ms. Winter did a wonderful job organizing our holiday party. Thank you so much for your hard work.

Lori Williams

### Grades PK-8 Music

December was a busy time as we prepared and presented the Holiday Music Program. January will be a busy learning time in music. Students will be learning to read music through rhythmic symbols and notation on the music staff, using the "do, re, mi.." solfa method.



Diane Engle

*Grades 5-8 Drama*



DECEMBER 2016	Coming in JANUARY 2017
<p>5th- 8th Grade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ I am extremely proud of our CTL drama students for their hard work preparing for our holiday show. Our performance of "Ye Olde Card Shoppe" was absolutely amazing. Congratulations to all our CTL music and drama students on a job well done!</li> <li>★ During our final few drama classes before holiday vacation we began reading play scripts for our next project. The students unanimously picked "LIVE: It's Fairy Tale News!". We will create a video production of this play. We began assigning roles and responsibilities for our video.</li> </ul>	<p>5th-8th Grade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Students will be asked to take home play scripts to read and critique in preparation for our spring show.</li> <li>★ Students will spend most of January working on our video production of LIVE: It's Fairy Tale News! This play will allow our CTL drama students to step into roles as reporters and classic fairytale characters. They will discover the news as it unfolds in twists on classic fairy tales. I am excited to see anchors Ruby Red and Pete Charming team up with reporters Wanda Whereabout, Gore May, Hasket Hansen and Katie Lean as they meet the three little pigs, sleeping beauty, jack and his beanstalk and many more.</li> </ul>

*Grades PK-8 Physical Education*

DECEMBER 2017	Coming in JANUARY 2017
<p><u>Physical Education</u> Pre/K - 8th Grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Soccer Skills - We had a blast practicing our soccer skills with the coaches from Texas Rush!</li> <li>&gt; Snowball Game</li> </ul> <p><u>PSHE</u> (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) Pre/K - 8th Grade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; We read Stone Soup by Jon J Muth. All CTL students helped make a healthy stone soup with cheerios, raisins and marshmallows. We experienced the benefits of being generous and the positive feelings of giving as we served each other small portions of CTL Stone Soup.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Physical Education</u> Pre/K - 8th Grade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group Warm Ups with focus on hula hoops, jump ropes and NFL agility exercises.</li> <li>• Gatorball Games</li> <li>• Volleyball Skills</li> <li>• Cooperative Games                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Spaghetti and Meatballs</li> <li>o Spiders and Flies</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) Emotions! Students will begin to understand how emotions can drive behavior!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will create emotion posters to hang in our enrichment classroom</li> <li>• We will discuss the emotions featured in the movie Inside Out:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Yellow - Joy</li> <li>o Purple - Fear</li> <li>o Green - Disgust</li> <li>o Red - Anger</li> <li>o Blue - Sadness</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>CTL Pyramid of Success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ We will spend time working on the our COOPERATION building block of our PE Pyramid of Success. Students will learn that success is easy when we work as one and help each other.</li> </ul>

Trisha Brandimarte



Grades PK-8 Art



<p>Artists and Their Art Styles' Mini-Lessons...</p>	 <p>The Life and Artistic Style of Hallmark Ornament Artist Orville Wilson</p>	 <p>The Life &amp; Artistic Style of Children's Book Author Byrd Baylor</p>	 <p>The Life and Artistic Style of Hallmark Ornament Artist Edythe Kygrize</p>
<p>Art Read-Aloud Books that Sparked Our Art-Creating Experiences...</p>			
<p>Artwork We Have Created</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Animalia</i>—Inspired Christmas Alliteration</li> <li>• <i>Lily Brown's Paintings</i>-Inspired Abstract Watercolor Paintings</li> <li>• <i>When Clay Sings</i>-Inspired Earth Clay Sculptures</li> <li>• Watercolor Christmas Ornaments &amp; Christmas Trees</li> <li>• Christmas Angels</li> </ul>		

Treva McKissic