



# CTL CORNER

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

## Important Dates

**October 2** - Brother's Pizza Friday Lunch and Parent Council from 12:00 - 12:45

**October 5-9** - Parent Teacher Conferences

**October 9** - Quiznos Friday Lunch

**October 14** - Student Health Screenings

**October 16** - Chick-fil-a Friday Lunch

**October 23** - El Chaparro Friday Lunch

**October 26-30** - Red Ribbon Week

**October 28** - Fall School Pictures

**October 30** - Quiznos Friday Lunch, Grades K-2 Costume Parade at 1:00, and Halloween Carnival for all students and families from 1:00 - 3:00

## Important Reminders

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

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

\*Feel free to send bug spray in your child's backpack to be applied before he/she goes outside. Please make sure the bug spray is in a zip-lock bag, labeled with his or her name on it.

\*Encourage your child to show CTL school spirit by wearing his/her CTL t-shirt each Friday.

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

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

## WELCOME OCTOBER -THE SEASON OF CHANGE!

*Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.*

*-William Butler Yeats*



We have been about the business of lighting fires at CTL during the month of September, and we so look forward to October—the season of change!

We had an amazing first month with your children! Our entire CTL team focused on building relationships and getting to know each child as an individual learner—likes, dislikes, strengths, challenges, interests, how they learn, where they are in their learning, and so forth. The first month of school is the most important month in the school year for that reason. We also spent a lot of time during the first few weeks establishing rules, procedures, and the general structures in the school as a whole and in individual classrooms,

structures and frameworks that will make the rest of the school year run smoothly. Thanks for your patience as we learned more about your children so that we know how to light their fires and keep those fires burning.

Thanks also for your continued support! We feel fortunate to have such an amazing group of parents. Thank you for the fantastic turnout at our Parent Orientations. We enjoyed visiting with each of you and especially enjoyed meeting with you in our Parent Councils. Thank you all for your celebrations, suggestions and offers of help. We welcome your ideas and your support and are thankful to all who have willingly volunteered to serve and help CTL however you can! We look forward to our next Parent Council in November. We encourage all parents/guardians to attend.

CTL team members are looking forward to that special face-to-face communication with each of you during Parent/Teacher Conferences scheduled October 5-9. We encourage you to sign up for a time to meet with your child's teacher(s) on our SignUpGenius at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0545ada62eazfb6-parentteacher>. Of course, all CTL team members are always available to communicate by email or during conference periods when appointments are made by email. We love your children, and we consider you to be our partners in their education.

We look forward to the exciting events scheduled for October and appreciate all the parents who have volunteered to help with these fun activities.

Have a Happy Spooktacular October with your family! We will make your child's learning joyful and will continue to ignite their fires! Thanks for sharing your children with us. They are amazing!

*Linda Ellis and Jennifer Chamberlain*





## Kindergarten

Kindergarten is off to a great start! We have really enjoyed getting to know each other and developing our classroom community.

In reading we have been focusing on developing good reading habits, such as knowing what kinds of books we enjoy, understanding how to use our classroom library, and building our stamina for independent reading. We have also begun to discuss schema (what we already know) and connections to texts (what the texts remind us of) and how these help us better comprehend the stories we read. Next month, we will continue think about strategies that help us comprehend books. We are enjoying reading our Poetry Notebooks with our families and are looking forward to sharing some books we've read in class as well.

In writing we have been busy writing our own books. The students are so proud that they are authors and illustrators! Students are working on different skills in their writing, depending on what they need at this time. Much of our focus has been on where to get ideas for writing and strategies for writing words. We are also looking forward to our first Authors Celebration with the Explorers class.

In math we have been working on many skills, including creating repeating and growing patterns, comparing quantities, describing attributes of shapes, and recognizing the symbols that represent numbers. We will continue to work on these skills next month, but we will also begin to focus on strategies for addition and subtraction.

In science we learned about our five senses and that we can use them to make scientific observations. Then, we began our study of Earth Science with learning about rocks. We went on a rock hunt around our school and then sorted those rocks by different attributes and tested them to see if they sink or float. We have been surprised to find out how many things we use every day are made (at least partially) from rocks and minerals, even rugs and toothpaste! Next month, we will continue this study with a focus on soil and water.

In social studies we have just finished our study of ourselves and what makes us similar and different. We also learned a bit about the history of the American flag and the meaning of the pledges. We enjoyed creating our own artistic versions of both the US and the Texas flags. Next month, we will be learning about our families and family traditions.

We have really been enjoying Passion Projects on Fridays. Some of the students have been researching topics of interest to them on a research website for kids. Others have been working on a hula hoop t-shirt rug. We finished the first one last week and can't wait to make some more! We will be using them for cozy places to sit during independent reading!

## Stephanie Phipps

### Grades 1-2

Happy Fall! This month we have been enjoying many fun projects and classroom activities. The class is really diving into reading. They understand and respect the Reading Workshop time in our classroom. Everyone finds a cozy spot to get lost in their books. They are also jumping into writing in Writing Workshop.





They have learned how to select and record topics for writing and to sustain writing for the entire workshop. We will continue to expand our topics and learn about "small moments" in writing. We will also focus on using a writing folder and using our popcorn (high frequency) words.

In math we are learning and strengthening skills taught through various math games and hands-on activities. We are working on money exchange, tallying data, bar graphs, using number lines and grids, greater/less than and equal to and frames and arrows. We will continue to review skills taught and move on to turn around facts, part and whole, identifying odd and even, writing number stories and working with calculators. We will also continue to strengthen skills with math games.

In our science lab, we studied soil and its properties, learned about the layers of soil and even looked closer at our soil samples through our digital microscope. The class is busy filling up their science notebooks with all of their observations and information. We will study rocks and minerals in October.

We finished our small group projects on communities and they presented them to the class. They all turned out awesome! We will continue learning about the differences in communities and learning about maps.

We are looking forward to all of our fun fall school-wide activities as well so please check out our CTL Corner newsletter for details.

*Lisa Lipar*

### Grades 3-4

September has a busy and productive month for the Discovators. Students have quickly adapted to our Reading and Writing Workshop routine. Each day after students find a book of choice, they record that title in their *Reading Logs*. Our students have read so many books they are asking for a second page for their reading logs already. It is exciting to see students so familiar with the classroom library they not only don't need my help finding books, but they are recommending and finding books for one another to read. In Writing Workshop we have been filling our notebooks with a plethora of prewriting pieces. Recently, students have honed in on one idea and we are taking it through the writing process. We've enjoyed Dr. Ellis' lessons about showing and not telling. She has helped us bring our writing to life by using our senses and strong verbs. She helped us to see that our best writing teachers are the favorite authors we read.

In math we've focused on place value with whole numbers and decimals. Besides learning to recognize, read, and manipulate numbers out to the hundredths place value, we have also discovered that these decimal place values convert to fractions as well. We made connections with decimals and money, compared and ordered decimals, and played a variety of games with spinners and dice. We've often used the iPads and laptops to reinforce our math concepts with a host of math websites that Mrs. Smith has collected for us and posted on RenWeb.

In science we have not only studied landforms, we have made plenty of them. Besides independent inquiry about landforms, we played with PlayDough to





model what we know about how a variety of landforms work. We've played in tubs of dirt, exploring how to make mountains, rivers, and plains. We used straws to demonstrate wind erosion and poured cups of water over our landforms to discover a river's path and how water either absorbs into the earth or creates bodies of water like ponds and lakes. Our culminating landform project was to create our own landforms with graham crackers, icing, and food coloring. It was fun and yummy!

In social studies we reviewed lots of map skills. We used blue balloons to label our own "Earth" with continents, oceans, the equator, and prime meridian. Students learned that lines of latitude and longitude form grids and help us to locate places in our world. We've made our own city maps on coordinate grids complete with streets and icons representing homes, stores, and buildings. A fun game of Battleship on grids helped us to reinforce the skill of finding intersecting lines using coordinates. We finished our map skills studies by creating our own countries and integrated what we learned in science by adding major landforms to our maps.

September has been a month of learning procedures and routines. As we are becoming more familiar with our learning space and building the community feel within our class, October will be a great month to usher in more of what we love - learning by doing and having a wide array of opportunities to discover our strengths.

Melanie Smith

### Grade 5 Language Arts

Students are immersed in books in Reading Workshop. We begin each reading class with a teacher read-aloud. We are currently reading *Fuzzy Mud* by Louis Sachar. The students are engrossed in the book and have meaningful discussions about the story where they consider plot and story elements. After the read aloud, students find a spot in the room to become lost in their own books. At the end of Reading Workshop students are able to give book talks about the books they've enjoyed. During these talks, we add to our *Books I Want to Read* list when a book piques our interest.



In Writing Workshop we have completed several prewriting activities including *Writing Territories* and *Heart Mapping* to help students find topics to write about. Dr. Ellis introduced the class to the genre Memoir. Students began writing their own memoirs. This will be their first published piece of writing this year.

I am getting to know the students as readers and writers as we confer individually during reading and writing. My goal is that students love reading and writing so much that they continue to read and write when they are not in school.

### Grades 6-8 Language Arts



Students are immersed in books in Reading Workshop. We begin each reading class with a teacher read-aloud. We are currently reading *The Crossover* by Kwami Alexander. This story is written in free verse poetry, which is new to most students. We look at the word choices and line breaks the author uses to draw in the reader. Students are engaged in the story and enjoy our class discussions about story elements and characters. During Reading



Workshop students are entering the *reading zone* with the books they have chosen. We've listened to classmates give book talks about the books they've enjoyed and after these talks we've added to our *Books I Want to Read* list when a book piques our interest.

In Writing Workshop we have completed several prewriting activities including *Writing Territories* and *Heart Mapping* to help students find topics to write about. Students have taken their first piece of writing, a free-verse poem, through the writing process and are now beginning another piece. A favorite time of the day is author share at the end of writing workshop. Students enjoy sharing their writing with classmates and look forward to the constructive feedback they receive.

I am getting to know the students as readers and writers as we confer individually during reading and writing. My goal is that students love reading and writing so much that they continue to read and write when they are not in school.

### *Grades 6-8 Social Studies*

Students have learned how social scientists reconstruct the lives of prehistoric humans by examining images of cave paintings and other artifacts. They have begun to explore the physical and cultural development of early hominid groups and will work with their "clan" to learn more about these groups. This group project will be completed at school, although some students may need to complete work at home.

All 5th through 8th grade students will need to bring in a flash drive to be kept at school for writing and research projects. If possible, we would like students to have a flash drive at school by October 5, 2015.

*Angela Bailey*

### *Grade 5-8 Math and Science*

In fifth grade math and science, we continued our stock market unit in math, but took it to another level by using improper fractions and graphing the daily results on a coordinate grid. In science, we completed presentations and reflections over the external forces section of our earth science unit. Because Mrs. Smith's 3rd and 4th grade class was also learning about earth science, we presented to her students. We recently began investigating the moon and lunar cycle. This takes our study of earth science to a new level too... space!

In sixth through eighth grade math and science, we continued our focus on the projects and activities related to our individual levels in Connected Math. I used innovative iPad apps with most of the students allowing them to apply their knowledge of linear relationships and functions on the coordinate grid. In science, we presented to our peers what we knew about the sun and seasons. After our presentations, we spent time reflecting on our learning. We recently started investigating the Sun – Earth – Moon relationship and lunar cycle.

### *Grade 5 Social Studies*

We completed our unit on American Geography by playing a fun interactive game online. We've begun our readings on Native American tribes and the different environments they settled into. This unit will culminate into a team presentation where the students illustrate and act out a way of life for their selected environment.

*Caleb Cannon*















### Grades K-8 Art

We have been having a blast in art class. Your children’s creativity is energizing and infectious! The table overview is a quick snapshot of what we have done in Art class for the month of September 2015.

During the month of October, CTL students will continue their personal journeys of experiencing art and art history in fresh and exciting ways. We will continue to delve deeper into our studies of the elements of art, the design principles of art, and cultivating a community of creative thinking artists. New art history mini-lessons about artists from around the world will spark student curiosities and promote them to think in new ways.

Treva McKisic

 	
<b>Read-Aloud Books We Have Experienced...</b>	
<b>Art History &amp; Artist Techniques Mini-Lessons...</b>	<div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="width: 50%;">  <p>The Life &amp; Art of Swiss Abstract Artist Paul Klee</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%;">  <p>The Life &amp; Artistic Style of American Writer &amp; Illustrator Antoinette Portis</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%;">  <p>The Life &amp; Artistic Style of UK Artist &amp; Children's Book Writer Migy Blanco</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%;">  <p>The Artistic Style of Collage with Spanish Artist Pablo Picasso</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%;">  <p>The Artistic Style of Collage with French Artist Georges Braque</p> </div> </div>
<b>A Few of Our Art-Creating Experiences...</b>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div>  <p>Hand Designs with Lines</p> </div> <div>  <p>Self-Portraits Inspired by Paul Klee</p> </div> <div>  <p>Not-a-Stick! Art Inspired by Antoinette Portis</p> </div> </div>
<b>Community-Building &amp; Empowerment Questions and Topics We Have Discussed...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Learning Styles and Individual Learning Preferences Inventory</li> <li>• Getting to Know Each Other</li> <li>• Teacher and Student Expectations</li> <li>• What Is Art?</li> <li>• What Does It Mean to Be an Artist?</li> <li>• Art is about Freedom In Thinking</li> <li>• Doing Your Best and Feeling Good about the Art You Create</li> <li>• How to Engage In Positive Talk about Your Art and Others' Art</li> <li>• Enjoying the Process of Creating and Allowing the Art to Be What It Is</li> </ul>

### Grades K-8 Physical Education

Wow! Hard to believe it is already October. We have been busy and have stayed active in PE this past month. It was all about setting expectations and getting to know one another. Kindergartners and Grade 1/2 demonstrated different movement patterns, learned *Rock, Paper, Scissors* as a means to settle conflict (and play a fun game), and played *Captain's Coming* to find partners and form groups.



There was an obstacle course, a trip to the playground to review directional terms, follow the leader using our shadows, and a favorite game was “Traffic Light.” We’ll finish our foundation building this coming month with a fitness introduction and some games of chase (always a hit!).

Grades 3-8 spent much of September also playing *Captain’s Coming*, first as a way to work together and then as a way to quickly form partners or groups. In addition to some great cooperative games using hoops, we discussed the five components of fitness and focused on activities that improved our aerobic capacity and muscle strength/endurance. Circuits provided us the opportunity to do a variety of activities at the same time, and since they kept moving, the heart rate stayed elevated. Fitness training will be a constant throughout the year, but it will be interspersed with a current skills unit. For October we will cover striking and throwing.

*Marci Murphy*

*Grades K-8 Music*

We are off to a great start in our music classes here at CTL. Each lesson incorporates singing, movement, and instrument playing. I can already see the musical growth in the students and look forward to a wonderful year. Please remember to send in your order forms for recorders as we will use these instruments often in class. We will use them in most classes so the students should make sure to have them at school on Tuesdays. As we practice the recorder, it will help us learn to read note names, note values and musical notation.

*Debbie Kinzel*

*Morning Meetings*

This past month, our CTL teachers have been our meeting leaders. First, Mrs. Smith, our 3rd and 4th grade teacher, went with the theme *Smooth Operators*. She explained that although some of the most successful people in life seem like they sail smoothly to reach levels of success, if you look closely, they often had to face and overcome giant challenges. Each day Mrs. Smith played a short motivational video highlighting such *Smooth Operators*. Next was Mr. Cannon, our 5th-8th grade math and science teacher. Piggy backing off the stories of successful people overcoming challenges, Mr. Cannon reminded students that the most successful people in life are also often “forward thinkers.” Mr. Cannon shared personal experiences and showed video clips highlighting such forward thinking people that used their innovative ideas to succeed in life when others thought they couldn’t. Mrs. Bailey, our 5th-8th Language Arts and Social Studies teacher finished September morning meetings by reminding us of the importance to pay attention to those nagging ideas that follow us around. She shared wonderful picture books illustrating what it feels like to have an idea come to you and then grappling with the feeling of “What do I do now?”

*Fridays at CTL*

*Reading/Writing Buddies*

Students are getting to know their reading buddies even better as they continue to share their favorite books. Not only are we enjoying getting to know our new friends, we are especially enjoying reading our books outside in the fall weather.

*Passion Projects*

These past few weeks have been a time for students to narrow their focus on their passion projects. Students are not only creating “big questions” they are also diving into researching how they are going to answer such questions and present their projects.



### *Enrichment Clubs*

1st Trimester Enrichment Clubs are now under way!

- Mr. Cannon sponsors the Metcon Club.
- Mrs. Smith sponsors the Gamers Club.
- Mrs. Phipps sponsors the Lightening Lego Club.
- Mrs. Lipar and Mrs. Kinzel sponsor the Dancing Divas Club.
- Mrs. Murphy sponsors the Outdoor Games Club.
- Mrs. Billings and Mrs. Bailey sponsor the Yummy Club.
- Mrs. McKissic sponsors the Creative Writing/Poetry/Art Club.
- Mrs. Chamberlain sponsors the Drama Club.

### *Council*

Council in the classroom every Friday before we leave for the weekend has been an awesome opportunity for students to build relationships with their peers and teachers. Students are learning not to “break the circle” and be respectful of what each individual student has to say. Students’ thoughts and feelings are respected when shared, and this has helped students and teachers form bonds that strengthen the classroom community.

### *Parent Council*

Parent Council meetings are held monthly. All parents/guardians and caregivers are welcome to participate. The goals of the CTL Parent Council are to enrich the learning experiences of our students through active involvement in the school community.

We would like to introduce and thank our Parent Council Co-Chairs - Marcy Schustereder and Aimee Shupe, Secretary/Treasurer - Claudia Williams, Room Parent Coordinator - Kallie Rees, and Room Parents - Anne Peebles (Kindergarten), Claire Want and Regina Puckett (Grades 1-2), Sara Bier and Joanne Hammon (Grades 3-4), Cecille Wright, Laurie Robertson, and Diana Chavez (Grade 5), and Trudy Donders and Mary Latona Ward (Grades 6-8). We look forward to organizing our Events Coordinator/Committee, Development Coordinator/Committee, and Volunteer Coordinator/Committee. Thanks to those who have volunteered to serve thus far. If you are interested in volunteering in any of these capacities or in other ways that you feel there is a need, or if you have any new ideas or suggestions please email Marcy Schustereder at [marcy.roland@comcast.net](mailto:marcy.roland@comcast.net) and Aimee Shupe at [aimeeshupe@yahoo.com](mailto:aimeeshupe@yahoo.com).

### *Kuykendahl Property Update*

In an effort to do the impossible and meet the 2015-2016 school year, the investors purchased the land and moved forward with development, as they sought out proper permitting and site development. Much due diligence was performed prior to closing, as the engineers involved have had long-term involvement with the site. As you know, we experienced many roadblocks along the way, delaying our plans. Please know that a team of people is working on our behalf daily to produce a final school site that is in compliance with all regulations, encourages education, and accommodates the needs of all those that attend.

Harris County has approved our septic system proposal. Our Civil Engineers have addressed all other comments from Harris County on our site proposal. We now just need a signed access/easement agreement with Lone Star College System. Lawyers are in communication now, and we speculate an easement agreement with LSC in writing and submitted to Harris County within the next week that will release our final permitting. Buildings are ready for delivery as soon as we get the final permit cleared. Thanks for your continued patience in this time of transition.

*Linda Ellis and Jennifer Chamberlain*