



# CTL CORNER

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

## Important Dates

### Friday, April 1

Brother's Pizza Friday Lunch  
Parent Council at 12:15 p.m.

### Saturday, April 2

Mrs. Kinzel's Birthday

### Friday, April 8

Chick-fil-A Friday Lunch  
Family Fun Evening in the Park from  
5:30-7:30 p.m. at Northshore Park.  
Contact: Kevin Murphy

### Wednesday, April 13

Grades K-4 Field Trip to Main Street  
Theater

### Thursday, April 14

CTL Open House & Registration Event  
from 6-7:30 p.m. for prospective families  
and relevant professionals who support  
school choice.

### Friday, April 15

El Chaparro Friday Lunch

### Monday, April 18

Mrs. Murphy's Birthday

### Friday, April 22

Quiznos Friday Lunch  
Earth Day Up-cycle & Bake Sale from 12-1  
p.m. Contact: Cecille Wright

### Thursday, April 28

Kendra Scott Fundraising Event from 6-8  
p.m. Contact: Shannon Petillon

### Friday, April 29

Chick-fil-A Friday Lunch

### Saturday, April 30

Mrs. Maia's Birthday

## Happy April!

We loved visiting with so many of you at our fun March activities as children celebrated Dr. Seuss' Read Across America Week, Texas Independence Day, PiDay, Music in Our Schools Month, an on-site Petting Zoo, and club showcases at Morning Meetings the week before Spring Break. We also enjoyed great fellowship at our CTL Spirit Night at Corkscrew Barbecue. Thanks to the Buchmans for the great food and to parents for organizing the event.



Thanks to our wonderful parents who donated their time, efforts, and talents to our second trimester clubs. Many more parents have volunteered to facilitate clubs this trimester as well. Thanks also to those of you who attended Parent Council on Friday, April 1. We are fortunate to have so many parents who are organizing school and community events and fundraisers. Thanks also to the parents who will be volunteering to help with the grades K-4 students on a field trip on April 13 to see *Harriet the Spy* at Main Street Theater in Houston. Thanks to the many parents who have worked hard this year fundraising for the school, and thanks for involving the teachers and staff in prioritizing CTL needs. We are all excited that Parent Council will be purchasing an interactive white board that will serve your children well in the new science/technology lab next year.

Dr. Joyce Armstrong Carroll, godparent to Joyce Elizabeth in Kindergarten, Abydos Founder and Co-Director, and Dr. Ellis' "brain mother" will provide a keynote address at the CTL Open House on April 14 where many of our founding board members will be in attendance. In addition, we will be providing an overview of the history of CTL, CTL's mission and vision, and introductions to the CTL Team as well as answering enrollment questions. Please invite your friends and other families, or anyone who may be interested now or in the future in CTL as an innovative school for their children.

CTL Team members continue to grow professionally. It's an integral part of our model! Stephanie Phipps just completed her interview for the doctoral program at University of Houston in Early Childhood Education. Congratulations, Stephanie! Dr. Linda Ellis, Dr. Jamie Marsh, and Angela Bailey will travel to Edgecomb, Maine April 4 through 8 to intern at the Center for Teaching and



## Important Reminders

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

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

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

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

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

\*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.



Learning, Nancie Atwell's school that inspired Dr. Ellis over 20 years ago to start a school, inspired many of our team members in the teaching of language arts through a workshop approach, and inspired much of the framework here at CTL. Nancie was awarded the Global Teacher Prize in 2015 and one million dollars, an award given each year to the "best teacher in the world." To read more go to <http://www.globalteacherprize.org/top-10-finalist/nancie-atwell>.

Thanks to the generosity of Dr. Carroll and Edward Wilson, Co-Directors of Abydos, the CTL Team will be attending the 2016 Abydos Conference: Putting the PRO in PROfessional at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Houston April 7 through 10 where Jennifer Chamberlain will be honored with the Abydos Principal A+ Honor Roll Award on April 9. Our CTL Team will present a session on April 10 highlighting how Abydos' roots have influenced and continue to influence our roots at CTL.

Treva McKissic and Dr. Ellis are also excited to hear Sir Ken Robinson speak at the Houston A+ Challenge event in Houston on April 28. Sir Ken Robinson is a favorite of our CTL Team and many of our parents. We encourage you to also learn from Sir Ken Robinson by listening to some of his Ted Talks such as the following: [https://www.ted.com/talks/ken\\_robinson\\_says\\_schools\\_kill\\_creativity?language=e](https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity?language=e).

Our entire CTL Team is learning from going through the self-assessment process in preparation for our upcoming AdvancEd Accreditation Visit on May 5 and 6 led by Christina Callaway. We are well on our way to completion of the accreditation process. It has been a strenuous, time-consuming, but beneficial process of self-reflection, self-assessment, and goal setting for the future.

Thanks also to Paige Hayward for leading our efforts with marketing and enrollment in preparation for the 2016-17 school year. We have almost daily tours, and many students are shadowing. Our enrollment is growing, and we anticipate adding other multi-age classes, promising to keep our future numbers capped to 20 per grade level. Paige has also taken a leadership role to work with interested parents to coordinate events for community building and fundraising.

We continue to learn more and more about construction and development as our new site draws closer to completion and our July 1 date to take possession. The developers are working hard and making great progress. The road is framed, and pouring of the concrete is scheduled for this week along with preparation of the parking lot and areas to be landscaped. Centerpoint is currently working on rerouting the easement around the pond and getting electricity to the property. We have hired a landscape architect firm to design the master plan for our natural playgrounds and landscaping. It is exciting to see the many Facebook posts on the CTL Parent Council Facebook page and hear the exciting dialogue among parents who are interested in assisting with the building of the natural playgrounds and gardening. We welcome your help! Just as the growth of CTL from inception has been an organic process, the preparation of the grounds at our new location is also organic.

We are sad to see some of our CTL families moving at the end of the school year. We get attached not only to the children but also to the families. We wish you the best, but we will miss you! To those who are continuing this journey with us, we truly appreciate your patience and your continued partnership with us in the education of your children!

*[Linda Ellis and Jennifer Chamberlain](#)*

## Kindergarten



March went by quickly as we prepared for and presented our portfolios, enjoyed spring break, and then returned ready to enjoy the last trimester of the year.

In Reading, we have continued to develop our skills for comprehending text. As we approach the end of the year, the students are really enjoying going from talking about things such as problems and solutions and their connections to the text to recording these to share.

As we did our self-evaluations this month, almost every child said they would like to write poetry before the end of kindergarten. So, in Writing, we have begun looking more closely at the features of poetry and how poets tend to look at everyday things from a different perspective, often referred to as a “poet’s eye.” Some students have begun writing their own poems this month, and next month, we plan to continue to enjoy reading poetry and trying it ourselves.

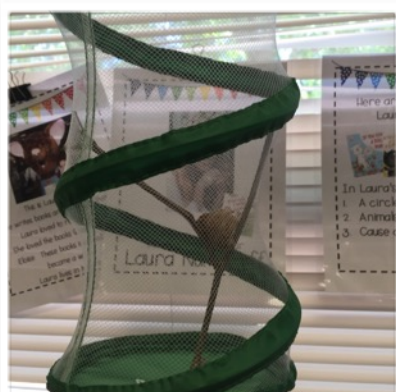
In Math, we have been working on concepts including addition and subtraction strategies and developing strong number sense with numbers beyond 10. One of my favorite activities was developing an understanding of number lines. We really enjoyed heading outside with sidewalk chalk to make giant number lines and then hopping along them to solve number stories. Next month, some of the topics we will work on are revisiting combinations of 10, more work with 3D shapes, and fact fluency.

In Science, we have been studying plants. The children have loved planting seeds to grow radishes and flowers. We tried something I had seen online: planting seeds in an ice cream cone, which can then be planted in the ground, cone and all! FYI, don’t use waffle cone bowls! Our experiment was literally a flop, but you never know unless you try! We are also beginning to discover the life cycles of various animals. We have five painted lady caterpillars in our classroom and expect to see them make their chrysalises very soon. By the end of April, we will be releasing butterflies! We are also so lucky to have Mrs. Kinzel bringing us an incubator and chicken eggs this week. They take 21 days to hatch, so we should have chicks by the end of April too!



In Social Studies, we wrapped up our focus on where we live with a look at some US symbols. We are now learning about how different people live around the world. The overall idea is that people all over the world do similar things, but maybe in different ways. For example, we all communicate, but there are many languages. It is so fun to have different cultures represented by the children in our class. Those whose families are from other countries have been telling us about their languages. We will continue this study into next month. I am really excited for the day that each student is going to bring a food from either their own culture. It will be fun to not just read about differences in foods but try some out as well! Next month we will continue to learn about how people live around the world and then learn about needs and wants. As we discuss needs and wants, we will also learn about jobs. I’m looking forward to having some parents come tell us about the work they do!

The hardest thing about this month was knowing that at the end, we would be saying goodbye to our good friend, Ava. She and her family will be moving back



home to England. We have loved having her in our class, and it won't be the same without her. However, we are excited for her to move closer to family and are looking forward to sharing messages and pictures with her. Thank you to all of the parents who contributed such sweet things to her going away gift! You are amazing!

[Stephanie Phipps](#)

### *Grades 1-2*

The explorers were very busy in the month of March. As we continue to learn about Life Science, the class was excited as we introduced our new science unit on the Praying Mantis. We now have a live egg case that we will observe and explore! The class is anxiously awaiting the hatching of our new friends (which will probably happen in the first week of May). We have also planted sunflower seeds to observe as well. During the month of April the school will be hatching chicks donated by Mrs. Kinzel's farm which will be so much fun!

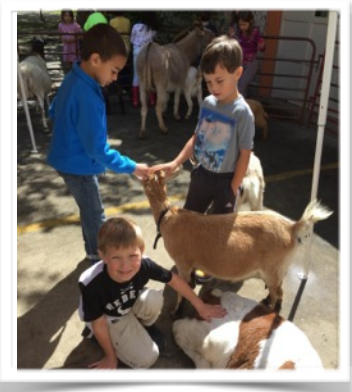
In math the class is working on the fundamentals of division, which includes repeated subtraction, equal groups, arrays and fact families to compare division and multiplication. We will continue to review and practice skills previously taught. Please make sure your child is turning in the math Home Links sent home each week. It really helps to keep their skills sharp! Also, please check out the Prodigy website/app that we have been using. Each of the kids has been given a username and password. The letter was sent home last week. It is a great way to practice math at home and it keeps track of your child's progress so that I can see it at school as well.

The Explorers embarked on a new adventure in reading as they participated in their first Reader's Theater. It is such a great way to help them understand the importance of using expression and voice in their reading. They are looking forward to doing more of it in the coming months. It was so fun to listen to them express their voices and bring the characters to life! As always, please make sure your child is reading every night for at least 20 minutes as this will strengthen their reading skills.

As we get into April, please make sure you check our calendar, as we have many things coming up! We will be going on a field trip to Main Street Theater to see *Harriet the Spy*. We will be traveling by bus to the theater. There are only a few spots left for chaperones. We will have our Open House on April 14th. Also, we will be holding a CTL Family Fun Night April 8th at Northshore Park.

Lastly, please remember to sign up for a secret reader slot as we have many Thursdays left! Remember if you do sign up I will need three written clues about you sent in on the Monday of the week you will be reading. The class really looks forward to this, so if you can volunteer it is greatly appreciated! You can sign up on SignUpGenius.

[Lisa Lipar](#)





### Grades 3-4

March was a time for celebration and rejuvenation! Beside celebrating St. Patrick's Day just before we embarked on Spring Break, we began a new read aloud in our reading workshop. After the suspenseful and intense story of *The Raft*, we enjoyed the slower paced story of *Mister and Me* by Kimberly Willis Holt. Set in 1940 Louisiana, we got a peek into the life



of Jolene Jasmine as her life endured some big changes with the marriage of her sweet, loving momma to the loud but kind Leroy. Because this story was set in the past, we had wonderful discussions about life in the 1940s. As students followed along with Jasmine's mother (a dress maker), we learned about the material velvet and even about a few famous musicians such as Louis Armstrong and Count Basie. In addition to our daily read aloud and routine conferences



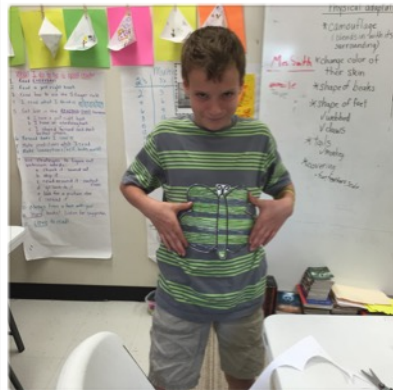
with Mrs. Smith, students also read several reader's theaters. We discussed how reader's theaters are often adapted from published stories and are meant to be heard through the voices of readers with no help from props. Students were so intrigued, they tried their hand at writing their own reader's theater in writing workshop.

In writer's workshop, we continue to write daily and publish almost daily as well. Each day, before students begin writing, they jot down on their writing workshop record sheet what they plan to write that day. Students are becoming efficient at planning exact goals such as, "I plan to write 1 to 2 pages of a rough draft about my Killer Bee story." After reviewing a weekly mini-lesson with Mrs. Smith, students are adept at working their way through the process. At the end of workshop time, students return to their planning sheets to write down what they have accomplished for the day. Our record keeping system has resulted in more students making it through the writing process more often. As you may have noticed from student led conferences, this past trimester, students have almost doubled their published pieces. Because we stick to a daily routine of writing and sharing, students not only love to write, they see themselves as authors. Visit our class website at [www.mssmithismyteacher.com](http://www.mssmithismyteacher.com) to read a few of our published pieces.

In math, we have been busy! To celebrate St. Patrick's Day, we sorted cups of Lucky Charms cereal. Students counted out their marshmallows and sorted them by shape. This was a great time to review fractions and decimals as well as basic operations as adding to find totals and dividing to find percentages. Students continued practicing long division and two digit times two



digit multiplication as well as putting those multiplications skills to work as we moved into measuring area and perimeter of rectangles. We began our unit of measurement with area and perimeter as well as moving into geometry. Students have been learning geometrical terminology that helps them to name polygons. We will continue geometry into April with plane figures and 3D shapes. We will measure area, perimeter, degrees of angles as well as volume of 3D figures. We are currently making a lap book which is basically a file folder folded into thirds. It holds all of our notes about each geometric concept we cover. In addition to measurement, students will continue to review past concepts in all of the skills we have covered throughout the year. And of course Prodigy continues to be students' favorite way to review our daily math skills.



Mrs. Smith keeps the game up to date with our daily skills and if you have signed up for parent access, you are hopefully receiving emails informing you of your child's progress.

In science we have completed numerous experiments. Walking Water was a huge success. We used seven clear cups, filling only a few with water and leaving a few cups empty. We colored outside water cups with blue food coloring and inside cups red and yellow. By connecting the cups with folded paper towels, we watched as over time the water crawled up the towel and over into the empty cups, filling them up with the mixed colors of water. In the end, all of our cups were equal in amounts of water and the color mixed to form a nice rainbow! We related our walking water experiment to our study of life science. Students connected what they knew about water and how water travels with their prior knowledge about animals and their need for water to survive. We also made Blubber Gloves. Students placed their hands into plastic bags filled with vegetable shortening (to represent animal fat) and dunked their hands into ice water. They waited one minute and measured the temperature of their hands. Students were able to draw conclusions about physical adaptations such as blubber and how animals use these for survival.



In social studies, we have been busy making flip books and learning about the history of Texas. Our flip books contained the six flags of Texas. Students were surprised to learn that although they know Six Flags as a theme park, the six flags actual represent six different times in Texas' amazing history. We will continue our study of Texas in April as we learn about the "father of Texas," Stephen F. Austin, as well as the Battle of the Alamo and the battle at San Jacinto.

Melanie Smith

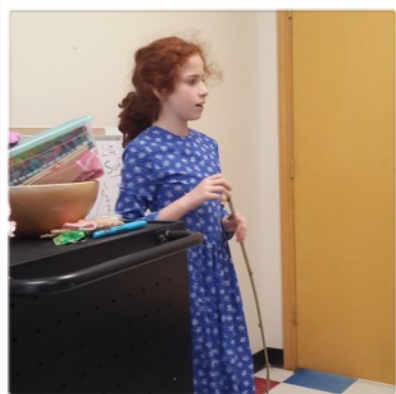
*Grade 5 Language Arts*

March was a busy month! Students spent a great deal of time getting their portfolios ready to be presented to parents. I was impressed by the growth they demonstrated in the presentation of their portfolios. After all of their hard work, students enjoyed a well-deserved break from school. We all returned refreshed and ready to learn! Students voted on a new read aloud and quickly settled back into our reading workshop routine. Many readers gave book talks about novels they enjoyed reading over the break and inspired classmates to add to their "books I want to read" lists.

Several students have continued to work on stories they began writing in the previous trimester. Others came back from spring break with exciting story ideas and quickly set to work recreating events in writing workshop. The focus in writing workshop has been on developing characters. Students looked at the qualities of characters in the books they are reading and noticed how authors show the reader these qualities. They are using these examples to develop characters in their own writing.

*Grades 6-8 Language Arts*

March was a busy month! Students spent a great deal of time getting their portfolios ready to be presented to parents. After all of their hard work, they enjoyed a well-deserved break from school. We all returned refreshed and ready to learn! Students quickly settled back into our reading workshop routine. Some readers gave book talks about novels they enjoyed reading over the break and inspired classmates to read the books. Others have signed up to share books they have recently enjoyed reading. We enjoy learning about new titles!



This month our focus in writing workshop has been on informational writing. Students read and discussed several examples of effective informational pieces. After creating a list of elements found in the examples they read, students began working on their own informational pieces. These pieces will be taken through the writing process and students will complete their final drafts in the next couple of weeks.

### *Grades 6-8 Social Studies*

This month we began studying ancient India. Students researched ancient Hinduism and created scrapbooks to showcase their learning. They are currently learning about the caste system in India. They will be assigned to a social class and will create a persona to match what they have learned about the class they've been assigned to. Students are looking forward to creating skits with their classmates to demonstrate their knowledge of the caste system in ancient India.

*Angela Bailey*

### *Grade 5 Math and Science*

With the term winding down to a close in the middle of March the 5th graders were introduced to the world of Prodigy. I have never seen such enthusiasm and camaraderie. Dates were being made in the afternoons to meet in different worlds; and different levels were being passed at a rapid speed. Thank you to Mrs. Smith for finding this amazing Math game that has sparked this Mathematical frenzy amongst our pupils in 5th Grade and all through CTL.

In science we are working on different types of energy and their sources. Mrs. Masciola, who was in for me last week, did an incredible experiment that demonstrated Potential and Kinetic Energy. The 5th graders LOVED it. Thank you so much. We are busy with exciting research projects on light energy and rainbows. I know they are going to impress me and their peers with the awesome experiments that they have been working on.

### *Grades 6-8 Math and Science*

Although we haven't had much time together in March due to Student-led Conferences and Spring Break our students have been busy at work. The past two weeks we have focussed on individual skills and each student is working in their Connected Math books according to the content area they are wanting to focus on.

We are coming to a close with our Chemistry portion of science. The students were briefly introduced to Acids, Bases, pH levels, chemical reactions and different types of indicators. I am so excited to move onto Physics. Electric circuit boards, electric current, resistors and ammeters will be explored. We have a lot in store this trimester, and I am looking forward to experimenting and being hands on.

### *Grade 5 Social Studies*

Towards the end of trimester 2 the 5th Graders began a trip into old Colonial Williamsburg. We have compared how differently towns looked and worked back then and how influential schools and parishes were.

They have teamed up in groups of three to write plays on six of the most important and/or influential establishments in Colonial Williamsburg:





- \*Dames College and the College of William and Mary
- \*Bruton Parish Church
- \*Raleigh Tavern
- \*Tabacco Plantation and Slave Quarters
- \*Shoemakers shop
- \*Governors Palace

I have been so impressed by the 5th Graders' amazing presentations, and they have each shared interesting information with their classmates.

Chantal Dos Santos

*Grades K-8 Physical Education*

Striking was the motor skill of the month in PE. Grades 3-8 participated in games and activities associated with volleyball. Students learned basic fundamental volleyball skills such as passing, setting and serving. Utilizing the Four-Square-In-The-Air, students had a chance to practice their striking skills while playing a fun recess game. A modified catch and hit game played like traditional volleyball gave the opportunity for grades 5-8 to understand positioning and typical game play. Biggest problem encountered in this unit – losing our balls over the fence, especially during our serving drills!

The younger grades explored all types of striking. Students struck foam balls, balloons, beach balls, bean bags, ping pong balls, soccer balls, tennis balls and basketballs. They used their hands, pool noodles, bats, Frisbees, racquets and paddles. Just about anything they could strike they did, except of course each other (okay, maybe just a little with the pool noodles). Straddle Ball was a favorite game (see the picture) that involved a lot of laughter and eye hand coordination practice!

March was also about mindfulness. I usually try to end PE classes with a few minutes of slow, conscious breathing. The rainy weather presented the opportunity to further explore the breath using a program I discovered in Australia called *Smiling Minds*. I was very impressed at how well all the students did. Funny to think that the hardest skill I ask them to do all year is sit still and breathe. Please check out [www.smilingmind.com.au](http://www.smilingmind.com.au). It is a free program and you can even download the app for easy access.

Quick reminder: Send your child with a water bottle to school on PE days. It is getting hot outside and sending students in to use the drinking fountains disrupts not only PE but also the classes inside.

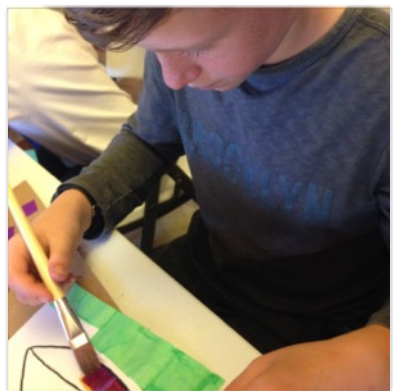
Marci Murphy

*Grades K-8 Art*

March has zipped by and April is already here! During the month of March, students have been exposed to different ways of thinking and different ways of creating art. We have already begun to delve into fashion designing (by way of sneaker designing) to introduce the creative process of artists who work in the fashion industry.

Finding inspiration has been our theme for this month. We have been inspired by the season, holidays, and professional basketball players...just to name a few! Students have commenced on a journey to uncover new opportunities for getting inspiration to expand their thinking and add to their experiences. CTL students are actively “inventing” and creating abstract art based on personally selected themes and individual interpretations.

The table overview is a quick snapshot of what we have accomplished in Art Class for the month of March 2016.







With enthusiastic anticipation, April 2016 will be the month where students will perform more investigative duties and research about artists of their choosing. Students will all have homework assignments that will require them to research and bring in objects to help out their art-making process. More details will be provided via RenWeb, email, and parent letters that will be sent home.

## CTL ART CLASS

<p><b>Artists' Techniques &amp; Art History</b> Mini-Lessons...</p> 	<p><b>The Life &amp; Artistic Style of Zentangle Artist &amp; Author</b> Michael Hall</p> 	<p><b>Art Inspiration</b> Basketball Player Charles "Chuck" Hollis Taylor</p> 
<p><b>A Few of Our Art-Creating &amp; Reflecting Experiences...</b></p> 	<p><b>Creating Cut-Out Bunnies with Watercolor Backgrounds</b></p> 	<p><b>Zentangle Portraits</b> Finishing Touches</p> 
<p><b>Community-Building Empowerment Questions &amp; Discussions</b></p> 	<p><b>Continued Creating Our "All About Me" Books</b></p> 	<p><b>Fashion Collaging</b> "Chuck Taylor" Sneakers</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to Get Inspired to Create Outside of Your Comfort Zone</li> <li>• Getting Inspired from a Variety of Sources</li> <li>• How to Not Compare Your Work with Others (Continued)</li> <li>• How to Celebrate Your Own Creativity (Continued)</li> </ul>		

*Treva McKissic*

### Grades K-8 Music

Thank you to all the parents that came to help us celebrate Music In Our Schools month. I hope you enjoyed it as much as the students and I did. They have been concentrating the past month on playing different instrumental parts together as an ensemble. To that they have been adding singing along with movement and games.

Drums were introduced this past week and, as we move in to April, we will be using the drums more. Grade 3 and up will need to remember to bring their recorder to class every Tuesday since we will be playing them more and belt testing very soon.

We are looking forward to a fun spring!

*Debbie Kinzel*

