



# CTL CORNER

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

## Important Dates

**November 2** - Grades K-4 Field Trip to Sheldon Lake State Park and Environmental Learning Center

**November 3** - Grades 5-8 Field Trip to Sheldon Lake State Park and Environmental Learning Center

**November 5** - Parent Council at 7:00 p.m. at Nigel and Claudia Hutchinson's home

**November 6** - Brother's Pizza Friday Lunch

**November 13** - Chick-fil-A Friday Lunch

**November 13** - Staff Appreciation Lunch hosted by Grade 3

**November 17-19** - Student-led Conferences (Early Dismissal at 12:00 p.m.)

**November 20** - Thanksgiving Feast from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. and Tomball Parade Float Assembly at Mrs. Kinzel's home after school

**November 21** - 50th Annual Tomball Holiday Parade (Location/Time TBD)

**November 23-27** - Thanksgiving Break (No School)

## 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).

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

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



## Thank You CTL Family!

As we leave October behind and enter into the Holiday Season, we are grateful for you—our CTL parents—for the support you have provided and continue to provide to CTL and our CTL Family. Thank you for your generous offerings of resources and time to make the learning environment fun and enriching for your children. They are making memories that will last a lifetime.



The CTL Halloween Carnival was a huge success thanks to you! The rain didn't dampen our spirits as we moved into backup mode. Who knew we could fit so many people into our small space, but we all had such fun. Thank you!

We are also excited about our fun field trips this week to Sheldon Lake State Park and Environmental Learning Center and the

upcoming events this month including the Thanksgiving Feast and 50th Annual Tomball Holiday Parade, as well as our first trimester's culminating activities with our first trimester Enrichment Club Showcase (which will be presented to the parents through a video this trimester) and our first trimester Student-led Conferences. CTL students are excited to share their learning with you!

Morning meetings continue to start our days at CTL with the positive. Although each CTL team member has participated in leading our morning meetings, some of our most exciting morning meetings during October were those that we celebrated during Red Ribbon Week. We had fun dressing the part while learning the importance of saying no to drugs and





pledging to be drug free. We dressed in red to kick off red ribbon week and *rally against drugs*. We dressed like our favorite super heroes to *overpower* drugs, wore our sunglasses to *shade out* drugs, *put drugs to sleep* in our pajamas, and *scared drugs away* with our Halloween costumes. It was an awesome Red Ribbon week that made our morning meetings extra special.

We were also fortunate to have visits throughout the month from special guests. One Friday each month the CTL team is honored to learn with Dr. Joyce Armstrong Carroll, Co-director of Abydos Learning International. In October Dr. Carroll treated us to a special writing across the curriculum session and reminded us of the work of giants, Drs. Jerome Bruner and Janet Emig. At CTL writing is not confined to the language arts classroom but happens throughout the school day because we realize that *writing is a mode of learning*. This month also, under Dr. Carroll's tutelage, the kindergarten and 1/2 students became researchers, using specimens and t-charts to identify the differences between insects and spiders. Through stories, poems, songs, making spider cookies, talking, questioning, and sharing, CTL students engaged in the love of learning with Dr. Carroll. Thank you Dr. Carroll for making learning come to life!

We are also thrilled to host Lori Williams, Dr. Andrea Foster's Sam Houston State University methods student who is completing her math, science, and social studies field experiences this semester at CTL. Lori is implementing a Project Based Learning (PBL) unit in which K-4 students are investigating the physical environment in which fish live. To kick off the unit, she introduced K-2 students to Gyotaku, a traditional Japanese method of painting fish that dates back to the mid-1800s. Through producing their own Gyotaku art, CTL students studied the structure of a fish and made fish prints they will label to reference the different parts of a fish. Stay tuned for more exciting, interactive lessons from Lori throughout this PBL unit. Thank you Lori and Dr. Foster for bringing math and science lessons to CTL.

We have a lot to be thankful for this Thanksgiving. Even though our relocation at the last minute was a challenge, it has not dampened the spirit at CTL. It will make us even more thankful when we move into our new building on Kuykendahl Road before the end of the year.

Thanks to all of you for helping us to *ignite and grow a love of learning in every child*. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving week with family!

*Linda Ellis and Jennifer Chamberlain*

## *Kindergarten*

October has been a fun month in kindergarten. Many of the Investigators have decided it is one of their favorite months of the year!

In Reading Workshop we have been learning about story elements. We have been working at understanding characters, determining setting, and understanding plot. Understanding these features of text help us make connections to the stories we read, recall more details, and improve our comprehension of what we read. We had our first author study on Mo Willems. We have fallen in love with his hilarious characters!

In Writing Workshop we have been learning how to focus on small moments in our writing and add details to our words and pictures. We have been working on skills such as using sight words, stretching unknown words, using punctuation, putting spaces between words, and capitalizing the first letter of a sentence. Several students were inspired in our pigeon study to write their own books about a favorite Mo Willems character, Pigeon. We also have several







kindergartners who have decided to start writing poetry. It's fun to see them use techniques they are seeing in books in their own writing.

In math we have been working on many topics including number stories, graphing, and attributes of shapes. Our favorite activities were definitely those involved in our pumpkin exploration. We made lots of predictions and measurements including the height, weight, and circumference of our pumpkin. We also practiced counting by 10s as we counted how many seeds it had. We were surprised to see that such a large pumpkin would

actually float in water. Finally, we voted on a design and a name as we turned our pumpkin into a jack-o-lantern, and she became *Scarylocks!*

In science we began October with a study of soil. We enjoyed bringing soil samples from home and comparing them with each other and with soil we found at school. We learned about the types of soil, things you find in soil, and uses of soil. We then looked at properties of water, where water is found, and uses of water. We ended the month by beginning our study of weather. We are so excited to be building tools to help us observe and record the weather. We will continue this project into November.

In social studies we began the month with a study of families. We learned about similarities and differences in families. We discussed our own families and enjoyed sharing activities we like to do with our families and family traditions. We also learned about getting along with others as we discussed why we have rules at school and home. We learned about the importance of being good listeners, taking turns, and making good choices. Next month we will be learning about friendship and making friends.

This month we will spend a significant amount of time preparing for our first portfolio previews, looking back at the work we've done so far and selecting pieces that represent our learning. We will reflect on what we have accomplished so far in kindergarten and think about what we want to achieve in the coming months. I'm looking forward to sharing these with you before Thanksgiving Break!

*Stephanie Phipps*

### *Grades 1-2*

This has been a fun month! The class has had many exciting activities.

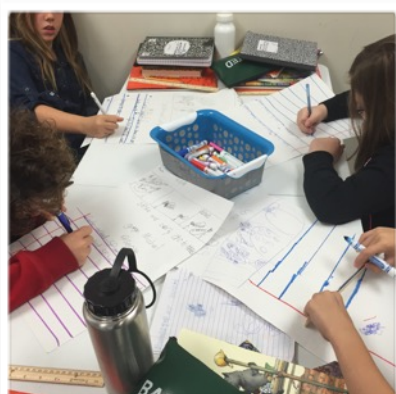
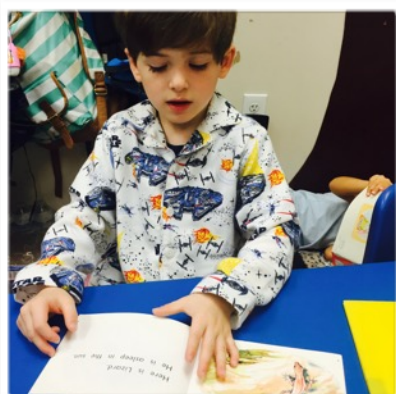
We had fun with our rock and mineral unit in science. The class explored weight, size, texture and shape of rocks and minerals. They also studied the many uses of rocks and minerals in our environment. It was interesting to see that many students knew granite was already in their homes and used on their kitchen counter tops.

The class was busy creating maps in social studies. Our class followed a map which took us on a treasure hunt. This helped the students explore using their cardinal directions and a compass.

We are busy with our weekly author studies in Reading Workshop and creating our mini books in Writer's Workshop. In reading we have studied Robert Munsch, Mo Willems, and Judy Schachner. From our author studies some students were able to model their minibuses after the authors.

We are continuing to build our math skills. The class enjoyed our pumpkin





explorations for math and science. We measured the circumference, height and weight of our pumpkins. We also counted all of the seeds inside the pumpkin. It was interesting to see the correlation between the number of seeds inside the pumpkin in relation to the ribs on the outside of the pumpkin. The material we will be learning in math will become more challenging in the following months.

Our Halloween Carnival was so much fun! We really appreciated all of our parent support.

Lisa Lipar

### Grades 3-4

October proved to be a fun and exciting month for the Discovators.

In Reading Workshop students are continuing to read their books of choice. Many students have discovered their love for graphic novels. *Amulet* has been a popular graphic novel series that many students have enjoyed sharing with one another as well as *Diary of the Wimpy Kid*, *Dork Diaries*, and *Big Nate*. Thank you to the many students and parents who have donated books to our classroom library. We have enjoyed an influx of new books to explore and share.

In Writing Workshop we chose a piece of writing that told a personal story and took that piece through the entire writing process. We learned to work within a group to revise our writing as well as take our writing through the editing process to final publication. Besides personal narratives, students have enjoyed reading and writing poetry. We have practiced using figurative language within our poems as well as playing around with rhyming schemes and rhythm to make our poems come alive for the reader.



In math we have expanded our knowledge of decimals by reading and writing to the thousandths place. We've added, subtracted and turned decimals into fractions and percentages. With fun size bags of Skittles we counted, sorted, and determined the amount of candy within the bag by using decimals, fractions and percentages. Learning math with manipulatives has been the name of the game this past month. We've used Play-Doh to represent fractions, magnetic bars to practice comparing fractions, yarn to measure out meters with the metric system, and tons of Halloween pictures and puffy marshmallows to measure with centimeters.

In science we have studied the phases of the moon. To help us remember and understand the phases, we have made finger fortune tellers and moon cycle spinners and have watched several interesting moon phase videos. We've discovered our favorite video is by StoryBots called *Time to Shine*. We have also discovered the importance of the relationship between the moon and earth and how the moon creates our high and low tides.

In social studies we have learned about several iconic landforms and landmarks in the United States. We've been exploring the history and location of The Statue of Liberty, Mount Rushmore, The Grand Canyon, and The Willis Tower, formerly know as Sears Tower. It has been interesting to see how many students have visited many of these locations on family vacations. Besides getting our bearings on where in the United States these famous places are located, we have





been using map scales to measure the distance from our community to these places.

In the next few weeks we will go back through a large collection of our work and decide which products we would like to place in our portfolios. I look forward to students leading parents through conferences and having the opportunity to show just how much they have learned since the beginning of the year.

Melanie Smith

### Grade 5 Language Arts



Reading and writing have taken off in the classroom! Students are engaged in their books in reading workshop and enjoy discussing them during conferences. Many have shared their favorite books through book talks and have inspired classmates to add titles to their *Books I Want to Read* lists. The daily read aloud of *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare gives us a chance to discuss story elements and author's craft in a genre that is new to most students. It's impressive to

listen to the depth of thought contributed by fifth graders during these discussions. Students have had many great mentor authors to study and learn from as they've read several books since the start of school.

For their first publication, each writer has chosen a personal narrative to revise and publish using tools learned through their reading as well as through mini-lessons and individual conferences—tools used by published authors to appeal to the senses and strengthen verbs, leads, conclusions, titles, and paragraphs. These published pieces will be added to student portfolios to be shared with parents during Portfolio Preview scheduled in November.

### Grades 6-8 Language Arts

Reading and writing have taken off in the classroom! Students are engaged in their books during Reading Workshop and enjoy discussing them in conferences. Many have shared their favorite books through book talks and have inspired classmates to add titles to their *Books I Want to Read* lists. The daily read aloud, of *Ship Breaker* by Paolo Bacigalupi gives us a chance to discuss story elements and author's craft. Great class discussions have taken place as students have had differing opinions relating to character development and plot. They're becoming more critical readers and are stretching each other to think with more depth. Students have had many great mentor authors to study and learn from as they've read many books since the start of school.

For their first publication, each writer has chosen a personal narrative to revise and publish using tools learned through their reading as well as through mini-lessons and individual conferences—tools used by published authors to appeal to the senses and strengthen verbs, leads, conclusions, titles, and paragraphs. These published pieces will be added to student portfolios to be shared with parents during Portfolio Preview scheduled in November.

### Grades 6-8 Social Studies

Students have learned about the physical and cultural development of early hominid groups. They've analyzed various groups and explored how cultural adaptations gave later hominid groups advantages over earlier





ones. Students worked with their *clan* to research one hominid group, determining where they lived and the group's physical and cultural adaptations and analyzing how the capabilities of their group helped them survive. A favorite part of the project was inventing a means of communication for the group. These languages were creative! Each *clan* presented their project to the class. Students had a great time with the project.

Angela Bailey

### Grade 5 Math and Science

Fifth graders have transitioned to new concepts in math and science. Be sure to look for their rubrics from both the stock market unit and earth-moon relationship demonstrations. Also, remind students to bring home their interactive notebooks for each subject on a weekly basis so they can share with you all of the things they are learning.

In math we have started looking at bivariate data and how to plot it on a coordinate grid. This unit started with a smooth transition from the stock market unit as we used the graphed data from the individual stock performances to start. We have also done a couple of experiments and investigations and will be doing more experiments and investigations in the coming weeks. This is so we can create data and then practice graphing it using pre-algebra concepts. For example, students will become fluent in determining and writing basic one-step additive and multiplicative functions for  $x$  and  $y$  on quadrant one of the coordinate grid.

In science we are still discovering earth science and have transitioned from the moon-earth relationship (lunar cycle and tides) to stratigraphic superposition (ask your student what this means). In the coming weeks we will be drawing and diagramming different layers of the earth's crust to both expose and correct misconceptions related to this concept. We will also be doing a lab investigation that consists of creating fictitious core samples of sediment layers and describing how each layer formed from the previous layer.

### Grade 6-8 Math and Science

Sixth through eighth graders have transitioned to new concepts in math and science. Be sure to look for their notebooks from both the previous *Connected Math* workbook and their rubrics from the earth-moon relationship demonstrations. Also, remind students to bring home their interactive notebooks for each subject on a weekly basis so they can share with you all of the things they are learning.

In math we have started a unit on geometry with a fun and challenging tangram activity that really had the students thinking. This whole-class activity served as a springboard into our separate *Connected Math* books since it reinforced and reviewed several foundational geometry concepts for 6th through 8th grade. We will continue working in our *Connected Math* books for geometry concepts as well as in small groups by grade level for the next few weeks.

In science we are still discovering earth science and have transitioned from the moon-earth relationship (lunar cycle and tides) to stratigraphic superposition (ask your student what this means). Next, we will be drawing and diagramming different layers of the earth's crust to both expose and correct misconceptions related to this concept. We will also be doing a lab investigation creating fictitious core samples of sediment layers and describing how each layer formed from the previous layer.

### Grade 5 Social Studies

In social studies we are reading and watching videos about English settlements and all of the hardships and implications related to their founding. We recently





finished the *Social Studies Alive!* online lessons in their interactive notebooks for European exploration. We only recently started studying English settlements and are already knee-deep in a project (in school only and no additional materials from home required) where the students are creating a Public Service Announcement concerning what they determined to be the biggest problem facing new settlements and settlers in the Americas.

#### Caleb Cannon

### *Grades K-8 Physical Education*

In K-2 we started the month finishing our foundation and ended it sailing to the ceiling with a parachute. Students learned the five components of fitness: aerobic capacity, muscle strength, muscle endurance, flexibility and body composition. Completing a circuit with both fitness and funny activities (like equipment pile up), they practiced exercises such as curl-ups, push-ups, and planks. An increase in heart rate was observed as we played running games such as *Builders and Dozers* and *Pizza Tag*. We will continue with fitness component activities throughout the year.

Parachute work was all about teamwork. We had to work together if we were going to have fun. Although we weren't without a few frustrating moments, students performed awesomely. By the end they were pros at making high domes, low domes, and of course their favorite, *The Clubhouse!* Students switched color panels with their classmates by running around or under the parachute. Grades 1 and 2 even switched between parachutes as they were moving. There were games of *Popcorn*, *Superhero Cape*, *Sharks*, and *Fly in the Web*. I was impressed at how they all came together. We will need to remember that as we begin our next unit on *Chasing and Fleeing*.

To further explore the components of fitness with the older students in 3rd-8th grade, I introduced choice fitness stations. Using what they learned from the fitness testing or general interests, students had a choice of six stations: upper-body muscle fitness, lower body muscle fitness, core muscle fitness, balance/flexibility, cardiovascular conditioning, and dynamic coordination (catch all station that included sports skills like agility and coordination or any dynamic exercise like *Jumping Jacks*). We have begun to discuss goal setting at each of these stations so the students can monitor their progress. Station activities will vary throughout the year.

Fitness stations last for about two minutes, and I aim for three to four station breaks each class. The other time is spent with a game or working on a specific sports skill. This past month the game was *Pin Guarding* and all its variations. Whether individually, with a partner, or as a team, *Pin Guarding* required strategy, running, agility, throwing, and blocking skills. Since they had to do five *Jumping Jacks* every time their pin fell, it also gave their hearts a little workout. We ended the month with some cooperative games. As the year continues this ability to work together, listen, be positive, and be patient with one another will make for a more enjoyable PE class.

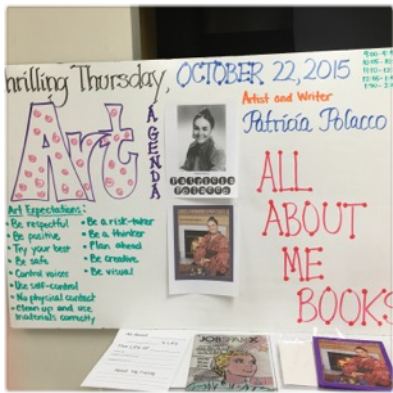
#### Marci Murphy

### *Grades K-8 Art*

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your support in donating spectacular art materials for our CTL students! Your donations have made our students eager and excited to create innovative art pieces and try new things. Thank you all for your help!

The table overview is a quick snapshot of what we have accomplished in art class for the month of October 2015.

During the month of November, CTL students will begin to excavate more about who they are as artists, thinkers, and creators by way of publishing their

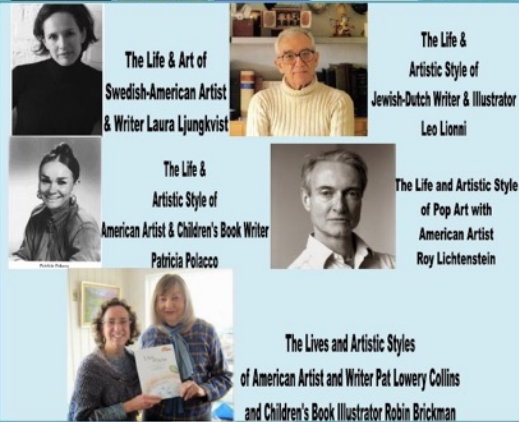


# ART CLASS

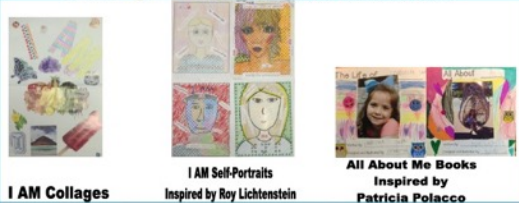
## Read-Aloud Books We Have Experienced...



## Art History & Artist Techniques Mini-Lessons...



## A Few of Our Art-Creating Experiences...



## Community-Building, Empowerment Questions and Topics We Have Discussed...

- What mindset should you have as you work on your art?
- What should you be thinking and telling yourself while working on your art?
- Why is it important to plan out what you will draw and what colors you will use?
- How can making a mini, quick sketch before you begin your self-portrait help you?
- What are my biggest take-aways from learning about other artists' styles and techniques for creating art?
- What does my art style and my art say about me?

own books. Not only will they become authors, they will be the designers and illustrators of their creations as well. CTL students will continue to be exposed to inspirational art history mini-lessons about artists from around the world that will spark their curiosities and promote them to think in new ways. Remember to continue to ask your child what artist/writer/illustrator have they learned about for the week.

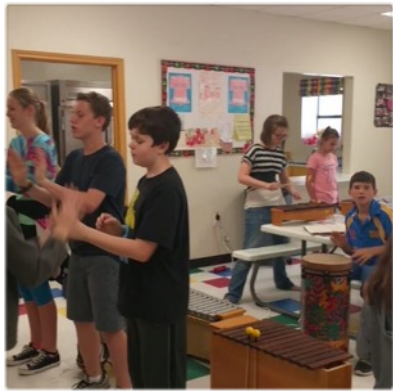
If you have any ideas or questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at [tmckissic@centerforteachingandlearning.com](mailto:tmckissic@centerforteachingandlearning.com).

Treva McKisic

## Grades K-8 Music

We are busy in all our music classes working on beat and rhythm. The K-2 students accompany singing with a steady beat chord on the bar instruments. In addition to keeping the steady beat on the bass xylophones, in the 3-8 classes we have been adding two to three additional parts on the other barred instruments. All the grades had fun with our Halloween songs as well as adding rhythm instruments for sound effects in Halloween stories. Our movement/





dance too this month has been to fun songs like *Ghostbusters* and *Monster Mash*. It is fun to watch the students become more comfortable with their moving week after week.

There are several important activities approaching that I encourage everyone to take part in. The CTL Music Department is going to head up our school entry for the 50th Annual Tomball Holiday Parade to be held on Saturday, November 21, 2015. The parade's theme this year is *Fifty Golden Years of Holiday Spirit*. We have a trailer for the float and plan to assemble it at my home on Friday, November 20 after school. My home address is 24519 Rolling Meadow Dr., Tomball. I am still in need of a committee chair willing to organize parents and come up with an idea for the float to complement the parade's theme and to coordinate the decorations and parent volunteers. All students are encouraged to participate in the parade. I have been doing the Tomball Holiday Parade for many years, and it's always great fun. If you would like to help out in any capacity, please email me at [dkinzel@centerforteachingandlearning.com](mailto:dkinzel@centerforteachingandlearning.com)

If your child will participate, please fill out and return the form they brought home last week. The parade time commitment on that Saturday morning is 7:30 to about noon. We will fine tune the time frame after we are given our parade slot number. Let's have a great show of holiday spirit from CTL!

The CTL Christmas Program will be Wednesday evening, December 9. All students were given a CD last week with songs we will be singing in the program. Please have them listen to the CD so they are familiar with the songs as we begin rehearsing next week. With our class time limited, it is important they practice outside of class. I am excited for you to see and hear what these students can do.

[Debbie Kinzel](#)

### *Kuykendahl Property Update*

Lone Star College has now completed the driveway that will provide access to our property. Our developers, civil engineers, surveyors, and attorneys have worked tirelessly over the last several months, and our surveyor and civil engineer supplied the final drawing last week. Lone Star now realizes there is not enough room for a second easement to co-exist with their driveway. The entrance from Lone Star's driveway to our property will move from the east end of the driveway to the west end. Lone Star has agreed to enter into a written agreement with us to be submitted to Harris County for final permitting hopefully this week. Our land prep crew is now back on the property to complete final preparations for the arrival of the building, a process that should be complete by the end of next week. The building is ready and waiting to be delivered once the preparations are completed. It will take about three weeks to get the modular ready for move in once it is on the property. If all goes as expected, we are looking at about another month before the building is ready for move in. A safe estimate for our move will be over the Christmas holidays, perhaps sooner.

Thank you for your patience. You have been wonderful throughout this unexpected delay!

[Linda Ellis and Jennifer Chamberlain](#)

### *Parent Council*

Happy November, CTL Parents! This is the first month that Parent Council has had its own space in the monthly newsletter, and we hope you find it informative and helpful in keeping up with all the activities that we coordinate for our students. Parent Council at CTL is a unique and wonderful opportunity for all our parents to plan and contribute to our children's experiences at school. Our primary purpose is to show our children, through our actions, that their



education is something we value, appreciate, and want to play a part in.

Before we look forward to our plans to celebrate the beginning of the holiday season, we want to give a HUGE thank you to our generous Halloween Carnival Sponsors: Abydos Learning, Emergy Group, Inc. and the Bracchini Family, Mary Latona, REALTOR, North Freeway Hyundai and the Peebles Family, Fabric N' More and the Reddy Family.

We also want to thank the Halloween Carnival Committee for all their planning and hard work: Reina Bozeman, Diana Chavez, Elizabeth Hutchinson, Becky Masciola, Regina Puckett, Kallie Rees, Laurie Robertson, Marcy Schustereder, Michelle Volpi, and Cecille Wright. And, of course, many thanks to all the student and parent volunteers who pitched in and made this a fun event for everyone.

November is a busy month at CTL! It's the end of our first trimester with student-led conferences, lots of fun activities for the holidays, and our monthly Parent Council meeting. November's Parent Council meeting is in the evening, Thursday, November 5th at 7:00pm. The meeting location is Claudia and Nigel Hutchinson's home, 6903 Pennwell Dr., Spring TX 77389.

The Teacher Appreciation Luncheon is on Friday, November 13th. This month's lunch will be hosted by the third grade class, so third grade parents be on the look-out for a Signup Genius from your room parents with all the details. Thanksgiving Holiday Feast is on Friday, November 20th, 12:00- 1:00 p.m. You will receive details as we get closer to the date.

The Tomball Holiday Parade on Saturday, November 21st, 7:30 a.m. This is being organized by our music teacher, Mrs. Kinzel, and we'd love to have all the students participate. We'll also need parents to volunteer to help with decorating our float the day before the parade. Hopefully you received the information and volunteer forms sent home last week in your child's take home folders. If not, please let us know so we can get it to you as soon as possible.

We hope this section of the newsletter is one more way to ensure we are communicating Parent Council's plans with all our families. Feel free to speak up if we've forgotten something. We want everyone to feel a part of the CTL family.

Happy November!

*Marcy Schustereder, Aimee Shupe, and Claudia Williams*



*Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all the others.*

Marcus Tullius Cicero