



CTL CORNER

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

Important Dates

Friday, December 4

Parent Council at 12:00 p.m.

Brother's Pizza Friday Lunch

Wednesday, December 9

Holiday Music Program Dress Rehearsal from 4:00-5:30 p.m.

Holiday Music Program at 6:00 p.m. at Congregation Beth Shalom of The Woodlands at 5125 Shadowbend Place, The Woodlands, TX 77381

Friday, December 11

Chick-fil-A Friday Lunch

Polar Express Day and Scholastic's Great Bedtime Story Pajama Drive items due

Interfaith of The Woodlands Toy Drive items due

Holiday Treasure Shoppe

December 17

Class Holiday Parties at 2:00 p.m.

Friday, December 18 - Monday, January 4

Winter 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.

*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.



Happy Holidays CTL Family!

November was filled with fun and excitement as CTL students brought the first trimester to a close by eagerly compiling their portfolios to share with their parents in their student-led conferences. Thanks to you, our CTL families, for participating in this important celebration of learning. They began this second trimester, fresh from Thanksgiving Break, even more excited, anticipating what they would produce for the next round of portfolios.

Reflecting is the most important part of the learning process. Without it the portfolio would become simply a collection of student work without purpose. By reflecting on their work, students engage in metacognitive thinking and begin to develop a working knowledge of who they are as learners. You will see them continue to grow as readers, writers, historians, mathematicians, scientists, musicians, artists, and fitness enthusiasts as they reflect on their learning throughout the second trimester and anticipate goals for the future. As we are reminded by two of our mentors:

Students are in a constant state of self-assessment as they consider where they've been, who they are, where they might go next, what they don't understand yet, and what they need to know.

-Nancie Atwell





When we start to ask for our students' evaluations, they often surprise us, and we realize how far we might have gone astray without their insights. Their thoughts beget adjustments in our teaching and then we have to ask them, again, what they think. They evaluate. We revise what we do, and, eventually, we find ourselves in a teaching situation that can't exist without the frequent evaluations of students. We thirst for their insights.

-Jane Hansen

And this is what the Center for Teaching & Learning proudly stands for -- teaching and learning that feeds our vision to ignite and grow a love of learning in every child. Thank you for trusting us and your children in this process!

December is also filled with an abundance of learning opportunities, activities, and service opportunities, like the Scholastic Pajama and Book Drive sponsored by Ms. Phipps and the kindergarten class and the Interfaith Toy Drive sponsored by Ms. Lipar and the first/second grade class, that teach students to have compassion for others. We look forward to the many events planned by our CTL team and parents during the month of December.

Thank you for your support! Have a wonderful holiday season with family and friends.

[Linda Ellis and Jennifer Chamberlain](#)

Kindergarten

November went by quickly as we put together our portfolios and reflected on our learning so far this year. I am proud of my kindergartners and the work they have done. We have so much fun together, but in the process of doing portfolios, we saw just how much we have grown.

In reading we continued to think about story elements in the texts we read together. We also learned about visualizing. Good readers are able to create a picture in their imagination of what is happening in a story. This helps them better comprehend and remember what they have read. We enjoyed practicing visualizing by reading some Jack Prelutsky poems and then drawing what we had "seen." It was fun to compare our drawings and see how our visualizations were similar and different. We had our second author study on Robert Munsch, my favorite author! We enjoyed his use of repetition and onomatopoeia, and some of the students are even implementing some of his style into their own writing! In December we will compare and contrast story elements in different versions of *The Gingerbread Man* and read lots of holiday stories. We will also begin an author study of Jan Brett.

In writing we have been thinking of different types of books we can write. Many students have been writing personal narratives since the beginning of the year and are now interested in trying something different. Some of them have now experimented with writing poetry and songs, books with a pattern, or books about a concept such as colors. When we returned from Thanksgiving break, some of the students brought up "all about" books and "how to" books, so we will explore the features of those types of writing in the coming weeks.

In math we have been working on addition, the concepts of greater than and less than, and attributes of shapes. In December we will work on concepts to composing and decomposing numbers, writing and recognizing numbers beyond 10, and measuring weight and capacity.

In science we planted some of our pumpkin seeds and recorded the changes we





saw as they grew. We have also been studying weather. We really enjoyed going outside and using tools (some that we even made ourselves!) to measure changes in the weather. We also learned about the seasons, the cycle they follow, and things that typically happen in each season. Next month we will be learning about objects in the sky and the cycle of day and night.

In social studies we completed our unit about friendship and making friends. Some of the skills we worked on were introducing ourselves, inviting someone to play, and using kind words and actions. We also learned about the history of Thanksgiving and traditions associated with the holiday. Next month we will be learning about strategies to solve problems, how to be a good helper at school, and Christmas traditions.

Thank you for your support of our classroom and our learning! From helping your children at home to Mystery Readers and much more, you are a fabulous group of parents. I am so THANKFUL for you and your children!

Stephanie Phipps

Grades 1-2



The month of November flew by! The Explorers had many exciting activities this month. They enjoyed their first field trip to Sheldon Lake State Park. They explored nature and its many wonders. Some of us even saw baby alligators!

In science the Explorers learned about the water cycle in our environment and how to distinguish between predators and prey. We worked with minerals in science and looked up the many uses of minerals in our everyday lives. The class also finished the study of rocks. We will move on to study water on earth.

In math the Explorers learned about rounding numbers to the nearest ten and hundred. They worked on telling time to the half hour, measuring in inches and centimeters, as well as using paper clips to determine length.

In social studies they really enjoyed learning about the Pilgrims, their voyage to the new world, and the first Thanksgiving. Our school Thanksgiving feast was such a fun time for the class. Thank you to all of the parents and grandparents who helped with this event.

We were busy filling our portfolios with all of our hard work. The portfolio presentations were a huge success! The Explorers did a wonderful job presenting the material. It was such a learning experience for them to reflect on their work over the past few months.

We are looking forward to a great finish to the year as we celebrate all of our accomplishments so far. The Explorer class will be heading up the Interfaith Toy Drive as a school-wide event to give back to our community. Please think about donating a new unwrapped toy for this event. We will have many fun holiday activities, so make sure to look for upcoming dates in our *CTL Corner* newsletter.

Lisa Lipar





Grades 3-4

November was a month of deep reflection for the Discovators. In preparing portfolios for student-led conferences, writing reflections and self evaluations proved to be challenging and called for the students to not just remember activities, but to also analyze and synthesize their learning. I was proud of each student as they reflected on their learning and set goals for what they want to learn in this next trimester.

In Reading Workshop students are getting serious about their books of choice. Writing self evaluations and reviewing *Reading Logs* helped students see the pattern in the types of books they have been choosing to read. As a community of readers, students are sharing and recommending book series and favorite authors with one another. This has helped many students explore books they may never have chosen before. Rick Riordan has surfaced as a popular author along with Chris Colfer with his series, *The Land of Stories*. For our most recent read alouds, Pam Munoz Ryan captured our hearts and imaginations with *Esperanza Rising* and *Riding Freedom*. We will finish out December with Lynda Mullay Hunt's heart warming story, *One for the Murphy's*.



In Writing Workshop we are continuing with poetry. Making large 3D origami snowflakes along with learning about Wilson Bentley's obsession with photographing snowflakes helped us to write imaginative poems about snow, snowflakes, and crystal formations. We are letting our imaginations run wild as we write fictional stories to accompany our paper plate snow globes with pictures of ourselves "stuck" inside the

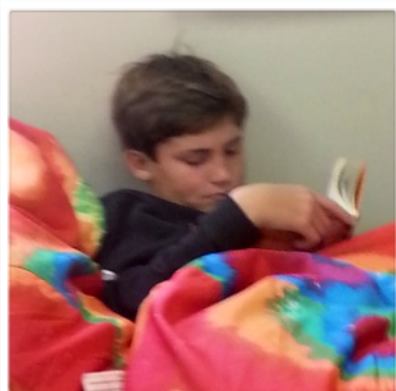
globe. As always, we spend time free writing about topics of our own choosing, but in December we will practice researching a topic of our choice and writing expository essays with documentation.

In math, as we wrap up our study of decimals and place value, we are moving into multiplication. Some students will be starting from the beginning with the concept of multiplication, learning how it is the same as repeated addition and practicing manipulating arrays. Other students are ready to review their facts and begin to use their knowledge of multiplication to solve problems. As we all become proficient with our facts, we will explore the communicative property of multiplication and begin to practice algebraic expressions. We will also continue reviewing our addition and subtraction skills, with an emphasis on regrouping across zeros. This trimester our focus will be on all of the operations so we can move into problem solving using all of our skills.

The month of December and the change in cooler weather will be a perfect time for us to continue our study of earth science. We have been reading about Wilson Bentley and viewing his amazing photographs of snow flakes. We will continue to learn how ice plays a role in land forms. Along with studying glaciers and the land forms located at both of Earth's poles, we will also build upon what we know about the sun-moon-earth relationship to understand how seasons work. In social studies we will continue to learn about our community in relationship to its location within the United States. We are learning which states make up the regions of our United States along with being able to locate states and their capitals.

Melanie Smith





Grades 5 Language Arts

November was a busy month in the language arts classroom. Students published their memoirs, created and presented a book project on their favorite book of the trimester, and worked diligently compiling representations of their learning to be included in their portfolios. The dedication and thought put forth by students was impressive!



Now that we are back to our familiar workshop routines this week, students will review their individual reading goals for the trimester and develop a plan for meeting these goals in reading and writing. We will discuss how we develop and grow as readers using the psycholinguistic model of reading which will inspire additional reading goals. Students will engage in "reader's roundtable" discussions about story elements and the organization of different types of novels. We will continue our read aloud of *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare through which reading strategies and story elements will be taught.

In writing workshop students will begin to explore poetry. Through the critical reading of poems, students will discover examples of good writing and will learn about theme, voice, audience, organization and specificity. Students are excited about writing poetry! This trimester we are beginning our spelling program. Students will be responsible for learning five words from their individual spelling lists each week. Look for the lists to come home on Tuesdays.

Grades 6-8 Language Arts



In November students published their second piece of writing, created and presented a book project on their favorite book of the trimester, and worked diligently compiling representations of their learning to be included in their portfolios. The dedication and thought put forth by students was impressive!

Now that we are back to our familiar workshop routines, students will review their individual reading goals for the trimester and will develop a plan for meeting these goals in reading and writing. We will discuss how we develop and grow as readers using the psycholinguistic model of reading which will inspire additional reading goals. Students will engage in "reader's roundtable" discussions about story elements and the organization of different types of novels. We will continue our read aloud of *Ship Breaker* by Paolo Bacigalupi through which reading strategies and story elements will be taught.

In writing workshop students will learn about text structures in expository writing. We were excited to have Dr. Joyce Carroll visit our class to introduce this type of writing. This trimester we are beginning our spelling program. Students will be responsible for learning five words from their individual spelling lists each week. Look for the lists to come home on Tuesdays.

Grades 6-8 Social Studies

Students enjoyed learning about the different hominid groups and the lives of hunters and gatherers. We have moved into the agricultural revolution. We will learn about geographic challenges leading to the rise of Sumerian city-states. Students will determine characteristics that lead historians to classify a society as a civilization and will create a version of their own civilization.

Angela Bailey



Grade 5 Math and Science

November was a busy month! We spent a large portion of this month preparing for our student-led conferences.

In math we continued our study of linear equations. The students observed two different walking rates and recorded the data on an X and Y chart. They then graphed the data and discussed how and why the lines were different. Students also worked together in collaborative groups to find patterns in the perimeter of different shapes and determine how to write that pattern as an equation. As each group was working they were able to write and draw on table sized white boards. The collaborative groups were then given a problem to solve using the equation.



Students learned about the layers of the earth by researching the topic and then writing and drawing a representation of their learning on a small square piece of paper. The squares were taped together to create a "quilt" of learning. We have started a unit on the process of skills of science by observing how to pull an egg into a bottle. Students developed their own ideas to explain the results of

the experiment and are currently researching those ideas to see if they are supported by science.

Your students will be bringing their science and math journals home on a regular basis. If they find something interesting relating to math or science please have them add the information to their journal.

Grade 6-8 Math and Science

Students have still continued their study of geometry by working in their *Connected Math* books. Students will continue working together in small collaborative groups during math. The groups will each spend time working at different classroom stations to learn and master new math skills and strategies.

Students learned about the layers of the earth by researching the topic and then writing and drawing a representation of their learning on a small square piece of paper. We had many different perspectives about the layers of the earth. We discussed everything from



magnetic fields to what materials make up the earth's core. After a large group discussion, the squares were then taped together to create a "quilt" of learning. We have started a unit on the process of skills of science by observing how to pull an egg into a bottle. Students developed their own ideas to explain the results of the experiment and are currently researching those ideas to see if they are supported by science.



Grade 5 Social Studies

In social studies we started a unit on the geographic regions of the United States. Students are working in collaborative groups to become experts in one of five different regions. Students will develop a proposal to convince a hypothetical person to move to their region and present their proposal to the class.

Lori Williams

Grades K-8 Physical Education

Hoops and bean bags and scarves, oh my! November was all about manipulatives in Grades K-2. Students demonstrated skills such as throwing, catching, rolling, balancing and spinning. They even learned how to boomerang a hoop! We have excellent hula "hoopers" at CTL, and I am impressed how everyone tries their best.

We also used our manipulatives in two games – *Clean My Backyard* and *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*. Students had lots of fun throwing bean bags in and out of a "cloud" or just out of their "yard." My favorite part of class however was the warm-up. Nothing like a little Chicken Dance to get the heart pumping and the fun started. We'll revisit this warm-up during our Dance Unit later in the New Year.

Jump roping was the November activity for Grades 3-8. Students learned and practiced a variety of both individual and partner skills. Many challenges were presented but once again, I am impressed by the attitude. Students didn't give up, and it was a nice exercise on how practice can make perfect (or somewhat close to perfect)! Although we have moved on to our Flying Disc Unit, our warm-up will continue to be the jump rope as students create group routines. Performance date still to be determined. I will make sure to post videos.

Of course Grades 3-8 continued their fitness work. Our stations this month included V-sits, toe raises and calf stretches. Crab and bear walking also were practiced as a way to work multiple parts of the body at one time. Student are definitely getting fitter. As busy as we were, there was also time for some games of *Secret Agent*. One of my favorites, as it is meant to be played silently!

As a reminder, please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for PE. Sneakers, coats and maybe even a hat! Although the weather is turning colder, we will still be going outside unless it is raining. Thank you in advance and as always, please contact me with any questions.

Marci Murphy

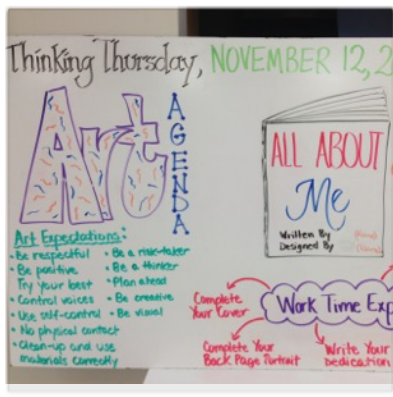
Grades K-8 Art

November has been a fantastically exciting month of the following activities: METACOGNITION, where students were engaged in thinking about their thinking; REFLECTION, in which students studied themselves and their learning throughout the first trimester; and REVIEW, where students were able to see how far they've come in their development as young artists. They are so proud and excited about the art they have created and how much they have learned during Trimester 1. As we continue to journey forward, we will continue to cultivate a classroom where students will question, research, create, and try out new techniques and art mediums.

The table overview is a quick snapshot of what we have accomplished in Art Class for the month of November 2015.

During the month of December, CTL students will continue to work on publishing their own books about themselves. They will also have the opportunity to create art that reflects their interests in celebration of the










winter season. 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.

Students in grades 6–8 will be able to sign up to teach “CTL Young Artist Mini-Lessons” during art class, with guidance from Mrs. McKissic. During student-led mini-lessons, students will be able to share a favorite art technique or skill with the class and provide their peers with real-time modeling skills. More details to come.

All students in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 will be participating in Artists’ Investigations during Trimester 2, where students will be able to research an artist of their choice to discover more about their childhood and lives as artists. More details to come.

Remember to continue to ask your child what artist/writer/illustrator they have learned about for the week. Looking forward to the journey ahead!

ART CLASS

Read-Aloud Books We Have Experienced...	
Art History & Artist Techniques Mini-Lessons...	 <p>Continued... The Life & Artistic Style of American Artist & Children's Book Writer Patricia Polacco</p>
A Few of Our Art-Creating Experiences...	  
Community-Building, Empowerment Questions and Topics We Have Discussed...	<p>Artist Self-Reflections Inspired By Our CTL Learning Experiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What mindset should you have as you work on your self-reflections? • What are my strengths as an artist and art creator? • What should you be thinking and telling yourself while working on your art? • 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? <p>We Continued Creating Our "All About Me" Books Inspired by Patricia Polacco</p>

Treva McKissic

Grades K-8 Music



The CTL Music Department sponsored the school's entry in the Tomball Holiday Parade on November 21st. This was a special event because it was the parade's 50th anniversary. We had a great time building the float and making the CTL sign. CTL staff and parents worked painting, cutting and stapling while students had a fun time at the Kinzel Farm with the animals, zip-line and making s'mores. Our slogan was *Ring Those Bells, CTL!* We endured a downpour in the early morning of the parade, but at parade time the rain stayed away and everyone had a great time representing the school. Thanks to everyone who worked on the float and



participated in the parade.

We are working hard in our music classes preparing for our Holiday Music Program. We are excited to share it with you next Wednesday evening, December 9 at 6:00 p.m. at Congregation Beth Shalom of The Woodlands at 5125 Shadowbend Place, The Woodlands, TX 77381. All CTL students must arrive at 4:00 p.m. for a closed dress rehearsal before the program. They will need this time to practice the program on the stage as a whole group. Snacks and drinks will be provided for your children, or, if they prefer, they may bring their own snack and/or drink. Parents are welcome to begin seating for the program at 5:30 p.m. All students must wear jeans, a holiday shirt/sweater or a solid holiday colored shirt/sweater, and a santa hat. If you do not have a santa hat, I have extras. All grades 3-8 students must also bring their Recorder. We hope to see you all there!

Debbie Kinzel

Parent Council

Happy Holidays CTL Parents! We have just a couple of things to tell you this month. First, we want to make sure you all know that Parent Council now has it's own private Facebook page created by Shona Wells. We hope this is a convenient way for us to share information and create a memory timeline of our children's year. Feel welcome to join and contribute; the page name is CTL Parent Council.

Next, we'd like to thank all the students and parents who have supported CTL by contributing to the holiday toy drive, the pajama drive, and the Holiday Treasure Shoppe. We also want to thank everyone for participating in the Parent Council events and fundraisers; so far we have made \$1,520 to spend on future student activities. You have given so generously, and it makes us all proud to be part of such a wonderful group of families.

Marcy Schustereder and Claudia Williams

