



# CTL CORNER

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

## Important Dates

- September 1** - First Day of School
- September 4** - Brothers Pizza Friday Lunch
- September 7** - Labor Day (No School)
- September 11** - Quiznos Friday Lunch
- September 14** - Grades K-4 Parent Orientation from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. & Parent Council from 7:00 - 7:30 p.m.
- September 15** - Grades 5-8 Parent Orientation from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. & Parent Council from 7:00 - 7:30 p.m.
- September 18** - Chick-fil-A Friday Lunch
- September 25** - El Chaparro Friday Lunch

## 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.
- \*Please visit our website and click on "Team" to learn more about our CTL team members.
- \*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.



## Welcome Back to CTL!

What an amazing week at CTL! Thanks to you and your children for your flexibility and positive attitudes in the midst of the temporary location changes.

The primary focus our first week at CTL was to get to know your children, to establish routines and expectations, and to create a positive learning community. Students have settled in, and our CTL family has jelled quickly. Thank you for sending us such amazing kids who are happy, positive, respectful, flexible, and just all-around great kids!

We feel thankful that *Caring Hearts of Faith* opened their doors for us with such short notice and provided us with a temporary home while our developers and attorneys are





working with Lone Star College System attorneys and Harris County to resolve the permit issue. The communication with Lone Star College System is positive as we work out access, utility, and drainage easements. We're in our final round of comments from Harris County concerning development permitting. Once that's approved, we can finalize site preparation and schedule arrival of the building. Thank you for your patience as we work through this final permit stage. We will keep you posted as we near our move to our Kuykendahl location.

We look forward to an exciting school year with you and your children. Please follow us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/CTL.TheWoodlands> for frequent updates and photos.

*Linda Ellis and Jennifer Chamberlain*

### *Kindergarten*

The kindergartners have had a great start to school! In fact, last Friday I had some friends who were very sad that they wouldn't be coming to CTL the next day! Having such a small group has really allowed everyone more time to contribute to our group conversations, which means we have the opportunity to get to know everyone better!

We took a vote the first week and decided that we are going to call our class the Investigators. That name is perfect for kindergarten as we will be investigating so many concepts this year! These first two weeks we've spent a lot of time getting to know each other and getting to know the rules and routines of CTL. We have already started Reading Workshop and Writing Workshop. I am especially proud of the books they are writing! It is amazing how quickly they are picking up strategies and ideas to use in their writing. In math, we have been discussing the calendar, weather, and numbers. We have also been exploring some of the manipulatives we will be using throughout the year. In science, we are learning about our five senses. We are learning that we can use our five senses to make scientific observations just like real scientists. In social studies, we are learning about how we are similar and different and how those things make us special, unique people.



During the month of September, we will continue to develop the routines of Reading and Writing Workshop. We have started with shorter reading and writing times, but we will be building up our stamina, so we can stay engaged in reading and writing for longer periods of time. While I have begun informal assessments of the class, we will complete formal reading assessments in the coming weeks as well. We will then be able to start guided reading groups, where each child can receive more individualized reading instruction. In math, many of our activities will be focused on number sense and counting. As I assess what students already know in

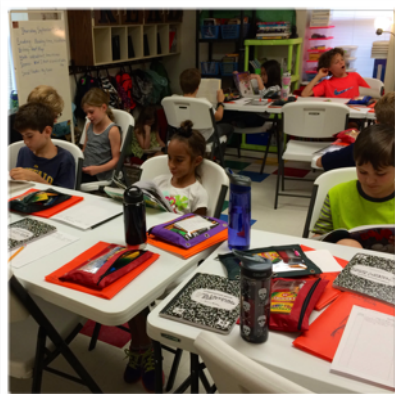
these areas, I will be able to differentiate more and offer activities that are more individualized. In science, we will continue to learn about the five senses and will then begin our semester-long focus on earth science. In social studies, we will continue learning about ourselves and our friends.

*Stephanie Phipps*

### *Grades 1-2*

I have to start by saying how impressed I am with this group of children! They are wonderful! All of them have smiles on their faces and are full of questions





for me every day. I love it! They are also great listeners and very respectful.

We have been working on procedures and practices in the classroom as well as the school. The kids created an agreement on our expectations for our school and our classroom. We also created our class job chart to offer them a sense of community. They helped to choose the jobs they felt were necessary for an efficient classroom! We have also voted on a name for our classroom, and we decided to continue being known as the Explorers!



We reviewed our W.I.L.D. binders that are an essential part of our classroom communication. PLEASE make sure you look through them and read the contents as they are a wonderful resource. All notes, money, finished work, and home projects and Home Links (math practice) will be sent home in the folder within the binder. Make sure you check it each day so you don't miss anything. These need to come to school every day. The first week was a great introduction to our schedules and school-wide/classroom procedures. This past week we began with our regular routine. Our day includes Reading Workshop, Writing Workshop, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Science. We will also begin Passion Projects each Friday (this was presented to the kids the first week). We have also reviewed Council and what it looks like in our classroom. The kids really look forward to that special time for sharing and reflecting every Friday.

It was so nice to meet so many of you at our meet and greet at the beginning of school. I feel we are going to have a great year! Thank you so much for all of your support. We appreciate all you do!

Lisa Lipar

### *Grades 3-4*

Wow! We've had an awesome start to our school year in 3rd and 4th grade. Besides getting to know one another, we quickly focused on the expectations of class. The students discussed what they felt were the most important qualities of a successful classroom. Together we made a large chart displaying our agreed upon expectations along with voting on our class name - The Discovators!

We have spent time becoming familiar with classroom procedures. Students began checking out books from the classroom library using our index card system along with setting up our orange "Take Home" folders. This orange folder is to be taken home and brought back on a daily basis. Inside students will have homework for the week or any special forms or announcements that I may have for you. The folder is also a place for you to send notes, money, or forms back to school. Besides the orange "Take Home" folder coming home in the backpack on a daily basis, students started bringing home a planner. If you'd like to see what we did in each subject on a daily basis, you will be able to glance at your child's planner.



Day one we began our class read aloud novel, *Wonder*, by R.J. Palacio. The students love hearing this heart-warming story about the importance of choosing above all else to be kind to one another. Along with the read aloud, students have been choosing their books of choice from our classroom library. I have also introduced to them my favorite children's author/illustrator, Mo



Willems! We've enjoyed learning about Mr. Willems' start in the world of publishing along with laughing out loud while reading several of his books. Many students stated they own some of Mr. Willems books. Although I have many of his books, I don't have them all, so I encourage students to bring in their copies of his books, and we can read them together.

In math, science, and social studies we have prepared our journals for each subject. For math, we've worked in groups solving a variety of problems involving the review of time, multiplication, and even money. Students enjoyed pairing up to play a fun game called "Race to the Top" which allowed students to not only review addition skills, but encouraged them to be strategic thinkers so they could win the game. In science, we've discussed our personal interest in the areas of the world of science along with drawing pictures of what we each think a scientist looks like. Next time you are in our room, be on the lookout for awesome portraits of scientists hanging proudly on our walls. We've started off our social studies by talking about our own homes and where we are in the world. It seems our class is made up of quite a variety of backgrounds with students being from all over the United States and multiple other countries!

It's going to be an outstanding year in the Discovantors class! I'm excited to be your child's teacher and look forward to discovering with them what our future holds.

*Melanie Smith*

### *Grade 5-8 Language Arts*

I have enjoyed getting to know our students this week and look forward to the unique perspectives each child will bring to class through discussion, book talks, and stories in writing workshop. This week we focused on classroom procedures and setting up reading-writing notebooks and folders. Students began checking out books from the class library and enjoyed curling up in a bean bag to read.



This month in Reading Workshop, we will look at a variety of genres and learn how to identify them. I will begin our first read aloud book of the year, which will offer opportunities to teach students important elements of fiction writing. Students will learn how to give book talks, rate the books they read, decide when to abandon books, and understand the importance of reading daily.

Writing Workshop will begin with opportunities to explore writing topics that matter to each student. As they find topics that matter to them, they will begin drafting their first stories for publication. Through mini

lessons and individual conferences, students will learn writing conventions and will begin using an individual proofreading list to assist them when editing their own drafts.

Students will be keeping a "Thought Journal" this year. I have asked them to take the journal home each day and to be sure to bring it to school every day. The journal is a place for them to record thoughts and ideas that can be used as inspiration in Writing Workshop. I also ask that students read for a minimum of thirty minutes each evening.

### *Grades 6-8 Social Studies*

This year in social studies, we will be studying Ancient History. In the month of





September, students will explore the geographic region, early hominids, and how the development of agriculture contributed to the rise of civilization.

I'm looking forward to a great year! If you have any questions or concerns, please email me.

*Angela Bailey*

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

I have been so happy to meet and start to get to know your children. I am the type that generally likes to get to know my students better within the scope of the lessons we complete together. This is why I am excited to get started with our introductory units in math and science.

In 5th grade math, we will be starting our stock market unit. This unit encompasses so many math concepts including, but not limited to, fraction and decimal equivalencies and conversions, operations with fractions and decimals, graphing, predicting patterns and outcomes, and financial literacy. This is all in addition to the fun they will be having as they buy and sell fictitious stocks in an effort to build their fortune in assets plus money in the bank. Periodically throughout the unit, I will ask that students bring their math journals home so they can share their progress with you and explain what they are learning.

In 5th grade science, we are starting our study of Earth and Space Science concepts by investigating and recreating examples of external forces and how they shape the Earth. We will be completing labs and experiments where students will see how weathering, erosion, and deposition happen firsthand. Periodically throughout the unit, I will ask that students bring their science journals home so they can share their progress with you and explain what they are learning.

In 6th-8th grade math, we will be starting our monopoly unit. This unit encompasses so many math concepts including, but not limited to, fraction-decimal-percent equivalencies and conversions, operations with fraction-decimal-percent, use of percent functions and algorithms, graphing, predicting patterns and outcomes, and financial literacy. This is all in addition to the fun they will be having as they buy and sell percents of companies on the Monopoly board to collect penalties and avoid pitfalls like financial audits and taxes. A winner will be declared at the end based upon whose investment company is the most successful financially. Periodically throughout the unit, I will ask that students bring their math journals home so they can share their progress with you and explain what they are learning.

In 6th-8th grade science, we are starting our study of Earth and Space Science concepts by investigating and recreating models of how the sun affects temperature, day/night, and the seasons on Earth. Periodically throughout the unit, I will ask that students bring their science journals home so they can share their progress with you and explain what they are learning. One thing to be aware of with this class is that even though we will start every unit of study as a whole class investigation, they will be put in groups according to their developmental/grade level when its time for individual research of the topic and assessments.

### *Grade 5 Social Studies*

In conjunction with landforms and how they were shaped on our Earth, we are starting off the year in Social Studies by reviewing map skills and identifying these major landforms on a variety of maps.





A cool development from our first week was that our 5th grade homeroom chose the class name, "Prodigies." This choice excites me because I am confident we will all live up to the moniker.

Caleb Cannon

### *Grades K-8 Art*



The 2015-2016 school year has begun with excitement and enthusiasm! Our theme for art this year is "Quest for Creativity". CTL students are about to embark upon an artistic quest to discover more about their individual uniqueness and their inner creativity.

Our first week in art class was incredible! I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know your students and them getting to know me. For the month of September, we will focus on investigating the elements of art, the principles of art, and we will make self-portraits in fresh and engaging ways.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or ideas via email at [tmckissic@centerforteachingandlearning.com](mailto:tmckissic@centerforteachingandlearning.com).

Treva McKissic

### *Grades K-8 Physical Education*

Thank you so much for sharing your children with me! I enjoyed meeting each one of them and vow to get all of their names correct when we meet next week.

Only one day of PE the last two weeks but much was accomplished. Classes discussed rules and expectations. We played a variation of "freeze dance," learning how to stop our activity and listen for directions when the music stops. Then we added hoops, jump ropes, and bean bags to the mix and learned the "one touch rule."

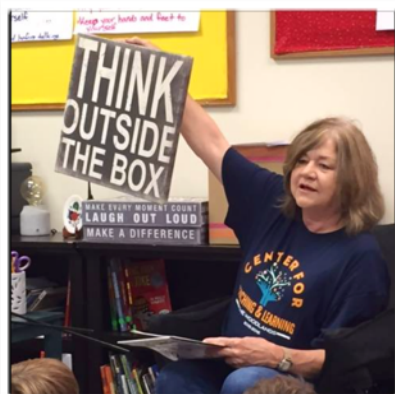
Grades K and 1-2 played games with spot markers, always returning to their "home" and being aware of their personal space. Grades 3-4 and 5 learned "Captain's Coming," reinforcing listening skills and cooperation. Houdini Hoops and Survival Island presented team building challenges to grades 6-8. I was impressed by how all the classes followed directions and worked together.

Lastly we met my PE mascot RICK. RICK stands for Respect, Integrity, Consideration, and Kindness. This term we will emphasize consideration and kindness, finding ways to demonstrate these character traits in PE and throughout our day.

For the rest of the month, we continue to familiarize ourselves with PE expectations. Spatial awareness, directional terms, and locomotor skills are the focus in the younger grades, and cooperation and an introduction into fitness for the older classes. Please remember to have your child wear sneakers on Mondays and Wednesdays and bring a labeled water bottle. It is still hot out there and hydration is key!

Marci Murphy





### *Grades K-8 Music*

I am so thrilled to be working with your children at CTL this year. We jumped right in this week working on rhythm reading, solfeggi singing, and instrument playing. I hope the kids were excited by the sound they were able to produce as an ensemble. I look forward to music class each week as we continue to build on our lessons. Look for an announcement soon about our holiday music program!

*Debbie Kinzel*



### *Morning Meetings at CTL*

Every morning at CTL we begin our day with the morning meeting. During this time, one of the staff members delivers a message of encouragement. In the first week of school, our wonderful president, Dr. Linda Ellis, not only reminded us of our vision at CTL, but she also helped students to remember that we ENCOURAGE students to be outside of the box thinkers! Our outstanding principal, Mrs. Jennifer Chamberlain, led our morning meetings in our second week. Principal Chamberlain reminded students of "New Beginnings: Let's Start Fresh & New" through introductions, expectations, her open door policy, and a few life (and science) lessons with the help of Kid President - You are here. You take up space. You matter! During morning meetings we also say the pledge, have celebrations (including birthdays), share a weekly theme/message, and sing our CTL song. It is a wonderful way to start our day!



### *Fridays at CTL*

#### *Reading/Writing Buddies*

Each Friday during our morning snack recess time, we have Reading/Writing Buddies. Each young student is grouped with older students. During this time, students not only enjoy their snacks and get to know one another, older students read to the younger students. As the younger students become more successful in reading, they will often choose to read to the older students as well. Reading/Writing Buddies is a wonderful way to build literacy and personal bonds between our CTL students.

#### *Passion Projects*

In our first weeks of school, teachers have helped guide students to explore their individual passions. As the trimester progresses, students will be given time on Fridays to continue exploration and discover how best to make their passions come to life.

#### *Enrichment Clubs*

Fridays are a blast as CTL students enjoy participating in self-selected enrichment clubs for the trimester. These first weeks of school we have brainstormed, voted on, and signed up for the clubs we would like to participate in this trimester.

#### *Council*

Each Friday, students end their week with Council in their homeroom classrooms. Council is a time for students to practice listening to their peers as well as learning to speak from their own hearts. Building connections between students and creating a safe learning environment are key components of our weekly Council meetings.