



## A Reflection of Past Accomplishments...

by Nicole Levitan, LME Enrichment Coordinator

Welcome to another fabulous year of learning at Laurel Mountain Elementary! I am very excited about all the enrichment opportunities for your children during the 2009-10 school year.

Let's take a moment to reflect on last year's many successes and amazing accomplishments from our students, teachers, parents and community members:

**Enrichment Cluster Showcases.** A significant accomplishment last year was the Enrichment Cluster Showcases. All students participated in a showcase which highlighted products and services created during the six or eight weeks of enrichment clusters. The showcases were enjoyed by many parents, community members, RRISD staff and even a RRISD School Board member.

**Independent Investigative Method (IIM).** In August 2008, all LME teachers were trained in the Independent Investigative Method (IIM) method of research. Our goal was to use IIM within the regular classroom curriculum, and we accomplished this goal across every grade level:

- The kindergarten classes had a whole class IIM unit on butterflies.
- Our 1st grade classes participated in a whole class IIM on winter animals; every 1st grade class researched a different winter animal and created different products.
- In 2nd grade, some classes did an IIM on penguins, while others did an IIM focused on a famous historical people. Both were done in small groups within the classroom. Later in the school year, 2nd graders completed an IIM where each child researched a different animal of their choice.
- The 3rd graders did an IIM on spiders or pigs during their Charlotte's Web unit.
- At the beginning of the school year, the 4th graders did an IIM on Native Americans—each class researched a different tribe and created museum displays for the hallway.
- The 5th graders did individual IIM projects based on their interests and topics studied in class.

**Renzulli Learning System (RLS).** Our teachers continued to utilize the Renzulli Learning System (RLS) in the regular classrooms throughout the last school year. Many used the Renzulli profile to guide product choices for IIM; students and teachers used the RLS as a research tool for IIM. Several teachers created and assigned class projects and assigned Wizard Projects to students throughout the school year. I was very excited to provide three different training sessions in May for our parents on the Renzulli Learning System and how to utilize it over the summer.

**Parent and Community Involvement.** We increased our parent and community involvement with enrichment clusters and E-slot including more than 73 outside presenters for enrichment clusters and E-slot! Of those, 35 were parents or RRISD staff, 18 were CVMS, WWHS or UT students and 20 were volunteers from our local community.

**Service Learning and Philanthropy.** As a campus, we put a focus on service learning and philanthropy. This became a natural part of enrichment clusters, E-slot activities and classroom activities. We have many wonderful examples of our students doing for others:

- The *Quilting* enrichment cluster donated 27 blankets to the Linus Connection, whose mission is to provide a handmade security blanket to every child in a crisis or at-risk situation in Central Texas.
- Four different *Libraries of Love* enrichment clusters which were in charge of planning and executing the 2nd Annual Libraries of Love Read-a-thon. This remarkable event raised \$5,860.56 for Libraries of Love and got our entire school reading more—a noteworthy 59,573 minutes!
- The 4th/5th grade *Solar Car* enrichment cluster raised and donated \$30 to the Dell Children's Foundation.

### PARENT UNIVERSITY

Mark your calendar for two upcoming Parent University classes—SEM Overview and Enrichment Clusters and E-slot—hosted by Nicole Levitan, our LME Enrichment Coordinator. She will be available to answer any questions about SEM, enrichment or the Excellence Fund. Mrs. Levitan is looking forward to meeting with our school's parents and discussing the exciting enrichment that takes place every day at LME. Please RSVP to [Nicole\\_Levitan@roundrockisd.org](mailto:Nicole_Levitan@roundrockisd.org) if you plan to attend any of the classes. Be sure to include your name and the date(s) you will be attending.

- ✓ **SEM Overview: What is SEM? What does it entail? What does it do for my child?** Tuesday, September 15 from 11-12 noon in portable 1.
- ✓ **Enrichment Clusters and E-slot: What are these? What is the difference? How can I help as a parent?** Tuesday, September 29 from 11-12 noon in portable 1.

- The *Art from the Heart* enrichment cluster created a banner for Texas soldiers in Iraq and made Halloween bags for a local nursing home. The soldiers were so impressed and excited that they sent back a banner of their own to say “thank you” to the students.
- The 4th/5th grade *Kitchen Chemistry* enrichment cluster sold “Dry Ice - Ice Cream” after Marathon Kids and donated \$78 to St. Jude’s Hospital.
- We were awarded two RRISD Service Learning Grants: Mrs. Rhonda Hieronymus received a \$500 grant to create a Butterfly Garden with her 2nd/3rd *Flutter Friends* enrichment cluster and class. Mr. Bill Earley also received a \$500 grant, which his class and the 4th/5th grade *Animal Home Builders* enrichment cluster used to create a Chimney Swift Tower.
- We were very lucky to have several 5th grade students serve as assistant facilitators in 2nd/3rd and K/1st enrichment clusters.
- Our 4th grade teachers arranged for several local non-profit organizations to present during E-slot about how they help the Austin community: CARITAS, Meals on Wheels, Any Baby Can, and the Capital Area Food Bank. From these presentations, the students created Valentines for Kids with 94.5 and made valentines for Meals on Wheels clients.
- Fifteen of our 4th/5th graders participated in We Flap. Started by a former Laurel Mountain parent, We Flap is a social non-profit aimed at creating a vibrant online community to enable individuals to engage with and assist various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) across the world.
- Mrs. Hendrix’s kindergarten class collected pet supplies for the Hurricane Ike animal survivors.
- At Halloween, our 3rd graders collected over \$700 for UNICEF during trick-or-treating.
- Ms. Henegar’s 4th grade class created spring decorations for a local nursing home.
- During the month of April, Mrs. Myrick’s 5th grade class organized and executed the Food for the Foodless food drive for a local food pantry and collected an amazing 1,353 pounds of food to donate. In May, the students went to the local food pantry to sort and shelve the food once the food drive was complete.

**Visitors and Specials Guests.** We enjoyed several very special visitors this past year who wanted to check out the enrichment action taking place at Laurel Mountain. We were honored to have Dr. Joseph Renzulli and associates visit Laurel Mountain on October 20. He met and spoke with LME students, staff and parents and members of RRISD administration. The principal and several teachers from RRISD’s Great Oaks Elementary visited LME during 4th/5th E-slot and the Enrichment Cluster Showcase. Teachers from The John Cooper School in The Woodlands, TX came to look at enrichment in action.

## KICKING OFF THE 2009/10 EXCELLENCE FUND CAMPAIGN

# Pathway to Excellence: Keeping Our Children a Step Ahead

by Nicole Levitan, LME Enrichment Coordinator

In order to provide monetary support to implement the Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) at Laurel Mountain, the leadership team has set up a fund through Round Rock ISD. To fully implement SEM, we have set a goal of \$75,000 for the 2009/2010 school year. The monies raised for the SEM campaign fund a full-time Enrichment Coordinator, Renzulli Learning System annual site license, on-going staff development, and resource materials, such as technology equipment, consumable supplies, and field trips. Only with the support of our parents and community can we make the SEM educational experience a reality. Last year 70% of our LME families financially supported the SEM Excellence Fund. This year our goal is 100% participation, and we hope to raise the \$75,000 required to keep the program going at Laurel Mountain.

The Excellence Fund Campaign kicks off Tuesday, September 8 and continues through Friday, September 25. Of course, donations are accepted at any time of the year. Please refer to the Excellence Fund brochure and envelope (sent home in last week’s Monday) folder which provides more detailed information about SEM at Laurel Mountain. More information is also on our updated website, <http://www.lmesem.org>.

## Thank You to our Family and Community Enrichment Supporters

**Larry Barnett**, Round Rock ISD Video Services and 2009/2010 SEM Video Editor Extraordinaire

**Anne Webster**, Laurel Mountain parent and 2009/10 SEM Video Producer and 2009/10 SEM brochure creator

**Elizabeth Barrett**, Laurel Mountain parent and 2009/10 SEM Video Writer and Producer

**Eric Deal**, Laurel Mountain parent and SEM Web Master

**Lindy Buckley**, Laurel Mountain parent and 2009/10 SEM Newsletter Editor and Publisher

**Ingrid and Jeffrey Moulckers**, Laurel Mountain parent and student and Longhorn Garden summer helper

**Juli and Matthew Powell**, Laurel Mountain parent and student and Longhorn Garden summer helper

**Garrett Mott**, Former Laurel Mountain student and Longhorn Garden summer helper

**Claire and Freddie Kirk**, Laurel Mountain parent and student and Longhorn Garden summer helper