



# UPDATE

**Schoolwide Enrichment Model 2007-2008**

May 26, 2008

## Here's to a Successful Year of Enrichment!

By Nicole Levitan, Enrichment Coordinator

As the school year comes to an end, I would like to reflect on our Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) successes we had this year. One huge change and improvement was having an enrichment time, or E-slot, built in to our weekly schedule. On Friday afternoons from 1:30-2:30, the entire school participated in some sort of enrichment activity. This ranged from grade level enrichment clusters, e-slot electives and individual classroom enrichment activities. This year we were able to execute 49 different enrichment clusters and 24 enrichment coordinator-planned E-slot electives. Of course, throughout the year the enrichment excitement spread as several grade levels independently decided to plan their own E-slot electives or mini-clusters.

Four different enrichment clusters were able to take field trips relating to their cluster topic. The field trips provided hands-on experiences about the topic children were learning about in clusters. Beyond field trips, we provided real-life experiences during enrichment clusters and E-slot by bringing about 35 different community members and/or businesses to talk to groups of students. Please refer to the "thank you" section of this newsletter to see a full list of those who shared their knowledge and expertise with our students.

Another improvement this year was utilizing the Renzulli Learning System (RLS) within all classrooms at Laurel Mountain. Every student—kindergarten

through fifth grade, completed a learning profile on RLS. Along with the profiles, each student has a Total Talent Portfolio (TTP), where individual enrichment information is kept and filed for a child's entire school career at Laurel Mountain. Teachers used RLS as a resource and tool not only during the e-slot, but were able to incorporate it in their everyday learning and teaching. Even kindergarteners were logging on to RLS in the computer lab and looking at sites that dealt with the curriculum being taught within the classroom. Teachers were able to not only provide enrichment, but were able to extend the normal activities in class using RLS.

The Schoolwide Enrichment Model would be possible at Laurel Mountain without the support and backing of our parents. Parents supported SEM by meeting our fundraising goal with the Excellence Fund Campaign. Beyond these generous donations, 24 different parents gave their time, talent or resources to support enrichment clusters or e-slot activities this school year. It was wonderful to see parents getting involved with SEM in some way and making it a true community effort to support enrichment learning and teaching for all of our students. Please refer to the "thank you" section of this newsletter to see a full list of parents who shared their time, talent and resources with our students.

Finally, another big success this year was the Enrichment Showcase that took place after the PTA meeting on April 22, 2008. It was a time when students shared with parents their hard work and enrichment accomplishments from this school year. TAG students grades second through fifth participated, along with students who completed Lightbulb projects (Individual Research Projects) with Mrs. Levitan. We also has student representatives from the Quilting Clusters, the Marine Mammal Biologist

elective, the Outdoor Preserve elective, the Read-a-thon elective, the Reusable Bag elective, the Renzulli Learning System elective and the Hollywood Movie Company cluster.

Walking around the mini-gym that night, you could feel the excitement from the children and see how impressed the parents were by all that the students learned and accomplished. Of course, improvements will be made next year, but it was a wonderful start for our first time.

So, here is to a wonderful year of enrichment at Laurel Mountain. There are so many endeavors for our staff, student and parents to be proud of. Looking ahead, we have new goals for next year. But for a moment, I think we should sit back and relish in our successes and be proud of all that we accomplished this year.

## Reflections on a Year of Enrichment from LME Students

My mini-cluster was about animals. In this cluster we chose groups and picked an animal group to write some of the things that are the same and different. It was very fun. Another thing we did in our cluster was pet some reptiles. A few fifth graders came and brought snakes and lizards. The 5<sup>th</sup> graders told us about reptiles. While they were telling us about snakes and lizards, we got to pet some snakes. It was a once in a lifetime event! So, if you like animals, you would probably like the animal cluster.

*Ishani P, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade*

The kids at LME, the author included, have been enjoying their enrichment immensely! We choose a topic that peaks our interests and then do activities that help us learn about that subject. These activities take place for an hour on Fridays. Sometimes different grade levels participate in the different enrichment

clusters together, and sometimes each individual grade level will do them alone.

There are many different enrichment clusters. Sports, cooking and photography are just a few. We willed out a form that tells the teachers what cluster we would most enjoy. You do not have to have specific 'qualifications' to be in your cluster of choice. Although you may not get your first choice, you are guaranteed to be enriched with a cluster of fun!

*Madalyn M, 4<sup>th</sup> grade*

My experience in the Marine Mammal Biologist enrichment cluster was fantastic. I got to choose a sea animal that I was interested in and study about it. Then, I shared the information in any way that I wanted, from presentations to posters and maybe even cards. But most of all, I want you to know that whenever you have a chance of this cluster, you should pick it!

*Seema I, 4<sup>th</sup> grade*

# Thank You...

By Nicole Levitan, Enrichment Coordinator

*Thank You...* to all of the parents who gave their time, talent and resources to support SEM at Laurel Mountain:

Kathy Aylor, Mindy Booknis, Ellie Brady, Lindy Buckley, Monica Cosby, Doug Cosby, Monica Deal, Eric Deal, Yulia Demkov, Angela Ebert, Elizabeth Gunz, Tricia Hoover, Dave Jernigan, Janis Kidd, Ren MacNary, Ilker Ozsaracoglu, Usha Rayapati, The Richburgs, Lori Snider, Sara Solomon, Junko Takeuchi, Becca Wassmuth, Anne Webster and MaryAnn Zeitz

*Thank You...* to all of the parents who donated to the Excellence Fund Campaign:

Refer to the Schoolwide Enrichment Model website to view all of our fabulous donors at [www.lmesem.org/donors.php](http://www.lmesem.org/donors.php).

*Thank You...* to all of the community members and/or businesses who shared their knowledge and expertise with our students:

Thomas Massey of Whole Foods Market, Robert Bellah of Whole Foods Market, Andy Price of Texas Parks and Wildlife, Paul Hammerschmidt of Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas State Aquarium, Mad Science, Physics Presentation from University of Texas, Mercedes Homes, Any Baby Can, Austin's Children Shelter, CARITAS, Meals on Wheels, Yuhudi Mercado (animator), Rodney Rash (magician), Ann's Kitchen, Susan Busa (screenwriter), Kellyn Bradford (photographer), Mark Helper (geology professor at UT), Mithu Deb (potter), Barbara Anderson (Travis County Audubon Society), Terry Phillips (astronomy enthusiast), Chinese New Year Dancers, David Whatley (geology enthusiast), Cheryl Sanders (author), Eunice Marrero (dance) Lisa Turkovic of Young Chefs Academy, Nurse,

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