

The 2nd and 3rd grade enrichment clusters finished their fourth meeting this past Friday, February 13, 2009. The clusters are moving right along! The students are excited and engaged in their learning. There are many fantastic products and services being worked on. Below are the summaries from our most recent cluster meeting.

Happy Feet - Mrs. Jackson

Last week, seven Westwood Sundancers came and visited with us. They taught us a short routine to "Ice, Ice Baby". The kids loved it. We spent this week performing that routine with each other. We also talked about costume design. I brought in several dance costumes and showed the children. Some of the children made drawings of their own costume designs. Next week I will provide fabric and paper doll like cardboard structures so that they can actually make the costumes. The rest of the children are choreographing dances. They are supposed to bring in music next week. We still don't know what our product or service will be. But, we are having fun.

The Hot Spot - Mrs. Nguyen

The Volcanologists have been busy studying volcanoes around the world. We have taken off on our mission and there is no stopping us now. We have learned about their silence, their destruction and the creation of new land. Soon, we will be on our way to draft the dimensions of these volcanoes in order to build an exact replica so many others will learn about these monstrous formations of nature. These volcanoes will retell the stories of the land that once was and has become.

Sew What? - Mrs. Campbell

The students are cross-stitching their pictures. They are doing well manipulating the small needles and threading them. They have learned to separate their thread, thread their needles and tie a knot so that the thread does not come out of their needles. They are doing great following the pattern directions and most of the children are well on their way with their pictures!

Champion Chefs - Mrs. Schuster and Mrs. Wheeler

Champion Chefs broadened their hands-on kitchen experience by making sunshine toast (a.k.a. eggs-in-a-hole) and strawberry-banana smoothies last Friday. Our chefs did a fabulous job working together while exercising their reading, measuring and coordination skills in the execution of these recipes. Our cluster is also enjoying the support of three awesome 5th grade facilitator chefs from Mrs. Sorrell's class. We all enjoy the inter-grade level camaraderie among our Champion Chefs! The pleasure of working together surpasses even the food.

Lion's Pride Quilters - Mrs. Marshall and Mrs. Rung

We are all growing and sewing! The quilter's have become quite good at pinning and ironing seams. It takes practice to learn the art of steady pressure on the sewing machine foot pedal (we are trying not to win any NASCAR trophies) and many are mastering the art of the ¼" seam. Some students have sewn their first set of blocks together and now will work to arrange and sew these into their completed quilt tops. Each of the students brings their enthusiasm, creativity and various levels of experience. We are always impressed with the level of cooperation and helpfulness of each of the quilters. Everyone has jobs and is supportive of one another. We are looking forward to many more fun meetings.

Flutter Friends - Mrs. Hieronymus and Mrs. Markle

Our monarch and painted lady caterpillars arrived this week. It's amazing how much milkweed monarch caterpillars can consume! We are documenting the growth and development of our caterpillars in our journals. We planted milkweed plants in our garden for future generations. We have also planted thistle seeds to attract painted lady butterflies to our garden. We hope the passion vine will attract a wide variety of butterflies. In addition to working in the garden, the students have picked various Texas butterflies to research. They plan on presenting their information in PowerPoint slide shows.

Hocus Pocus! - Mrs. Wenum and Mrs. Briggs

The Magic Cluster has been busy creating a variety of Hocus Pocus. Since our cluster has begun we have changed our names to Magic Makers. As Magic Makers, we have already learned a new magic trick called "Now You See It, Now You Don't". We have also started to create the various props we will need to be magicians. At our magic meeting Friday, February 6th, we picked the perfect stick from outside and

created our very own magic wand by painting it black and white and adding glitter. We are on our way to becoming the perfect magicians.

Fabulous Fable Theatre - Mrs. Carrera and Mrs. Sanders

Students have selected four fabulous fables to perform in groups. They have written their own lines and staged the actions for each short skit. They have practiced theatre warm-ups, learned some terminology, and played memory games. Over the next couple of weeks, they will continue to practice acting their skits and begin work on simple set design and costumes.

Clay Creations - Ms. Schorn and Ms. Elliott

The Clay Creation Cluster has been learning clay techniques that include coil, pinch pot, relief, and slab. Each week, two or three students take turns working on the potter's wheel while the other students make their creations using one of the techniques. We also watched videos that demonstrated Native American and Japanese artists using clay. This helped us understand the history of clay and the philosophy and beliefs of the people who use clay to create pieces of art.

Fantastic Fitness Fun - Ms. Peters and Mrs. Gordon

This week, we worked hard to begin production of our fitness video. After forming teams, each group began to brainstorm and research appropriate exercises that would work a variety of muscles. Each team selected several activities and worked to develop a smooth routine. We also worked to add descriptions during the routine to help the viewer become better acquainted with the exercises. We are preparing to begin shooting in the coming weeks.

The People of P.R.I.D.E. Productions - Ms. Bolch and Mr. Ferrin

The cluster participants have re-named the cluster, which is now "The People of P.R.I.D.E. Productions". We are busy involved in finalizing the script, rehearsing and making invitations to our production, "Oreo: A Story about Being Dependable". The group has been actively involved in making decisions together. They are creating agendas for each meeting and divide responsibilities among themselves. The group decided to present the play as a traveling troupe, so kindergarten and first grade teachers are being asked if they would like to have the cast come to their room during e-

slot. We will be finishing and sending out our invitations during our next meeting. We will also have a special guest, Mrs. Isabelle Bursk, who is a former speech and drama teacher in RRISD. Mrs. Bursk will be sharing ideas about how to polish our performance. By the way, the People of P.R.I.D.E. Productions would like you to know that they love popcorn and pineapples and that they are having fun and learning a lot about what it means to be dependable!

Hooked On Paint - Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Deal

Our kids truly are hooked on painting! Over the past four weeks they have had the chance to try numerous styles of painting: still life, self-portrait, landscape, abstract, and pointillism. They've also used different types of paints and brushes: watercolors, tempera paints, sponges, and various sizes of brushes to try different effects on their paintings. Next week we're going to work on color blending, and the kids will begin planning their masterpieces to display at the end of the cluster. This is a very talented group of artists, and we can't wait to see what their masterpieces look like!

Remarkable Reptiles - Mrs. Scott and Mrs. Snider

Today we decide on the focus of our cluster. We feel that a lot of people do not understand reptiles. We want to tape a live presentation that introduces people to different types of reptiles and gives interesting facts about the animals. We want to help people realize that reptiles are an important part of our ecosystem and we don't need to be afraid of them. We are going to research turtles, bearded dragons, corn snakes and geckos.

Brain Puzzlers - Mrs. Trejo

Today, some of us made jigsaw puzzles. We found pictures from magazines and glued them onto poster board with rubber cement. After that, we went to get the pictures laminated. When we came back, we started to look for new pictures for our next puzzle. Other people worked on putting together a jigsaw puzzle that had 400 pieces. Others made a crossword puzzle using winter words.

Reach for the Stars - Mr. Johnston and Mrs. Markins

This week, the "Reach for the Stars" cluster was on a fact finding mission. The students are working on several different products relating to space. One group is working creating a model of the solar system. Another group is working on a constellation black box and the third group is

working on space TV show. The students watched a space video and were responsible for writing down 5 facts that would help them with their product. Everyone did a great job and learned even more about space and our solar system.

The Computer Connection - Ms. Rumpf and Mr. Weiler
Computer Crashers have been creating stories using Photo Story 3 with added narration. We worked on Audacity making Pod casts. Mr. Weiler introduced us to NVU to design websites. We started exploring with NVU (website design software) and will continue to develop websites on our own topics.