

The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade enrichment clusters started on last Friday, October 16, 2009. This year, we were able to offer sixteen different enrichment clusters for the students to choose from. Below are the summaries of what took place during their first meetings.

### **YOU'VE GOT ME IN STITCHES!**

In our first cluster meeting, the girls in "*You've Got Me in Stitches!*" learned to thread a needle and try a few stitches on cross-stitch fabric. We discussed what products we'd like to create and then each girl chose 2 projects that we'll begin working on next Friday. A shopping list of needed supplies was compiled. We also decided that they will be able to work on their projects when free time is available in their classrooms.

### **THE QUILTING CLUB**

We are the Laurel Mountain Quilting Club and we are going to make quilts. We chatted about where quilts come from and who uses quilts. We learned about the Linus Connection and its mission to give quilts to children in need and decided that we should make quilts for children who need love. Several of our members have quilted in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Others have sewn with machines at home. There are many things that we will use to make the quilts, the first thing is fabric. We are getting our fabric from the Linus Connection and we will give them back our quilts when they are done. We also might make a quilt for ourselves at home. We looked at Mrs. Marshall's quilts and books and we saw a slideshow about safety and MATH! We really need math to make the quilts look nice and the pattern come out matching. Next week we will take out the sewing machines and work with our partners to start sewing.

### **KID'S KITCHEN**

Today, in Kid's Kitchen, students learned about safety rules in the kitchen, the process by which a chef prepares a meal, and were introduced to certain terms used in the cooking/culinary industry. They are designing their own cookbooks, which will contain easy, kid-friendly recipes, which they selected today. They made crispy rice-sprinkle balls, which they either ate or took home. Bon appetit!

### **FRIDAY MORNING KNITTING CLUB**

At our first meeting, the boys and girls of the Friday Morning Knitting Club shared their knitting knowledge and experiences with the group. We learned to finger knit and got our creativity going as we discussed a focus for our cluster. The students were very productive and are excited about exploring the world of knitting.

### **CLAYMATIONS**

The "Claymation" enrichment cluster rolled off to a great start. We watched examples of claymation films like Wallace & Gromit, as well as examples of LME student produced short films. We discussed the characteristics of a claymation

type film and how it is created. They identified the multiple scenes needed to create one film. Then they used post-it notes to create flip books. They took a simple sequence and broke it down into individual scenes with movement portrayed by slightly adjusting the repetitive scenes.

### **LAUREL MOUNTAIN'S GOT TALENT**

The Laurel Mountain's Got Talent cluster spent some time discussing what talents are and what makes a person talented. Students then watched people who had talent on America's Got Talent. Together the students discussed what talents each person had. Next week, the students will get a visit from American Idol contestant Jimmy McNeal. He will talk to the kids about his experience on American Idol and talk about his love for his talent!

### **MOVIE MAGIC**

In the Movie Magic cluster, students watched a short movie on Leonardo da Vinci for the purpose of noticing sets, lighting, costumes, props, dialogue, and camera angles. Students also began testing the video cameras and brainstorming ideas for next week's meeting. At the Oct. 23rd meeting, we will decide on our new cluster name, explore the various jobs associated with movie production, choose jobs and scripts and develop our timeline. Students hope to make a DVD of their movie and sell it to raise money for a charity.

### **ART A LA CARTE**

The members of Art a la Carte suggested ideas for future projects. They also made drawings for the Yearbook Cover contest. Some students worked on Visual Arts entries for Reflections.

### **STEWARDS OF THE PRESERVE**

This week's cluster focused on our plans for building outdoor display cases for our preserve. Students were introduced to the designing aspect of these cases as Mr. Johnston taught a short lesson on the difference between regular graph paper and isometric graph paper. Because our designs are going to be three dimensional, students will use the isometric graph papers found on a link from our web page to begin thinking about a design idea and putting that idea onto paper. Students were briefed about conversions and drawing to scale to help them with this process. The second half of our cluster involved the planning process for the remainder of the meetings. We developed a plan for each week on the parent's letter to help students and parents know what we will be doing throughout the week and keep us moving at a pace that allows us to not only complete our project but to be prepared for the presentation on December 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **THE CLAY CREATIONS**

The Clay Creations Cluster began their meeting observing a potter, Mrs. Deb, who demonstrated her skill on the potter's wheel. We watched as she turned the piece of clay into a beautifully formed bowl. She taught us how to wedge the clay first to ensure there were not any air bubbles in it. (She wedged one lump of clay and cut it open to find out if there a pocket of air. She had not spent enough time wedging! This is an important step in the process because air bubbles cause the finished piece to explode in the kiln!) Next, she showed us how to center the clay on the potter's wheel. Centering is a critical step so the final product will be evenly balanced. Next, we watched videos that demonstrated Native American techniques we might use as we work with clay. We had time to experiment and construct our first product! Two students worked on the potter's wheels while the other students worked with clay to create a design of his or her choice. Next week, we will begin learning techniques and continue taking turns on the potter's wheel.

### **FITNESS FUN**

To kick our Cluster out, we learned about vitamins and minerals from Mrs. Vaidynathan. She was very informative about what we should be eating and how much to ensure that our bodies stay as healthy as they can be. We learned that milk, fruits, vegetables and some protein products are necessary to our healthy lifestyles. Then, we discussed what our cluster would be doing for our product or service. Everyone was interested in creating some type of new sport and then having a school-wide competition to raise money. To get our bodies moving, we then got into groups and had some fun with various P.E. equipment. Everyone had a FABULOUS time trying new moves and thinking of new sports to invent. We all can not wait until next time!!!

### **WHO CAN? WE CAN USE A WEBCAM!**

The Webcam enrichment cluster looked at the many features of a webcam. They enjoyed being a talking Avatar, moon, fox, etc. They also looked at how it could be used for 'Skyping'. To conclude, the students discussed possibilities for the use of webcams at Laurel Mountain.

### **BEADS, STRING AND KNOTS - OH MY!**

Today we met and got right to work. We learned how to make an anchor knot. It's the first step in making friendship bracelets. The kids worked with a partner learning and practicing the first knot. They learned how to make this knot quickly and started making their own bracelet. We also discussed ways we can share our talents or do something nice for Libraries of Love. We haven't decided that yet. We are off to a great start.

### **BEYOND deSCRIPTION**

In our cluster, we were lucky enough to have an author come visit us, talk about the writing process, talk about finding ideas to write about, and share her experiences as an author. P.J. Hoover, a Laurel Mountain mom and author of

"The Forgotten Worlds" trilogy, got us excited about writing and we're really looking forward to getting started. (Some of us already have!)

### **PICTURE THIS**

We all enjoyed our two guest speakers. Mr. Barnett, from RRISD Video Services, showed us cameras dating back to the early 1900's. Mrs. Clitheroe, a Laurel Mountain parent, showed us her photos that she took, and we were so inspired that we wanted to start shooting pictures right away! Next week we will get our cameras out and begin taking pictures around Laurel Mountain.

### **TIME WARP**

The Time Warp enrichment cluster discussed wars that have occurred in the history of the United States. The group decided to concentrate on the major battles of the Civil War. They will begin researching these battles next week. Using their research, they will begin making battlefields.