



THE



# LEAFLETTE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF LCW,  
LARCHMONT CHARTER SCHOOL - WEST HOLLYWOOD

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## CALENDAR

**June 17**  
End of Year Picnic  
at West Hollywood Park

**June 18**  
Last Day of School  
Shortened Day

**August 19**  
Family Council Meeting  
St. Ambrose campus  
auditorium

**September 7**  
First Day of 2010-11  
School Year

## IN THIS ISSUE...

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## PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

by Dr. Kristin L. Droege



As the 2009-2010 school year draws to a close, it's impossible not to look back at the last two years and feel astonished by what has been accomplished. A new school opened, doubled in size, spread onto two locations, implemented a nationally renowned hot lunch program, created a dynamic constructivist curriculum, and, helped 120 children achieve happiness and success in their primary years. And clearly that success has been noticed. One hundred percent of our families are returning, and 14 of these families are sending a new sibling to join our community. At this year's lottery for 2010-11 enrollment, we received 14 times as many applications as there were spaces available!

Each family that joins our community assumes responsibility for at least 50 hours of volunteer service to our school. As I reflect on the many accomplishments of the past two years I am struck by how little of it would have been possible without the hard work of our volunteer parents. While some of the parent volunteer time is very visible to the community at large, other support goes on behind the scenes and is probably not known to many.

Fundraising is one area to which LCW parent volunteers devote countless hours. Fundraising volunteers run our Annual Pledge Drive—which has achieved 100 percent participation two years in a row—which entails calling every family of the LCW community to explain our financial needs and asking for support. In addition, enrolled parents and Founding Parents alike are the force behind our monthly fundraising events, which will be responsible this year for raising about \$40,000 toward our general fund.

Facilities demand a great deal of our attention as we grow and move. Our parents have stepped up to paint, repair, clean, build cabinetry, establish our garden, move furniture, and help us create the place within which our community can thrive.

Communications is another volunteer-based portion of our school, and we have reaped the benefits of materials that are professional-quality in both content and appearance. Our exquisite newsletter, web site, and recruiting materials all represent LCW to the broader community and are based on the design, writing, and technical skills of our parent volunteers. T-shirts and kitchen aprons have the personalized touch of one of our parent artists. Our internal parent communication board, Big Tent, and our Facebook page are supported and maintained by a parent volunteer as well.

And finally, there are so many parents who help by working directly with the children, ensuring that students' daily experiences reinforce our mission and our message that they are part of a caring community of families. Parents serve lunch to our children; they tenderly remind them to drink their milk and enthusiastically serve seconds of the delicious fruit or the tasty salsa. Parents work in the classroom day in and day out: They support a math center by leading games with the children; they read stories aloud during library time; they oversee painting projects; or they present information about a fascinating journey or a "heroic" activity.

We are enormously grateful to the parent volunteers who make our program possible. The contributions mentioned above are but a few of those that occur every day. Whenever the call goes out that we need a hand, someone is there to answer. Charter schools depend on contributions of time and energy from parents, and having met the parents of Larchmont Charter School - West Hollywood, I know we are poised for many years of success.





**Maria Alvarado**

SPA Director  
{Rosewood Campus}



**Jamia Weir**

Classroom Assistant &  
Art Specialist,  
{Rosewood Campus}

# MEET THE TEACHERS

by  
Laura Shanahan



**Kathleen Block**

Classroom Assistant &  
After-School Teacher,  
{St. Ambrose Campus}



**Sam Hobson**

Physical Education Teacher  
{St. Ambrose Campus} &  
After-School Teacher  
{Rosewood Campus}

No	Tennis	Do you play a sport?	Backyard baseball and Frisbee!	I practice and help teach yoga
Basketball and volleyball	Every sport, really, with the neighborhood kids...then in high school, field hockey and tennis	When you were younger what sport did you play?	I was on the swim team and ran cross-country track	Swimming, basketball, baseball, football, soccer, and tennis
No	Guitar...and tambourine!	Did you play an instrument?	I play a mean kazoo!!	Guitar and harmonica, and just about any instrument I can get my hands on
Dried fruit	Chocolate, chocolate...and um, chocolate!	Your favorite snack?	IN-N-OUT burgers	Yogurt
Yes, a small dog named Blacky	A cat named Moonie	Do you have any pets?	A dog named Sprocket, and a snake named Eva	No, but I love animals!
Lion	Pig	Your favorite animal?	Squirrels	Cat
Imagine by John Lennon	To Sir, with Love by Lulu	Your favorite song?	Too many favorites to list!!	Young Americans by David Bowie and A Matter of Time by Joe Con ;)
Make soup and watch a movie	Artwork	What do you like to do when it's raining?	I love to curl up with a good book	Write a song or just play the guitar and listen to the rain
Matilda by Roald Dahl, and Charlotte's Web by E. B. White	Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak	What's the best book you read in school?	The Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster	Where the Sidewalk Ends, A Light in the Attic, and The Missing Piece, all by Shel Silverstein
A teacher	An artist	When you were in kindergarten, what did you want to be when you grew up?	A nurse and a teacher	Jet fighter pilot

Born in Mexico, Maria came to California at age five and has lived in Los Angeles ever since. In 2008, she graduated from California State University at Northridge, with a BA in Sociology. Maria helps children and young adults make important decisions regarding their education, and is passionate about making a difference in their lives. Maria says that she also likes doing pretty much anything, as long as she's accompanied by her family.

Jamia was raised in Wallingford, Connecticut, and attended college in Burlington, Vermont, where she majored in art and minored in Women's Studies/Theater. Before moving to Los Angeles, she was a public-school art teacher for grades K-12. She has been showing her mixed media artwork in L.A.-area art shows, and designing jewelry and clothing for her "Artgirls" collection. Jamia plans to get her master's degree in Art Therapy, and to publish the children's books she's already written and illustrated.

AND IF YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE...

Kathleen was born and raised just outside Chicago. The sixth of seven children, she was surrounded by her siblings as well as many neighborhood children, who would gather in her family's yard. Kathleen felt destined to either have many children herself, or to teach. She attended the College of Dupage, then moved to Los Angeles, where she has been teaching preschool for the last 16 years. She continues to take classes, as she's not quite sure what she wants to be "when she grows up"!

Sam grew up in central Kentucky, in the beautiful rolling hills and rich farmland of the bluegrass region. After high school, he moved to San Francisco to continue his education. One highlight of his college years was a semester abroad studying French and art in Paris. In 2005, Sam graduated from the University of California at Berkeley with honors and received a B.A. in English. He is a musician, a singer-songwriter, a guitarist, a poet, and a performer, whose stage name is Joe Con.

# A STROKE OF LUCK

by Hilary MacGregor

Clutching giant coffee cups and praying for good luck, more than two dozen nervous parents crowded into Jennifer's classroom on February 20 for LCW's 2010-11 lottery. Principal Kristin Droege was there, drawing the numbers, Stefanie Fujinami was there, calling out names, and two assistants crouched on the floor taping names to numbered spots on huge charts that would determine who might get in and who probably wouldn't be so lucky. Larchmont Schools executive director Brian Johnson and several volunteer parents stood by as official witnesses, and the event was recorded on tape and video.

Just days before, LCW received final approval from LAUSD to implement a new, staggered lottery system, which will help the school achieve its mission: to provide an exceptional public school education to children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. The school's mission is to have a student body with 40% of children eligible to receive free and reduced-price lunch.

As parents entered Jennifer's room, they received a sheet with a detailed explanation of how the lottery works. Here are the details.

Under the new system, there are four priority groups: Priority Group 1 is composed of siblings of current students, Priority Group 2 is made up of children of Founding Parents, Priority Group 3 is made up of children eligible to receive free and reduced lunch, and Priority Group 4 is made up of children applying for general enrollment—or everybody else.

Each priority group is assigned a reserved percentage of spaces in the class, and has its own lottery. Those not offered spots initially are placed on the wait list in order of their priority groups, and move up the list as spaces open up. Starting with Priority Group 1, once the allotted spaces for each group are filled, the school moves down to the next priority group to fill open spots, until all spaces are filled. The order of the numbers on the waiting list will remain in effect through June 2011.

A total of 356 children applied to the LCW lottery this year, with 268 families hoping for one of just 40 coveted kindergarten spaces.

For the 2010-11 kindergarten class, there will be 13 siblings total joining the school. Ten percent of each class, or four spaces out of 40, are reserved for children of Founding Parents. Forty percent of the class, or 16 spaces out of 40, are reserved for children eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, and the remaining seven spots went to those who applied for general enrollment.

The school aims for a diverse student body, but Kristin said there is no legal way to adapt LCW's mission to accommodate gender and ethnicity. Fulfilling that part of the mission will just take hard work.

"We have and will continue to do outreach efforts to all the cultural groups in our city we hope to serve," Kristin said. "Our efforts this year to recruit a diverse pool of applicants really paid off, with the incoming class including 35% to 40% children from lower-income families, and 12% to 18% each of African-American, Hispanic-Latino, and Asian/Pacific Islander."

LCW could not use a staggered lottery during the first two years because the school received start-up grants that required an open enrollment policy, with priority permitted only for siblings and Founding Parents.

Despite massive outreach efforts, Kristin said it was hard to get enough low-income families into the application pool because LCW still does not have a permanent site, or offer bus service. As the school became more

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## KIDS WALKED FOR FUN—AND FUNDS

by Raf Green

Menacing clouds raced in from the ocean as LCW's students gathered early on Saturday, February 27, at West Hollywood Park to begin the LCW Walkathon. Even faced with ominous skies, the walkers began to count up their laps. But rain prevailed and soon the little fundraisers—and their valiant parents—were being drenched in a serious downpour.

However, the gloomy weather didn't slow them down or dampen their spirits. In fact, 89 students braved the storm and not only walked, but in many cases ran, 20 laps or more. Kimberly Canter, who organized the event with Marya Francis, proclaimed the event a huge success. "I am really impressed that so many people came out to participate, even on a rainy Saturday. The kids were amazing. I think they felt a sense of accomplishment completing their set goal and doing it all in the pouring rain." The event raised an impressive \$12,188, but the total would have been even higher if pledges had been taken for every puddle splashed. "Everyone had an incredible attitude," said Canter. "There was a great sense of school spirit. What could have been a disaster turned into an amazing day."



Fundraisers like the walkathon are crucial to LCW's success. Charter schools receive 30% less funding per student than other LAUSD schools, and LCW has goals that go beyond simply making up the difference. Activities such as physical education, music, yoga, and gardening all depend on the success of LCW's fundraising efforts. The money raised also allows LCW to offer competitive salaries that help attract great teachers to our school.

Last year, grants, donations, and fundraisers brought in an extra \$300,000 to LCW. This year, in addition to the walkathon, there are a wide variety of events that have been organized to raise even more money. Fundraisers are scheduled for each month of the school year.

Our biggest event is the Music Night fundraiser, which took place May 12 at the Cabana Club in Hollywood. Performers included Lisa Loeb and Lili Haydn as well as many other amazing singers.



In addition to holding fundraising events, LCW launched a new web site to help make it easier for families to donate online. Just log in at [www.lcw.mycharterschool.org](http://www.lcw.mycharterschool.org). The site has a school directory, simple ways to donate and access records of your donations, and an easy way to invite friends and family to make donations.

Successful fundraisers help LCW deliver an exciting and ambitious education to our students, and they help our community band together in a common purpose. Given the success of this year's walkathon, there's sure to be another one next year, rain or shine!

# DECONSTRUCTING CONSTRUCTIVISM

by Dr. Kristin L. Droege

## THE MYSTERY OF READING



One of my first experiences with the baffling nature of the education system was a course I was required to take in order to accept my first teaching position. I spent the summer after college taking a class on how to teach children to read. It was 1986, and the focus in the education world at the time was on gender equity. So we spent weeks

exploring the characters represented in basal readers; what qualities and traits were associated with female versus male characters? What career possibilities were represented for men and for women? Were protagonists and antagonists equally balanced across gender? I remember walking out the door at the end of the summer thinking to myself, “That’s all very interesting... but how do children learn to read!?!?” What I have learned since, I learned by studying cognitive development, teaching first graders for six years, and working with children and teachers throughout my career.

Becoming a reader has two basic components: First, it requires learning to decode the words on the page and say them, either aloud or silently in one’s head. Second, it requires developing the skills to comprehend what is written. This second part is a long-term process that involves vocabulary development, life experiences, broadening the knowledge base, and just growing up! The part of reading that gets tackled predominantly in the early years of life is decoding.

### Different Ways to Become a Reader

There are four different processes that children use to decode text. Most children have a strength or preference for one approach, but also dabble in all the others. Very few readers, if any, learn to decode exclusively through one approach.

#### The Analytical Reader

This child uses phonics rules, letter sounds, and “sounding out” strategies in a very systematic approach to reading. I conceptualize this reader as the “logical mathematical” reader. In education, children are frequently taught “word attack” skills, and these tend to cater to the analytical reader.

A child who is an analytical reader will sound out new words starting with the first letter and moving systematically from left to right, needing little assistance other than learning the unusual variations in vowel sounds. The analytical reader may struggle with words like *was*, *auto*, *come*, and *their* because they break the rules of phonics.

#### The Visual Reader

This child uses visual memory to tackle reading with a heavy emphasis on what we frequently call “sight words” or “high frequency words.” The visual reader benefits from a great deal of exposure to text—looking at books that are read aloud by others, text within real life activities, word labels around the room, attention to signs and symbols in their environment.

This child is likely to remember “word families” such as *bug*, *mug*, *hug*, and *rug*, and use that pattern to decipher the word *shrug* despite its tricky beginning. When encountering a word on page 10, this child might flip back to page 3 to look at that same word and remember what it said the first time! The visual reader might seem “careless” in reading by substituting a similar-looking word—a for *an*, *they* for *them*, or *house* for *horse*.

#### The Contextual Reader

This child uses the context of the material to determine the meaning of a new word. There are two types of contextual readers—those who use visual context and those who use auditory context. The visual context reader uses pictures extensively to support word attack. What would make sense in the sentence based on what I am seeing in the drawings or photos? The auditory context reader “listens to” the words or story and makes meaningful assumptions about what might come next to make the story logical. This child might think, “If the character just put on his socks, what is he probably putting on next? Shoes!”

This child using visual context may take time before tackling any of the print material on a page to really familiarize herself or himself with the pictures. Adults sometimes mistake this for a delaying tactic and weary parents will occasionally have to resist saying the words first rather than waiting! However, the contextual reader is setting the stage inside the mind to be prepared to encounter new words and when prepared, will be able to move forward with reading and make sense of the story.

The child using auditory context will benefit from reading words out loud rather than shifting early to reading silently. This reader will hear the beginning sound of a word and be able to figure out what it might be, even if phonics rules aren’t helpful, based on the imagery or story they have developed while listening to the story. Being asked to read aloud to younger children will be a helpful tool for this young reader.

#### The Organic Reader

This reader I really can’t explain. It just seems to happen. At a relatively young age, the child comes into reading through a smooth and natural process giving very few clues about strategies or approaches. Organic readers almost always live in text-rich environments so they are surrounded by the necessary clues. And not surprisingly, organic readers are frequently in LOVE with reading, choosing it as an activity over almost anything else.

While teaching this child to read presents few obstacles, one area on which to focus is realizing that the organic reader may easily “decode” high-level text at a young age while not being ready to address the thematic content or material in a sophisticated story. It is important to remember the child’s social and emotional age and identify reading material that is suited to the life experiences and understanding of the young reader.

### Strategies to Use to Teach Reading



At LCW, we use a number of strategies to teach reading, and in particular to support the decoding process in our K-1 cluster. We move children into homogeneous groups of readers with similar levels and styles of reading so that teachers can implement those strategies that are most successful for a smaller variety of readers. We introduce all readers to all four approaches to insure that students are able to adopt the strategies that are most effective. When a reader struggles, we support reading through one-on-one support so that individual considerations can be given to a child’s style and needs. And finally, we recognize that peer support can be a powerful tool for young readers so children get time and opportunity to learn with and from each other.

At home, parents can help their children with a variety of strategies as well. Encourage children to use reading in their daily activities: Read street signs, billboards, labels, marketing symbols, names, and addresses. Celebrate literature routinely. Tell children about the stories you are reading; read aloud from newspapers or magazines so children see that you are interested in the content; connect popular culture to the literature it is so frequently

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# ART IS EVERYWHERE

by Beth Wishnie Michaelis

On both LCW campuses, you'll notice impressive works of art hanging on the walls—some paintings, some 3-D sculptures, some mixed-media compilations. These mini art galleries are being created by our students during in-class project time just about every day.

At LCW the visual arts are a big part of the curriculum. We do not employ a full-time art teacher or have an art class that the children attend weekly—instead, every teacher in each grade creatively incorporates art into their lessons, which makes each subject more inspiring and, as kindergarten teacher Cecilia Wong explains, “teaches the children that art is not a separate topic. It’s part of all of our lives. The students see art with meaning.”

For example, Cecilia introduces art basics in kindergarten. All of the projects are based on the California State Standards and encourage the students to explore different ways they can create art. So far, the students in her class have painted, drawn shapes and lines, created work with a foreground and a background, saturated things with color, and built three-dimensional models. Now, as their fine motor skills are developing, they are adding clay.

In addition to the lead teachers, Jamia Weir, our classroom assistant and art specialist at the Rosewood campus, is also a certified art teacher, and comes into the Rosewood classrooms to lend a hand with various projects. When teachers are working on a theme, Jamia will come in and help infuse art into the subject, or refine some of the projects that have begun. For instance, after Kelly finished reading a book to the class, Jamia did a quick drawing lesson to show how she would re-create the book with a possible way to set up a composition.

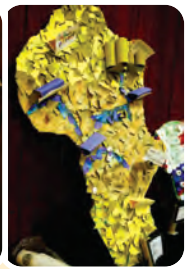
Jamia also supported the students’ artwork for their Earth Day displays. She worked with the kindergarten teachers and students on habitats: the rain forest, the desert, the oceans, the poles. The students then made animal masks and hung them where they belonged in the habitats.

Jamia helped the first graders fill huge cut-out continents with recycled materials. Antarctica was filled with woven plastic bags. Australia was filled with egg cartons. North America was highlighted in bottle caps that the kids had saved.

At St. Ambrose, the second graders have also been working on recycled-art projects. A geography lesson came alive when the students made a three-dimensional map of the United States.

For this project, as well as many others, LCW parents volunteered in the classrooms to further instill creativity into the art and make it an important part of their day. Sallie Higgins, Nicolas Ghaffary’s mom made homemade Play-Doh to build out the map, and then with the help of Daisy’s mom, artist Emily Green, the states were embellished with recycled wood, Astroturf, and recycled paper. All sorts of found “garbage” from hardware stores and daily life are put to use.

Emily often jumps in and helps the second grade teachers out with various art projects. Her goal is to expose the students to many different ways of making art. She’s brought in water-color pencils, black Sharpies, oil pastels, India ink, and plenty of recyclables. She emphasizes using found materials.



This year, the students have used found objects to enhance many of their lessons. They made puppets out of recycled clothes, and a giant Earth-friendly scarecrow for the garden. For the winter holidays, they had a scavenger hunt for rocks, painted them, and wrote inspiring messages on them as gifts for their families. The rocks were wrapped in Chinese take-out containers and were just as pretty as the big expensive rocks bearing words like *happiness* or *love* that are sold in card stores all over the city.

Tiffany Lowe, Luna’s mom, noticed in Emery’s class that kids were trying to draw people. She came in and taught them how to draw faces in proportion. She showed them how to make the head in the shape of an egg and drew guidelines on a grid to show them where the eyes, nose and mouth go—in proportion. Tiffany showed the students pictures by Kahlo, Renoir, and Picasso, which led some of the budding artists to make some very interpretive faces. She hopes to introduce shading next, so the students can make things look three-dimensional.

The face-drawing project is still evolving based on Principal Kristin Droege’s idea to have each student do a self-portrait and photograph it. Then, the goal is for the students to do a self-portrait every year, photograph it and have a disk of their self-portrait over the years at LCW.

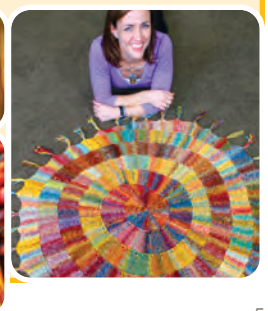
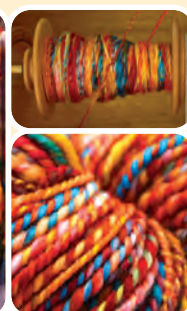
Another eye-catching project that will fill the halls of LCW forever is a wool-hanging that Lucas Calado’s mom, Carey, spearheaded. Carey came into the second grade classes and demonstrated knitting and spinning wool with her spindle and spinning wheel. She also showed the students wool at various stages: unwashed locks from a sheep, a piece that was washed, and pieces that were ready for dyeing and/or spinning.

The students were excited to use the wool to create something of their own. They took two pounds of wool and dyed it using homemade edible colors made of Kool-Aid and icing gels. The kids had a blast choosing where the primary colors went, as well as creating colors of their own and applying them all, using spoons and eye droppers.

Carey finished up the wool project by spinning the wool and knitting it into a spiral circle with 40 points on the outer edge representing each student who worked on creating the work of art. It is a unique and beautiful piece.

Even when the regular school day is done, the students continue to tie art into what they’ve been learning. When discussing symmetry in the after-school program one day, Theo Fernandez came up with the idea of folding a piece of paper in half, painting it, then opening the paper up to get a symmetrical design.

While \$10 million was slashed from art budgets in Los Angeles public schools this year, LCW has managed to offer many unique, creative ways to introduce visual arts to its students. And boy, do the walls look good.



# THE STUDENTS SPEAK!!!

Harvested by Pete X

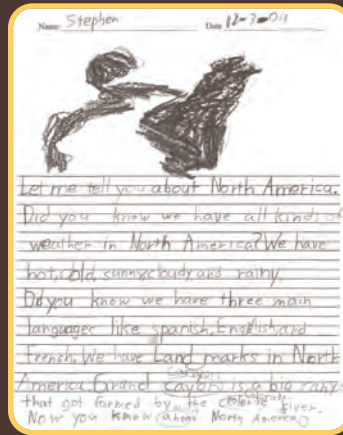
This time around, the students speak through what they write. In keeping with the constructivist approach, our teachers focus on recognizing that learning to write is about learning to compose and think of oneself as an author, more than merely learning the technical details of forming letters and formatting a paper. Also, as a part of project-based learning, compositions usually reflect and are part of a larger theme or subject being studied. That said, have a look at some of our children's words. Way cool.



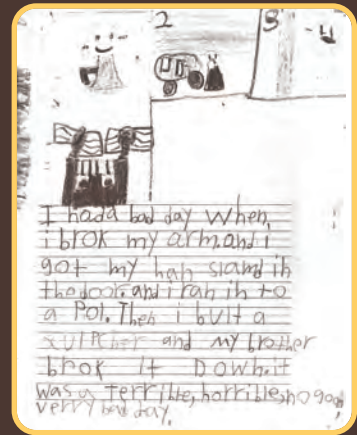
Cecilia's Class, Kindergarten  
"My name makes me feel like My mommy."



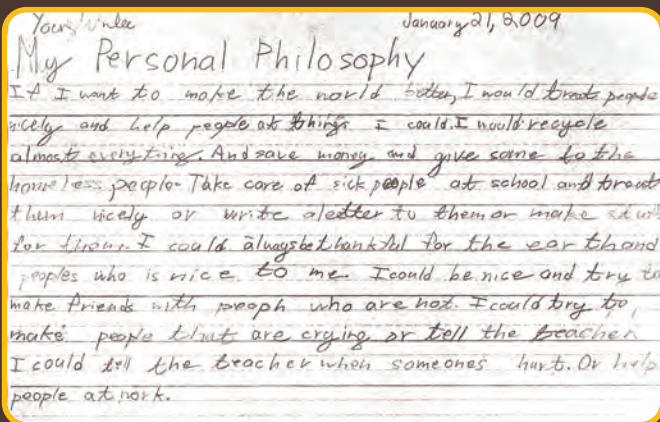
Mersedeh's Class, Kindergarten  
"My paradise IS IS crem."



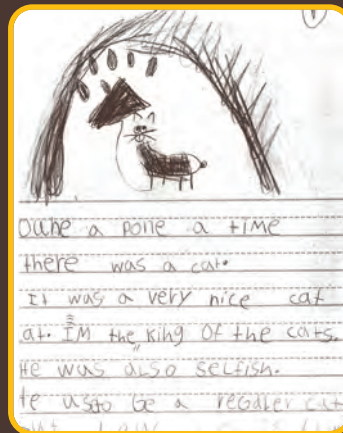
Jennifer's Class, First Grade  
"Let me tell you about North America. Did you know we have all kinds of weather in North America? We have hot, cold, sunny, cloudy, and rainy. Did you know we have three main languages like Spanish, English, and French. We have Land marks in North America Grand Canyon is a big canyon that got formed by the Colorado River. Now you know about North America."



Kelly's Class, First Grade  
"I had a bad day when I brok my arm. and I got my han slamd in the door. and i ran in to a pol. Then i built a sculpcher and my brother brok it down. it was a terrible, horrible, no good, verry bad day."



Emery's Class, Second Grade  
"My Personal Philosophy: If I want to make the world better, I would treat people nicely and help people at things I could. I would recycle almost everything. And save money and give some to the homeless people. Take care of sick people at school and treat them nicely or write a letter to them or make stuff for them. I could always be thankful for the earth and peoples who is nice to me. I could be nice and try to make friends with peopoh who are not. I could try to make people that are crying or tell the teacher. I could tell the teacher when someones hurt. Or help people at work."



Alejandra's Class, Second Grade  
"Oune a pone a time there was a cat. It was a very nice cat. Cat: I'M the king of the cats. He was also selfish. He use to be a regaler cat but now he is the king. The servants wanted to make him nicer. One day, they had a plan. They sent a letter for a costume party. When he got there, no one was wearing costumes. That's what it feels like to be mean. I'm not being the king, yes."

Aren't those the best? So, once again, the students have spoken. Let's keep listening to them. Until next time, peace.

## A STROKE OF LUCK, continued from pg.3

established and more siblings entered the school, the number of low-income students was dropping. That trend promised to become more pronounced in the future. With the help of enrolled parents, Kristin has made presentations to numerous Head Start preschools enrolling lower-income students. In addition, the school pursued outreach among Korean and Hispanic communities, and this year hired a consultant to assist LCW in outreach to the African-American community.

After the drawing, Marya Francis, one of the original Founding Parents of LCW, looked out at the many disappointed parents, wishing she could help. "It's time to start a new school," she said with a sigh.

## DECONSTRUCTING... READING, continued from pg.4

based upon. Discuss characters in terms of their traits and skills and help children make connections to their real-life experiences and people they know. Model a reading mentality. Insist on reading a book together before going to see the movie. Suggest looking something up when your child has a question, and then help do it. Show children that you sometimes choose to turn off the TV and read a book!

And finally, never stop reading aloud to your children! We sometimes think we are helping a child learn to read by asking the child to do the reading, but emerging readers and even very skilled readers reap enormous benefits from hearing stories read aloud.

# LCW FAVORITE BOOKS CORNER

by Jeremy Rogers

*"Books, the children of the brain."  
- Jonathan Swift*

Good books open the floodgates of the mind; the informative and imaginative experience of reading is something to embrace for life. As many avid readers know well, stellar books need to be shared with others. A favorite recommendation from a friend can carry more weight than critical reviews, bestseller charts, and literary awards.

Below are some of our favorite books from LCW classrooms, as selected by the teachers and students. Some of the titles might be familiar, while others might be new discoveries for you and your children, but all of these books come with the assertion, "You must read this!"



## MISS NELSON IS MISSING!

Written by Harry Allard / Illustrated by James Marshall

\*\*\*Recommended by [Cecilia Wong](#), Kindergarten Teacher

The students are unruly in Miss Nelson's classroom. One day, Miss Nelson concocts an inspired plan to make herself disappear, paving the way for the strict, homework-adoring substitute teacher, Viola Swamp, to educate the classroom on how to be respectful and appreciative. Cecilia says, "The children have truly enjoyed this piece of literature for its comical nature and mysterious ending. They love the fact that the book leaves them with clues as to what happened to Miss Nelson, instead of explicitly giving it away!"



## HEY, AL

Written by Arthur Yorinks / Illustrated by Richard Egelski

\*\*\*Recommended by [Mersedeh Emrani](#), Kindergarten Teacher

This is a story about a janitor named Al who is dissatisfied with his life and begins to look elsewhere to find his "paradise," which just so happens to be in the form of an island in the sky. Al quickly learns that the grass is not always greener, and that sometimes "paradise" lies within what you already have. Mersedeh cites the Caldecott Medal-winning illustrations and the strong message of being grateful for everything you have. She says, "This overarching moral makes this book a great recommendation for people of all ages."

## MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS

Written by John Steptoe

\*\*\*Recommended by [Jennifer Santangelo](#), First Grade Teacher

Mufaro lives in an African village with two daughters. Nyasha is sweet, while Manyara is selfish. When the king announces that he is seeking to make a bride from "the most worthy and beautiful daughter in the land," both of Mufaro's girls are tested. But only one can be chosen to marry the king. Jennifer praises this story, "My first graders really enjoyed this [African folktale, reminiscent of Cinderella]. They said they liked it because it taught them lessons about jealousy."



## THE LORAX

Written by Dr. Seuss

\*\*\*Recommended by [Kelly Ferguson](#), First Grade Teacher

First published in 1971, this Dr. Seuss cautionary tale of greed and environmental destruction introduces the mossy, bossy Lorax, who speaks for the trees against the greedy Once-ler. Kelly says of the classic Seuss book, "My students like the pictures and words. Their favorite character in the story is Once-ler...because he is green."



## YOU'RE A BAD MAN, MR. GUM!

Written by Andy Stanton / Illustrated by David Tazzyman

\*\*\*Recommended by [Alejandra Domenzain](#), Second Grade Teacher

Mr. Gum is a ferocious old-timer with "two bloodshot eyes that stare out at you like an octopus in a bad cave." The one thing that brings him joy is his beautiful garden. If only there wasn't a "furry wobbler" chewing his lovely flowers. Can the children save Mr. Gum before he commits too dastardly a deed? Alejandra cites a particular character, "Jammy Grammy Lammy F'Huppa F'Huppa Berlin Stereo Eo Eo Lebb C'Yapp Nermonica Le Straypek De Grespin De Crespin De Spespin De Vespín De Whoop De Loop De Brunkle Merry Christmas Lenoir. Her friends call her Polly. As you read the book, you have to decide whether you are her friend or not."



## THE BEE TREE

Written by Patricia Polacco

\*\*\*Recommended by [Emery Shiau](#), Second Grade Teacher

When Mary Ellen gets bored with her reading, Grandpa knows a hunt for a bee tree is just the outdoor excitement she needs. After collecting some bees in a jar, Grandpa lets one out, and he and Mary Ellen follow that bee through the town. Emery says, "It is a delightful story about a young girl who becomes tired of reading indoors. To rejuvenate her interest in reading her grandfather takes her on a wild adventure chasing a bee to the Bee Tree. In the end, the young girl learns that reading a book can be as exciting as chasing a bee and as sweet as honey from the Bee Tree. The students love listening to this story and it provides a launching pad for wonderfully insightful discussions."

# A NUMBERS GAME

by Kenton Fees

At LCW, **LEARNING MATH = FUN** and our kids are really getting excited about the way we help them develop their skills! We approach teaching our students math using constructivist project-based instruction. This means that our teachers employ different strategies to keep math concepts fun—by combining real-life problem solving skills with the math fundamentals, learning math becomes automatic no matter what kind of feelings about math or experience a student might come in with.



Kindergarten teachers Mersedeh Emrani and Cecilia Wong are giving our students a foundation of skill sets and strategies to build upon, from recognizing and continuing patterns to the understanding of numerical relations and representations.

Fist grade teachers Jennifer Santangelo and Kelly Ferguson take these strategies further with real-world applications in money, value, time and measurement.

Second grade teachers Emery Shiau and Alejandra Domenzain then help the students explore geometry and pre-algebraic concepts.

At home, making mathematics part of daily family life can reveal to our children that the application of basic math concepts in real-world situations is darn fun! Opportunities to explore the math world around us are vast—simply counting, exploring patterns, telling time, and noticing weight and volume can help build our children's math vocabulary. Encouraging children to draw upon their experiences along with the fundamentals being taught at LCW, will help them confidently explore the deeper abstract numerical concepts ahead.



## SPRING SPRUNG WITH GREEN SUNDAYS

LCW families saw nature all over Los Angeles this spring. Kristin hosted a picnic among the roses at Exposition Park, some lucky families got to know the earth well at Sage Hill Campground, and kids and parents got close to ducks and turtles at Franklin Canyon and herons and osprey at Sepulveda Basin Nature Reserve.

Come and welcome new LCW families at El Matador Beach on June 13 for the last Green Sunday this school year. And watch for all the cool upcoming Green Sundays starting in September. Please contact Stephanie Hubbard at [huranghu@gmail.com](mailto:huranghu@gmail.com) for summer schedule and with any questions that you might have.

\*Note: These are not school-sponsored events.



## VOLUNTEER HOURS COUNT ALL SUMMER LONG!

If you're around this summer, feel free to get in some of your volunteer hours. In August and September, we'll begin prepping our new site classrooms for our new school of all four grades. Get ready to dig, plant, paint, organize and socialize in between. Check out Big Tent for the schedule.

## KEEP UP THOSE LCW FRIENDSHIPS (AND MAKE NEW ONES)

Continue the trend! Meet up with your fellow classmates at West Hollywood Park on Wednesday afternoons throughout the summer to hang out and play. Bring chalk, snacks and water balloons and join professional artist Emily Green and her daughter, our second grader, Daisy while they face paint and help create lots of fun art projects!

## BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Brian Kaplan

## DR. SEUSS DAY by Peter Giambalvo & Brian Kaplan

This is one holiday the Grinch can never steal. This March, all LCW students celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday. Stories were read by parents, teachers, and even invited members of the community. Every student made Cat-in-the-Hat-worthy red-and-white hats. Some classes made parfaits with layers of white yogurt and strawberries. And luckily, no one fish, two fish, red fish, or blue fish were harmed during any festivities.

And to further celebrate Dr. Seuss's life and contribution to education, first graders and kindergarteners from Jennifer's and Cassandra's reading groups created, composed, and illustrated their own Dr. Seuss-inspired stories. They focused on rhyming patterns, inventing words, and including a message for the reader. They then read their stories aloud to the rest of the students. The audience's response was amazing! Then they all had muffins and orange juice. Here's but one example of their fine work:

### Shorgamazand and King Fland

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY OMEED, LUCA, RUBY, MINGEE, AND MAYA

Once there was a dessert named Fland, who lived deep in the dessert world called Shorgamazand.

Fland is the ruler of them all. he is very tall and his servant is very small.

His Guard gathers up all the cakes and orders them to make milkshakes.

The cakes worked for 10 long years. the noise was so loud it hurt their ears.

They worked so long they grew beards.

One day the cakes escaped!

They got everyone from Shorgamazand to go back and attack King Fland.

The cakes threw whip cream at Fland. He fell down and made a crash land.

Now the cakes no longer have to make milkshakes.



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