

Kinsella Courant

Volume 4, Issue 3

January/February 2008

R.J. Kinsella Magnet School of
Performing Arts

245 Locust St. Hartford, CT. 06114

Telephone: 860-695-4140

Principal: Pamela Totten-Alvarado

Contents

P.1 Interview with Mr. Jimenez and Letter from the Principal

P. 2-3 PTO and News from the Classrooms

P.4 "What the Performing Arts Mean to Me"

Dear Parents:

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the state mandated Connecticut Mastery Test will begin on Monday, March 3, 2008. Testing will take place Monday-Friday until March 14, 2008. School begins promptly at 7:55 am each morning. Therefore, all students must be in school by 7:55 am. We will be testing in the morning and in the afternoon.

I would like to request your support and cooperation to ensure that our students do their best during the testing period. For this reason, I would like to request that students are not picked up early during the testing period. The testing will be completed every day by dismissal time.

A good night's sleep is essential for each student. Therefore, it is imperative that each student goes to bed by 8-8:30 every night.

Also, please make sure that your child eats a full breakfast either at home or at school. If you are planning to have your child eat breakfast in school, please ensure that your child arrives at school on time. We want to make sure all students have a good breakfast prior to testing. We appreciate your support.

We have worked hard with your child and we are anticipating great gains with our CMT results.

Thank you again for continuing to BUILD UNDERSTANDING, GROWTH AND SUCCESS (B.U.G.S) for all of our students.

Sincerely, Pamela Totten-Alvarado
Principal

R.J. Kinsella Magnet School of Performing Arts



Interview with Mr. Jimenez

- 1. How did you become interested in music?**
I grew up in a rural area in Puerto Rico. I was very influenced by the rich musical styles of the region including my country, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba. Music was all around us, at family gatherings, at festivals, at church, and at work. My parents owned a restaurant and every Saturday all the musicians in my village came and performed. I wanted to be like them. I started playing accordion when I was 10 and a few years later, I taught myself to play the trumpet. When I was in High School, I began my formal study of music. In High School, I also organized bands and played music in church.
- 2. You have received many honors and awards over the years including most recently in 2006 when you were chosen as Teacher of the Year at M.D. Fox school and also chosen as the Connecticut Music Teacher of the Year by the Connecticut Music Educators Association. What has been the key to your success?**
I am inclusive. I value and respect everyone. Everyone has a contribution to make. I welcome and involve everyone. When we put on a performance, everyone has a contribution to make; from the Special Ed students to the Gifted and Talented to everyone in between.
- 3. What is your ideal Music Program?**
Music programs should be multicultural. They should teach students to understand and be proud of their cultures and to understand and appreciate other cultures. I teach music in the context of geography, history, and cultures. My program focuses on folk music. Folk music is music passed down from generation to generation. Folk music songs are about the most important feelings and challenges and events in life. Like great literature or poetry it is timeless and universal. You can think of folk music as like a foundation to a building. Folk music is the foundation of all music.
- 4. Why is music so important?**
Music is for everyone. Enjoying music doesn't depend on where you come from or what language you speak. The essential parts of music, rhythm, melody, form, and harmony are found in all cultures. Everyone can learn the basics of music. Once you learn them. You can understand and enjoy musical styles from all over the world.

News From The PTO and the Classrooms

PTO

Mrs. Rivera, the PTO and Family Resource Aide, reports that during January and continuing through February, there are FREE Parent Training Workshops. Mrs. Chao, Kinsella's math coach has been providing parents strategies and skills in math. Mrs. Campbell, Kinsella's reading curriculum specialist, has provided parents with the skills in writing prompts, CLOZE (DRA-Filling in the blanks) Editing and Revising. All the presentations are based on CMT Practices. We encourage parents to use this information to support their child at home. We have your child during school hours, but the education should continue at home.

Student Recognition was a great success. We rewarded students for having Perfect Attendance since August 29, 2007 and for Honor Roll, improvement, and good character. Special thanks to Emily, Erin and her daughter Aisha, Ceci and her daughter Taiz, and PTO President-Morgie.

Kindergarten

Mrs. Grimaldi reports that in January, the class learned about Martin Luther King. We read stories and poems and studied civil rights and talked about how important freedom is. We were excited about singing in the program at the high school. In February, our class will have a heart estimation contest. Our reading groups have been studying rhyming patterns

Mrs. Duchon reports that in January, our class worked on patterns and sets. We are reading our take home books every night to make us better readers. In February, our class will visit the Recycling Plant in Hartford. We will practice retelling stories we have read from beginning to end.

Mrs. Saperstein reports that our class has been busy working on letters, sounds, writing numbers, non-standard measurement, balance scales and many other fun and fantastic things! We have been auditioning and practicing parts for our first musical, "The Little Overcoat". We have read two versions of this folktale, compared and contrasted the different versions, identified words in the folktale and now we are going to bring it to life! We'll be sure to invite everyone to the final performance! Enjoy the winter! Stay Warm and get out there with your kids to build a snowman!

1st Grade

Mrs. Andrusia reports that in January, our class worked on story retells with fun activities with stories such as There Was a Cold Lady Who Swallowed Some Snow and A Snowman Named Bob. We also learned about Martin Luther King and that it's more

important what's inside a person than what they look like. In February, our class will be celebrating 100 days of school. We will learn about the groundhog tradition of predicting weather. We will also celebrate friendship on Valentine's Day.

Ms. Stamos reports that in January, our class read several books about what it takes to make a snowman. We also have been working on each student learning at least 100 sight words by the 100th day of school. We have also been DRA testing and Mondo testing.

3rd Grade

Mrs. Gray reports that in January, our class began studying force and motion in science. We are gearing up for the CMT. We also welcomed our student teacher Mr. Picone from the University of Hartford. In February, our class will continue CMT prep. Students will have 30 minutes of reading daily along with either CMT math, reading comprehension, or edit and revising.

5th Grade

Mrs. Noonan reports that in January, our class learned a lot about fractions. We also discussed the phases of the moon and several astronomy vocabulary words. In February, our class will be going on a field trip to look at eagles in Essex. We are hoping to meet with students from Emerson-Williams who will be going with us to the Discovery Center in April.

6th Grade

Mrs. Dinnald reports that in January, our class started CMT Prep. Students are excited for the countdown to begin. In Science, we made moon buggy models using recycled materials. In February, our class will continue CMT Prep. For math, we will be working on Decimals, Measurement, and Fractions. For Language Arts, we will be working on Diagramming sentences with Mrs. Keegan-Ward. In Science, we will be presenting a model of a homemade satellite

Mrs. Hassell reports that in January, our class completed Inspiration and PowerPoint Research Projects On Martin Luther King Jr. Our author study on Gary Paulsen was nearly completed. In February, our class will continue to prepare for the CMTs. We will start a new author study on Virginia Hamilton. We will also create monologues on famous African-Americans

Mrs. Shimkus reports that in January, our class came back to school after a wonderful vacation. We went back to work quickly. The Hartford Stage program is in full swing and we are really enjoying it. In February, our class will continue to prepare for the CMTs. Many of the students take instrument lessons. They are getting better all the time at playing their instruments and are enjoying it.

7th/8th Grade Social Studies

Mrs. Piotrowski reports that in January, the 7th graders began learning about the United States and Canada. They have become experts on the geography of the area and will move on to culture next!

The 8th grade will begin our American revolution Unit. We have many exciting activities planned that will prepare them for their May trip to Washington D.C.

7th Grade Language Arts

Mr. Stohl reports that in January, the class focused on their Literacy Letters and enjoyed the Martin Luther King performances. We continued our goal of 25 books read by each student. Also, we finished our WANTED novel and look forward to starting The Watsons Go To Birmingham-1963. In February, our class is hosting a dance party as an earned demerit activity. With lots of CMT Prep, we hope to hit a homerun on the CMTs.

7th/8th Grade math

Mr. Lalime reports that in January, our class worked very hard on CMT Math Strands. We reexamined Strands 1,4,7,8,9,10,12,13,15, and 21. Everyone is showing improvement on all Strands. In February, our class will be working on CMT Math Strands in order to prepare for the CMT in March.

Performing Arts

Vocal

Mr. Jimenez reports that in January our class learned songs about Dr. Martin Luther King. We sang a song in 3 parts and songs about the "I Have a Dream" speech. In February, Grades 1-2 learned to play prerecorders with 3 sounds B-A-G and to sing and play songs with 3 sound patterns. The upper grades are drawing music notes on the staff including quarter, half, and whole notes and learning to apply them to songs to play on the keyboard or xylophone.

Band

Mrs. Kroqi reports that in December, band students were preparing for the MLK Performance and the Winter concert. In February, our class will perform at the Buckeley High School for the Winter Concert.

Instrumental

Ms. Hanjian reports that In December, brass students began working on music that will be performed by Kinsella students at the CT Music Educators Conference in April. In February, three instrumental students will take part in the Northern Regional Musical Festival made up of the best middle school musicians in our part of the state. The

students are Dayquan Williams, Samantha Baker, and Jeremy Lucenay.

Drama

Mrs. Chiucarello reports that In January, students in the upper grades worked on developing their scenes for the Monologue/Scene Showcase. 7th and 8th graders learned how to block their scenes and discovered how to bring their characters to life on stage. Students identified their character's objectives, actions and obstacles within the scene. 5th and 6th graders worked on placing the other actor on stage when doing their monologues and identifying the emotions and feelings of their characters. The lower grades continue to work on their storytelling, pantomime and puppetry skills.

In February students in the upper grades will present the one act play "Amazing Grace" by Shay Youngblood on February 21st at Buckeley High School.

Dance

Ms. Thomas reports that in January, our class learned a West African dance called "Lamban", which was originally done for healing, and was performed for the Martin Luther King remembrance Ceremony. In February, our class is exploring the history of dance styles of Middle Eastern dance and Spanish flamenco.

Ms. Howe

In January, Ms. Howe's dance classes were busy at work learning all different cultural dances. Pre-Kindergarten through second grade learned the Horah from Israel. Wow, that is a fast dance! Third and fourth grade were busy at work learning the D'Hammerschmiedsgselln, a German dance that involves a lot of knee slapping fun. Grades five and six have been learning the Highlife Juju dance from Ghana, Africa. Grades seven and eight have been hard at work learning the Hunter Gatherers dance and a Brazilian dance called the Maculule. We are working with sticks for this dance so watch out! Congratulations to Ms. Dimattio's class, December's all star class. They chose a hip hop routine for their "free" dance class.

In February, Ms. Howe's dance classes will be continuing learning different cultural dances. We will be practicing hard for the February 27 dance and music show. I hope to see everyone there.



What the Performing Arts Mean to Me

Dayquan Williams-7th grade

Since I have been in a performing arts magnet school, I have turned my whole life around. Before, I was just a boy who had been getting in lots of trouble; I didn't know what to do with my life. But since I am where I am now I have met nice new people. I have met new teachers and experienced new things. I am getting the chance to learn about new instruments, other cultures and different types of dances. I have also performed in many performances. My attitude has also changed a lot; it has gone from a boy who didn't care about anything to a boy who cares about everything.

Jose Jimenez-8th grade

The performing arts are a part of what makes my body keep moving. Performing arts means an opportunity to make my dreams come true. When I am stepping onto a stage- I get the feeling of butterflies and I just clear my mind and let it happen. It is a feeling that comes from the performing arts manifesting in my soul. I can speak of this feeling because it is personal experience. The only difference is when that feeling comes – I take over and perform the true meaning of the arts. Performing Arts is succeeding at what you love.

Chassidy Arce-8th grade

The Performing Arts is a way for me to show my potential. I can express my feelings while doing what I love. When I am up on that stage I can express my feelings. For example, recently I performed the words of Martin Luther King Jr. On stage I felt so strong; it felt like what I was saying was really happening. I felt so great inside because people loved how good we were. It feels like you're a superstar when you perform even though you get butterflies.

Since belonging to a performing arts school, I have noticed some changes in me. I believe that I am more confident. I am not as shy as I used to be. This is a good thing. I also know that I'm not a quitter. My peers and I feel more comfortable with each other because we worked together and did a great job.