

Kinsella Courant

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R.J. Kinsella Magnet School of
Performing Arts

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Dear Kinsella families,

The year is off to a great start thanks to your patience, understanding and diligence!!!

Our PEAC program and Extended Day programs are in full operation. We are thrilled to have so many students and families committed to these programs.

Upper grades 5-8 students should bring home academic progress reports to parents by the end of October. Please review this information and if you have any questions, please schedule an appointment with your child's teacher(s).

Our performance schedule for the year has been sent home. Join us in celebrating all of our student performances and accomplishments. We need your help!!! Your continued involvement contributes to the growth of your child and our school.

Notices have been sent home about our Halloween party on October 29th. Please see Mrs. Vanessa Rivera, the Family Resource Aide, for any questions and possible donations.

One last reminder: there is a parent-teacher roundtable discussion from 4:30-5:30 on Wednesday, October 15th. Come and join our discussion! Hope to see you there!!

Sincerely,

Pamela Totten-Alvarado

Principal

R.J. Kinsella Magnet School of Performing Arts



Interview with Mrs. Collins

1. What do you most enjoy about being a paraprofessional?

I enjoy working with kids. I enjoy getting to know them. I enjoy working one on one with students especially special education students. I also enjoy working in after school programs and tutoring students in math and reading.

2. What is one of your proudest moments as a paraprofessional?

There was a boy some years ago who was always getting upset and getting into trouble. I worked with him for several months. I was patient with him. I comforted him and brought him treats and helped him with his school work. Gradually he turned his life around and he became successful at academics and got along well with his peers. Several years later, I bumped into him and he remembered me and said "You used to help me, you helped me so much. You were a good teacher."

3. What advice do you have for novice paraprofessionals who want to be successful?

Be dedicated. Be patient. Take extra time for the students. Make each student you work with feel special.

4. You are originally from the state of Alabama. Why did you move to Connecticut?

Many years ago, in Alabama and other Southern states, black people were segregated from white people and were mistreated. We had few opportunities to improve ourselves.

My sister and I had heard that there was less racism in Connecticut and that white people there were more respectful to black people so we moved to Connecticut. In Connecticut, we were able to get decent jobs, to buy a car, to buy a house and to send our children to college. We missed our family in Alabama but we knew we had made the right decision.

Of course, things are much much better now in Alabama and in the rest of America, but there are some things I will never forget. One of them was when I was a teenager walking down the street and I picked up a pecan that had fallen from a tree in front of a big fancy house. Suddenly I heard somebody screech the "N" word. I looked towards the house. The screeching came from a parrot inside. Imagine someone training a parrot to say that awful word. That's the way some people acted 50 years ago.

News From The PTO and the Classrooms

PTO

Mrs. Rivera, the PTO and Family Resource Aide, reports, on the first day of school August 25th, we held our first PTO meeting. We provided PTO Committee sign up sheets, such as PTO Executive Board, Halloween, School Year Book, box tops and Performing Arts. Many parents signed up. During Open House we held the PTO Executive Board Team Election day, which are parents that sign up for the PTO Committee. Our new members for the 2008-09 school year are as follows – Raquel Roseboro - President, Michelle Falls - Vice-President, Ana Trammell - Treasurer, Ariel Pino – Assistant Treasurer, Priscilla Rivera – Secretary, Deborah Walsh – Assistant Secretary and Marilyn Jusino – PTO Coordinator. Please join us in welcoming them. In September, we provided free training workshops for parents in Homework Help Line, services by certified teachers by phone or e-mail. The second training was the Reading Workshop presented by Maria VanNostrand. The PTO also held a meeting on September 25th where the principal was in attendance and answered a number of questions from parents and addressed their concerns. We look forward to a great, fun filled and exciting school year. Parents, please help your child to memorize their School ID number.

Prek

Mrs. Baker reports, in September, her students learned the class rules and we also baked a cake in the classroom. In October, the class will go on a field trip to Flamig farm in Simsbury.

Kindergarten

Ms. Hamilton reports, in September, our class started our superstar year by decorating the classroom and doing a “Hands are for Helping” mini-unit. We finished the month by reading and writing about insects and creating beautiful patterns in math class. In October, our class will do a dinosaur theme to start off the month followed by a fall pumpkin theme just in time for Halloween. In math, we will keep learning our numbers and shapes.

1st grade

Mrs. Andrusia reports, in September, our class was busy finishing up DRA testing and starting our guided reading groups. Our student of the month was Keanu Figueroa. In October, our class will continue working on our sight reading. We are also working hard on counting money, learning to read and write numbers to 100.

Mrs. Joyce reports, in September, students made lots of new friends and learned the class routines

and procedures. Students also took DRA tests to determine their independent reading levels. They also practiced their sight words. In October. They are learning to tell time to the nearest minute and learning about pennies and nickels.

2nd grade

The second grade team reports, Thank you to all of our parents who helped make the transition to second grade successful. Continue to work with your child’s teacher to make this first semester a huge success.

DRA2 testing has begun. Continue to read at home aloud to practice fluency & accuracy. The more your child reads aloud—the better Reader he/she will become.

3rd Grade

Mrs. Bendezu reports, in September, our class traveled to the 4-H center in Bloomfield and went apple picking. We also learned how to make apple cider with fresh apples. In October, our class will work on descriptive language and is also working on math skills using pumpkins.

Mrs. Hicinbothem reports, in September, we went to Auer farm to learn the process of making apple cider. We learned the procedures in our classroom and worked beautifully in our reading centers. In October, our class will continue our study in rocks and minerals in science and focus on strand 1 (place value) in math.

4th grade

The fourth grade team reports, in September, students began a new reading program called Mondo. Students are working in Literacy Centers which promote peer teaching and collaborative learning. In October, our class began concentrating on CMT strand C which is making connections to the text in the form of open-ended questions. In math, we are focusing on place value with larger numbers.

5th Grade

Miss Noonan reports, In September, our class settled into the routines of our new Mondo reading program. We also began learning about factors and exponents. In October, our class began Unit 2 in math. We will also continue using real-world applications for each subject as we explore various career options.

Mr. Geer reports, in September, we wrote a class song about journeys. We focused on the steps of the scientific method and have begun writing introductions to expository essays. In October, our class began a unit on sound. We will learn how to write effective main idea sentences with supporting details for our expository essays.

6th Grade

Mrs. Dinnald reports, in September, our class started learning about the ecosystem and how abiotic factors and biotic factors affect our environments. In October, our class will learn about predation which is prey versus predator interaction.

7th/8th Grade math

Mrs. Carillo reports, in September, we started introducing the language of algebra (variables, expressions, order of operations). We also started identifying words and translating them into expressions. In October, the 7th grade class will complete their M&M projects. The 8th grade will be working on addition and subtraction of equations and will complete the Big Dig project using formulas and expressions and technology. Both classes will also work on fractions, decimals and percents.

7th/8th Grade social studies

Ms. Blair reports, in September, 7th grade students studied geography tools and concepts. Students created exciting brochures describing Hartford, using the 5 themes of geography. We also created maps of the classroom. In 8th grade U.S. History, we studied the Native Americans and how their environment influenced their cultures. Now we are studying Spanish exploration doing Act it Outs.

7th Grade language Arts

Mr. Stohl reports, in September, we completed many reading reports. We are exploring the 2009 Nutmeg nominees. The middle school went to the theatre to watch "No Child" which was a wonderful educational experience. The students also completed the first round of tests which will guide our instruction for the rest of the year. In October, we will continue working on our friendship journey journals. We will also continue exploring new drama techniques that support our reading comprehension. As always, it is October and the Red Sox are in the playoffs! Enjoy!

Performing Arts

Drama

Ms. Nario reports, in September, 5th and 6th graders performed comic ABC scenes for their informal. Our 7th and 8th grade theatre majors performed in our 911 tribute. They created tableaux from actual photos from Sept. 11th 2001 and performed poems written about this event. 7th and 8th grade students went to Theater Works to see an incredible play, "No Child." Students performed scenes from "No Child" for our own Informal performance. 8th graders also went to Hartford Stage to see "A Midsummer Night's Dream." In October, our 7th and 8th graders majors will perform

an original play about themselves for our cultural heritage performance. All majors have the chance to show off their acting skills at this month's drama informals.

Dance

In September, dance classes with Miss Howe and Mrs. Russo were very busy. Pre-K through Grade Four explored shapes, levels, and personal/general space. Fifth through eighth grade took a JOURNEY to different countries through cultural dance.

In October, grades five through eight will be preparing for the cultural heritage performance, and Pre-K through grade four will be exploring pathways, contrasts of movement, and more party dances!!!

Stagecraft

Mrs. Wiszniak reports, in September, 7th and 8th grade students created large 3-d stars made out of cardboard for the 911 remembrance. You can see these beautiful stars hanging up in the hallway. They also just completed a painting that will be sold for the Hurricane Katrina fundraiser. 5th and 6th grade students sewed their initials onto a piece of fabric. They did an excellent job for the first time sewing! You can see their work displayed in the glass showcase. PreK-2 students have been working on images with lines, an important element of art. 3rd grade just completed a geometric shapes painting. 4th grade summer journey hands are displayed in the hallway. The students drew what they did over the summer in the shape of their hand. Can you find these images in the hallways?

In October, 7th and 8th grade students are creating performance posters. 5th and 6th grade are currently working on images to sell for the Hurricane Katrina fundraiser. 4th graders are working on Matisse Fish bowls, 3rd grade is working on sailboats in the style of Monet, and 2nd grade is creating 3-d lizards. 1st grade has been working on figure drawing and Kindergarten has started making their art books.

Instrumental

Ms. Hanjian reports, in September, the new instrumental music students got started on their lessons. In October, the fifth grade band will perform in the cultural heritage performance on October 17th. They will perform "America" and "Latin Rock."

Band

Mrs. Kroqi reports, thanks to all the students who performed for the 911 remembrance. Also, thanks to Jazlyn Velez, Dante Santiago, Diana Raouf, Evelyn Quinones, Breannie Hernandez and Nastasjia Harris who all played an informal performance for students in grades 5-8. In October, students are preparing the music for our cultural heritage performance.



Headed for Hollywood? By Mr. Saxon

Rise and shine, ritzy LA film fatcats. There's a new dog in town. Under the direction of Mr. Eddie Duran, The R.J. Kinsella Magnet School of Performing Arts is making a movie!

How will our movie be different than the ones you make? Well, you know how most of your lala land movies have predictable plots, mindless characters, dumb dialogue, and silly special effects. We'll be mavericks and skip all that lame stuff. Your movies are fake as an indoor lake. Our movie will be real as steel. We're making a movie that m-a-t-t-e-r-s.

You want a gripping story line? How's this: Picture a tough town facing tough times; imagine a diverse group of courageous and determined students, parents, teachers and volunteers that decide to band together for a common purpose. Their mission: to create an elementary school that combines high caliber academics and high octane performing arts- and for students to excel at both. I know this probably sounds a little crazy so let me explain.

You're probably thinking: Number 1, the story won't include the daunting obstacles and challenges that are needed to create suspense. Trust me; the characters face plenty of obstacles and challenges. Number 2, you probably believe the characters' circumstances might be so difficult that any positive outcome will seem unbelievable to the audience. All I can tell you is: Expect the Unexpected. Number 3, you probably think that the story of one little school in Connecticut couldn't possibly make audiences laugh and cry and cheer and really CARE. You want to bet?

What? You say you want me to tell you how it ends. Sorry, you'll have to wait to see the movie.

