

# Kinsella Courant

Volume 5, Issue 2

November/December 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 Ms. Escribano and Letter from the Principal

P. 2-3 PTO and News from the Classrooms

P.4 Something To Celebrate!

Dear Kinsella Families,

The holidays are upon us and the entire staff want to wish each student and their respective family, a joyous holiday season and New Year. Recess begins Wednesday December 24<sup>th</sup> and ALL students must return on Wednesday, January 7, 2009.

When students return from holiday recess, we continue major preparation for March CMTs. Please speak with your child's teacher about skill building work. We need to continue our growth of making Safe Harbor and AYP. Please continue to support your child's growth and success. Remember, preparation is key! January also brings DRA testing for grades K-8: more information to follow.

This time of year allows us to reflect and plan for the upcoming year. We have much excitement as we continue our journey with the anticipation of moving back to 65 Van Block Avenue. The building is looking great-the construction is right on schedule. Take a minute and ride by to see how much is completed.

Enjoy the holiday season! Be sure your child is reading EVERYDAY! See you ALL on January 7<sup>th</sup>!

Feliz Navidad, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah, Happy Kwanza!

Sincerely,  
Pamela Totten-Alvarado

*Pamela Totten-Alvarado*



### Interview with Ms. Escribano

#### 1. Your family lived in four different countries. Why?

My parents were originally from Spain but left because there was no freedom. The government did not respect the people. Citizens could not criticize or change the government unlike in the United States and other democratic countries. My parents looked for a place where they could be free and have a better life. It took them many years. They first moved to Switzerland, then to Canada, and finally to the United States.

#### 2. As a child, what was it like to have to move around a lot?

It was difficult at times. In school, I was usually the new kid on the block. I felt shy a lot. And when I moved to Hartford, I did not know how to speak English. I had to work very hard to learn English and to do well in school.

#### 3. How did you get interested in the Performing Arts?

My elementary school, unfortunately, did not provide students exposure to the performing arts. It wasn't until High School that I got a bit of performing arts training and experience; I was offered a role in a musical. I wasn't the star of the show; I just had a minor part. But that experience changed my life. I discovered that I had a passion for acting. I also discovered that acting made me more self-confident and being more self-confident helped me to care more about school, to work harder and to get better grades.

#### 4. What do you most enjoy about being an acting teacher?

Teaching acting is a terrific thrill and students involved learn about responsibility, teamwork and the excitement of creating something. We explore problems and situations that concern students by acting them out. Afterwards they discuss their meaning and importance and how they feel about them. I love seeing students learn to express their feelings and creativity through acting.

## News from the Classrooms

### PTO

**Mrs. Rivera, the PTO and Family Resource Aide, reports,** during the month of November, Mrs. Campbell presented a free training workshop for parents on antonyms, synonyms, homophones and compound words. This workshop enables parents to understand and assist their child at home with vocabulary. We were also fortunate to see A Christmas Carol at Hartford Stage. The show was spectacular and each child received a cup of hot chocolate, donuts, and an I Spy book from Scholastics.

The AmeriCorps/PEAC/CL&P/PTO sponsored a Thanksgiving food drive. The class that collected the most had a pizza party or ice-cream social. The winner was Mrs. Carrillo's class. Thank you to all the parents who supported the food drive.

During the month of December, we had scheduled a holiday celebration for Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup> at Burr School. Due to the snowstorm, it was postponed until Thursday, January 8. If that is a snow day, than it will be on the 9<sup>th</sup> from 3:30-4:30 in the cafeteria. Each child will receive an unwrapped toy from 1-2 pm. I apologize for any inconvenience. Thank you for supporting the PTO,

### PreK

**Mrs. Baker reports,** in November, her students learned about the four seasons. In December, our class will be learning about markets and foods

### Kindergarten

**Mr. Sailer reports,** in December, our class improved "big time" on behavior. We also learned to predict using pictures; we learned about different shapes. We learned addition and subtraction stories. We read about bears, the city, and a family from the circus!

**Mrs. Grimaldi reports,** in November, our class learned how to use Indian symbols in writing. We made Indian blankets. Our families received thanksgiving cards we designed. And we wrote about how thankful we are. In December, our class made an estimation tree. We are also studying sunshine and shadows.

**Mrs. D'Alessandro reports,** in November, our class learned about Thanksgiving and how it began. In December, our class is doing our science fair projects on magnets. We have also learned almost every letter in the alphabet.

### 1st grade

**Mrs. Bavarro reports,** in November, our class worked on telling time and solving simple addition and subtraction word problems. We are doing well in our guided reading groups and we all read EVERY night. We also did many Thanksgiving activities and shared what we are thankful for. In December, our class is busy getting ready for the Science Fair. Look for our dancing raisins. Happy New Year.

**Mrs. Joyce reports,** In November, our class was very excited to get 2 new class pets-Guinea pigs. Their names are Chiquita and Zoey. We have enjoyed learning about them and caring for them. On November 4<sup>th</sup>, we had a mock election. The students enjoyed going in the voting booth and filling out their ballot. The results were Obama 18 and McCain 3. We also celebrated with a pizza party that the students earned for good behavior. The class earned 20 stars over the last couple months. Yum! Yum!

### 2<sup>nd</sup> grade

**The second grade team reports,** Mrs. Hickey's class had 14 out of 20 students on time and ready to learn in November  
Mrs. Bernabucci's class had 11 out of 20 students on time and ready to learn in November  
Mrs. Shimkus and Mrs. Rietze's class had 7 out of 19 students on time and ready to learn in November. Thank you to all of our parents who helped make the first trimester of second grade successful. Continue to work with your child's teacher to help make the second trimester just as successful. DRA2 testing has been completed. Continue to read at home aloud to practice fluency & accuracy. The more your child reads aloud—the better reader he/she will become.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

**Mrs. Hicinbothom reports,** in November, our classes went to Roaring Brooke Nature to learn about Native Americans. We also started making a class movie with Mrs. Butson. In December, our class our best on the Rally testing, and learned a lot about building structures for our science fair experiments. Stay tuned for the results.

### 4<sup>th</sup> grade

**Mrs. Kazlowski reports,** in November, students started their science Fair Projects. Students also went to see a Mozart performance at the Bushnell. In December, Kazlowski's camera crew is making a documentary about the performing arts in Kinsella. Mrs. Butson is coming into the class to work with the students using smart board lessons to focus on CMT strands/

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Miss Noonan reports,** in November, our class met with our partners from Emerson-Williams School. We played games and got to know each other better. In December, our class has been

learning about different kinds of angles. We've been using our bodies and movement to help keep them all straight! (Ha...get it? Angles? Straight?)

### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Mrs. Dinnald reports**, in November, our class studied seed and soil properties and our surrounding environments. In December, our class will finish our environmental science book and labs. We will also complete our science fair PowerPoint presentations.

### 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

**Mrs. Carillo reports**, in November, our homeroom won the AmeriCorps food drive contest and won a pizza party. In December, our class is completing the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of district testing HMSA 1 & 2. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade students are learning about fractions. 8<sup>th</sup> graders are solving equations involving decimals.

### 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies

**Mrs. Blair reports**, in November, our class wrote personal reflections about their reactions upon hearing the news that Barack Obama won the election. We also studied the physical and human features of North America and World geography. In December, our class created illustrated children's books about the Declaration of Independence in U.S. History. In geography, students are beginning a unit on South America.

### 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts

**Mr. Stohl reports** that students have done a great job on the Rally testing, DRP and QAR tests. They have finished their mystery unit and completed their memoirs which they are sharing with younger student tutees.

### 7<sup>th</sup>8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science

**Mr. Romano reports**, in December, our class will be finishing up Science Fair Projects. In addition, we are learning about the cell cycle and how each cycle undergoes interphase, mitosis, and cytogenesis. We will be using our compound light microscopes to help visualize this abstract concept.

## Performing Arts

### Theatre

**Ms. Nario reports**, in November, grades 5-8 majors performed in scary scenes! Students worked on Character and created their own original characters and will be filming the "Kinsella Telanovela" in the spring. In December, Fifth and sixth grade students have been performing Aesop Fables. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders created a mini version of [A Christmas Carol](#). They are also starting work on Theater for Social Change. All of Ms. Nario's students have been very successful at Improv, performing "props", "party quirks", and "Switch" for their classmates and teachers.

## Dance Department

**Ms. Howe and Mrs. Russo report**, in November, our 4<sup>th</sup> grade students completed their creative movement unit. Prek-K continued with their creative movement unit. Grades 5-8 began their social dance unit. In December, Prek-K continues their creative movement lessons while learning a special piece for our February dance Concert. Grades 1-4 have begun their cultural dance unit while grades 5-8 continue their social dance Unit.

## Band

**Ms. Hanjian reports**, in Band, recording classes are preparing to perform in the January 16<sup>th</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration. The fourth grade band will have its first rehearsal on Monday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>. The fifth grade band is receiving all its new music for the trip to West Hartford in April.

## Instrumental

**Mrs. Kroqi says THANKS** to all the flute students, (Janemary Laboy, Cassandra Bodillo, Ashley Marquez, Janet Soto, Coraima Pagan, and Hurija Muskic) who played in the informal music performance in November. Also, THANKS to all the band students who performed in the winter concert. And THANKS to Hurija Muskic And Melissa Harris who played at the recruitment fair that was held at the EXPO Center on December 9<sup>th</sup>.

## Vocal

**Miss Clark reports**, in November, our majors and minors prepared for the Winter Music Concert. We also worked on form and scat in "Dancin on the Rooftop." In December, our class will be preparing for the Martin Luther King Jr. celebration. We will also be discussing the civil rights movement and will be studying some of the influential people of that time.

## Stagecraft

**Ms. Wiszniak reports** that 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders made props for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students who are working on the Nutcracker. They made several muskets, bugles, and Red Cross flags. Currently, we are making 6 hobby horses. We used sewing machines to sew their ears and heads. We are hand sewing the hair, and facial features. Our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders are in the process of creating nonobjective sculptures. Be on the lookout for them in the showcases! 4<sup>th</sup> graders just finished making Oaxacan animals out of model magic. They are little creatures found in Mexican Folk Art. Look for them on [www.artsonia.com](http://www.artsonia.com). Our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are currently working on color patterned landscapes while our 2<sup>nd</sup> graders are working on patterned cranes. 1<sup>st</sup> graders have been drawing a lot of figures. They are finishing up their family portraits. Kindergarten is making the last page of their Kindergarten Art books.



## Something to Celebrate 2008!



1. **Mrs. Andrusia:** The MONDO Reading program has started to Blossom.
2. **Mrs. Baker:** I just have one more class to take before I get my master's degree!
3. **Mrs. Bavarro:** I am very proud of my students for developing much better classroom behavior.
4. **Mrs. Bendezu:** Our class has incorporated more acting and Art connected to the literacy curriculum.
5. **Mrs. Bernabucci:** I passed my BEST Portfolio which is a requirement for certification for all 2<sup>nd</sup> year teachers. Woo Hoo!
6. **Mrs. Blair:** Student writing abilities have dramatically improved since September.
7. **Mrs. Butson:** I love teaching my grades 5-8 multimedia classes.
8. **Mrs. Carrillo:** I only have 2 more classes to go before I get my Math Middle school certification!
9. **Mrs. Chao:** I worked with teachers to develop an electronic monthly math newsletter, The newsletter includes lesson plans, CMT strategies and tips and other useful information.
10. **Miss Clark:** I am so pleased with my 7<sup>th</sup>8<sup>th</sup> grade students for taking control of their learning; they organize themselves and make their learning enjoyable .
11. **Mrs. Dimattio:** Our class has made me proud with their hard work and dedication to understanding texts. They ask questions, make each other wonder and encourage each other to seriously comment on deeper text concepts.
12. **Mrs. Dinnald:** I edited ,revised, and printed every Science fair PowerPoint and chart for every single 6<sup>th</sup> grade student.
13. **Mr. Durham:** The Response Intervention program is helping students to learn.
14. **Mrs. Gray:** I am proud of our class because they speak respectfully to others and have improved their behavior greatly.
15. **Mrs. Hanjian;** Kinsella students have formed a brass ensemble that has performed at the CT Music Educators conference. They sound GREAT when they play together.
16. **Mrs. Hicinbothom:** Using the Smart board has helped to enhance instruction and learning.
17. **Mrs. Hickey:** Our class has made me proud with their hard work and dedication to a hard working school year. Keep up the GREAT job!
18. **Mrs. Joyce:** Our class has enjoyed using the Smart board to learn Interactive math games.
19. **Mrs. Litwinka:** In September, my students were unable to count to a dollar using coins. Now, not only can they can count up to a dollar, they can also count up to ten dollars. I am so proud of them and they are so proud of themselves.
20. **Ms. Nario:** Ms. I have been recording episodes of a new cartoon called "My Lil World" to air next year on cable television. I play the voice of a little Latina named Maria.
21. **Miss Noonan:** My students' vocabulary has significantly improved.
22. **Ms. Opton:** I helped to create a very successful 8 week Reader's Theater Workshop.
23. **Mrs. Rivera:** Students now realize that even though math problems seem very complicated, they are not that hard if you break the problem into small parts and follow the steps needed to solve the problem.
24. **Mr. Romano:** I am thrilled that the science program has gotten many new supplies that I have been able to share with other teachers.
25. **Mr. Stohl:** Students have become much better at teamwork which has made them more self-confident and helped improve their academic performance.
26. **Mrs. Tocionis;** I am ecstatic that I am now cross certified in Elementary education and Middle school Language Arts.
27. **Mrs. VanNostrand:** We started a new tutoring reading method that has been very effective for both tutors and tutees.
28. **Mrs. Walton:** I am celebrating being at Kinsella fulltime for the first time and loving it.
29. **Mrs. Ward:** Students in the READ 180 program have made amazing progress!

