

Laurel Mountain 2nd and 3rd graders meet for the first time with their enrichment clusters on Friday, January 15, 2010. Below you will find summaries of what the students learned and accomplished during their first meetings.

Clay Creations

The Clay Cluster began their meeting watching a video that demonstrated Native American techniques we might use as we work with clay. Next, we were fortunate to have Mrs. Deb, a local potter, 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. 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. 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.

Snippets of Cloth – Quick Quilters

For the first meeting of the Quick Quilters, we discussed our purpose and what each of us would like to learn. We also came up with a name. Our group discussed various uses for quilts and who might need or want a quilt. The decision was for us to work in small groups to make a quilt to donate to The Linus Project. The mission of The Linus Project is to provide love, a sense of security, warmth and comfort to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need through the gift of new, handmade blankets. Next, we explored several different quilts made by Mrs. Marshall. We discussed a variety of resources we will need to make our future quilts. The group also made two no-sew, fleece quilts to donate to The Linus Project. It was a great first meeting that generated a lot of excitement about our upcoming clusters.

Paws and Claws Society

In Paws and Claws we made cat treats for the Humane Society of Williamson County. We will have a presenter next week and we will give her the treats to give to the cats at the shelter. Great fun and learning was had by all!

Mask Mania

On Friday, our cluster had a treat. Kurt Wheeler, Janifer Wheeler's husband, came and talked to us about mask making. He presented a great power point on the history of mask making and even brought in some masks of his own making to share with us. It was exciting to have him speak! He has even been in Zombie movies himself.

You've Got Me in Stitches!

In our first cluster meeting, the students in *You've Got Me in Stitches!* practiced threading a needle and dividing embroidery thread into 3 strands. Each member of the cluster looked at different sizes of cross-stitch fabric, practiced threading a needle, and learned about the different supplies needed to complete a project. Most students were able to select a cross-stitch pattern and are eager to get started stitching at our next meeting.

Future Change Makers

The Future Change Makers geared up for our enrichment cluster by discussing the needs of children around the world, including the victims of the tsunami in Southeast Asia in 2005. We learned about "We Flap", a non-profit social organization founded by a former LME parent that helps connect children, teachers, and non-profit organizations around the world. We then watched videos of children in the United States that are making a difference in the lives of others. We look forward to learning different ways that we can help those in need and to coming up with our own projects to accomplish this goal.

Dynamite Drawers

The Dynamite Drawers were fortunate to have local Art+ Academy instructor, Beatriz Gunz, give them a drawing lesson. They experimented with new drawing techniques and the use of oil pastels to create some great bird drawings. It was wonderful to see the different interpretations, use of color, and drawing styles. The kids were thrilled to receive their own sketchpads which will be used throughout the cluster. We've got a lot of talent in this group, and we're looking forward to exploring and further developing our drawing skills!

Crazy about Science – Mad Science

Our Cluster Kids really ARE crazy about science! They are SO crazy, they want their group to be called "Mad Science". They'd like to see some "exploding" experiments, but we'll be keeping things a bit more tame. We discussed what type of service project

they wanted to do, and we decided that some students may want to provide more “Take Home Science” kits, while others may want to do science experiment in other classrooms, or perhaps even to videotape their step-by-step instructions of the experiment. Today, students participated in some demonstration experiments involving force and density. There will be more experiments next week...

Hocus Pocus!

Now you see it! Now you don't! The Hocus Pocus Enrichment Cluster kicked off its first meeting on Friday, January 15, 2010. All the students came in very excited sharing stories about why they wanted to be in this cluster and what got they are hooked on magic. Next we were treated to a magic show by Magician Brad Henderson. He demonstrated and explained tricks done using the technique of illusion. At the end of our cluster Brad showed us a special trick using illusion and helped us create our own props to perform the trick for family and friends. We are excited to have our next meeting and discuss what products and service we will do as magicians....

Bracelets - African Style! – Jewelry Team

The Jewelry Team decided to make safety pin bracelets. After much discussion, they decided to make two - one for themselves and one for each of the children that sang in the Watoto Choir at LME. The students are choosing for the Watoto Choir to use a pattern of beads - the first pin holding the colors of the USA flag, with the colors of Uganda placed on the alternate pins. Mrs. Marshall has agreed to deliver the bracelets to the children at Watoto Village in the summer while in Uganda.

Young Inventors Club

Boy Inventors Mania had an energetic first meeting! We discussed what inventions are. We talked about some inventors who came up with their invention by accident. We talked about the inventing process. Then we broke up into groups to do an activity that matches the invention with the inventor and when it was invented. This was a challenging task! After that, we came back to discuss problems we have around school. A problem one student suggested were balls getting stuck in trees. Next week, I will give them a challenge to solve. Looking forward to seeing what develops!!

Brain Puzzlers – Brilliant Brain Teasers

The Brilliant Brain Teasers are warming up our minds. We plan to spend the next few weeks learning ways to strategize our brilliant minds to solve puzzles. ...jigsaw puzzles, math puzzles, brain bender puzzles, board game puzzles and magic cube puzzles. By the end of our session, we will blow you away with our brilliance. Bring it on!!!

I Scream, You Scream, We all Scream for Ice Cream! - Dessert Disasters

This week the "I Scream, You Scream, We All Scream for Ice Cream" cluster officially renamed itself.....DESSERT DISASTERS. However, we are hoping there are no disasters in ice cream making these next few weeks! After the helpful information we learned from Mr. Morris from Amy's Ice Cream, we don't expect any. Today Mr. Morris taught us all about the ice cream process and how all the delicious flavors at Amy's Ice Cream come to be! Did you know that Sweet Cream ice cream is just unflavored? Neither did we before today!! We've decided to make a cookbook to share all our great recipes as we work to become ice cream makers ourselves these next few weeks.

Outer Space Exploration

In Outer Space Exploration, we learned about Newton's three laws of motion and applied them by creating and launching rockets. We learned that the smallest and lightest rockets go the farthest into the air.

Talent Time!

Students in the Talent Time Cluster listened to the story *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae and talked about how we can all "find the music we love", meaning that we are all talented in a unique way. We discussed ways that we can share our talents and be appreciative and respectful of the talents of others, too. After brainstorming ideas, the group decided to re-name the cluster "Laurel Mountain's Got Talent". Then each student got to "stand in the spotlight" and tell the group what talent(s) he/she had to contribute to the cluster, which included singing, dancing, doing cartwheels, gymnastics, acting, playing basketball, being really flexible, riding a scooter, directing, being a crew member, and even running and sliding! Our next goal is to determine our product (how we will share these talents with others). The group is really eager to make plans and start moving forward with their ideas. Laurel Mountain's definitely got 2nd and 3rd grade talent!

