

**SOUTH LYON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS**

**GOOD NEWS**

**DECEMBER 2009**



### **Bartlett Elementary**

- Bartlett students had the opportunity to meet Maria Dismondy who wrote, Spaghetti on a Hotdog Bun. Ms. Dismondy spoke with the students on bullying and used real life examples from her own life.
- Mrs. Kobe's 5<sup>th</sup> grade class celebrated holidays from around the world. The 5<sup>th</sup> graders enjoyed learning about different holiday traditions and even got to sample some foods that were new to them.
- Mrs. Thompson's and Mrs. Walters' third graders learned about geometry. As a final culminating activity, the third graders built candy houses at their holiday party. They loved adding spheres, cubes and other shapes to their houses- not to mention eating a few objects.
- Bartlett Student Council wanted to do something special for the community during the Holiday season. With the chilly weather upon them, the Student Council members decided to have a coat and can drive. The items were donated to Community Chest Service. Donations of new or gently used hats, mittens, gloves, coats and snow pants were accepted. There were people of all ages that appreciated having warm items to wear during Michigan's cold winter months, and the Bartlett Kids helped!
- Students throughout Bartlett have been "filling up buckets!" This is when a student says something positive to another student. In Mr. Therrian's class, his students wrote down their positive comments on a sticky note and put them on a "bucket" displayed on a bulletin board. Every time the students walk in the room, they are reminded of the wonderful comments their classmates made about them.

### **Brummer Elementary**

- Deck those halls! All of our students participated in a concert in December. The kindergartners looked all spiffed up in their best closes and reindeer headbands. We all sang our favorite holiday songs and learned new ones, too! Santa visited us and really surprised everyone!

### **Dolsen Elementary**

- Kindergarten has been on the move with measurement! The students learned how to measure using non standard units. They began this unit by tracing and measuring their feet. The students were so excited to see how many "unifax cubes" long their foot was. They also used objects such as paper clips and snap cubes to measure objects in their classroom.
- The first graders have done a fabulous job writing small moment stories. They practiced adding punctuation, details and zooming in on one part of the story.

- Second graders learned about revision. They learned that writers revise to add missing information, to add dialogue and to help their readers visualize their small moment.
- The third grade students worked in small groups (one from each classroom) on creating and collecting data. Teams created questions and choices then asked most of their fellow students their questions. Then they looked at their results and created a graph. Third grade students also enjoyed learning all about fossils. Also, the December 31, 2009 blue moon made Dolsen students eager to begin studying the moon.
- Fourth graders finished learning Michigan history and created a timeline to reflect the important events of our history.
- In December, Dolsen 5<sup>th</sup> graders began their essay (non-narrative) writing. They also explored the historical fiction genre in reading. Best of all, they enjoyed the wonderful winter weather.
- Reading Recovery students made good progress with their reading and writing. They were able to bring numerous books home over break to enjoy reading with their families and showing off their skills.

### Hardy Elementary

- On December 16<sup>th</sup>, the Hardy fifth graders held a mini society “Market Day” in which the children learned about economic systems, by building goods and services.
- During the month of December the entire Hardy school community supported several local needy families for the holidays. Our art teacher made a “Giving Tree” for the front lobby. We then hung ornaments labeled with items the children needed. People chose ornaments from the “Giving Tree” and returned the items to the office for distribution.
- The month of December was a musical month at Hardy. We had three grade level concerts to get everyone in the holiday spirit. Kindergarten, first grade and second grade entertained both friends and family with their joyful singing.

### Kent Lake Elementary

- The Kent Lake third graders combined their knowledge of geometry, measurement, and number sense to plan, design, and ultimately build gingerbread houses! They started with a lesson on perimeter and area. Students used graham crackers to determine the perimeter and area they needed to cover for each side and roof panel of their houses. They also determined the volume by estimating and then using centimeter cubes to fill their milk cartons. Then they confirmed their findings using the algorithm length x width x height. Later in the week, the students used the area of the graham crackers to determine how much of each candy they needed to create the designs they drew on their planning sheets. They also used measuring tools to find out how much of the candies

they could get for the amount they paid. With a \$20 budget, they decided how much of each candy they could afford to create the designs of their dreams. After filling out purchase orders, they worked together to once again measure out the amounts in order to fill each other's purchase orders. They learned how to use a check register to deposit their \$20, write a check for the amount of their purchase orders, and balance their checkbooks. After all this hard work, they finally created their gingerbread houses.

- The 1st and 2nd grade students performed their yearly concert on December 8th at South Lyon East High School. The theme for the concerts was 'Holiday'. Some of the songs they sang and played were "I'd Like to Fly Like a Snowflake", "Deck The Halls", "Christmas in America" and "Blitzen's Boogie". They ended their concert with the "Kent Lake School Song" with piano accompanist, Ian Streeter (2<sup>nd</sup> grader).
- The third, fourth and fifth graders performed their yearly concert on December 9th with songs such as "Here we Come A-Caroling", "Winter Walk", "When the Lights all Shine" and "Christmas Through the Eyes of a Child". They ended their concert with the "Kent Lake School Song" with piano accompanist, Danielle England (3rd grader). The students sang, played Orff instruments and the 5th graders played Recorders.
- In November, the first grade classes began collecting a variety of Gingerbread Man stories. They spent several weeks reading the different versions of the story to the children during Reading Workshop. They discussed the variations in characters, setting, problem, and solution. Next, they began to work with the children during Writing Workshop creating and developing their own versions of the Gingerbread Man classic. They had such a great time weaving their own versions with a variety of characters and very creative endings. During this time, they practiced a number of Gingerbread songs and chants. On Friday, December 18, they performed their songs and shared their stories with families and friends, all the while wearing their Gingerbread T-shirts that were painted for the occasion. It was a wonderful journey watching the children develop their skills as authors of fairy tale fiction.
- On December 18th, five of our Kent Lake students were given the opportunity to sing with Kenny Rogers and, up and coming country star, Rebecca Lynn Howard at their concert at the Fox Theater in Detroit. Second graders Abby Barnes and Marina McMahan, third graders Ava Carter, Connor McGillen and Leslie Miller were the participating students. They learned a holiday medley of Silent Night, The Chosen One and Joy to the World. We had a great time and the kids were given an experience of a lifetime.

### **Salem Elementary**

- Salem families enjoyed the Christmas concerts that were performed by our Kindergarteners and Fifth Grade Classes on December 8, 2009! The concert put everyone in the mood for the upcoming holidays.

- A Rainforest Assembly was held on December 2, 2009 for all grades. The assembly showcased a variety of rainforest animals.
- Third graders were excited to make their own musical instruments after completing the Sound Unit in science.
- Sixteen children and their families were chosen to receive Christmas presents from the Heartstrings Foundation.
- Fifth graders at Salem participated in “The Great Mail Race” during their study on the geography of the United States. Each student picked a school in another state to write a letter to and ask for information about their area. Several schools responded back from places as far as Alaska, Utah, and Arizona. It was exciting to learn firsthand about other areas in the United States.

### Sayre Elementary

- Sayre Elementary hosted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) on December 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> in efforts to continue our accreditation work through NCA. The visiting team was very impressed, and the staff, students, and parents felt proud to be recognized as part of a great school!
- Thirty-seven Sayre Elementary students were invited to a Habits of Mind Breakfast of Champions with Mrs. Murphy on December 15. These students had completed two or three optional monthly homework activities to practice their habits. These thinking tools will make them better learners every day of their lives!
- Sayre second graders were very excited to make electrical circuits and electromagnets during their science lessons in December. Many students came to school each day with stories about their own magnet experiments at home. That is proof of the great team that parents and schools can make!
- Sayre third graders are becoming experts in the geography of Michigan! Students made cookies shaped like Michigan and used candy and other treats to identify important features of our great state. Learning can be delicious!
- Sayre fourth graders have been working as mathematicians to solve multiplication and division problems. Along with solving problems with the “traditional” method, students learned how to use clusters, partial products, repeated addition/subtraction, and other ways of getting a solution. Flexible thinking is a useful habit of mind in math!

### Centennial Middle School

- Frau Huffman’s German students celebrated St. Martin’s Day (*Martinstag*) by carrying homemade lanterns and singing songs about St. Martin throughout the halls of CMS. They stopped in at offices to sing and receive a sweet treat as their reward as is the custom in Germany and Austria.

- An assembly was held for sixth grade students regarding proper behavior. Mrs. Barshaw's eighth grade drama students wrote and performed skits showing appropriate school behavior. CMS staff were proud of not only the talent displayed by our 8th graders but by the suitable behavior displayed by all sixth graders as well.
- While studying Canada, Ms. Ashley's 7th grade social studies classes researched a Canadian province of their choice. Students spent time researching land forms, climate, population, and other exciting facts about their province. They created colorful, interesting travel guides full of information and pictures for display.
- CMS held their annual "Teaser" where all students attend a sneak preview of the upcoming band and choir concerts along with part of the play "A Nose for the News". The teaser is intended to spark the interest for students to attend the festivities offered in December at the school. Performances were at their best for the band, choir and drama students involved in the presentation.
- The play "A Nose for the News" was enjoyed by families, students, and staff in attendance. Directed by Mrs. Barshaw, the play ran on two consecutive days the first week of December. The play was as entertaining as it was amusing. It was obvious the hard work the students put into their practices paid off by their performance.

### **Millennium Middle School**

- MMS students were treated to a musical salute to the upcoming winter break. The holiday concert featured the Symphonic Band and Women's Choir with a special guest appearance by the combined SLHS and SLEHS Jazz Singers.
- We said goodbye to one of our veteran special education teachers, Ms. De Adkins. We wish her the best in her new endeavor in California and were assured that she left us with a song in her heart.
- CHEERS volunteers generously provided delicious homemade holiday cookies for the staff. Boxes were also provided, so staff members were able to select a variety of cookies "to go". What a wonderful treat!
- Feliz Navidad! The 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spaniards in Mrs. Gribble's 4<sup>th</sup> hour class ended their week of learning about Spain and Mexico's Christmas customs with a yummy fiesta.
- Millennium staff and students embraced the spirit of the season with our annual food drive and mitten trees. Thanks to the generosity displayed, MMS was able to donate over 1,000 food items and hygiene products, over 200 blankets and towels, and over 30 hats, gloves, and scarves to Active Faith.
- Math takes the spotlight for a day! Thanks to the entire Millennium Middle School math department who contributed to Math Mania, students were able to engage in learning about fractions for a fraction of each of the seven class periods. Ms. Dutcher and Mr. Ferguson entertained everyone with witty video clips that kicked off each lesson. Math Mania provided the opportunity for students to focus on equivalent fractions,

operations with fractions, and even solve a fraction mystery! Thanks to the hard work of this dedicated staff, students continued building successful skills for math and life beyond class.

### **South Lyon East High School**

- The South Lyon East High School Concert Band and Cougar Chorale put on their annual Winter combined concert on Thursday, December 3, 2009 at 7:00pm. They were directed by Mr. Andrew Hathikhanavala. The flute quartet was led by Mrs. Laura Hogan, and the choirs were accompanied by Mr. John Matthias. The concert took place in the beautiful South Lyon East High School auditorium and featured performances from extracurricular ensembles such as the Women's Chamber Choir, Brass Quintet, Jazz Band, Percussion Ensemble, and Flute Quartet in addition to the curricular choirs and band. Instrumentalists and singers united during the evening to make the concert truly combined. First, the jazz band backed two outstanding soloists for White Christmas. Finally, the concert was brought to a close with the six-minute Variations on Jingle Bells, which put the familiar tune through a musical blender while also blending the combined Cougar Chorale with the Concert Band, utilizing nearly every inch of the stage. The choirs and band will unite once again on Friday, March 5, 2010 at 7:00pm for the annual Pre-Festival Concert, where they will present selections for the upcoming MSVMA and MSBOA district-level choir and band festival season.
- South Lyon East participated in the Detroit Pistons Winter Gear Drive on December 2, 2009 through December 15, 2009. The National Honor Society collected mittens from the students and staff. NHS collected these items and sent them off to the Pistons for distribution. It was a great success.
- During the month of December, Key Club put on a school wide drive for Adopt a Family. Unlike last year, the school adopted two different families, so that more people could have an opportunity for a better Holiday season. The school was split into two pathways and each was designated a certain family and each classroom was assigned certain goods to bring for the families. This year's drive was a huge success, raising over five hundred dollars for the families. The items were delivered to the families over break. They were so excited and grateful to know that the holidays would be filled with joy and life would be a little easier. Key club was very happy with the results and hopes that next year the quantity and support will only grow.
- On December 14, 2009 the South Lyon East National Honor Society held its first American Red Cross Blood Drive. The blood drive was an overall success. NHS managed to collect fifty one pints of blood. Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood and the National Honor Society made it possible for South Lyon East High School to help out the ones in need.

- Mrs. Athey and Mrs. Evans 20<sup>th</sup> Century History classes did it again! The Students turned the Media Center into a 1920's museum on the day before winter break. The exhibit topics ranged from the changing role of women, to the Harlem Renaissance, to sports heroes. As students toured the museum, they discovered that Picture Palaces were showing movies like, The Jazz Singer and bringing movie stars like Charlie Chaplin to your neighborhood. The writers wrote about the materialism of the decade in novels like, The Great Gatsby or the situation of African-Americans as portrayed by Langston Huges. The people were migrating to the cities to work for Henry Ford building cars or they would use their skills to construct the Empire State building. All students worked hard to make the exhibits interesting and entertaining. Great job students!

### **South Lyon High School**

- December was a busy month for AP Chemistry teacher, Lynn Hensley and her students. Hensley had her students make micro scale hydrogen rockets out of plastic pipettes. They had to determine the appropriate amount of hydrogen and oxygen needed to react to create a tiny explosion to propel the rocket off the launch pad and across the room. The students generated both hydrogen and oxygen gas via chemical reactions. The winner (based on distance flown) in 1st hour was Brett Yerke and in 6th hour it was Jake Ross. Students also tie-dyed shirts as one of their experiments. The shirts were first soaked in a basic solution to open up the cotton fibers so the dye could bond better. Students chose their design and colors. The classic swirl was the most popular design, which Ms. Hensley helped them with. The shirts had to sit for at least 24 hours before washing. Many students wore them on the same day to show them off. Their assignment was then to write a short paper about the history of dyeing fabrics and the chemistry involved. Mr. Webber came to 6th hour AP Chemistry to join in the activity and make his own shirt - a sunburst design.
- Student council and leadership collaborated efforts to make the holidays bright for many families this season. They purchased enough fleece to make just over 20 blankets for children at Mott Hospital. On December 16<sup>th</sup>, student council laid out fleece blankets around the perimeter of the commons and invited all students to come help tie the blankets. The blankets were delivered over the holiday break. Leadership spent a few days at all lunches organizing the decoration of placemats. Various holiday decorations were placed on red or green construction paper. The placemats were then laminated in the library. Over 240 placemats were created, enough for every bed at Mott. Stephanie Kula and Kylie Decker delivered the placemats on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Both student council and Leadership also participated in the Active Faith Adopt-a-Family program and adopted 5 families during the holiday season. Gifts of toys and clothes were provided for 8 children. Some families requested that the gifts be wrapped while others were given wrapping paper so that they could wrap the gifts themselves. Leadership held

their annual canned food drive for Active Faith. Items were collected from November 30<sup>th</sup> – December 8<sup>th</sup>. First hour classes competed to see who could bring in the most items. Mrs. Lindow’s class of 15 students won with a donation of 156 items. Mrs. Andreski’s class of 30 came in a close 2<sup>nd</sup> place with a donation of 202 items. Overall, 800 items were collected. Allie Selmi, Kortney Koenig, Andrea Cogo and Aaron Shelp delivered the items to Active Faith on December 16<sup>th</sup>.

- On December 11<sup>th</sup>, AP Government teacher, Toni Simovski, took his AP class on a field trip to the Henry Ford Museum. The focus of the trip was the “Liberty and Justice for All” exhibit. Mr. Simovski had his students work on exploration packets that tied the trip to the evolution of Constitutional Rights through four themes within the exhibit. They agreed that the highlight of the exhibit was the Rosa Parks bus.
- Former student, Ian McGee gives acknowledgement to Stephanie Gerlach, AP English teacher here at South Lyon High School for encouraging him to reach above and beyond. Ian was a student in Stephanie’s AP English class in 2008. She suggested that Ian might want to try and submit a story he had written for one of her assignments to the Claremont Review; an international magazine for young adult writers. Ian’s family was thrilled when he was selected and won the privilege for publication. His story was published in this past falls publication of 2009, number 36. Ian gives acknowledgement to Mrs. Gerlach in the magazine for her wonderful teaching and encouragement to try and have his story published.