



# Gecko Gazette

December 2011

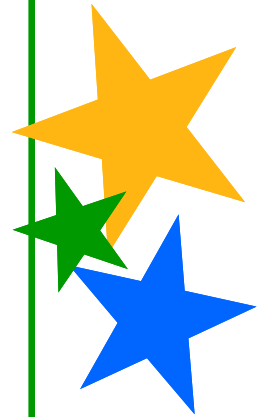
Volume 2 Issue 4



## Ready, Set, Go!

And off they ran with a spectacular mass start to our first Sierra Academy of Scottsdale fundraiser to benefit our physical education department. With enthusiasm the students of all ages began their mile walk or jog with classmates, family, Sierra faculty and relatives to support our school. The beautiful fall morning weather, motivational music, drinks, and snacks were only a few of the rewards enjoyed by all who participated. Not only did the social event continue to build long lasting friendships for the students but also provided a true experience of community support as the generosity of giving was evident. The students turned in their donations far surpassing our initial fundraising goal. A special thank you to Susie Vanderey who volunteered as chairman of this first time event.

Following this memorable event was a Thanksgiving potluck of traditional food and desserts. Everyone left for the start of their holiday festivities stuffed as a turkey!



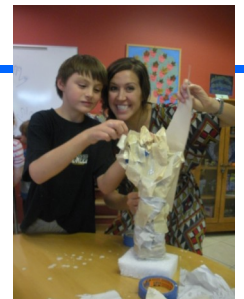
## A Double Thanksgiving By: Katelin

Each year on Thanksgiving, my family has two celebrations. My Grandfather comes to a celebration on Wednesday before Thanksgiving. We have the celebration at our home in the evening. The next day we have another celebration and the whole family attends.

For each celebration, we have many traditional foods. The foods include turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, brussel sprouts, salad and pumpkin pie. One food that we all enjoy is Swedish Sweet bread. Some people call this a cinnamon roll.

On this Thanksgiving, we did some fun things. After Thanksgiving dinner, we went to the theater to watch Arthur Christmas." After the movie, I watched television and packed my suitcase and went to bed. On Friday, we put our suitcases in the car and went to Las Vegas. We went shopping for Christmas gifts. Just finished one holiday and it won't be long before the next...Christmas!

## Meet Jo— Elementary Teacher



Hello! My name is Jo. I grew up in a very small town in Oregon. I attended ASU and participated in the Dual Certificate program which allowed me to earn degrees in both Elementary and Special education. I am also certified in both Applied Behavioral Analysis and Pivotal Response Training.

I am extremely excited to be a part of Sierra Academy. I have a deep rooted passion for children and all types of learning environments. This is my second year teaching, and my first year teaching Elementary age students.

Outside of Sierra Academy, I stay busy providing habilitation and respite care for a boy with Autism. I also love the outdoors. My therapy is staying active by running, hiking, climbing and taking Zumba classes. During my down time, I read or take long drives with my significant other.



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## Mix'n it Up!

Math doesn't just happen in a math book! The student's in Ms. Heather's high school class put their fractions into action as they prepared two batches of goodies for the Thanksgiving Bake Sale. Making "Special K bars" was a new experience for all the students, especially when asked to "half" all of the ingredients for the first batch to ensure that we had a good recipe. After the kids tasted them and approved with chocolate smiles, they made a full batch of the bars and also a batch of Rice Crispy squares. They took turns measuring, mixing, wrapping, pricing the bars and making signs for the sale. The students profited over \$20, which they have voted on using for a class party involving a holiday movie and popcorn in December.



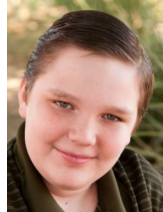
### *Amelia's Road* By Sebastian

*Amelia hates roads because roads can only take her one place, a place to work. Amelia took a shortcut home one day and found a beautiful tree at the end of the Accidental Road. The tree reminded her of the tree in her dream. She put her hair ribbon, a picture of her whole family, a picture of her dearest dream and a map of "Amelia's Road in a box. She buried it next to the tree because she wanted to remember where the box is when she comes back. I think the story is great because Amelia had a dream.*

## "What's going on in Ms. Jo's Class?"

I am so excited to announce that my students have been working diligently on a classroom horticulture project. They have been taking care of the classroom plants in addition to journaling their observations. "The plants are growing!" has become the common outburst every time we step outside to look at the plants. It is so wonderful to see the kids' excitement and proud faces each and every time they see what they have grown.

We also have a couple of new additions to the classroom! We welcome Landon and Emilio who are new students at Sierra and Cooper who is our very own classroom therapy dog. Everyone is enthusiastic about having more peers as well as Cooper, who stops by every Tuesday. Barb, Cooper's trainer, has kept the kids involved with Cooper by helping them build their own Cooper scrapbook so they can document their interactions with him. This week they will be learning how to groom and properly take care of Cooper.



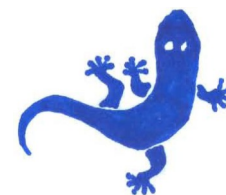
### **My Life so Far** By Nick

I learned about caring and friendship from reading about Enrique. My favorite part of the book is when Enrique designed the round array for the rover. My second favorite part is when Enrique drew a comic, called "Ketchup Wonderland". My third favorite part is when Enrique was there when Art won a trophy for tennis. I think the book is exciting because it showed his life from the beginning until now.





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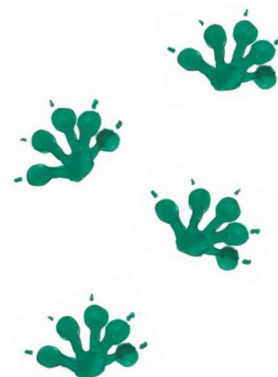


## Middle School Student Happenings in Yennga's Class

Yennga's class just finished the book, "Amelia's Road", by Linda Altman. Throughout the newsletter are articles written by Nick, Sebastian and Reanne writing reviews about the book and sharing their lives in relation to Amelia.

We are currently plowing through another awarding winning book, "Esperanza Rising", by Pam Munoz Ryan to deepen our studies in Latin America!

In addition to these great books, the children had the opportunity to read Hugo and see the movie "Hugo" on a recent field trip.



## Susan's Great Adventurers

The middle grades class recently celebrated 'National Geography Week'. The theme this year was 'The Adventure in Your Community'. We started the week with a school community walk. The students took pictures of both natural and man-made things around the school. They found it interesting that we all took the same walk, but none of the pictures looked the same. We also looked at map making, storytelling and the effect we have on the world around us. The point of the week was to find geography activities in every community. It was a fun and interesting week.



## Reanne and Amelia's Road By Reanne

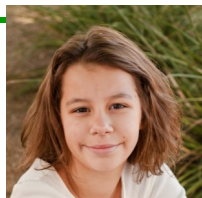
I think that Amelia is thankful for a family, money, and dreams. First, she's thankful for her family because some children don't have a Mom and a Dad. Secondly, she is thankful for money because her family has some money they earned at last. Lastly she is thankful for dreams because some people don't have dreams. I think that Amelia is thankful for these things because it's what makes her special.

I'm thankful for my family, clothes and animals. The first thing I'm thankful for is clothes because not a lot of people have fancy clothes. Secondly I'm thankful for my family because not a lot of children belong to a family. Lastly I am thankful for animals because of animals my Mon and Dad are veterinarians, which is how they earn a living.

Amelia and I are thankful for these things because it makes our lives special and interesting.



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## Hugo:

### Tate's Movie Review

Hugo is about a boy that goes on an adventure. He lived in Paris. There are movies in the movies that have mermaids, skeletons, and all different kinds of stuff. He has a friend named Isabelle. She has god parents. The station inspector tries to get Hugo but he can't and fall in love with the flower lady. I like the movie. Hugo fixed the automaton.



### Jame's Movie Review

It took place in Paris. It was about a boy who lived in the clocks. Hugo met a man named Georges who took his notebook and he had to go to Isabelle for help. There was the station inspector who was after Hugo because he stole stuff. I liked the movie because it was an adventure. You should see the movie.



## A Trashy Tale

Yesterday, I was plopped into a recycling bin and carried several miles away to the Recycling Transfer Station. The Sierra Academy High School students were there, taking a field trip. They saw me, a lowly piece of trash; get dumped from the huge truck onto a large floor. Then, they watched as I, and 6 tons of recyclables, were pushed into a large hole, which emptied into a larger truck below. The students were able to not only sit in the truck, but were given a ride around the recycling plant in the front seat! They learned about which materials should be recycled and how the trucks dump and how technology has improved over the past few years to create faster dumping methods. The students learned that each truck travels to over 1,000 homes each day! Also, they found out that it used to take 40 seconds for a truck to pick up one recycling bin and now it takes 6 seconds! I bet the students will think twice about throwing away or recycling materials after this field trip!

# December 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Eat a Red Apple Day	2	3
4	5	6	7 Letter Writing Day	8	9	10
11	12	13 Ice Cream Day	14 Holiday Party- Nestors	15 <b>Early Release-</b> Pro. Development	16 <b>Early Release-</b> Conferences	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
<b>Winter Break December 19—January 2</b>						
25 Christmas	26	27	28	28	30	31 New Year's Eve

