



Gecko Gazette

January 2012

Volume 2 Issue 25



Celebrate!

This Amanda Bradley quote *“Celebrate the happiness that friends are always giving, make every day a holiday and celebrate just living!”* speaks to my gratitude for our gracious parent and family support of our recent school fundraisers.

I wish for each of you to make everyday a holiday and celebrate the beauty of each day. Your contributions to our fundraisers will benefit our school staff and students in many ways. Happy New Year!

A special thank you from Debi Watland



Meet Beverley

I have lived in Arizona since 1962 with a couple of detours to Alaska and Montana for a few years. My three children are native Arizonans as are my two grandchildren.

I decided to become a teacher about 5 years ago and received my Masters Degree in Special Education from Grand Canyon University. I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to teach at every level from kindergarten through high school. I love teaching and am very excited about being part of the Sierra Academy team.

My hobbies are reading, hiking, sewing and knitting but my passion is cooking. My granddaughter shares my cooking passion and we are always teaming up to try a new recipe or put a new spin on an old recipe. What fun!

I am looking forward to working with my students in our new classroom and welcome parents to drop in and say hello.

A New Year, a New School



2012 lies before us and with it comes fresh and exciting challenges. Every day, the teachers at Sierra Academy encourage students to strive toward reaching their goals and when a goal is met, it is time to celebrate!

A long term goal of transitioning to public high school has been met by Kyle, a student who began Sierra Academy after struggling in the public middle school setting. During the past three years, Kyle has become increasingly more confident in our highly individualized, small group environment. Though nervous about starting a high school with 1,500 students, Kyle took his learning into his own hands and braved the massive school for the morning session, then traveled on a bus to Sierra Academy for the afternoon. The semester long transition of going half the day at the larger school and half the day at our small setting eased Kyle into his current full time enrollment at the public high school. The staff at both schools collaborated to ensure that Kyle made a successful transition. Upon leaving Sierra Academy last December, students lined the hallways to cheer and give him high-fives and personal cards of congratulations. By continuing to reach for his goals, Kyle has been an inspiration to all of us at Sierra Academy. We wish him the best success in his new school!



Gecko Gazette

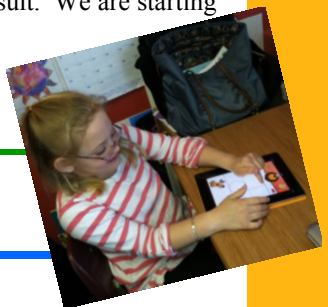


Did Someone Say "Is there an App for that?"

My class has been diving into technology this month. They are learning how to use the keyboard by typing their name, logging in with a login/password, and typing their own sentences. We also have some great new iPad applications. Each student is able to navigate through a variety of laded apps for Reading, Writing, and Math. The kids have also been taking turns acting as the teacher using the "Smart board" lessons! They love going up to the board with the pointer and leading their peers through the sight words. Every day, the kids as, "Can I have a turn to use the pointer?"



This month in Science we are learning more about weather and climate. Each day we examine the weather and we record our observations in a classroom Science journal. At the beginning of each day, one student gets to report the weather. We have been discussing how weather affected our classroom plants! Our horticulture project has taken a slight turn as a result. We are starting fresh with improved resources.



Student of the month: Allison



- The student spotlight is an award that goes to someone in our school who is working hard in class, is friendly with others and has a positive attitude. How do you feel about being chosen?

Great! I feel like a star!

- This is your first year at Sierra Academy. How is our school different than your old school?

My old school had a lot of people and sometimes kids would bump into me.

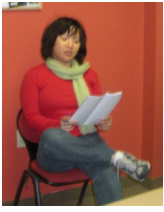
- What do you like about being a student at Sierra Academy?

I get my work done. There is more time to focus.

- What would you like to do for a job someday?

I want to be an artist. I love to paint.

Middle School is Rocking Around the World!



We finished Latin America by finishing yet another award winning book, "Esperanza Rising", by Pam Munoz Ryan. We also enjoyed some chips and authentic school-made salsa by Nick! Everyone loved it! Thanks Nick!

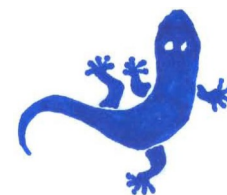
We started the New Year with a reading pledge to end the Third Quarter (March 2nd) with a "Surprise Celebration". Nick has pledged to read 30 books, Sebastian pledged to read 20, and Ireland has pledged to read 25 books with a teacher. I also pledged to read 3 novels and I've got all stacked up, ready to read!

We are moving on to Europe next! until then... bon voyage!





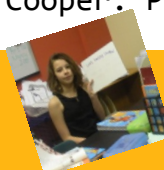
Gecko Gazette



We have a new primary classroom!

Ms. Bev is the new teacher and this class will be concentrating on reading, language arts, and math. All other activities will be done in concert with

Ms. Jo's class. That means we will have group lunch, music, PE, and visits from Ms. Nancy and our favorite dog, Cooper. Please stop by classroom number 5 to say hello and watch our progress as we go from a rather empty plain room to a dazzling new primary classroom!



Welcome to 2012, to the Middle Grades Class!

We are continuing to work on reading, writing, and math skills. We are also trying to continue to read more novels and authentic or 'real' text. In social studies, we are continuing our tour of Central and South America, and then will venture to Europe.

In science, we are working on simple machines, and simple chemistry concepts.

We are also continuing writing various formats.

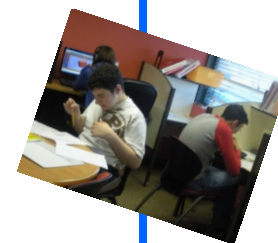
We are looking forward to a great semester.



High School Happenings

What better way to start a new year than by learning new healthy habits; which is the topic for our new semester long health class. This week, we discussed the three pillars of health – physical, social and emotional health. When one of these parts of health is “down” then we become unbalanced. Living a balanced healthy life is something we are all striving for this year! Healthy living ties into our current social skills topic of identifying physiological responses to anger and how to cope with feelings of rage and frustration. Healthiness is also found in our math curriculum, where students are counting the amount of calories in various foods and how many calories are burned while performing various activities (sitting, standing, running...) In science, the students made models of atoms, elements and compounds while identifying the protons, neutrons and electrons. Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal are the countries that we are studying in Geography and the suspense is building in Literature class as students are reading short suspense stories such as “The Tiger or the Lady”, “The Lottery” and “The Monkey’s Paw.”

The students warmed up quickly to our new teacher assistant Kwabena, who assists in all of the school subjects to create an incredible learning atmosphere fostering individualized attention. Also, a special thank you goes out to Jacob and Baxter for helping in the assembly of the PE storage cabinets in the gym! The PE equipment will be so much more organized because of your hard work! As a teacher, I thought the kids would need some time to get used to school again, but they all jumped in with their minds ready for new knowledge. I can tell this is going to be an amazing year in our high school.





Gecko Gazette



Student New Year's Resolutions

- Peter: I will improve my multiplication skills.
- Garvey: *My goal is understanding story problems in math.*
- Jacob: I will slow down and read my literature book carefully.
- Katelin: *I will work hard to learn about other countries in Geography class.*
- Allison: My resolution is to hangout with friends.
- Michaela: *I will focus on becoming better at subtraction.*
- Baxter: I want to survive another year.
- Tate: *I want to go to Texas.*
- Charlie: I want to become a better dancer.
- James: *I want to go to California.*
- Nicholas: I will help Mom do more chores.
- Ireland: *I will say yes instead of nodding.*
- Jordon: I will be a better brother to my sister.
- Emma: *I will learn how to ride a bike.*
- Landon: I will help Mom more with the hamper.
- Sahara: *I want to travel around the world.*
- Emilio: I will help my Mom with the new baby.
- Sebastian: *I will be a better listener.*
- Najib: I will share my games at home with my brother.
- Faith: *I will help feed the dog.*



January 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 New Year's Day	2 NO SCHOOL	3 Welcome Back	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 Make Your Dream Come True Day	14
15 National Hat Day	16 NO SCHOOL MLK day	17	18 Winnie the Pooh Day	19 National Popcorn Day	20	21
22	23	24	25 Informational Forum	26	27 Chocolate Cake Day	28
29 National Puzzle Day	30	31 Backward Day				

