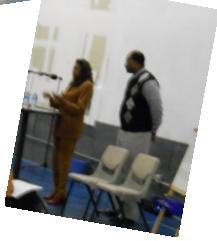




# Gecko Gazette

February 2012

Volume 2 Issue 6



## The Autism Forum

“Think of the brain as a tree that needs nutrients, pruning, and healthy flowers.” was the visual theme of our recent information forum.

Sierra Academy of Scottsdale hosted this information forum for interested parents, educational professionals, and mental health professionals who attended to hear Dr. Albert Mensah and Judith Bowman speak about their healthcare reinvented philosophy. They provided information about Mensah Medical’s integrated approach to medical care bridging the gap between traditional medicine and natural medicine based on biomedical evaluations, research, and clinical experience. The Dr’s. shared that their physicians offer conventional treatments as well as individualized nutrient therapies addressing the unique biochemical needs and imbalances affecting behavior, mood, development and mental well-being. Their belief is that these imbalances may be associated with disorders such as;

anxiety, depression, mood swings, panic, behavior/ learning disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, autism, eating disorders, and bipolar.

The Mensah Medical staff provided information regarding their U.S. Outreach Clinics which includes the West Coast, East Coast and Southwest

Regions. For more information you can research this interesting healthcare topic at [www.mensahmedical.com](http://www.mensahmedical.com)

## LOOK Who’s Watching!

This month has already presented our classroom with some thrilling events. We had the exciting opportunity to visit the Phoenix Zoo. The kids absolutely enjoyed every minute of exploration and **LOOKING**. The Monkey Village was certainly a highlight for us all. We had the unique experience of roaming with the squirrel monkeys in their personal zoo habitat. Some other classroom favorites were the giraffes, flamingos, and tortoises.

Our class also spent a lot of time preparing for Cooper’s surprise birthday party. Cooper, the therapy dog, turned 4 years old this month! Cooper has been receiving a lot of attention lately. This week we are expecting a visit from CBS channel 5 News to **LOOK** and check out how well he has been working with the kids. We feel extremely honored to have this opportunity to share with everyone how much positive energy Cooper brings our classroom. Even though Cooper is only here once a week, the students have been beefing up their therapy dog scrapbook!

In order to keep the positive aura perpetuating, our class has been recognizing “Star of the week.” This student earns the reward for working diligently on their seat work, helping their peers, sharing, and keeping a positive attitude. **LOOK** at our “Star of the week!” This student has gone above and beyond the classroom expectations. I am proud to acknowledge **Emilio H.** for all of his efforts and for earning “Star of the week.” He truly sets a high standard for our classroom.

Thanks Emilio!



## Meet Melissa

I am originally from Boston, MA. But have been in the valley for the last fifteen years. I have a wonderful 11 year old son and in my spare time I am pursuing my BA in Elementary Education/Special Education. Besides teaching, I am an avid reader and I train dogs.





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Wouldn't it be simply amazing to have wishes come true? After reading the short suspense story "The Monkey's Paw" by W.W. Jacobs in our literature class, the students were surprised to realize that wishes do not always have positive consequences. As an assignment, the high school students had to think of three wishes and then think of a negative consequence that may result from one of the wishes. Three of the student's essays were selected for this month's newsletter.

### Three Wishes By Katelin Nestor

One time I found a magic lamp on the street. I wondered what it was when I picked it up. So I rubbed the lamp and a genie appeared out of the bottle.

My first wish was to have 1,000 batteries. With that many batteries I could listen to music forever or I could make toys work. It could also made my lamp work.

My second wish was a remote control chair. When I sit in the chair, it makes me feel relaxed. It makes my body warm with the seat heater. It also gives me massages.

My third wish was Magic Shoes; they help people walk who have a hard time walking. They gives people energy and they even give light.

All in all my wishes came true, but I need to be careful for what I wish for. For example, when I wished for 1,000 batteries, they can cause waste in the landfill when they expire; some wishes can have negative consequences.



### The Three Wishes By Allison

It all began last month when I was doing something at home. I was on my computer playing a cooking game which involved making a chocolate house. I had to make everything in the house. Then outside my window I saw a girl who had everything. She even had a car named Katrina. The girl gave me a magical lamp and told me I could make three wishes.

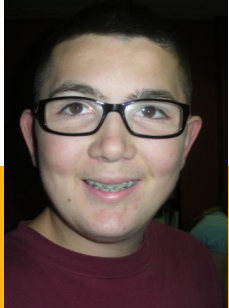
My first wish was to be a rich girl. If I had a thousand dollars I could buy 10 iPods so I could always have music wherever I went. I think I would use the money to buy a variety of shoes and matching bottles of nail polish.

My second wish would be to turn my house into chocolate. My door would be a chocolate bar. My sink water would be chocolate sauce. If I was really hungry, I would eat my own house and it could build back up.

My third and final wish would be to have a car named Katrina when I'm sixteen. With that car I could drive my friends to the mall then sometimes I would go out to lunch. After I had my lunch I could take my dad places, but if I drove everywhere it would be too dangerous. I may see a big boulder in the middle of the road and the car might fall over and I would fly out and fall.

My wishes may come true someday but I have to be careful with them.

### Three Wishes By Jacob



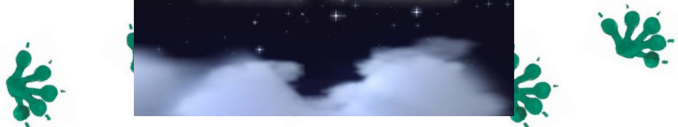
Having three wishes would be fun. If I could wish for anything I want. I'll tell you about my wishes.

My first wish would be a popcorn machine and an arcade. The arcade would have different games to play. The popcorn machine would have different slots. One slot would have soda. The second slot has hotdogs, nachos and candy.

My second wish would be to have a chocolate room filled with Hershey bars. I would have ten thousand Hershey chocolate bars. For decoration, 400 Hershey bars be a sculpture of a 100 dollar bill.

My third wish would be one million dollars. I would have a room filled with money to jump in to. I would throw the money up in the air.

All in all, having three wishes would be fun, but I shouldn't get too carried away. If you ate 500 hundred candy bars a day you would weigh 5,000 pounds. Be careful what you wish for.





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## Beverley's Coming Up with More Reading Ideas

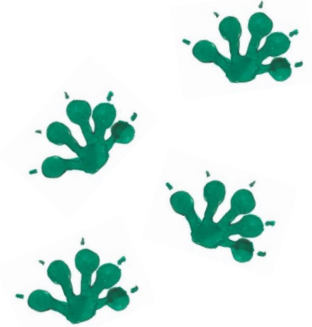
We are getting settled in our new classroom. We received our new computer in January and we are thrilled to have it. The students rotate each day during math and reading. This means they have 15 minutes of independent practice, 15 minutes of one-on-one instruction and 15 minutes on the computer using Compass Learning to reinforce the concepts learned in their one-on-one session.

We also have a new curriculum, Reading A-Z. This is an on-line reading program that allows teachers to download and print out books for students. The variety of reading material is tremendous and includes fiction, non-fiction, biographies, science, and history.

I am so pleased to have this program available for the students and I think you will all be pleased with the results. All the books are leveled according to student needs and each book comes with a complete lesson plan that includes vocabulary, phonics, fluency assessments and comprehension questions. Students can progress at their level and pace.

Most students enjoy the books and don't complain about reading them. I have started using the program and once your student completes a book, I will be sending it home. The books that are sent home are for the students to keep. Ask your student to read their books to you and watch how their reading improves.

Please drop by and visit our classroom. I would also love to show you the new curriculum. If you would like to meet with me at any time, I will be happy to accommodate a meeting at your convenience.



## New Programs at Work

Sierra Academy of Scottsdale recently purchased a program called Make-A-Schedule from [www.do2learn.com](http://www.do2learn.com). This program is designed to build visual schedules, reminders, step-by-step guides, and any other visual reinforcements that any student might need.

A summary taken from their website describes it as - "Make-A-Schedule is an easy-to-use program that gives you access to thousands of picture cards. In minutes, you can create Schedules, Story Strips, and Forms."



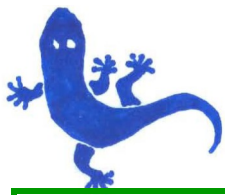
## THANK YOU FOR ALL THE BOOKS!

Thanks to all the support at our Scholastic Book Fair in December, our Middle School students are reading up a storm! Remember about their reading pledges in January's Newsletter? Here's an update...Nick has reading 26 books out of 30; Sebastian has read 9 out of 20; Ireland has collaboratively read 14 of 25 books. Michael our newest Middle School student has taken the challenge and pledged to read 14 books by the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter to join us for a "SURPRISE PARTY". The number "14" is Michael's lucky number, by the way!

Here is what Nick thinks about Reading:

I like the books that I've read because they are interesting. My favorite funny book is, "Come Back Amelia Bedelia". It is funny because Amelia Bedelia does not understand how to do her job. Amelia Bedelia was asked to sew the dresses, but she cut the dresses short instead. My second favorite book is, "Big Max the Great Detective". I like the book because it's about exploring where the answers are. Big Max and the King are searching for the elephant. Why are they searching for the elephant? I think people should read books everyday to be good at reading and writing. People should read books at home, on the beach while on vacation, at school, on an airplane, at the workplace, or at the restaurant while waiting for their order. They can read books, magazines, I Pads, newspapers, and manuals. People should read everyday like Ms. Yennga and me.





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### Avoid the Summer Learning Slide

Summer school is an important aspect of education. As we know there is a slide in the summer if students do not continue to stay connected with their learning process. For many students it is vital that they have the opportunity to continue to learn, review previously learned skills for maintenance, have an opportunity to continue their structured routine and schedule, and socialize with their peers. It is very beneficial to provide this year-round learning to enhance the academic skills of your students. For these reasons, Sierra Academy of Scottsdale is providing parents with an academic summer school option. Our goal is to avoid the summer learning slide and continue to maintain student academic success. Our summer camp can help to mitigate the loss of knowledge through keeping kids' brains active and engaged. We are accepting registration for summer school currently. Please call for more information. Calendar attached.

### Gabriel's Angel: Pet Therapy with Ms. Liz and Rubicon Nick's Pet Therapy Journal



*January 13, 2012*  
Rubicon is a good dog. He is good because he listens. I would like to teach Rubicon to stand on his hind end. I would like to spend more time with Rubicon.

*January 27, 2012*  
Today I learned to walk Rubicon. I also gave Rubicon commands that told him to let's go, sit, up and touch. Next week I will teach Rubicon to roll over.

*Stay tune for next month's Pet Therapy update by Nicholas!*

## February 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Ground Hog Day	3	4
5	6	7	8 Kite Flying Day	9	10	11 Make a Friend Day
12 Abraham Lincoln's Birthday	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17 Random Acts of Kindness Day	18
19	20 President's Day- No School	21	22 George Washington's Birthday	23	24	25
26	27	28 High School AIMS writing	29 High School AIMS reading Leap Day			

