

SYCAMORE LEAFLET

February 9, 2015

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Sycamore Valley Academy
Charter School

Prepare for Boot Camp

Mrs. Denham is one of the 3rd and 4th grade teachers. This is Mrs. Denham's second year. She currently teaches 31 students; 10 boys and 21 girls. She has more 4th graders than 3rd graders, she has 16 4th graders and 15 3rd graders. She loves to teach kids. She chose to teach at SVA because she taught 4th grade for six years before coming to SVA. She also taught Kindergarten and 5th grade for three years, but something about 4th grade really stuck with her. Also, she loves California History and that's a very important part of 4th grade. When Denham first came to SVA she never taught 3rd graders before so it was a brand new experience for her, but she loves it just as much. She especially loves seeing her 3rd graders from last year become 4th graders this year.



This is one of the fun activities that Mrs. Denham's students get to do.

Mrs. Denham is a very creative person. They are doing a few different things in E.L.A. Her class is reading Soft Rain which is about a 9 year old Cherokee girl who is forced by the American Government to move out West. It's about her life on the "Trail of Tears". By reading this, they're not just learning about the Cherokee Native tragedy, but also working on building up their independent reading stamina and learning how to use specific evidence and proof from a text to support their thinking.

Her class is doing a fun activity on Spelling. It's called Spelling Boot Camp. It's a six week activity that includes the top 90 words spelled incorrectly by most 3rd and 4th graders, as well as the study of Greek and Latin Roots. E.L.A. sounds like a fun subject.

At SVA classes have to participate in a Service Learning Project. Mrs. Denham's class has not yet agreed on a Service Learning Project, but her students have come up with the ideas of helping the homeless, helping patients with Cancer, serving the elderly, working to get school supplies for poor children who can't afford them, or planting more trees. They did some research this week on different organizations in Visalia that have connections to the issues they have come up with so they can make an informed decision about what project they want to do and, who they want to help with the project. Their PBL has been decided. They're doing a project on bullying. They are going to conduct surveys on campus to get a "taste" of how much bullying there is and how frequently it happens at SVA. They are planning to provide a presentation to the whole school about preventing bullying by the end of the project. Mrs. Denham really cares about her students and she has asked her class what they like the most about learning. She told us they had many varied answers, but the overall theme was that her students love learning in general and stretching their brains. One of her many students said, "Whenever you learn you can use it in so many other ways and with other skills." Another student said she likes to contribute ideas to other students. A student also said, "You can learn more from a great debate". Their favorite subjects ranged from Science, Spanish, Math, Writing, and to Reading. Mrs. Denham even said, "There didn't seem to be a clear winner." So all in all, Mrs Denham is a very creative teacher.

Got Paint?

Mrs. Bennett discusses art.

Who is the art teacher at Sycamore Valley? Mrs. Bennett, of course! When we queried her about her motives for teaching art, she replied; "Art and creativity are a really important, though often overlooked, part of life. I wanted to add these attributes to children's lives." When we asked why she left her old post, she promptly replied; "I was subbing for science until they [Mrs. Dutton and Mr. Benton] could find a science teacher, Mr. Rook!" Mrs. Bennett has her special areas of art that she either is good at teaching, or likes to instruct children in. Her favorite style of art to teach is pop art. Drawing is a unique and sophisticated technique, and it is her favorite to instruct in. Mrs. Bennett loves to see students experimenting with paints. This year Mrs. Bennett, who has an



affinity for art, has planned special projects for every two grades. For example, Kindergarten is doing a project on Van Gogh. First and Second are painting butterflies. Third and Fourth graders are making monochromatic self-portraits (pictures of themselves in one color). Fifth and Sixth are painting their impressions of Kandinsky's work, *Circles in Squares*, using concentric circles to make a surreal or abstract masterpiece. Seventh grade is preparing their sculptures, while working with color, tints, and shades. And eighth is creating a pop-art project inspired by Andy Warhol. Most of the artists they are inspired by are

recent from the 20th century. Mrs. Bennett makes an encomium on the projects; "I seriously love and am excited for them all!" All in all, Mrs. Bennett is an extremely talented teacher and artist at Sycamore Valley Academy, and we are very glad to have her this year.

Young Inventors in Mrs. Weeaks Class



The kids in Mrs. Weeaks' class have been creating board games to thoroughly study the book they read in class. The games they produced were based on the book they read in their groups which was Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of Nimh. Claire and Sarah are the students that invented this board game. The board game consisted of directions, cue cards and a board game. This creative way of learning displays that students can show their critical thinking and have fun at the same

time. Many students apparently seem to like PBL (Project Based Learning) more than ordinary book reports. You can see that through the student's details that they pay close attention to events throughout the story, making the board game more realistic.

It's Not Difficult!

We asked Ms. Lopez a few questions about her Spanish classes and she diligently replied. Here are some of the questions we inquired about. Is it difficult to teach Spanish? Ms. Lopez said, "It is not hard if the students are open minded and eager to learn." What do you prefer to start with? Ms. Lopez likes to start with the basics; the alphabet and phonics. She explained that her techniques are to teach pronunciation. What do your tests look like? She does assessments including small



presentation's, group dialogs, skits, vocabulary, drawings, and words or phrases. Does every class have the same exact materials or does it depend on what level they're on? She said, "Each grade level is at a different level with the curriculum I am using." What do you always carry around with you from classroom to classroom? She said, "I don't usually have to take much with me, being that there's only one class that doesn't come to Spanish."

You can see that Ms. Lopez works very hard to teach and inspire students of all ages to learn the fluid language of Spanish, and SVA is very lucky to have her here as one of the Spanish teachers.

Mrs. Poggione's Kindergarten Class!

Learning about the works in Mrs. Poggione's class.

This whole month, Wyatt and I have been interviewing one of the kindergarten teachers. In this article, I will be telling you and the readers, about one of the teachers on campus, Mrs. Poggione.

First, we'll be reporting to you a little About Mrs. Poggione and her class. Mrs. Poggione has been instructing kindergarten for three years now, and has been teaching kindergarten at SVA for the first three years (since this school has opened). She does get exhausted, but it's not because of teaching.

It's because she is spending her time here at SVA and even at home she is still thinking about what kinds of activities and lessons she plans on doing

with her cute, little kindergarten students!! Here are the art projects that her class has done so far: Self portraits, drawing and painting frogs, and learning how to cut and use mini morsels of glue.

Her class has also just finished studying apples (life cycles and parts of an apple). Mrs. Poggione says that, "It has been an amazing journey teaching here! I wouldn't have it any other way!" Mrs. Poggione also says that, "I am looking forward to a great and exciting year full of learning!"



Here is one of the many projects that Mrs. Poggione works so hard on to make sure her students have fun and learn how to use their motor skills.

Ms. Chan's 3rd and 4th Graders

In Ms. Chan's 3rd and 4th combo class she plans to encourage students that bullying is a wrong choice to make when it comes to irritation or getting bullied. The main PBL (Project-Based-Learning) is bullying so Ms. Chan is teaching the kids that there are other options in life than to bully back the kids who have bullied you or one of your friends. You could discuss to them and ask for them to stop, but if that doesn't work don't let the weeds infest. You should solve the problem by telling a teacher. Also, don't be the

one to start the problem because if you want to start it you better be able to take it. The PBL is very important for their childhood and even adulthood. Ms. Chan believes that this is the right choice to teach her students today and in her future classes.



What's Going On in Ms. Chan's Class?

Recently, I visited Ms. Chan's class to observe what exactly is going on inside the classroom, and to follow, I took some notes. The day I went inside, the class was having spanish-time. I knew that it would be exciting to see what they have been learning in spanish, so I took a few notes. I noticed that there were about 7 groups of 5, and each student was put into a group of 5. Also, each group excitedly worked together and discussed a certain matter. Each student took a turn to read, in spanish, from a paper that each group received. I also noticed that no one got up and wasted time, but they all remained seated and turned to their assignments. Ms. Ramos, their spanish teacher, went around the room and gave help to the students who needed help. Those particular students quietly raised their hands and waited patiently for Ms. Ramos. Although, some students were distracted.

I also did notice that their classroom was very neat and tidy. All of the group-tables were in neat order. Some chairs, though, weren't pushed in. Each of the 4 walls displayed the artwork that the students have finished in the past. There are a few books stacked on each table. Those are reading books.

Everyone in the room is participating on their assignment. Mr. Hum would go around the room helping with students who need help. I notice everyone is happy and having a good time. Everyone took turns speaking. I was happy to see that when a girl wasn't happy, another girl walked by and comforted her. I was impressed. I loved observing Ms. Chan's class because I really saw excitement and good nature with all of the students. They all behaved very well and stuck to their work. I am happy to only report good things.

Thank you, Lauren Zachary

Science Circus

What I be will outlining in this article is the Science Circus, and how some of the stations are so outstanding and that most of the students were passionate and wanted to do it again for the spring. I will also mention a few of the reviews from the students.

First I will talk about Oobleck. In this group, the students conducted an experiment called Oobleck. And what you do in Oobleck is you add some cornstarch and water to acquire a mixture that is neither a solid or a liquid but in fact both! But I am not writing to describe the work. Many children loved the science experiment that was in just a inch of gooey liquid. Most of them said that they want to do this at home to amaze their parents.



Here is Mr. Rook posing for the camera and being very photogenic at the science circus.

The Boy at the Science Circus

Once upon a time there was a boy named Kevin. It was science circus at his school, Sycamore Valley Academy. There were lots of stations and Kevin's was one of them. Kevin did a simple, but fun station. He did the tornado in a bottle. The tornado in the bottle is simple to make and use. You can create this by getting two 2-liter bottles and a connector. First, you fill one bottle up to $\frac{7}{8}$ with water. Then you connect the connector to the bottle and then you connect the other bottle to the connector. You should get water in one bottle and the other bottle connected to the connector. After this you get the side of the bottle with water on top and turn the top in a circle. This will create a reaction when the water turns into a tornado going to the other side. So at science circus the tornado in a bottle attracted lots of kids. They all loved the tornado. In second grade a energetic kid name Olin really loved this. His first reaction was his face getting really big and saying, "WOW!!!!!" Kevin and his friend could tell he loved it just from that. This made Kevin happy. He did this because he knew at least one kid loved the experiment and hoped more kids would have the same reaction.

Spanish

We interviewed Ms. Ramos on Spanish 2 and asked her questions about her Spanish class. Kids in K-4th, have learned several words and phrases. Some of the words are "cabeza", "hombros", "decodes", and "brazos". She loves teaching Spanish to K-4th graders. Ms. Ramos quoted, "Spanish is a beautiful and valuable language." She has always wanted to become a teacher. She was given the opportunity to teach Spanish at SVA and the Spanish language was always important and present in her life. They do different activities depending on the grade level. The younger kids start Spanish by saying the word of the day/week, cedar. The third and fourth graders activity is, "Pared de Instagram". Another activity is the bow and arrow on the whiteboard game. Some examples of the words they have learned are hola, buenos dias, buenas tardes, and buenas noches. Sometimes Ms. Ramos will give out pencils and stickers for participating and leading the class. They have done some fun projects and she wants to continue these particular activities. One of the projects were "Pared de Instagram".

This is her first year teaching. Spanish at any age is important to learn because it is a beneficial 21st century skill to have. The reason for this is you can get a better job and education. Therefore, our students will be prepared for high school and college if they choose to take spanish. Some jobs encounter having to work with the Spanish language. Ms. Ramos says the best thing about teaching Spanish was all the progress the children make. Ms. Ramos says "The ability to speak more than one language will open up so many doors to your future".



Recently Discovered: Ancient Artifacts

Ms. Bellamy's class builds special clay caves to dig deeper into ancient Native American culture.

More than just math, language arts, and history are being used in the SVA curriculum. Archaeology has been introduced to students through various short term projects. The students in Ms. Bellamy's class have recently created clay caves that contain a culture that was buried long ago. Investigating the process of an archaeological dig has revealed insight into a whole new world.

The students gathered bins, dirt, clay, and paint to invent a small tribe. They shape, mold, and form small artifacts to tell a story of how the tribe lived and what they used for tools and food. After they are satisfied with their creation, they bury it! Why? So other students can dig it up and figure out the tribe's story (i.e. how they lived, what they ate, and how they died). All of the caves that were completed showed that hard work was put into the project, but most of all, the students had fun.



Mr. Bedolla

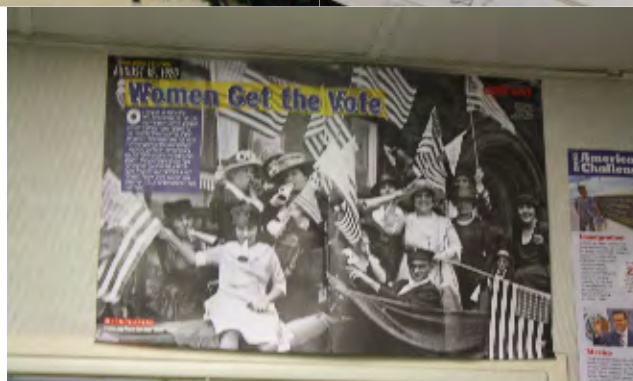
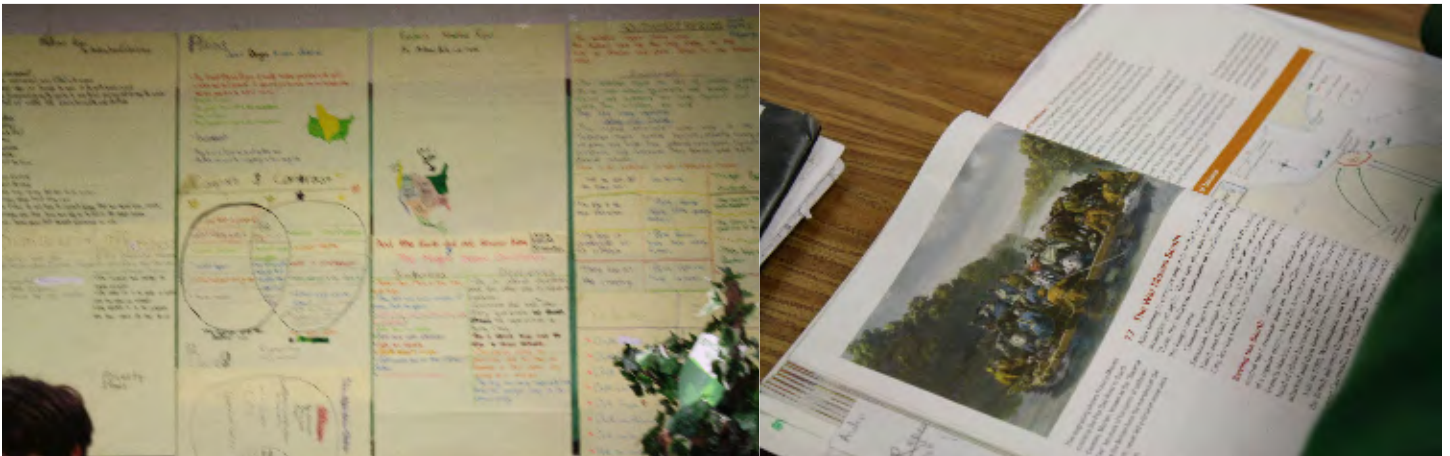
How history meets english language arts!



Mr. Bedolla's 8th grade class is currently reading a historical fiction book named *The Road To Memphis*. *The Road To Memphis* is about adolescent African Americans that takes place in the 1940s when the Jim Crow Laws were still in motion.

The Jim Crow Laws were racial laws that separated blacks and whites from public facilities (for example: bathrooms, water fountains, restaurants, work places, schools, and not to mention public transportation). This law also prevented African Americans from back-talking to white Americans. Which is basically what most of the characters in *The Road To Memphis* have a problem with.

This book provides helpful insight to people of all ages, not just the 8th graders of SVA, but to all ages as well. Why? Because it opens up your mind to not just yourself, but to the people around you and it helps remind yourself of how you treat others.



Zephania's Word Scrambles

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MUDONS

Bullies, Bullies, and More Bullies

By: Jonathan Vedenoff

Bullies, they're not nice. Even if you, yourself, have not been bullied you have most likely seen or heard of them in movies, TV shows, books, comics, and so much more. Well I have thought, for a while now, in those movies and books someone figures out how to stop the bullying. Why can't that happen in the real world?

Some kids have stuck up for themselves and others at their schools, to help stop bullying. I know I have been bullied and it's not fun at all. Don't be a bystander, go help stop the bullying! I try to help people at SVA to stop bullying by not encouraging it. It's not hard, all you have to do is be nice. Trust me, it makes you feel good. So help stop bullying. If you have been bullied you know how it feels. It is not fun. So, last but not least, stick up for bullying. Don't be a victim, be a hero.

Stomp out Bullying

by Sarah Plummer

One of Mrs. Denham's class' previous PBL projects was about ways to stop bullying. During this project they learned about the bad impacts bullying has on people. After they did lots and lots of research, they created products to convince people to stand up for people who are bullied. One of the groups made a parody remix to the songs Shake It Off and Firework.

This group was very excited to be able to make a change influencing many people around the world. Some other students had very creative ways to encourage people to help stop bullying such as plays, videos, comic books, campaign posters, and powerpoints. I would say that so far Mrs. Denham's class has done a great job at helping to stop bullying around the world and in my opinion we should do our best to help them!

Mrs.Denton

By: Jonathan Vedenoff

Ms. Denton teaches the drama elective. Drama is not only what it sounds like. Ms. Denton also teaches her students how to act. They do many activities like, watching movies and do drama drills. They play games like Murder.

Murder is a game where one person is declared the murderer s/he is not supposed to be known by anyone. Then there is a sheriff. The sheriff has to find out who the murderer is. The murderer kills people by winking at them. Everyone who doesn't have a role is a bystander who can be killed. Drama is lots of fun. Mrs. Denton's Drama elective. Her class looks like they have so much fun.



Mrs.Andrews

Reading Rascals

In Mrs. Andrews 1st and 2nd grade class, on Fridays, if her students behave and accomplish what they have been asked to do, the students then get rewarded with what they desire. On a typical Friday the students don't want to go and talk their heads off like what a student would normally want to do. Instead of doing something that would be nonacademic, they want to get lost in a fictional or non-fictional world.

A couple of facts are that kids who read more have better chances of learning new things everyday and one more fact is that your vocabulary expands greatly by reading and that will help them in their later future when they get a career. The kids of room 9 have the best time using their imaginations when they get a chance to silently read. In Mrs. Andrews a good chunk of time is dedicated to reading. And even when she asks how much longer until they believe that they are at a good stopping point, not one of the students gives the answer of now. If somebody is stuck and needs help, a friend will help them through their struggle. They all help each other persevere in their own ways.