

COMPOST

The Parent Community Organization newsletter of Environmental Charter School **FEBRUARY/MARCH 2013** Vol. 5, Issue 3

Photo by Todd Hoffman



Being **TESTED**

BY STEPHANIE FRANKLIN

In the world of education today, we hear an awful lot about high-stakes testing. High-stakes testing like PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) is one way that students are assessed at ECS, but there are many different types of assessments teachers use to measure student achievement and growth. Teachers assess students almost daily, sometimes formally and sometimes informally, as they try to gain an understanding of what they know and what they still need. Assessments come in a variety of different shapes and sizes. Types of assessment you might hear about include: diagnostic assessment, benchmark assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment. All of these types of assessment are valuable, and while we mostly hear about the importance of high-stakes testing like PSSA, it's important to understand the value of using multiple types of assessment.

Diagnostic assessments measure students' skills before they begin a certain task or unit of study. This informs the teacher of students' readiness to learn about the topic and identifies areas of need before the unit or lesson begins. Diagnostic assessments can also help teachers determine their plan for presenting the material. Some students may need to gain background information, while others are ready to begin immediately. Teachers can create multiple goals for students with the use of these assessments. The assessments can be formal like a written pre-test, or can be informal like a conference with a student.

See **TESTING**, page 2

Letter From **The ECS Board**

The New Year brings new resolutions, and often causes us to reflect on what we want to change in our lives. Goal setting, strategic thinking, and new growth are big ideas that often enter our thoughts this time of year. In the past, the Board of Trustees, in close cooperation with school leadership, has played an integral role in the attainment of our beautiful Lower School building and most recently in the school's new status as an independent charter school. Although we have much to be proud of, it is important for us to continue thinking big and striving for an even greater experience for our students and families. As catalysts in public education, this is our responsibility.

Recently, the Board has investigated the relationship between the school's mission and the potential for expansion to high school. Because we know this is an issue our parents and families feel passionately about, we wanted to update you on our progress and future plans. Additionally, we plan to offer an update on Board expansion activities in each edition of the comPOST moving forward.

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Benchmark assessments measure students' progress, based on the same learning standards, repeatedly throughout the year. Repeated use of benchmark assessments allows teachers to understand student growth against the standards and alter the curriculum to appropriately meet the needs of the student at that time. The MAP tests are one type of benchmark assessment.

Formative assessments are on-going and tell the teachers about what students are learning as they progress through a lesson or unit. They can be as simple as an exit slip before leaving the class or a brief question and response with a student, or it can be as formal as a quiz or an essay. Formative assessments help teachers understand whether they need to review a certain concept, or move more quickly because the students understand. Teachers also use formative assessment to help them create small groups of students or individual learning goals for different students.

Summative assessments are those assessments given at the end. Many teachers at ECS use written summative assessments at the end of a unit, but high-stakes tests like the PSSA are also considered summative assessments, because they assess if the student has mastered the skills set in the Pennsylvania standards for that grade level. Most summative assessments

are intended to inform the teachers about what a student learned during a whole unit and evaluate achievement based on that information.

PSSA Tests

PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) tests are given at ECS in compliance with state laws for public schools. PSSAs test the Pennsylvania State Standards, which state what students should be able to do by the end of each grade level. Students at ECS take PSSAs in several subject areas. All students in grades 3-8 take PSSAs in Reading and Math. Additionally, grades 4 and 8 take a Science PSSA and grade 5 takes a writing PSSA.

PSSA tests provide a snapshot in time, a picture of that child completing an assessment of those skills on that particular day. In addition to other data sources and other assessments, student scores are used to understand students' mastery of the standards in that grade level. Unfortunately, with state mandated tests, students cannot retake the test if they perform poorly, but will have the opportunity to test again the following year. The Pennsylvania Department of Education publishes state statistics as well as additional information on PSSA testing at www.portal.state.pa.us.

MAP Testing

In addition to PSSAs, this year students at ECS started taking MAP tests which stands for Measures of Academic Progress. The MAP tests are supplied by the Northwest Evaluation Association and are aligned with the state and common core standards. ECS tests students in grades K-2 in Reading and Math, and in grades 3-7 in Reading, language, and Math. 4th grade also takes a Science MAP assessment. MAP tests are computer-based assessments which are given three times per year: once in the fall, once mid-year, and once at the end of the year. They are considered a type of benchmark assessment.

The MAP assessments provide a baseline for student learning by telling teachers the students' current levels against the standards, as well as what they should be ready to learn next. Additionally, teachers can use these tests to inform instructional decisions like what to focus on and how to provide students with additional help. The MAP system provides more useful data for teachers than some of the benchmark testing systems ECS has used in the past. This information travels with students from year to year as a way to inform instructional decisions for students and to show growth. More information on MAP testing is available at www.nwea.org



Photo by Juan Pablo Gonzalez

A Symphony for ECS

On December 2, 2012, 343 *Meet the Maestro* ticket holders from ECS enjoyed a special afternoon at Heinz Hall that began with a Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra performance. ECS families were then treated to a private reception with Clarinet Soloist Michael Rusinek and, of course, Maestro Manfred Honeck; both were wonderfully engaging with our students.

In the month preceding the *Meet the Maestro* event, all ECS students enjoyed musical enrichment in the form of assemblies and in-class workshops with accomplished musicians. Many thanks to Dr. Pellathy, Miss Cook, and the ECS faculty for their support of the program. Special thanks to ECS parent Elena Hilf who organized the events and to Mrs. Riston and her string students who performed for Maestro Honeck. We look forward to next year's Pittsburgh Symphony event.

The Difference at ECS

These days, we hear about a lot of schools and teachers “teaching to the test.” When people say this, they mean teachers are using instruction methods that mimic PSSA testing, which is often very repetitive. In classrooms like this you might see a lot of skill and drill, worksheets, fill in the bubbles, or memorization. This type of teaching doesn’t require much discovery, application, or deeper understanding, but prepares students solely to take a standardized test.

At ECS, we use the standards that are assessed on the test to create a curriculum that uses those standards-based skills but requires higher-level thinking and learning, is centered on student discovery, and is authentic in origin. For example, students might actually research something they are wondering, or experiment about why a particular phenomenon works and then explain it. Students are still prepared for the PSSA because they understand the state standards and can apply those skills, but have been taught in a more authentic way.

Preparation for Testing

Students who take PSSAs at ECS do spend some time in each individual subject area preparing for these high-stakes tests. This is not to “teach to the test” but to help the students understand the test as another genre of reading and writing, or another place where they can be mathematicians. In Math, individual test-taking lessons are incorporated into each unit. In Literacy, test-taking lessons make up one two-week long unit dedicated to testing as a genre. The language of the tests is sometimes different than the way we speak about reading, writing, math, or science daily. Preparation time is used to help students understand how to interpret the tests and tackle them successfully. During this time, students are exposed to the format of the test, answer sample test questions, and learn how to apply the thinking and skills they have learned all year to the test they are about to take.

Parents are notified about the tests through the Wednesday Word, school calendar, grade level newsletter, and ECS web site.

Information is sent home as students get closer to the testing dates. This year PSSAs will be during the weeks of March 11—15 (5th grade Writing), April 8—19 (3rd-7th grade Reading and Math), and April 22—26 (4th grade Science).

Parents can prepare their children by making sure they get plenty of sleep and good nutrition the week leading up to the PSSA test and during the test. Ensure your children that they have nothing to be worried about and explain that the tests simply assess all of the skills they’ve been learning throughout the year in school.

For additional information about the types of tests administered at ECS and the AYP (Academic Yearly Progress) measures, please visit the new Data and Assessment Page of the ECS web site at www.environmentalcharterschool.org. Through this informative web page, ECS hopes to answer parents’ questions and address concerns. Parents can also contact their child’s home base teacher to answer questions about testing throughout the school year.

Do you have an upcoming...

- Kids' birthday party
- Girls' night out
- Afterschool get-together
- Craft group
- Girl Scout event
- Bridal shower
- Mother-Daughter day
- Reunion

or just looking for something fun & different to do?

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In Our **SPACE**

Our relationship with the classroom environment



BY SHANNON MERENSTEIN

When you walk into the majority of classrooms across the state, you will notice strikingly similar features: “teacher store” purchased decor, a few instructional posters, garish colors, desks in isolating rows, the flicker of florescent lighting, the dark, drawn shades. You may notice also that the school buildings, fixtures, and furniture are stuck in time, a time where schools were preparatory for a certain industrial kind of

work and lifestyle. However, some schools (ECS included) are beginning to attend to space, considering design and its impact on students and faculty. They are beginning to associate the idea of what it means to be a 21st century citizen or member of the workforce with the space that prepares students to fulfill that role. We spend the majority of the day indoors and we want to make that space feel not only functional, but beautiful. ECS is taking steps to set up classroom spaces for collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking.

CMU architecture students recently listened to the feedback of the 7th grade students at ECS and created new furniture that met their criteria and aligned perfectly with our guiding principles and the mission of our school. The 7th graders articulated that the furniture should be repurposed from their current pieces. It should also be comfortable and serve a social/collaborative function. After engaging in several conversations in person and through the use of technology with the architecture students, 7th graders now have larger tables with a white board surface, chairs made from the old individual desks, and additional storage made from the carriages of those desks. This work is generating excitement and enthusiasm not only in 7th grade, but with their younger peers as well. “I think the 7th grade classroom is

UNREAL! They have white boards on their desks!”, said 4th grader Caleb Massie. “Yeah, it’s awesome because you can do your work on there and in a regular classroom you’d use a lot of paper,” agreed Henry Hilf.

In the 4th grade Environmental Literacy classroom, another group of CMU architecture students created a Visible Thinking interactive board. This project began when 4th grade teacher, Stephanie Franklin observed students prototyping a similar structure with me for the Thinking Lab at the Lower



BOARD, from Page 1

Expansion is a topic the Board does not take lightly. During the summer of 2012, we spent significant time considering our school’s future economic sustainability and the maintenance of our current K-8 program. Most importantly, we assessed our commitment to ECS families and to the greater Pittsburgh community. Late last year, the Board voted unanimously to commit funds to seriously explore expansion.

In 2013, the Board will devote significant energy to both the pursuit of growing our school through 12th grade and to the continued oversight of our K-8 program. We are working with various consultants to better understand the financial and logistical demands of expansion through high school. The Board will also work closely with a comprehensive team of ECS educators

to begin defining the high school program. An ECS high school curriculum will reflect our organization’s mission and guiding principles, and seamlessly integrate with the K-8 program.

Over the coming months, we will draft location criteria that will be used in the search of suitable sites. As you may be aware from our expansion to Park Place, specific locations will not be made public until site control is established. This is standard procedure in site acquisition and development.

Finally, the Board and Home Office Team will work closely with the Pittsburgh Public Schools throughout the expansion process. ECS has built a strong relationship with the Pittsburgh Public Schools that is defined by transparent communication and collaboration.

As the Board, we value collaboration and recognize that our ECS families play an important role in our organization’s success. We are working on a parent survey that will provide us with important data and help inform our decision-making. Please look for the survey in the Wednesday Word in early February. We also look forward to providing you with another update in the next issue of the comPOST. Thank you for your continued support of ECS! We appreciate your commitment to our community.

Sincerely,
on Behalf of the ECS Board of Trustees,

Leigh Halverson, Board Chair
Jon McCann, CEO

School and exclaimed what a useful tool it would be. The 4th graders helped create a structure so that they could physically contribute their thinking during a class Thinking Routine. Removable boards with a wipe-off surface could be used in the classroom or out in the park and then brought back to the main structure for class reflection.

These small-scale projects are intended to be catalytic at ECS, to insist on thinking about our relationship with the built environment. Moving forward, we will continue to partner with CMU architecture professors and students. In the upcoming month, we will work with Christine Mondor who teaches Human Factors in Architecture. Christine and her students will work on designing what she calls a “deck of cards” that prompts adults and students to ask the question: How can educators and children use their space as a “Third Teacher”? This Third Teacher concept comes from Reggio Emilia, Italy where public preschools are designed to be beautiful, engaging, and educational. Loris Malaguzzi founded the approach and worked to develop programming. Christine states “I want to think about how we use the environment— to provoke, to offload, to norm behavior, to communicate and connect.”

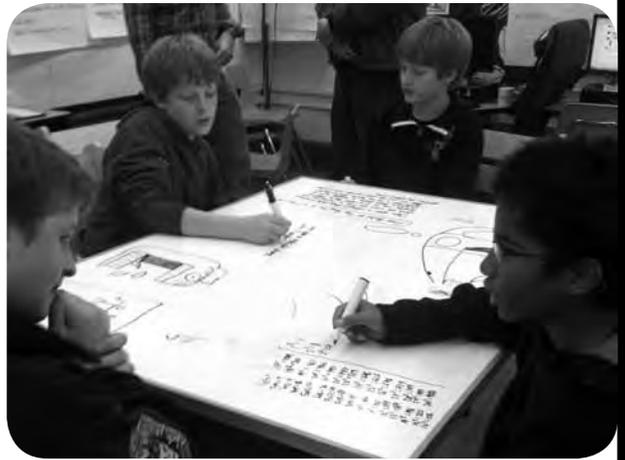
As we work to design the “deck of cards” that serve to prompt and inspire us, we hope to facilitate meetings of faculty, students, and

families. As in most of the work we do at ECS, the process is just as critically important as the product. During this project, we might think about how we can use the built environment to engage, immerse, and inspire our students and ourselves.

With the guiding principles driving each decision we make at our school, we have a unique opportunity to design intentional spaces in our buildings that represent who we are and what we value. As Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of Reggio Emilia, said “It has been said that the environment should act as a kind of aquarium which reflects the ideas, ethics, attitudes and cultures of the people who live in it. This is what we are working toward.”

Want to know more about the design/education relationship?

- Bertschi School: http://www.bertschi.org/docs/LivingBuilding_web_Nov6.pdf
- Reggio Emilia: <http://www.reggioalliance.org>
- The Third Teacher: <http://thethirdteacherplus.com>
- Make Space (a resource used during our Classroom Design Initiative): <http://dschool.stanford.edu/makespace/>



Photos by Shannon Merenstein

ECS Kids COMIX KIDS

Kids love comics... right? ComPOST is welcoming all Upper School students to submit a short, black and white comic strip (just like this ad) for upcoming issues of comPOST. Comics can be about anything, as long as they don't make fun of anyone. So get out the markers and paper and show us what you can do!

Hey, watcha workin' on! Can I see? Please?!

Oh nothing. Just a super awesome comic, for the next issue of comPOST!

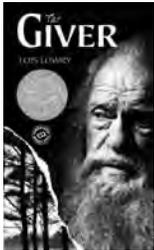
Hmmmm...

Looks like it's catching on!

Available space is as big as this ad. Submission must include your name, grade, teacher and a contact e-mail. Deliver to the PCO mailbox (in an envelope clearly labeled with your name in the upper left corner and “comPOST Comic Submission”) OR send a high resolution scan to newsletter@ecspco.org. comPOST will select up to three comics per issue depending on available space. Original drawings will be returned.

What We Are Reading IN 5TH GRADE

The Reading Workshop model provides 5th graders with many opportunities for reading self-selected books. Here are a few recommendations from the students.



The Giver by Lois Lowry is the Read Together text as the students complete a Literacy unit on Science Fiction.

Recommended by Emma Hicks— "*The Giver* is a story about Jonas, an 11 year old. He is going to be assigned to a job, and he is very nervous about what it will be. His community has a weird and mysterious way of picking jobs. He gets the job of Receiver of Memory, the highest honor. He meets the Giver and receives some amazing memories, but the job isn't all fun and games... I like the book because it is mysterious and filled with real emotions. You will like the book because it is down-to-earth and has quite a cliff hanger."



The Throne of Fire by Rick Riordan

Recommended by Gavin McShane— "*The Throne of Fire* is about Carter and Sadie Kane, brother and sister magicians, who must find three scrolls in only four days in order to keep Apophis from swallowing the sun. Will they succeed? I liked the book because it has Egyptian Gods and magicians. You will like this book because it has a good story line and great dialogue!"



Big Nate On a Roll by John Peirce

Recommended by Ajani Mohanty— "Nate, an eleven year old, is annoyed by Artur, a student in his class who gets everything his way. He is in a scout troop called the Timber Scouts and now so is Artur. The Timber Scouts are having a competition where the grand prize is a new skateboard. Who will win? I liked the book because it was funny and follows the life of a kid like me. You will like this book because it's funny and will make you laugh a lot."



The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

Recommended by Alexandra Benton— "Katniss Everdeen has been chosen to do the unthinkable, to go to the Hunger Games where she has to fight for her life against 24 other tributes while being televised. Will she win and have endless fortune? Or more importantly, will she survive? I liked the book because it is very exciting and it's one of those books you can't stop reading. You will like the book because it's full of action and sneakiness. You will get emotionally attached to the characters."

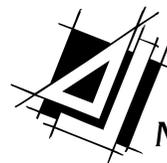
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Take a hike!

Amy Bianco visits the historic and changing Nine Mile Run Trail

A warm spell in the month of January allowed me to revisit a hike along Nine Mile Run that stretches to the Monongahela River. It was a rainy day back in autumn of 2010 when I ran out of time before I was able to reach the confluence. I was so close! Last time I was here, it was like un-chartered territory with a thin dirt trail heading into the unknown. Nine Mile Run Trail, under construction at that time, is now a very tidy, graveled trail.

Under the parkway, it was fenced off and covered (overhead construction), winding its way through a neighborhood of generators and trucks. I continued around a curve following a steep outcropping of what looked to be shale. The stream slope dropped considerably while I remained level. Looming to my right was the mountain of slag which houses the Summerset at Frick Park community. Of course, I've always noticed its immensity from the parkway, but standing alongside of it gave the valley a tight, claustrophobic feel. Walking further, I couldn't help but notice the all-around alien quality of the landscape. I had read about what happened here during the steel industry but had never seen it first hand. The impact has been profound. The slopes are steep, of uniform grade, and sparsely vegetated.

In 1922, the Duquesne Slag Products Company bought 92 acres of the Nine Mile Run Valley to provide low-cost dumping to Jones and Laughlin Steel and the Homestead Works. Additional sections of the valley were purchased over a period of 40 years. Duquesne Slag stopped dumping in 1972. Political loop-holes and lack of city government support essentially destroyed any early attempts to preserve the valley. Protesting civic groups were not powerful or financially strong enough to protect it. In the end, 238 acres were covered in slag with some areas reaching over 100 feet high.

Restoration efforts in this part of the valley are in full swing, and the new trail is really nice. There is a footbridge, quaint retaining walls, and trail signs for cyclists. The loom of the slag pile eventually tapered as I approached the Duck Hollow neighborhood, another place I had only read about. A particular article online painted Duck Hollow as a depressed, "we used to be able to keep our doors unlocked" community cut off from the rest of the world. I didn't see that at all. People were out on this mild, sunny day doing yardwork and washing their cars amidst a pocket of well-maintained homes. I envied that they lived so close to the water. And I bet they love living there.



The Nine Mile Run Trail ends at Old Browns Hill Road. Past the railroad trestle, signs connect you with the 3 Rivers Heritage Trail and the Steel Valley Heritage trail. I passed through the trestle and there it was – the confluence where Nine Mile Run flows into the Mon! Maybe I'm a hopeless romantic, but seeing this after reading so much about it was like witnessing a prehistoric marriage. A giant smile burst across my face. It's so simple and innate how the stream frees itself into the wide river completing, yet renewing an ancient journey. I crossed the metal bridge that leads into Duck Hollow and was able to walk right to the shore and put my hands in the water. There was no one around except for a few mallard ducks. Across the river, the sun reflected off of glass and cars highlighting the bustle of the Waterfront. On this side, the wind hissed through the trees and the water gently lapped the muddy shore. It was peaceful and slow in comparison. This is how it SHOULD be. The river's edge should be accessible and free of concrete and metal. It could have been the year 1712 or 1512 as I sat on a log in the sun watching the waves. This hike was so worth the wait. Of course, I recommend checking it out, maybe as a solo hike. You'll pass through centuries of history, including the unpleasant evidence of a booming steel industry and decades of restoration, but you'll end where it all began.

What's Happening Around Here?

Events from ECS partners for you and your family

These are just a few events happening in and around our school. Check out events from ECS partner web sites on our "Partners" page at www.environmentalcharterschool.org.

Sundays in February

Tropical Sundays at Phipps Conservatory

9:30 a.m.—5:00 p.m. It may be chilly outside, but you can hardly tell at Phipps on Tropical Sundays. Relax under our palm trees, taste tropical fruits, and sway to the sounds of live performances by Matthew Mazza and Carmen Bruno of the Tropical Sands Steel Band. Plus, wear a tropical flower shirt and receive a 50% discount on admission. For more information, visit: hipps.conservatory.org.

February 8

ECS Family Game Night at the Upper School

6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m. Join ECS families for an evening of board games and bingo! We will provide games for all ages, but you are also encouraged to bring your own games to share. Bring some cash for the bake sale and game raffle!

February 10

Soup of the Month Hike at Riverview Park

10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. Join Venture Outdoors on a brisk winter day for an invigorating 3-4 mile hike that explores one of our beautiful city parks. After the hike, gather to enjoy a hot bowl of tasty soup. Two homemade soups will be served (one vegetarian) as well as bread, hot chocolate, and tea. \$16.00 non-member, \$12.00 members, \$8.00 kids. For more information, visit: www.ventureoutdoors.org.

February 16

A Modern Twist: Attack Theatre + Cello Fury at Hillman Center for the Performing Arts, Shadyside Academy

7:30 p.m. Sponsored by *Gateway to the Arts*. Cello Fury's energetic set includes classical favorites and pop cover songs. Attack Theatre, with "ninja-like intensity," blends contemporary dance with live music, multimedia and interdisciplinary art forms to create passionate pieces that emphasize the humanity in dance. Tickets: \$25. Available at www.showclix.com/event/3644745.

February 16

Winter Bird Walk at Emerald View Park

8:30 a.m.—10:30 a.m. Ever wonder what birds are utilizing Pittsburgh's wooded hillsides for habitat? Join Venture Outdoors and local naturalists on a winter bird walk through Emerald View Park. The 3-mile walk will cover mostly easy terrain with some steep hills. This outing is gauged for the amateur or beginner bird enthusiast, but birders of all levels are encouraged to attend! This walk is part of the Great American Backyard Bird Count. \$12.00 non-member, \$8.00 member, \$6.00 kids. For more information, visit: www.ventureoutdoors.org.

February 17

Mountain Pie Ramble at Riverview Park

1:00 p.m.—3:30 p.m. Join Venture Outdoors for a winter walk around a local park. Stroll at an easy pace as you explore the hilly terrain of Riverview Park on this family-friendly adventure. Afterward, gather in a shelter and make some tasty mountain pies over an open fire. All the ingredients will be laid out for make-your-own-mountains-pies, from savory to sweet. Discover how everything tastes better in the woods! \$12.00 non-member, \$8.00 member, \$5.00 kids. For more information, visit: www.ventureoutdoors.org.

February 18

ECS Movie Day at the Waterworks Cinema

10:00 a.m. Spend the day off from school at the movies! ECS families will have the theater to themselves and enjoy discounted admission and popcorn! Featured movie will be announced in the Wednesday Word.

February 20 • Call for Parent Support

ECS Board Meeting and Discussion about Art and Sport Programs at the ECS Middle School

6:30 p.m. Upper School. The ECS Board is interested in hearing from parents who support the addition of an arts program and/or sports program in grades 6-8. If you have questions about what is or is not offered at ECS or feel strongly that these programs should be offered, please attend.

If you would like your voice to be heard but can't attend the meeting please send an e-mail to Kathi Taymans McShane at mcshanes@gmail.com.

February 21

Starting From Seed: Presented by a Phipps Master Gardener at the Pittsburgh Green House

6:00—7:30 p.m. Join the Pittsburgh Green House for an interactive workshop on the benefits of starting your garden from seed. After learning about some general gardening basics, attendees will have the opportunity to plant a variety of seedlings to start their own garden. This workshop is limited to 15 participants. Cost: \$5 Register at <http://pittsburghgreenhouse.org>.

March 9

Urban EcoSteward Training Event on Erosion Control at Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, Highland Park

9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. Location TBD. Learn how the geology of Pittsburgh's hillsides make erosion a regional problem and practice techniques you can use to prevent gullies and landslides on your site. All training events are free and open to the public. Register using the form found at www.pittsburghparks.org/uestrainings or by contacting the Parks Conservancy Education Department at 412-682-7275 x232 or volunteer@pittsburghparks.org.

March 9 - April 7

Spring Flower Show at Phipps Conservatory

9:30 a.m.—5 p.m. (open until 10 p.m. on Fridays). Admission is \$15 for adults, \$14 for seniors and students, and \$11 for children (ages 2-18). Members and children under two enter for free.

Unlock a world of color and surprise at Spring Flower Show, inspired by Frances Hodggett Burnett's beloved children's classic, *The Secret Garden*. Highlights include whimsical topiary animals, a formal Victorian garden, and thousands of beautiful blooms. For more information, visit: phipps.conservatory.org.

March 16

Maple Sugaring Festival at Boyce Park Nature Center

Times TBD. During the month of the Maple Moon, sample the sweetness of the maple season. Individuals and groups can learn the history and lore (pioneer/Native American) of the maple sugaring process. Experience first hand how to identify maple trees, tap, collect sap & then reduce it to syrup! Pre-registration required. Call 724-733-4618 for more information and registration.

March 21

Third Thursdays presents Ben Shannon at the WYEP Community Broadcast Center

7:00 p.m. Free. All ages. Third Thursdays at WYEP are a monthly happy hour featuring a performance from Pittsburgh's best local musicians. For more information, visit: www.wyep.org.

March 21 - April 11

Horticultural Series: Seeding at Boyce Park Nature Center (Greenhouse)

Times TBD. Learn seed planting techniques concerning annuals, perennials, herbs, grasses and veggies, too. Call 724-733-4618 for more information and registration.

March 30

Breakfast with Dinosaurs at Carnegie Museum of Natural History

8:00 a.m.—10:00 a.m. Let your little ones dress up as their favorite dinosaurs and come to the museum for a truly amazing family event! Eat a hearty breakfast and enjoy very special hands-on activities developed especially for Breakfast with Dinosaurs families. Investigate dinosaur tracks, touch real fossil specimens, and enjoy a private guided tour of Dinosaurs in Their Time. Same-day admission is included in the ticket price. High chairs and boosters are not provided, but you are welcome to bring your own. Dinosaur dress-up optional. Seating is limited, so be sure to register early! For more information and to register, visit www.carnegiemnh.org/programs/breakfast.html.

Families, Staff and Friends of ECS

You are invited to the ecs pco blooming bash pARTy!

Saturday April 13, 2013 • 6:00–10:00 p.m.
Edgewood Club

Watch your mail for an invitation in March.

For more information, contact bloomingbash@ecspco.org

Win two free tickets to the pARTy! Attach your name and contact information to a copy of this ad, and send it in with your child in an envelope labeled "PCO- Blooming Bash"!



Support the pARTy!!

The goal of the ECS PCO Blooming Bash pARTy! is to raise funds that will support art experiences in our school.

By donating goods, money or services, you can draw attention to your business *and* support ECS! Big or small, your contribution will make our pARTy a success!

- Would your company like to provide underwriting?
- Do you have tickets to an event or a valuable item that we could auction off?
- Can you donate a valuable service?
- Do you have a vacation home that you would be willing to auction off for a weekend?

If you are interested in supporting the pARTy!, please contact bloomingbash@ecspco.org or 412-243-2626. *Thank you!*

ARCHITECTS OF GRAHAM HOUSES

The PCO's Gingerbread House Event on December 15 brought 183 people out to show off their architectural skills. Students and their families crafted structures ranging from zoos to castles using pounds of candy, frosting, graham crackers, and imagination! Over 71 houses were completed.

Thank you to Cheryl Ritts, Michelle Morrow, and the parent volunteers who made many sticky hands and smiling faces that day. A special thanks to the students who helped including Jessica Berger, Ethan Byrd, Emma Horowitz, Denise Woods, Teddy Ritts, Brenna Leavitt, Leo Riley, and Amaris and Mariah Martin.



Photos by Melissa Rychener

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ECS ART in the community

Children's Museum Exhibit Features 5th Grade Projects

BY LINDSEY MAYO-KLEINBERG

During the first quarter, ECS students focused on the unit All Living Things and Their Habitats. In collaboration with their studies, the 5th grade art class used nature to inspire art by creating nest-like baskets. They studied birds, characteristics, habitats, and bird nests. They sketched, planned, discussed, and finally, created baskets that were inspired by bird nests. The students asked questions like, "Why does the nest look this way?" "Where does it live?", and "What shape and size is my bird?" They created their baskets in a way that reflected the collection of materials that is used by many birds. For example, students incorporated more than three types of materials because in many cases, real birds use a mix of materials to build and strengthen their nests.

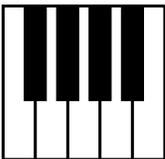
At the end of the project, even though each student had access to the same grading criteria, sketchbooks, visuals, and types of creative materials, no two baskets turned out the same. I was given a contact at the Children's Museum and was delighted to collaborate with her in order to showcase our students' work within the community. The students did an amazing job in their research work as well as the final art so I decided to showcase their written self-evaluations and reflections as a way to display visual thinking and illustrate their process. Visitors at the museum could enjoy both that final art and the thoughtful questions addressed through student writing.

Why do we sketch and plan when making 3-D projects? How does my basket emulate real nests in nature? Why did I choose these materials?

The final baskets, written reflections, and a booklet describing the project and process were on display at the museum from the beginning of December until the last week of January. All 5th grade students received an artist pass to go see their work on display. I would like to commend the students for their creativity and achievements as it is quite an honor to have work displayed at a museum for two months!



Photos by Felicia Turano



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ComPOST Help Wanted

Are you interested in contributing to comPOST? Send a note to: newsletter@ecspco.org. We would love to have new talent, new opinions, and new ideas.

We are looking for:

- A Managing Editor, the planner and organizer who pulls it all together.
- Researchers and Writers who love to find a good story, interview people, dig up a few facts and turn them into a great article.
- Proofreaders who are nitpicky with sentence structure, capitalization, and grammar.
- Graphic Designers, Illustrators and Layout Artists who use InDesign and other Adobe applications
- Photographers
- Contributors, anyone who has an interesting single article or a regular feature that they would like to share with the ECS community.
- Chicken Farmers (see page 16).

comPOST is for all us: the families, staff and friends of ECS. Send in your ideas!



ECS Parents: Are your kids growing out of their uniforms?

Please donate gently used uniforms to other ECS families during the Uniform Re-Use Committee's Winter Clothing Drive. **DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 28.***

Donation box locations: ECS Lower School, Main Office and ECS Upper School, Auditorium (near lost and found). Contact uniform@ecspco.org for information.

**There will be another clothing drive in the Spring and the Summer.*

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Discovering Our World

2nd Grade Celebrates Cultural Traditions

BY DIANE KARICHKO

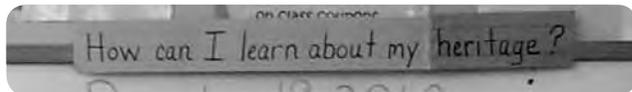
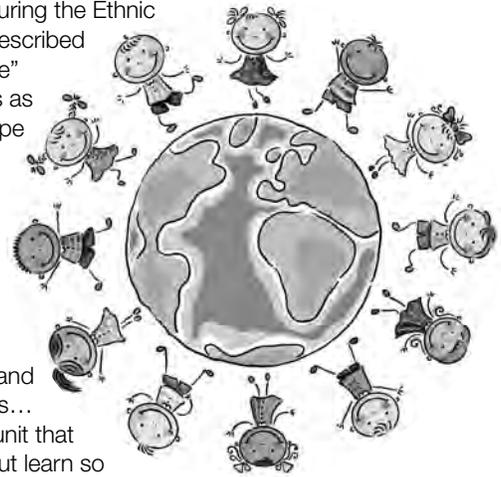
ECS 2nd grade students recently took part in an interdisciplinary unit entitled "Traditions Around the World," which gave them the opportunity to explore ethnicity and culture through classroom experiences, culminating in a celebration day.

As young social scientists, the 2nd grade students had an opportunity to interview family members to learn more about family traditions as a way of gaining insight into their own ethnic heritage. They also took a hike through the neighborhood and discussed how the decorations they observed might reflect the history of the residents.

As literacy students, they authored non-fiction articles about an ethnic tradition and the country in which that tradition originated. The articles were compiled into a class book and presented during the "Traditions Around the World" celebration day. For the celebration day, each student was also encouraged to bring an ethnic dish from the heritage that was the subject of his or her article.

These dishes were served during the Ethnic Buffet, which the teachers described as "truly amazing and diverse" and featured such delicacies as Polish sausages, stuffed grape leaves, schnitzel, and fancy desserts. The presentations and buffet were followed by an ethnic traditional sing-along.

In conclusion, the teachers observed, "the students are for the most part interested and eager to try some new things..." It is a great interdisciplinary unit that the children not only enjoy but learn so much!" Congratulations to Ms. Karichko, Mrs. Shupak, Ms. Catello, and Mrs. Lassiter as well as the 2nd grade students for working so hard to make "Traditions around the World" a success!



Photos by Diane Karichko

PCO Mini Grants

Have a Great Idea?

Do you have a fabulous idea that would improve our ECS community, but you are not quite sure how to get started? Consider the PCO mini-grant program! Mini-grants are monetary grants (up to \$250) that the PCO distributes to teachers, parents, and community members who have good ideas for our ECS community, but don't have another funding source. They have been used in the past to fund a wide variety of projects, from supplies for after-school clubs to cameras for classroom use.

Interested?

Application information can be found on the PCO website at www.ecspco.org. But don't hesitate too long—**the next deadline for applications is Monday, February 11.** For more information, e-mail minigrants@ecspco.org.

Two Worlds United

ECS Students Making a Cultural Connection **BY KELSEY WEISGERBER**

This Winter, the 7th grade team is embarking on a new Cultural Literacy project with roots in Afghanistan. During the One Young World Summit in Pittsburgh this fall, I had the amazing opportunity to meet Asma Athai. She is young woman who currently runs an orphanage and day care facility in Afghanistan for children who have lost their family members due to the Taliban. Ms. Athai's mission for her trip to the United States was to spread awareness about the political and daily hardships in her country and to form connections to improve her orphanage.

It is against Afghan law for women to travel outside of the country without a male guardian. Yet, tenaciously, Ms. Athai ventured outside of Afghanistan solo, risking her life to attend the summit. Bravely, she spoke

in front of the entire delegation and asked for help. She desperately needed clothing for the children in her care, as well as funds to buy fuel to warm the orphanage and purchase food. After hearing her speak, I decided that ECS would be the perfect team to help.

Over the past several months, the 7th graders, Ms. King, Mr. Kaczmarek, Mrs. Rendulic, and I have been working on "The Asma Project." The educational objective of the project is to present a cultural connection for the students. As a team we discuss the social, cultural, geographic, and political hardships surrounding an issue including pictures and video as available, and challenge students to create solutions to the problem. In our initial session, we built students background knowledge by

discussing connections between Pittsburgh and Afghanistan. We also explained the problems facing Ms. Athai's orphanage.

Our 7th grade students have taken The Asma Project and run with it! They came up with ideas on how to support students at the orphanage and share the project with community members outside of ECS.

Taking their inspiration, Ms. King helped the students identify four aspects of the project:

1. Cultural
2. Educational
3. Funding and Resources
4. Social Media

The students have begun to develop a website about the project. (Watch for it in March!) The site will explain the story of

ECS 7th grade students and children in an orphanage in Afghanistan are united through the Asma Project.



Photos from Kelsey Weisgerber and Asma Athai

Grow Pittsburgh

Cooking With Our 4th Graders

Asma Athai, her culture, her organization, and the connections that have been forged between Pittsburgh, ECS, and Afghanistan as a result of the One Young World summit. On the project website, students will share experiences and educational videos for the students at the orphanage. Ideally, we hope to have a shared page where Ms. Athai and her kids can share videos about their lives and educate us about their culture and heritage. A funding and resources page will allow families and community members to donate directly to the project. The website will serve as a way for students to learn about communications while sharing our message with the ECS community and beyond.

This project has already benefited ECS students in their study of Geo-Literacy. Seeing videos of Afghanistan, skyping with Asma Athai, and studying the political challenges abroad have enabled them to reflect their own lives. One 7th grade student noted, "I will remember to be less ungrateful because at least I have a jacket...these kids don't even have shoes." Ms. King, Mr. Kaczmarek, and Mrs. Rendulic have done a tremendous job framing the situation and guiding the students to be introspective, creative and empowered.

As part of the Asma Project, we are launching a clothing drive to help the orphans stay warm through the winter. If you have any clothing for kids ages 3-12 please pass it along! Send the following (gently used) items: socks, boots, sweat-shirts, pants, pj's, shirts, outerwear, old ECS tee shirts, blankets and sleeping bags. We will have a separate collection bins at both the Upper and Lower Schools. Label your donations "FOR ASMA." We will have several clothing drives throughout the rest of the year.

Additionally, donations to cover postage would be greatly appreciated. Please e-mail us at Kelsey.Weisgerber@environmentalcharterschool.org or Michelle.King@environmentalcharterschool.org to find out where to send donations or if you have any questions. We will provide additional updates on the Asma Project as it grows on the ECS Lunch Facebook page. Students will also be able to participate in a series of dress down days to support our cause. Stay tuned!



The Edible Schoolyard

Based on the seed-to-table learning model initiated by Alice Waters in Berkeley, CA, Edible Schoolyard Pittsburgh integrates garden and cooking activities into the regular classroom curriculum to improve young students' eating habits, engage students in their school communities, and enhance students' academic performance.

When Edible Schoolyard Pittsburgh decided to expand in 2011 and offer an open application process for a new school, the Environmental Charter School was a perfect match.

The 4th Grade Kitchen

Grow Pittsburgh's James Rowell (aka Farmer Jim) has been visiting the 4th grade classrooms at ECS each week to share fresh recipes and food heritage as a way to continue Edible

Schoolyard Pittsburgh's focus on growing, preparing, and sharing fresh food. Students are making pumpkin pancakes, fresh corn tortillas, and noodle salad using Farmer Jim's "portable kitchen" right in the classroom!

RECIPE: Tortillas

Making supple homemade tortillas is easy. The following recipe from www.saveur.com is similar to the one that 4th grade students recently prepared.

1. Place 1 cup masa harina (a finely ground corn flour made from corn that has been dried, cooked, ground up and dried again) in a bowl and make a well in center. Add 2/3 cup plus 1 tbsp. water to well, and stir with your fingers to form a dough. Knead the dough until soft like Play-Doh.
2. Cut two 7" circles out of a clean shopping bag. Put 1 circle on the bottom plate of a tortilla press*. Pinch off a golf ball-size piece of dough, roll it into a ball, and place it in the center; top with second circle.
3. Cover with top plate of tortilla press, and press handle down to flatten dough. Open press; peel away plastic from tortilla. Immediately, place tortilla in a cast-iron skillet over medium heat.
4. Cook until it begins to brown and blister on bottom. Flip tortilla; cook until lightly toasted on other side. Transfer to a towel-lined bowl; cover to keep warm. Repeat to make more tortillas.

** If you do not have a tortilla press, you can hand press the dough, use 2 skillets or plates to evenly press the dough, or use a rolling pin.*



For more information about the Edible Schoolyard, please visit:
<http://edibleschoolyardpgh.org/what-we-do/>

Water Conservation in **Your Home**

BY CHRISTY FITZPATRICK

Last week, I found out about a project student Lucy Ruzanic was working on as part of 5th grade Environmental Science curriculum. She started a blog and was implementing water conservation within the Ruzanic home. Great idea! Not only is it good practice to conserve our precious natural resources but all of us would be happy to reduce our monthly output to PWSA.

I relayed a tip to Lucy that we used in college. There were no dual flush toilets commercially available, so we put a brick in the toilet tank to reduce our water consumption over numerous flushes per day from three people. The use of bricks is not recommended today because, over time the brick can break down and negatively affect the

plumbing. The updated "toilet brick" is a plastic water bottle filled with water and a few rocks to anchor it.

Rain barrels are another great method of saving water. If you have a garden, you won't need to use water from PWSA when you have a constant supply from mother nature. Rain barrels also helpful in reducing the amount of water run off that ends up in our sewer system. We bought a barrel from DeLallo's in Jeanette. It was used to ship olives to them and they sold it to us for \$15. YouTube has many videos that show how to easily convert a similar container into a rain barrel.

Other easy and inexpensive ways to cut water consumption include:

- Install aerators in all of your faucets
- Lots of folks still brush their teeth while the water is running. **DON'T DO IT!** And, really, you shouldn't let it run while washing your hands either if you're washing them according to the CDC's recommended 20 seconds.
- If you like to wash your car at home, consider changing your practice. The *Daily Green* says a homeowner typically uses between 80 and 140 gallons whereas a professional car wash typically uses 45 gallons of water per car.

For additional information and resources, contact Christy Fitzpatrick at FitzBurns@One80res.com.

CALL FOR Spring Chicken Farmers!

Are you an Urban Chicken Farmer?
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Student Voices

7th Grade Students Publish “A Memory Map”

BY NICK KACZMAREK

Memoirs are a way for us to share personal stories with one another and discover that we all have much more in common than we might think. In quarter one, each 7th grade student dove back into their memories and wrote a unique contribution to be included in the group’s memoir anthology entitled *A Memory Map*.

The anthology is now complete and is being printed! It is available for pre-order at the special price of \$10 for a black and white edition (which includes all three volumes, memoirs from the entire 7th grade) or \$20 each for one of three color volumes (which also include artwork and maps designed by the students). All editions are bound with color covers. To order your anthology, return this order form with payment to your home base teacher. We hope you enjoy the following excerpts from our 7th grade authors.

Excerpts from “A Memory Map”

I walk into the studio being blinded by the bright white wall, I breathe in and out catching a whiff of wet paint. A little chill blew by me. —Imara Brown, Volume 1

She stood there and blinked at us, standing there covered in flour, water, spices, and who knows what else. —Chloe Butcher, Volume 1

A drop in the water, a change in the weather can change everything. —Riley DiFiore

The audience was quiet but my amp was crackling with static. —Cecilia Novelli, Volume 1

I was in my mom’s Honda Accord when we got the phone call. The caller ID said “unknown,” just like my illness. —Riley Shea-Wood, Volume 1

I tried to not look at the face in the rearview mirror. It didn’t look anything like me; the lugubrious, watery hazel eyes especially. I felt the despair start to creep up on me again, but I profusely shoved it back down, keeping it safely away from my mind. —Ariana Chernyshev, Volume 2

Then came that evening, the time when those children are staring up chimneys and something or other, but for me I was driving around the neighborhood looking at Christmas decorations with my family. —Jack Chipman, Volume 2

Looking up at the stars and color-lit night sky told me something. I was never alone. And I will never be. —Veronika Gillespie, Volume 2

The fall air stung my eyes as I ran down the steep hill I now know as Race Street. The houses became blurs as I zoomed past each one of them. —Alex Klemmer, Volume 2

The majestic ice crystals came from the mysterious cloud palace to cover the earth in a white glaze. —Ofir Lemon, Volume 2

It was a beautiful fall morning. The suns rays woke me up like I was having a nightmare. I woke up with the smell of my mom’s breakfast cooking. I ran down stairs as fast as lighting. —Ebony Peeples, Volume 2

Death is the end for some but the beginning for others. —Leah Simpson, Volume 2

Sometimes I wish that she could still be here with me, but since I know that can’t happen, I just wish that some little boy or girl has found the hideaway tree with someone they love so they can share some of the magic that it has to offer. —Olivia Brumn, Volume 3

My grandma was getting old, and it was hard to come up with a tradition we would both enjoy. —Emelyn Broniek, Volume 3

Leave your pacifier at home bring your A game! —Yasmeene Henderson, Volume 3

It was a frigid day in Southwest Alaska. Of course, any day in Alaska was enough to give an underdressed man breakable fingers. —Heath Mauk, Volume 3

You never know how much you love something until it’s gone forever. At least I didn’t. For some people that might be a person they took for granted or a pet or a privilege they had, but for me it was a cottage; a small, surreal cottage down a windy dirt road in Ligonier. —Erin McShane, Volume 3

It was a dark and stormy night. Rain pelted the car, wind threatened to blow down the giant tree next to us, and my Dad and I were lost trying to find a short cut to the haunted house. I was getting pretty nervous. I had never done anything like this before. —Evan Rubin, Volume 3

“A Memory Map” Order Form

| Qty | | Cost |
|-------|---------------------------------|-------|
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| | Total Payment Enclosed | _____ |

Contact/Delivery Information

Student Name: _____

Teacher/Grade: _____

Contact E-mail: _____

Orders will be taken through the remainder of the school year. Make checks payable to: ECS. Return Order Form and payment to your home base teacher. *Please allow up to 3 weeks for delivery.* **Thank you for your order!**



A Cool Treat from the Sierra Club in E-Day

BY GINNY LEVY

On November 29 and 30, the Sierra Club's Endangered Species Action (ESA) Team paid a special visit to the E-Day kids to talk about polar bears. Listed as a threatened species in 2008 due to loss of critical habitat, polar bears are considered marine mammals that can only live where oceans freeze. This habitat allows them to hunt seals, their primary prey.

The Sierra Club ESA Team is great for providing fun, themed activities that are always service-based. They brought along special guest Margie Marks from the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium to share her wonderful slideshow and knowledge of polar bears. Margie is Curator of Conservation Education at the zoo and recently traveled to Churchill, Canada to observe polar bears in the wild!

After learning all about this awesome species from Margie and the ESA team, the E-Day

kids made their way around activity stations, where they could touch a polar bear's skull, pelt, and claw, work on polar bear art projects, contribute to a beautiful arctic mural, or even pledge to save a polar bear. The kids filled out certificates and composed letters to President Obama on behalf of the threatened bears. ESA will actually mail the letters! What a cool day!

For more information, visit: The Sierra Club ESA Team at <http://alleghenysc.org/?cat=69> and the Pittsburgh Zoo polar bear page at <http://blog.pittsburghzoo.org/2012/conservation-polar-bears/>

For information about the ECS Extended-Day after school program, please visit <http://eday.weebly.com>



Photos by Ginny Levy



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Our new neighbor... **61B Coffee House**

BY MELISSA A. RYCHENER



On a misty winter morning in January, I reluctantly got out of my warm car and into the chilly air. I walked quickly toward my destination, Squirrel Hill's popular 61C Café, anticipating the warmth. I was also anticipating a day in the not-too-distant future that the coffee, conversation, and fresh scones that have made 61C a Squirrel Hill standard will be available in a second location opening up in Regent Square. But I am getting ahead of myself... As soon as I opened the door of 61C, the aroma of coffee and cinnamon greeted me, and the warmth of the room was matched by the greeting I received from the manager and barista extraordinaire, Keith Kaboly.

Keith has been managing and serving coffee at 61C for more than 18 years. In 1994, Keith was contacted by his uncle, Gary Kaboly and his wife Cathy Knorr, about a new coffee shop they were opening. Their vision for this new endeavor was to make a good cup of coffee available outside of the Strip – and to create a neighborhood space for conversation and community. Keith, who was finishing up his degree at Pitt, said that he would help them out while they got it off the ground. Fast forward to 2013, and Keith, along with his staff, is still serving up

coffee and community in Squirrel Hill. Keith will soon help to open 61B in Regent Square and will manage both locations.

Over a cup of Darjeeling tea (in addition to freshly brewed coffee, 61C offers more than 50 varieties of tea) and a freshly baked cinnamon scone with just the right amount of sweet (it was still hot!), Keith filled me in on plans for 61B. The new venue will be where Katerbeen was formerly located. If you walk past now, you will see that demolition work is in full swing! They are working with an architect to create a new space that retains much of the character of the Squirrel Hill location. The entrance to the new location will be on Braddock, and addressing some concerns raised, they will ensure that the air that filters into the store is fresh and smoke-free. Although they plan to reproduce much of what has worked so well at 61C, they are considering some additions to the menu – possibly sandwiches – and maybe a walk-up window for late nights. I look forward to what makes it to their final plans!

While talking with Keith about future plans, he introduced me to some of the regulars at 61C, and I took in the atmosphere. Enjoying a scone and cup of freshly-brewed coffee while reading the paper, one regular

customer explained that a few weeks ago, he noticed that the coffee was not up to par. Keith went to work researching the problem and noticed that the filter in the coffee pot was not functioning properly and immediately fixed it. This customer noted that that kind of responsiveness is hard to find - and characteristic of 61C.

As I looked around the room, I noticed a couple deep in conversation, one student with an open textbook, and another customer working on her laptop. Several more customers came and went with their to-go cups. Another customer said that he enjoyed the lively conversations that take place. Keith emphasized the “unscripted” nature of the 61C environment, explaining that baristas are encouraged to bring

their own music, opinions, and personalities to work. I also noticed that all of the signs appeared to be hand-lettered. Keith explained that his wife, Casey Johnston, an artist, is responsible for the signage.

So whether you come in for an espresso, a smoothie, a bag of coffee from their extensive selection, house-made macaroons, free wireless internet, a good conversation, or a convenient meeting place, 61B will certainly be a welcome addition to our Regent Square neighborhood. **Be sure to look for the new café opening in March at 1108 South Braddock Avenue.**



5

QUESTIONS FROM AN ECS STUDENT

Get to know an ECS community member better through 5 questions from one of our students. This month, 6th grade student Grace Brennan spoke briefly with her home base teacher, Stacey Formal.



I wanted to interview Miss Formal (shown here with me and my friend Annie Ruzanic) because she is an awesome new teacher and I thought people would like to get to know her better.

1. If you had a super power what would it be and why?

If I had a super power, I would want the ability to fly. I would fly all over the world and visit different countries. I love seeing new places and learning about different cultures. I would also stop somewhere with beautiful beaches and warm weather. I enjoy relaxing in the sunshine with a good book and access to water sports.

2. What is your favorite childhood memory and why?

My favorite childhood memory is when my sister was born. I was 10 years old. My grandmother picked me up from school, and told me I had a little sister. It was really nice having a sibling, and I used to love taking care of her. It was nice not being the only child in the house.

3. If you could be anything other than a teacher what would you be and why?

I would like to change the way people live. I would want to improve the educational system in the country. We need to put more money, resources, and value into education in the United States. Therefore, we would be able to be more competitive with other countries. I truly believe knowledge is power.

4. What is your favorite place in Pittsburgh and why?

I like a lot of the different shops in Shadyside such as GAP, Coach and many of the local restaurants. In addition to the shopping in Shadyside, I enjoy walking around the area, checking out new places and seeing different types of people. I am a city person, so I like being around busy streets and lots of people.

5. If the ECS cafeteria gave you a chance to pick the lunch for a day, what would you pick?

I would choose to have pizza and ice cream for lunch.

ComPOST is taking submissions from students who would like to interview one of their favorite staff members. If you or your child is interested in interviewing a teacher for the next issue of comPOST, please e-mail Becky Randall at 5questions@ecspco.org.



ECS PCO is on Facebook.

Participate in discussions, learn about upcoming events, and post questions and concerns. Search "ECS PCO" to join today!

comPOST

Contact us: newsletter@ecspco.org

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