

MAY

2022

# THE SOULARD SCHOOL

COMMUNITY NEWS

## LEADERSHIP NOTES

The students are always at the forefront of our "why" behind the work that we dedicate ourselves to daily. Each school year is very unique however the one constant is our students - the reason we show up everyday! This year we were met with another unique set of challenges but the thread that continues to connect us all and hold us together is our students! My message is simple, it encompasses gratitude and grace.

I would like to thank all the students, parents, guardians and our hard-working, committed staff who have made this year at Soulard School such a rewarding experience. To our 5th graders, best wishes as you all head to middle school! You all have contributed greatly to our school and will always be a part of the Soulard School family.

To our parents and members of our community, thank you for your many contributions to our school and your dedicated partnership.

To our teachers, THANK YOU! Without your patience, dedication, talent, and love for our children we would not be able to serve the kids in the capacity that we do each day. My sincerest gratitude! You all have met each challenge with grace, overcome each obstacle with fierce determination, created amazing learning experiences, loved and advocated for each of our students along the way.

To the staff that are moving on, thank you for your time and service. You will greatly be missed but your contributions will continue to be a part of our legacy.

"Many hands make light work!" seems a fitting motto for this school year. Sincere thanks and appreciation to each of you who have made our load a little lighter. Have a relaxing and safe summer!

- Principal Shenika Bishop



*The Soulard School community gathered at the Tower Grove Bandstand for our annual showcase of musical talent and the students' hard work.*

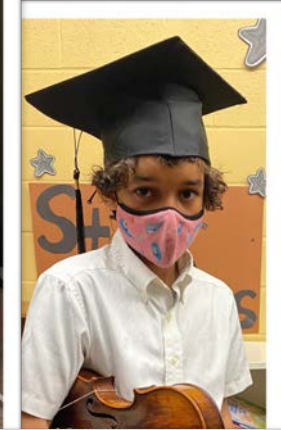
# THRIVE GRADUATION

The Soulard School  
Class of 2022



Dante, Otis, Janae, Will, Agnes,  
Sophia, Logan, Remy, Raleigh,  
Alivia, Blake, Kodi, Cy, Jay,  
Kalise, Celeste, Holly, Theo, Leo







# JR PRE-K SPROUTS

## GARDENING

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### What does a plant need for it to grow?

KIEDIS: "PLANTS NEED WATER, SEEDS, THE SUN, AND POOP."

Over the last couple of weeks, we have been learning about gardening in the Sprout classroom. They have explored with their senses and planted seeds and sprouts of their own. We are not just eating carrots, we are growing carrots too.

Digging in the soil is an enjoyable part of our day. By gardening, we teach our friends about taking care of their bodies and caring for the world around them. The social emotional lesson of gardening is to take care of the people and things around us - the garden is part of our classroom, and when it has needs, we take care of them. When our garden is dry, we water it.

### What does germinate mean?

LOREN: "IT MEANS POINTY STUFF COMES OUT THE GROUND."

Our friends learned how plants grow, parts of plants/flowers, how a plant germinates, and types of pollinators. We began by studying bees, which are pollinators and aid in the growth of our garden - we learned about the parts of the bee and how they generate honey. We used a gro-dome and terracotta pots to plant radish and carrot seeds. Sprouts were able to observe radishes germinate in our gro-dome just a few days after planting seeds.

We collaborated with Quietude Sr. Pre-K to plant our seedlings in our garden beds, along with other plants including lavender, basil, tomatoes and bell peppers. Sprouts loved digging in the soil and playing in water.





## SR PRE-K QUIETUDE MOVEMENT STUDY



During the first few months of our school year, the Quietude class made it clear that they have a deep love for dancing and moving their bodies. We followed their interests and have spent the rest of the school year studying ways to move our bodies. Based on the classes' suggestions, we began with yoga as it was a natural part of our classroom already. In this part of the study, we were able to partner with **Island Life Yoga** here in Soulard for a group class in their studio. Each student created their own yoga pose and we compiled them into a class book of yoga cards.

After yoga, we noticed several children talking about gymnastics and doing "cool moves" like somersaults and flips outside. As a class we learned about a variety of gymnasts and the apparatuses they use. We were able to take a class field trip to **Concordia Turners** where they got to use real equipment and take new risks. They were so proud to tell us that they were "brave like Simone Biles."

We have concluded our movement study by talking about dance, particularly ballet, hip hop, and breakdancing. Esther T's aunt, **Sarah Anne Patz**, teaches dance and creative movement to young children and we were lucky enough to have her come teach our class as well. They loved experimenting with different ways to position their bodies to music.



# PARENT ASSOC. UPDATES

Thank you Parents for another great year of supporting The Soulard School. It felt so good to get back into some of our favorite events and also add a few new things to the mix.

## JOIN THE PA

We have open roles on the Parents Association for next year. An important aspect of the PA's work is building a strong school community through volunteer work, fundraising and special events.

The PA hosts social events such as the Welcome Back Picnic and the school's Birthday Party. It also organizes or supports participation in fundraisers like Oktoberfest and works to find ways to facilitate parent involvement in the school.

The PA provides general support to the school and teachers and hosts lunches for them on Records Days.

It's also a fun way to get to know other parents.

If you are interested in learning more about a leadership role with the PA please contact, [samantha.fisher@soulardschool.org](mailto:samantha.fisher@soulardschool.org).

Parent Association Officer Positions Include:

- ★ President & Co-President
- ★ Vice President & Co-Vice President
- ★ Treasurer
- ★ Secretary & Co-Secretary
- ★ Social Events Co-Coordinators
- ★ Lead Room Coordinator
- ★ Room Coordinators x 2+ per grade level



Most notably this year was the return of the annual TSS Birthday Celebration in April. Our Social Events Committee, led by Laura Jacobson (Kaleb, 2nd & Logan, 5th) and Angela Wildermuth (Leo, 5th & J.P. Class of '20) did an amazing job coordinating food, decorations and entertainment.

We honored our teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week in May with 5 days of sweets and surprises. Thank you to all who donated their time, funds and talents to make it all possible.

*Coffee Cart, sponsored by **Gather Cafe** (A TSS family-owned business)*

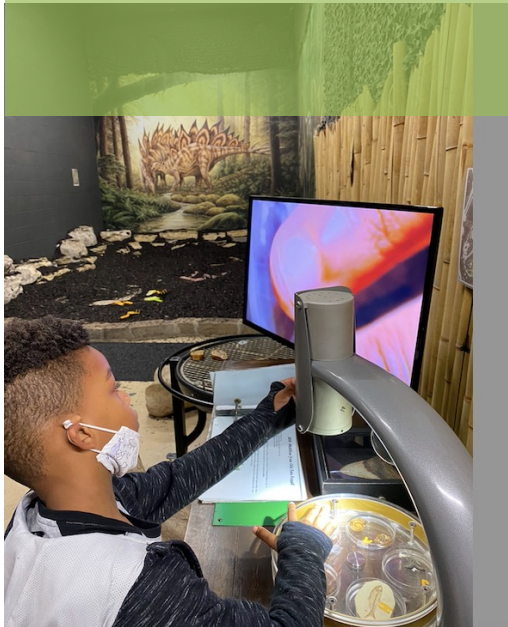


This spring, Mums kindergarten students took their first field trip to **Myseum** to further explore their love of all things STEAM related! Myseum's hands-on, interactive exhibits made for a perfect field trip for kindergarten friends.

Students were able to explore Myseum at their own pace, spending more time at exhibits that peaked the individual students' interest.



# KINDERGARTEN MUMS MYSEUM



Some class favorites included the vertical wind tubes, laser harp, the shadow wall, radar slide, dino dig, and of course, the giant bounce house!

We are grateful for our parent chaperones and drivers that made this field trip possible.



This spring, the first grade Enigma friends did a literature study of **Stellaluna**. The students worked in teams to summarize parts of the plot in preparation for a reader's theater performance. Students selected parts and worked hard to practice their lines and create costumes and scenery. They practiced public speaking skills including projecting their voice and reading with expression.

On the big day, the first graders provided two performances - one for parents and a second for other classes. It was a hit!



1<sup>ST</sup> ENIGMA  
READER'S THEATER

HAVE A GREAT  
SUMMER!



# TSS/SEC CALENDAR

- 06/06 Summer School & Camp Soulard begin
- 06/09 Parent Association Mtg. 7PM  
@ The Fortune Teller Bar
- 06/23 TSS Board Meeting 1PM
- 07/04-15 School CLOSED: Summer Vacation
- 07/28 TSS Board Meeting 1PM
- 08/22 FIRST DAY OF 2022-23 SCHOOLYEAR
- 08/25 TSS Board Meeting 1PM

## MINI PRE-K STEAMFEST

The Soulard School held its first ever Mini Pre-K STEAM fest.

Fifth grade Thrivers created stations for both Jr. Pre-K Sprouts and Sr. Pre-K Quietude students. Thrivers taught and led the stations in The Boys' Club gym.

Thrivers were so mindful with their young friends. Every one of them demonstrated leadership. They really acted the definition of "Soulard Students".

Thank you to Courtney Keefe (in her 10<sup>th</sup> year at TSS) for creating this amazing experience.



# DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

## GiveSTLDay Thank You

We are happy to report that Give STL Day was a huge success for The Soulard School. Thanks to your generosity we were able to surpass our goals and raise more than \$34,000.



### HERE'S WHAT YOUR DONATIONS HELP SUPPORT...

The Soulard School is a free, public, charter elementary school. Donations on Give STL Day support our Annual Fund that makes the Soulard School's signature programs possible including:

- Co-teaching classrooms with low student-teacher ratio (maximum 12:1)
- Hands-on Culinary Arts & Nutrition lessons
- Violin & Performing Arts lessons starting in kindergarten
  - STEAM-centered programs
- Social Emotional & Wellness programming

We are grateful for your partnership and support, please visit our website [www.soulardschool.org/ways-to-give](http://www.soulardschool.org/ways-to-give) or contact Samantha Fisher, [samantha.fisher@soulardschool.org](mailto:samantha.fisher@soulardschool.org), to make a pledge.



## 2<sup>ND</sup> ALCHEMY MERAMEC CAVERNS

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Second grade enjoyed exploring a student interest learning all about rocks and minerals this spring. This study led us to a field trip to **Meramec Caverns** where we explored an underground cave found right here in Missouri, and we took a workshop learning about and testing different properties of rocks and minerals.

Thanks to our parent chaperones for making this trip possible!

# 3<sup>RD</sup> EXPLORER MAKER'S MARKET

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To finish up the year the Explorers third grade class blended math and social studies for a project-based study of financial literacy and entrepreneurship and created a **Maker's Market**.

For the Market, students began by learning about the economics of business before developing their own small business ideas, inspired by the classic lemonade stand. Groups took ownership of budgeting, branding and product development. A trip to **Soulard Market** allowed them to see small businesses in action as well.

Finally the big day arrived, and they opened their stores to the TSS community for a one-time sales event! Products sold included cookies, homemade salsa, crafts and jewelry.

The purpose of this project was to inspire philanthropy as well as entrepreneurship. The class decided to give the profits from the market to the **Climer family** in honor of our dear friend and staff member Joe Ploch who passed away this spring.

This project was a huge success for everyone involved.

# STEAMFEST 2022

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After a two year on-site hiatus, STEAMfest made its triumphant return this year! Coinciding with Spring Concert's theme of What a Wonderful World, STEAMfest highlighted architectural wonders of the ancient world. The experiences created by our amazing Extended Core teachers focused on the history of The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, The Great Wall of China, Stonehenge, the Taj Mahal, and the Colosseum followed by hands-on interactive activities for each.

Students were divided into multi-age group teams and participated in Roman chariot races, "Escaped the Room" at the Taj Mahal, reconstructed the Great Wall of China to keep the Mongols at bay, recreated transportation to move the 25 ton stone slabs to build Stonehenge, and worked with Neo-Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II to create hanging gardens to remind homesick Queen Amytis of the lush foliage of her homeland.

Each activity incorporated a subject area of STEAM to create a full day of thematic cross curricular experiences!



*1 Stonehenge: Working Tire-Less-ly: Students work together to move 50,000 pound stones without the use of modern technology by rolling them over tree trunks.*

*2 Chariot Race: Let the games begin! Students take off around the arena, hoping to secure the fastest time.*

*3 Taj Mahal: Crack the code! Students must use their wits to decipher a cryptogram in order to escape the Taj Mahal.*

*4 Great Wall: Take Cover! Students are under siege as they see how effective their wall of protection is against the attacking Mongols.*

*5 Hanging Gardens: Simply Iris-istible! Students work to weave floral arrangements through the vertical garden.*



The fourth graders in Mosaic got to celebrate their hard work during MAP testing with a special surprise: a sleepover at the school!

Beginning right after school on Friday, students made their own pizza dough and played in the yard while the dough was rising.

When they came back inside, they customized their pizzas with all the



## 4<sup>TH</sup> MOSAIC SLEEPOVER AT SCHOOL

toppings and ranch their hearts desired.

After a movie, it was finally dark enough for a game of hide and seek throughout the school!! Topaz was the clear champion, the last one to be found three times in a row.

After a dance party on the Adventure Ship, everyone set up their sleeping bags in different classrooms and (kind of) went to sleep.

The next morning, everyone woke up bright and early for a breakfast buffet by Chef Phil. We are super proud of the hard work the Mosaic crew has put in this school year and we are happy they got to make these memories together as a classroom community!



# 5<sup>TH</sup> THRIVE CAMPING DAY



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Should we stay or should we go? That was the question, with the roller coaster spring weather we've had! Our answer? "Let's go make some memories!" And that's just what we did.

Our fifth grade Thrivers were able to enjoy a final "Camping Day" together at **Washington State Park** in DeSoto, MO. The day was full of exploring and adventuring. Thrivers built forts, hiked, and even watched as the river rose in front of our eyes from all the rainfall. We embraced the wet and the mud and had a phenomenal time connecting and making memories to last a lifetime.

Our fifth graders are ready to head off to middle school, and we are so proud of them. We can't wait to see how they'll use the many skills they've developed while at The Soulard School!



1 Roasting marshmallows on the grill for yummy s'mores  
2 Building forts together in the woods  
3 Thrivers making their own petroglyph-inspired necklace  
4 Thrivers hiking the "1,000 Steps Trail"  
5 Scenic overlook while taking a break on the trail  
6 Naturalist-guided tour of the Petroglyphs, created by indigenous peoples of this region long ago



# SAYING GOODBYE TO A DEAR FRIEND & COLLEAGUE



*"Do you need some help?"*

These are the words that were most frequently heard whenever Joe was around. Joe was a doer. He was a team member. He understood that happiness was most authentically achieved by doing for others. Joe helped others for no reason and gave without expectation of return. Joe's kindness knew no bounds.

On November 15th, 2021, Joe underwent emergency brain surgery and was subsequently diagnosed with stage 4 esophageal cancer that had spread to his brain. Best believe, Joe knew this wasn't good, but he remained so calm and optimistic as his battle progressed. He knew it couldn't be cured, but it could be treated. It didn't matter what the prognosis was, Joe was going to fight. And fight he did. Even as he underwent radiation and chemotherapy, Joe continued to come to work because it made him happy to be with the kids, and gave him something to look forward to. Courage is not the absence of fear, but the decision that other things are more important than fear. It was important to Joe that his illness neither define him or ruin anyone's day.

Joe and his wife Shawna joined The Soulard School community in 2012 when their oldest daughter Verona began kindergarten. Three younger siblings followed - Verona and Saxon are now alumni, while Topaz is in fourth grade and Magnolia in second.

Joe initially began his work with us as a volunteer, running a board games club starting in the Spring of 2017. In 2019, his longtime friend Sarah Kate Buckles, who was running aftercare at the time, recruited him as her assistant, knowing that his love of children and his calm demeanor would be a welcome addition to the program. She was right. Joe helped us, and we helped him too, inspiring him to go back to school and switch to a focus on early childhood education from middle school education, and he was nearing completion of an Early Education and Care certification from UMSL at the time of his diagnosis.

## JOE PLOCH 1976 - 2022

On paper, Joe was our aftercare coordinator and he supported pre-k in the afternoons. But Joe's roles at school far exceeded his job description. Dressed in cargo shorts with his long beard sticking out of the bottom of his mask, Joe could be found in the lunchroom, supporting classroom teachers at all grade levels,

taking care of the chickens in aftercare, coming up after school hours to be knee deep in muddy water to help muck the pond, single handedly handling the rodent invasion on the playground during the pandemic--the list goes on and on. Joe is the type of person who would plant trees knowing that others would enjoy their shade for years to come.

To say that Joe Ploch was a special person is an understatement. Joe's life was rarely about Joe; it was about his family and all of us. He chose to spend the final months of his life living the way he always did. He spent time with his family and with the kiddos here at school. We are all better people for knowing Joe and we honor him by being a bit more like him -- Strong, Courageous, and above all, Kind. - Courtney Keefe

*The entire school community paid homage to Joe during "Beards & Board Games Day" - an event created to celebrate Joe and his love of games and the students.*

