

# THE SOULARD SCHOOL

JAN  
2017

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### LIFELONG LEARNING

"THERE WAS A CHILD WENT FORTH EVERY DAY; AND THE FIRST OBJECT HE LOOK'D UPON,  
THAT OBJECT HE BECAME; AND THAT OBJECT BECAME PART OF HIM FOR THE DAY,  
OR A CERTAIN PART OF THE DAY, OR FOR MANY YEARS, OR STRETCHING CYCLES OF YEARS."

—WALT WHITMAN

#### Notes From The Leadership *Kerri Fair, Principal*

This quote is the beginning stanza from the poem "There was a child went forth" by one of my all time favorite poets, Walt Whitman. The poem itself is too lengthy to add, but goes on to list many **objects, experiences, and elements of our environment that we interact with through our lives in a way that they become part of us somehow. In this way, we are always learning, growing, and renewing ourselves.**

Many classroom teachers and administrators At The Soulard School have had the opportunity over the past several years to be both teachers and students. They have been partners with professors from Webster University by participating in two classes that are both held and implemented in our school environment. The first course, Teaching in a Diverse Society, will meet for the fifth time this spring and supports pre-service teachers who are working to obtain a Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree. **With the support of our teaching staff and their own Webster professors, pre-service teachers learn about best practices in teaching, cover timely topics in education, and are introduced to basic lesson planning. The class takes our project-based learning approach and gives the MAT students practice with building curriculum that connects to classroom studies. Our classroom teachers support as mentors, but have also expressed how much they, in turn, learn from the course and the perspectives of the new teachers.** A second course is a practicum-leveled course that focuses on action research. One or two practicum students are paired with an administrator or classroom teacher to support a research project to analyze an aspect of their own practice. **While members of our staff lead the research, pre-service teachers support by collecting data, helping interpret the data and results from the study, and presenting the data to our staff and beyond.** Research projects have included analysis of our proactive ways to support student behaviors and learning, specific tools to support teacher professional development, and internal strategies to support students. **Currently, two of the research projects (related to our teachers' processes rather than student data) are the topic of presentations that will be held at the Professional Development Schools National Conference at Myrtle Beach, SC and the Leading Out Loud MAESP (Missouri Association of Elementary School Principals) Conference at Osage Beach, MO this year.**



At The Soulard School we believe that all elements of our environment are important and influential to our learning. When we say "our learning," we truly mean everyone who enters our school. Our goal is to put students in healthy and integrated environments that are presented with intention and purpose, and support meaningful connections and personal growth. Students, in this sense, can be our Soulard School students, university students, or ourselves as we research and reflect on our own practice.

As all students move through our school's environment, it is our hope that they take elements with them and make them their own; creating their own meaning from and with us. Learning is a personal process, and it is so much more enjoyable when we can learn together and have a healthy integrated environment like The Soulard School to do it in.

GO FORTH IN THIS ISSUE  
TO SEE THE WAYS LEARNING  
BECOMES A PART OF US:

PAGE 4  
Listening, a lifelong  
lesson with 1<sup>st</sup> grade

PAGE 6  
Making, More Than  
You Think in STEAM

PAGE 7  
Growing Our Growing  
in Culinary Arts

## Our Calendar

- 1/18 PA Meeting 6-7pm
- 1/21 Open House 10am-12:30pm
- 1/30 Birthday Book Assembly
- 2/4 Trivia Night Fundraiser
- 2/7 Parent Coffee: Mosaic Hosts
- 2/8 PA Meeting 6-7pm
- 2/17 School Closed: Records Day
- 2/20 School Closed: Presidents Day
- 2/27 Birthday Book Assembly
- 3/3 School Closed: Student-Led Conferences
- 3/7 Parent Coffee: Enigma Hosts
- 3/8 PA Meeting 6-7pm
- 3/20-24 School Closed: Spring Break
- 3/28 Birthday Book Assembly

Emma designs patterns inspired by Aboriginal art.



Edi strengthens her fine motor skills by creating Aboriginal symbols in the sand.



Evie engages in dot painting the continent of Australia to add to our collaborative world map.

THE SOULARD ★ SCHOOL

WHOSE BRAIN WILL REIGN?

TRIVIA NIGHT

doors @ 6

02.04.17

trivia @ 7

\$250 - FOR - 10 TOP DRINKS INCLUDED

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[soulardschool.org/trivia-night](http://soulardschool.org/trivia-night) 314-865-2799 [sarah.christman@soulardschool.org](mailto:sarah.christman@soulardschool.org)

## THE QUIETUDE CLASS HAS BEEN STUDYING OCEAN AND CONTINENTS

During our study of Australia, we investigated the history, culture, and art of the Aboriginal people. We explored Aboriginal dot painting and symbols throughout a variety of activities including painting, patterning, and fine motor work.



Cameron and Linkyn draw Aboriginal symbols as a form of communication.



# The Play By Play of the Thrive Class Fundraiser

*By* Thrive Class Students: Sylvia Woldow (5<sup>th</sup> Grade) & Joss Thenhaus (4<sup>th</sup> Grade)

## Act 1: Behind the Scenes

We got to see a play of *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* by Metro Theater Company. It was behind the scenes so we got to see the background and how they used multiple Edwards in different clothes for different scenes. After the play we got to ask some questions and comments like, "How did you switch Edward's clothes so fast?" It was a really good play!

## Act 2: The Fundraiser

The fundraiser that we did was we sold coffee for \$1.50. We also sold cookies for 50 cents each. We did it for 3 days (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday), Dec 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup>. **A big thank you for all the people that bought our coffee. We raised \$285. Yay! We used that money for the final show of *Edward Tulane*. We have extra money, so we are going to the Humane Society.**

## Act 3: Final Play

At the final play of *Edward Tulane* (at the History Museum), things were definitely different than the one we saw behind the scenes. For example, the background was 3D, therefore having stairs that would go up to a platform that was out of sight, where the actors would switch outfits/characters. Something fun we found out, was that they had an Edward toy rabbit for every scene, so that they didn't have to change his clothes. Now just because they were amazing actors, doesn't mean they should have to stress about where to put what in the twenty seconds they have to set up they next scene. To fix that, the stage did have small pieces of tape showing the actors where the props go. During the behind the scenes show, we were in a fairly bright room, whereas the theater was dark. The stage couldn't have been as dark as the rest of the room, or else we wouldn't have been able to see the play. So, in the beginning of the play, the lighting was a "quiet" purple, but later on, the lighting would be brighter, and more cheerful. Those qualities were not included during the rehearsal. The play at the theater also included live music that was played on the platform above the stairs.

## Act 4: Reflection

Soulard School, this experience was so much fun, and it was also very exciting to prepare. The fundraiser was a hit. If it weren't for the Soulard School parents and staff, we wouldn't have gotten to see this amazing piece. On our part, we did work hard. It was cold outside when we did this, but we did it anyway! I wasn't there for most of that time, but my classmates had so much stamina of being out in the cold, selling warm coffee and cookies to families in warm cars (And I'm pretty sure if any of them asked for a car ride home, they were joking.) It was fantastic to see behind the scenes, even though it was more of a smooth outline, it was awesome. Alright, enough beating around the bush. **What I, and all of my classmates are trying to say, is Thank You. We all really appreciate the support you all gave us. It really helped us out. Again, Thank You for this wonderful experience.**



**"Open your heart. Someone will come."**

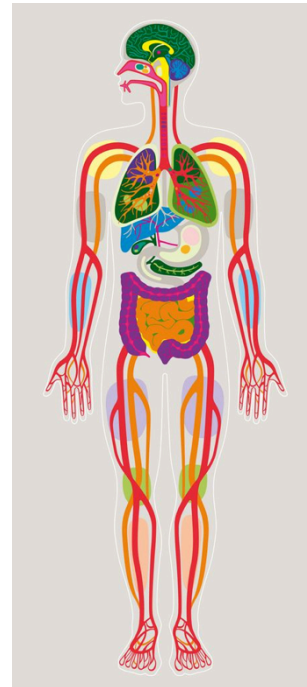
-Kate DiCamillo *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*

# WHOLE BODY LISTENING HOW-TO

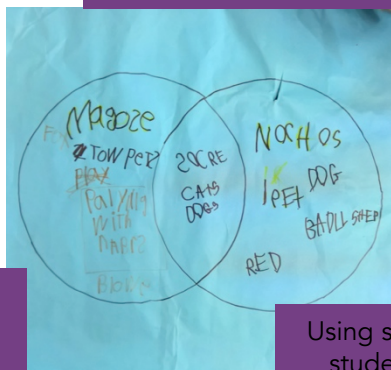
Buddy Circles and the practice of “being a buddy” have become an everyday occurrence for The Soulard School staff and students. Students can be observed being a buddy by taking care of their classroom and shared spaces, showing the “Peace & Quiet” sign during assembly, or looking for ways to help each other by “being there, even if they don’t need you,” (Vera, 2nd grade).

To further integrate this kid-friendly term for acting with integrity, the Enigma (1<sup>st</sup> grade) and Thrive (4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade) classes have participated in Buddy Circle Panels, this year an additional extended core time led by classroom teachers and Assistant Principal Haley Biehl. The natural goings-on of the classrooms have initiated classwide conversations that emphasize the social-emotional practices that are embedded within the school day, and allow time and consideration for additional dialogue and reflection.

Enigma students were introduced to **Whole Body Listening**, a strategy from the Social Thinking curriculum, as a way to develop active listening, **also known as empathic listening**, which is a skill that many adults struggle with! **Active listening is listening and responding in a way that builds mutual understanding and trust, and is critical for teaming up to achieve shared goals and resolve conflicts in healthy, productive ways.** Although Whole Body Listening emphasizes the art of following directions and attending to the task at hand, we focused on the language of “**Listening with your brain** -- Thinking about what the person is saying,” and “**Listening with your heart** -- Caring about what the person is saying.” This was identified, labeled, modeled using stories, images, and videos of the children themselves. Many of the students felt that listening with your heart was the most important part of listening, saying things like, “You want people to know you care about them,” (Stella) and “You want to have trust with people,” (Clyde).



“Me and Clyde both like hot chocolate!” -Zack.



Using sketches and inventive spelling to fill in the diagram, students talked about their partners favorite colors and Food, pets they have at home and more.

Students were invited to “listen with their heart” as they interviewed each other using a Venn Diagram, and had the opportunity to build new connections, learn more about their peers, and discover commonalities.



THANK YOU!

## FLAPJACKS FOR CASH!

The McKenzie family helped organize our first ever Flapjack Fundraiser in November. The event, sponsored by Mac's Local Buys and hosted by Byrd & Barrel, sold out within less than 2 hours and raised almost \$1000 for the Parent Association. Thanks also to Rustic Roots Farms for donating the eggs, The Tumbleweeds for performing (parent Heather Manley's band), Bem General, and all the families that brought in cakes for the cake walk.





# ALL THE WAY FROM NORWAY!

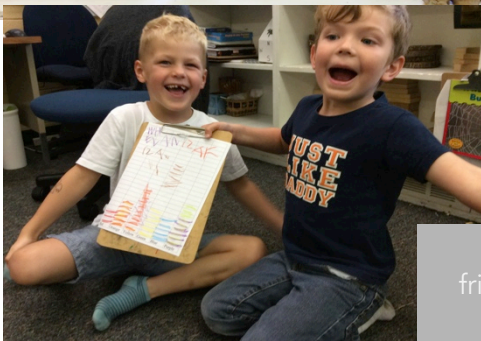
This fall, the Mums Kindergarten class welcomed our first non-English speaking student. When a Norwegian family moved to St. Louis for several months because of the father's work, Isak joined our classroom. The total immersion of Isak into our class became mutually beneficial to him and his fellow Mums. While Isak experienced local culture he also began to speak English. When Isak left in December he knew many numbers, colors, some animals, requests, and even several sight words, and was able to experience firsthand the American traditions of Halloween and Thanksgiving. For the other Mums, Isak's visit provided a larger world view. Not only did our students learn much from Isak, but his family offered their time to come in to visit as well. Isak's mother, and a friend of hers who is a middle school teacher in Norway, visited at class. They spoke first in Norwegian and then translated to English. This allowed our students to build empathy towards Isak, understanding how it feels to not understand what is being spoken around them. Many of our students were considering the idea of language for the first time. Isak's mother and her friend spoke to our class about aspects of Norwegian culture including school, daily life for children, and even Christmas. We practiced a few Norwegian phrases, and heard folk stories of Norway in their original language and English. Having Isak in our classroom brought up many questions from our students leading to the study of flags, maps, traditional foods, climate, and time change. Mums were amazed at not only how many differences we found between life in the United States and Norway, but how much we all have in common.



"Troll City" Mums friends loved hearing Norwegian folktales. Creating their own trolls out of clay and sticks, friends collaborated in writing their own troll tales. Using the clay trolls, the stories were retold and acted out in small groups.



The Soulard School's philosophy of learning through the environment and our outdoor classroom allowed the transition to a new school to seem more natural to Isak. His mother explained to us that his school in Norway spent 80% of the day outside, regardless of the weather.



Even with the language barrier friendships were made. Here is Isak making a chart with Whelan.

## OKTOBER-YES!

### \$9,500 RAISED FOR THE PA!

Oktoberfest was a huge success this year for the Parent Association. Thanks to grandparent Anne Chance and parent Shannon McGrath, we were able to play a larger role than ever in the newly reformed event. Parent volunteers helped collect more than \$2000 in tips selling beer, in addition to our share of the proceeds from the one-day event, \$7500! Our own Monica Watson and some student chefs got to show off their stuff with a cooking demonstration as part of the event too, helping spread the word about our approach to healthy eating and real food!



**JOIN THE PA!  
ELECTIONS FOR  
OPEN  
POSITIONS  
IN APRIL!**

# BIG IDEAS: The Importance of Curiosity & The Maker Mentality

By Courtney Keefe, STEAM Lab Teacher

How many parents have experienced their young kids being more interested in the boxes, bubble wrap, and wrapping paper than the birthday or holiday gifts they just received? Perhaps it is because these items do not have a specific purpose and as far as they are concerned, they can be made into or used for whatever they want.

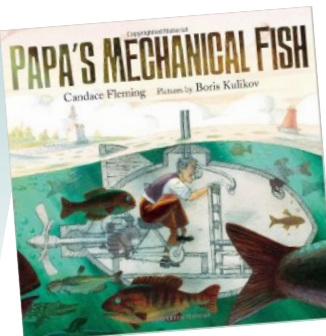
In essence, this is how every “maker” gets his or her start. Seemingly random items become something “made.” These creations can provide hours of amusement or years of practical use. The goal in our STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math) program is to create unique experiences that spark curiosity and creativity in a safe learning environment. Students learn that failure is part of the process and to use those mistakes as tools for growth. Over time, we’ve seen kids who once would have given up had their project not met their initial expectations, now closely re-examining and fine tuning the details of their work. This is the Maker Mentality we work hard to cultivate. We provide our students with as many tools as possible -- cardboard, foam, tape, fabric, technology, robotics, etc. -- for them to pursue their creative interests. Where one child sees an empty oatmeal canister as a tunnel or a wheel, another views it as the perfect hat.

We frequently introduce design challenges to younger students using picture books. We recently read the book *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires with our pre-k and kindergarten friends. Students were tasked with creating their very own Most Magnificent Thing. We gave the students the option of working individually or with a partner and cut them loose. One kiddo created a giant cardboard t-rex as his Most Magnificent Thing because he wants to see a real dinosaur someday. Another friend designed a musical instrument complete with a built-in speaker system and a disco ball. We decided to call it the Porta Party. Coming soon to Amazon.

As students get older, we present them with more involved design thinking challenges. Earlier this year, our second and third grade friends worked in small groups to create a customized chair for a client with very specific needs--a toddler (Maggie), a high school student (Ralph), a marathon runner (Lisa), and an astronaut (Neil). Students began by building empathy for their client and brainstorming creative ways to meet their needs. Maggie is a wiggly toddler who hates sitting still; one group designed a chair with a built-in trampoline and slide to help get her energy out. Lisa has sore muscles because of how much she runs; another group decided that her chair should have a built in back and leg massager and mechanical arms to quickly deliver a water bottle post-run.

By crafting things, whether it’s knitting a scarf or creating a Rube Goldberg machine, students can clearly see that they build specific skills with each completed project. The greatest joys of my job are witnessing a child have an ‘a-ha’ moment and their eagerness to share creations with ANYONE--parents, classmates, siblings, random people in the hall. As they master some basic skills, their creativity will grow and they become more willing to take risks.

Suggested  
STEAM  
Literature  
Connections



The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Clovers & Stars Irish Music & Dance Festival was huge success! Thank you so much to all who helped make this such a memorable event, including: McGurk’s, Switchback, St. Louis Irish Arts, McGurk’s House Band, Matt King, Samantha Fisher and the talented The Soulard School Orchestra

CLOVERS  
&  
STARS

Held at a new venue, The Sheldon Concert Hall,  
we raised **\$77,000!**





# SOW, GROW, EAT, REPEAT

*By* **Monica Watson, Culinary Arts & Nutrition Teacher**

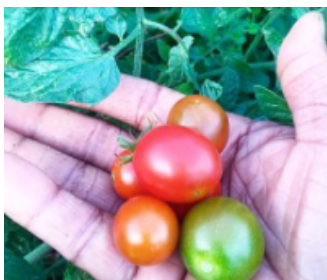
The Soulard School's Culinary Arts program began twelve years ago as a farm-to-table lunch program providing students with a framework for learning about the connections between the food we eat, our bodies and our environment. The program served a mere 14 kids at its inception. It was an idea that was far from the norm. Elementary students actively planning and preparing school lunches from scratch to be served "family style"...no trays, no trucked-in processed food, no Taco Bell days. It was different.

As part of the extended core curriculum of the school, Culinary Arts has always been foundational to the school but the framework continues to grow in scope. Its weekly classroom nutrition component includes a focus on food literacy and the effect of food on our bodies. The goal is to help students understand the importance of making healthy choices and empowering them with the knowledge to do so.

This year, a display in the Culinary Arts classroom reads, "Sow, Grow, Eat, Repeat...". It serves to remind me of how this amazing program was sown from conversations and ideas that continue to grow us forward and outward. We are now ready to enrich the CA program by connecting and deepening many of the components that have always been present. We are beginning to grow more of our own food used to prepare meals, moving us to a seed-to-table lunch program. As we expand our growing methods indoors and out, classroom involvement and cross-curricular activities can increase as well. A long-term goal would be to provide CSA opportunities for our greater school community. We are continuing to build relationships with local farms and other local food sources including Scharf Farms, Bohlen Farm, Urban Harvest, Mac's Local Buys, Local Harvest and Midwest Pasta.

Connecting nutrition knowledge from the classroom to the kitchen and then transforming the food we've grown into healthy meals will give food preparation and eating more meaning. We will become mindful eaters and more intentional in practicing sustainability. Increasing our composting system will also help complete the circle. Our chickens are our first example of these connections. Hatched last spring by the 1<sup>st</sup> graders during their life cycle study, they now eat some of our food scraps. We use their eggs for cooking and will use their waste to enrich our soil for growing.

These plans and goals are a natural extension of what has been done for years at The Soulard School. Ask any of the older students and they will tell you, "We have conversations about these ideas all the time."



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We are profoundly grateful to those who help The Soulard School build capacity through very generous multi-year pledges and major gifts.

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I'M A BIG FAN!

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## Annual Appeal 2016-17

The Annual Fund directly supports our Equitable Tuition Program. **This year's goals are to raise \$48,000**, achieve 100% family participation, and add four new members to our Grandparent Scholars Club. **We are excited to report we have 6 new Grandparent Scholars and are about \$10,000 away from our fundraising goal!**

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