



October 18, 2010

Spring Lake Park Schools ISD 16

Volume 2, Issue 1

## Important Dates

- 10/15- no classes
- 10/19 - scheduled evening conferences
- 10/20- scheduled day conferences
- 10/21- no classes
- 10/22—no classes
- 11/4 LA Picture retakes
- 11/5—term ends
- 11/8—minicourse 2
- 11/12—no classes
- 11/15—LACS term 2 begins
- 11/25—no classes
- 11/26 no classes

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## From the Director's Chair

By Bill Sommers, PhD



We are two months into the school year. The changes in the schedule for reading and problem-solving seem to be building skills for our students. The staff prepares lesson each week for the students which takes collaboration on the part of the staff.

As we read about 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools, "teamwork and collaboration" is always in the top three of the skills business

and industry wants to see in potential employees. We look for that when we hire teachers, paraprofessionals, custodians, food service, etc. None of us make it in the world alone.

Some times I hear students say, "I can't wait to graduate, then nobody will tell me what to do." I know what they are saying, they want more autonomy. I ask you, the parents, have you reached the position where nobody tells you what do to? Of course not. So, what we have to

model for and teach to our students is how we work together on common goals (learning and graduate) so that more of our students will contribute positively to the world.

We are hoping that the Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a step in the right direction. Change is not easy, some students are adjusting quicker than others.

## Excited To Be Back!

By Frank Herman, Principal



Greetings,

My name is Frank Herman and soon I will be the new Principal of Learning Alternatives Community School. The last four years, I have been the Principal of Spring Lake Park High School. Prior to that, I was the director of LACS for five years. So for me, this will be like coming home again.

I am very excited to be coming back to LACS and look forward to meeting, listening to, learning from and working with the students, staff and community. A lot has changed since I left. I have met with the student council and some of the staff members already, and have seen

some of the amazing things that are happening and will continue to happen in the future.

My hope, as I get use to my new role here, is for your patience and support. I invite you to help me to catch up by sharing ideas, concerns and the good things about LACS with me.

As always, here at LACS, we will continue to provide a high quality education for our students as we prepare them for the future. Please do not hesitate to stop in, give me a call, check in on the principal's blog on our home page or email me after Oct. 25.

Looking forward to a GREAT year,

*Frank Herman*

*Editor's note:*

*On October 25, 2010, there will be a change of leadership in Learning Alternatives Community School. Our current director, Bill Sommers and the current High School principal, Frank Herman, will be exchanging roles. Bill will transfer to the High School and Frank will return to LACS.*

*On September 29th staff and students were made aware of the change, and have since been working toward a smooth transition. We wish Bill all the best in his big move (only 200 steps from our doors) and welcome Frank (back) to our community.*

## The Derek Greenfield Experience

By Sada G.

"We don't live in the future, we live right now and we need to make this moment count," said Derek Greenfield as he welcomed students and staff to his workshop on Sept 27.

In a high energy, fast-paced format, Derek helped students listen to themselves and each other.

"He knows how to talk to people, and how to help people talk to each other. He's a smart guy," said Dean P.

"I volunteered to stand up in front of everyone, and Derek asked 'what is LACS to you,' and I said a big family," commented Harris H. "and the thing is, I really mean it."

When Derek asked, "Who here is in a better place because of someone in this room?" Students stood up and thanked the people that were making a difference in their lives.

"It was emotional, he took us out of our comfort zone in a good way," recalls Devion R.

"He got us to trust each other. He helped us to feel safe so we could share things," added Kaylean S.

Students who shared personal struggles or concerns got immediate support from LACS community members. There was a positive and encouraging conclusion to the workshop.

"He was awesome," summarized Nathan J.

*As a speaker and consultant for more than 15 years, Derek has worked extensively with Minnesota's Association of Alternative Programs and is a perennial favorite at the MAAPSTARS conference. For more information on Derek visit his website at <http://derekgreenfield.com>*



Pictures Clockwise from Top:  
Derek pauses for a picture with students after his workshop;  
Derek meeting with students before the workshop began;  
Derek in the midst of students during the workshop, Derek with a student post-workshop



## How Do We Do It?

By Sada G.

Lately, with tough economic times affecting us all, community members have been asking how we (LACS) can afford to do so many cool things in our classrooms. The answer is simple, although the process isn't. Staff and administration work extra hard year round to locate funding opportunities, then spend personal time applying for grants, discounts and freebies.

Some examples of how my hard work has paid off in the past year (grant awards totaled >\$11,000) :

### Panther Foundation Grants

- Outdoor Gardens
- Rocketry: Math, Science & Beyond

- Boardgames in the Classroom
- One Small Thing (for classroom supplies
- No Child Left Inside (Outdoor Adventure funding)
- Improving Literacy

### National Gardening Association

- Hydroponics kit

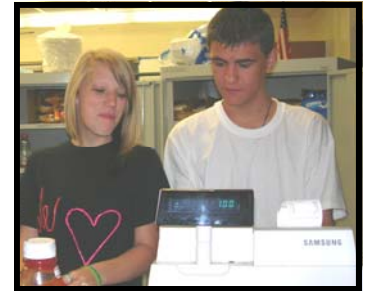
### National Environmental Education Classroom Earth grant

- Outdoor Gardens and STEM design

In addition to grants, we also actively recruit funding from individuals. For example, I have an adopt-a-classroom webpage

(adoptaclassroom.org (teacher search: Sada Ganske)) and Cheryl and Joanna have a donor's choose webpage (www.donorschoose.org (school search: Spring Lake Park)).

Although we look all over for funding and materials for our classes, our greatest resources are close to home. Our community has provided us with guest speakers, expertise, discounts on materials and unwavering support as we work together to provide our students with world-class learning opportunities.



LA students practice using their new till—funded by a Perkins Grant.

## Students Volunteer

By Jesse H.

### Animal humane society –

We went there, had a tour, learned about the adoption process. We also learned how they take care of animals when they get dropped off and before they are adopted.

### Spring brook nature center –

Our class learned about the events that are coming and the volunteer work that they have there. We are going to Spring Brook on October 18<sup>th</sup> to help carve pumpkins and place them along the trail.

**Old central garbage pickup** – We went on old central and walked along the sidewalks and ditch to pickup the garbage to make the street look nicer.

**Kids Club** – We walked to

Woodcrest and read to the kids and played games with them.

**ACCAP** – We went to low income houses and helped stain a fence for the town-homes.

**Food shelf** – we went to the human resources center and unloaded food from the truck and help load it into the freezer. We will be going there on October 14<sup>th</sup> to help again.

### Student Comments on the Experiences:

Jesse H – *My favorite part of this class is when we went to the humane society and learned about what they do to help out animals and how they take care of them.*

Jesse N – *My favorite trip was to the human society because I like the care of the*



Pictures from top: Reading to Kids' Club, Painting the Fence at Oak Manor, Food shelf volunteers stocking the food shelf.

*animals and I saw the process that the animals go through.*

Macey J. – *My favorite trip was the humane society because I love animals and was interested in how they treat them and take care of them.*

Dean P – *My favorite was kid's club because the kids were energetic and were happy to see us play with them.*

Colten B– *My favorite trip was the food shelf because I liked knowing that I helped a lot of people and the community.*



## Congratulations Graduates!



Lorenzo



Caitlynn

LACS is excited to recognize our first graduates of Fall Term 2010. Lorenzo proudly walked the halls ringing the graduate bell on Friday October 8th, and Caitlynn took her graduation stroll, bells in hand, on Tuesday October 12th. Way to go Lorenzo and Caitlynn, we wish you all the best as you embark on your new adventures!



## Project-Based Learning: Tips for Parents

by Cheryl G.

### Tips from LACS students to parents:

1. Motivation and encouragement are important. Even for some of us who are good at keeping on track. We need you to stay interested in what we're doing and support us.
2. Ask questions. We may not look like it, but we want you to know we are doing well. Ask us what we're working on and how we're doing.

### Tips from LACS teachers to parents:

1. PBL goes beyond basic book learning, it's more real because the kids have to go out and learn not be spoon-fed. I think it's important for parents to really understand their student's project. Ask them really specific questions, as a way to understand what they are doing and learning.
2. If you have questions, please ask. PBL is very different from traditional learning. If something seems odd or has you worried, please feel free to call your student's

advisor!

What can you do to support the project-based learning approach and apply this kind of learning at home? Here are some tips from "Introducing Project Based Learning" at [www.edutopia.com](http://www.edutopia.com)

**Introduce risk taking.** Your child may be concerned with succeeding at a project the first time around. But project-based learning is all about trial-and-error and learning-by-doing. To encourage this environment, ask your child open-ended questions rather than give instructions when she works on a project. Let her discover solutions for herself – even if it means stumbling upon wrong answers first.

**Enforce a team mentality.** Parents can especially apply project-based learning in a household of siblings, says Wheatley. "Too many kids are treated as VIPs in their own homes, rather than as a member of the team," he says. "The older they get, the more involved they should be

in family decisions about vacations, budgets, and home improvements." Boss adds, "From planning a vacation to planting a garden, family activities offer real-world opportunities to put project strategies to work."

**Make school-to-world connections.** Bring your child's project work to life when possible with occasional, unforced comments. If your child recently learned about photosynthesis, and you're at the park, look at the leaves of plants and remind her of this process. You don't have to drill her with a lesson; simply helping to make connections about the ideas she learns is enough.

Bottom line? "Talk with your kids about the projects they are doing at school," says Boss. "Ask questions that get them to think about what they're doing and why it matters." Finally, familiarize yourself with the curriculum, so you know about the projects in which your child participates.

## What is Project-Based Learning: A Parents' Guide

by Cheryl G.

Adapted from source information at [www.edutopia.com](http://www.edutopia.com)

**What is PBL?** It is a way of learning that asks students to investigate real world questions and apply what they learn for an authentic purpose. The days of being spoon-fed are over. Using the Minnesota State Standards and District Outcomes as a base, students and teachers work together to create projects where students can take more control over what and how they learn. Projects can range from very teacher-organized to projects created entirely by students.

**What do great projects include?** In a great project, not only will your child be engaged in the content areas, your child will be involved in teamwork, problem solving and critical thinking, all goals of 21st century learning. Those are the skills employers are looking for. Employers are searching for "team players" and employees who can be given a task and a

deadline and then use their creative abilities to solve problems. Instead of being an "extra" thing to do, it's the centerpiece of the curriculum.

**What is my child doing in a PBL classroom?** If a parent visits a PBL classroom, they may be surprised by what they see. They will not see kids sitting in neat rows, learning the same content at the same pace. Teachers, too, move about the classroom, observing students and making suggestions. The projects, then, are student-centered with the teacher acting as a facilitator and coach. Students are responsible for finding resources and reviewing research that applies to their problem or theme of their project. Your child may be working alone, in a small group of peers, or with a large class-sized group. Especially this year, your student may be inspired to create a project based on credits they need.

**How can PBL benefit my child?** In PBL, student engage-

ment is high and your child will discover and learn by building on previous learning experiences. This kind of learning is typically motivating and relevant for the students and takes place over a period of time. Once a project is completed, students can present their findings and respond, often as experts themselves, to questions posed by their peers. Students learn their content, but they also learn how to work with peers and do so creatively. Also, projects offer flexibility to meet the needs of diverse learners. Students start at different places when they begin a project. Each student, though, brings something to the table – a unique skill or perspective, for instance. But students who are used to waiting for directions may find this type of learning challenging and may find it hard to be more active learners. We are finding this last point, a realistic roadblock for some

(Con't p9)



The student learns when he or she decide to start and work through all their ups and downs along the way. The staff and teachers at LACS do everything they can to support that learning.

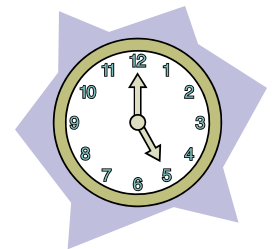
## LACS DAILY SCHEDULES

### Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri

PBL	7:35 - 8:45	70 mins
2	8:50 - 9:40	50 mins
3	9:45 - 10:35	50 mins
READ	10:35 - 10:55	20 mins
Lunch	10:55 - 11:20	25 mins
PROB.	11:25 - 12:00	35 mins
6	12:05 - 1:00	55 mins
7	1:05 - 2:00	55 mins
PBL	2:05 - 2:30	25 mins

### Wed. Late Start

PBL	8:11 - 8:55	44 mins
2	9:00 - 9:45	45 mins
3	9:50 - 10:35	45 mins
READ	10:35 - 10:55	20 mins
Lunch	10:55 - 11:20	25 mins
PROB.	11:25 - 11:55	30 mins
6	12:00 - 12:45	45 mins
7	12:50 - 1:35	45 mins
PBL	1:40 - 2:30	50 mins



### Volunteer Resource Fair

By Sada G.



Students explore volunteer opportunities at the Volunteer Resource Fair



More than 90 students met with organization representatives and explored volunteer opportunities on September 29th . Thank you to the community organizations that shared their time and options with students:

**Chores & More** Yard and Household help for Needy Community members

**CEAP** Anoka County Food Shelf in Blaine area

**Free2Be!** Car giveaway and Car Care program

**Feed My Starving Children** Hunger Relief

**Alexandra House** Women's Shelter

**Meals on Wheels** Food program

**Springbrook Nature Center** Fridley

**Blaine's Blazin 4th Festival**

**SLP Kid's Club** After school daycare program

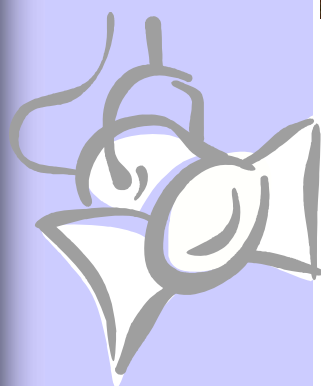
**Head Start** Preschool program

**Anoka County Library**

**Unity Hospital** Volunteer program

**ACCAP** Affordable Housing

**SLP Schools** Volunteer Reading program



**"We want to see how manipulating variables in the hydroponics system affects plant growth."**

### Project In The Spotlight

By Michael C. & Nate J.



**Students:** Nathan & Michael

**Project:** Hydroponics

**Location:** in the storage space of the science room

**Purpose:** We want to see how manipulating variables in the hydroponics system affects productivity. We are also comparing plant grown in soil mixtures, soilless mixtures and water.

**What have you done so far:**

So far we have read a lot about hydroponics and plants, we talked with hydroponics experts at the Brew and Grow Store and Menards, we set up the hydroponics system, we are germinating seedlings and planting them in different mixtures, and we are manipulating chemical variables and measuring there effects.

*One thing that has surprised you during your project?:*

There are a lot more things that affect plants than we thought. They are just as complex as humans.

*Time logged on project to date:* 67h 30m (shared hours)

*Pictures from top: sprouting seeds, chemical variables, hydroponics kit*





**Students & staff posed for photos on the afternoon of October 12.... one serious, one silly.**



### Notes from the Front Office

Except for illness or an emergency, we expect all students to be at school. For your teen's safety, please call **our attendance line** to report an absence or tardy. The number is: **763-785-5531**

Want to volunteer your time or talent to help LACS? Please call: **763-785-5531**

**Parking Permits** are required on all cars. Permits are available in the security shed. Daily permits for \$3.00 are also available if you have not purchased your permit. Students must only park in student lots.



**LACS picture retakes:  
Thurs., Nov. 4.**

**DRIVERS EDUCATION**  
The 30 hours of driver's education will **start on October 25<sup>th</sup>**. This class is limited to 30 students only and a form must be completed before participation in the class. The fee is \$360, for more information stop by the LA office.



Café LA is open and selling home-made lunches daily



**TUESDAY  
NOV. 2ND!**



Daylight Savings Time Ends Nov 7th. Turn your clocks back one hour.

Find yourself in the LACS office?? Please remember that the office is a professional space and it is usually the first location in LACS a person visits when coming to our school so..

- use appropriate language
- respect those who are working in the office
- be polite
- use your quiet inside voice
- schedule an appointment to see Sue or Frank so you don't have to waste time waiting

And be sure to thank Sherril and Carol for all their hard work!!

**Classic Monster Movies (black and white films from the 30's, 40's and 50's) will be shown at the Northtown Library on Wednesday evenings during October from 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. The event is FREE and open to the public..**

The Northtown Library is located at 711 County Road 10 NE in Blaine.



## Zentangle®



By Ryan P.

A zentangle®; your mind on paper. When your mind wanders, it finds patterns, shapes and words. That is what a zentangle® is: everything you can imagine on paper.

The idea of a zentangle® is to doodle and sketch and eventually find something you like. It should simply be you, and every single thing you see in your mind, on paper.

Art should always represent you; zentangle® just goes about that in an abstract way.



## MAAP News Briefs

By Sada Ganske

- ◇ The MAAP Conference Logo Contest: **"The Real 3Rs: Reviving, Rejuvenating and Revolutionizing Innovation"** is still open; get your submissions to your advisor by Dec 1 for a chance to win FABULOUS prizes.
- ◇ **The STARS Fall Conference** will be held on October 28 and 29, 2010 at Camp Ripley. Applications for students interested in representing LACS are now available.
- ◇ **STARS Legislative Day** Date is still not determined. It will most likely be on a Wednesday in February or March.
- ◇ **STARS SPRING CONFERENCE DATES**  
The STARS Spring Conference will be April 14 and 15, 2011 in Bloomington, MN. More information will be available soon.



### GET YOUR WORK IN THE NEWSLETTER:

Email submissions (creative writing, artwork, news stories, photographs, etc.) for our next newsletter to: [sgansk@district16.org](mailto:sgansk@district16.org)

E-mails received by the monthly due date will be reviewed by staff for newsletter approval. Items may be edited before being printed.

### Project Based Learning: A Parent's Guide

Cont from p5

students. Most of their educational careers have been the kind where they wait for the teacher to tell them what to do, then decide if they will do it or not. PBL turns that on it's head. The student learns when he or she decide to start and work through all their ups and downs along the way. The staff and teachers at LACS do everything they can to support that learning.

## Spring Lake Park Schools ISD 16

Learning Alternatives Community School  
7925 Able Street NE  
Spring Lake Park, MN 55432  
Phone: 763-785-5531  
Fax: 763-795-5105

### Learning Alternatives Community School

Learning Alternatives Community School is dedicated to educating capable young learners who will become productive members of our society.

We focus on the development of personal responsibility, community and communication.

Student choice and student voice are integral in our courses.



Learning Alternatives  
Community School  
Office:

763-785-5531

District Services Center:  
763-786-5570

Community Education:  
763-786-1338

Athletics / Activities:  
763-785-5549



## Cancer, Caps and Covers

By Sada, Kathy & Colleen

Our first Mini-course week is coming up Nov. 8th, and one of the course options is Cancer, Caps & Covers (CCC). In CCC students will research a cancer in depth, explore treatment options and craft caps or covers for cancer patients. The caps and covers will be donated to the local cancer resource center.

This topic was requested by students and reflects their concerns about Kathy, our FACS teacher. Kathy was diagnosed with breast cancer this summer and is currently undergoing chemotherapy and other treatments. She is the third member of our staff to undergo cancer treatments in recent years. Because cancer is a common occurrence in our community, we want to help our students better understand the varieties and phases of cancer, as well as treatment options. We also hope to empower students to make a positive difference for cancer patients, which is why we are purposely and purposefully incorporating a service learning component into the class.

In order to successfully create caps and covers, we are looking for help from the community. We plan to use the patterns found online at [headhuggers.com](http://headhuggers.com), [headcovers.com](http://headcovers.com), and [chemocaps.com](http://chemocaps.com). If you know how to knit, crochet or sew and would be willing to help teach teens your craft, please contact us. Also, if you have any materials for crafting caps or covers, please let us know. We are specifically in need of t-shirts to turn into turbans, soft yarns, fleece and other soft fabrics (we don't want to agitate the sensitive scalp of chemotherapy patients). We are also looking for crocheting needles, knitting needles, thread, sewing needles, fabric sheers and other basic crafting materials. Thank you (in advance) for all of your support.

*Sada, Kathy & Colleen*

[sgansk@district16.org](mailto:sgansk@district16.org) [ksylve@district16.org](mailto:ksylve@district16.org)