

# Honey Bunches of Notes

A Monthly Newsletter

March, 2011

## Upcoming Events:

- March 4:** Conferences, 1/2 day
- March 11:** Conferences, 1/2 day
- March 13:** Daylight Savings Time Begins
- March 23:** K-1 Field Trip to the Leslie Science and Nature Center  
Board meeting
- March 25:** Talent show / dinner



## News From the Director

Greetings,

As the weather warms, students will tend to gravitate outside at the end of the day. We want to keep them safe, so please keep in mind that the speed limit on our campus is fifteen miles per hour. I've also noticed that there has been an increase in the number of cars entering by the north drive. This is an exit only and all traffic must enter by the drive closest to Scio Church Road.

On another note, teachers will be administering the TerraNova assessment the last week of March. The individual levels will be scheduling the assessments to make the best use of instructional time. Students in the second through eighth grades will be assessed in Reading, Language

Arts, and Mathematics. Unlike the MEAP, we expect to have results within three weeks and will share class averages and your child's results with you as soon as we have reviewed and analyzed the data.

Finally, as many of you know, the Intermediate School District's special education millage is up for renewal in May. This is the only millage that supports programs at Honey Creek. For the 09/10 school year, Honey Creek received \$126k from the ISD in partial compensation for special education services. State and Federal maintenance of effort regulations require us to maintain this level of spending even if the millage does not pass and ISD funds are reduced or eliminated.

Further information on Honey Creek's finances can be found at this link: <http://honeycreekschool.org/budget-and-salarycompensation-transparency-reporting/>. If you have any questions regarding this millage, or how special education costs are compensated in the state, please feel free to contact me.

Have a great weekend!

Al

## Phoenix Rising Campaign

There is now an option to use a direct debit form to contribute to Phoenix Rising. Using the ACH will make contributing to Phoenix Rising easier for some people! Please return the completed form/voided check to Shellee Almquist or Karen Giltrow. Your information will be kept safe. Thanks!

## Scrip News

The next scrip order will be placed on Wednesday, 9th March. As usual, please drop your orders off at the scrip table on Wednesday, leave it in the scrip mail box or e-mail it to me by noon on Wednesday. Thank you to all of you who have supported the program. If you want to get involved but are not sure how it works, please don't hesitate to ask. We have lots of scrip in stock to sell. If you are looking at buying kids' clothes for the summer or birthday gifts for children's parties we have lots of different scrip cards you can use and help your school at the same time.

Many thanks,  
Alex Foulis  
Scrip Coordinator  
[alexfoulis@hotmail.com](mailto:alexfoulis@hotmail.com)  
734 475 1153

## Board News

The Honey Creek Board of Directors gathered on Wednesday February 16, 2011. This month's meeting included the 2nd reading and approval of the budget.

The Financial Committee approved a mini-grant for \$500.00 for a document camera for Salli Kropp's 2-3 classroom.

The Fund Development Committee is currently clarifying the board's role in fundraising and researching the possibility of establishing a school foundation to raise funds beyond the per pupil funding.

The Governance Committee is focusing on board recruitment and director/board assessments.

The Outreach Committee looking at ways to make the HCCS website more effective.

The Strategy Committee met and has worked on draft revisions of the mission statement. All of the Strategy Committee work is done collaboratively and is grounded by historic, foundational HCCS documents. The draft revision will be submitted to the Board for final review and will be discussed in cross-community focus groups.

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 23, 2011 at 6:15.

Karen Giltrow

## Board Kudos

Tammy Hall and the students in A-9 for hosting the ICT training, the IC Team and Amber Byers for facilitating the staff training on behavior cases, Nayan Khanna for leading a game of DaVinci Quest during the After School Program, all staff and students who participated in the Student/Staff basketball game with special thanks to Kristin Vespa, Shannon Davis, Courtney Jenkins, Shellee Almquist, and Matt Scott.

## PTO News

### Talent Show

Mark your calendars for this year's Talent Show, which is coming up on **March 25**.

Come have dinner and enjoy watching our incredible kids take to the stage and entertain us with their talents. There are Middle Schoolers busy right now planning the meal that they will prepare and planning and producing the show. Please join them in what is one of the most fun events of the school year!

### PTO Raffle at the Talent Show!!

This year, a raffle will add to the Talent Show evening festivities! Tickets will be on sale beginning at Bagel Sale on Friday, March 25 and will continue through the dinner. Lots of great prizes have already been donated, which will make for a fun raffle. We are still accepting donations of raffle items so if you are thinking you might want to do that, there is still time! Contact Christine Kelley ([ckelley@umich.edu](mailto:ckelley@umich.edu)) or Trish Gearhart ([tgearha1@gmail.com](mailto:tgearha1@gmail.com)).

# Honey Creek Community School ACH Authorization Agreements

**Direct Payment Withdrawal Authorization Form**

I hereby authorize the HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION to initiate debit entries, from my account indicated below, for payment of the amount listed on this agreement. I, also, authorize HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION or CHELSEA STATE BANK to reverse any debits made to such account in error. This authority is to remain in full force and effect until HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION has received written notification from me of its termination in such time and in such manner as to afford HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION and CHELSEA STATE BANK a reasonable opportunity to act on it.

Date	Name (Print)	Financial Institution Name
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Employee Number/SS#	Account Number	Financial Institution Number
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**IMPORTANT! CIRCLE TYPE OF ACCOUNT:    CHECKING   or   SAVINGS**

**Please Withdraw \$ \_\_\_\_\_ from my account**

**once a week, on the \_\_\_\_ day of the week**

**or**

**once a month, on the \_\_\_\_ day of the month**

**or**

**every \_\_\_\_ months on the \_\_\_\_ day of the month**

**Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_**

**CHECK ONE:**

I am not currently participating in the Direct Payment Withdrawal Program

ADD - Withdraw my payment from the account shown.\*

I am currently participating in the Direct Payment Withdrawal Program

CHANGE - Change financial institutions and/or account number.\*

CANCEL - Stop my participation in the program

***TAPE YOUR VOIDED CHECK HERE***

*NOTE: Always get the Financial Institution Number from a check; never use the information from a deposit slip.*

## Early Elementary News

Early Elementary celebrated the 100th Day of School. This celebration is a great way for students to reinforce their number sense, with many opportunities for counting to 100 (by ones, twos, fives, and tens) and to experience what the quantity 100 looks like. It is also a chance for us to celebrate 100 days as a classroom community and all the experiences we've shared so far this year. The children were able to choose among different activities, including making a 100 bead necklace, making artwork with 100 tiles or by coloring in 100 squares, making a 100-link paper chain, building a structure with 100 blocks or legos, connecting 100 interlocking cubes, or writing and drawing "I wish I had 100 \_\_\_".

In Writing Workshop, the children have been hard at work using their writing to teach others what they know. They are writing non-fiction "How to" books, sharing their skills and teaching the rest of the class how to bake a cake, how to ice skate, how to ski, how to dance, how to make a play-dough person, and much more. The next challenge will be for each child to write an "All About" book with a table of contents, a fact page, lists, diagrams, and a how-to section.

Our current theme is "My Journey through the Community". After wrapping up our Fairness unit, we are moving on to a unit about Resource Use. The children will learn how people get what they need to live from the environment and how our actions affect the environment. They will learn the terms reduce, reuse, recycle, and renew, and do hands-on activities to put each concept into practice. They will learn about people who work to conserve the environment and about Earth Day. They will discuss possible service projects related to resource use at Honey Creek. At the end of the unit, all of the Early Elementary students will go on a field trip to the Leslie Science and Nature Center to learn about renewable energy. This unit is an excellent example of how Environmental Education and Academic Service-Learning are built into the curriculum at Honey Creek.

## Middle Elementary News

Did March come in like a lion or a lamb? The weather feels lionish to us! Please make sure that your child dresses for weather and has a separate pair of shoes/slippers/flip-flops to wear in the classroom. This will be especially important as the snow starts to melt and the playground turns muddy.

We have a fabulous opportunity to attend Greenfield Village at a reduced rate and have added another field trip to our agenda. On May 12<sup>th</sup>, we will be heading to Dearborn. Although it is at a reduced rate, we still need to collect \$5.00 for the fees.

Fractions and geometry will be on the menu in March. These topics have great applications at home, so involve your child in cooking, measuring, building, etc. whenever possible.

All of the 2/3 students are writing their own stories for another AS-L project. We are writing fiction and focusing on having a problem and solution in our stories. Marion, the librarian, is helping us learn about all the different parts in a book. We will then publish our stories into a book form and donate a copy to the library. Other children will then be able to check out and read your child's book. The children are very excited! We will be asking for volunteers later in the month when we actually start making the books and doing the publishing.

Light will be the main focus in science this month and once again Bill is working on this topic in Technology with all of our students.

At this time of the year, some of our students start to get sloppy and forget about the importance of doing their best work. One area where parents can help is to make sure that the weekly homework sheet is completed to the best of your child's ability. Remember, there are three main reasons for assigning homework. We hope to increase your child's sense of responsibility, we want them to get some extra practice with reading, math and spelling and we want you to be aware of the skills your child is working on in the classroom. While we always have families that want more homework and families that want less homework, the three teachers try to find a balance that works for everyone and still prepares your child for the new challenges they will encounter in the higher grade levels.

## Later Elementary News

Well, folks, we've finally made it through the darkest months of winter. And while we may still get a snow storm in March, one thing is for certain, the days are getting longer and spring is just around the corner. Here's a quick look at the month ahead.

In social studies, students are wrapping up their study of government and civics. We've had some lively discussions and activities surrounding the core democratic values, the Constitution (particularly the Bill of Rights), the structure of government, and the important role each branch of government plays in helping to make our nation run smoothly. Over the next several weeks we'll be discussing economics. This is certainly a pertinent topic to discuss in light of our nation's current economic challenges. Specifically, we'll be working on lessons involving the questions economists ask when examining the United States (What is produced? How is it produced? How much is produced? Who gets what is produced? etc.). We'll be describing some characteristics of a market economy as well as how positive and negative incentives influence behavior in a market economy. We'll also take a look at why public goods (like libraries, roads, parks, the Mackinac Bridge) are not privately owned. These are just a few of the economics topics we'll be discussing throughout the month of March.

In language arts, students are making their way through the book, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. As a way to integrate social studies and language arts, students recently learned about Jim Crow Laws and the Plessy vs. Ferguson Supreme Court trial of 1896. Students learned that the majority opinion in that case - in favor of segregation - laid the foundation for the era of Jim Crow throughout the south. Issues of racial discrimination, inequality, and segregation form the basis for much of the story line in *Roll of Thunder*.

In science, students are wrapping up their study of the human body. Thanks to all our gracious, informative, and creative volunteers for coming in to talk about the specific body systems. Your willingness to share your knowledge and expertise is part of what makes Honey Creek a true community school.

Please feel free to contact Johnny, Cam, or Laura if you have any questions about your child's math class.

On another note, as you all know, Teresa is out on maternity leave for the next two months. In her absence, we're lucky to have Laura Edmonds - a competent, kind, and enthusiastic educator - as the third member of our 4/5 teaching team.

Best wishes for an enjoyable start to the spring season!

Warm regards,  
The 4/5 team

# Middle School News

## Language Arts

As February came to a close, we wrapped up writing our book reviews, and either sending them to the author, or pursuing professional publication. After some final editing, the letters should go out next week. Our next unit of study is focused on disability awareness, using different books that all have characters with disabilities. So far our conversations have been enlightening, and we have become more aware of the gifts and struggles of those we spend time with every day. Stay tuned to learn more about our next upcoming project... the multi-genre research project.

## Science

Middle school students are in the midst of crayon production in our cross-curriculum unit Green Chemistry, where students are learning the "hows" of manufacturing and what criteria and responsibilities companies need to consider when making a product.

Our unit for light and sound will end with a project the students will do combining their knowledge of the two. We will then move towards "Matter Matters", our next unit involving changes in matter. Using materials science engineering, students will investigate different properties of matter and how they affect products they might come into daily contact.

## Social Studies

In Social Studies, students are moving forward in American history, learning about the challenges of the new nation during its adolescent period: 1790s to 1820s. They just experienced an interactive trip to the Pacific northwest with the Corps of Discovery and Lewis and Clark. In the near future, we'll be covering outside influences (War of 1812), new technology (cotton gin, steamboat, and railroad), and our citizens' ever-growing desire to move west. The goal is to get to the Civil War by April. It's a lofty goal but I'm optimistic. I want to cover a unit on Africa in the final month and a half.

## Mathematics

Middle school math classes have been busy... and playing our favorite Near Miss game whenever we have an extra five minutes. Here's what we've been up to:

**Course 1** just finished a unit on Algebra, practicing with integers and solving one-step equations. Next, we'll be exploring ratios, rates, and proportions.

In **Course 2**, we have been working with proportional relationships and will be using scale factor to enlarge a puzzle, look for the project results at the curriculum celebrations. Good, strong pieces of cardboard will come in handy, if you have any laying around feel free to bring them in to the middle school math room.

**Course 3** has been practicing some fancy Algebra, solving challenging, multi-step equations, and inequalities. Next, we will focus in on linear equations.

Our **Algebra** students have been practicing different ways to solve systems of equations and inequalities. We've been enjoying some very animated discussions about the best methods to solve such equations... deep thinkers ;-)

## Physical Education/ Swimming

The students have been working very hard in swimming and it has definitely paid off! I am so excited to announce that after so much hard work we currently have 85% of 2nd-5th graders as deep end swimmers. This means that this 85% of students can tread water for at least 3 minutes and swim a front crawl for at least one length of the pool without stopping. This is so important because these are life saving skills! For the K1's we have 1/5 of our students as deep end swimmers. This is amazing as some of these students have only been swimming at Honey Creek for less than one year!

In P.E. for March we will be doing a fitness unit, focusing on activities that students can do to keep themselves fit for a lifetime. We will be focusing on jump roping and something very special called Fit Deck cards which shows students how to do different exercises, and helps them complete these exercises with visuals and detailed descriptions. It is very important that our students know how to keep themselves fit, even when they are not in PE class.

As always, please remember to help your student come prepared to class with gym shoes, swimsuit, towel and goggles.

## Music

Exciting activities are happening in music this month. The 2-3's and 4-5's are wrapping up the recorder unit. They all learned a great deal about music theory, reading music, and playing an instrument. The K-1's are learning about composers. Currently, they are learning about Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and soon will learn about Beethoven. Band 1, Band 2, and Choir will receive the music for the upcoming concert this week and we will begin preparing this music. Our Spring Concert is coming up on Wednesday, May 25th.

## Technology

In the 2/3 **Technology** special, we are partnering technology with ideas being explored in the science curriculum. The concepts of two forms of energy: sound and light are the topic of our explorations. We have finished discussing sound, and are now exploring light.

During the portion of our unit dealing with sound, we did a number of learning activities. To start, we measured sound volume with a LEGO Mindstorm NXT sensor. Students then built paper cup & string telephones, which showed them how sound can be used and experienced (by hearing the sound travel through the string, and touching the string to feel the vibrations). After that, we started building instruments - look for video of these at Curriculum Celebration! You may have also seen an instrument come home.

As we are moving on to light, we started with measuring the brightness of light in the classroom with LEGO Mindstorm NXT sensors, and this week we're studying how light behaves with an online simulation. More learning about light will follow in the weeks to come!

The 4/5 **technology** classes are finishing up the vibrobots project. Students have been attaching motors and battery holders, wiring up the motor's circuit, and getting ready to watch them move! During this whole process, the students have also been documenting their project work using digital photos and video, which they are using to build a Keynote presentation that shows their project start-to-finish.

The current **Middle School technology** unit is called Green Chemistry, and it's a cross-subject project involving technology, science, math, language arts, and social studies. Students are formed into 3-4 person teams that work as a company to manufacture crayons. Students have been learning about the design process, learning how manufacturing works, and working together to create sustainable crayon companies.

One of the major focus areas of this project is on sustainability, so students are

being forced to make some tough choices, including which wax to use (petroleum-based paraffin versus soy wax), as well as whether or not to use the "toxic" red dye (it's perfectly safe in reality, but for the purposes of this simulation, it's "toxic").

Students will be working on package designs, advertising, and making molds for their crayons in the upcoming weeks. Look for an announcement about final presentations in the next few weeks!

The second semester's **technology elective** has been an extremely exciting class for me to teach. Students in the **LEGO Mindstorms Robotics** class learn by analyzing problems to be solved, designing a robotic device, building it from the LEGO Mindstorm kits, programming their robots, then testing to see if it solves the problem.

As I mentioned earlier this year, the school was able to fund the purchase of 7 additional LEGO Mindstorm NXT kits through the donations made to the Phoenix Rising fund. That allows me to put two students per robotics kit, making this a much more engaging, hands-on experience than would be possible if we had to use fewer kits. Thank you all for your support!

In addition to the robotics kits, the Phoenix Rising money was also used to purchase a robotics curriculum package from the Carnegie Mellon University's Robotics Academy. This curriculum is video-based, and allows students to learn at their own pace. This has been a wonderful resource, and is allowing every student in the class to have an engaging learning experience.

## Media Center

We have now upgraded the library's Alexandria software (thanks, Bill!), and are enjoying the new features it provides. The librarian's end of things has many more functions, and the users now can access the Alexandria Researcher catalog on the internet! Start at the Honey Creek School home page, and scroll down the left-hand menu to *Media Center*. When you open this page, near the center in large font is the link to the catalog. Now, not only can you see what we own from the classroom computers, you can be anywhere that you have Internet access and check the resources available to you and your students. The new software also allows us to put web addresses into the catalog, subject-described just like books or AV material. If there are web sites you use and can recommend for inclusion in the catalog, please send the URLs to me. Students will be able to find books and electronic resources all in one search, right from our catalog.

I have finally accomplished a goal I set at the beginning of the school year: rearrange the library's collection so that it makes more sense. The non-fiction is now shelved all together in one bookcase, instead of in sections illogically separated from each other. The same was done for the fiction (chapter books) sections, which now flow in one order around the perimeter of the room. I'm doing some weeding of items from the collection, which contains many titles with more than useful numbers of copies. Our shelves are nearing capacity, and this will help us stay efficient and better organized.

The plans for the spring Book Fair with Nicola's Books will be taking shape soon. I will be conferring with the staff at Nicola's to get ourselves organized for May 20. If you have suggestions of items that we should stock at the Fair, please let me know, and I'll pass them along to Nicola's.

I visited the 2/3 classes this week and we did a small workshop on the parts of books, as preliminary help for their current book-writing project. We talked about the features of various genres and the use of indexes and other supplementary materials often contained in books. The students were especially interested in the idea of a "dedication page," and being able to acknowledge their special people (or pets, as one student mentioned). We'll have some of these new volumes cataloged into the library's collection before the end of the year!

Later in March, the 4/5s will be doing some work with understanding and using the Dewey Decimal numbers found on all our non-fiction. They'll become familiar with how this organizational framework helps library users locate the material they want. We're planning this along with their study of decimals in math. Place order is key in understanding DD numbers and in material retrieval. This will also help our student shelve (and we have several) do their work more accurately and with greater understanding.

Thanks to those of you who have looked over your own book collections for stray library materials. We'll be doing an inventory near the end of the year, and rounding up the stragglers will be helpful in getting a better grip on what the library actually owns and what is truly gone for good.

## Art

I hope everyone had a safe and exciting mid-winter break! K-8 classes have all been working on projects which explore the relationships between art and food.

K/1 classes learned about concepts of layering and overlap by creating burgers and sandwiches out of construction paper.

2/3 classes learned about the great Italian artist Giuseppe Arcimbaldo, who was famous for painting a still life which could also double as a portrait, creating a face out of food! Students created collages from cooking and baking magazines and turned photos of food into an extravagant portrait. They are continuing on with a project inspired by Wayne Thiebaud and learning how to draw shapes such as cakes, slices of pie, and wedges in perspective to create a more realistic look.

4/5 classes are finishing up their "stained glass" designs by using cutouts and frosted paper to create a window. Inspiration was drawn from medieval design as well as work by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Middle School classes are also learning about the work of Wayne Thiebaud, and taking his 2D paintings and turning them into 3D works of art. Each student is creating a realistic food sculpture from Model Magic, and learning about assembling a 3D piece as well as creating realistic color and texture. Middle School Elective is working on an exciting project, designing their own custom Converse shoes, and learning the process of how a design on paper transforms into wearable art. They are also learning about careers in graphic and apparel design, and what those jobs entail. A huge thank you to all of the parents and friends at Honey Creek who donated magazines to help with our projects, we appreciate it greatly and have put them to good use!

## After School Programs

ON-SITE EXTENDED DAY STUDENT CARE WILL BE AVAILABLE ON THE FOLLOWING “EARLY DISMISSAL FRIDAYS:” March 4th & 11th; April 22nd; and May 6th. Please register 1 WEEK BEFORE in order to receive the Early Bird Discount. Also, please remember that you MUST give us 48-hour WRITTEN notice to cancel any pre-registered care without being held financially responsible.

**REMINDER: NO ON-SITE STUDENT CARE DURING SPRING BREAK (April 4th-8th).  
Enjoy your break!**

**SPECIAL CLUBS** There are still openings for the following after school special clubs:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Music Lessons	Music Lessons	Music Lessons	Music Lessons	Music Lessons
Dance	Italian	Choi Kwang Do	Basketball 4-8	Swim Lessons
	Basketball K-3	Theater-FULL		
	Photography-FULL	Art K-3		
	Art 4-8	Chess		

Please pick up a registration form from the after school programs bulletin board or online. **IMPORTANT:** You must give 30-day written notice to change / cancel your regular after care schedule. You may email your changes to: [afterschool@hc.wash.k12.mi.us](mailto:afterschool@hc.wash.k12.mi.us).

4H                  Basketball                  Chess                  Baking/Cooking                  Baseball                  Music  
 Writing              Drums                  Football              Yoga                  Swim Lessons Art  
 Gymnastics      Knitting/Sewing      Violin              Crafts                  Fitness                  Theater  
 Orchestra      Tech                  Study Skills      Soccer              Tutoring                  Scouts/Campfire  
 Dance (ballet, hip hop, international, tap) Language                  Rockets & Robotics  
 Lessons (Chinese, French, German, Spanish)

PLEASE CARE WHAT YOU WEAR. Recess will be outside everyday. Except for hazardous weather conditions (lightning, severe storms, wind chill below -10° F), we will always go outside for recess. There is limited indoor space that allows the children opportunities to move around energetically. Children should always dress for the weather. Students must wear snow pants, boots, coat, hat, and mittens or gloves in order to play in the snow and sled.

# Honey Creek Community Schools

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We're on the Web!

<http://honeycreekschool.org>

Need to submit something to next  
month's newsletter?

Email submissions to Amber Byers at:

[abyers@hc.wash.k12.mi.us](mailto:abyers@hc.wash.k12.mi.us)

by the last Friday of the month!