

The ASU Leader Elementary Edition

Volume 1, Issue 3

November 2013

Upcoming Events:

- Dec. 13: Winter Concert
- Dec. 16 - Jan 3: Winter Break

'Twas the Night Before Christmas will be performed December 13 at 2:00 p.m., in the Secondary School Auditorium. All students in grades one through five will be involved in the play. Kindergarten students will be performing some great songs before the play starts. Please remember all families are invited to attend. Students who are characters in the play will be wearing appropriate costumes for their roles. All other students should wear their nicest clothes or something festive. Hope to see you there.

- Elizabeth Collins,
Elementary Music

Teachers Experience *Close Shave* during Movember Ceremony

This month's Spirit Day was a little hairier than most. Teachers sported beards and moustaches in support of Movember, a global charity that began in Australia and has since spread around the world. Throughout the month of November, men grow moustaches and beards to raise awareness about men's health. Last year, part of the donations raised at ASU went toward helping our sister school, School 60.



At the elementary school, this year's month-long campaign ended with a "shave-off" assembly, during which students were selected to shave the teachers' moustaches and beards.

As always, the monthly assembly was also a time to recognize the special achievements of students through presentation of Student of the Month certificates.

Principal's Message

Absenteeism – What's the Big Problem?

"So what if my child misses a few days of school. Will it really make a difference?"

Of all the issues I have faced and addressed since the beginning of the school year, there is one that seems more pervasive than all others – that of absenteeism. Whether it is because of health issues, family dynamics or extended holidays, the common refrain is, "What's the problem with missing a few days of school?" The answer is, *the problem might*

be bigger than many people realize.

Recent studies have linked chronic absences early in a student's career with drop-out rates later. There is a more immediate impact, however, and that is academic performance. Studies show that chronically absent students score significantly lower in math and reading. In fact, it should not take studies to tell us what is obvious.

A report by the California Attorney General's office

states, "Both common sense and research show: children who are habitually absent from elementary school will fall behind their classmates. Students who miss a lot of school in the early years are likely to become disengaged from their studies and struggle academically.

"Children who are not in school are not exposed to critical tools for learning. In elementary school, students build the foundation for fu-

(See **Absent**, p. 4)

Inside this issue:

Art Class 2



ESL 3

Drama Club 4



Elementary Students Work Hard, Have Fun, and 'Make ART SMART'

This year is getting more and more exciting as the students are exploring, experimenting, and doing art. Having more time this year to study and do art, students are having fun, and we are enjoying their art throughout the school hallways.

In elementary school, students are introduced to elements and principles of art, and to some famous artists and their work. Throughout elementary school, they've covered elements: Lines, Shapes, and now we are on the unit Color. Students are enjoying mixing colors and



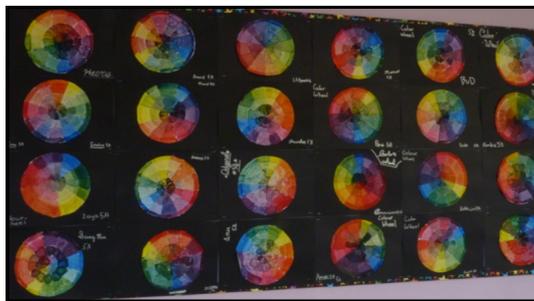
(Above) Grade 1 students dabble in the primary colors. (Left and below) Artwork displayed throughout the school shows some of the techniques students are learning in class.



amazed at colors they have created.

Grade 1 students are learning how to use materials and tools safely and properly. They received an introduction on

how to use a brush with water, tempera colors, how to use modeling clay, how to create secondary colors by using primary colors, and more. Their beautiful window glass projects are displayed on the



windows of the entrance door.

Grade 2 students learned to do mosaics, to draw self portraits, and to create yellow orange and red orange from yellow and red colors. Students are excited to learn how to create skin color by themselves.

Grade 3 students also created beautiful winter cardinals and are working on their color wheels now.

Grade 4 has learned about artists, such as Andy Warhol and his Pop art, and Jim Dine and his famous heart projects, and combined it together to come up with this beautiful art that is displayed on the third floor bulletin board. They also learned about Edvard Munch and his famous art "Scream" for Halloween.

Grade 5 students worked hard to create their full color wheel, using tints, tones and shades. It was interesting to watch them work hard and be amazed at the colors they created. Hopefully they will remember it and use it for their further art projects. Their Banyan tree projects are decorating our lobby, and color wheels are displayed on the third floor bulletin board. Well done!

I am very proud to teach these young talents, to see them grow and learn about art, and make their own art smart. Well done everyone! Hope to see more beautiful art displayed all around school!

- Ms. Enkhee, Elementary Art teacher



Home of Future Leaders

Drama Club Performances Teach Important Life Lessons



Students perform a skit about the responsibility of doing homework.

The Drama Club ended the first round of After School Activities by performing skits for the entire elementary school. The skits, which were written by the students and contained some well-known themes, highlighted important social issues, such as bullying, lying, and judging others, as well as lessons on always doing your best and what do to when approached by a stranger. The club was one of many activities offered after school on Mondays and Wednesdays.



Students, sporting their own moustache creations, shave the moustaches and beards of teachers from the elementary and secondary schools. The annual Movember event met its goal of 1 million tugriks, which will be donated to a worthy cause during the school year. Thanks to all who participated in the fundraiser.

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Expected School-wide Student Outcomes

ASU students will be...

Academic Achievers

Critical Thinkers

Involved Citizens

Effective Communicators

Self-Directed Lifelong Learners

(Absent, from p. 1)

ture learning – from reading and writing to math, science and social studies. Once a student is no longer able to keep up with his or her classmates, the student may become disengaged and develop behavior problems.”

How does this affect students specifically at ASU? Our school body is predominantly comprised of English Language Learners (ELLs). That creates a significant challenge for teaching reading and writing strategies, as well as gaining understanding of other core subjects like science and social studies, and even our language-intensive math curriculum. We have targeted programs in place to help ELLs, but the programs only work when the student is present to take advantage of them. When it comes to acquiring basic skills, there is nothing quite like being there. Hedy Chang, the Director of Attendance Works, says, “Many people don’t understand how you learn a language or reading. You can explain the consequences of missing school to parents, but often they say ‘Just give me the work.’ It’s hard to convey the richness of the classroom and the powers of peer learning.”

At ASU, we don’t face many of the same issues that lead to absenteeism in public schools in the West, but we have different challenges. I understand that there are sometimes circumstances that keep our students away from school, but it is vitally important that these situations are limited to what is unpreventable. We must work together to encourage student attendance and participation, and that may mean finding ways to prevent or correct situations that lead to absenteeism. That can only happen if we – students, parents and educators – have the same vision for success and seek practical answers to these problems.

References:

California Attorney General’s Office, Special Project Team. (2013). *In School + On Track: Attorney General’s 2013 Report on California’s Elementary School Truancy & Absenteeism Crisis*. Retrieved from <http://oag.ca.gov/Truancy>

Steiny, Julia (2012). Chronic absenteeism reveals and causes problems. *Education News*. Retrieved from: <http://www.educationnews.org/education-policy-and-politics/julia-steiny-chronic-absenteeism-reveals-and-causes-problems/>