

# **SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE NEWS**

## **Academics and More**

Welcome back and Happy New Year to our Level 3 students and families! We hope everyone had a renewing and wonderful break, and we're looking forward to our second semester.

We always begin our first week back as an immersion week, where we can tie up loose ends, explore new areas, and do special projects. This week students brought in a major Personal World project, their Life Map. The Life Map project had been assigned in early December, but we extended the due date to yesterday, in order to take pressure off the final week before break. The Life Map project is intended to be more than a timeline. Many pieces of it tie directly into the Heroic Journey, a major theme in Personal World this year. Students were to include challenges they've overcome, as well as challenges they continue to work on. "Allies and Ogres," a theme in Personal World, were also to be included. When we've discussed "Ogres" in the past, we noted that our ogres need not be other people; they may instead be bad habits, self-doubt, and negative mind talk that we each deal with. In order to feel more comfortable adding this material but not make it public, students were encouraged to write about it, but put it in a sealed envelope on their life map. Students were also encouraged to create a meaningful pathway which curved or changed directions at times in their lives when events altered their life direction.

Below are several pictures of life maps students have shared.



Monday we begin Cycle 3, the theme of which is Power.

## Outdoors Science Fun

I'm a big believer in experiencing the wonders of science hands-on. Making a concrete, experiential connections to abstract knowledge enhances learning dramatically and instills an enthusiasm that otherwise is just not there. This week, the students at school and I explored (Outdoors!) a variety of science concepts that tie directly into our next cycle, Power. We baked cookies in a solar oven, used a hand-cranked generator to produce electrical power to run buzzers, lights, and motors, and explored the transformation of kinetic energy into heat energy with two steel balls. We also played with two different motors driven by temperature differences: a Stirling engine and a thermoelectric generator. We had the best time! Below are pictures of our outdoor science time.

I'd like to give the online students this experience as well, either after school, or for about an hour on a Saturday. The plan would be to keep it entirely outdoors, with masks and lots of hand sanitizer. I'll email all of the online students and their families about possible times.



Exploring the hand-cranked dc electric generator



The favorite activity was striking a 1 kilogram steel ball with another 1 kilogram steel ball, while keeping a piece of paper in between. All of the kinetic energy is transferred to heat energy, and the heat from the collision is enough to burn a small hole in the paper.

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## Questions?

PARENTS AND STUDENTS: We encourage you to contact us with any questions and concerns. The best time to call us is in the evening; alternatively, you can email or text us any time:

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*-The Level 3 Team (Robin, Deana, and Beronica)*

**Please** send any email address changes and updates to [redidin@centermontessori.org](mailto:redidin@centermontessori.org)