

SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADE NEWS

Academics and More

It's been good to see everyone return from Thanksgiving break, re-energized and ready to dive into the Social World (social studies) portion of our cycle! Our Social World studies this cycle will be focusing on different government structures (democracies, totalitarian governments, constitutional and absolute monarchies, and anarchy (intentional)). Students will be having a major lesson on this material this Friday (Dec. 4), and we'll be doing a simulation as well, next week.

The other major area of Social World study is the United States Constitution. Students have had lessons and readings on events after the American Revolution (such as Shay's Rebellion) that precipitated the governmental crisis that led to writing of our Constitution, as well as the major compromises that took place during the Constitutional Convention (the Great Compromise and the Three-fifths Compromise).

The students are each currently doing a project on a state constitution of their choice, which will be an interesting contrast when we study the U.S. Constitution in-depth. Students will present their projects tomorrow.

As part of our Geography and Current Events work, we are learning about mineral resources and world markets. We've begun by learning about conflict minerals. "Conflict minerals" are mined through forced labor, and the revenues from the sales of the minerals are then used by warlords to purchase weapons and ammunition for their insurgent activities. A substantial portion of Africa's conflict minerals are mined in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a hotbed of guerrilla activity. This week, the students learned a little about the DRC, its troubled history, and its vast and valuable mineral resources. Each student is creating a map of mineral resources of the DRC.

In Personal World, we've begun looking at how the teen brain is affected by addictive substances. This week we read an article about cannabis, in *Choices Magazine*, published by Scholastic Publishers. The article began with a teen's account of "greening out," the deeply unpleasant and terrifying experience of accidentally over-consuming THC-laden edibles. The article describes how much more vulnerable the teen brain is to cannabis and other addictive substances, as compared to the adult brain. The article also presented a more positive side of cannabis: how it's used to help cancer patients and those with other serious illnesses. Finally, it addresses how to handle situations with friends or peers who use cannabis (Example: "Is it bad to ride with a driver who is high? Short Answer: Yes.) Ask your adolescent to tell you more about the article, or show it

to you. It can be a catalyst for a candid discussion. Listen to what your adolescent has to say; we as teachers were impressed by how sophisticated their knowledge was, and how grounded and sensible many of their attitudes were.

(I can also send you the article as a PDF file.)

Science Update

We've finished the science portion of our cycle; however, some of our students still need to turn in work, and several people need to retake tests. I'll send out a science work update tomorrow, so you can see where your child is with regards to science this cycle.

Optional Holiday Gift Exchange (Known as OompaLoompa)

The 7th and 8th graders were unanimous in their desire to have the 6th-7th-8th student gift exchange this year, despite the logistical challenges posed by a mixture of online and in-class students. We think we've almost got it figured out.

Stay tuned for coming information.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Last Day of School before Winter Break.....Friday, Dec. 18
Winter Break.....Monday, Dec. 21- Monday, Jan. 4
Classes Resume.....Tuesday, Jan. 5

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