

# Specialist Newsletter

January 2019

Floortime

Art

Fitness

Letter Boards



Olvin is making a homemade batch of healthy sweet potato fries.



Salem experiments with healthy ingredients on "Taco Tuesday."



Clair, Julia, and Harper show-off their rainbow scarves.

**Leigh McCune, Affinity Specialist**

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Here is a small peek into what we are up to this month.

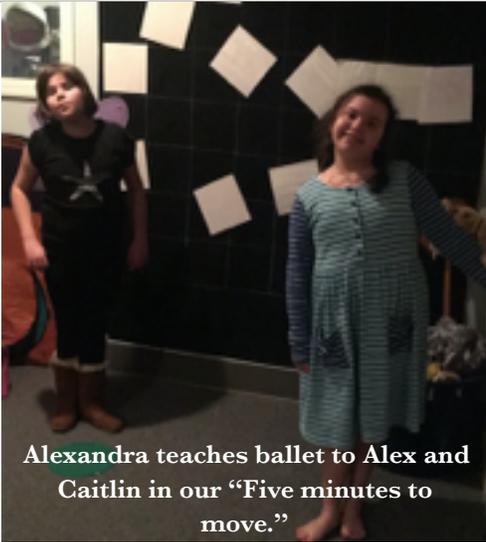
In the spirit of the new year we have been learning about New Year's traditions and their history including what foods people eat to welcome the new year and the live Possum Drop in Tallapoosa, Georgia!

We will be discussing S. M. A. R. T. goals for 2019. S.M.A.R.T. goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-Bound. We will be setting a goal in the area of personal development, relationships, healthy habits or passions and interests. Reading aloud is one of our goals that some of us are working on in various ways such as reading the fun facts on the back of the card when we play Wildlife Bingo.

Our cooking experiments this month include muffins, blueberry, plain, cranberry, banana, chocolate chip and everything! Our cooking experiments introduce students to new foods/tastes/combinations and encourage creativity, fun and, you guessed it, experimenting with foods. Some of our famous "picky" eaters have been known to try cucumber sandwiches, chocolate chip muffins and gummies!

This month, purposeful movement includes our Georgia Breathes Movements, designs with Parquetry Blocks, Yoga, Simon Says and Zentangle. Zentangle is a meditative doodling activity that is fun, beautiful and calming.

Our crafty kids will be making bath bombs this month so keep an eye out for them in the backpacks. We will also be doing some jewelry making with paper beads and talking about the importance of recycling.



Alexandra teaches ballet to Alex and Caitlin in our “Five minutes to move.”



Gabriel repairs and reconstructs cars in his imaginary mechanic shop



Harper and Jack play life-sized tic-tac-toe as part of the game series

## Whitney Pfohl, Floortime Specialist

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We have started this month off by reflecting on our achievements and big moments of 2018, and learned how to create, scaffold, and measure newfound goals for the new year. In addition to setting new goals, the students have also paired up and found peer accountability buddies that can help them to check-in, assess, and re-evaluate their goals so that they can achieve the greatest level of success. Some goals that have been identified so far: practicing healthier lifestyles, trying new foods, and prioritizing activities more at home.

Additionally, we have learned about the benefits of exercise and switching up routines in the brain. Thus, to encourage both of these practices in the new year, we have started a “Five minutes of Movement” initiative, where the students will have the opportunity to teach a type of movement that is important to them, as well as explore different types of movement outside of those they are already familiar with. The goal is to encourage healthy lifestyle while exposing the students to a variety of ways that they can choose to be active.

Some students began a life-size game series last semester, where each game builds on the skills of last. All of these games require full-body engagement. Some examples are: tic-tac-toe, battleship, and mastermind. These games have focused on motor-planning, problem-solving, strategizing, and collaboration. Now, we are adding in skills of spatial and deductive reasoning through geometrical games (Tetris and Blokus), as well as detective-based activities such as clue and other mysteries.

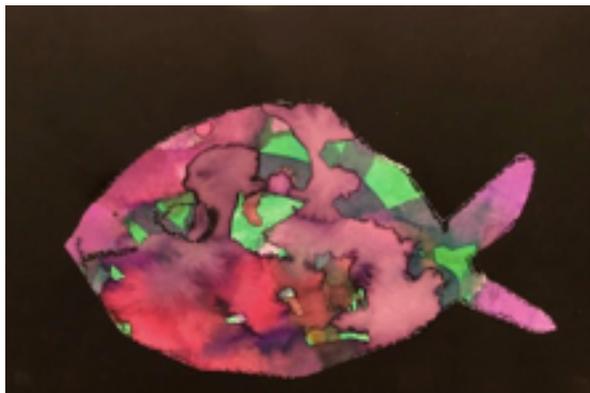
Lastly, other students have continued to foster and stretch their imaginations and creativity, embarking on wild adventures where they must sequence, bridge story gaps, problem-solve, and collaborate to solve the variety of problems that they come up with for their invented characters.

# Jerry Zaloski, Art Specialist

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The first artist we studied this year was Paul Klee. Check out our students' beautiful interpretations of his famous paintings.

The various art techniques involved were: etching, oil pastel resist, watercolor, salt/alcohol painting, and bleeding tissue paper art.



In our study of surrealism, we focused on 4 characteristics of surrealistic art: Dislocation-putting things where they are not usually found. Juxtaposition-putting things next to each other that usually don't belong there. Transformation-changing things into something else and Symbolism-using things to mean something else. Salvador Dali was one of the students' favorite artists in the unit.



Frottage: the perfect transition from surrealism to our found/folk art unit in Art!

Frottage, a French word, is the technique of taking a rubbing from an uneven surface to form the basis of a work of art. Surreal artist, Max Ernst, developed this style by taking found objects with textured surfaces and using the frottage process to create surreal drawings.

In our classes we created different types of animals, some with MOVABLE parts.

**Be sure to arrange a visit with us at The Hirsch Academy to see more from our Musee d'Art (aka The Hirsch Art Gallery). Email Jerry for scheduling and more information!**



**Chris Brown & Christa Orbann, Fitness Specialists**

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This month in Fitness we had fun creating a Hirsch volleyball and baseball team, as well as, our Hirsch Winter Olympics!

The Winter Olympics week consisted of winter Olympic yoga stretching and familiarizing students with sports including skiing, curling, and bobsledding. The students worked to hold static poses, strengthening the body and focusing on stability, while executing yoga poses that symbolized or resembled a winter Olympic activity. Our skiing exercise helped to unify the upper and lower body at the same time as propelling self forward. Curling focused on holding the body in a lunge, an abnormal position for the kids, while executing rolling a weighted ball towards a target. Bobsledding aimed to work as a team to collectively hold on to a handle while maintaining balance.

During our week of baseball, students worked to understand the rules, motions and expectations of the sport. We broke down the elements of base running, batting, and throwing, all while promoting working together as a team.

Finally, we spent a week breaking down the offensive components of volleyball. This included bumps, sets, spikes and serving, working on hand/eye coordination and body control.



John Paul and Caitlin practice their bobsledding skills.



Harper is ready to hit the slopes on her snowboard.

Erin McAlister, Letterboard Specialist

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My job is the best job at Hirsch Academy. I get to work with students one-on-one, in dyads, and via “push ins” with other Specialists, providing relevant cognitive lessons and communication support in Art, Floortime, Creative Play and Movement/Fitness. I get to learn and explore, along with your children, poetry, art, Shakespeare, music and so much more.

I am delving into poetry with *lots* of your kids. While I foster clear intention and accuracy on the letterboards with them, together we are reading and analyzing the poetry of Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman and Rudyard Kipling, identifying structure, rhyme scheme, and poetic devices including symbolism, alliteration, paradox, hyperbole, metonymy and anaphora.

New this January:

For the students who grappled with the recorder last semester, we brought in the new year with the ukulele! Talk about a VAKT (visual – auditory – kinesthetic - tactile) activity! So far we have learned the history of the instrument, uke anatomy, practiced tuning the instrument and some basic strumming techniques.

For students new to Shakespeare, we are starting with *The Tempest*. One of our older students is tackling *Hamlet*!

Younger students and I have learned all about the science behind bubbles (+ lots of bubble blowing!), why Ivory Soap floats, the science and lore behind *Frozen* (fractals) and *Moana* (Polynesian traditions and culture).

If you have any questions for me or would like more specifics about my work with your student, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [emcalister@hirschacademy.org](mailto:emcalister@hirschacademy.org).

Please feel free to reach out to any of the specialists for further information about your child and what they are doing specifically! We look forward to sharing more information with you in our next Specialist Newsletter in March.

Warmly,

The Specialist Team

