

LC CORPORATION CONNECTION

Larry Veracco- Superintendent // Al Gandolfi -Assistant Superintendent // Sarah Castaneda- Director of Secondary Education // Theresa Schoon- Director of Primary Education // Rebecca Gromala- Director of Special Education // Rob James- Director of Business Services



The mission of the Lake Central School corporation, as a family, community, and school partnership, is to ensure that each student becomes a self-directed learner and a contributing responsible citizen through an instruction delivery system that engages students to achieve their personal best.



FROM THE DESK OF DR. LARRY VERACCO



“And in the end, it’s not the years in your life that count. It’s the life in your years.”

Abraham Lincoln

As we celebrate President’s Day, it is not by chance that I have chosen a quote from my favorite president. President Lincoln is famous in part for his willingness to surround himself with individuals who possessed both great skills and a willingness to disagree with him and challenge him. This example from history helps us to realize that it is through meaningful discussion that

organizations grow stronger and better meet the needs of their members.

Recently, we received the executive summary from the survey that was completed by over 1,300 students, faculty, staff, parents and community members last fall. The next step in our process will be to create focus groups from among students, staff members and our community to discuss further the areas in which our

respondents feel we can improve. For instance, the survey results indicate stakeholder satisfaction with safety initiative and protocols yet room for improvement with addressing students on student teasing. The survey results also indicate student satisfaction regarding teacher enthusiasm, knowledge of subject, and willingness to assist the learning process, yet included some concerns regarding the frequency of instructor feedback. These are the types of challenges that our school corporation plans to take a more significant look at in the next few weeks.

If you are asked to participate in a focus group, we hope you strongly consider sacrificing 60-90 minutes of your time to help us devise plans to improve on our areas of weakness.

Our school corporation is blessed to have dedicated teachers and administrators, caring bus drivers and food service workers, helpful instructional aides, compassionate nurses and speech service providers and kind office staffs. Ideas generated through our follow up activities will help to strengthen our corporation as we strive to continuously improve the quality of our educational delivery system.

Enjoy the upcoming three day weekend and get started on those tax returns, spring is right around the corner!

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE NEWSLETTERS?

You may have previously seen the monthly newsletter produced for the elementary schools, middle schools and the high school, but now we introduce to you a corporation-wide newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to show members of the community what is happening not only in their child’s school, but also in the other schools in the district. The production of these newsletters is done by nine high school students in the Public Relations internship program. For the 2016-2017 school year, the administration created

a Public Relations Internship, where students who are part of the Lake Central News team, were given the opportunity to write “good news” articles about the corporation and have them published in local media outlets in addition to reviving individual school’s newsletters. The mission of the program is to show the usually under-publicized, feel-good stories of LCSC while also giving students a chance to enhance their knowledge of journalism, broadcasting and public relations.

IN-SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

LAKE CENTRAL: #LIKEABOSSI FUNDRAISER



Lake Central class cabinet put on a fundraiser the week of Mon. Jan. 23, to help raise money for Vincent Bossi, a freshman at Lake

Central. Bossi, who is currently at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, was diagnosed with COVID, however, doctors at the Mayo Clinic have been hearing from doctors all over the nation about potentially finding a new diagnosis.

“A few weeks ago the Lake Central News Facebook page received a message from a friend of the Bossi family asking us to promote the family’s GoFundMe page. Since Olivia Oster and I have access to the LC social media accounts we were able to see it and get it out there for all our followers to start donating. We realized after a few days that many students did not have access to credit or debit cards so we decided to talk to administration about starting a cash and check fundraiser during lunches at school,” Stefan

Krajisnik (12) said.

Throughout the week students sat and collected funds during lunches. The students ended up raising \$700 at the end of the week.

“Since Vincent’s brother, Anthony, is a senior here at LC I thought it would be fitting as class president to have the senior class cabinet sponsor the fundraiser. Our principal, Mr. [Sean] Begley, seemed totally on board with it, and once the school board approved it we went into it full force. Our goal was just to help the family out as much as we can. We never had a certain number in mind because we knew even the smallest amount could help. With so many students in our school we knew even small donations from each person could add up to a large number. Overall, I am extremely happy with how much we were able to raise,” Krajisnik said.

Even as a freshman, Vincent managed to touch hundreds of students’ hearts.

“I’ve never had the chance to meet Vincent but he is a part of the Lake Central family nonetheless, and we should be open to helping him out. Just because our in-school fundraiser is done doesn’t mean people should stop trying to help. Even something as simple as tweeting out a link to his GoFundMe can go a long way. Our efforts to help their family won’t stop until Vincent is healthy, back home and in the halls of LC,” Krajisnik said.

GRIMMER: YOU CAN HAVE YOUR CAKE AND EAT IT TOO



Grimmer’s fifth grade is cooking the afternoons away with cooking club. Every Monday and Wednesday students gather to learn

new recipes that they can take home to share with their families.

“We just teach them a couple easy recipes that they can make themselves. They are more confident in the kitchen, and know how to do some things for themselves,” Kristen Duncan, a fifth grade teacher, said.

Cooking club is lead by Duncan and Allison Colgrove, fifth grade. They demonstrate the process of making the food that the club will be making at the beginning of the meeting; after that it is all up to the students.

“We send them off into their groups [after we

demonstrate how to cook the food.] It teaches following directions, their goal is to revert back to the recipe before coming to us,” Colgrove said. Not only do the students get the opportunity to learn new recipes and listening skills, but they get the chance to work on their homework and get help from their peers.

“I like cooking because it helps me in subjects where we’re doing fractions. I’ll be like ‘Oh, I used that amount for oil in the cake.’ It helps me relate to math,” D’ana Albores, fifth grade, said.

Cooking lets students take something they have learned in the classroom and use it out in the world. So far students have learned how to make ham and cheese croissant roll-ups and oreo truffles. They will also be learning to make puppy chow, rice krispy treats, grilled cheese and macaroni and cheese.

“I joined it because I always see my mom and dad cooking and I just wanted to [cook too]. [My favorite thing I’ve made so far] are croissant roll ups. They’re really good and cheesy, and I made them last night with my mom and dad,” Shane Adams, fifth grade, said.

IN-SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

KAHLER: POSITIVE OUTLOOK ON A NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE



Sharon-Austin-Weinstein
Summer break is an unforgettable time for many teenagers. Sharon Austin-Weinstein (7), however, had a summer experience different from most people her age. "Over the summer I was with my friend and I jumped into her pool. I hit the

ground [and] I broke my leg. I had to be in a cast for six months. When I first started walking, I had to have crutches just to help me since I didn't walk for six months. That took me around two or three months to finally get back but then I had to do physical therapy. Now I am pretty much back to normal," Austin-Weinstein said.

Unfortunately, there were some things in her day-to-day life that had to be altered. She also had to approach prac-

ticating for sports, like running and basketball, in a different way.

"I couldn't go out because my wheelchair would be too much work [and] for school, [and] I couldn't always walk around in case I fell down. I was afraid when I broke my leg, people would go away from me but nothing really changed. I'm [also] on the travel team when I'm not on the school [basket]ball team. I had a thing called an air cast which was just something that went over my leg. I would stand up and practice shooting free throws and something that I could do on one leg, so I never really like stopped playing. [But] the first time I ran it was not pretty so I kept working to build up my muscle mass and it just came natural to me to start running again," Austin-Weinstein said.

Even after almost a year in recovery, Austin Weinstein still managed to keep a positive outlook on things.

"I feel good about myself for just getting through it and working up to where I am now. [What kept me motivated was] knowing it's only temporary and I'll get back to the things I am used to doing. It's not a permanent thing," Austin-Weinstein said.

CLARK: A FAR-OUT FIELD TRIP



Every year, Clark Middle School's sixth grade science classes take an educational field trip to The Challenger Learning Center, located in Hammond. During this field trip the students go on a simulated space mission and are assigned specific jobs for said

mission.

"The mission we choose to go on is the Mission to the Moon. Once the students arrive, they are 'NASA astronauts'. Upon arrival, the students are briefed on their duties and half of the students go into Mission Control and the other half of the students go into the spacecraft," Kim

BeDuhn, Science, said.

Not only does this simulation teach students about the duties of a real space mission, it teaches them the importance of teamwork.

"The students must work together, complete a wide variety of tasks, and often must overcome 'emergency' situations," Kim BeDuhn, Science, stated.

But before the kids went on the actual field trip, they did some activities in class to help them practice for the mission and jobs they were assigned, one was having them tell their partner where to color in specific boxes, without having the partner, who was coloring, see the actual picture, and see if the images matched each other in the end.

"The activity served 2 purposes - the students had to communicate effectively, to get their partner to draw the exact picture that they had, and it also required the students to use coordinate pairs, which are skills they will need for the space mission," Kim BeDuhn, Science, said.

Since during the entire third quarter the classes are covering a space unit, this far-out field trip tied right in.

HOMAN: AMERICAN LEGION POST ESSAY WINNERS



American Legion Post 485 created an essay writing contest through The Flag Education Program asking students what the national flag means to them. The Legion members read through each essay and picked a Post winner for a boy and girl. Two students

from Homan Elementary, Jacob Meyer and Kaylee Cline Phillips, won the contest.

"I was shocked when I heard I won," said Jacob Meyer.

Kaylee Cline Phillips was chosen as a Post winner as well and was invited to the Post to accept her award and will compete against other Lake County schools.

"It was through so many schools, I was so surprised when I heard that I was the winner," said Phillips.

Mrs. Kathi Tucker, Homan principal, said that she was very excited when she heard two students from her school were the winners.

"I would say the competition is always tough. The kids are writing an essay and hoping their essay is the one chosen out of all the elementary schools in the district. It is always a great feeling when one of Homan's students are recognized for doing outstanding work," Mrs. Tucker said.

IN-SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

PEIFER: OLIVIA DVORSCAK



Second grader, Olivia Dvorscak has started taking piano lessons. She started in Nov. of 2016.

Olivia now knows how to play Row, Row, Row Your Boat, Mary Had a Little Lamb, Old Macdonald Had a Farm, Hand-bells, and Jolly Old Saint Nick.

Old Macdonald Had a Farm, Hand-bells, and Jolly Old Saint Nick.

“The thing I like best about playing is [that] you don’t have to study a whole lot, you can [play] at home, and that if you mess up the teacher helps you.” Dvorscak said.

Being the only one in her house that can play the piano, Olivia feels very special. She also felt very special when for Christmas, she put a picture of herself playing the piano on the “Ringmaster” board in her class, and her teacher, Mrs. Caposey, thought it would be a fun opportunity to have her ask Mr. Hickey, Music, if she could play a song on his piano.

Olivia went to music class, and played her favorite song, the Christmas tune, Jolly Old Saint Nick. Olivia wants to continue playing the piano through all of 2017, and maybe even when she gets older. Good Luck Olivia!

BIBICH: Q AND A WITH MRS. JOANNE PRATT



Why did you move to the United States?

“When I was 18 years old, in England college and university is completely different. We leave school at 16, so basically you have three options: there’s college, you can stay at school for a few more years or you can go out into the world and get a job. I finished college when I was 18. So I applied for lots of jobs, and I got this job as a Nanny in Germany for seven months. I only had a week to decide so I packed up everything, and took off. I ended up living there for five years. I did meet my husband over there. He was in the Military, the Air Force. We got married and I came [to the United States] through him.”

Why did you decide to go into teaching?

“Part of the college [in England] was helping in a classroom and I just loved it. I really enjoyed working with kids. Even my mom said ever since I was little [I enjoyed working with kids]. So when we got back to the states I went back to teaching.”

How do your students feel about your culture?

“I think the kids love it, [especially my accent], the kids don’t really do it in front of me, but I’ve heard that they like to practice my accent away from me, which I think is cool.”

Was it difficult to move to the United States?

“No, but it’s still hard today, because I miss my family. All of my family is over [in England] and that’s really hard for me. I go back every couple of years. I’m actually going back this summer, and usually when I don’t go back, my mom comes that year. My mom’s on her own so it was hard for me to leave her. But with technology it’s a little easier.”

Do you involve your culture in your teaching?

“I do because that’s part of me. My culture is a big part of me so I do refer to a lot of things that I have done in the past. I’ve involved my culture by a few years ago we wrote to the Queen. We actually got a letter back from her Lady in Waiting. The year after that we wrote to a second grade class in England, so I try to involve that part [of me].”

What’s your favorite place in the world?

“It’s the easiest; Hungary, Budapest. I feel so much at home when I’m there, but my dad’s from Hungary, so that’s a big part of my culture too. One of my goals actually is to take a sabbatical and go back to Hungary and teach English, because I have some family over there and it’s hard because they don’t speak very much [English], so we had to translate a little bit.”

KOLLING: SETTING THE BAR HIGH FOR THIRD GRADERS



Libby Tobias, a third grader at Kolling Elementary, has taken gymnastics to the “next level,” jumping 2 levels after switching to the United Gymnastics Academy in Illinois. Most of her teammates are at

least 2-3 years older than her.

“She is currently level 7 and the youngest level 7 in the state of Illinois. There are 10 levels. She trains 20 hours a week at a gym called UGA in Frankfort Illinois, competing on vault, bars, beam and floor,” Janel Tobias, Libby’s mom, said.

Recently Libby traveled to Tampa for a meet. This was the farthest she had ever traveled for gymnastics.

“I just went to a Florida meet in Tampa, and I placed 6th

place in beam,” Libby Tobias said.

Although gymnastics takes up a lot of Libby’s time, she still manages to maintain her grades while improving her skills.

“She is a straight A student and has learned to prioritize her time as many times she does homework in the car ride to practices,” Mrs. Tobias said.

Libby’s favorite thing to compete in is bars, but she has high skills in all categories.

“She has many awards from many gymnastics competitions, but she is a 5 time state champion from her previous time in Indiana. She competes very well and places at all her competitions,”

As a 7 year old, Libby aspires to one day compete at an Olympic level, but for right now, she enjoys learning and surrounding herself with life long friends.

“I like getting lots of new skills and hanging out with my friends,” Libby said.

IN-SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

PROTSMAN: WELLNESS CHALLENGE



Former First Lady Michelle Obama made it clear that her initiative while living in the White House was to get Americans moving and working out. Her goal for adults was to have them

active for 30 minutes a day, and at least five days a week, or about 8,500 steps each day (4.5 miles).

Well, Mrs. Obama would be proud if she heard what the Lake Central School Corporation was doing. Throughout the month of January, the corporation held a Wellness Challenge for all staff members and interns looking to find a fun way to work-out with their coworkers.

"I love that LCSC is encouraging and motivating us to get moving. As teachers, we never sit down and are moving all day, but this allows us to challenge ourselves to become more active than we already are. They are helping promote healthy lifestyles," Protsman third grade teacher, Jennifer Walters said.

The overall goal is to walk 43.6 miles, the length it takes to walk to all LCSC schools, in a month, or approximately two miles per day. However, the real goal is to get teachers active for more than just one month.

"The most important thing we should take from this challenge is to continue and go above and

beyond even after the challenge is complete. The wellness committee does a great job each year getting us to jumpstart our workouts," Walters said. "The corporation has done a great job in promoting this wellness challenge along with the other 5k run/walk they have promoted in the fall. Going forward in the future, a challenge would be beneficial to have twice a year to keep us on our feet."

Participants could join their peers and make a team of 3-5 people. All individuals that reach the 43.6 mile goal will be entered in a raffle for a Speedway gift card, while the school with the most combined miles per participant will be given a plaque to keep for a year. Although the challenge is mainly to get staff members moving while also having fun, the competitiveness between schools is still there. There is a special meaning behind having your school own the plaque.

"I think it will mean a lot to us at Protsman if we were to be titled the "most fit" school because it shows how we come together not only as educators, but as friends as well. We encourage one another on a daily basis to be the best we can be. For the past 3 years, Protsman staff and faculty have participated in Funday Mondays. Once or twice a month, we get together in the gym to play games such as musical chairs, human hungry hippos, hula hoop contests, tic tac toe relay, and balloon races," Walters said. "Other activities on Mondays have included a half court basketball game, volleyball, yoga, Zumba, and line dancing. If you think the wellness challenge is competitive, you should watch staff and faculty members play musical chairs for prizes."

WATSON: KIDS GET DOWN AND GERMY



Watson Elementary's Mrs. Rita Evanson put her third grade students' cleanliness to the test with a germ lab on Friday, Jan. 27. Thanks to the help

of Evanson's microbiologist husband and donations from Silliker Laboratories, students were able to see their lesson come to life.

"The supplies are donated from a business called Silliker Laboratories. It's about \$300 worth of supplies. My husband is a microbiologist who is a consultant with them, and they have donated the supplies for the past eight years," Evanson said.

There were multiple experiments within this lab, including testing the germs on the children's hands before and after being freshly washed and swabbing items around the school and in the classroom.

"My favorite part was when we got to swab the stuff around the building. I thought it was fun, and it was kind of gross," third-grader Diane Jefferies said.

Prior to this lab, the students have spent class time learning about chronic and communicable diseases and how germs spread.

"The chronic diseases are ones that you are born with, but you can't catch them from people or you just get them, but communicable diseases you can catch from food, people or animals. Today I learned that germs can be everywhere," third-grader Grace Marksteiner said.

To finish off the lab, Evanson asked her students what studies have shown to be the top two germiest items, to which they promptly responded: purses and cell phones. Gross!

FROM THE DESK OF...



AL GANDOLFI, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Lake Central School Corporation is committed to a continuing education program regarding drug and alcohol prevention and we encourage you to participate. If you missed our first presentation on Stairway to Heroin it is not too late to get

involved. In collaboration with the Dyer, Schererville and St. John Police and Fire Departments, Lake Central has put together a multi-session educational program that benefits individuals, families and the community. Please help us to become a part of the solution throughout Northwest Indiana!



SARAH CASTANEDA, DIRECTOR OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

Last year, Lake Central began using the SAT suite of assessments to help measure how students grow academically as they transition from middle to high school. We administer the PSAT 8/9,

PSAT 10, and the PSAT/NMSQT for grade 11 in the fall, in addition to hosting an SAT School Day in the spring for juniors.

We realize that some of our students may start a career straight out of high school or pursue a trade or certification rather than college. However, when our middle school principals and counselors talk to students and ask them if they may go to college, almost all of our students say yes. And that is a good thing, because given they are only in middle school, our students should not be closing any doors just yet. They have their entire high school career to determine what the best path is for them to pursue as an adult.

The SAT suite of assessments measures college and career readiness in three areas: reading, writing, and math. If your child's score report shows that they are meeting the college and career readiness benchmarks, it means they have a 75% chance or higher of earning a C or better in first year college courses. Taking the PSAT multiple years prior to the SAT exam that colleges and scholarship programs will be looking at helps students identify both their strengths and areas of opportunity for improvement.

If students want to track their progress on the PSAT each year, they can create a College Board account by going to <https://studentscores.collegeboard.org>, and

Our second presentation of this three part series entitled, Wake Up Call, centers around a life size exhibit of a teen's bedroom with more than 20 red flags that can signal drug and/or alcohol abuse. The goal of this presentation is to educate parents, teachers, and other adults who are influential in the lives of youth so these adults know what seemingly innocent items can actually be an indication of abuse. This presentation is for adults only (21 years of age or older). This event will be held on Tuesday, February 28, 2017, registration is available through <http://lakecentralwakeupcall.eventbrite.com>

Our third presentation in this series will be held on September 18-19, 2017, it is entitled, Playground to Pills. Presentations will be held in all three middle schools with an additional presentation in the evening for parents and the community on September 19, 2017. We believe healthy habits are formed at a young age so it is never too early to lay the foundation for a drug-free lifestyle. Look for more information on this presentation in August.

then entering the access code on their PSAT Score Report to link their scores.

In an effort to help students and families prepare for college, the College Board has developed two outstanding free resources. First, they have partnered with Khan Academy (www.khanacademy.org) to provide free SAT test prep and multiple full length SAT practice tests for all students. Students can use this at any time by simply creating a Khan Academy account. However, if a student creates a Khan Academy account and then links it to their College Board account, the test prep becomes customized based on their PSAT scores, which allows them focus on the areas they need the most help with in preparation for the SAT. If you have any questions about Khan Academy or need your child's access code for PSAT scores for College Board, please contact your building principal or school counselor.

The second resource is Big Future (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>), which is a free college planning website designed to help students research colleges that match their interests and potential career pathway. Students who are not certain what they want to pursue can do a questionnaire to help them identify potential fields. Students who already know what career they are interested in can narrow by a variety of characteristics to see which colleges may be a good match. Families can then compare admission criteria, cost, and other factors to see which school makes the most sense. Big Future also has resources about different ways to pay for college, complete with financial aid information and loan calculators.

If you would like more information about the SAT suite of assessments or College Board resources, please go to your child's middle or high school website, hover over the Academics tab, and click on the link PSAT/SAT Resources. While we realize that graduation may seem a long way off in middle school, it arrives more quickly than we often expect, and we want to ensure our Lake Central families have the tools they need to plan for a successful future.

FROM THE DESK OF...



REBECCA GRAMOLA, DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

This fall semester has brought renewed focus on our mission to service students within the least restrictive environment appropriate. A team of educators from all levels attended the Institute on Access sponsored by the Indiana IEP Resource

Center and the Indiana Department of Education. Our team, consisting of general and special education teachers and administrators, reviewed district data and reflected on local practices. Our goal remains to ensure that our teachers and administrators have high expectations for all

students with special needs. We were reminded during our time together that educating students with special needs is a shared responsibility. General education teachers, special education teachers, administrators, families, and peers are contributors to the success of our students. We hope this process leads to increased communication and collaboration on behalf of all students.

Special education teachers and staff have participated in many professional development opportunities as they work toward providing all students access to grade-level standards and curriculum. Indiana has release new Content Connectors, which are modified standards for our students with more significant needs. Teachers in our Structured Learning and Functional/Essential Skills programs have been meeting monthly to review these standards along with their curriculum and assessments. I'm pleased to say our teachers are tackling this challenge head-on and our students are benefiting.



THERESA SCHOON, DIRECTOR OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

In our last newsletter, I shared information on the changes in math instruction that are occurring in elementary classrooms this school year. Our focus has moved from just teaching procedures and formulas

to developing conceptual understanding and number sense. Parents are finding that the changes we are implementing in classrooms are also showing up in their child's math homework. Here are a few tips to help parents navigate math homework that most likely looks different than when they were in school.

Most math homework that goes home is an extension of the work that was done in class previously and so students should be able to complete it independently. There may be times that your child struggles with an assignment. Resist the urge to come to their rescue too quickly. Our goal is to build problem-solvers who persevere in completing a challenging task. Praise them for sticking with it and encourage them to think about how they got started on a similar problem in class.

When it is apparent that some additional support is needed, rather than showing them a trick or procedure to get the answer, work together with

your child as a team. Supporting them to figure out a problem rather than telling them how to do it builds their confidence as a mathematician. A good place to start is by asking one of the following questions to get your child talking about the problem.

1. What is the problem about? Tell me in your own words.
2. What strategy have you already tried? What have you done so far?
3. Will it help to make a drawing, diagram, chart or a list? Can you act it out?

Students usually know more about the problem than they think they know. Often, just getting them to talk about the problem moves their thinking forward and they can figure out how to proceed.

There may be a time when even with the best efforts of parent and child, the problem is still a mystery and frustration, on both sides, is mounting. This is the time to stop and write a note to the teacher telling him/her that your child tried but just couldn't figure it out. Your child will not be penalized and the teacher can then help your child.

If you are looking for additional ways to support your child's math achievement, I highly recommend having them work on Dreambox, an adaptive, online math program that complements the instruction that occurs in elementary classrooms. Your child has a subscription to Dreambox through Lake Central. Instructions for accessing this resource were sent home at the beginning of the year. If you no longer have that information, just email the teacher and the information will be sent to you.

REMINDER: Kindergarten Enrollment is March 8 and 9, 2017

SUBMISSIONS



KINDNESS DOES MATTER, KOLLING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Lake Central families always come through when it comes to giving back. A perfect example are the Kolling students and parents from Mrs. Freeman's kindergarten class. This past holiday

season, Mrs. Freeman organized a drive with her students and families to collect blankets, hats, gloves, lotion, and towels to donate to St.

Jude's House in Crown Point. St. Jude House serves as a safe shelter for victims and their dependent children who are affected by domestic abuse. This drive was tied into the class theme of "Kindness Matters" and teaching children that it is more important to give than to receive. Children in Mrs. Freeman's class discussed this idea after reading the children's book *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*, and then worked with their parents to collect 62 items that were most needed by St. Jude's. These students did not just talk about being kind – they put their words into action and learned a valuable lesson doing so!

Submitted by: Cassandra Cruz

SILLY SAFARI COMES TO PEIFER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

On February 9, 2017, the students of Peifer Elementary School had the annual opportunity to engage grade-specific assemblies throughout the day, through a very entertaining and educational Silly Safari assembly. Each K-4 assembly covered one of the following topics: Kdg.- Animal coverings, Grade 1- Animal homes, Grade 2- Animal adaptations to environments, Grade 3- Rainforest animals, and Grade 4- Endangered species.

The animals and their owner, Amazon John, drove into town Thursday morning, stayed most of the day at Peifer, and were then headed home to Indianapolis before the return trip on Friday for our neighboring Schererville school, Watson Elementary students. John brought with him animals with fur, feathers, slime, and scales. He shared with Peifer students a Boston terrier,

rabbit, ferret, kinkajou, opossum, a tawny owl, tree frog, toad, fainting beetles, baby alligator, tortoise, a legless lizard, blue-tongued skink, and a 10-ft. albino Burmese python. He used each of these animals to cover the standards for each grade level topic for conversation.

Silly Safari is one of the assemblies that students and teachers ask to return every year. Amazon John and Coyote Chris, the 2 animal presenters with this company, teach in a way that the students aren't even aware that they are learning during their 45-minute assembly. Children volunteers are asked to come to the front and help present the animals in ways that are safe and fun-filled. All students are given the choice at the end of the assembly to follow the line of students to pet several of the animals discussed during the assembly. This day is certainly one of the highlights of our school year every February!

Submitted by: Doug Delaughter



THE GREAT KINDNESS CHALLENGE, WATSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Kindness matters. Just ask anyone at Watson Elementary! During the week of January 23-27, Watson sponsored the 2017 Great Kindness Challenge, an event meant to encourage students to perform as many acts of kindness as possible in one week. Students/classrooms were provided with a checklist of 50 possible

acts of kindness. The challenges on the checklist included smiling at 25 people, making a new friend, thanking a bus driver, and helping someone up if they fell down, just to name a few.

The event, which was organized by Mrs. Claesgens, was a huge success! Students were very excited and enthusiastic about the challenge. Some of the highlights from the week included a peace pledge recited by the entire school during morning announcements, watching students complete the kindness checklist, and grade level photos promoting kindness. Watson School has learned that kindness is contagious!

Submitted by: Michelle Lavin