

SOAR NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER 2015



Welcome to the Big Top

The 6th annual, circus-themed, Soar Showcase entertained audiences on Friday, April 17th.

For several months, students and staff prepared for the show by preparing acts, making props and costumes, and taking time from their busy days to truly showcase their talents.

On the morning of the showcase, nerves and excitement were high. Students were cramming in last-minute practice sessions and anxiously awaiting their time on stage.

The auditorium was decorated to the max with circus themed colors and decorations. Also adorning the

walls and tables were art and academic projects from various classes throughout this school year. The creativity and hard work of our students brought both color and inspiration to the showcase.

The showcase opened with an act performed by an elementary student. He used projected images to challenge the optical illusion knowledge of the audience.

There were multiple vocal performances that ranged from alternative rock, country, pop, and folk. One student dedicated his performance to his dad and includ-



ed a slide show of images that were significant to the two of them.

A middle school student followed a piano performance with another, impressive act. For the showcase, she chose a Disney melody to play as a duet with our music teacher, Ms. W.

Closing the showcase was a middle school student showing his dancing skills, and an elementary student and behavior interventionist performing to 'Shake it Off'. This duet came complete with matching costumes and the audience even got into it at the end.



The showcase wouldn't be complete though, without the sweet treats provided by our culinary crew. Following a circus theme as well, the audience had many edible options following the hour of entertainment.

Special thanks to all of the hard working student-performers and staff mentors. Thanks also to our emcee, or ring-master, Deana Paquette, and Flora Whitmore, music teacher.



Soar Student Athletes



This spring, there are many students, once again, participating in sports and activities with their sending school.

We have students playing softball, baseball, lacrosse, track and field, and participating in boy scouts. These students must not only work hard while they are here each day in the Soar community, but they then travel to their practice or game and join a new group of peers.



For some students, this can be challenging since they sometimes feel removed from these teams. However, all of our students participating in extra-curricular activities know the expectations for both academics and behavior, and they all work extremely hard to maintain those high levels of performance.

One of our high school students, Josh Carr, is having yet another successful

track and field season for Milton High School. At a meet in May, Josh placed second, third, and fifth, in discus, javelin, and shot put. Most recently, in the Division II state meet, Josh placed 5th overall in discus.

Staff at SLC also do their best to get out and support these students. Since we do not have our own sports teams, supporting these students at their sending schools in the next best thing.

Congratulations to all of these motivated students.

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Recipe Corner

Buffalo Chicken Mac and Cheese

Ingredients:

- 16 oz. elbow macaroni
- 16 oz. sour cream
- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 12 oz. evaporated milk
- 12 oz. hot sauce
- 1 package ranch dressing mix
- 1 rotisserie chicken, chopped
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup melted butter

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350° and spray a 9x13 inch baking dish with cooking spray
2. Bring pot of lightly salted water to a boil and cook pasta, drain
3. Stir in sour cream and cream cheese until smooth, add evaporated milk. Stir in hot sauce and ranch dressing mix
4. Mix in shredded chicken and 1 1/2 cups cheddar cheese
5. Pour mixture into baking dish and top with bread crumbs and 1/2 cup cheddar
6. Drizzle melted butter over the top and bake for 20-30 minutes or until bubbling and golden on top



The Sugaring Season and Pancake Breakfast

All sugar-makers would likely agree that this was one of those shorter seasons. Mostly due to how long it took for winter to pass and temperatures to warm up, the sap was slow flowing for quite some time.

When it did finally run, SLC was able to collect, boil, and boast 10 gallons of liquid gold. Despite this short, cold sugaring season, our high school students and staff worked hard at our 140 taps.

Using trees here at our school, at the bay park, and on the land of a generous community member, students and staff spent several weeks in sugaring mode. This included school and after-school hours.



Several high school students chose to stay late, long after the vans had taken their peers home. Stacking wood and boiling during these off hours not only gained them community service hours but also experience seeing the sugaring process through from beginning to end.



With the sugaring season complete, we then look towards the delicious benefits of this hard work. The SLC pancake breakfast, which always falls near our April break, was just as mouth-watering and impressive as past years.

Again, there were high school students that got up

much earlier than the alarm clocks usually deem necessary, to join staff in the kitchen to prepare breakfast for our school.

Eggs, pancakes, bacon, home-fries, and toast were just a few of the offerings. Most important though was the fresh syrup we enjoyed, made right here.

Students also participated in the 3rd Annual Rock Paper Scissors Tournament, organized by Marc Brunelle. So far, the winners have been from the high school, a staff member, and this year, a middle school student joined the victory circle.



A Peek Inside the Kitchen on Friday Mornings...

Prior to Friday's, Culinary Connection meal being served, the staff and students are busy planning at least a week in advance. After the Friday lunch is cleaned up, the preparations begin for next week. Students discuss menu ideas and themes, and also any upcoming holidays that could be tied into the meal.



The next piece is the grocery shopping. The students are also part of this process since navigating the sections, brands, and prices of the store are life skills we all need and use.

Each Friday morning, jobs are assigned: prep station (wash and cut ingredients), cooking, baking, and serving (order, plates, utensils). Everyone

is responsible for dishes and clean up. From 8am until noon, these students are busy working and being self-starters. The motto Claire Thompson likes to use is 'see a job, do a job!' This kind of attitude is what makes this class so successful and has so many full and happy customers each week.

Thank you to the Culinary Connection and cooking classes for their hard work again this year.

How Does Our Garden Grow?

From sugaring to seeding, the greenhouse class has been busy this spring. Once the sap collecting and boiling was complete, the research began. Students used web-based programs to help plan the layout and best plants for our SLC gardens. Students learned about the distance needed between plants, time needed to grow, and the

best time to plant.

Although the summer program will maintain the gardens this summer, the class has gotten a great start with beans, tomatoes, broccoli, squash, peppers, watermelon, a variety of herbs, and a bunch of flowers around the garden's perimeter.



The elementary also has a garden growing, thanks to Erika LeClair and her 5/6th grade students.

They have also been outside on nice days digging, raking, planting, and weeding. This fall should bring a wonderful harvest for snacks and events throughout the year.



Graduation 2015

On Friday, June 12th, Soar Learning Center honored transitioning students and the 12th and 8th grade graduates.

In true SLC style, the ceremony opened and closed with musical numbers. A 5th grade student sang 'I believe I can fly' to begin, and then the 6/7th grade class, accompanied by a graduating senior on guitar, performed Greenday's 'Time of Your Life'. Both musical acts reminded us of the talent and potential within every one of our students.

There were many students acknowledged and awarded during the graduation ceremony. Four students were recognized as they



will begin next fall back at their sending schools. Among these students were one elementary, two middle school, and one high school student.

Attorney, Joshua Martin, presented the Franklin/Grand Isle County Bar Association Citizenship Award to 8th grader, Spencer Bidwell. His engagement in his academics and involvement in extra-curricular activities were both factors in receiving this award.

There were also four academic achievement awards presented for hard work and excellence in classes throughout the school year.

Before graduates received their diplomas, the middle

school had three students write speeches. The three speeches focused on not giving up and working through challenges, always giving your best effort, and the third spoke to positive qualities of their peers.

Finally, the five 8th graders and four 12th graders were called and received their diplomas. Mr. Bombard spoke about each of the high school graduates and gave the audience the opportunity to hear how they have grown throughout their time here, and also their potential as they move forward in their lives.

From the SLC community, your family, peers, and friends, congratulations graduates!

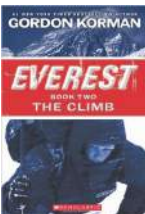


Elementary and Back to School Quick Notes

The Back to School students have been studying a unit on Vermont. The students have learned several facts and studied important industries in Vt. On April 30th, the students took a field trip to the Gervais dairy and goat farm to learn more about the dairy process in Vermont.



Mrs. LeClair's middle school reading class has finished reading book one and are almost done book two of "Everest", by Gordon Korman. Students will end the year watching a Discovery Channel series about climbing Everest. With this series, students learn content specific vocabulary such as Sherpas, jumar, piton, pinnacle, moraine, Sirdar, porters, ascend, and descent.



Mrs. Young's math class has been working on mastery of multi-digit multiplication and division. The final

weeks of the school year will allow them time to construct a board game that features their creativity and a way to review the skills with which they've become successful this year.

Mrs. Cota's 6/7th grade class has been studying ancient Greece. They have spent time learning about what life was like several thousand years ago, recognizing what elements of civilization for which we have the Greeks to thank, and most recently, they've been creating shields or flags depicting the beliefs and lifestyles of either Athens or Sparta.

Ms. Torrey's class spent part of the spring learning about plants during their science class. They studied the parts of different plants. They planted flowers in personalized decorative pots. They were able to look at different samples of trees around our area and try their hand at some tree aging! They ended their unit planting some grass in some clear plastic cups where they were able to watch it grow from the top and checking

out the root system in the cup! Not to mention, grow some pretty cool hair for these guys at the same time!

The K-3 class has been having fun learning about dinosaurs. The students learned about diet, characteristics, where they lived and what they ate. The students were asked to choose their favorite dinosaur and make paper plate replicas. They had a blast personalizing them by building them and adding an artistic flair to their project.



They also enjoyed a unit on continents and oceans. The students learned about Pangaea and the continental shift that occurred to make the world look like it does today. They learned the name of each of the continents and oceans and where they are located on a map. For a project each student made their own handheld globe to bring home.



Far Left: Pictured at the bottom is one of the covers of the books Mrs. LeClair's class read this year.

Top Left: Back to School students get up close and personal with some cows in the milking

parlor of the Gervais Farm.

Top Right: Serious faces with some serious hair stare us down, from Ms. Torrey's grass growing experiment.

Bottom Right: A colorful dinosaur, straight from Mr. Pike's class, is complete with glitter and googly eyes.



High School Highlights

In Ms. Lusk's Literature and Writing Workshop, students have been reading Tobias Wolff's memoir, *This Boy's Life*. Students are answering in-depth reading response questions focused on character development, theme, symbolism, rhetorical grammar and literary devices. Wolff's memoir served as inspiration for students to write their own personal narratives.

One of the high school Enrichment classes, led by Tim Stanley,

has been following the "soda tax" debate. Students have been looking at the issues from both sides of the debate. They have been analyzing the pro's and con's of the tax and choosing which side they are on in this contentious debate. Students have also calculated the possible tax rates on their favorite sodas! The conclusion: a new tax on sugary sweetened beverages would affect/alter buying habits but it would not stop it completely.



Several high school science students spent a full morning in May, engaged in a stream monitoring study at Mill River. This was done in collaboration with the Watershed Alliance Program, from the University of Vermont.

SLC students had the opportunity to work together with college undergraduate students and learn a variety of field science methods, conduct data collection, and engage in hands-on learning



through the process of a long-term water quality study.

One of Diane Mock's math classes constructed a geodesic dome. It tied into a geometry unit where students worked with angles, shapes, measurement, and construction. The dome has been on display outside and the students have been quite proud of their creation.



The Soar Learning Center summer programs are ready to go! Running from July 6th-July 31st, students will engage in embedded academics to keep their skills sharp, participate in many group and team building activities, as well as go on lots of exciting field trips.

The elementary, middle, and Back to School program will be overseen again by Nicole Rees. In addition to swimming, fishing, and learning activities; students will also be visiting Pelkey's Ar-

chery, several state parks, Cold Hollow Cider Mill, cooking at the Ronald McDonald House, and participating in a community scavenger hunt (just to name a few).

Our high school program, coordinated by Devin Quinlan and Brad Messier, will also run throughout the month of July. The program is called S.E.R.V.E. and stands for Service, Education, Recreation, Vocation, and Exposure. All five of these areas will be addressed and experienced throughout the four-week program.

AHEAD: Summer Fun

Three days each week, students participate in activities, job site tours, or trips during the morning, while their afternoon is spent employed locally. This afternoon, money-earning opportunity is made available through Vocational Rehab, a truly valuable state resource for our students.

On Thursdays, students participate in an all day trip, while Friday mornings are educational workshops and recreation activities. For the fifteen students involved, not only will they gain valuable experience and have summer fun, but they will also

gain a 1/2 credit in either science or language arts, a 1/2 credit in physical education, and also a 1/2 credit in a work-study elective.

Some repeat trips the group is looking forward to are Arbortrek Adventure Course and the Lake Champlain Sailing Center. However, there are also some new activities such as Hiking Laraway Mountain and exploring Metro Rock Indoor Climbing Center, that also have the group excited for their summer.



New Testing Arrives: The SBAC's in Real Time

It began over a year ago, that the NCSS technology team was checking and preparing our computer systems, requirements, and network speed for the new standardized testing aligned to the common core state standards: the SBAC.

SBAC stands for Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, and while this year was very experimental for participating schools, real scores are expected to arrive this summer.

The SBAC newsletter spoke to challenges faced by schools, but also the learning gained throughout this new, computer based, standardized assessment. Gone are the days of filling in those little bubbles with your number 2 pencil. Students now log in to a portal, use their personalized student ID, and begin an assessment that is geared towards their grade and then adjusts to their academic level depending on their correct or incorrect responses.

Each participating student, grades 3-8 and grade 11, completed tests in ELA (English language arts) and math. These tests were a mix of cumulative knowledge and also standard specific tasks.

To prepare for test administration, teachers received online certification and met regularly to understand both the testing and technology pieces. The staff at SLC also worked hard to prepare students behaviorally, academically, and

technologically for a very different format of

testing to which we are all accustomed. In all, 41 students were tested within the 13 week testing window. Nearing the 95% completion rate in the state of Vermont, SLC finished with 93% of students completed. Well done, for our first year of SBACs.



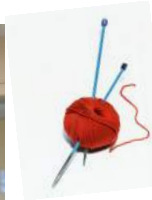
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Student Corner



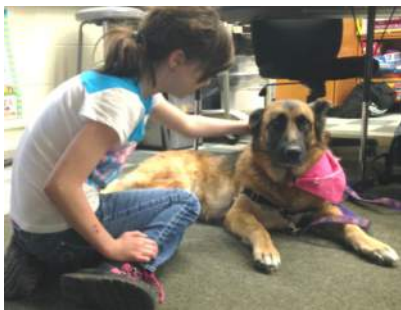
Above: A creation out of Diane Mock's high school math class, the Menger Sponge, a fractal curve, was constructed earlier this year. It is now ready for display up at one of the main NCSS office buildings for others to examine and enjoy.



Right: Two middle school students learn to crochet while spending a Friday morning at Care Partners, in St. Albans. The elementary has visited this adult day facility for many years now. The high school also participated in visits this year bringing games and their culinary skills to share. Both the students of SLC and the clients at Care Partners look forward to these visits.



Left: Two high school students stand proudly with exemplary resumes they completed prior to attending a job fair in late March. At the job fair, both students impressed businesses with their questions and interview skills. Responses from businesses were; "They were so organized with their questions and clipboards" and "It was so nice to have the students asking questions".

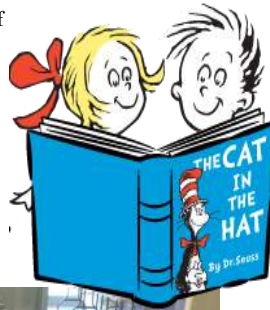


Left: A middle school student sits with Holland, a therapy dog, during a visit where students learned about and discussed how animals are involved in different vocations.



Left: An eighth grader delivers a speech about the positive qualities of the peers in his graduating class.

Right: Throughout the month of March, staff and students stopped what they were doing and read for 20 minutes each morning. In honor of Dr. Seuss' birthday, many schools celebrate this on March 2nd, but SLC carried it right through the month.



Above: Middle school students participate in the Blue Cross Blue Shield 'Walk at Lunch' day in May. Jesse LeClair set up a walking perimeter around the school, measured the distance and calculated that collectively, 75 staff and students walked a total of 88 miles!

Below: Students in the 6/7th grade designed shields and flags that displayed information characteristic of either Sparta or Athens, during their Ancient Greece social studies unit.



Left: Nicole Rees has yet another impressive spread of books laid out for students at our 3rd book fair this year. This June book fair was a little different though. The prior two fairs this year had provided enough sales to make this one free for students to choose up to five, free books. The fairs earlier this year also allowed our school to add some new titles to



our library. Students will all head into summer with some new reading to keep them busy!