

1711 N. CALIFORNIA AVE.
CHICAGO, IL 60647
(773) 252-0970 EXT. 329, 322, 318

School Newsletter

January, 2009

Karime Asaf, Principal kasaf@mrcscs.aspirail.org
(773) 252-0907 ext. 324

Senior Academy

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George Smith

Fall College Classes Report:

Over 30 seniors completed at least one class this past fall semester at Wright College. Over half of these students received an A or B in at least one of the classes they took. Three juniors received credit for classes at DePaul University. For next fall we're planning on offering to juniors and seniors for dual credit classes at Wright, Northeastern, and DePaul.

Kristie Krall

Welcome to the second semester! For the 2009 year, Latin America Studies class is continuing our case studies of *Revolutions of the twentieth century*. While learning about Ernesto Che Guevara, Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution, students will read both primary and secondary documents as well as analysis of primary films for a better understanding and learning experience. Sophomore U.S. History & Constitution classes are preparing for the Illinois State Constitution test, which must be passed in order to be promoted to junior level. Study guides, practice tests and re-takes are available for all sophomores.

For all assignments, information and class notes, check out our new class website www.classnotesonline.com/teacher/kkrall.

John VanderHeide

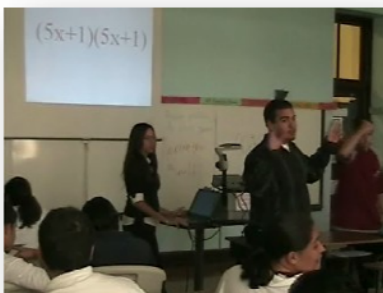
I am excited to begin this new year with the students. In Environmental Science we have just finished our unit on agriculture and are embarking on our new unit studying biodiversity and conservation. The research papers are progressing nicely. All students should have their bibliography done and should be beginning to read one of their books for the book review that will be due in February. Chemistry is moving out of our discussion of the periodic table and starting to talk about chemical bonding and reactions.

Zachary Moran

In our physical education class we are grateful for the local boys and girls club allowing our students to take over their facilities while the weather is too cold to be outside. The students are having fun playing basketball, volleyball, and soccer in the warmth and comfort of an indoor gymnasium. In health education the students are finishing their second quarter projects, which is a poster about themselves and their interests. In the second semester we will be getting into some interesting topics including nutrition, physical fitness, and the human body and how it works.

Jaqueline Sanchez

The seniors just completed their photo montage projects which were briefly displayed in the hallways. This project used Fireworks to combine and manipulate images. The seniors will begin working in Dreamweaver and building websites. Third semester they will work on and enter a website into the Thinkquest competition. For more information about this competition please visit www.thinkquest.org and to view past entries from this school.



*Senior students teach
math lessons to
sophomore academy*

Malgorzata Gaj

Did you ever build or fly a kite? Well, seniors built their own kites to apply their learning about functions (especially the quadratic function – parabola). Once the weather gets better, maybe you will see these beautiful kites flying in the sky.

Peter Chen

In English IV, we have been working on a unit about coming of age. We have discussed different methods that we become adults. Students have read the acclaimed graphic novel Persepolis, about a young girl growing up in Iran, and compared it to their own lives. Their final project has been a story about how their lives have been influenced by stories they have heard.

In third quarter, we will begin a Shakespeare play, The Tempest. Students will be required to obtain their own copy of the text, whether buying it from the teacher or borrowing it from the library. Copies cost around \$6 on Amazon, but if students have difficulty getting a copy, they should talk to Mr. Chen. Students will act out the play, while learning about the set-up of the Globe Theater and Shakespeare's sets and costumes. Students will also read criticism and analysis of the play, especially looking at the colonial perspective. This quarter will culminate in a paper about the performance of The Tempest.

The Junior Corner

Cameron Louis and Alex Ames

Half way there! The juniors continue to improve in the Language Arts. In English, they are currently working on a film studies project and will be having their POL the afternoon of the 22nd. For this project they are studying films about heroes. They will be showcasing plot lines that show their hero's journey and original movie posters. After the film project, the juniors will be immersed in a Horror/Mystery/Thriller unit during which they will have the opportunity to engage with books such as *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *Sherlock Holmes*, and others. ACT Prep is somewhat more drill oriented. Students are preparing for their second mock test and, ultimately, for the real ACT. Currently, the juniors are standing out as "most improved class". Actually... that's just my opinion... but I'm proud of them! Keep up the hard work... and get ready for it to get even tougher!!!

Announcement: Boys basketball will be beginning soon. Please listen for related announcements, as they will be made in the weeks to come!

Christie Bobowski

For the second semester in Math III we will be doing intense ACT prep. The topics that will be covered are systems of equations, functions and their graphs, quadratic functions, factoring and radical expressions. In biology, we have started a new unit on genetics. The students will complete a few lab type activities as well as a family tree pedigree project. In addition to genetics, we will also be doing ACT science prep. The test is right around the corner so encourage your kids to keep working! No rest until April!

Iliana Aviles

The junior students are through their first semester of this school year. They have completed many projects and POLs thanks to their hard work and wonderful teachers. This is a hard year for students. Juniors are preparing for the ACT Mock in February and studying hard for the actual ACT test in APRIL.

I'd like to take this time to remind students that they should take advantage of afterschool programs and activities at Mirta Ramirez. Tutoring is encouraged and in some cases required of students in order to keep up their GPAs. Also Students need 30 service learning hours before they move into their senior year. Please keep an eye open for volunteer opportunities in your community to complete these hours as soon as possible.

Hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday!



News from the Sophomore Academy



Junior students preparing for the ACT/PSAE test and college.

Malgorzata Gaj

We just completed our project for second quarter that challenged students to write lyrics to a math song. Students were asked to sing about math concepts we learned in the first semester.

Zachary Moran

In our physical education class we are grateful for the local boys and girls club allowing our students to take over their facilities while the weather is too cold to be outside. The students are having fun playing basketball, volleyball, and soccer in the warmth and comfort of an indoor gymnasium. In health education the students are finishing their second quarter projects, which is a poster about themselves and their interests. In the second semester we will be getting into some interesting topics including nutrition, physical fitness, and the human body and how it works.

Nicolette Rivera

Happy New Year!

A few of our sophomores have been offered the chance to attend college courses this summer through Wright College. This is a great opportunity and the entire sophomore academy congratulates them!

Please remember that the after-school tutoring program is still on. Please take advantage of this opportunity to catch-up with work and raise your grades.

Please see me for more information regarding credit recovery. Night school registration will begin within the next two weeks.

If you are interested in taking Driver's Ed at Lane Tech High School, please see me for registration information. The course begins on February 9th.

Kristie Krall

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Jaqueline Sanchez

The sophomores are finishing an animated story book in Flash that will play in both english and spanish. The students have been working diligently on this project and have the opportunity to add sound effects and/ or music to their project for extra credit. For any student needing extra time or extra help during this process is encouraged to come to computer tutoring after school Tuesdays and Thursdays in room 207.



Sophomores learn about slopes with real-life applications

Peter Chen

In English II, we have been working on readings from Tim O'Brien's [The Things They Carried](#), and students are now taking those stories as models for their own creative projects on the Vietnam War. Each student had the opportunity to make a short story, poem, comic book or non-fiction essay about the Vietnam War. This allowed them to combine their work in history class with their work in English.

The following semester, students will work on literature from the 19th century, as well as connected literature to modern day America. Students will also research the meaning of the Constitution in modern day America, focusing on research and reading skills.

The Magnificent Freshmen Class!

Pragna Trivedi

In Mrs. Trivedi's Interactive Math class, the students will cover two units: The Shadows and The Overland Trail. In the Shadows unit, the students will learn geometric similarity, scaling factor, basic idea of congruency, special triangles, parallel lines, the 180 theorem, and basic trigonometric ratios.

In the Overland Trail unit, the students will experience what it's like to be on a trail of wagons headed to the Western United States during the mid-nineteenth century. They will learn estimating the cost of the move, rates of consumption and of travel. By closely examining the mathematical relationship of past events, students will learn to solve real life problems involving estimation.

Josh Burke

Hello and welcome to Applied Physics. For the past month in physics we have been working through the science of motion which ended with an exploration into Newton's Laws. We are finishing our second quarter project which involves designing and constructing a catapult. This project will tie in our current unit on forces with our old unit on motion. The catapults will be constructed in class over the next few days and then will be launched outside to test for distance, height, and accuracy.

Our next unit that we are starting is momentum and will be the last motion topic that we cover. The second semester will begin with an exploration of electricity and magnetism.

Shillymol Sabu

Math and Science Application Class Students are currently working on constructing tamiya car project. In this project, students will learn how to measure the velocity, distance and time. Also they will collect data and display on the graph.

Main focus of third Quarter is application of Geometry. Students will find area and perimeter of polygons, similarity and congruent of triangles, surface area and volume of solid figures. Students will see the application of algebra in geometry. They will build model of their dream house as project.

Robert Bindewald

History Fair- Coming Soon!

Coming March 12th and 13th, Aspira students will be presenting our first annual History Fair. Our theme this year is *Conflict and Compromise*. Students will be researching topics of interest to them, examining the conflict and potential for resolution through compromise. A number of formats will be pursued by students, from museum-style displays to video documentaries, even live-performances.

This rigorous research-based project will be the culmination of weeks of work by the students. As such, we would like to invite the entire Mirta Ramirez community to join us on the evening of Thursday, March 12th, from 4PM to 6PM. Presentations will be judged during the half-day on March 13th. "Best in Class" projects will remain on display for visitors to see.

If you have any questions you can contact the primary coordinator of the event, Mr. Bindewald. Email him at RBindewald@MRCSCS.Aspirail.org.



Students engaged in hands-on activities that help them understand physics concepts.

Michelle Figueroa

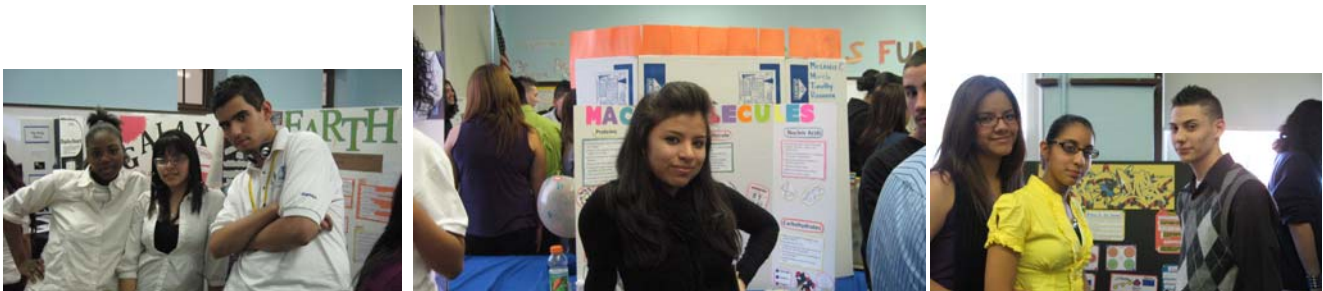
As we begin the new semester remember to do your best in school. Universities and scholarship committees will be looking at these grades when you start applying in two years. Keep in mind that you need to complete 10 hours of community service this year. I will provide you with a list of places where you can do them. Send me your e-mail address at mfigueroa@youth.aspirail.org

Linda Cook

The Freshman English classes are in the middle of a social justice unit on child soldiers. We are reading a memoir titled "A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier," and are learning all about the recruitment of children into armed conflicts worldwide. It's an intense unit, but we are covering a lot of important material, and we are going to have a great time doing our Presentation of Learning (P.O.L.) project! On February 12, we are going to participate in Red Hand Day, a day on which we will be teaching others about the plight of child soldiers, and raising awareness (and hopefully funds!) to benefit victims of current conflicts. If you would like to volunteer to help us, please contact Ms. Cook at: cook@mrcscs.aspirail.org!

**Shauna Lager**

Students in Ms. Lager's College Literacy classes are currently finishing a career exploration unit. To bring a close to the unit, students are compiling a portfolio with artifacts they have created during the unit, such as resumes, letters of application, reference pages, interest inventories, job shadowing experiences, career research, etc. Also, students are creating PowerPoint presentations to teach members of the class what they've learned from researching the career of their choice.



Junior students present their Math and Science projects. They will be having an exhibition at Haugan Middle School within the next few weeks.

Specialized Services

Laura Edwards

The Supportive Services department is alive and well! We have a wonderful new addition to our team, Ms. Sudduth, who will run the instructional program and do inclusion. Mr. Ruhaak will be going from full time to part time, and will be here during the day on Fridays, and Tuesday and Thursday after school. We are continuing to go into the classrooms and pull students out to work one-on-one, break down concepts, and use different methods to ensure student' comprehension of the material. A reminder, we are here Monday through Thursday for after school tutoring, please come see us! This is a great way to get homework done and ask those questions that there is not always time for in class. Please contact us at anytime with questions or concerns at 773-252-0970 ext. 351.

There is an important event this month for parents of children with disabilities. NAMI of Greater Chicago is hosting a presentation by Maribel Huerta, Parent and Educator Liaison for the Chicago Public School's Office of Specialized Services' Parent and Educator Partnership Program. She will be speaking about *How to Advocate for Your Child with a Disability* on **Thursday, January 29th from 6:00-8:00pm at NAMI of Greater Chicago: 1536 W. Chicago Ave, Chicago IL 60622.**

Happy New Year!

Upcoming Events

We have made some changes to the school calendar. We will have early dismissals every month on Fridays instead of Thursdays. Please make note of it.

Senior Financial Aid Workshop	Jan 10, 2009
All Day PD (No School for Students)	Jan 15, 2009 and Jan 16, 2009
End of first semester	Jan 16, 2009
Beginning of 3 rd Quarter	Jan 20, 2009
Report Card Distribution	Jan 22, 2009
2009-10 Lottery	Jan 29, 2009
Early Dismissal (PD: Curriculum Development)	Jan 30, 2009
Awards Assembly 9:00 am -11:00 am	Jan 30, 2009

JANUARY 2009						
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FEBRUARY 2009						
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MARCH 2009						
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29	30	31				

AMRCS is now accepting applications for the 2009-2010 School year. Please contact Ms. Otero for further Information (773) 252-0970 ext. 322
