

ACADEMY

Q U A R T E R L Y

A publication from Damar Academy



2010 Commencement
May 21st at 1:30 p.m.

To RSVP please contact Aimee Brown at aimeeb@damar.org or call 317.856.5201.

Learning is a tasty treat for young boys

Breaded chicken and vegetable rice medley are popular menu items at fancy restaurants, but this school year they are also among the favorite foods prepared weekly in Mrs. Wells's classroom for young boys.

As part of their life-skills curriculum, the students select recipes from cookbooks and magazines and, with support from Wells, prepare four recipes each month. Since November, they've cooked a little of everything — from cocktail meatballs to green eggs and ham.

Coming up next from the kitchen: tuna salad and cheese coffee cake.

"The boys are really enjoying this experience and have asked to learn how to make some very interesting dishes like steamed oysters," Wells said.

The boys' culinary experience extends beyond cooking and baking. They also are challenged with grocery shopping for all recipe items needed to prepare the food.

"The students are divided into two teams; one goes to Meijer and the other goes to Walmart," she said. "Then we compare receipts to see which team got the best value for the money."

The winning team receives a small reward, but for the students, the joy of learning to cook is a treat of its own.

Mrs. Wells said, "All of these boys now have their very own recipe box filled with foods that they know how to cook. More importantly, they have a valuable new skill and that they can take with them when they leave this class, and that definitely has a positive impact on their confidence and self-esteem."

Friday, May 21 is the last day of school.

Visit www.damaracademy.org for the 2010-11 school calendar.

Students getting prepared for the workforce of the future

Students in Ms. Quinn's class engage in many volunteer activities — from walking animals at the local animal shelter to cleaning windows and exercise equipment at a local gym. From every experience, they gain more than just personal satisfaction for a job well done. They also gain valuable employment-related skills and real-world exposure to life in today's workforce.

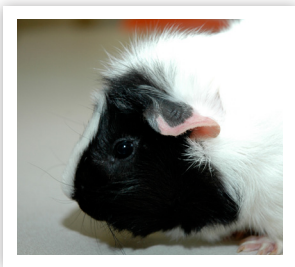
The students, all adolescent boys, perform a variety of volunteer duties at businesses across the Indianapolis area, including a Habitat for Humanity animal shelter, Goodwill, Teachers' Treasures, and Core Fitness Club.

"For these kids, this is about so much more than just learning how to sweep floors properly or stack and sort boxes," Ms. Quinn said.

The volunteer activities also help them build other concrete skills that they can include on job applications and résumés.

"Learning how to successfully work with others and developing a sense of teamwork in a variety of new environments are important skills for to have, and these boys are getting an abundance of hands-on training that they'll take with them to prospective job opportunities down the road," Quinn said. "It is practical and community-based experiences just like these that help support Damar's mission of developing its clients' skills, sense of confidence, and hope."

Furry friends find a home at school



What do a cute little rat named Sassy and an energetic guinea pig named Bugsy have in common? Surprisingly, both are resident pets loved and cared for by the young

boys in Mrs. Cass and Miss Burns' classrooms.

"It's important for students to be exposed to animals," Mrs. Cass said. "They need to understand, appreciate and learn to care for animals because they play a big role in our culture and society."

Students in both classes share responsibility for the pets, and are supervised in ensuring their pets have adequate food and water, and clean cages. The animals have been a positive addition to the students' curricula and classroom environments. Their presence is therapeutic.

"Teaching through exposure to animals helps the students learn responsibility while being fully engaged and able to see the immediate impact on the animal's behavior," Miss Burns said. "Sassy and Bugsy also help us provide positive reinforcement to students who have completed their work and demonstrate good behavior, because their reward is spending time with the animals."

Damar Academy girls making music and money

The girls at Damar Academy have been nurturing their creativity with the help of a unique fine arts education program.

Since January, the students in Miss Hudson, Mr. Combs, and Mr. Powroznik's classrooms have been participating in the Very Special Arts of Indiana (VSAI) program, part of an international movement that makes dance, music, drama, creative writing, and visual arts accessible for people of all ages with special needs.

With support from their teachers, the girls have been writing songs, raps, spoken-word reflections and other original works that will be recorded, compiled on a CD and provided to them courtesy of VSAI. The CD cover also will feature student artwork.

"This program requires a lot of self discipline," said Mr. Combs. "The girls have really worked hard on their respective projects, and shown significant improvement in their public speaking and creative writing skills."

In a separate project, girls in Mr. Combs' class are earning extra spending money by making and selling crocheted hats, scarves, and blankets — some specially designed by request from prospective buyers.

One student who advertised her products to teachers and other Damar employees has sold dozens of her skillfully handcrafted creations.

ISTAR assessments will be completed for all students by April 30. These assessments monitor students' individual gains in academics and functional-living skills.

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