

Charter Vision

MINNESOTA

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2005 Sees A Dramatic Enrollment Increase in Charter Schools

by Michael, 12th grade
RiverBend Academy

Ever since the movement started in 1992, the number of charter schools and the number of students attending them has been rising. Charter schools all over the country are becoming competition for regular public schools. Well, 2005 has seen the biggest increase in the 13 years since the start. In Minnesota, 17,441 students are currently enrolled in charter schools, with a 22 percent increase from last year. To give you an idea, St. Paul alone has 639 new students attending charter schools alone. With new schools opening in fall 2005 and even more approved and awaiting opening, charter schools are meet-

ing the demand and welcome students with open doors.

Charter School Facts:

- Total charter enrollment statewide is 17,441.
- 3,200 new enrolled students in 04-05 school year.
- 55 percent of charter student are of color.
- The first charter school in the nation was City Academy, in St. Paul MN.



more KDWB field trip photos on page 6

A Spectacular Trip!

by Ariel, 3rd grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

On Thursday February 17th 2005 the 3rd and 4th grade class went on a field trip to the KDWB radio station. We made a commercial for our school to get other kids to come to our school. We also went on a tour of KDWB. The radio station wasn't what I expected at all. It looked more like a business place. I would never know that it would be a radio station. After that we went to the Old Country Buffet. I ate salad, mac &



My afternoon with CeCeile

by Dan Frey, teacher
Jennings Experiential High School

I have been working at Jennings Experiential High School for 8 months, as a special education paraprofessional. In that time I have learned about the implications of experiential education and how it relates to our community. We as charter schools want to provide children and parents with choices. We tailor our visions to what we feel is important for children to value. In Jennings' case, this vision has to do with community-based learning. Almost every afternoon we are out in the community, taking a tour, or volunteering.

Personally, this has been a difficult shift for me, having gone to public High School in the Northfield school district. There are times when something inside me wants these kids to have their acquisition of knowledge tested in very concrete ways (worksheets, standardized tests, etc.). But there are other times when, despite my frustration and confusion with 'experiential learning,' I see what it can be. I see the potential. This is one of those times. An early spring trip to the Lower Town St. Paul studio of an impressionistic painter named CeCeile Hartleib.

I had been in contact with CeCeile as a part of our careers curriculum. This particular week in early May, we were focusing on careers in the arts and humanities. I had called her out of the blue, and she agreed to show some kids around her cramped studio.

One of the other challenges for inner-city charter schools is transportation. For some time now, we have been taking the city bus to most of our field trips. We hopped on the east-bound sixteen bus and took it into downtown St. Paul, near where the farmers market is usually held. And in that moment, we were worlds away from the midway, where our school is located. The clean lines of old brick buildings towered to the sky. Construction workers kicked up dust with their jack hammers and skid loaders, making slow progress on newly developed condominiums. The location of the farmers market, a parking lot, was full of cars. I took a moment to get my bearings and began to walk.

This moment can be nerve-racking, being uncertain of where you are, and where you are going.

CeCeile... continued pg 5

My Favorite Childhood Toy

by Alan
Skills for Tomorrow High School

When I was a little boy, I had a toy from the Sonic the Hedgehog video game series. There was Sonic and there was Tails. My big brother Luke, had Sonic and I had Tails. Tails was a fox with two tails and that is where he gets his name.

My mom, Luke and I were going to the mall. We looked around for a little while and saw a video game store. Luke and I started to run toward the store. When we got in the shop Luke saw Sonic and I saw Tails. We begged our mom for them, but she didn't get them.

A few weeks later it was Christmas. We were so excited! Luke and I tore through the wrapping paper, we got a lot of games and a Sega Genesis. Then she took a few presents from the closet. I always hated when she did that.

We opened them to find Sonic and Tails! We loved them so much we brought them everywhere.

One time Tails' tail got ripped and my mom had to sew it. I remember running up to her screaming bloody murder, "IT'S RIPPED, IT'S RIPPED!" She told me to shut up and she fixed it, but she didn't have any sewing stuff so she used a glue gun instead.

Luke and I started to forget how much we loved our favorite toys. Slowly they went further and further under the bed. We would forget we had them totally. It wasn't until we moved from Hastings to St. Paul that we found them again. I stuffed Tails in a big box and prayed he would arrive at our new house.

Time passed and I grew up. I got new things and put them on the shelf and once again Tails slowly

disappeared into the closet. But somehow he always came back to me. It is funny because I totally forgot about him until today. Tails was there for me whenever I needed him, but I kept forgetting about him.

He's just a toy but somehow I'm connected to him and I still love my Tails.

You see it was hard to hold on to anything where I lived. When I go home today I will go into my room and find him. And when I do, I will give him a big hug, apologize and tell him I will never put him in the closet or underneath the bed. I will put him on the dresser and that is where he will stay. Until I get new ones.....

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SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

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Ascension Academy Student Visits NASA

by Eric, 10th grade
Ascension Academy

When I began my sophomore year at Ascension Academy, one of my goals was to be an astronaut. I shared this goal, with Ascension Academy Director, Dorwatha Woods. She and I had several conversations and she observed my work ethic and academic skills during the fall term. Ms. Woods wants to help students achieve academic success and realize their goals. She brought my dream to benefactors whom she knew shared her passion for helping young people. That is how I got to see the astronaut training facilities at NASA.

Ms. Woods and I left Minneapolis on Wednesday, February 23, 2005 for Houston, Texas. My interest in the recent Mars missions and what I thought was the life of an astronaut had me excited to tour NASA. At the Houston facility, Ms. Woods and I were given the “Level 9” tour. This tour takes

several hours and visits areas of NASA that are usually off limits to civilians. For instance, we saw the current mission control center and the original control center used during the 1970’s. We also visited a life-size replica of the International Space Station. But, the highlight of the tour was actually watching astronauts during some of their training experiences in the pool.

The astronaut training pool is 40 feet deep. I witnessed some very arduous training exercises taking place there. All the training is difficult and sustained. Astronauts may train for many years and never get a space mission at all. Throughout the tour, I observed the astronaut’s life as anything but glamorous. They work hard, they must stay in excellent physical and mental shape in order to remain in the astronaut program, and their future in space is uncertain. Now, I am not so sure I want to be an astronaut.

If you are thinking about becoming an astronaut, here is some advice I learned at NASA. The space missions these days are of an intense scientific nature. The more varied your background is, especially in the sciences, the better your chances are of actually flying a mission (once you pass all the training). For example, a medical doctor who also has extensive experience in a particular biological or chemical specialty field has a higher “profile” at NASA than someone who has only one of those experiential backgrounds. Today’s missions are more about the kind of science that is done once an astronaut reaches the destination, than it is about getting to a place in space. Astronauts work hard! I have a few other goals I would like to check out before I graduate from high school.

Legislative Rally

by Judy Jo
Liberty High Charter School

At 5:00 p.m. on Monday, February 28th, 2005, a statewide rally was underway at the State Capitol Building in Saint Paul.

Hundreds of students, teachers, parents, and community members, gathered at the Capitol to raise public school funding. Students spoke out, hoping to get their voices heard and to let others know that public schools are at risk. With school closings, class-size increases, teacher layoffs, and the cutting of student programs, students have been forgotten. It is as if no one cares what happens to the students.

There was a senior at Hopkins High, a couple of teachers, a parent, and even a preacher who spoke at the hour-long rally.

Liberty High’s very own Mrs. Wedel took four students to the rally so they could get a better understanding of the issue and so they could get involved.

The cutting of public school funds affects us all. Without the schools and the opportunities they offer, students drop out and they turn to the streets and violence. The economy also is affected, because there are no younger generations to fill positions when older people retire.

Rally-goers were invited to write to the legislative people and tell them what they thought of the fund cutting. If you would like to write too, the website link is: http://www.educationminnesota.org/index.cfm?PAGE_ID=9760.



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MAAP STARS

by Judy Jo
Liberty High Charter School

MAAP STARS is a youth program where students from alternative and charter schools get together and compete for plaques and other awards. There is a conference in the spring, which expands over two days. Students show their talents to gain self-esteem, confidence, friends, and awards.

At the conference, students compete in teams and individually. They also have the chance to compete in artistic performances, displays, and demonstrations.

MAAP was organized by a small group of educators in alternative education in the 1980s. MAAP stands for Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs.

STARS is Success, Teamwork, Achievement, Recognition, and Self-esteem.

The STARS program was created to give students the chance to gain self-esteem, confidence, and responsibility.

There are events that prepare students for jobs and careers, such as Career Portfolio, Public Speaking Employment Interview, Job Manual, and Entrepreneurship. Other team events include Parenting, Decision Making, Team Advertising, and Team Audio, Video, or Live Promotion.

Schools come from all over Minnesota and surrounding states as well. Liberty High Charter School will be sending 15 students to compete in this year’s spring conference April 14-15, which is being held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Minneapolis.



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Keeping The Dream Alive

by editorial board writer
Harbor City International School

When Joe Rogers, former Lieutenant Governor of Colorado and presenter of the Dream Alive Program, walked onto the stage at Harbor City International School, there was a large, enthusiastic round of applause. “What would he have to say?” were the thoughts running through all two hundred students at HCIS. We would soon find out.

Joe Rogers, a practicing attorney in Colorado, was in Duluth to present his Dream Alive Program on the UMD campus, sponsored by UMD’s Office of Economic Opportunity. Dream Alive is a program to help increase the understanding of the enormous contributions that Dr. Martin Luther King made to this country. Rogers explained to the Harbor City student body that racism is a complex issue and yet comes down to a very basic, individual level. For most, his speech was

inspirational and challenged a deep level of thinking. In response to the speech, director of Harbor City, Chris Hazelton commented that there were many complex ideas swirling around in his head and that Mr. Rogers truly made him think.

Joe Rogers brought up many important things, but the most thought provoking question was, “How will you treat my kids?” His quote from the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. followed this question. “Will you judge them by the color of their skin or the content of their character?” This was truly powerful.

Near the end of his speech, Mr. Rogers asked the audience for any comments or questions. There were many who participated. We all thank Joe Rogers for taking the time to come to our school and talking with all of us on such an important issue.

SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Winter Symposium Celebration

by Anne Wise, teacher
Harbor City International School

Despite frigid temperatures on Monday, January 17, Harbor City International School students participated in Duluth’s Martin Luther King Day celebration by attending the 7:00 A.M. community breakfast at the Copper Top church, marching from Washington Center to the DECC, and participating in the rally at the DECC Auditorium.

Participation in the Martin Luther King Day events was part of a Winter Symposium class in which students studied the life of Martin Luther King, the Civil Rights movement, civil disobedience, and racism of the past and present.



Students in the class were privileged to have Claudi Washington, local president of the NAACP, and Will Cameron, desegregation officer for Duluth Public Schools, speak to their class.

The class will be offered again next January with even more opportunities to participate in Duluth’s Martin Luther King Day celebration.

A Poem

by Sarah 10th grade
Echo Charter School

The sky streams red
As I head for bed
I’m really, really tired
Be late for work and get fired.
Already took a shower
I smell like a flower
The radio’s playin my favorite song

I hum as I dance along
* My kitty says its time for sleep
So I set my alarm clock to ‘beep’

I say good night
And turn out the light
A fan goes whirr-
Pretty soon I’ll say brrr
I’m bundled up all nice and warm

One of my blankets is torn
I’ll say good-bye; this poem is done

Hopefully my next one will be a better one!

New Century Charter School: Two Big Events

by Megan 12th grade
New Century Charter School

NCCS is a new and rising opportunity for students in Hutchinson, Minnesota. NCCS is a project based charter school that offers grades 7th -12th. This school year is the third year that New Century Charter School has been open and running. This year, however, is a particularly special year. The returning 11th graders from last year will be the first class of graduating students from New Century. This year NCCS will also be presenting their second live theater production.

Nick Kempfert and Adam Laine have given their energy and time to help make this year’s presentation possible. They are currently full time students at the University of Minnesota. This fact required them to drive three hours round trip to be able to work with the cast and crew twice a week. Terry Kempfert, the producer, and Sheila Hendricks, the production manager, put in extra hours to work with the cast and crew as much as possible. Their efforts were a tremendous help in pulling together the production. Aaron, an NCCS 11th grader, and an understudy, kept all the extra little pieces together as a total of eight weeks passed by. Opening night was February 24th and it was a night to remember. All the lights, which were coordinated by Eric, were on cue for every command. The stage, located in the school’s cafeteria due to the lack of space, looked dramatic and unrevealing; as the audience waited to be thrilled. The cast came out and nailed all their lines on time. The audience had a magnificent hour and forty minutes of comical laughs and many rounds of good ho-hums.

I asked some of the cast what kind of impression the play left on them:

Thomas, “I gained more respect for Adam and Nick. I also learned a couple of things from Adam about stage presence.”

Gretchen, “I didn’t really learn anything, I had fun. I was scared that I wouldn’t be able to perform, but then I was able to.” She realized that she did not have stage fright.

Vanessa, “I learned for once that I could be extremely serious.”

Tavia, “I learned how to be someone else, besides myself.”

An underlying buzz of excitement travels around the school this year. The 12th graders have a renewed dedication in their school work and activities. This is because this year is the very first year ever, that NCCS has a graduating class. Much of the ceremony has already been planned out. What is special about the planning is that the students are incredibly involved. All the 12th graders were able to raise their own voices and include their opinions. Barb Haugen is the main coordinator of the graduation; however, she has taken every single 12th grader’s opinion into consideration in every part of the planning. There is a committee of eager students who are planning the majority of the graduation. Here is a question for you... What’s black and blue and free from traditional schools? This year’s graduation class has chosen black gowns with royal blue trimming. They have chosen their motto to be: There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle.

CCLA visits KDWB

continued from page 1



Harbor City International School Meets Mr Jurek



by editorial board writer
Harbor City International School

Harbor City International School’s 10th grade CORE classes had the privilege of hearing the story of Korean War Veteran and P.O.W. of 33 months, Tony Jurek, Tuesday, February 15th. In 2nd semester CORE, 10th grade students have been studying warfare in the 20th Century. After learning about WWI, WWII, and the Cold War, the Korean War became the hot topic of the week and an interest point for students. CORE teacher, Anne Wise, took this opportunity to invite Mr. Jurek to our school to share his story. Mr. Jurek dropped out of high school at age 17 and joined the Army. He was trained as a tank operator and was in a combat engineer battalion. While stationed in Washington state in

1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. His General volunteered the 2nd division to be shipped over to the 23 mile perimeter area that the South Koreans still occupied. By Thanksgiving the UN forces had brought the border back to the 38th parallel, and the Chinese were getting involved on the North Korean side. On December 1st, after a raid where most of the 2nd division was lost, they surrendered to the Chinese. For 23 days they were marched all over North Korea, with their food rations half a can of cracked corn two times a day. On Christmas Eve they were brought to a prison camp on the Chinese border where most of the men eventually died from frostbite and gangrene. In the spring they were moved to a second camp run by the Chinese, who treated them better than the North Koreans for

propaganda purposes. By 25th of July, the day of the Cease Fire treaty, they were brought back to South Korea after a series of negotiations, and traded back to the UN troops by August 27th. When asked if he and other soldiers saw themselves as fighting the large threat of communism or simply assisting the South Koreans he replied that once you were out there you fought to just stay alive. We were very fortunate to have hosted Mr. Jurek and enjoyed the learning opportunity of listening to his experiences told in a genuine and humble manner. His story helped open our eyes and glimpse the reality of those who have actually fought. We were privileged to receive a snapshot of what isn’t always talked about.



New Century Charter School Students

Assembly

by Alayjanae, 3rd grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

There is something called the assembly in the lunch room. Every Friday morning the teachers give their kids awards. The kids get suckers, too. The suckers are colorful. The kids get awards for doing good work, and when kids help other kids with their homework. At the assembly we have people come in, like authors.

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CREATIVE WRITING

CLAY

by Sarah, 10th grade
ECHO Charter School

I am a lump of clay
Full of possibilities
I am molded and shaped
By life's hands

I can be something useful
Like a pot, or a dish
I can be something fanciful
Like an abstract sculpture

Maybe I shall be a reminder
Of life's ever-changing
seasons
Maybe I shall be historical
To stand for all of time

I will copy that around me
Faking the best, and worst, of
all
I will strive to be unique
To keep my originality intact

May I ever be malleable
Always ready to be refined
May I never be hardened
By disappointment's kiln

For I AM a lump of clay
Overflowing with possibi-
ties

My Weird Dog

by Nicole, 4th grade
Concordia Creative Learning
Academy

My dog is insane. He is odd
because, lately, he has been
bugging my mom and dad. He has
been huffing and puffing in their
faces when they are sleeping.

My dog's name is Teddy. My
parents call him Teddy Bear
because, in all of the pictures of
him, he looks like a bear. His breed
is a Husky Chou mix. Teddy is
black with light tan feet and tip of
his tail. He has a face that almost
looks like a fox. He always barks
at the neighbor's dogs.

When Teddy Bear is tired, he gets
on the couch, lays back and falls
asleep.

Teddy is a fantastic dog!

A Tiny Sister

by Isabella 4th grade
Concordia Creative Learning
Academy

I know what it feels like to be a
tiny sister. Sometimes you get
picked on by your big sisters or
teased by your big brothers.
Sometimes they get mad at each
other or they do fun things like
playing games like Pictionary, or
Trivial Pursuit or going
swimming.

We have a lot of family get-
togethers and have B.B.Q's. My
dad does most of the cooking, so
he cooks ribs, chicken, corn on the
cob and hotdogs in our backyard.
My big brothers and big sisters
sometimes have to do things that
they don't want to do like take
me everywhere they have to go,
but sometimes they like to take me
places. This is why I wrote this
because they mean the whole
world to me.



Frankenstein, by Mary Shelly A Book Review

by Brittany, 4th grade
Concordia Creative Learning Center

Reading the introduction, I was struck by Maurice Hindle's perception of how society has been for the most recent centuries. Humans try to play God, and because of this, our creations begin to backfire. In this book, Mary Shelley expresses how the human mind often believes itself to be invincible; though everyday we are proven not to be. Victor Frankenstein calls his creation "The Being", today we call him Frankenstein. Victor Frankenstein even admits in the book that he himself is in comparison to Satan. He blames God for, as he describes it, "The hateful day when I received life." He also blames God for turning against him. He compares God's creation, and how man is made within God's image. He is bitter because "The Being" didn't turn out the way he had hoped. When "The Being" asks his creator to make him a female, who looks like him, otherwise he would be alone, due to his looks, but his creator refuses because he sees "The Being" as an ugly creature. He criticizes "The Being's" looks, so he reminds Victor that he was the one that created him. I highly recommend this book, due to the true perception of how we as humans find it hard to take responsibility for our actions.

Nightmare

by Sarah, 10th grade
ECHO Charter School

You open your eyes, and you're standing in the middle of a fog. The ground is spongy, but not soft. When you move, the scent of crushed herb drifts up. It's very aromatic, but leaves a slightly bitter tasted in your mouth. The wind smells of salt, but another aroma assails your nose, smoke. It grows stronger as you stand there. Why aren't you moving? Are these small details so captivating that they hold you frozen? You notice some low, flickering lights, creeping closer. As its eerie beauty surrounds you, realization dawns, its fire! Your trance broken, you turn to run, but instead notice a door in the middle of nowhere. The fire is completely around you, but leaves a path to the door. How weird is this? You take the hint and fling yourself through, only to find...

You are now in a busy city airport. The mysterious door swings shut behind you, closing with a pop. You're in the way, and are jostled by travelers in a hurry to get to various unbeknownst destinations. Stunned, you look back to the door, but it's not there! In a daze, you let yourself be swept along by the crowd heading towards an exit. A group of tourists surrounds you and enters a bus. Not knowing where else to go, you are hustled on as we!! Sitting in a seat a little bit away from the others, you close your eyes. You always did have problems falling asleep in moving vehicles. However, when you get up, your vehicle has changed.

You're in what looks to be an authentic Viking longboat. How do they make it seem so real? You look around for the tourists, but there are none to be found. Huge, smelly, muscled men are on either side of you; they seem to be everywhere. Glistening from labor or the burning sun, they heave their muscles to the steady beat of a swarthy looking man by a huge drum. A tall, almost painfully thin-looking woman clothed in course fabric awash with greasy stains notices you, and shrieks something totally incomprehensible. While having no effect on you, it does galvanize several black swathed individuals to pick you up, and toss you into the sea.

Down you sink, but you aren't

drowning! Don't stop to wonder why, enjoy the view, or at least start swimming! You don't want to go all the way to the bottom, you don't know what's down there! You struggle to move, but are strangely paralyzed as a murky shape slowly circles, getting closer. Now you really panic, fearful of being eaten alive. The shape grows more distinct, and your fears are not unfounded! As you sink into darkness, the ocean grows colder, the shark gets closer, and all you can think about is hoping its over fast. Your vision narrows and fixates on long, sharp teeth, and you black out.

You sit up in your bed, sweating. That was a strange dream. You really should ask someone about it, in the morning, of course. As you roll over, and drift off once more, you don't notice that you brought something back with you from that strange dreamland. A pair of glowing red eyes peer out of your closet, and strange symbols write themselves in the air as a disembodied voice chants. The voice grows stronger, the symbols more complex, until suddenly, they stop, and fade away. The only things left are the eyes, slowly fading as well. What has just happened? You stare out of unmoving eyes as a well-dressed family looks at you. They are obviously tourists, carrying large cameras, larger totes, and looking extremely out of place compared to the locals. A little boy laughs, and you're being picked up. Strong fingers encircle your stomach as you rush through the air and are set in the boy's grasp. He turns you over, examining you like a bug under a magnifying glass. He screams with anger as another boy tries to take you away. The first boy runs to the man, and jabs something, glancing suspiciously at the second child. The man laughs, and turns to the shopkeeper, taking you from the boy to set you on the counter. Coins exchange hands, and as you are handed over to the tussling boys, you wonder how your life was reduced to a plaything of children. You apprehensively guess your future either evolving being torn to shreds, or even worse, dying on a dusty shelf, long forgotten by the world you used to know.

Hiding in the Open, by Sabina Zimering A Book Review

by Brittany
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

Since the third grade, I've been very intent with learning anything and everything relating to the Holocaust. Reading this book makes me value all that I have, and proves that if just one person is racist against another, demoralization occurs. Sabina Zimering tells a captivating story of how she and her sister Helka, passed as Catholic Poles, to escape Hitler's clutches during the Holocaust. The family was forced to split up, her mom was eventually taken to Treblinka, a concentration camp, and her father and brother ventured together. Sabina and Helka have to be very cautious of the Gestapo. They are in constant wonder of their family's whereabouts, or if they, like the other Jews, have perished. Sabina talks briefly about how she wishes things were how they used to be, the foods her mother cooked, and the friends she used to have. This book kept me intrigued all the way through. I highly recommend it to those who carry an interest in the Jews and the Holocaust.

Emily the Great Explorer

by Emily 3rd grade
Odyssey Charter School

Today I am going to explore the new land. My name is Emily and Thomas Jefferson sent me to make maps of the Louisiana Purchase. I am going to bring one pair of cloths, my binoculars and a hat. When I get to the boat I saw five people coming to join me on my trip. We pack the boat with our bags and start to row. I saw something moving in the water and started to shiver. Then "POP" it flew out of the water. It was a fish.

We got farther and farther into the river. It started to get cold. "Hand me the wool blanket," I said. We kept following the light. Suddenly it got dark and creepy. We decided to make camp for the night. I went in my tent and fell asleep. Then we heard something in the forest near by. It started coming closer so I zipped up my tent real quick. It was sniffing my tent. It was a wolf. I went under my covers and fell asleep. I woke up in the morning. The wolf was gone.

We took down camp and packed everything in the boat. We started rowing again. The water started moving faster. IT WAS A WATER FALL! I warned the others but it was too late. We all screamed. We landed on a stone and our boat broke into pieces. We grabbed as many supplies as we could and then swam to the bank. My bag got caught on a log that was stuck in the water. We all tugged and pulled as hard as we could but could not get the log off. I had to get the important stuff out. We were safe for now so we walked along the river.

On the way some weird Indians attacked us. They tied us to a tree by the fire pit. An Indian girl was out doing her chores. We yelled, "help!" When no one was looking she set us free. We grabbed our supplies and ran as fast as we could. It was dark, we could not see where we were going. We ran into a cave and did not know it until we ran into the wall. We set up camp for the night. We started a fire, rolled out sleeping bags and roasted marshmallows. I made smores then got so full that I was tired. I slowly walked to my tent

because I didnt want to hurt my stomach.

We woke up in the morning to a strange noise. It said, "GRRRRR". We peeked out of our tents. A giant animal was standing over us. It had big brown fur and we guessed that it lived in this cave. We heard a gun fire and the animal ran off. The air smelled of gun powder. We decided to call this animal a Grizzly Bear because it had big bushy hair like the grizzly tree.

We were traveling again and came to a sandy desert. We traveled farther into the desert and saw something pop up out of the ground. It was a sort of dog so we named it a prairie dog because we were close to the prairie. We even kept it to prove that we had found one.

We started walking back to where our adventure started. We knew we were almost there because we saw the waterfall that broke our boat. We set camp one more time and traveled in the morning. We were almost home at last. I thought of all the things that we saw and was just glad to be home.

My Fat Cat

by Destiny, 3rd grade
Concordia Creative Learning
Academy

My fat cat is small and he likes catnip. It is his favorite thing to play with. He rolls around. He is black, gray and white. He loves it. Do you know what else he likes to play with? Ponytails! They are another one of his favorite things to play with. My cat's name is Smokey. My mom and dad love pets and so do I.

My Heart

by Tera, 11th grade
Sobriety High, Maplewood, MN

I tear my heart open.
I sew myself shut.
My weakness is that I care too much,
and my scars remind me that the past is real.
I tear my heart open just to feel.

LeBron James

by Chase, 3rd grade
Lafayette Charter School

Lebron James is the number one player in the game of basketball. Two-three weeks ago, the Cavaliers beat the LA Lakers. I am writing about him because he has been through hard times in his life and I admire him. I think he is a caring person and he's an awesome player.

SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

CeCeile... continued (pg1)



A moment like this can only be made worse by twenty teen-agers on your heels. They can see the uncertainty in your every step. By the time I knew where I was, I had heard ‘we’re lost, this sucks,’ at least ten times. But I found the markers that CeCeile had told me to look for. The word ‘JAX’ painted in large white letters along the windowless side of a brick building. ‘We’re close,’ I thought to myself. When I saw a marquee that read ‘books for Africa,’ I knew I had found the right building.

This is where that final leap of faith takes place. I crossed my fingers that the kids would behave and that CeCeile wasn’t a witch. With one last warning for the kids, ‘no more whining,’ we started up the staircase. The stairs wrapped around an elevator shaft, to the fourth floor. I was practically running, hoping to get there first. I reached the fourth floor, slightly winded, and began making my way through the hallway, to Suite 404.

When I walked inside, I no longer felt like I was in lower town St. Paul. I forgot about the brick and the construction workers. Those thoughts were replaced by walls full of portraits and landscapes, and a smiling silver-haired woman, with black-framed glasses.

“Hello, my name is Dan Frey.”

“Hi, CeCeile Hartleib.”

“There’s a rabid group of teenagers coming up the stairs, I hope you’re ready.”

“I think everything will be fine.”

As she assured me, I heard the rumble of approaching students. I looked around the corner and saw my smiling coworker Josh, with all of the kids in toe. This is where things got a little blurry. I tried to do my job as best I could, fighting the urge to be distracted by all of the amazing paintings littering the wall. It was easy to see that CeCeile was an old hand at entertaining, she had set out snacks, and even an easel. The kids went straight for the popcorn and crackers, mingling for a time, gasping at the nude portraits displayed prominently on the wall. She was an amazing host, buzzing around the room, providing students with the stories behind her many paintings. I recognized some of the landscapes as Minnehaha falls, and a statue from Como Conservatory. Some of the kids even thought that one of her portraits resembled Burt Reynolds. I thought it looked like Rafael Palmero. She even showed us how she starts her portraits.

She squared herself in front of the easel, and with a steady hand, began to sketch the oblong shape of a head. In her left hand she held the picture of a husky middle-eastern man with thick black hair, brushed back from his face. She showed us how to divide up the head, with the eyes in the middle. She then let all of the students put their own personal touch on the portrait.

As you can imagine, the end result did not resemble the subject’s picture in the least. Some kids added peircings, six to be exact. Other students added tattoos and a landscape of fire. When finished, the portrait resembled some sort of demon with a trident and a butterfly tattoo on his

forehead. CeCeile smiled and laughed when she saw these things. We agreed that it was a case of artistic interpretation.

CeCeile sat down all of the kids and told them what it was really like to be an artist: how you may not be able to pay the rent all of the time, how tireless work is often rewarded with very little. But she also talked to us about passion. She told us how painting was what she loved to do, and how she wouldn’t trade that freedom for the world. By this time the kids were ready to go, so we said our goodbyes. I thanked her profusely, knowing I wouldn’t soon forget this day. She smiled and thanked me right back, showing a few of the students where the bathroom was, a small closet with no sink. She accompanied us down the stairs so as to spray the portrait we had made, so that the charcoal didn’t smudge on our bus ride home. We said our final goodbyes and parted ways.

Sitting at the bus stop with my coworker, I felt good. We had put our students in a position to broaden their perspective on St. Paul, and the world. We showed them a layer of human existence they never would have seen, had CeCeile not been so gracious.

This is an example of experiential education that worked, but there are many more mistakes to be made. This type of education relies heavily on community acceptance, and sometimes this is in short supply. It will take the work and good will of many to make something like this function, but it can be done, because it must. The future of education is not rows of desks, it is not bells ringing on the hour, every hour. Not every student responds to classical teaching styles. This is where charter schools come into play, giving students and parents a say in what education really means.

CCLA School is the Best

by Stephanie, 3rd grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

Concordia Creative Learning Academy is the best because it has great classrooms. This school begins at preschool and goes through 6th grade. All of the classrooms have computers. We have the coolest gym teacher. He helps us stretch and learn new games. We also have the best ELL teacher. She helps us learn more because she helps us read, write and think. CCLA has awesome teachers. Every Friday we go to the gym. Sometimes we might have an assembly. We give awards for kids and staff who are pleasant. Third and Fourth graders have to do news reports. News reports are articles you cut out of the newspaper and present them to the class.

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The Best Amber Alert Ever

by Alexis, 4th grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

Did you know what happened to the teenager that was taken? I do. She was taken off of the school bus by her ex boyfriend. He started beating her and grabbed her by her neck and put her in his friend’s car. They drove off. Thanks to Amber Alert for trying to do everything it can to find the girl. I think parents should not leave their kids at the bus stop alone without anyone there.

My Furry Hamster

by Chloe, 3rd grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

I have a hamster, and his name is Duke, he also has a sister named Miss Mouse. Duke looks like a hairy yarn ball. He is actually fuzzy and a little chunky. If you saw him ,you would think that there is only tan hamster bedding in the cage, but it is my furry hamster Duke is very lazy. He just sleeps and lays around.

Duke eats a lot of hamster food. My mom says to only put two scoops of hamster food in his food dish.



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Concordia Creative Learning Academy

by Brianne, 4th grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

On Fridays we have Friday meetings. We go to the cafeteria and people get awards because they have positive attitudes. The kids also get suckers from our principal. We also we have fun Friday. That is when you play and have fun on Friday afternoon. You have to have all of your work done. It is really spectacular because you can do anything that you want. Well, not anything, just play games and color and draw and all of the people that don’t have it, should.

I Like My Teachers

Riley 4th grade
Lafayette Charter School

Hi! My name is Riley, and this is why I like my teachers. I like my teachers because they let us have tons of fun! My Phy. Ed. Teacher Mrs. Mathiowetz, she lets us play games like the Blob, Red Rover, Freeze tag and all kinds of fun games! In Music, Mrs. Kunz is teaching us to play recorders, it’s pretty cool! In Social/Science we get to do fun experiments, like this

one time when it had to do with magnets. We put a magnet under a piece of paper and put sand on it and the magnet appeared! Mrs. Jacobs, who is my regular teacher let’s us have free time sometimes! Oh, and our Ag Fair was on March 17th. I’m did pigs or cows, I can’t remember. Well, that’s why I like my teachers!

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CREATIVE WRITING

Family Night

by Gabriella, 4th grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

At our school we have a night for family and friends. It is called Family night.

At Family night we do things like scavenger hunts, listen to music and play games. When we have these nights, it is a great time to talk to staff members and see how your child is doing in school. In my opinion, Family night is a spectacular night. We always have a great time.



Talent Show

Erin Grade 3
Lafayette Charter School

Our talent is amazing and outstanding. That’s why we have a talent show, we can show off and be funny, we can do almost anything! If you don’t have a talent show in your school, you should. You can also see what people are into and what they like and how good they are! It isn’t a place to say ok, this is boring, instead ,go and sign up and be a part of the team! Join in and team up! The people in the talent show, I don’t know how good they are. But don’t say boo you stink get out of here. Just cheer them on. Be part of the talent show, be strong!

My Pet Dog Cattie

Jenny 4th grade
Lafayette Charter School

My dog is a chubby dog. She likes to play tugger war, sleep, eat, watch other animals go on walks. She is very playful. Her name is Cattie. She also loves to chase my cats and also bark. And loves to whine to go outside. She likes to cuddle, she is also a pretty black dog.

Cinder-Riley

An Irish version of Cinderella

by Vijay
Odyssey Charter School

Cinder-Riley is still living with her stepmother and stepsisters, but in this version she’s a princess. She has 396 matters to sign before sundown. She also must marry the King of West Muffinland. She loves the Prince of Potatoes, Jack O’Clock, who is a simple scullery knave. Will she marry her true love or the King of West Muffinland?

This play was performed on St. Patrick’s Day, March 17, 2005, at 6:00 p.m. All the students who performed are in second through fifth grade! I was one of the dancers at the pantry frolic. Other dancers were Shreyas, Halley, Emmanuel, Mattifa, Mike, Shelby, Haley, and Sheila.

Main characters were Kaylin as Cinder-Riley, Jake as Jack O’Clock, Kayla as Stepmother, Ellie as Aggie, Sarah as Maggie, Myki as Fairy Godmother, Jake as Leprechaun, and Josh as the Magic Table. The play was directed by JaLene Rosengren.

Ag Fair

by Ben, 3rd grade
Lafayette Charter School

On March 17th, LCS had an Ag Fair. An Ag Fair is a fair for agriculture. Everybody had to do something that is part of agriculture. I butchered a chicken. Well, that’s all , bye.

My Cat

Josh 3rd grade
Lafayette Charter School

My cat is fat.
He like’s to play with string.
He eats a lot
and sleeps all day long.

New Things

Justice 3rd grade
Lafayette Charter School

My teacher is great, she taught us how to write in cursive. It’s awesome to know about things I never knew before, like English, the moon, and hard words to spell. This school is awesome.

Sleep

Kali 3rd grade
Lafayette Charter School

The lion sleeps in the jungle,
The caterpillar on the tree,
A deer sleeps in the forest,
And a fish sleeps in the sea
They all sleep it is true
But not in a bed like me and you.



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Bluffview Montessori Writers



Jodi, Paige, and Maureen

Look In My Eyes

by Paige, 8th grade
Bluffview Montessori School

Look in my eyes
Tell me what you see
Do you see hatred, foolish,
heartbroken
Look at my face
What do you see
Do you see innocence, cheating
Well what you think does not
bother me does not hurt me
I have thick skin not thin
I may cry I may do something
dumb

Buy I follow and do what my
heart tells me to
I don’t hold back
I don’t run and hide
I stand up for myself
With justice, integrity, and pride
I am real and not fake
I keep my word
I don’t give up I try, try, and try
I have friends and family to back
me up
I keep my life!!

King Snow and the Dry Wind

By Jodi, 7th Grade
Bluffview Montessori

A long time ago in the palace of King Snow, there lived a servant girl who worked against the king. She called the king’s enemies in the North to ask if they could possibly send a cold, dry, wind their way. The North’s most trustworthy messenger, named Howy, replied and said that they would be glad to. They were upset with the king because he chose not to fund their annual sky surfing competition.

When the wind started to blow, the servant girl ran and hid in a cozy, underground hide-away that she had made for relaxation. Meanwhile at the palace, King Snow heard the faint (but intriguing) sound of wind whistling through the village. He went out on his patio, not knowing the consequence. At once the king felt his scalp starting to itch, and his nose dripping rapidly. He went to the palace nurse to see what the matter was. The nurse said that the drippy nose would go away over time but the itchy scalp was due to dryness in the air and until this storm passes it would remain that way. She called it dandruff.

The king was quite distressed about this problem and went to consult his servant girl. But it was too late; she had already contacted the North to tell them to keep on with the wind. When he approached her, she snickered behind her hand and said, “Dandruff is a good thing, you should build a factory and have your head itched daily.” “What should we do with the dandruff after it is scratched out?” questioned the king. “Simply discard it beneath the land of clouds.” The king favored this idea and set to work immediately. Only because the king wished it was so, it was so. No one ever even thought about what life might be like living *under* the clouds.

Why Do I Write?

by Maureen, 8th grade
Bluffview Montessori

Locked up.
Chained, rather,
By the authority
Of myself.
I keep only two lights left on
Under this blanket of darkness.

The first one is obvious;
The flame of the candle
Only existing for me
What I’ve put on the paper.

The other one
Normally takes a while
For visitors to see
Although it’s a light as well.
An invisible light.
And that light
Is called writing.

The moment I arrive
To that dark, cold room
I forget everything else
The entire world slips away
And the only sounds
Are the scratching of the pen on paper,
My deep breathing,
And the beating heart of a life
That lies within the pages.

Sometimes, if you listen hard enough,
You might hear it.
When you first open a book,

It’s very distant and faint.
But by the time you’re done,
That heart is a drum,
Beating along with your own.
It can beat inside you for days
And years
And a lifetime.
All you need to do is listen.

Why do I write?
Why do I lock myself here,
Where the pen keeps moving
Until my fingers bleed
And the only reason I stop
Is to keep the deep red blood
Off the white paper?
Why do I devote my life
To a bunch of
Words?

Because within those words,
Lies something you’ve never
seen before.
People and lives you’ve never
known.
Histories, loves, friendships,
betrayals,
Joy, sorrow, hatred, lives,
deaths...
You’ve never known.
That no one’s known.

Letting other people know that
story...
Those lives, those emotions,
those people.
That’s my mission. My “job.”
My life.
That is why I write.

Fat Cat, Fat Rat

Steven 4th grade
Lafayette Charter School

I have a cat,
That is so fat,
And he wears a hat,
That is so fat.
I have a rat,
He is so fat,
He runs on the mat,
And he chases a cat,
That is so fat.

My Very Mean Mean Cat

by Anna, 3rd grade
Lafayette Charter School

I love my cat a lot!
But she is so mean!
She bites and fights.
I hate her so much.
Now she had kittens
Five, they’re so whiny.
She can eat me alive.
But I love her so much!

Untitled

by Johnathan 3rd grade
Prairie Creek Community School

I saw
on a wintry night
a fox
I watched it waltz
with a rabbit
I saw
them waltz to a meadow
that glimmered
by the light
of the moon
by the light
of the moon
I went home
delighted with the tale
I tell.

Panther

by Johnathan 3rd grade
Prairie Creek Community School

The King
of the jungle
mighty
mighty
mighty
a panther
black and mysterious
a black sky
is his body
his eyes golden rubies
a panther
black and mysterious.

CREATIVE WRITING

My Family

Vanessa 4th grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

My family is so great. If I did not have one, than I would be lonely. The people who put my family together is, everyone, because we are one big blob of love. I love my family and I'm pretty sure they love me. We do many fun things together, like go out to eat, have picnics, and much more. My family is always there for me and I can always count on them. I have a really big family with big hearts and I would never give them up.

The Best Teacher

by Ingrid, 4th grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

At our school the third and fourth grade class has the best teacher. She is polite and her name is Miss Nichole. Miss Nichole has been my teacher for two years. She is the best third and fourth grade teacher. I think she is unique because she loves her class. She has been a third and fourth grade teacher for four years. She collects Barbie Dolls and shoes. She is creative and wonderful. She takes care of her class. She is the best. She was my sister's teacher too, and Emma also liked her. She is the greatest teacher.

The Lion and Lou

by Sarah 10th grade
ECHO Charter School

Larry the lion wanted out of the zoo. He wanted to go back to his home, in Kalamazu.

Unfortunately, no matter how hard he tried, Larry the lion couldn't get his keeper to understand his cries. He sat in his cage, night after night, howling and roaring, and giving the grounds keeper quite a fright.

Until one day, a little child said, "Larry the lion why are you feeling so sad? You've not been eating quite right, my mommy said to me, so I shouldn't talk to you, just in case you're hungry." But Larry the lion did not eat the child, and so they talked and they talked, about what? It matters not.

The child's name was Lou, and Larry and Lou became quite a sight, talking and laughing, with all of their might. Now Larry the lion was feeling quite blue, and when he told Lou, Lou knew just what to do. He went straight home, and said to his pop, "Now Pop, I'll tell you just what I think you should do."

Friends

by Elena, 7th grade
Twin Cities Academy

If you think about it you always have friends
If you're up
If you're down
If you are hurt they are there
always there at your side
If you're sad they are always making you feel better

If you don't have friends you will be sad
If you do have friends you will be happy

The fact is you need friends

My Favorite Baby Cousin

by Gao, 3rd grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

At my uncle's house, my uncle has a daughter named Sunshine. When her mom takes her for a bath, she likes it because she likes to play with the bubbles. Her mom and dad say that Sunshine smells fantastic. Her mom wants me to change her stinky diapers, wipe her, feed her and burp her, so she will go to sleep. She is a baby that is very cute, nice and funny.

Morning Star Baptist Church

by Davion 3rd grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

At my church I do a lot of fun things. I play the piano and I sing solos and I sing in the choir. One of my favorite songs is called Yes You Can. I also lead the Praise and Worship. I also do the welcome which is hard because I forget the words sometimes. It is fun to have something to do and be at my church with my family. I feel at home at my church because everybody there makes me feel comfortable, while my mom is in the choir.

For Lou's Pop was the owner of Larry's Zoo! And Lou said to Lawrence, his Pop, that Larry the lion should go back to Kalamazu. He knew his mother would help Larry, too.

Now Lou's family just so happened to own a house by Kalamazu. And would you believe, that Lawrence said Larry was getting too old to act fierce and ferocious, so you know what Lawrence did? He called up a friend, down in Kalamazu, and that friend talked to a cousin of Larry, friend of Lou. Now that cousin's name was Sasha, and she was a lion, too. But unlike Larry, Sasha and her husband, Sam, wanted to go to a city, and live in a zoo.

There they'd be sure that their kids could grow up in safety. And all they had to do, was roar once in awhile, and look pretty. So Larry the Lion went back to Kalamazu, and met Kisha, a friend of Sasha. Sasha and Sam, and all their cubs too, moved far away from Kalamazu. But once in a while, there comes to Kalamazu, a letter from Lou, saying, "How do you do?"

Look at Peyton Manning Throw

Dominic 3rd grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

I wrote about Peyton Manning because he went to a good college and I look up to him. He is a good football player and he is very good in the pocket. A pocket is when the Defense Line protects the quarterback. I think he is also good player on the Colts team. His favorite receiver is Marvin Harrison. Now you know about Peyton Manning.

My Fat Cat and My Dog

by Sarena, 3rd grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

In the morning when I get out of the shower, my dog and cat, always, are playing with my Nemo towel. My cat Paco bites the towel that I use. When I get dressed in the morning, I go to the couch and my dog and my cat, always come up to the couch and they lay on me and is so cute. They make me feel happy. They always follow me wherever I go and they listen to me. We get on my bed and they look out the window and they look so pretty. They flip their ears up when they see cars and people.

Poem of Dreams

by Isaac, 7th grade
Twin Cities Academy

When I dream, I dream of flying, free as a bird, soaring high above the sky.
Waving to a plane passing me by. Feeling the clouds as I go through their
Fluffy being. Then I go touch down on the ground and take off and do this
All over again

When I dream, I dream of going to school. I dream I have my books and my pencils and I'm ready to go. I go to class and hand in my homework. I take Notes and be an angel. Then I wake up and go to school.

When I dream, I dream my teachers are doing weird things like my History teacher being my camp counselor, or my French teacher being my swimming instructor. My Spanish teacher is a kicker in the NFL, and my Science teacher is a nurse.

When I dream, I dream of many happy things.

I'm Sorry

Samay 7th grade
Twin Cities Academy

I'm sorry
For all the things we've been through
I'm sorry that it had to come out this way
I know that I have done something wrong,
I know how much it hurt you,
I know as much as it hurt me too.
I want to say all the things I said before,
I know all I can say is sorry.
The things have gone wrong, and there was always
I know.
I thought that it was going to get this bad.
I know that someday, you will see how much I cared.

Spiders

by Sarah, 10th grade
ECHO Charter School

Dreams are sometimes wonderful, but they can also be very frightening. I spent a few weeks in a canvas tent last summer, and it was fun. Until I discovered that I was sharing the tent with a colony of wolf spiders. Now, I like looking at spiders, I think they're cool. But I'm not talking about looking at them through a glass cage here. These darn things were LIVING with me!!

My dream started off pretty cool, I was flying. After dodging birds, dive-bombing with sparrows, and crash landing in a huge pile of feather pillows, I woke up. Or at least I thought I did. I'm looking at the ceiling of my tent, all nice and warm, and mostly safe from the mosquitoes that wanted to suck me dry. Suddenly, I feel something land on my sleeping bag with a soft 'thump.' I didn't know what it was, everybody else was sleeping, and I'm a curious person. So, naturally, I look down. There is a spider, as big as my head, sitting between my feet. Just sitting there, not really is doing anything, just sitting. Then it looks at me. All of its eight, glowing, red eyes pointed my way. And it smiles. Don't ask me how a spider can smile, I honestly don't know. I start trembling. I watch, horrified, as it slowly lifts one leg, and moves forward. 'OH MY GOD!!!! ITS GONNA EAT ME!!' screams through my mind. And one by one, I watch the legs move up and down, up and down, always inching forward. My eyes grow huge, and my shaking is now uncontrollable. It stops on my chest, and by then I'm hyperventilating. So even though it's just sitting there, it's going up and down jerkily. My vision goes all out of focus, everything is distorted except for this spider that's just looking at me, its fangs glistening in the dim light. It opens its pincers, and I stop breathing.

"Boo."

I wake up.

Different

by Andrea, 7th grade
Twin Cities Academy

In a noisy playground
The smell of spring and blooming flowers
Children play
Crickets chirp
Trees sway and children scream
Balls fly through the air
Baseball bats crack against baseballs
And the soft but fast pitter-patter
Of running feet
The sound of the bus motors
That grind and pound
And I sit in the corner just because
I'm different

Winter

by Rebecca, 7th grade
Twin Cities Academy

Winter is truly the best season ever
It is dazzling with excitement
There is so much to do
It never gets boring!

You can go outside and play
In the sparkling fresh white snow
Or maybe instead snuggle inside
While reading a fabulous book
Whatever you do, you will enjoy the whole day!

During winter around Christmas, it is also exciting
To look at houses decorated with lights
The houses look like fantasy castles!

I think winter tastes like warm homemade cookies
Right out of the oven.
And for some people winter is staying inside
And cooking fantastic meals all day long.

Snow adds just the right touch
To making winter complete
It always looks marvelous when it is snowing outside.
Winter is the best season ever!

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My Teacher, Miss Nichole

by Kia, 3rd grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

My teacher, Miss Nichole, loves Barbie dolls. My teacher, Miss Nichole, loves shoes. My teacher, Miss Nichole, is pretty good at reading. My teacher ,Miss Nichole, is happy when the third/ fourth graders do well at music, art, and gym. My teacher, Miss Nichole, is good at multiplication. My teacher, Miss Nichole, likes summer school because summer school is hot. My teacher's favorite color, is purple.

Thirteen

by Molly, 7th Grade
Twin Cities Academy

She is lost
Nowhere to go
Running, running, towards
nowhere in the world
She thought she knew it all
Was sure that she knew what it was about
Then one day
The bomb dropped
Her world fell apart
And everything changed

Her friends no longer knew her
Her parents no longer cared
School became stupid
And life became pointless
Her vision was gone
Her purpose had vanished
The class was half-empty
Nowhere near full
She felt like a person
Missing her soul
Felt like a person
Without a reason to live
Everything was different,
Everything had changed,
The day she turned
Thirteen

SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Charter Schools: Fostering Desired Learning In Children

by Mary-Anne Olmsted-Kohls,
Private Music Teacher and parent of a New Century Charter School (Hutchinson, MN) student

Isn’t it interesting that from birth through toddler hood, children don’t have teachers—except for their parents—textbooks, or pre-conceived objectives as to when and what they must learn by a certain time. Yet, amazingly, they do learn, developing by leaps and bounds. What causes this to happen? How can babies learn without someone dictating to them what they must know? Left on their own means, a baby learns through desire, environment, modeling, exploring, experimentation, repetition, and encouragement. In three years, they go from helpless to an independent, capable being who then is thrown into the “lions den” known as “school”. From here on in, children will be told, monitored, commanded, permitted, molded, “graded”, tested and made to feel less if they can’t achieve something by a certain time, in the name of education. Forget what the child is interested in, forget an enticing, friendly at-

mosphere, forget mentoring as opposed to directing, forget the joy of self-discovery and trial and error, and forget people who cheer the child on in spite of adversity. No, now children will become pigeon-holed, stifled, and automations—the fine products of their systematic edification. Sadly, many children become lost in this institutionalized environment and ideology. They lose interest in learning and most of all belief in their ability. They want to be more in control of their own destiny. They have strengths that cause them to be excited, but they have weaknesses that cause them to avoid or shut down. They need a balance of areas where they can thrive, with smaller portions, patience and more time with their weaknesses. Above all, they need adults who mentor and encourage instead of ones who determine they are bad in math or science or reading and cast them aside or worse, give up on them for the more

“gifted” in that area. They always need to feel that they count no matter what their ability. They need the developmental freedom they had as babies. Thankfully, charter schools are trying to do just this—bring back the joy and freedom of learning. Though each school is different in their focus and means, they all want to help children gain back their autonomy in education. They are trying to allow desire to be more the determiner of subjects. They are trying to create smaller, more positive, less institutionalized environments where kids feel more comfortable and will desire to come to school. They encourage students to seek role-models and community leaders to help them find out more about an area than just the teachers hired by the school. Not only will this help them get different perspectives, ideas and overall instruction, but also discover the world is the school not the building. In the charter schools,

students are given the freedom to try, to experiment, and to explore to find out more about their area of interests and also of themselves. They are encouraged to think outside the box and run away with whatever direction the ideas lead. The teachers at these schools are prompted to take an interest in what the child is into rather than judging if something is worthwhile or not. Most important with the charter schools, is that the student -teacher ratio is lower so teachers are more available to the students and the structure is not so formal. Students feel more comfortable seeking out the assistance of and from the teacher, then. Overall, charter schools are seeking to provide children a place where they will want to learn, not have to. An agenda item promoted by the government is “No Child Left Behind”. At face value, it is very commendable and should be an

educational mantra. It is, however, not devoted to helping students learn but having them score properly on tests. The reality is, all children want to and can learn anything. What the “system” has lost sight of is what it takes to do so. “Hopefully, charter schools will forge ahead and become an example of nurturing the joy of learning that seems to be absent in the other.”

A Snowy Day

by Emma, 7th grade
Twin Cities Academy

my favorite kind of day
is a snowy day in wintertime.
not wet, icy snow
that slices the air
carried by the wind that slashes
your face like a wet knife

no, i like the soft, thick snow
that flutters down from the sky
like a thousand little whispers.
tiny, glittery voices
telling you the smallest of
secrets

when this sort of snow falls
the world is smaller, somehow
easier to approach.
the world is softer, gentler
and every little worry
fades away.

The Storm

by Melanie, 7th grade
Twin Cities Academy

(REPETITION)

The wind whipped by
Taking everything in its way
The rain falls hard
Trying not to listen to the sound
of the wind
Like a memory

The wind whipped by
As the radio went on
Huddled together
A rush of fear came upon me
Like a memory

The wind whipped by
The rain fell on the window like
a drum
We quietly waited
And our porch was gone
Like a memory

My Mom and I

by Charlotte, 4th grade
Concordia Creative Learning Academy

My mom and I like to shop, eat and do lots of other things. She likes to be on the computer and she’s a teacher and she likes to cook and sleep and talk on the phone. She is always there for me when I need her. For example when my stomach hurts or when I scrape my knee. She helps me with my homework and I always say thank you to her and that is the story of my mom and I.

Get Involved in Charter Vision

Charter Vision is a non-profit organization committed to providing students’ opportunities to be involved journalism. The editorial board, comprised of Minnesota’s charter school students, needs your help to make this newspaper the best it can be.

Here’s how you can help:

STUDENTS

- 1) Write stories, articles, news briefs, comics, poems, and/or short stories and send them to submissions@mnchartervision.org.
- 2) Encourage your friends and other students to write.
- 3) Bring Charter Vision home and share it with your friends and family.
- 4) Join the editorial board. Send an email to leisa@mnchartervision.org for more information.
- 5) Check out our website at www.mnchartervision.org for current stories from charter school students.

TEACHERS

- 1) Encourage your students to write for the paper.
- 2) Incorporate journalism into your language arts program. Email us for curriculum ideas.
- 3) Read the paper with your class.
- 4) Become a teacher leader with Charter Vision.
- 5) Become a “friend” of Charter Vision.

PARENTS/COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- 1) Read the paper with your students.
- 2) Encourage your student to write for the paper.
- 3) Become a parent or community leader with Charter Vision.
- 4) Place your business’s advertisement here.
- 5) Become a “friend” of Charter Vision.

Don’t let this list limit your possibilities for involvement. Please contact us if there are other ways that you’d like to help.

Submission Deadlines

Summer Edition

Articles Due: July 15, 2005, 5:00 p.m.

Advertisements Due: July 30, 2005, 5:00 p.m.

Email: submissions@mnchartervision.org

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