

Miles McKeown,  
Greenbriar East  
Elementary,  
Kindergarten



# Children's CENTRE VIEW

NORTHERN EDITION

Chantilly ❖ Fair Oaks ❖ Fair Lakes ❖ Oak Hill

DECEMBER 29-JANUARY 4, 2012

25 CENTS NEWSSTAND PRICE

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# Transportation News and Inclement Weather Guidelines from Fairfax County Public Schools

Coming in January: The Superintendent's Proposed FY2013 Budget

## FCPS Buses by the Numbers

FCPS operates one of the largest publicly owned fleets in the country. More than 1,500 school buses, using 6,500 separate routes, transport more than 110,000 students to school each day.

The average FCPS bus is 8.1 years old. Depending on the school district budget, FCPS purchases an average of 95 buses a year. When it comes time to replace a bus, the FCPS transportation department purchases buses that meet or exceed federal and Virginia state safety standards, have a record of reliability, have low projected average total cost of ownership with durable parts to minimize down time, and is sold by a dealership that provides an acceptable level of service and

responsiveness. The average purchase price for a new bus is \$114,000.

### Did You Know?

Only New York City Department of Education transports more students by bus than Fairfax County Public Schools every day.



## When the Weather Outside is Frightful

The holidays may be almost behind us but there is still plenty of winter ahead of us. Are you prepared?

Hat and mittens? Check. Shovel? Check. Ice scraper? Check.

But if you have children in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), do you know where to get information about school closings and delays due to the weather conditions?

Whether snowflakes are fluttering or raindrops are pouring, Fairfax County Public Schools monitors weather conditions all year round. Weather conditions may necessitate schools open two hours late, close two hours early, or that school will be canceled for an entire day.

Students use various methods to get to school – they walk, take a bus, get dropped off by a parent, ride with another student, or drive themselves. The safety of students, staff, and parents is the primary consideration when FCPS is making a weather-related decision about schools.

If an impending weather event is forecast, FCPS staff gathers information about

weather, road conditions, mobilization plans from transportation sources, and other information to determine the impact on the school system. Weather conditions can vary significantly in different parts of the county. Often major roadways are in good driving condition, but neighborhood roads may be treacherous. The Superintendent is given the most up-to-date information from various sources in an effort to make

a decision by 4:30 a.m. on whether to delay opening schools or cancel school for the day. If weather conditions worsen during the school day, the Superintendent may make a decision to close schools two hours early. Once the decision is made, the information can be found in the following locations:

- www.fcps.edu
- Red Apple Channel 21
- Keep in Touch email and text notifications
- FCPS Facebook page
- FCPS Twitter page
- Local tv news and radio stations

If school is canceled, the School Aged Child Care (SACC) program run by the Fairfax County Government, is also canceled for the day. Parents should have a plan for any last-minute child-care arrangements if schools and SACC programs are closed.

### This Just In

The Fairfax County School Board approved the 2012-13 school calendar. The first day of school will be Tuesday, September 4, 2012, and the last day of school will be Tuesday, June 18, 2013. View the complete calendar by visiting [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu) and click on Calendars.



## Getting To Know Us

### FCPS Bus Driver Art Hurlock

Art Hurlock spends his days transporting more than 100 students to and from Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS).

Hurlock became a FCPS driver 11 years ago after managing the automobile maintenance shop for a large company. Although his wife would like him to join her in retirement, he says he has no intention of retiring any time soon.

"I really enjoy it. I like driving and I like the kids," he said. "That's why I'm still here."

FCPS has one of the largest school bus fleets in the nation traveling on more than 2,700 miles of roadway in Fairfax County.

"It's pretty amazing how the school district creates bus routes to make sure all the kids get to school," he said.

Knowing parents are relying on him to transport their children safely to and from school is not something Hurlock takes lightly. He admits the traffic in Northern Virginia is particularly challenging on snowy days.

"When I get home after driving in snowy weather, I just say, that was some day. I'm not just thinking about the 30 kids on my bus, but there are 60 parents who are counting on me too," Hurlock said.

He's been driving the same bus for the more than four years and logged more than 100,000 thousand miles on it.

"I really like what I do. I like the kids. I would say 99 percent of the kids are good and the parents are good to me too," he said.

## Safe Routes to Schools

Fairfax County Public Schools is proud to participate in Safe Routes to Schools, an international effort to encourage more families to get out of their cars and onto their feet to enjoy the many benefits of safely walking and bicycling to school. Parents are encouraged to accompany their children to school and to work with their PTA or PTO to organize walking events.

"Walking is a simple way to incorporate exercise into your day," said FCPS Superintendent Jack D. Dale. "We encourage all FCPS students and families to participate in this program and walk or bike to school whenever possible."

The program promotes physical activity, pedestrian safety, and concern for the

environment. Several Fairfax County public schools have established a Safe Routes to School program and participate in bike and walk to school challenges.

For more information visit [www.saferoutesinfo.org/](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/).



## Be a School Bus Driver for Fairfax County Public Schools

Fairfax County Public Schools has more than 1,200 bus drivers on its transportation team. Their primary goal is to ensure that students are transported safely to and from school. If you have a good driving record, enjoy working with children of all ages, can pass a physical exam and drug and alcohol screening, and have the ability to complete training, you are eligible to apply for a position. Starting pay begins at \$17.07 per hour, with five weeks of paid training. Learn more about how to become an FCPS bus driver at [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu) and click on Work for FCPS.

Stay informed about all the latest news from FCPS at [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu). Check us out on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

Watch the most recent School Scene and Insight broadcasts on Red Apple Channel 21.



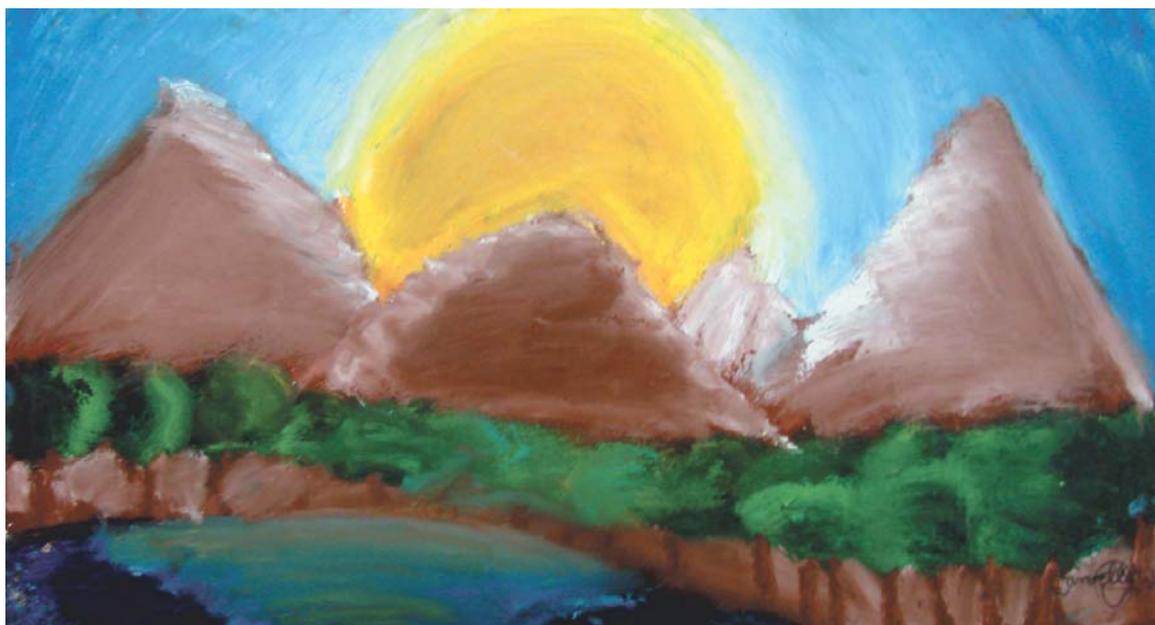
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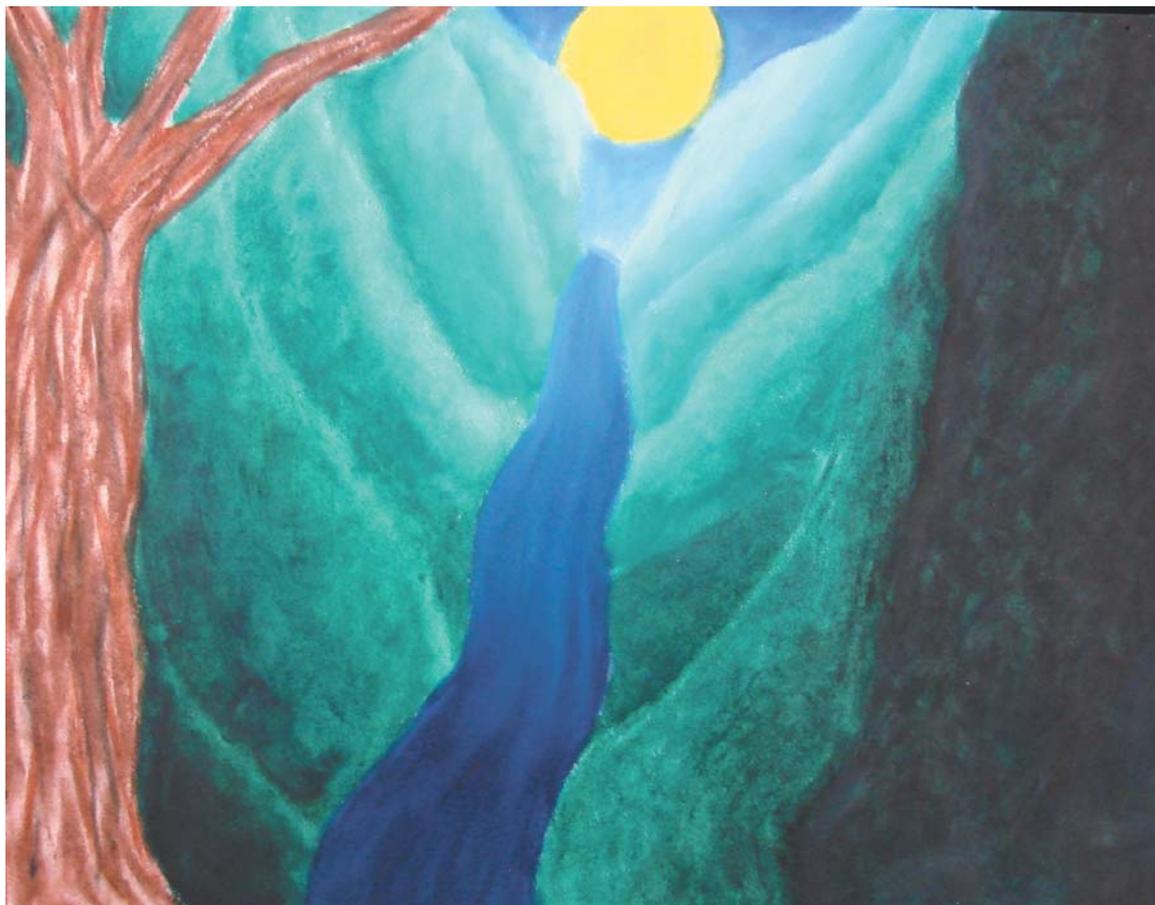


2011 BUSINESS PARTNER OF THE YEAR

# CHILDREN'S CENTRE VIEW 2011



**Danielle Wynd**  
Franklin Middle School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Veronica Phillipps**  
Franklin Middle School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade



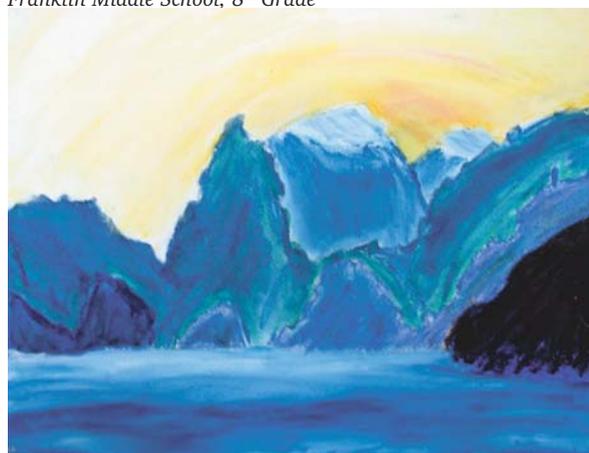
**Victoria Brigola**  
Franklin Middle School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

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## Art Work From Franklin Middle



**Helen Lim**  
Franklin Middle School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Christine Legg**  
Franklin Middle School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Welcome

Dear Readers:

This week, the Centre View turns over its pages to the youth and students.

We asked principals and teachers from area schools to encourage students to contribute their words, pictures and photos for our annual Children's Issue.

The response as always was enormous. While we were unable to publish every piece we received, we did our best to put together a paper with a fair sampling of the submitted stories, poems, drawings, paintings, photographs and other works of art.

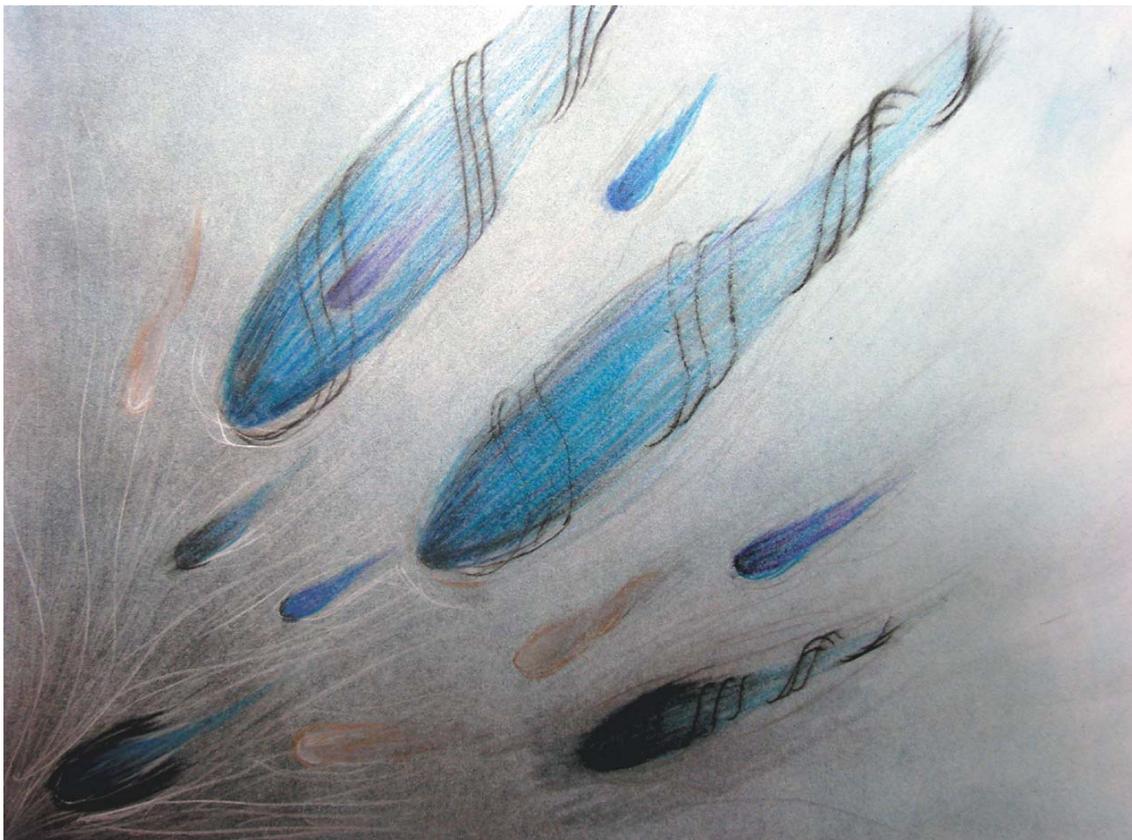
We appreciate the extra effort made by school staff to gather the materials during their busy time leading up to the holidays. We'd also like to encourage both schools and parents to mark their 2012 calendars for early December, the deadline for submissions for next year's Children's Centre View. Please keep us in mind as your children continue to create spectacular works of art and inspiring pieces of writing in the coming year.

The children's issue is only a part of our year-round commitment to cover education and our local schools. As always, the Centre View welcomes letters to the editor, story ideas, calendar listings and notices of local events from our readers. Photos and other submissions about special events at schools are especially welcome for our weekly schools pages.

Our preferred method for material is e-mail, which should be sent to [centreview@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:centreview@connectionnewspapers.com), but you can reach us by mail at 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 or call 703-778-9415 with any questions.

— EDITOR STEVEN MAUREN

## Art Work From Franklin Middle



**Helen Lim**  
Franklin Middle School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Helen Lim**  
Franklin Middle School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Eliseo Gonzales**  
Franklin Middle School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Victoria Brigola**  
Franklin Middle School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Meghan Gibbons**  
Franklin Middle School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Timothy Irwin**  
Franklin Middle School, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

# CHILDREN'S CENTRE VIEW 2011

## My Name

By Lauren McKeel

Chantilly High School, Grade 9

If my name was a place it would be a cold place, not cold enough for snow, but every morning, looking out my shanty window, I would see frost that made pretty pictures while I slept, tucked under my warm quilt. If my name was a place, it would be in the mountains and in the winter, the trees would be bare, the wind would make the branches rattle against each other. In the spring, flowers would bloom over the newly conceived grass, colors of blood red, cerulean blue, and buttercup yellow would cover the earth in a soft blanket. It would rain often and the rain would come in sheets over the grassy contours of the land, and rocky crags would soak up the droplets. There would be caves to explore, labyrinths underground, hidden by hanging curtains of ivy and moss, and in the summer, The wind would sing, blowing that grass that has long grew past my knees. There would be ancient oaks, with stories that would go untold, the sights and sounds that once were.

## My Precious Dogs

By Brittany Jones

Chantilly High School, Grade 12

There are five in all. They are all different sizes, from the size of a Chihuahua to a German Sheppard. They are all different ages, ranging from 2 to 13. They have all different personalities; one could be really friendly and love to cover your face in wet, slobber kisses while another may have a bit of an attitude and nip at your heels while you bring them food. However, I loved them all equally, and miss them very much.

The first, and oldest, dog is Cassie; she's a Collie-mix. We found her under my grandma's cabin in Texas when she was just a young dog. She was hiding out with no food in her belly and her tongue was dry from lack of hydration. Being a veterinarian, my mother just had to take her in. She lost her eye when we moved to Indiana. It's a rather horrific story that I'd rather not go into detail about; it was pretty bad. She is a loyal dog, always followed commands and though she would sometimes run into walls (with her lack of an eye and all) she was a really good dog.

The next is my dog; his name is Sambuca (my mom named him, not me). He is a miniature Schnauzer, black with a stub of a tail that wriggles around like a worm chopped in half. My mother also rescued him, though when I saw him I claimed his cute, little, bearded face as my own. He has a metal brave in his leg — a scar from his past owner. When we first got Sambuca he was a timid and very quiet dog, but as the years went by he got more confidence, energy and his bark became obnoxiously noticeable. He followed me everywhere, waiting by the window overlooking our front yard for me to return from a tireless day of school. He's in a new home now; hopefully he likes it there.

A few years after Sambuca came into our lives Ashley joined us on Christmas morning. She is a beautiful German Shepherd-Husky-mix; with her thin hips, curly tail and smoothed multicolor coat she is our most breathtaking dog. She was a present for my sister and even though she was rough around the edges at first (always shying away from us and the other dogs) she gradually became a part of our big family. Even though she had no physical scars, Ashley was abused by her owners before us leaving mental scars that will stay with her. My brother, sister and I were always smothering her in love and trying our best to heal those scars. She also has a new home now where she is very happy and able to run around forever. I know she's happy now.

Our littlest dog is Gomez, the Chihuahua. He's a long haired Chihuahua, making him look a little less like a rat, with light brown and white fur and a long tail that constantly swayed to-and-fro. Gomez was hit by a car and had metal hips; he was

perfectly fine afterward but his entire rear wobbled when he walked reminding me of a penguin running around on the ice. He's a quiet dog and very nervous around things bigger than him (which means everything) but when he didn't like someone he was not afraid to let them know it. Something that I loved, and hated, about Gomez was that he always slept in my bed. He would curl himself into an impossibly small ball and lay down right between my legs. It took awhile for me to get used to, but Gomez seemed to be perfectly comfortable. He was hit by another car soon after I left him. He didn't survive.

Last but not least is GusGus, our Australian Sheppard. He had beautiful spotted fur (dark brown, black, light brown and white blended together) and a small nub tail, much like Sambuca except his was covered in bushy thick fur. The best thing about GusGus was his eyes. One eye was a crystal blue as deep as the ocean and bluer than the sky, while the other was a chocolate brown that turned a brilliant yellow in a certain light. His moods ranged from hyperactive and fun loving to a lazy couch potato who enjoyed TV and watching other people work. Even though he wasn't in the family for very long I loved him so much; it was hard to send him away. He's happily living with a college-aged man now somewhere in Texas.

All of my animals mean a lot to me, but my dogs really were the best. They always cheered me up and they always made life more exciting (be it steal a shoe and make you chase them around the house or escape the fence and run around town for an hour playing a wonderful game of tag). It was really hard for me to leave them in Texas, but I couldn't bring them back to Virginia with me. Not a day goes by that I don't think about them and think about how lucky I was to own them, at least for a while.

## The Bride's Soul

By Aleena Shahzadi

Chantilly High School, Grade 11

I am the soul, the freedom. I give the body life and shape, so I can use them to express myself. I think about us while entering the wedding hall, trying to reach the bride. Since I don't have to make my way through a crowd of people, I get to the makeshift stage quickly. This is my first experience of flying; before this, I was in the bride's body, her soul. I did what she did, but today we're being separated by the fact that people don't want us living together anymore. They believe that women don't need a soul to stay alive; rules are enough to keep their skeletons moving. The bride forced herself to understand the elders and gave up on me, deciding to accept an unpredictable, soulless life.

Since no one can control me because I'm invisible, they're planning to destroy my body, the bride, by keeping her apart from me, which will lead to her demise, and we'll never be together again. After her death, they'll trash her like an animal, which never finds its way back into the living and neither do the living creatures bother to imagine the heat and the smell of that detested environment. It happens to every woman who becomes a bride; she loses her soul and later her body is discarded. This is the way men rule in Pakistani culture. In fact, in my culture, all the women die twice: Once when they are buried alive by their parents in a bedroom, where they are trapped by a man, which is similar to the second death, when they experience natural death and are buried in a grave by their relatives, and later insects are fertilized by their bodies.

Today, we are the target; Ell — the body — will die her first death. Her choices that I couldn't agree with will lead to her demise. Since she doesn't believe in my existence anymore, I — her soul will depart from her tonight. She has five hours to change her decision before she will be locked in a room with a bed decorated with red flowers. She will be left alone with her predator — the man — to be instructed on how to remain

SEE CHANTILLY, PAGE 17

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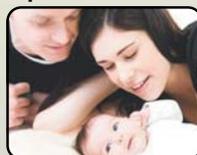
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# CHILDREN'S CENTRE VIEW 2011

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Aimee, Age 5, Montessori of Chantilly



Ashish, Age 5, Montessori of Chantilly



Ava, Age 6, Montessori of Chantilly



Ayush, Age 5, Montessori of Chantilly

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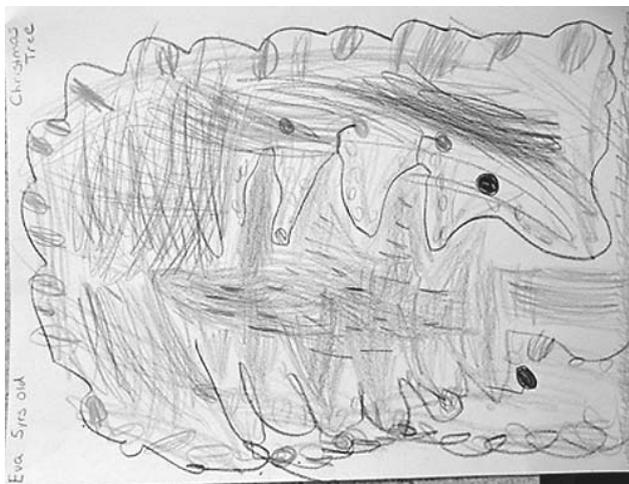
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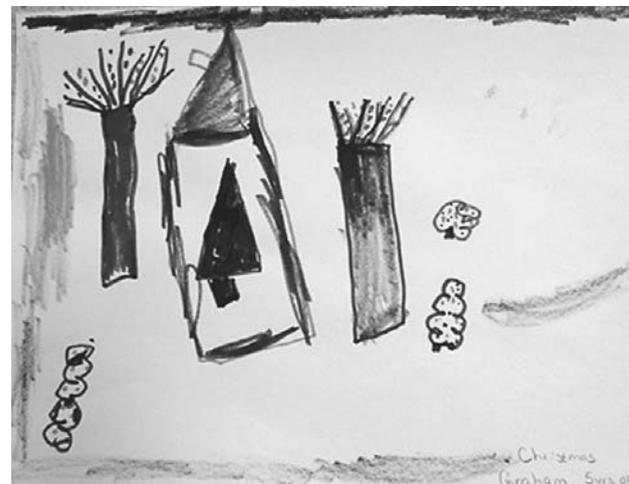
# Artwork from Montessori of Chantilly



Dhruv, Age 5, Montessori of Chantilly



Eva, Age 5, Montessori of Chantilly



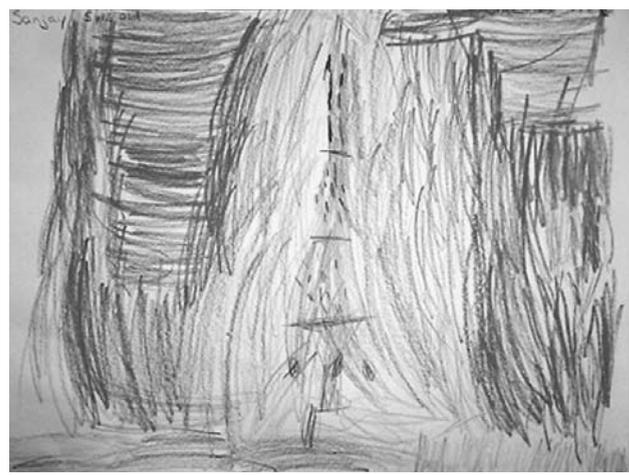
Graham, Age 5, Montessori of Chantilly



Harika, Age 5, Montessori of Chantilly



Neeraj, Age 5, Montessori of Chantilly



Sanjay, Age 5, Montessori of Chantilly



Leena, Age 5, Montessori of Chantilly



Mahima, Age 5, Montessori of Chantilly



Satvik, Age 5, Montessori of Chantilly



Myra, Age 4, Montessori of Chantilly



Shunta, Age 5, Montessori of Chantilly

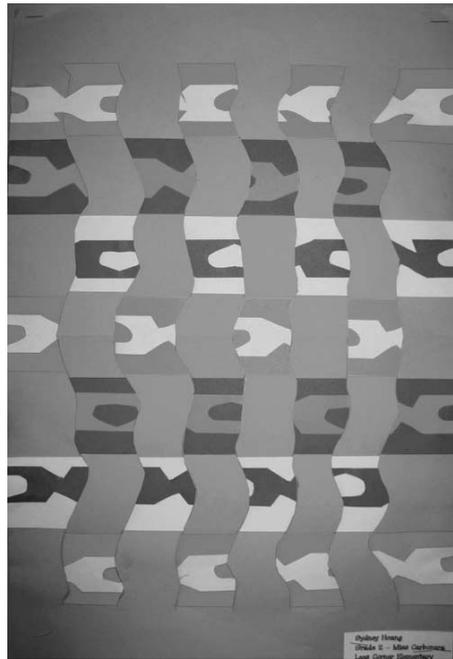


Sierra, Age 6, Montessori of Chantilly

# CHILDREN'S CENTRE VIEW 2011



Alexa Allen, Lees Corner Elementary, Grade 1



Sydney Hoang, Lees Corner Elementary, Grade 2



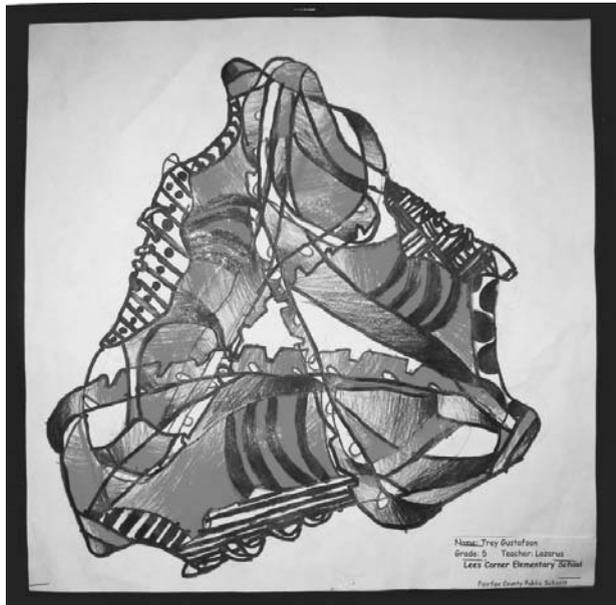
Bennett Anderson, Lees Corner Elementary, Grade 6



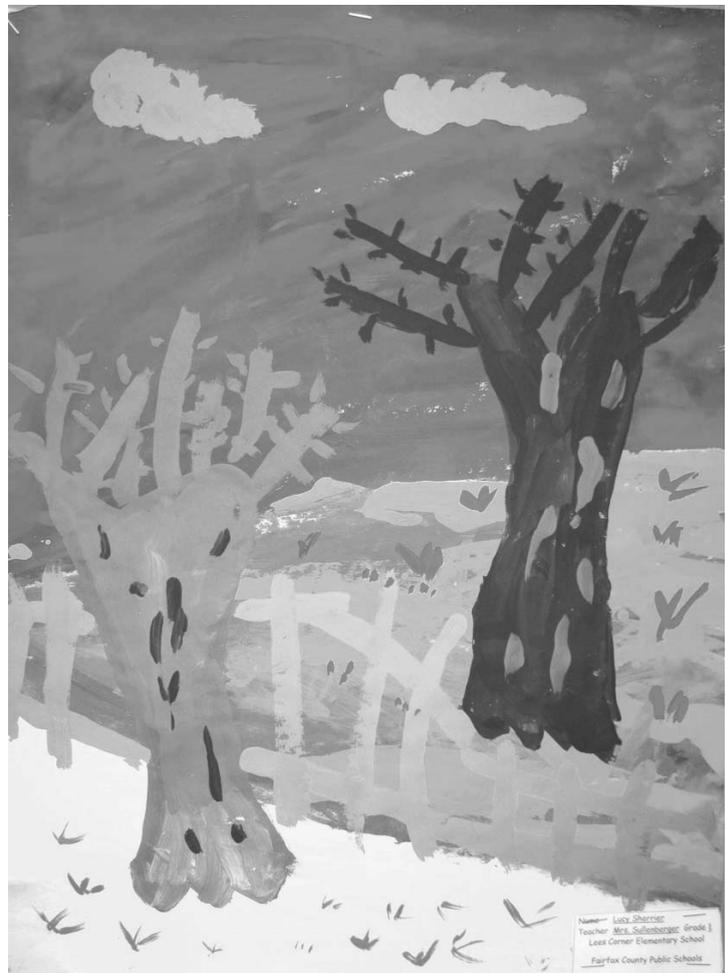
Rachel Yeo, Lees Corner Elementary, Grade 2



Julie Nguyen, Lees Corner Elementary, Grade 6



Trey Gustafson, Lees Corner Elementary, Grade 5



Lucy Sherrier, Lees Corner Elementary, Grade 1

## Lees Corner Elementary



Katie Latham, Lees Corner Elementary, Grade 3



Celine Sayegh, Lees Corner Elementary, Grade 3

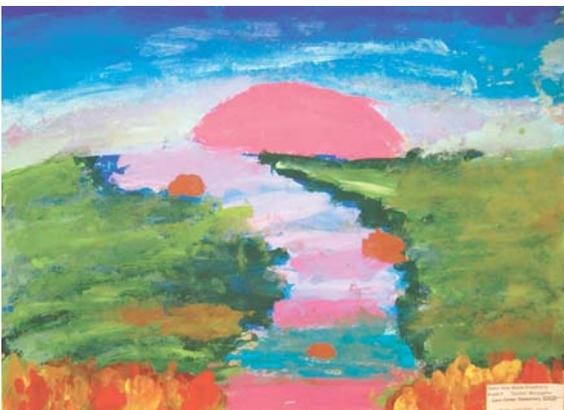
# CHILDREN'S CENTRE VIEW 2011



Brian Creeks, Lees Corner Elementary, Grade 1



Emma Rowson, Lees Corner Elementary, Grade 5



Rosa Broadberry, Lees Corner Elementary, Grade 4



Virginia Marie Greathouse, Lees Corner Elementary, Grade 2

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# Willow Springs Elementary School



Robin Urban, Willow Springs, grade 6



Kira Stotts, Willow Springs, grade 3



Tiffany Ngo, Willow Springs, grade 6



Skylar Blankenship, Willow Springs, grade 6



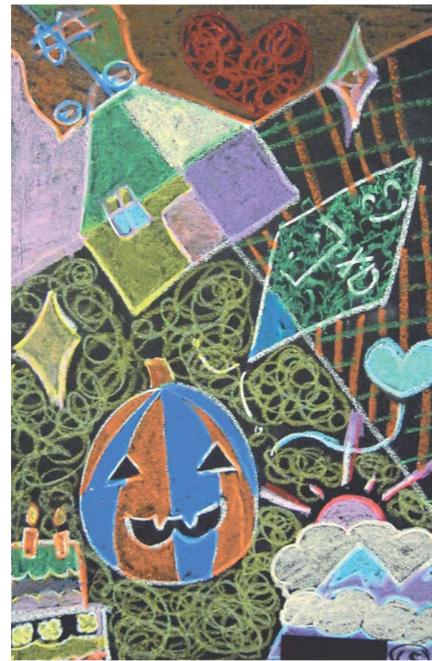
Amaya Henry, Willow Springs, grade 3



Isabelle Deadman, Willow Springs, grade 5



Sallie Miller, Willow Springs, grade 4



Elizabeth Yi, Willow Springs, grade 5



Anya Ivkin, Willow Springs, grade 3



Bryan Hong, Willow Springs, grade 1



Nathan Makonnen, Willow Springs, grade 1



Katherine Yang, Willow Springs, grade 6



Adriel Chen, Willow Springs, grade 4



Christina Yi, Willow Springs, grade 3

# CHILDREN'S CENTRE VIEW 2011



Andrew O'Rourke, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Oak Hill Elementary



Angela Giaconia, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Oak Hill Elementary



Julia Muscar, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade, Oak Hill Elementary

## Oak Hill Elementary



Catherine Philipps, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Oak Hill Elementary



Taylor Hannam-Zatz, Oak Hill Elementary, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade



Katie Chan, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Oak Hill Elementary



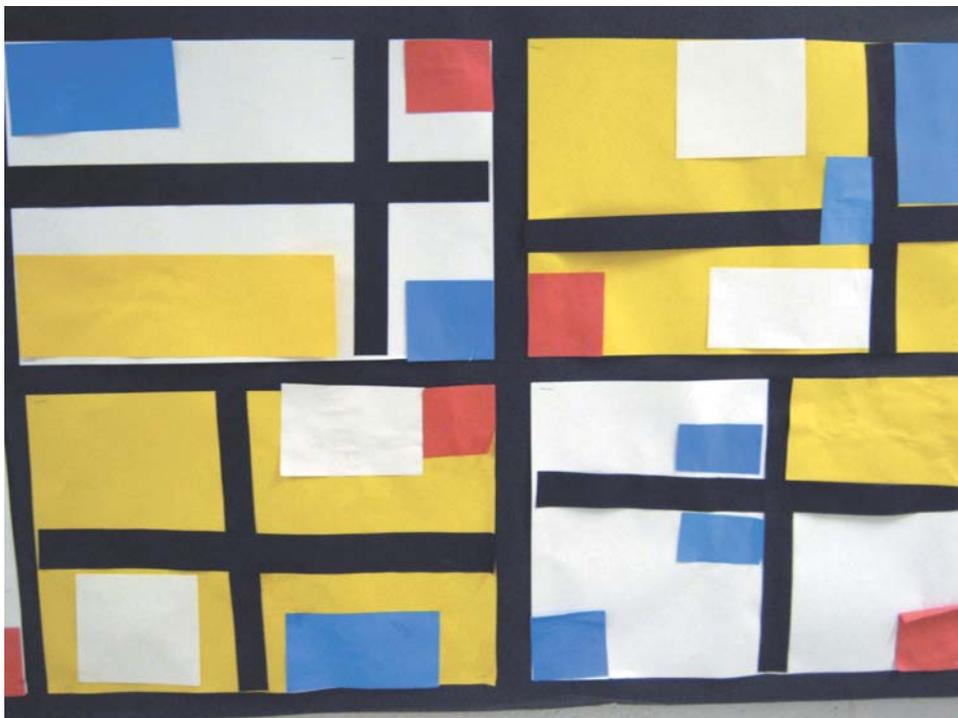
Anne Rhoads, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Oak Hill Elementary



Mrs. Muscar 1<sup>st</sup> Grade, Oak Hill



Nicholas Chen, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade, Oak Hill Elementary



Mrs. Davis Kindergarten Class, Oak Hill Elementary

# CHILDREN'S CENTRE VIEW 2011

## Greenbriar West Elementary School



Adam Bateri, Greenbriar West Elementary, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade



Sydney Bates, Greenbriar West Elementary, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade



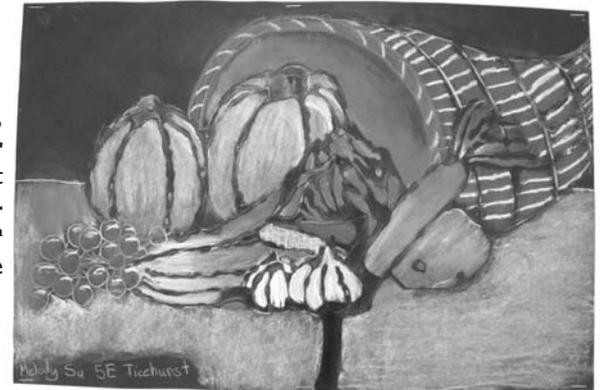
McKenna Ramsey, Greenbriar West Elementary, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade



Adam Bateri, Greenbriar West Elementary, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade



Simar Narula, Greenbriar West Elementary, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade



Melody Su, Greenbriar West Elementary, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade



Ally Brearn, Greenbriar West Elementary, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade



Hudson Acocella, Greenbriar West Elementary, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade



Anna Xu, Greenbriar West Elementary, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade



Shreya Manoj, Greenbriar West Elementary, Kindergarten



Radhav Vinayak, Greenbriar West Elementary, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade



Mandy He, Greenbriar West Elementary, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade



Jasmin Yoon, Greenbriar West Elementary, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade



Kevin Song, Greenbriar West Elementary, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

**By Allison Blechl**  
Willow Springs Elementary, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
C ookies and candy  
H appy people when they get presents  
R ead Christmas stories  
I cicles hanging from the trees outside  
S till a lot of snow  
T ime for opening presents  
M y favorite holiday  
A ll my friends and family  
S o many presents

**By Anna Farmelo**  
Willow Springs Elementary, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
C andles and Christmas lights  
H oliday spirits  
R ibbon flying everywhere  
I ce on the slippery road  
S till snow falling down

T asting the holiday cookies  
M erry Christmas to all!  
A ll the fun in the world  
S melling all the treats

**By Elisia Barber**  
Willow Springs Elementary, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
S o cold  
N ever ending storms  
O h how I love it  
W ith delicious cocoa

**By Linda Ziamanesh**  
Willow Springs Elementary, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
S creaming with joy  
L ots of fun  
E veryone loves it  
D oing tricks on the sled  
D ashing in the snow

I t makes a trail  
N ot boring  
G reat for snowy days

**By Abby Keogh**  
Willow Springs Elementary, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
I ce is outside  
C old snow  
I eat them  
C old ice  
L ike big ones  
E ffort to pull them down  
S himmer in the sun

**By Natalie Simpson**  
Willow Springs Elementary, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
W arm food  
I cicles are big  
N ice cold weather

T emperature goes down  
E ars turn red  
R ed and green

**By Anya Skare**  
Willow Springs Elementary, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Cocoa time!  
H oliday cheer  
R ain, goodbye!  
Icy roads  
S tockings full  
T elling stories  
M any smiles  
A joyful day  
S nowy lawns

**By Yusuf Elhag**  
Willow Springs Elementary, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade  
S ledding around the world

A lways brings presents  
N ever forgets you  
T akes your cookies and milk  
A nd gets stuck in the chimney

## Once Upon a Butterfly

**By Ella Modes**  
Willow Springs Elementary, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade  
O nce upon a time there was a butterfly named Connie. She was a nice butterfly. She helped lots of animals. She helped Charlotte the spider get out of her web because she was stuck. She helped Sammy the ant. He needed help getting food. The butterfly helped a ladybug named Danny get away from a person  
SEE WILLOW SPRINGS, PAGE 15

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# CHILDREN'S CENTRE VIEW 2011

## Willow Springs

FROM PAGE 14

who had him in his hand. In the town she helped caterpillars named Ashley and Aimee. They were stuck together. There was a praying mantis named Emilie. Emilie was stuck on a worm and Connie the butterfly helped her get unstuck. Connie helped a bird named Cait learn how to fly. All of the animals thanked Connie the butterfly for helping them.

### The Ocean Blue

By Uriel An

*Willow Springs Elementary, 5th Grade*  
In the ocean, waves blue as sapphire, roar like a lion. The waves cut through rock like a wild beast. Boats crash, steel cries in agony of the mighty king of blue. The untamed beast calms as Mother Earth releases Sun to tame the waves. As Sun rises, all is calm.

Down below, in the seas, likes kelp. Green as an emerald, they wave to fish passing by. The fish are swordfish in a school. Their scales glitter, bright as quartz. They swim away looking for their supper.

Next to the kelp stand the coral, holding strong. The lobsters come, heads held high. Their shells shine as a ruby red. Their claws clamp at others.

The ocean blue is a mighty place, for all of it is made from Mother Earth.

### The Big Brown Bear

By Engi Kamel

*Willow Springs Elementary, 5th Grade*  
As I walk through the quiet woods, I hear something behind me making the leaves rustle. I swiftly turn around, but no one is there. I run to a large tree and turn around. Except for my panting, everything is silent. All of a sudden the woods start to shake! What is happening?

From behind a tree, a big, brown, grizzly bear comes out! It starts to roar and groan. It breathes heavily and stares at me.

I start running home, while my heart is pounding very fast. I finally reach my house. I turn around, the grizzly is following me. As I run to open the door, it comes closer and closer to me. I open and lock the door rapidly. I swiftly go upstairs into my room and look out the window, but the grizzly is gone. Where is the grizzly bear? Is this all a dream or am I just imagining things?

### The Evergreen

By Hanna Whitaker

*Willow Springs Elementary, 5th Grade*  
The evergreen. It is many things. It is the slightest shimmer of hope in the harsh winter. It is a warm home to animas. It is the source of life.

When you're close to an evergreen, you'll know. Inhale its piney smell mixed with strong and sweet-scented wood.

The redbirds and the blue jays tweet

sweetly in its branches, creating a melodic harmony to wake you in the morn.

To find beauty within life, you'll have to look closely: red cardinals against dark green pine and dark green pine against pure white snow.

Its everlasting life and love can give you company. Just smell its smell and listen as the birds tweet you to sleep.

### My Rollercoaster Trip

By Sean Smith

*Willow Springs Elementary, 4th Grade*

The happiest thing I ever did in my life was when I went on my rollercoaster trip. I can't wait to tell you about it! Our first stop was The Great Wolf Lodge. Then we went to King's Island. My first coaster was "The Beast". It was a super tall roller coaster. I loved "The Beast" ... well, a little. The next day we headed back on the road for our next stop: Hershey Park. Our first ride was "The Comet". I really liked it a lot. Every time you go on it you will probably see a train. It was very cool. Next was the "Super Duper Looper". I was very scared of going on this one, but I finally forced myself to get on it. I actually really like it a lot. It has one loop, but it was worth it.

After the roller coasters, we all came back together and went on the "Hershey Factory Ride". It is a little ride that takes you through the phases of how they make their chocolate. In some of the rooms you go through, you can actually smell the chocolate!

When we left Hershey, we went to camp out and then headed to Dutch Wonderland. The first ride we went on was "The Rocket". It is one of those rides where you swing from side to side. It is a lot of fun. After that, we did the long ride back to Virginia. And that was when I was so happy!

### The Day of My Fishing Trip

By Ty Blankenship

*Willow Springs Elementary, 4th Grade*

The best thing that has happened to me is going to Lake Anna. I caught a 10-pound spotted bass. That is one of the biggest spotted bass I have ever caught. I was in a kayak and it pulled my boat. I almost fell in the water and it almost broke the line. Yes ... it was that big! It had a big fat belly and long tail. We had a great time at the lake. When it began to get dark, we started up the truck. We put the kayak on the trailer and left. And that is my story about fishing at Lake Anna.

### Angry BirdsX

Alayna Lee

*Willow Springs Elementary, 6th Grade*

Are the same old games making you bored and somber? Why play the worn out Angry Birds, when you can give your-

self something better? The alternative is Angry BirdsX, the new and improved version of Angry Birds. Just as vivacious as the old version, its multiple language features make it perfect for the bilingual as well. That means the centurions in Ancient Rome could have used it, and so can kids all over the world!

The malls are already populous, full of people waiting for ABX. Just listen to singing pop sensation, Justin Bieber! "I was just going to procure the normal Angry Birds, when I found ABX. It's my baby, and I hope it will always be mine." That's evidence that ABX is amazing.

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE! We'll be so benevolent as to give you a free ABX hat with your purchase! Supply is limited, so don't be indolent, and call 1-800-ThisIsFake for all of that!

### Coca-Cola Commercial

By Callie Doyle

*Willow Springs Elementary, 6th Grade*

Imagine this — You are driving down the interstate on your way home from work. Makes you feel as indolent as ever, right?! What is the first thing that you should think of as a vivacious pick-me-up? Coca-Cola, duh!

Your alacrity to placate your taste buds is irresistible! With Coca-Cola, the superfluous overdose of taste not only possible, it is guaranteed! It will revitalize your somber expression.

We know that there are profuse amounts of other sodas out there. For example: Pepsi, Sprite, Dr. Pepper, Root Beer, and even Sunkist. But there is no alternative. So why don't you try a Coca-Cola, and enjoy your happiness today!

### Snowball Maker

By Ethan Tae

*Willow Springs Elementary, 6th Grade*

You're inside your house in a somber mood because you're watching your brothers and friends have a snowball fight. You feel intimidated. Not anymore! In contrast to making your own snowballs which take a lot of time and can be boring, why don't you try the perfect alternative? With the Snowball Maker, you are able to compact snow into perfect spheres and you can revitalize yourself with an abundant amount of snowballs because of its efficiency.

It has a scissors-like function with two semi-circles at the ends to compress together. For best performances, open up the Snowball Maker and dig it into the snow. Next, close it and compact it as much as possible. Open it up, and you have made a snowball! Swipe off that doleful face because the Snowball Maker will make the complex, simple.

Having this ingenious item, you have already made the teams unequal; so don't let anything dissuade you! Hurry up, and get one as soon as possible! You'll thank me profusely later on.

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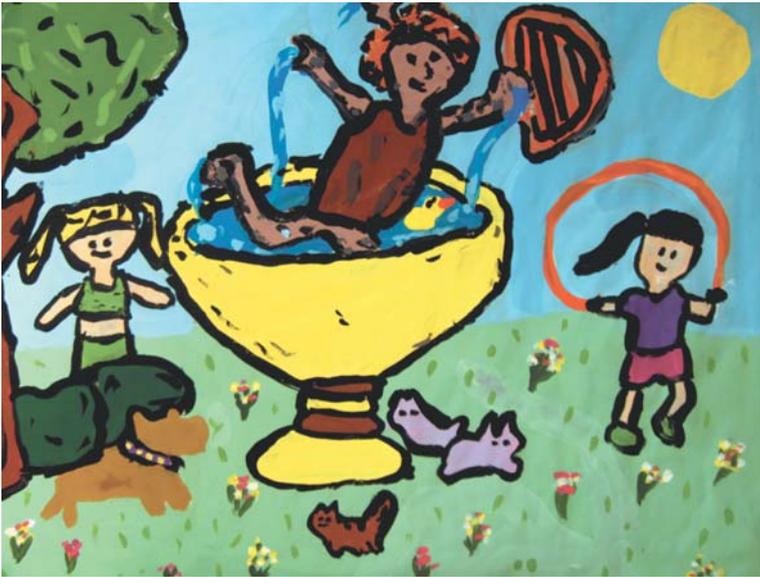
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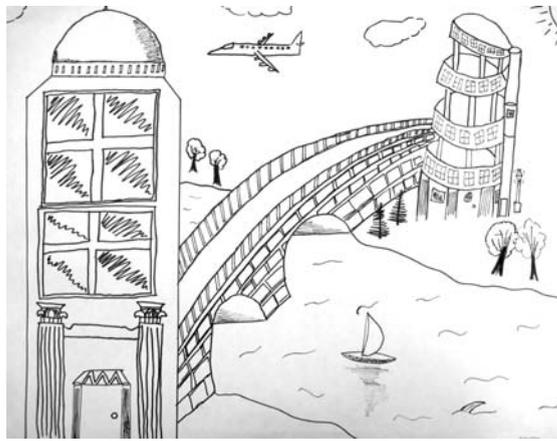
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# CHILDREN'S CENTRE VIEW 2011

## Greenbriar East



**Anne Young**  
Greenbriar East Elementary, Sixth Grade



**Richard Kim**  
Greenbriar East Elementary, Fourth Grade



**Jada Stack**  
Greenbriar East Elementary, First Grade



**Ethan Gasper**  
Greenbriar East Elementary, Second Grade



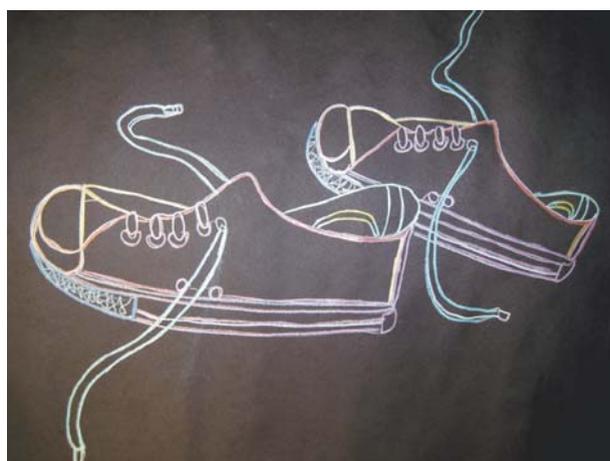
**Laila Davson**  
Greenbriar East Elementary, Second Grade



**Dongjoo Kim**  
Greenbriar East Elementary, First Grade



**Sonia Chaudhary**  
Greenbriar East Elementary, Fifth Grade



**Jahnavi Chindepalli**  
Greenbriar East Elementary, First Grade



**Tae Ho Kim**  
Greenbriar East Elementary, Sixth Grade

# CHILDREN'S CENTRE VIEW 2011

## The Bride's Soul

By Aleena Shahzadi

Chantilly High School, Grade 11

FROM PAGE 5

slavish. She will be left to feed him until I become a part of her again; and then she will die once more, handing me to the mighty angels for the second death. However, it will be an unwanted death, differing with the one she will experience tonight. I don't know when that time will come; for now I am just concerned about our future.

There is no one on the makeshift stage except the couple. I fly down, making Ell the target, thinking of some choices that I have to help her and myself to escape the situation. She is still, and facing down like she is examining the design of her clothes and is scared to touch and feel it; it's a red colored dress that every bride wears on the day of departing from her soul. It's not a bad excuse for not looking up. However, this isn't being done intentionally. She is sad and facing down to hide her tears; it can be clearly told by her sobbing. Ignoring her depressed mind, I crease down and look at her wet face willingly. Her eyes are flooded with tears making their way through the corners of her nose onto her red dress, spreading between the golden stones like dew drops finding their spots on the grass.

The moment she notices my appearance, her tongue dashes through her red lips, tasting the salty white tears. She speaks silently in a bitter manner, not wanting to catch her predator's attention, "I told you not to interrupt me again. I don't need any help; I am just being led to my destiny!"

"By whom are you being led to your destiny? By your mother who was led once before, or by your father who haunted her? I hope you aren't planning to make your kids the target of this tragedy next, because what your parents are willing to do to you is unacceptable to me! They don't own you; you rather take my orders. How can you ignore me? I am your soul, your freedom. You can't have a life without me!" I reply angrily, trying to get as loud as I can, not caring if anyone else there is capable of sensing the invisible.

Without waiting for her answer, I stand up and grab her arm, trying to get her out of that cursed death chair. The man notices Ell's sudden move and joins our argument. "Are you alright?" he demands.

"Yes," Ell replies in the same manner.

Surprisingly, she gets off the stage quietly, not scared as before, and heads straight to the bathroom. Since only she can be seen by others, I walk along with her. We pass by different people in the hall laughing and having fun. For a while, I wish I was one of those people and not thinking about Ell, being on death row. But soon I am back on track and try to come up with some options to solve the problem. Unfortunately, the only thing I can come up with at this moment is the idea of running away from home. Right after I share it with Ell, she holds my wrist and pushes me hard into the wall like she doesn't know I would go through with it. I don't try to chase her, because I know it wouldn't work even if I wanted to. It's one of my silly ideas, I guess.

I don't want to go near her and feel the beating of her broken heart. Why she is going through this, I wonder. Reluctantly, I feel her as a part of myself. The sense is inflicted. Helplessly, I make the final decision of staying with her and start walking toward the makeshift stage, not feeling the need of my wings to fly anymore.

As I stride down, I find myself in the crowd of people cheering for the usual happening. It's time for the execution. The girl will never be seen in public again. I'm not sure whether I should go along with her, or if I should stay alive by myself. The moment has become a noisy silence. I can see the motion

on everybody's lips, but I hear nothing. I am lost in my thoughts. I don't even realize where I am until I see Ell leaving. People are greeting her parents by passing out gifts and not even thinking about what we are going through.

"She is dying!" I scream, hoping that people might respond, but they don't. They can't hear me. Old ladies just want to make the environment as good as they wanted to make on their own weddings, once. They have won, but by making things hard for both of us. They are sacrificing her for their own advantage. I wouldn't mind if they gave her up to God. But this isn't an option; she is becoming the food of a human. She is going to be tested by a man and even if she is innocent, she'll be punished. I think of escaping the moments and leaving Ell behind alone, but I don't want to do that. I can't. We are made to live together. We need each other.

"Listen people! You don't own me. I have the ability to make my own decisions," I yell again, trying to make a point. Ell looks at me with confusion, not wanting to talk. I peek through her eyes, seeing the response that I can't be understood while I am invisible.

Making their way to a white car decorated with red flowers, similar to the way in some cultures flowers are put on graves, her one sister holds Ell from the side of her arms while the other is protecting her dress from touching the dirt on the street, like it matters at this time. I wonder how many souls have left their bodies at this point. When Ell sits in the car, ready to be buried alive, I sit beside her, since the groom is resting in the front seat wearing red, giving us a last chance to be together. Most people are wearing red today—a cultural sign of selfishness, so I doubt that they are aware of this painful experience.

It's getting dark and chilly. The blue sky has turned into a black curtain, patterned with silver stones. Before I look at Ell's fearful face, the window of the car opens steadily, informing us of the frosty weather. The wind flings through one opening of the car and takes off carrying me to the other side, thrusting me into the shadowy atmosphere. Bewilderment takes over, making me incapable of proceeding. Soon, floating in the air, I see myself surrounded by a lot of other shiny, white souls. I look at myself and then at them; we are alike, all of us rambling in the dark, making the sky more colorful. They are all souls like me that were parted from their bodies once and are hoping to get a chance to get together again.

"Our bodies have vanished and we can't stay here anymore," I hear some souls uttering the words over and over. I won't let this happen to me, I think for a moment. I try to get out of the crowd, but I am being held by them. They press me against their masses, making it hard for me to breathe. I struggle to release myself while thoughts of losing Ell take over me. I take one last look at Ell's planet before marching toward the darkness.

I've spent years searching for Ell. I hear a lot of women screaming for help and I know Ell is one of them. All the bodies on earth are dressed in red and the sky is filled with bright wandering souls. It feels like we have made our own separate world; it's the world of the invisible. All we do is search for our bodies, all we see is the women that are alike, and all we hear are the hopeless voices of our bodies.

Helplessly, I give up. I am tired of tracking Ell's voice all over the planet. I wish for blindness, so that I wouldn't have to see anything. I don't want to heed; I don't want to hear Ell's screaming coming out, cutting her throat. I close my eyes, praying to go blind, or to see Ell. At this moment, I don't care what I get; I just don't want to see myself helpless.

I can't remember for how long I keep my eyes closed, but when I open them, I am not blind. Nothing has changed but my faith and I speak to myself one last time.

"I was born to get nothing; it's my destiny. I believe Ell that our destiny is made by others."

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## Greenbriar West Elementary School



**Stephanie Fong,**  
 Greenbriar West Elementary, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Moriah Obnial,**  
 Greenbriar West Elementary, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade



**Lucy Blazquez,** Greenbriar West Elementary, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

# State of Flux



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As much as I delude myself – and others – into thinking that Kenny’s-life-living-with-cancer is just another bump in the road, I suppose it’s only fair, after two and one half years of weekly writing about it, to admit the truth: I wish it were a bump in the road, but it’s more like a sinkhole. Emotionally, physically and every which way including loose.

Most days I manage all that I’m expected to, reasonably well. There are other days however, not so much. Sometimes those days relate to something cancer-related: medication, scan, appointment, chemotherapy – or cancellation or change of any of the preceding; or it can be unrelated, specifically, but related generally, as everything becomes when you’re categorized as “terminal.”

Having employed various mechanisms – and rationalizations since my initial symptoms appeared in late December, 2009 – which ultimately led to my subsequent stage IV lung cancer diagnosis two and one half months later, compartmentalizing has been my greatest ally. A real-life version of “the vault” from a Seinfeld episode, a place where information is stashed for safekeeping and secrecy. However, “the vault” is all mental. It’s not protected by doors and locks. Fort Knox it’s not. In fact, gaining entrance is fairly easy. And once inside, it’s akin to opening a Pandora’s Box of your greatest fears; rulling your roost; beyond your control.

And on those days when control is lost and emotions/energy run down – and negative, and depression sets in: wallowing is easy and giving in to it provides a peculiar sort of calm/a why-fight-it sort of attitude. After experiencing this sort of mental meandering multiple times, I can actually tell/feel when it’s happening; not before, definitely during and almost always after. It’s never easy. However, it is unfortunately a condition with which I am all too familiar.

Assessing its particular cause, other than the obvious cancer connection, is also part of the problem. Knowing and understanding its origin provides me with another peculiar sort of calm. What I have determined is that, as an adjunct to the compartmentalization I regularly employ, my subconscious is weakening under the continual stress of the diagnosis/prognosis. It works so hard to maintain my calm exterior that occasionally it loses its ability to do so, sort of like a rubber band that eventually loses its elasticity. The pulling and tugging and stretching on me emotionally has the identical physical effect that a rubber band would experience under similar demands. And so I snap, sort of (although I don’t shoot across the room): I get sullen and lethargic.

Sometimes, I feel like the character Odo (Rene Auberjonois), the Changeling/shapeshifter from Star Trek, Deep Space Nine. In order for Odo to maintain his “humanoid form” 16 hours a day, rather than exist in his normal, restful, “gelatinous state,” it required constant vigilance on Odo’s part (emotionally, physically; who knows really, it was Science Fiction). As such, there were moments (episodes) when he just couldn’t function normally in his humanoid form; the stress internally to maintain his shape was simply too great. It was only when he returned to his quarters and his bucket that he could relax and regain his composure.

Unlike Odo, I don’t have a normal state to return to: I only have my “new normal” (Kenny-with-cancer at age 57). And some days I wonder if pretending I don’t have cancer might be causing me more problems than admitting to it would. As Dr. Sidney Freedman from the classic television show M\*A\*S\*H said in his farewell episode, “Ladies and gentlemen, take my advice, pull down your pants and slide on the ice.” Or not.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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**Fairfax Water**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**  
**CONNECTION RULE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION/REDEVELOPMENT**

On December 6, 2011, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) held a public hearing regarding an ordinance to establish exclusive water service areas and maximum allowable rates, fees, and charges within Fairfax County for water service. At the same meeting, the BOS enacted the ordinance as Section 65-6-13 of the Code of Fairfax County. Section (a) of the ordinance provides that effective 12:01 a.m. December 7, 2011, Fairfax Water will be the provider of retail public water service within Fairfax County, Virginia, for any new construction or redevelopment of any dwelling unit and any residential or non-residential structure, unless Fairfax Water determines it cannot make water service available due to a utility-related reason.

The ordinance requires that any determination by Fairfax Water that it cannot make service available be made in accordance with policies, rules, or regulations established by Fairfax Water for the purpose of establishing when a utility-related reason exists that prevents it from supplying water. The ordinance further requires that the policies, rules, or regulations be adopted by Fairfax Water after notice and a public hearing.

**At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 12, 2012, Fairfax Water will conduct a public hearing on its proposed CONNECTION RULE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION/ REDEVELOPMENT.** The hearing will be held in Fairfax Water's offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax, VA.

A copy of the proposed rule can be viewed on our Web site at <http://www.fairfaxwater.org>. Those wishing to speak at this hearing or desiring a copy of the proposed rule should call Ms. Eva Catlin at 703-289-6017. Interested parties may submit written comments to [PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org) or mail written comments to:

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All written comments must be received by close of business on Wednesday, January 11, 2012 to be included in the record of the public hearing.

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