

The Quest Chronicles

**December
January**

2011/12

The Divine Vine

(Ms. Connie Divine: Quest Administrator)

As we enter the holiday and winter season, I want to wish everyone a safe and enjoyable winter break! Take some time for yourself and your family to build lasting memories and rejuvenate for the long winter ahead. Remember that we do not return to school until January 4th, 2012.

As your students return to school, please review with them their responsibilities as students: safety, responsibility, and respect in all settings. Long breaks can be difficult for students as structures change back to school.

Throughout the semester, we have seen a steady increase in behavior referrals on the bus since the beginning of the year. The totals below are for both the morning and afternoon rides:

September - 6 bus referrals
October - 12 bus referrals
November- 15 bus referrals

*Please take some time to especially review bus expectations with your child:
*Obey the bus driver by following directions the first time given.
Keep head, hands, feet, and objects to yourself and inside the bus. Keep aisles clear.
Remain seated in your assigned seat. (Back to back, seat to seat, feet on the floor.)
Do not eat, drink, litter, write on, or damage the bus in any way.
Use respectful language and keep voices quiet.*

We would like for you to have some data for Quest as we continue teaching students safety, respect, and responsibility. Following are data for the first semester for behavior referrals and first semester transitions and graduates. Please place more positive emphasis on the graduates and transitions, remembering that as students learn appropriate ways to handle overwhelming feelings they transition out of the program and are then replaced by students at high levels of crisis. Therefore our referral data tends to stay constant.

Transitions (partial and full day): 23
December Graduates: 2
Behavior Referrals: September 253
October 231
December 225

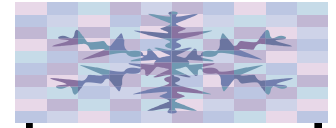
January, historically, has been a tough start to a new year after having time off for the holidays. Your active support in reminding your child of the importance of safety, respect, and responsibility is always helpful and appreciated. A good reminder from parents before getting on the bus on January 4th would be awesome

As December comes to a close and your families plan for the holidays, I hope that all that is close to your heart is close by your side. Thank you for all you do in supporting Quest staff as we support your child

Ms. Slusher: (Program Nurse)



When I think about the months of December and January, my immediate response is to rekindle happy memories of spending the holidays of past. I can easily recall celebrating with music, family, tradition and cheer. I think of playing in the snow, skating on the lakes and the start of winter sports. In general...I conjure up those simple "carefree" childhood thoughts. However, I realize the world is not such a bright and happy place for all children or for many adults during this time of year. Many individuals find these months difficult to get through. Some suffer from stress and depression. In fact, even something as simple as not being outside in the sunshine and fresh air during these cold winter days can lead or add to stress and depression. Many of our C.O.R.E. students lose the routine we have been striving to provide and that can be stressful for them as well. So, I thought it would be helpful to remind everyone to take some time every day to spend de-stressing. There are so many ways to relieve stress and you can find numerous resources online or in the media to give you new ideas. One of my favorite stress busters is to remind myself to take one day at a time and be mindful of the moment I am in. If I just stop and take a few deep breaths and pay attention to the breath as it flows in through the nasal passages, into the lungs and back out again I find myself in the moment, enjoying the simple task of just taking a breath. A few of these mindfully taken breaths every day can really beat the stress of the season.



Quest is a program offered by Columbia Public Schools for at-risk children with special needs.

We are housed at the **(C.O.R.E.)** Center of Responsive Education building.

(Quest)
Center for Responsive Education
4600 Bethel Road
Columbia, MO
65201

Secondary (Junior High/ High School)

Secondary Successes and Other Tidbits

Mr. Duchmann

This is one of my favorite times of the year not just because the holidays are here but we are learning about the Renaissance. I get a chance to share some of my pictures from my trip to Europe. We will not have time to look at all 2000 pictures but we will see Florence, Venice, and Rome. Students will try and imagine themselves lying on their backs for 4 years painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. After the winter break we will study the Reformation and see how Scientists like Galileo and Newton looked at the world.

Mrs. Rieken

The snow has found us again this year. Which makes teaching science even more exciting. We have been learning science trivia while getting the opportunity to earn bonus points toward our science grade. We have really enjoyed learning all of these fun facts. Some of the topics that we will be studying include: classification of animals, motion, and features of the earth, continents, and oceans. The students always look forward to hands on projects and we will be getting our hands "dirty" following the winter break! Oh, what fun!

Mrs. Bivens

Just wanted to let everyone know how proud I am of the students' progress in math semester. It has been busy with three levels of math being taught in secondary. We have basic math, integrated math and Algebra. I do look forward to continuing to sharpen our math skills next semester.



Ms. Fitzmaurice: Elementary

We had a lot to be Thankful for in November! We added a new student to our class; we finished our Science unit about Bones and started a new unit about Changes. We learned about Pilgrims in Social Studies and the first Thanksgiving. We wrote Thanksgiving stories and poems as well.

We continued working on sounding out words in reading and practicing our fluency so we can read smoothly. In Math one group is working on addition, another on subtracting larger numbers, and a third group is working on multiplication strategies and facts. We continue to work on

making good choices so we can earn our percentages!



Websites to ponder: (What to do during winter break?)

Places to take kids in and around Columbia:

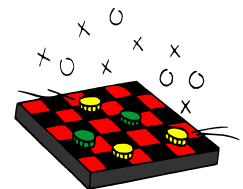
http://www.visitcolumbiamo.com/web/plan_meeting/activities/kids.php

Things to do in Central Missouri:

<http://www.visitmo.com/8/central-missouri.aspx>

Keeping kids active during Winter Break:

<http://www.findingdulcinea.com/features/edu/Keeping-Kids-Active-and-Engaged-During-Winter-Break.html>

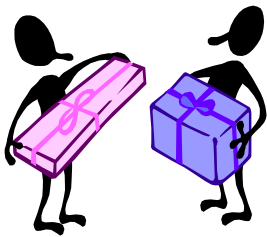


Parenting tips for the Holidays: By [Jean Lawrence](#) WebMD Feature

You know the drill: The "gimmies," the sugar meltdowns, the "are we there yet's?" Then there is the awkward problem of divorce and how to apportion time and attention. Kids reach a high pitch of excitement and sometimes invent surprising new behaviors that require your best holiday parenting skills. "Parents should start with their own expectations," advises Susan Newman, PhD, a social psychology professor at Rutgers University in News Brunswick, NJ, and author of *Make Your Children Feel Special Everyday*, tells WebMD. "Some parents want to be sure their children get everything they want so there will be no tears. This is an unrealistic goal. Parents, especially with younger kids get lost in the hype." Don't try to please everyone, Newman continues. Someone -- a parent, grandparent or in-law -- will be unhappy. But, as a rule, the children will not be -- and it's the little things that they will remember, like time spent playing a board game or teaching you to operate their toys. "We played Chutes and Ladders last Christmas with my older kids," Newman says, "and it was so funny!"



Give the Pleasure of Giving



"Children will model your behavior," Newman says. "If you bake for the homeless shelter (and they help) or if you visit people in the hospital, they will remember that. These patterns stick." "I like cooking with kids," Bunny Tobias, host of the syndicated radio show, *Solutions for Simple Sanity*, tells WebMD. "At my house, each child has a specialty, one was King of Cookies; one was on top of the veggies." Over time, each household develops a list of favorite holiday cookies and treats -- these are repeated each year. Many schools and churches have programs for kids to make gifts or contribute to the less fortunate -- you can suggest some of the kids' allowance be used, instead of just a handout from dad. Children can also help wrap presents -- so what if they aren't straight out of Vogue? "Kids have to see that everything doesn't come from a store," Newman says. Wrapping also creates a sense of excitement and is a good time to talk. Making gifts is also a good way to give kids a deeper sense of the holidays. Going to the craft store, planning a project, and gathering around to make things is also a good time for parents to give kids extra attention. So often the holidays involve grown-ups reuniting and catching up -- kids get shunted to the sidelines. Tobias recommends that children should be encouraged to make their own wish lists -- but to also describe why they want each item, to think a little. This way, parents can gently modify expectations before the fateful unwrapping.

Mr. Green: Secondary Community Skills

Our class consists of High school students that have the primary goal of advancing and expanding their Life, Vocational and Social Skills to improve opportunities for their future. Does that surprise you? I bet not, we are working hard daily on refining and learning new skills that will give us the greatest opportunities after Graduation.

We continue hone our job and I interpersonal skills by working in our building and in the Community.

We have identified as a class 4 Goals for us to focus on for the rest of the year.

- 1) Become more aware of the world around us
- 2) Continue to learn practical information about life skills
- 3) Practice and apply basic life skills
- 4) Become more independent in doing everyday skills

In future newsletters we will be giving examples of how we are achieving these goals.

"Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it."

Steve Jobs



Ms. Williams: Administrative Assistant/ Secretary

It's hard to believe this calendar year is almost over. It feels like the school year is flying by as well.

Just a reminder if you change phone numbers or addresses please let me know, it is very important that we keep contact information accurate, and if those that pick up your student change, please give us that information as well.

As always if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to give us a call at 214-3740.

Enjoy the Winter Break! See you in 2012!

Ms. Broderick: Middle School

In the last month, we have been very busy! In our reading and writing classes, we've been learning about synonyms, antonyms, writing complete sentences, and previewing texts to increase comprehension of what we are reading. In math, we have continued class wide to practice fluency and accuracy of our basic math facts, while also working on our math at our levels. In Science, we have been maintaining our Science notebooks and have studied new terms in the metric system that are helping us in our goal to think, talk, and act like scientists. We have been studying maps and how they

have changed over time in Social Studies, and we are just beginning our studies of ancient world history.

Every week, all students set behavioral goals, and are rewarded for meeting those goals. Most students in our classroom are making great behavioral strides and steadily moving up our school wide level system. The number of behavior referrals in our classroom has dropped in the past couple of months, because our students are making great choices, even when they are upset.

Looking ahead, the new year will bring new changes to our classroom as several of our students will be moving on to other schools. Academically, we will be focusing on constructing paragraphs, studying moon phases, continuing to learn reading comprehension techniques, and more!

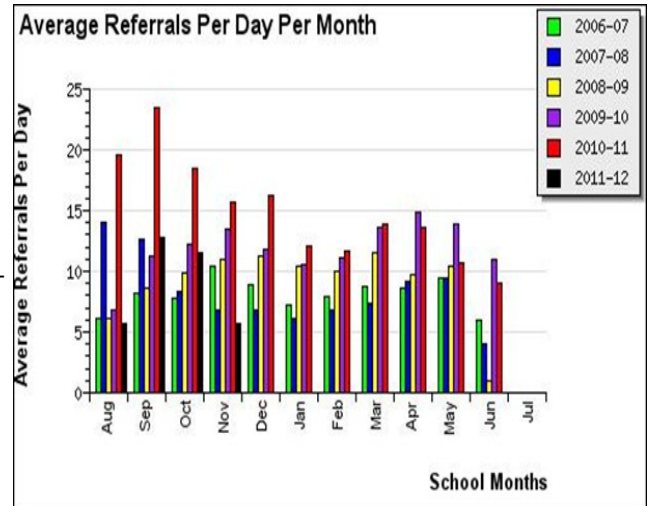
Happy holidays to all!

Middle School
Classroom motto

*"You make the choices,
but you do not get to choose the*

Ms. Tyler: Social Worker/ PBS News

Hard to believe that the year is already one-fourth the way over, and we are well on our way to colder temperatures. At Quest, we have definitely settled into a great second year in our new building and our data is proving that we are off to a great start. The black lines show that we are below our last year referrals in all of the months so far this year. This graph shows the average referrals per day per month per 100 students. This graph also allows us to compare our data over the last six years. You can see that our building did seem to be making an increasing trend in referrals each month, but this year, we have decreased that trend by reducing referrals. With the exception of last year, most of our months are pretty similar in the number of referrals each month. Each month our staff reviews our data to determine trends in the referrals and what expectations we need to focus on in order to be most effective in assisting students with their behavior choices. Be sure to ask your student what expectations we are working on this week at school.



Mr. Kuster: Primary Community Skills

We have been working very hard, refining current skills and learning new skills. Our outings have been very successful. We have had a few opportunities to volunteer at the Food Pantry and the students have been very productive. We have also used our outings to visit several different stores to find a variety of items, practice riding an escalator (a skill that certainly must be learned), and practicing our communication. Our recent trip to a Christmas tree farm was both fun and educational. We are showing our creative abilities in Art class, increasing fitness in P.E., and improving rhythmically in Music. It has been a great start to the year and the next Semester should be incredible!!



Administrator
Connie Divine

Secretary
Ms. Williams

Social Worker
Ms. Tyler

Nurse
Paula Slusher

School Resource Officer
Officer Ash

Literacy Support
Ms. Crowley

Elementary Teacher
Ms. Rippstein

Elementary Teacher
Ms. Fitzmaurice

Middle School Teacher
Ms. Broderick

High School Teacher
Ms. Rieken
Ms. Bivens
Mr. Duchmann

Community Skills Teacher
Mr. Green



Quest Mission

To create an environment
that empowers
individuals' learning and
decision making which
leads to success in school
and beyond.



What's Happening at Quest: <http://service.columbia.k12.mo.us/quest>

Dec/Jan 2011-12:

December:

8th- Winter Party 3:30-5:00

***13th- "The Bridge" Family
School Partnership 6:30-7:30***

22nd- Jan 3rd- Winter Break

January:

2nd-3rd- (No School)

***10th- "The Bridge" Family
School Partnership 6:00-8:00***

16th (No School)

25th (Early Release: Collaboration day)

The Continuous Quest for knowledge

Current Topic:

We are working on Social boundaries using a Program called "Circles".

The CIRCLES Program teaches social distance and levels of intimacy through the use of six color coded concentric circles. Starting from the center circle, which is the self, each new colored circle represents behaviors, feelings, and actions appropriate to the distance from the center, or self. For example, a person may hug and kiss members of the family, people in the Blue Hug Circle, but only wave to the mailman, who is in the distant Orange Wave Circle.

The CIRCLES Program assists students to discriminate different degrees of intimacy and to adapt their behaviors accordingly. The program teaches students how relationships can be formed and maintained according to the social norms of our day. Thus, the CIRCLES Program lays the foundation for people with social deficits due to their disabilities to manage the amount of personal responsibility and social integration in their lives.

