



Summer 2014

Nicasio School News

From the Principal

Editor's Note: Since Christy Stocker, our hard-working principal/language arts teacher, is taking a well-deserved summer break, it seems only fitting to use her column to recognize the achievements of her **Grades 5-8 Language Arts students**. All of them became **award winning authors** when their creative writing entries in the **2014 Marin County Fair** placed in the three highest award levels of their (short story) categories!

~ Mikki McIntyre

A big "CONGRATULATIONS" to the following students for their impressive achievements:
(Ages 9-12) 3rd Place Winter S.; 2nd Place William K., Raul S., Gavrie S., Esmeralda F. & Ashley W.; 1st Place Tino V., Ellierose J., Fiona B., Jamie K., Camilla T., Louisa W., Jasmine G. & Myrtle V.-L. (Ages 13-15) 2nd Place Phoebe B. & Olivia B.; 1st Place Elly P., Anthony M., Varian E.-B., Nicole C., Angelina V. & Maxine M.

"Write On" everyone!!



Nicasio School "Cougars" Merchandise Coming Soon!

Be sure to check out the new line of Nicasio School "merch" - sweatshirts, t-shirts, caps, water bottles, etc.! Samples will be on display at the **Aug. 20th Back-to-School Tea!** Proceeds benefit the Nicasio School Foundation. Contact Monica Snell or Tory Grady for details.



Nicasio School
5555 Nicasio Valley Road
Nicasio, California 94946
☎ 662-2184 ☎ 662-2250
office@nicasioschool.org

~ 1st Day of School ~
Wednesday August 20th

School Bids a Fond Farewell to Laura Rogers and Phil DiGirolamo



Laura Rogers



Phil DiGirolamo

The end of the 2013-14 school year was a milestone for two teachers, **Laura Rogers** and **Phil DiGirolamo**, who are both leaving Nicasio School for retirement.

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A Season of Change for Graduating Class of 2014



Eighth grade students (l-r) Angelina V., Maxine M., Varian E.-B., and Nicole C. are all smiles during June 12th graduation address by Principal Christy Stocker.

To everything, there is a season. That adage certainly rang true for the four members of Nicasio School's 8th Grade Class of 2014 who

Winter

Spring

Summer

Fall

(Continued on page 5)

Students Test Drive their Future Grades and Classrooms on Moving-Up Day



Luna S. (*above*) proudly unfurled the banner she created to welcome everyone to **Moving-Up Day** on **June 4th**. All current, and most of the incoming new students for the 2014-15 school year attended morning classes with the classmates and teachers they will have next year. The visiting new students were (*clockwise, from top left*): Tess R., Ryan D., Haley D., Leo D.-P., Anna D., Kate K., Francesca M. and Logan B.

Beaming Kindergarteners Receive Certificates of Completion



Kindergarten graduates (l-r) include: Moises D., Phoenix W., Eva T., Valeria D. and Adrian M.

Nicasio School's tiniest students stood a bit taller while receiving their "Certificates of Completion" during a special **Kindergarten Promotion** ceremony on **June 12th**. Attired in their "Sunday best" and adorned by their colorful, self-crafted mortarboards, the five kindergarteners - **Moises D., Valeria D., Adrian M., Eva T. and Phoenix W.** - entered the Library in a procession and sang several songs (while demonstrating sign language) for their audience of assembled family members and the school community. Next, teacher **Miss Ellian** described each student's special attributes and accomplishments as he/she was presented with a certificate by **Principal Christy Stocker**. *Congratulations, "grads"!* You are now officially in 1st Grade!

(Continued from page 1)

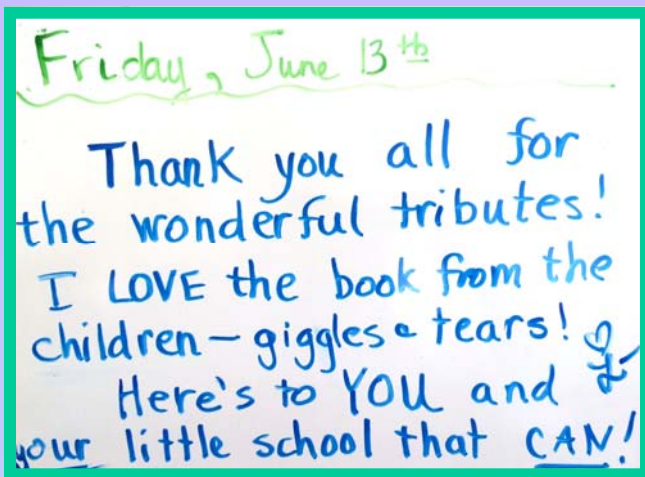
Laura started at Nicasio School as a substitute teacher more than 20 years ago and taught various classroom configurations over the years before her final role as the core teacher for Grades 1/2. Laura touched the lives of many students, families and staff

members during those years. In a recent message to the parent community announcing her retirement, she stated, "circumstances make it such that I am in a role reversal with my Dad, and also I do feel really good about making room for beginning teachers...my own daughter is just completing her first year, and I was a newbie 38 years ago!"



Laura Ramirez (l) and Gisela Alvarado serve homemade tamales at an all-school lunch they helped coordinate - along with other Grade 1/2 parents - in honor of Laura Rogers' retirement.

Phil had previously retired from many years of teaching at Terra Linda High School before joining Nicasio School just this year to teach physical education. He is now retiring "again, for good!" to pursue long-distance bicycle trips and other



Parting message from Laura Rogers on her last day at Nicasio School.

adventures with his wife, Michele.

There were farewell parties, gifts, hugs and well-wishes for Laura and Phil as the school year came to a close.

Among the gifts were tribute books for Laura and Phil that were created by the students and filled with memories and creative suggestions for how to spend their retirement years.

Hopefully, they will heed that sage advice!



Phil prepares to kick off his "final" retirement after teaching PE this year.



Laura Rogers' father, WWII veteran Clark Wold, makes a special visit to Miss Laura's 1/2 Class, sharing stories and memorabilia.

Best wishes to each of you in retirement! We will miss you!

Family Traditions Shared at Heritage Party in 3/4/5 Classroom



A bounty of family stories and favorite foods was shared in Julianne Bretan's 3/4/5 Classroom on May 23rd during the students' Family Heritage Party.

Each student brought a food item to class that represented a special family recipe. They also gave oral presentations from portions of their family history reports. It was a delectable and informative celebration of family traditions!



Ashley W. and Tino V. present their family history reports while Kriz Bell and Elijah V.-L. serve special foods.

Students Showcase their Growing Spanish Proficiency

By Judith De la Pena, Spanish Specialist

To bring the Spanish Program to a close for the 2013-14 school year, the K-2 Spanish class students took part in a musical performance on Wednesday, June 4th. They displayed their growing language skills through three songs: "Three Little Lambs" (using vocabulary of fruits, vegetables and farm products); "San Serafin" (talking about jobs); and "Travel to the City" (using vocabulary of places in the city).

On Friday, June 6th, the 6/7/8 class participated in student-created skits about the "Health" unit they studied. They presented three different

scenarios about visits to the doctor's office and to the pharmacy. In addition, Althea P. performed a small skit titled, "At the Supply Store."

Well done, everyone! Have a great Summer!



Phoebe B. (l) and Maxine M. in their Health skit roles.



Fiona B. (l) and Jamie K. perform their Spanish skit.



K-2 performers John Thomas K. and Eva T.

K-5 Students Throw their Cares ~ and their Kites ~ to the Wind on Lafranchi Hill



Eva T. sends her kite soaring.

Continuing a long-time annual tradition, Nicasio School's **K-5 students** capped off the school year with a trek up **Lafranchi Hill** for **Kite Day** on June 6th to fly kites of all shapes and sizes. Many thanks to **Mary Lafranchi and family** for the use of your hill for this always-fun adventure!



Lucas W. (l) and Adrian M. fly kites as Alexis R. (r) creates a giant bubble.

(Continued from page 1)

adopted **"The Four Seasons"** as the theme of their June 12th **Graduation Ceremony**. Each of the students ~ **Angelina V., Maxine M., Varian E.-B. and Nicole C.** ~ chose a different season as his or her symbol for the ceremony, which took place in the MPR and was attended by over 150 friends and family of the Nicasio School community. Adorned by either a boutonniere or a floral wreath representing his/her "season," each graduate addressed the audience, reflecting on memorable experiences at Nicasio School. Their candid and heartfelt speeches prompted laughter and even a few tears as they spoke of the many ways their school, families and community have touched their lives and how they will carry those influences with them into their new "season" of life ~ high school!

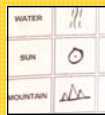
The graduates' accomplishments were noted in speeches by **Principal Christy Stocker** and **Board President Holly McArthur**, who then presented the students with their diplomas. It was an evening that touched the hearts of not just the graduates, but the entire community.

Congratulations, Class of 2014!!



Members of Nicasio School's Class of 2014 delivering their graduation speeches were (clockwise, from top left): Nicole C., Maxine M., Angelina V., and Varian E.-B.

Japanese-Chinese Brushpainting



Substitute Art Teacher **Jill Tisdale** displayed a lovely year-end exhibit of student art in the office that demonstrated traditional **Japanese-Chinese brushpainting** techniques.



Winter S.



Jasmine G.



William K.



Anthony M.

K-2 Students Mix Fun with Learning at Children's Creativity Museum

By Ellian Klein, Kindergarten Teacher



Isla S. rides a vintage carousel horse.



K-2 students share the slide and laughter at the Creativity Museum.

The K/1/2 students enjoyed an adventure to the **Children's Creativity Museum** in San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center on May 27th. A fun time was had by all, as they worked through docent-led interactive activities focusing around art, building and creative expression. The day concluded with lunch at the Children's playground and rides on the recently renovated, 100 year-old carousel.

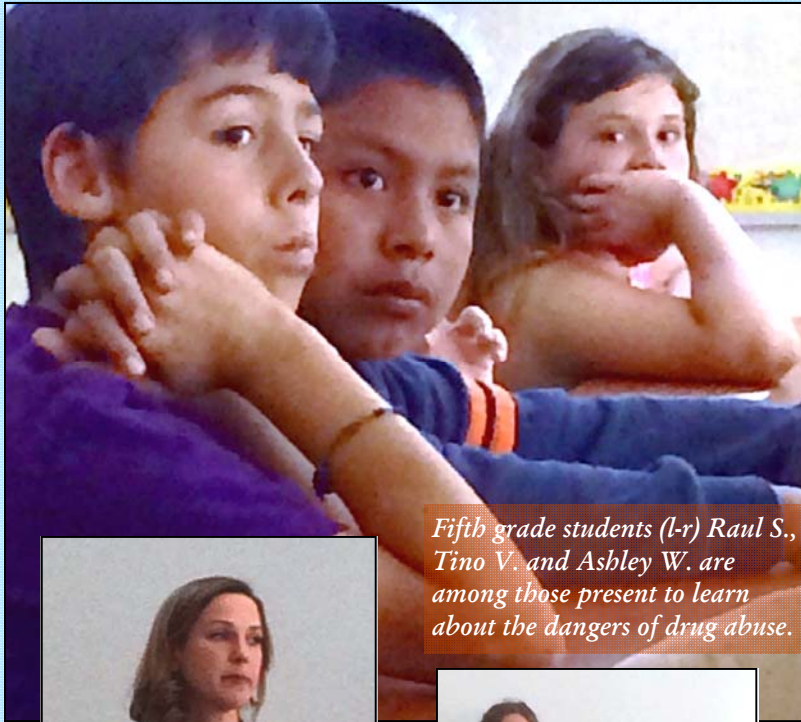


It's a race to the finish for students as they exert some creative energy.



The K-2 students respond to questions by the museum's docent.

Grade 7/8 Presentations Yield Sobering Lessons About Drug Abuse



Fifth grade students (l-r) Raul S., Tino V. and Ashley W. are among those present to learn about the dangers of drug abuse.



Christy Stocker shares her personal story of a tragic loss due to drug addiction.

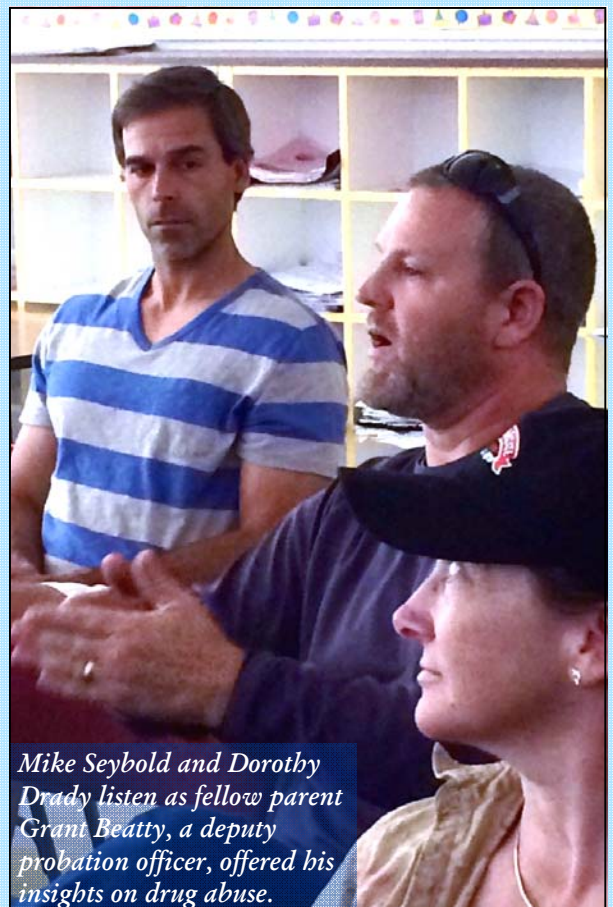


Louisa W. and Winter S. listen to audience input.



Students view the mementoes of a life cut short by drugs.

The destructive realities of drug abuse were spelled out in black & white for attendees of the June 10th **Drug Awareness Research Project** presentations by Christy Stocker's Gr. 7/8 language arts students. The audience, including Gr. 5-8 students, parents, staff and community members, focused intently as project participants handed out brochures they created and gave informative oral presentations about abuse of various drugs. The project's goal was to raise awareness about drug risks, warning signs and treatment options. During the Q&A segment, valuable information was offered by presenters and audience members alike. Christy brought the program to a very somber close by sharing her personal story of the **tragic death of her brother, Chris**, due to **drug addiction**. She also provided a display of mementoes and some personal effects of her brother. It was a grim yet powerful lesson for all in attendance.



Mike Seybold and Dorothy Drady listen as fellow parent Grant Beatty, a deputy probation officer, offered his insights on drug abuse.

❖ Middle School Field Trip to State Capital Mixes Fun with Learning ❖

By Colin Williams, 6/7/8 Core Teacher



A sweet start to trip.....

The Nicasio Middle School went on a whirlwind, jam-packed, year-end field trip to **Sacramento** via **Fairfield** and **Davis**. We made our first stop at the **Jelly Belly Factory** in **Fairfield**. After posing for several pictures in front of the Jelly Belly Volkswagen, we made our way into the actual factory and onto the scheduled tour. After donning the required (and tremendously fashionable) paper hats, we proceeded along the catwalks above



Students get bird's-eye view of jelly bean production.

the factory floor. As we watched the workers turn dials on the machinery and move buckets of sugar and syrup, it was impossible not to think of Wonka's factory and golden tickets. Most impressive were the "Jelly Belly portraits" of famous people—it certainly wasn't the Louvre, but I'm fairly certain that you can't stuff your face full of jelly beans while looking at the Mona Lisa.



"Intro to College 101"

As our mileage climbed, so did the temperature. We arrived at **UC Davis (UCD)** just as the heat began to hit its peak. We were dazzled by a spectacular presentation from one of UCD's application processors. She highlighted all of the things that prospective



6/7/8 group tours gallery of jelly bean mosaic art.

students must do in order to make themselves viable candidates for undergraduate selection into the UC system. Our tour guide, Sequoia, took us on an impressive and informative walk through the UCD



A shaded stop with UCD guide Sequoia.

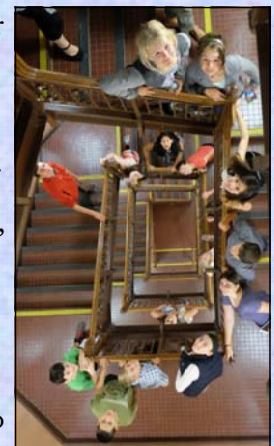
campus (she walked backwards the entire time!). Sequoia was very impressed by our students' knowledge and their behavior!



Students consider college options on inter-active wall of UCD Visitor's Center.

We spent the next few hours in **Old Sacramento** (just next to a real golden bridge!). At the indoor railroad museum, a particularly goofy state park ranger had the kids rolling with laughter. Inside the museum, we spent the better portion of an hour in and out of **GIANT** trains and their dining/sleeper cars. The students had time to explore the many shops and "old west" feel of Old Sacramento before our delicious Mexican dinner at La Terraza Restaurant. The students had a wonderful time eating our giant meal on the upstairs balcony (the overhead fans were a particular hit!).

Early next morning, we made our way to the capitol building. Nic was our tour guide—he too was impressed by the vast political knowledge of our students! We did not see our Governor when we arrived at his office, but we did get to pet the giant metal "California" golden bear that sits just outside his office (or 'bacteria bear' as the docents call it). Students really enjoyed



Students wend their way through the capitol building.

the visit to the capitol building—we learned the history of the architecture and restoration, the process by which legislation is created, and general bits of California history.

We hastened back to Old Sacramento to get a tour of “underground” Sacramento—that part of Sacramento that was ‘raised’ to avoid the floodwaters of the river during and after the **California Gold Rush**. We were led under massive brick and mortar buildings to the original street levels. It was a remarkable tour filled with history, restored artifacts and hands-on activities.



Winter S. and Elly P. take audio tour in train museum.



Varian E.-B. and classmates inspect a vintage locomotive.

After a massive pizza meal at Old Town Round Table we walked one hundred yards to our final destination—the one hour boat tour of the **Sacramento River**. Students relaxed in the sun or in the interior decks as we made our way up and down the river—all the while listening to a particularly amusing and strikingly historic account of the story of the river by our docent host. It was a wonderful way to end our whirlwind field trip. What followed was a relaxing and air conditioned drive back home to Nicasio School.



Boys staying cool in the shade(s).

The trip was a great success due in large part because our parent chaperones (**Tami Beatty, Jason Snell, Marnie Jackson and Karen Taylor**) were PERFECT! They were great drivers, chaperones, supervisors, and friends! The students were angels, as always! They had a great time throughout. EVERY tour guide commented to me that this was one of the best (if not the best) student groups that they had seen. I would also like to thank **Christy Stocker** and **Mikki McIntyre** for all of their behind the scenes paper work and phone calls that go toward making these trips so successful in the first place. It is always a joy to be a part of a fun and engaging field trip when you have so many good people around you—

Special thanks to the remarkable students once again—they are the reason why any of this is possible and every reason why we know our future is in good hands...

Peace

~ Mr. Williams



Mr. Williams and the Middle School students emerge from the California State Capitol Building during their fun and informative year-end field trip to Fairfield, Davis and Sacramento.

3/4/5 Class Ventures to Mother Lode Region for River Study Field Trip

By Julianne Bretan, 3/4/5 Core Teacher

For our end of the year field trip, the 3rd, 4th and 5th graders spent an exciting two days at the **Mother Lode River Center** in Coloma, CA. We **camped** on the banks of the **American River**, and the students learned about **riparian environment** and ecology, erosion, **California geography** and the **impact of humans on rivers and water**. Two highlights of the standards-aligned program were catching and observing insect larvae and invertebrates in the bog pond, and building a model of California on the riverbank using the rocks, sticks and grasses. Also, a **Native American storyteller** came during the evening to share legends and myths passed down to her from the indigenous people who used to make their home by the American River. The students also loved the **s'mores** and **campfire**! We also had a visit from a beautiful **gopher snake**, which was quite exciting. All in all, it was a fun-filled trip where the students relaxed in nature and learned a whole bunch of river science! Much thanks to the **awesome parent chaperones** for helping to make a **great trip** happen!



Students simulate water tables, aqueducts, watersheds, dams and erosion.



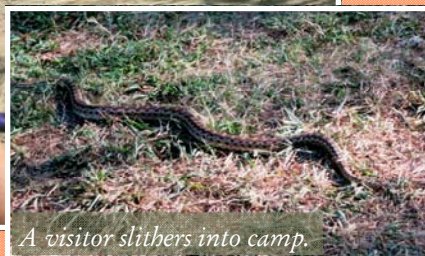
Native American storyteller shares indigenous lore.



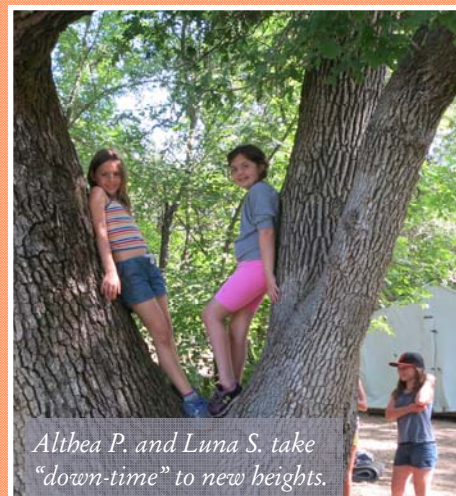
The boys relax in the shade of their tent.



Archie W. sketches and writes his observations about the river.



A visitor slithers into camp.



Althea P. and Luna S. take "down-time" to new heights.

Four Nicasio School Students Earn Medals in 2014 National Mythology Exam

There were gasps of nervous excitement at the May 14th school assembly when Principal Christy Stocker announced that results of the **2014 National Mythology Exam** had arrived. Of the 12 Nicasio School students in Grades 5-8 who took the rigorous exam, four students scored high enough (90-100%) to earn medals. Two students, **Ellierose J.** (Gr. 7) and



Jasmine G. (Gr. 5) each received the “**Athena Gold Award of Excellence**” for perfect scores of 100%. **Fiona B.** (Gr. 7) and **Ashley W.** (Gr. 5) were each awarded **bronze medallions** for their exceptional scores.

~ *Congratulations to ALL exam participants for your outstanding efforts! ~*

Ms. Julianne's Students Study Science in the Garden!

By Julianne Bretan, 3/4/5 Core Teacher

Students in the 3/4/5 class did a fun project this school year which **combined science** with our **wonderful garden**. In January, students planted **fava beans** in CD cases. The students watered their seeds with eye droppers and watched the seeds sprout into tiny plants. They drew, measured and observed the seeds as the sprouts slowly emerged out of the seed pod. Then, the students planted their sprouts in pots which we kept on the window sills in class. Students continued to water and observe their plants. Eventually, the plants were too big for the pots!

With the help of **Robyn Burton**, we planted the bean plants in the garden. We watched them grow and grow until the end of May. At that time, the seed pods were big enough to pick! Each student picked pods and **Ms. Julianne** took the fresh fava beans home to cook. The next day, students got to taste the delicious fresh beans!

This was a fun way to combine the study of the life cycle of plants (a California state standard) with eating something home-grown and delicious!



Althea P. prepares a pot for planting during a 3/4/5 class gardening project.

gratitude gratitude gratitude gratitude
gratitude gratitude gratitude gratitude

Nicasio School is most fortunate to be embraced by a community that gives so generously of its time, talents and resources for the benefit of our students. Whether we managed to catch you in the act (of giving) or not, please know that **EVERY KINDNESS** shown to our students, staff and school is deeply appreciated. Among those to whom we extend a *heartfelt thanks*:

- * **Mark Burton and Hersh & Hersh law firm:** *Donation of office furniture and supplies*
- * **Bruno W., Chase B., & Lucas W.:** *Weekly return of Thur. Envelope box to the Office*
- * **Mina Family:** *Field trip and yearbook scholarship donations*
- * **Kozubik, Burton and Vaughan-Lee Families:** *Donations of baseball supplies*
- * **Jack Kuhn:** *Repair of MPR cabinets*
- * **Strauss Dairy:** *Ice cream donation*
- * **Brian Walker & Rob Winkelmann:** *Exterior lighting troubleshooting & repair*
- * **Robyn Burton & Dan Remer:** *Garden assistance*
- * **Mark Burton, Jorge, Blantz Family, Rob Winkelmann, Robert Meckfessel, Daniela & Ulrich Weeren, Raul Saldana:** *Spring Campus Cleanup*
- * **Robyn Burton & Dan Remer:** *Garden assistance*
- * **Dave Goelz, Jack Kuhn & Rob Winkelmann:** *MPR sound & lighting enhancement*
- * **Gisela Alvarado, Laura Ramirez, Alejandra Diaz & Maria Mercado:** *Staff Appreciation Day lunch*
- * **Robyn Burton & Tory Grady:** *Staff Appreciation Day gifts*
- * **Mike & Monica Seybold, Lucienne Meckfessel, Laurie Kuhn & Monica Snell:** *Staff Appreciation Day yard duty for extended student recess*
- * **Marnie Jackson and students: Nicole C., Angelina V., Luna S., Ellierose J. & Xoxa B.:** *Staff Appreciation Day set-up and decoration*
- * **Lucienne Meckfessel, Robyn Burton & Julia Seidelin-Loose:** *Yearbook*
- * **Robyn Burton, Martha McNeil, Grace Rogers & Laura Psaila:** *Volunteering in classrooms*
- * **Monica Snell:** *Weekly office assistance*
- * **Kim Wallach:** *Water system upgrade project coordination*
- * **District Trustees, Foundation Officers, Parent Club Coordinators:** *Donating countless hours to support the students, staff and school!*

*With gratitude (and apologies!) to anyone
whose kind deeds were not listed!*