InterACT with Hartford Stage

Dr. Zotos is an advocate for the arts in education. He is thrilled about the fact that this school year, for the first time, GPA has a full partnership with InterACT, a Hartford Stage program. The partnership consists of three theatrical productions, all sandwiched by a pre-show hour and a half series of activities and a 45 minute post-show activity. Students in his drama course are able to take advantage of this beneficial program.

The Hartford Stage is “thrilled to offer the opportunity for students to experience the magic of theater,” teaching artist Emely Larson says. “We love coming in to enhance the understanding of the material, for students to get the most out of the theatrical performances.”

GPA has participated for the theatrical performance of “Macbeth” and now “A Christmas Carol”. A third performance, “Somewhere”, is a new play that GPA will also examine and view.

The pre-show workshop is an hour and a half event, in which the students examine the themes and characters. They are exposed to who and what they are going to see and begin to enter the world of the show. For example, for “A Christmas Carol”, students examined the symbolism of the ghosts, the past, present and future, among other aspects of the play. They are exposed to an overview of concepts in the upcoming show through a variety of activities, such as tableaus. They also work with the material through the lens of a variety of content areas. Students examined the Industrial Revolution in the Victorian Era. They looked at employee/employer relationships and what went on during this time period. Other topics covered were labor laws in general and, more specifically, child labor laws and how they apply to the show and the current times that we live in.

When the students return and share their experience with the performance, it is wonderful to see their impressions of the production.

“Students’ individual opinions are so important,” Emely says. Hartford Stage believes that “in order to grow a love of theater in a community, the best way is to work with the youth.” Through attending theatrical performances and getting up on their feet, students experience a different way to delve into themes and material that they may not experience in everyday life.

GPA students participate in a post-production workshop with a teaching artist from the Hartford Stage.

Student Spotlight!

Our November Students of the Month are 9th Grade: Nhan Nguyen, Sommer Hitchens, 10th Grade: Destiny Arroyo, Matt Dash, 11th Grade: Hannah Polinski, Muhammad Niang, 12th Grade: Julian Serrano, Ashley Williams.

“All I feel honored!” Destiny says. “It made me feel better about myself and how much I’ve accomplished so far this year. It gives me that reassurance that I’m working hard and to keep it up.”

GPA students participate in a post-production workshop with a teaching artist from the Hartford Stage.

AT GPA, the staff and faculty works hard to recognize our students on a day to day basis, as well as through the student of the month program.

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Special points of interest:

- GPA follows the Manchester Public Schools delays and cancellations.
- For information on a specific bus the day of a delay, please call (860) 524-4077 the day of a delay.
Unified Arts News

In Culinary 1 we are continuing our studies on cooking techniques and "mise en place" everything in place; we did 2 sauté labs where we sautéed apples for apple pie sundaes. The second lab was chicken and vegetables which was especially fun because we started our knife cuts with a medium dice. To learn baking we produced yellow cupcakes and made homemade frosting. This week we will also practice roasting with whole chickens and potatoes. Meanwhile in Culinary 2 we are moving through our curriculum and starting the fish section where will be cooking numerous seafood items including linguine with white clam sauce. All of the Culinary 2 students are gearing up for the end of the semester where they will be competing in an Iron Chef style tournament.

Group Piano class has been practicing ensemble arrangements of Christmas Carols. The arrangements require 3-6 pianists to work together to play a piece with interworking parts such as bass lines, inner harmony and melody.

Music Technology/Appreciation has begun a unit on Responding To and Analyzing Music. The enduring question is: How do musicians manipulate musical elements within a historical, cultural, and societal context for a certain response? They are applying this question to songs such as Maybellene by Chuck Berry, Through the Wire- Kanye West, and In the Air Tonight-Phil Collins.

The Vocal Ensemble is preparing for a performance at the Unified Arts and Social Studies Parent Night on January 14th, from 6-8 pm. The concert will feature music ensembles from the GPA Jazz Band as well as the GPA Choir.

Unified Arts News, Continued

In Art, students learned that portraits can represent individuals in many different ways. By the beginning of the 20th century photography took the place of literal, traditional portraits and freed up artists to create more expressive and symbolic portraits. Students had the chance to complete portraits by first using the camera and then creating expressive portraits by learning how to make block prints.

Photos: Kailah McCall, Prints by: John Lopez, Justin Robinson, Karina Escobar and Deneja Lopez

In Ceramics, students created a bizarre and strange environment based on the famous artist Sandy Skoglund, who photographs furnished rooms which are inhabited by neon colored animals. One of her most-known works, Radioactive Cats, features green-painted clay cats running amok in a gray kitchen. This project involved sculpting clay animals, painting them, creating environments as a backdrop and then photographing the whole installation!

Crocodiles by Kelly Shouldice and Suzette Kuerbitz

Shining Ornament by Tonyalee Williams and Sherita Rosa

Mathematics and Social Studies News

In College Preparatory Mathematics, students are solving real world problems that involve building and solving multi-step algebraic equations. In Pre-calculus, students created their own invertible and non-invertible functions and described real world situations that these functions could model. In Geometry, students are exercising their abstract reasoning by using their previous knowledge of the distance, midpoint, and slope formulas to prove the triangle mid-segment theorem.

In Mr. Buder’s classes, we have been covering world issues such as HIV/AIDS, Genocide, and child soldiers. We learned about the Rwanda Genocide, the "Lost Boys" in Sudan, how AIDS impacts Africa and the world, learned about Emmanuel Jal (former child soldier), and students are making connections to current events in the world. Students have been reading interviews and first-hand accounts of former child soldiers and people who lived in Rwanda during the Genocide. We will be finishing our unit on Africa and will be moving on to our next unit before break, which is related to contemporary issues within the U.S.
Science News

They have investigated how medications can be administered by use of transdermal patches, and will be studying how fingerprints can be used as a means of identification. Individuals in class will be presenting material about specific integumentary disorders and diseases affecting homeostasis of the human body.

Biology students have been wrapping up their study of Mendelian genetics and are beginning to look into the molecular side of genetics. Students recently completed the unit test and a lab activity involving yeast growth which will bridge our path between the areas of genetics as we narrow our lens from macro to microscopic. From there we will examine how DNA and cellular functions are related. Additionally, 9th and 10th grade students are starting to hear more about the upcoming science CAPT test in March. We will be hosting after school sessions as well as online practice through our website software Studiesland.com. Also, daily practice problems are posted on both the edmodo.com pages and gascience.weekly.com. Students who turn in practice problems will be rewarded with gotcha paws and even special weekly science raffles!

Science News, Continued

In Chemistry, we are learning about why objects (gases, compounds) emit different colored light (think: Neon lights, sodium vapor lamps or the rainbow or aurora borealis). Everything around us is made up of tiny particles called atoms. Atoms in turn have tiny particles called electrons. When an object is heated or electricity is passed through them, electrons absorb the energy, get excited and jump back and forth. This jumping causes them to release the absorbed energy as different types of light. Just as every human being has their own fingerprint, the pattern of light emitted is unique to that element!

The science department is sending home information packets to all 10th grade parents containing information about our plan for improvement, the CAPT overall, and our CAPT practice sessions. If you are a 10th grade parent and have not received this information yet or you have a 9th grader and would like to be sent the information, please email Ms. Thurrott at thurrott@hartfordschools.org.

Staff Spotlight: November Mishi-maya-gat Recipient!

Kevin Simpson is our November Staff Member of the Month! Kevin received the most staff written gotcha cards, along with a student one!

Kevin is born and raised in West Hartford, CT and went to college at Wheaton, in Newtown, MA. There, he majored in English with a concentration in Film. He knew that he wanted to be an educator when a film professor had a profound effect on him—by showing him that a subject that might not change your outlook on life could be so meaningful. Kevin knew that he wanted to be someone who could have a profound effect upon others. He loves teaching American Literature, because he’s interested in American culture. He feels like people underestimate “pop culture” and loves to incorporate pieces of pop culture into his lessons. He feels like most people interact with culture through pop culture and therefore it is an accurate depiction of our world. He loves the diversity at GPA, he feels like the students in his class come from so many different walks of life and that “everyone has arrived at this point in time through totally different experiences”. Kevin loves the different and unique viewpoints that every single one of his students has. He also very strongly believes that although his students are younger than him, that their opinion is just as important and he doesn’t like the mentality that only older people have experiences that are important. Thank you for all of your hard work, Mr. Simpson!
Community News - Study Island and Annual Staff/Student Basketball Game

A big thank you to our continued local sponsors, Dunkin Donuts and Dairy Queen, who have continued to donate items to be prizes that students can “buy” with their Gotcha Paws that they have been saving up as they earn them. Thank you for being respectful, responsible and safe, GPA!

* Study Island is a web-based program that students can access from school or at home as an academic resource. Study Island is an opportunity to provide our GPA students with additional support as needed, as well as SAT and SBAC preparation. There is also support for the Science CAPT, as well. Students will have 24/7 access to this program. Teachers have already begun to pilot use of this with reading courses and soon all GPA students will have access. Login information will be provided by teachers. More information on the program is available at www.studyisland.com.

* Our Annual Staff/Student Pre-Turkey Day Basketball Game was held the half-day before Thanksgiving. The game was structured with the first half played by freshmen and sophomores and the second half by juniors and seniors. The staff rotated players throughout. Staff won, 79-65. “Everybody who played showed good sportsmanship,” Mr. Wosleger, GPA’s ISS paraprofessional said, “the enthusiasm of the players and other students was fantastic.” Mr. W. knows good sportsmanship, he is the head baseball coach at East Hampton High School! The students played a great game. Shemar Spencer, grade 9 played well at both ends of the court, Mark Billingsley is a well-rounded player and Ryan Brumant rained in a number of long three-pointers. The staff players also had some shining moments, with Mr. Houchens and Mr. Jacobson leading them to victory.