

January: Discovery Class at Mauro-Sheridan where *Adventure Awaits!*

Adventure awaits Ms. Jodee Webb's students when they arrive for *Science Discovery*, a weekly hands-on enrichment class for PreK to Grade 3 students at Mauro-Sheridan. Last year's focus on the environment transformed the room into a rainforest with paper sloths and snakes trailing down from the ceiling. This year the vines are replaced with webs as students investigate structures in nature from snowflakes to root systems to houses built by animal engineers! Students are learning that bees build hexagons for a reason and making a web as strong as a spider's is a major construction project. Even leaves and plants have structure if you just look carefully! Students asked about human engineers and what they do, so the students built towers and tested them for strength. Science Discovery is everyone's favorite class but it doesn't end there! Students take materials home and reproduce experiments and activities with their families! As one student told Ms. Webb, "We did the germ experiment at home with soap and pepper. What are we doing next?" There's a book about the pyramids on her lab table and three bird nests are up on the shelf. Ms. Webb is already planning the next science adventure for her



excited students! The Spring semester will bring twigs and branches to the supply table as nest building takes over for the 200 plus students who join Ms. Webb every week.

February: Postcard Exchange connects 4th Graders across the country



Ms. Lauren Bitterman's 4th grade students at Mauro-Sheridan are learning regional geography by traveling to the other 49 states by postcard! Integrating the school's communications theme with Social Studies means writing to schools across the country and learning about new places when students write back! Last week a postcard from Utah inspired a discussion of the great Salt Lake; did you know that Missouri gets its name from a tribe of Sioux Indians and means 'people with wooden canoes'? Ms. Bitterman uses technology, another MASH magnet theme, to connect with teachers from around the world to bring real-life stories into her classroom. The students are excited to share the facts about a state whenever a new postcard arrives: the project asks for messages to be written on postcards that share what is special about a location! Not to be outdone, the class has crafted its own postcards about Connecticut and addresses

them to Grade 4 classrooms in cities and towns across the US. The postcard from Utah this year was the first response from that state in the four years Ms. Bitterman has been doing the project. This year the students are hoping to hear from every state! Marvin O. is excited to see if Florida sends a card; a postcard from Pennsylvania came last week! It is halfway through the year and the class is off to a good start learning the geography of the United States AND making new friends along the way.