

THE EXPLORER

A Word from our Director

Dear Parents,

At the end of another successful school year, I wish to thank you for your support of both the Armada Middle Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Macomb Academy of Arts and Sciences. Your interest in the educational programs at the academies is what sustains our work and our dedication to excellence for our students. The students have been recognized at awards ceremonies at both the middle school and at MA²S after working very hard to achieve at an outstanding level in advanced/honors programs. I wish to congratulate them, again, for a job well done.

As of this writing, we have 40 new students beginning with our two academies in September, and we expect more as the summer progresses. I would like to extend a special welcome to our new 6th and 9th graders. **Sixth grade students and parents: Please mark your calendars for Tuesday, September 6th at 6:30 PM for a short special meeting prior to the 6th Grade Orientation at Armada Middle School. Ninth grade students and parents: Please mark your calendars for Thursday, August 25th when MA²S will invite students to an all-day special orientation. Information about both events will be coming soon.**

Both of our academies in Armada offer unique opportunities for learning for our students. They are more than typical honors courses, as a result of our focus on project-based learning, natural learning and research. Technology is certainly embedded in all that we do, but more importantly our former students tell us that *thinking* is the basis of their education at MA²S. We have strived to carry that focus to our middle academy students, as well. Thinking deeply and differently about course content and being able to use that content in meaningful ways is what matters. That is our key question: "*What matters?*" We look forward to exploring this with all of our students during the 2011-2012 school year.

Thank you once again for your support. Have a great summer!

Eddie Fitzgibbon

SUMMER 2011

Index:



Alumni Corner pg. 2



Beyond the Walls – Endless Opportunities with the 6th Grade pg. 2



Academy Clean Up pg. 2



To Catch a Mouse with the 7th Grade – pg. 3



9th Grade Orientation – Save the Date pg. 3



Contacts pg. 3

Alumni Corner

After graduating from the Macomb Academy of Arts and Sciences and Armada High School, Jenna attended the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. She graduated from Michigan in 2007 with a major in English. From 2008 - 2011 she worked in Bucheon, South Korea at the Reading Town English Academy. Most recently, Jenna moved to St. John's Newfoundland, Canada where she plans on pursuing an advanced degree focusing on secondary education and possibly working at a local newspaper. She says she is intrigued by the choices she has available to her at this time in her life.

Jenna took the time to share several comments and observations about her time at the Academy, "I felt very well prepared for college academically, since the Academy encourages the students to take responsibility for their own learning. This format

of classes and the assignments given to Academy students really mimics the kind of things you can expect once you're in college."

Her words of advice for current Academy students include "Respect the education you're getting. The mentality of many high school students (and college ones) is to get enough information to get through the next test, purge, and start up on the new material without retaining much of what just happened. Take advantage of your teachers as resources –they are there to help, and they are great at what they do. Take advantage of your fellow students as resources, everyone has something that they're good at; you can learn a lot from them. And most importantly, take advantage of your own learning; you're at a time in your life when you're at the cusp of the rest of your life. Learn it now, or you'll definitely wish you had."



"I felt very well prepared for college academically, since the Academy encourages the students to take responsibility for their own learning...."
Jenna Parks

BEYOND THE WALLS - ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES

The 6th grade AMA²S students in Mrs. Markey's Science class participated in a lesson that was given completely in an online environment. The students used blogs, WebQuests, virtual tours and screencasts to learn about rocks, volcanoes, earthquakes, and the formation of mountains. Blackboard, a web-based learning management system, acted as the interface for communication as the students received and submitted their finished work. This method of learning was a big hit among the students and provided them with unlimited resources in their quest for knowledge. It also addressed several technology standards from the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) whose goal is to create proficiency in global learning in the digital age.

ACADEMY CLEANS UP

On Wednesday, June 1st, 9th – 11th grade students pitched in right alongside teachers to cleanup the school's gardens and grounds. Flowers were planted, hedges were trimmed, and weeds were pulled on what turned out to be a beautiful summer day. The pride and respect that our students have for their school and each other is outstanding. Thanks to all!



TO CATCH A MOUSE - IN 2011

The 7th grade Academy science students in Ms. Stephanie DeMarco's class have been energetically working on their last project of the year entitled – The Mousetrap Project. The original game of Mousetrap first hit the marketplace in 1963 – almost a ½ century ago. The 7th grade students' 2011 version incorporates many similar qualities of the original game but focuses more directly on various concepts of physics such as Newton's 3rd law of Motion. After the students create their ideal mousetrap and subsequently catch their mouse – they use current day technology to videotape their mousetrap in action. Their movies are then presented to the class at large in a final project presentation. When Ms. DeMarco asked the students if they liked this project, they responded with an overwhelming shout of "YES!" Some students remarked that they especially liked the hands-on construction of this project and really liked the way they could bring their own personalities into their mousetrap design.

SAVE THE DATE - ALL NEW 9th GRADE STUDENTS

New student orientation for incoming 9th grade MA²S students will be held Thursday, August 25th beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the Gallery. This year's orientation will focus on team building through a series of activities that will take place at Echo Park in Leonard, MI. Students will be transported from the Academy to Echo Park via district school buses. S.T.E.P.S., Inc. of Ann Arbor, MI will be providing a series of ground-based obstacles to facilitate outcomes such as effective teamwork, better planning, improved communication, stronger leadership, and respecting diversity. Academy teachers and a select group of current students will be on hand as participants and guides. More information regarding this orientation will be mailed to new students during the month of July.

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