



# The Kindezi Newsletter

## School

VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 1 | FALL 2011

A NEW  
YEAR FOR  
KINDEZI!



## Teacher-led Extracurriculars Add New Life to Kindezi

by Kathleen Jones

The first year of operation for any organization is filled with figuring out the nuts and bolts of how things are going to work. The second year... well, that's when things really start to get exciting! The Kindezi School has been no exception, as teachers have taken on the additional role of leading free after school clubs for all Kindezi students.

Our extracurricular club offerings this fall run for eight weeks, from early September to early November, and provide students with opportunities ranging from physical fitness to creative writing to honing geography skills. Over 40 Kindezi students are participating in this free program. Below is a brief listing of the clubs that students are currently participating in:

- **Get Fit Kindezi** is a program for Kindezi students, staff and parents who want to get moving with the goal of running, walking, or run/walking a 5K fun run in November. Students also receive education surrounding nutrition, stress relief, and creating healthy habits of mind.



Creative Writing Club



Get Fit Kindezi



Geography Club

- **Art Club** is for K-2 grade students. This is a place where students can create and spend time focusing on the visual arts with watercolor, pastels, acrylics, and other mediums.
- **Geography Club** is for 2-4th grade students. Students will discuss how geography affects and shapes cultures as well as expand their knowledge of countries, continents, and topography. Fourth grade students will study for the National Geographic Geography Bee in the spring!
- **Cursive and Calligraphy Club** focuses on teaching cursive and calligraphy handwriting to 3-4th graders, who will practice their cursive skills by writing letters to someone they care about. Students will learn to write more quickly and increase fine motor development.
- **Creative Writing Club** allows K-2 students to walk through the steps of the writing process in a creative and supportive environment. Young writers are investigating different genres of writing according to their interests.

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## FOUNDER'S CORNER

by Dean Leeper, Principal and Founder

Starting The Kindezi School was an act of faith. There was no successful model out there with six students per class we could replicate. Furthermore, the scientific research on class sizes smaller than 10 was and is almost non-existent. Meanwhile, the class size research that compares classes of 15 to 25 does not show great benefits. Yet here we were trying to start a charter school that would sacrifice a great deal financially in order to have family-sized classes. We had to have faith that, even without scientific research to give us confidence, we were not wrong in thinking that a school with classes of six would be better for many kids.

After one year, it is still too early to start making any bold scientific claims. However, it is time at least to begin addressing the question: Are children more likely to achieve their potential in a school with family-sized classes? I think the answer is yes. Obviously, I am biased but some irrefutable facts do support that opinion. Parent satisfaction, student satisfaction, and "before and after" academic assessments all support that claim.

According to our end of year survey, 100% of our parents stated they are pleased with their child's educational experience at Kindezi. Also, 100% agreed that their child has a positive relationship with his/her teacher. 100%

*continued on pg 4*

# About the Newsletter

Newsletter Mission Statement:  
"Increase Our Capacity and Grow Community"

- It is a tri-annual publication. Copies are freely given to all parents and community.
- Our volunteers: Brent Brewer, Jennifer Drummond, Cescely Porter Hill, Kathleen Jones, Dean Leeper, Cindi Maberry, Beth McBee, Angela Pelletier, Maria Wenger and Yolanda Wright-Udoh

## Advertise in your community

Please contact Brent Brewer at [bdbrewer@yahoo.com](mailto:bdbrewer@yahoo.com) for information regarding prices and sizes of ads.



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## Extracurriculars Add New Life

Many thanks to Samantha Palladino for coordinating our extracurriculars program, and to the following teachers who are organizing one of our clubs: Mashariki Wilson, Vonn Davis, Yomara Velez, Faith Wilbanks, Laura Rulon, Kathleen Jones, Alison Brown, Kaleen Enke, Andrea Ellington, Maria Wenger, and Jenn Drummond.

imagination

VALUE

CREATIVITY

LEADERSHIP



The Kindezi Newsletter  
School

confidence

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# YOUTH PAGES

celebrating the talent of our children

expression

character

empathy

AWARENESS

IDENTITY

strength

The Atlanta Botanical Gardens put out a call for Atlantans to create original scarecrows, and the first graders at The Kindezi School have risen to the challenge. Since reading is so important to Kindezi students, they worked together to create a scarecrow teacher reading to two scarecrow children. The title of their scarecrow is "Fall in Love with Reading." Their scarecrow, and others from amateur and professional scarecrow-makers around Atlanta, will be on display at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens through the month of October. The first graders will be visiting the Gardens at the end of October to see their scarecrow among its new scarecrow friends.

# First Graders with their Scarecrow

by Maria Wenger & Cescely Porter Hill



**Ms. McGhee**  
Cayenne Davis  
Sadarius Higgins  
Marquez Owens  
Robert Poole  
Adam Rocker  
Jaeda Slaton

**Ms. Wilbanks**  
Janiyah Alford  
Kayla Beasley  
Kaiya Ciho  
Jaden Favors  
Lucia Gravel  
Rontae Page

**Ms. Maria**  
Jalivia Aikens  
Christa Augustin  
Ava Hill  
Ayinde Johnson  
Christian Mack  
Camille Smith

**Ms. Porshe**  
Raet Bebley  
Layla Green  
Jabarrie Jones  
Deontae Page  
Carrington Smith  
Gavynn Sutton



# Chattahoochee Nature Center with the Kindergartners

by Jennifer Drummond



The Kindergartners really enjoyed their first field trip of the year to the Chattahoochee Nature Center. When we arrived we were able to explore the Discovery Center and even see a nature guide feed a live snake and care for it. After enjoying a picnic lunch, we made our way down the butterfly garden path with our nature guide to look for living and non-living things. We made a living and non-living list that included moss, curved trees, rocks, a pond, butterflies, a bench, and a plant that eats bugs! At the end of the hike we were able to sit down look at the different types of animal feet and skin coverings. We even got to touch a real live snake! We determined that the snake's skin felt soft and smooth. We then followed another path to where we were able to see a bald eagle, beaver, and owls. By then we were exhausted and very happy to enjoy a relaxing ride back on the school bus. When we returned to school we made a chart of all the activities we did at the nature center. After listing the activities, we sequenced them in order from beginning to last.

We can't wait for our next field trip to the pumpkin patch!



**Ms. Laura**  
Jack Almond  
Savannah Haywood  
Cameze Mapp  
Marley Rogers  
Joshua Upshaw  
Eva Warren

**Ms. Mashariki**  
Aliyah Gaddy  
Kennedy Maberry  
Isaac Nuriddin  
Kingsley John Royal  
Diego Shipmon  
Demarion Wiley

**Ms. Drummond**  
Demarco Calhoun  
Eddie Cooke  
Princess Gill  
Luca Pelletier  
Shemaiah Perry  
Abram Sullivan

**Ms. Hall**  
Elijah Brown  
Zamari Crowder  
Ry'en Dillard  
Savio Fernandes  
Frankie Rindlesbach  
Milan Stodghill

*"My favorite part was touching the snake!"* – Savannah

*"My favorite part was getting to see the bald eagle and the beaver!"* – Marley

*"My favorite part was riding the bus for the first time!"* – Luca

*"I liked eating lunch outside on the picnic tables!"* – Issac



# The Kindezi Pandroids Get ROBOTIC With It!

Five adventurous Kindezi 4th graders, Evan Rodgers, Kyro Cameron, Liam Green, Nubia Udoh and Sami Almond, have embarked on a new adventure. They have formed a First Lego League robotic team, The Pandroids, and will compete in the Boeing First Lego League competition on December 10, 2011. Every year, The First Lego League (FLL) releases a challenge for thousands of 9-14 year olds from all around the world to solve. The FLL competition is not just about making the coolest robot do tricks. FLL stresses the importance of always displaying gracious professionalism; therefore, teams are judged on good sportsmanship and team work during the competition. They also want the competitors to apply their problem solving skills to help solve real world issues, so they are also judged on the presentation of their research project based on the current year's challenge. Finally, the team will pre-program their robot to complete as many game challenges as possible to gain as many points as they can.

This year's FLL challenge theme is The Food Factor. FLL teams must research one food product from its beginning (planted, hatched, born, etc), its harvest, processing, distribution, preparation, and finally to its end, the dinner table. The team must discover a problem in food safety that exists throughout this process and come up with a creative way to solve the problem or enhance an already existing solution. In preparing themselves for the competition, the Pandroids have already attended a robotic workshop at the Fernbank Science Museum, where they were introduced to the Mindstorm NXT programming system and learned some of its basic functions. Yes, they are writing computer programs! They have also

by Yolanda Wright-Udoh



attended a robotic exhibit hosted by North Springs Charter High School, where they were able to get more hands-on experience writing and downloading programs to their robot, controlling some really cool robots created by

high school students, and were able to experience using the DaVinci Surgical System (a real robot used to conduct surgery!), and experiencing other really cool robots.

Kwame Royal and Yolanda Wright-Udoh are co-coaching the Pandroids, and all of the team's parents are serving as their mentors. The Pandroids have also been sponsored by CEISMC of Georgia Tech by way of the Boeing Grant; their team registration, challenge kit, a weekend robotic workshop and registration to the Boeing competition has been covered by this sponsor-

ship. John Harris of SAP America Inc. also donated his Mindstorm NXT kit to the Pandroids. The Pandroids are very excited about this new experience and plan to show all of the other FLL teams in Georgia what Kindezi students are made of!

The Pandroids will not only acquire the knowledge of using the Mindstorm NXT software to program their robots and develop strong presentational skills but they will also learn the meaning of true teamwork. They are learning so much in such a small amount of time, including how to persevere through obstacles, disappointments and continuous failure in order to finally achieve success. So, when you see the Pandroids walking through the hallway, lift them up, for they truly represent the spirit of Kindezi.

# The 1st Annual Kindezi Appeal

by The Kindezi School Board

As members of The Kindezi School's Board of Directors, we invite you to support education and enrichment at The Kindezi School!

As a result of our school's innovative, student-centered model, additional private funds are often needed to provide our students with comprehensive, project-based learning opportunities and resources during and after school. Your donation will help us provide greater educational and enrichment opportunities for 120 K-4th grade students. Won't you please consider making a donation to The Kindezi School during our 2011-2012 Annual Fund? This special campaign runs from October 24 - November 11, 2011.

The Kindezi School is a 501(c)(3) and 509(a)(1) non-profit organization. There are a number of ways to give:

**Gifts by Check:** If you wish to mail your gift, please send your check to: The Kindezi School, 98 Anderson Ave. NW, Atlanta, GA 30314

**Gifts by Credit Card:** If you wish to make your gift online using a credit card, please visit our website at [www.kindezi.org](http://www.kindezi.org).

Here are some examples of some of the programs and opportunities your donation could support:

- **\$1000:** Project Based Learning – Provide one grade level an entire year's worth of materials and resources for our daily project based learning block
- **\$250:** After School Tutorial – Provide ten hours of after school tutorial in math or language arts for one Kindezi student
- **\$100:** Art Education – Provide art supplies for two classrooms of students for the year
- **\$50:** Literacy – Provide seven new books for a Kindezi classroom library
- **\$25:** Understanding of Current Events – Provide one classroom with a Time For Kids Magazine subscription for one school year

Your tax-deductible gift will make you a Friend of Kindezi. As a part of the Kindezi family, you will receive:

- A subscription to our tri-annual newsletter
- Invitations to special events throughout the year
- An opportunity to visit Kindezi's campus for a school tour and round table discussion with our Principal, Dean Leeper

Thank you so much for contributing before November 11th! We sincerely appreciate your support. For additional information, please contact Kathleen Jones, Annual Fund Coordinator, at [kjones@kindezi.org](mailto:kjones@kindezi.org) or (404) 247-7514.

*Will the real tweenager please stand up?*



Conceived & Directed by  
Rosemary Newcott

**OCT. 29 - NOV. 13**

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[alliancetheatre.org/tweenagers](http://alliancetheatre.org/tweenagers)

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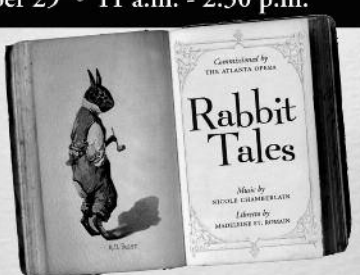
## Rabbit Tales


**World Premiere at the Wren's Nest**

Join us for family-friendly activities from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. including storytelling, museum tours, craft activities and face painting. At 1:00 p.m., audiences will be enchanted with the world premiere performance of the Atlanta Opera's first-ever opera commission, *Rabbit Tales*, on the outdoor stage in the natural grass amphitheatre. Stick around after the performance for a talk-back session with the composer, librettist, director and designer. Bring your lawn chair or blanket and enjoy your picnic or snack on the lawn!

*Opera Guide corresponds directly with Common Core Georgia Performance Standards*

For booking information, visit [www.AtlantaOpera.org](http://www.AtlantaOpera.org) or email [education@AtlantaOpera.org](mailto:education@AtlantaOpera.org)





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## FOUNDER'S CORNER

stated that their child looks forward to going to school everyday. Our targeted satisfaction rate was 90% in the first year because we knew it would be our hardest year. We significantly surpassed our own expectations.

Academically, the happy kids were making tremendous advancements according to the DRA, ITBS and CRCT. The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) is an individually administered assessment that measures all elements of reading from fluency to comprehension. It then simplifies the student's performance to a grade level equivalent. According to DRA results, our students jumped up nearly one and a half grade levels in just one year. For a group that was making less than a year's worth of progress each year, that is strong growth.

On the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, which compares our students to students around the country, our students started the year slightly below average and jumped up to well above average in just one year. In Reading our fall 2010 score was 51st percentile but it went up to 61st percentile in spring 2011. For Language, 47th percentile in fall turned into 59th percentile in the spring. In Math, our 49th percentile jumped up to 62nd percentile by spring.

Then there's the dreaded CRCT. While fear of the CRCT is driving many Georgia schools to cut recess, to cut programs like music, drama, and art, and to avoid constructivist approaches



## The 2011-12 Kindezi Governing Board of Directors

### On the Cover

**1: Tanya Washington**, Board Chair; chairing Board Development and Strategic Planning Committees

**2: Denise Blake**, Board Treasurer; chairing Finance Committee

**3: Angela Pelletier**, Board Secretary; chairing Facilities and Communications Committees

**4: Larry Alford**, PTSA President; co-chairing Fundraising Committee

**5: James Beasley**, chairing Personnel Committee

**6: Brent Brewer**, co-chairing Fundraising Committee

**7: Dean Leeper**, Founding Principal (*not pictured here*)

## Updated Kindezi Website to launch soon!

like "project-based learning", The Kindezi School is doing the opposite. Our students had an hour of break time each day, one hour of project-based learning, and specials like art, music, and PE each day last year and still we performed exceptionally well on the CRCT.

Our CRCT scores were higher than the average Atlanta and Georgia scores in all subjects. We scored among the top performing charter schools in the city after just one year of teaching these students. Not a single Kindezi student had to do summer school because 100% of them passed the Reading portion of the CRCT.

At a time when financial restraints are causing schools to increase their class sizes, The Kindezi School has reduced them to six students. This is made possible largely by the sacrifices of our staff. We could all make more money elsewhere and wear fewer "hats" but we care about answering this important question. Would it make a positive difference if all parents could choose a family-sized class for their child? That answer may take a long time to answer with scientific rigor. But those of us who work here and send our children to The Kindezi School already know the answer.