

December 2023 Newsletter



School Hours

Monday through Thursday 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Friday 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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Upcoming College Visits:

- None in December

IMPORTANT DATES

- 12/2/23 Finn's Birthday
- 12/3/23 A Christmas Carol at Fitzroy Mansion (1:30pm to 4:30pm)
- 12/6/23 Activity- Wings over the Rockies
- 12/12/23 Networking Event 4:30- 6:30pm
- 12/14/23 Ski Trip
- 12/15/23 Last Day of the Quarter
- **WINTER BREAK- No**

Monthly Message From Our Executive Director, [Michelle Tuengel](#)



I would like to be one of the first to wish you Happy

Holidays. Regardless of how or what you celebrate, this is the time of the year to gather with friends and family and be thankful for all that we have. Now more than ever I wish each of you health and happiness. Getting caught up in the hustle and bustle of shopping, gifts, and the trappings of the season is very easy. I hope you can find some time to reflect on all of the wonderful moments you have had over the last year. Find some time to enjoy the little things. My family has a tradition of getting hot chocolate, listening to Christmas music, and driving around to see all of the wonderfully decorated houses. Maybe you always make some special treat or cookie this time of year or snuggle up on the couch to watch a favorite movie. Whatever it is that makes this time of year special for you, I hope you do it with those that are important to you.

Friday, December 15, 2023, will be the last day of the second quarter. We will do all the report cards for the 2nd quarter on Monday and Tuesday, December 18, and 19th. Our Winter break starts on Monday, December 18,

students and limited staff
(December 18- January 2nd)

- 12/24/23 Christmas Eve
- 12/25/23 Christmas Day
- 12/26/23 Kwanzaa
- 12/30/23 Papa's Birthday
- 12/31/23 New Year's Eve
- 1/1/24 New Year's Day
- 1/2/24 First day of 3rd Quarter (Students and Staff back to school)

[Click Here to View Our December Calendar!](#)



Birthdays this month

**Finn
Papa**

**Donor Spotlight
December 2023**

We would like to thank the following individuals and companies for their generous donations and pledges of support during the month of November and our Silent Auction held on 12/3/23:

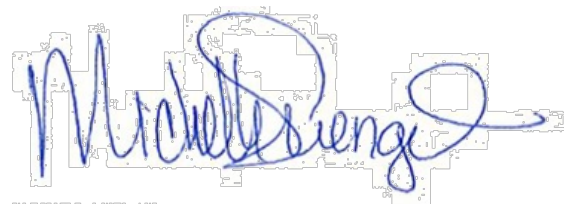
- **Madonna Nuce**
- **Ron Zinter**
- **April De Roin**
- **Bob Gamet**
- **Cathy Lambardo**
- **Kate Oh**
- **Ken Gosselink**
- **Chris Parker**
- **Mark Sawyer**
- **Micki Benge**
- **Ron Koehler**
- **Kayla Presnal**
- **Susie Isaac**
- **Todd Benge**

2023, for all students. We will all return to the building for the second semester on Tuesday, January 2, 2023. Some staff will be available over the 2-week break if you have any questions, but there will not be any classes during this time. We will be setting parent-teacher conferences in the first few weeks of the new year. Please let us know if you would like to come into the building or would like to schedule a virtual conference through the computer.

I would like to welcome Naoki who has joined our High School. We are so excited to have you here and to be a part of your education experience. I wish you the best.

I hope each of you has a safe and happy holiday season.

Happy Kwanzaa, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Boxing Day, Happy Omisoka, and Merry Christmas.



Referral Program
Reminder!!

Attention wonderful Accelerated families (and friends)! The 2023-2024 school year is almost halfway through as 2nd quarter wraps up on December 15th. By this time in the school year, it is easier to see what is and is not working for your student's education. Because of this, we want to remind our

- **Craig Havel**
- **Stephanie Sawyer**
- **Michelle Tuengel**
- **Raechel Kimsey**

Companies who donated to our Silent Auction

- **Comedy Works**
- **Loveland Ski Area**
- **Denver Zoo**
- **Stanley Hotel Estes Park**
- **Denver Art Museum**
- **History Colorado**
- **Colorado Symphony**
- **Sipping n Painting Hampden**

For information on becoming a donor, please visit acceleratedschools.org or contact us via [email here](#).

Donate Here

families (and friends) about our referral program, which allows us to support more families in our community! Current families who refer a new family will get a **\$1,000.00 scholarship** towards their student's tuition (with a successful referral). AND new families joining Accelerated Schools on referral will receive **\$4,000.00** towards their first full year of tuition.

Want more information? Ask an enrollment counselor or visit our website at

<https://acceleratedschools.org/admission/scholarships>

happy holidays



from, ACCELERATED SCHOOLS

A Christmas Carol at Fitzroy Mansion

On Dec 3, 2023 The Accelerated staff and students welcomed families, friends, and community members into the Fitzroy Mansion for an afternoon of Dickens' A Christmas Carol. Guests toured the mansion and journeyed through the world of Bob Cratchet, Ebenezer Scrooge, and of course, your favorite ghosts! Welcomed at the door by a duo of Saxophones playing holiday music, guests took a step into, what we feel, is the *perfect building for a Victorian themed fundraiser!*

On the ground floor, after procuring a warm drink (or two) from our chain-cladden Bob Marley, guests journeyed through "The Past" and met young Ebenezer and his fiancé, and peek into the "happier times" in Scrooge's life. Surrounded by a Booksale and Silent Auction, guests were able to bid on some incredible pieces, experiences, and ticket bundles. Journey upstairs, into "The Present" and visitors had an opportunity to join Mr. and Mrs. Bob Cratchet and their family as they decorated cookies and candles, made ornaments, origami and other crafts. With jazzy carols drifting through the windows, families took a beat and watched those younger (and some older) enjoy our variety of kids activities. Armfuls of cookies quickly became a common occurrence throughout the event! Taking a step outside of the Grand Room, guests could take a beat, listen to live blues guitar and purchase custom type-writer poetry.

Lastly, and if you know our story, you know what is coming: those interested, could peer into "The Future" and step into Scrooge's fate, should he forget the moral of this story! The decorations may have been spooky, with trees, cobwebs, graveyards, and a distinct sense of "doom," we must not forget the moral of the story: that there is always a glimmer of hope in the future for those who wish to improve their fate.

Similarly, we would have been remiss to think our own "Future" room should contain only Scrooge's worst fate. Shining brightly out of the gravestones, was our Tarot session. The warmth of energy that emanated from the private sessions may have been the reason this was one of the biggest fundraising activities of the night.

(Shoutout to Ms. Raechel and the art class for producing some awesome gravestones for this room!)

Helping families whose children need something and cannot afford it.

The Accelerated Schools staff offers a massive thank you to our volunteers, role-playing staff members, and all the guests who came through! This winter fundraiser is one of the opportunities we have to show off our building and celebrate with our community and families, while supporting the cause of the Accelerated Schools Scholarship Fund. We regularly host events and fundraisers to increase our ability to provide a scholarship for current and future students when Accelerated Schools otherwise may not be a reasonable opportunity.

Those interested in donating to our Scholarship Fund can scan this QR code or visit <https://acceleratedschools.org/donation>.



The History of the Christmas Tree as We Know it

Raechel Kimsey, Fine Arts Instructor

Right now, we are knee deep in the flurry of social events and cultural traditions that are otherwise known as the winter holidays, and there is nothing more indicative of the holiday season than decorations! Here at Accelerated Schools, we find that an understanding not only of the art and visual culture that surrounds us, but the history that is associated with it is very valuable for artists of all ages. Each and every

decoration and symbol has its origin and meaning, and while there are many different holidays, with many varied and beautiful decorations, one symbol that many of us find to be synonymous with the winter holidays is the evergreen tree. When we think of the holidays, we may automatically visualize not just the evergreen, but the ornaments that adorn it during this special time of year, as well as, perhaps, the lights, the tinsel, and the star that crowns it. You may be interested to know that this familiar icon of the Christmas holiday actually has its “roots” (pun intended) in ancient cultures from all around the world.

Ancient Greeks and Romans celebrated the winter solstice by decorating with evergreen trees. Over time, the tradition became so beloved that it came to symbolize winter holidays in general, and was adopted for Christmas celebrations especially in Germany. The tradition gained popularity overseas when many German people immigrated to the U.S., and began decorating trees inside of their homes. These immigrants were not wealthy, therefore, common household items that did not need to be purchased were used for decoration. Common decorations were made out of tin-foil, popcorn, and candles. Americans were so captivated by the glittering lights, the aromas, and the simple beauty of this age-old tradition, that wealthier people began decorating trees inside of their own homes for their families to gather around as well.

Shedding Light on Seasonal Affective Disorder: Tips for Students, Teachers, and Parents

Taleya Zinnea, Mathematics Instructor

As December unfolds, so does Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) Awareness Month, a timely reminder to pay attention to our mental health, especially within the student and school community. SAD, often linked to the winter months, can affect students, teachers, and parents alike. In our unique educational setting, where we support a diverse range of students, it's essential to recognize the signs and seek strategies for prevention and treatment.

Recognizing the Symptoms:

SAD can manifest in various ways, including changes in appetite, sleep patterns, and a persistent low mood. It's crucial to be vigilant, especially when students may already face challenges related to conditions like depression, anxiety, or learning differences.

Prevention and Coping Strategies:

Light Therapy: *Light boxes, simulating natural sunlight, can alleviate symptoms by regulating circadian rhythms and mood-affecting neurotransmitters.*

Social Interactions: *Encourage students to connect with friends and family for emotional support and positive interactions. Even brief social engagements can be uplifting.*

Therapy: *Seeking counseling helps individuals understand and manage SAD triggers and negative thought patterns.*

Physical Activity: *Regular exercise, both indoors and outdoors, enhances mood and energy levels.*

Diet: *Nutrient-rich foods, such as fruits, vegetables, omega-3 sources, and complex carbohydrates, support overall well-being.*

At Accelerated Schools, our mission is to provide a nurturing environment that fosters academic and personal growth. We recognize the diverse needs of our students, including those struggling with SAD, and we aim to equip them with the tools to excel academically and build self-esteem.

As we navigate the challenges of SAD, let us remember that by coming together as a supportive school community, we can help each other thrive, even during the darkest days of winter.

Meet Miles Isaac!

Val Montano, Music Instructor

Meet Miles Isaac, a ninth grader at Accelerated Schools. Miles came to Accelerated Schools as an eighth grader in the spring of 2023. He has previously played baritone and drums and is now working on piano and guitar. Miles has made good strides with the challenge of playing with "independence of hands" in both his piano and guitar playing. One of his favorite performers is BBNO\$, and he also likes the metal bands, Slackjaw, Metallica, and Lorna Shore. Miles says that his favorite activity is hanging out with his friends. He feels that he has better friends at Accelerated Schools than he had at previous schools, and that he can relate

to people better where he is now. He likes to crack jokes to make others laugh and have a good time. He is often thinking creatively of new and better jokes. At home, Miles enjoys watching movies, playing video games, and engaging with his chill, senior dog, Trixie, and his overly friendly and rambunctious kitten, Ferra, whom he named after a spunky video game character. The interaction of his two pets have made for some hilarious situations at home. In music class, Miles expands our discussions by contributing new and interesting information. I always look forward to what Miles has to say. Miles, we're so glad you're here!

Nurturing Teamwork and Culinary Creativity at Accelerated Schools

Kate Oh, Cooking Instructor

As the holiday season draws near, I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for the support you provide to Accelerated Schools.

Teaching both English Language Arts and Cooking Classes has been an absolute joy, largely due to the amazing students who make every moment memorable. In our cooking classes, I've witnessed the true essence of collaboration and teamwork. Cooking isn't merely about recipes and ingredients; it's about sharing, working together, and creating something wonderful collectively.

I'm truly proud of the exceptional individuals in our classes. Christian and Quinn exemplify true adventurous spirits, always eager to delve into new culinary experiences. Exploring the world of flavors together in our Cooking class has been an absolute delight. Our recent visit to the international grocery store, H-Mart, was an eye-opening experience for our students. It revealed a plethora of diverse ingredients, and I'm enthusiastic about arranging more such trips. It's an opportunity for students to discover the vast array of ingredients available and broaden their culinary horizons.

As we continue to embrace these culinary adventures, I'm truly grateful for your continuous support. Your contributions can significantly enrich our Cooking Classes, providing our students with a broader spectrum of resources to further nurture their culinary skills and passion for cooking.

Your support is greatly appreciated. I'm reaching out to kindly request any kitchen items, pots and pans, spices, or ingredients you might consider donating. Your generosity would greatly enhance our Cooking Classes, offering our students more opportunities to explore their culinary talents.

For donations or any inquiries, please reach out to Kate Oh at koh@acceleratedschools.org.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year filled with warmth, love, and delicious moments shared with loved ones. Happy Cooking!



Science and Podcasting Updates

Dan McMahon, Science Instructor

Environmental Science

With the 1st quarter in the rear view mirror the environmental science class has started unit 3 on energy and equilibrium in ecosystems. Students were introduced to the first two laws of thermodynamics and have managed to apply the two concepts to a shortgrass prairie. This week we are constructing a food web of the organisms found in Yellowstone National Park. Variables that affect a food web will be explored as well as positive and negative feedback loops and tipping points.

Chemistry

After evaluating the condition of mountain glaciers in Greenland, the chemistry class investigated 2 geoengineering proposals for slowing the rate of melting of the Greenland Ice Sheet. This work was in preparation for a visit to the USF-USGS Ice Core Facility in Lakewood.

The visit included a presentation on how the ice cores are extracted, transported, and stored at the facility. Each core is meticulously sectioned, observed and recorded in preparation for use. A number of research projects that use the ice cores were discussed. The tour then moved through the work and storage areas of the facility where temperatures are kept at well below zero.

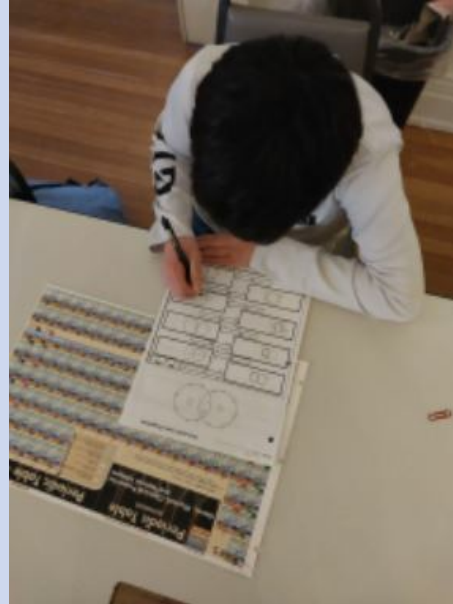
Podcast

With the start of the new quarter the intrepid podcasters have overcome many of the technical issues and are starting to cobble together their first official podcast. Work continues on finding appropriate free music clips to use, and incorporate into the podcasts. Scripts are in the works although several have undergone major changes. Interviewing skills are improving as are the quality of the questions being asked. We would appreciate your cooperation if asked for an interview.

Middle School Science

Unit 2 this year is a dive into the Periodic Table of Elements and a conceptual look at chemical reactions. Students have modeled atoms using the classical Bohr construction to help understand the chemical reactions they dissected in the bath bomb unit. After modeling the atoms we looked at some of the properties of each element compliments of the University of Nottingham's Periodic Table of Videos.

The goal of examining the first 20 elements in the table was to identify trends in periods 1 - 3 as well as chemical properties in several of the groups. This work has led to developing the concept behind electron behavior during covalent and ionic bonding.



The Season of Giving

Debby Sharp, Middle School Instructor

This is such a wonderful time of the year, as the song hints, Christmas songs, giving gifts decorating the house and workplace, and all the yummy treats that come with this time of year but for many, it can be one of the most depressing and stressful times of the year. I have to admit, I get a little stressed over thinking about what I'm going to get everybody and then I remember that there are so many families who can't afford the luxury of buying their children anything for Christmas. There are a number of locations in Denver that will accept food, clothing, and other household items.

- Ministry Outreach Center on East 39th Ave
- The Crossing on Smith Rd.
- Habitat for Humanity which has locations in Denver, Aurora and Arvada

These are just a few of the locations where you can drop off desperately needed items for struggling families.

I like to remind my children that when we give, it makes us a better person and strengthens our community. I will still stress over what to get everyone for Christmas but the stress is lessened by knowing I made someone's Christmas a little brighter.



Unlocking Potential Neurodiversity and Trade Education

Liam Murphy, Instructor, Enrollment Counselor and Community Outreach

Source: **Pamela Furr** Forbes Councils Member Mar 7, 2023

In recent years, society has become more aware of and accepting of differences among people. One important type of difference is called neurodiversity, which includes conditions like autism, ADHD, and dyslexia. While progress has been made in recognizing the value of neurodiversity, there's still work to be done, especially in the workplace. This article explores why neurodiversity is important at work and how learning a trade can be a great opportunity for individuals with neurological differences.

Neurodiversity makes workplaces better by bringing in different perspectives, skills, and ways of solving problems. It's not just about being socially responsible – it's also a smart business move. Companies that actively look for people with neurodivergent talents often find that these individuals are excellent at tasks requiring attention to detail, pattern recognition, and creative problem-solving – skills essential in many trades.

One effective way to help neurodivergent individuals find meaningful employment is through trade education. Teaching a trade to students with neurological differences gives them practical skills that are in demand in various industries, such as carpentry, plumbing, or welding. These professions offer hands-on learning environments that suit different learning styles.

Trade education focuses on skills that you can use in the real world. For neurodivergent individuals who thrive in hands-on learning, it's a way for them to become experts. By emphasizing practical skills, this approach ensures that neurodivergent individuals not only learn useful things but also gain the confidence to use these skills in a job.

Making workplaces more inclusive for neurodivergent individuals goes beyond just acknowledging differences – it means creating environments where everyone feels welcome. Neurodivergent individuals with trade education can contribute a lot to a company's success if their unique skills are recognized and used well. Employers can help by offering support like mentorship programs and workplace accommodations to make sure neurodivergent employees can do well in their roles.

In the journey toward a more inclusive society, welcoming neurodiversity in the workplace isn't just the right thing to do – it's also a smart move for businesses. By combining the ideas of neurodiversity with trade education, we can help individuals with neurological differences gain important skills and be successful in the workforce. As we understand the value of different perspectives, having neurodivergent individuals in trades shows how diverse talents can enrich the world of employment.

Learning Outside the Classroom

Jessica Machetta, English Language Arts, English Literature, Civics, Life/Study skills, and activities coordinator

As activities coordinator for our school, I am often at the helm of the bus taking our kids to museums, trailheads, or Loveland Pass for skiing and snowboarding. My co-teacher Liam Murphy likes to joke that I'm like Julie McCoy on "The Love Boat" – your cruise director. Some of my friends tease me with questions like, "with all of these field trips, when are you ever in the classroom teaching?" I tell them that actually, some of my best teaching moments are when we are out and about in nature and at other attractions and museums.

Just as we offer an elective class that I'm teaching this quarter called Life Skills, being

Julie from “The Love Boat” for our students – with the help from other teachers who come along – allows us to teach really important lessons that they will carry forward for the rest of their lives.

Hiking, paddle boarding, skiing, and snowboarding teach them how to plan ahead by wearing the right clothes and shoes, packing a lunch, making sure they have enough water, and of course, respect and appreciation for nature. Watching an international student’s face light up in awe of our Colorado flora and fauna is simply an unbeatable experience for them and for me. Not to mention, our adventures doubles as an English lesson where they can learn new vocabulary words at every turn. (Fun fact for ya: *chouette* is the French word for owl. However, *C’est chouette* is also slang for “That’s cool!”)

The kid who has never been on a paddle board before learns self-confidence and how to keep trying until you get it. He or she learns it’s fine to fail at first.

Buying food or souvenirs teaches money management skills. If their parents send them with \$20 for the day and they need to buy lunch but also want a souvenir, well, budgeting decisions have to be made.

Some of our kids learn valuable social skills, conflict resolution and teamwork. Skyler S., a graduating senior, says for him, our activities are all about motivation. Students are incentivized to have good attendance, complete their homework assignments and get good grades so they qualify to go on trips. So for Skyler, doing homework each night so he never misses a trip to Loveland Pass is a no brainer. Oh, and did I mention how much I love that they only have their phones out to take photos when we’re on field trips?

Frequently taking students on field trips is not the norm in America, but many other countries regularly incorporate learning outside the classroom into their curriculum. For example, a history teacher might take their students to a battlefield while a biology class might go to the aquarium. At Accelerated Schools, we know that any location can provide lots of opportunities for learning and it’s just one of the things that makes our school unique.

November Activities!

Devil's Head (hiking) 11/2/23



11/13/23 Roxborough Park (hiking)





11/30/23 Ski Trip





Accelerated Schools



ACCREDITED
BUSINESS



For more than 40 years, concerned parents have turned to Accelerated Schools for individualized learning programs helping students overcome challenges, and excel academically. The fact is, a traditional school system is not designed to meet the needs of every child. When a student is not being successful, or is not thriving in a traditional environment, parents must often look elsewhere for a solution. This is where Accelerated Schools comes in.

Accelerated Schools begins by creating a learning program designed specifically for a student. Our work points are toward changing the ratio of failure to success and by cultivating an environment of accountability. Our students are given attainable goals and are rewarded by celebrating their accomplishments. Once a student starts experiencing success, their attitude, motivation and effort improve dramatically. This ends the negative cycle and leads to positive academic progress and positive self-esteem.

If you have comments and/or suggestions about our newsletter, email [Kayla Presnal](mailto:Kayla.Presnal)

Accelerated Schools

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