

# November 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:

### 11/21/23 Auraria Campus:

- the University of Colorado Denver
- Community College of Denver
- Metropolitan State University of Denver

## IMPORTANT DATES

- 11/2/23 Activity- Devils Head
- 11/5/23 Daylight Savings Time Ends
- 11/15/23 Activity- Rhythm Metrix
- 11/22/23-11/24/23  
**THANKSGIVING BREAK (No**

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



At the end of October, we celebrated Red Ribbon Week to promote “anti-bullying” and positive, healthy choices. October 23 through October 27th were filled with fun dress-up spirit

days. We had Black and White Day, Sports Day, Hawaiian Day, and Pajama Day. The week ended on Friday with a pizza lunch, and many of the staff and students dressed up in their Halloween costumes. Middle School and High School both had their own Historical Treasure Hunts searching for “long-lost” items from the family that once lived here in the mansion. Prizes were awarded to the treasure hunters who found the items.

I want to welcome Carlo B. who is joining our middle school community, We are so excited to have you here.

Just a reminder that the school will be closed from Wednesday, November 22 through Friday, November 24, 2022, in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

In November, ski activities return to Accelerated Schools for the students. Students leave for Loveland around 9:45 a.m. and return to the school between 4:30 and 5:00 p.m. Students must qualify to ski, by having enough homework points and an average of 9 or higher for the 2 weeks before a trip. Please see the student handbook or reach out to Evan Simpson at [esimpson@acceleratedschools.org](mailto:esimpson@acceleratedschools.org) or

**School!)**

- **11/30/23 First Ski Trip!**

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



### **Birthdays this month**

**Ms. Debby  
Ms. Raechel  
Mo S.  
Miles I.**

### **Donor Spotlight November 2023**

We would like to thank the following individuals and companies for their generous donations and pledges of support during the month of October:

- **Madonna Nuce**
- **April De Roin**

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

Jessica Machetta at

[\*\*jmachetta@acceleratedschools.org\*\*](mailto:jmachetta@acceleratedschools.org) if

you have any questions about the qualifications. Please know that we will reschedule the ski trip if the chain laws are in effect on the morning of the ski trip. If your student is not interested in ski trips, it will be a normal day of classes and there will be other activities that will be available for the students the following week.

Wishing you and your family a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday.

Best,

**Michelle**

A blue ink handwritten signature that reads "Michelle".





## **Ursus arctos: Biology Class Binges on “Fat Bears”**

**Adrienne Chainey, Environmental Science and Drama Instructor**

This Fall Quarter, to bring into context the complexities and interplay of genetics, inheritance, physical traits, and learned behaviors, the 4th Period Biology class has studied the Brown Bears of Katmai National Park in Alaska. In an endeavor to understand two major keystone species, Brown Bears & Sockeye Salmon, and to interpret their relationship to the habitat of Brooks River. While observing, and enjoying, the success of these bears arriving to eat their winter's worth of food, we have explored inheritance and variation of traits, as well as behavioral and acquired adaptations.

Brooks River, the Katmai National Park, and Explore.org, since 2014, have recommended the 24/7 live nature cams of The Brooks Falls as a resource to study the different bears who frequent this fishing location. A perfect view of bears successfully fishing, napping, and getting fat for hibernation provides an up-close view, adults, subadults, and of mother bears teaching cubs, utilizing their skills to succeed. Perfectly summarized by Explore.org's Mike Fitz, "Fat Bear Week is an opportunity for us to consider the challenges that bears face to survive the winter. It allows us to marvel at their success, and the success and beauty of Katmai's ecosystems."

I hope that everyone who participated in Fat Bear Week has gained a greater appreciation for brown bears, and salmon. It is an amazing place, and champions of conservation efforts, healthy salmon runs, fat brown bears, and healthy habitats and ecosystems. I especially hope the 4th Period has come to appreciate Katmai National Park, and understand the importance, and bigger picture, that Fat Bear Week represents.

A special shoutout to Ms. Kate, who created the only *perfect* Fat Bear Week bracket, agreeing with over 1,000,000 voters across 5 days of voting, and correctly predicted Bear #128, lovingly referred to as Grazer, as the 2023 Fat Bear Week Champion! Grazer, a famously defensive mother bear arrived this summer at Brooks Falls without any cubs, and focused on herself. Over three months she successfully napped and fished her way to an estimated 700+ pounds of long-term energy storage (a.k.a. She got *chonky!*). And an extra special shoutout to runner-up, and a class favorite, Bear #32: Chunk. While I may have voted for #128 this year, I am rooting for #32, and looking forward to their potential success in the 2024 summer season, and perhaps, by then, he will rise in the hierarchy and finally achieve the title of Fat Bear Week Champion.

## **Art Class in Review**

**Raechel Kimsey, Fine Arts Instructor**

These past couple of months in art class have





been full of learning and creativity. In September, students participated in activities inspired by the artist Andy Goldsworthy who makes artwork out of nature using no adhesive, paint, or other art supply that isn't available to him in the natural environment he chooses for his work. A google search will illuminate just how incredible Goldsworthy's work truly is. Art students were welcomed to go outside and find things to construct natural sculptures out of, and photos are on display in the Carriage House.

During the month of October, we spent time learning about paper mache by making balloon masks in honor of Halloween. This unit took up

several classes, and included supplemental videos about different traditions of mask-making as well as learning about a place called *Bread and Puppet Theater*. Art gives our students the opportunity to express themselves, but it also provides the opportunity to understand other cultures. I found this to be especially relevant when teaching a unit about masks, which seemingly have their own incarnation in every culture. Students did a great job with this unit!



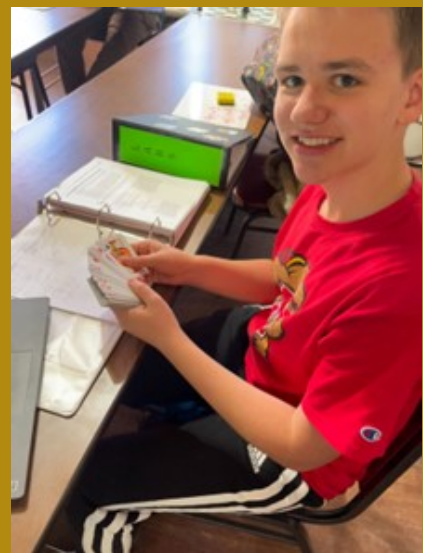
## Extraordinary New Card Game Hits the School Scene: "Four Suits" by Lars Sawyer

**Taleya Zinnea, Mathematics Instructor**

Lars Sawyer, our ingenious sophomore at Accelerated Schools, recently unleashed his inner game developer and created a thrilling new card game that's been making waves among students. With a grin, he quipped, "I made this in a day," showing the true spirit of innovation and spontaneity. The game is aptly named "Four Suits," thanks to a clever suggestion from his friend, Quinn.

### What's "Four Suits" All About?

In "Four Suits," you embark on a quest to rule your kingdom and amass wealth and power. What makes this game truly exhilarating is that it's designed for social interaction, requiring five or more players to join the fun because, as Lars wisely puts it, playing solo would be a snooze-fest. Each participant becomes a King or Monarch, responsible for managing their realm's finances, development, and military might.



### The Goal of the Game

In "Four Suits," the objective is to reach specific scores: a Development score of 4, a War score of 7, and a Population score of 2. Diamonds serve as your currency, with 5 diamonds needed to buy these scores. Every round, you tax your citizens, gaining the same number of diamonds as there are players. The currency is known as ON Guard, equivalent to 1 diamond.

### **Population Growth**

Each round sees the population increasing by 1, while players maintain full decks of cards. Falling behind in development by 2 scores causes other players to snatch your population points – a striking commentary on the importance of development in a kingdom.

### **Battle Royale**

Every round concludes with an intense battle. Draw a card from your opponent's hand and calculate the difference. If it's a multiple of 2 and you hold the higher card, you can remove a score from the Goal. The cards are ranked by their playing value, with spades trumping hearts. The game's lowest card is the 9 of Hearts, while the highest is the King of Spades.

When a difference of 5 emerges, it's a triumphant win! "Four Suits" is not only a thrilling card game but also a lesson in strategy, wits, and diplomacy.

So, assemble your friends, prepare your kingdoms, and get ready to dive into the captivating world of "Four Suits" by Lars Sawyer. May the best monarch reign supreme!

## **Music Has Something for Everyone!**

**Val Montano, Music Instructor**

Meet Luke Mouchantat, a high schooler who joined Accelerated Schools last spring. He has played piano in a band and is now working on playing ukulele. Luke sees music as part of what makes us human. It is an essential part of our nature. It is broad enough that anyone can like their own kind of music. In music, there is something for everyone.

At the start of high school, he developed his musical taste by listening on his own as well as being open to the recommendations of others. His tastes have evolved over the years, and it has been a fluid process. Luke's favorite performers come mostly from rock, rap, indie, alternative, pop, and contemporary genres. Ashnikko, Ryan Caraveo, Death Cab for Cutie, Lord Huron, Connor Price, Malanie Martinez, and Tawnted are a few of his favorites. He also has great interest in the music of the contemporary pianist-composer, George Winston. Luke adds a positive and intellectual energy to our classroom, and discussions with him are the best. Luke, we're glad that you're here!

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## **From Baking to Frying Focaccia- Let's Get Creative!**

**Kate Oh, Cooking Instructor**

Greeting Food Lovers!

Step into our kitchen where we're cooking up a storm and keeping things exciting. Our cooking classes have taken a fun twist, and we're jazzing up the classic Focaccia in a



way that'll make your taste buds dance. With Quinn, Christian, Skyler, Vee, Lars and me leading the way, we're on a culinary adventure you won't want to miss!

Quinn, Christian, and Lars are rocking it in the kitchen. They've gotten so good at making Focaccia that they don't need a recipe anymore. Every Tuesday and Thursday, our teachers can't wait to see what delicious bread flavors they'll whip up. They're like kitchen magicians, always surprising us with their cool ideas.



And then there's Skyler, our Focaccia pro. Newbies are lining up to get his advice on making awesome toppings. Thanks to him, our Focaccia has become a taste explosion, with all kinds of flavors to choose from.

But the fun doesn't stop there! Vee has added a sweet twist to our Focaccia journey. She's shown us how the same Focaccia dough can become a sweet treat for dessert or a yummy snack. Her creations have given our cooking adventure some sweetness.

In one of our recent classes, instead of just baking Focaccia, I decided to try something different. I spiced up the dough with onions and peppers, and we cut it into small pieces. Then, we fried them to a crispy, golden perfection. It turned out to be a hit, a snack that everyone enjoyed!

We want you to join us on this exciting Focaccia journey. It doesn't matter if you're a pro or a beginner in the kitchen – our classes have something for everyone. We're all about trying new things, getting creative, and exploring the tasty world of Focaccia.

Stay tuned for more fun stories from our kitchen, and we can't wait to have you in our next class. Until then, keep those cooking experiments going!





## Science and Podcasting Updates

Dan McMahon, Science Instructor

### Environmental Science

Environmental science is well into our third unit on Sustainability. After evaluating the sustainability and resilience programs in the City of Denver we zoomed out examining the Platte River Watershed. The maps produced by the Platte River Natural Capital Assessment Report provided insight into natural capital and environmental services, as seen in the watershed. We have also returned to Harvard Gulch to look at the natural capital and services the project offers. The unit ends looking at the Millennium Environmental Assessment and with students taking a Carbon Footprint Assessment.

### Chemistry

In The final weeks of chemistry this quarter we have dived into Redox reactions. The work on melting ice caps in Greenland has led to a survey of permafrost in Canada and China. As students looked into the behavior of permafrost the question of where does the carbon dioxide and methane come from came up. Students started with an introduction to oxidation numbers allowing for another look at the Periodic Table of Elements. They were then asked to use coefficients to balance chemical equations. The final step included evaluating chemical reactions identifying which of the reactants are oxidized or reduced and which are the oxidizing and reducing agents.

### Middle School Science and P.E.

As the 1st quarter comes to a close, so does our first unit in middle school science. Students have been working on explaining the chemical reactions in bath bombs. The search began with identifying the gas produced during the reaction, followed by determining the molecules responsible for the gas. The investigation then turned to modeling the reactants and products finding the ratios and validating the Law of Conservation of Mass. The last two activities included an odor lab looking at the similarities and differences of various odorants found in bath bombs, and an investigation into chemical weathering of the marble that makes up the Taj Mahal. Unit 2 this year is a dive into the Periodic Table of Elements and a slightly different look at chemical reactions.

Middle School PE is wrapping up the outside season. Besides the school campus we have been making use of Observatory Park's tennis courts, playground, field, and basketball court. Students have enjoyed paddle sports the most whether it is badminton or our own version of pickle-ball. As the weather cools we will move indoors for less strenuous activities.

## Podcasting

The budding podcasters have finished up their first interview by spending a few minutes at DU interviewing college students. The goal was to practice questioning and recording skills. These latest recordings were finally uploaded to Audacity on shared computers. Audacity offers the ability to edit an audio file. Most of the work next quarter will be to expand on the existing recordings, learn how to edit using the Audacity software, and compile a 7 - 10 minute podcast story or interview. Current topics range from chess openings to Americans' view of the English.



## All About Voting

**Debby Sharp, Middle School Instructor**

Some say we have a duty to vote as citizens of a democracy and the benefactors of government services such as roads and fire department services. The Tuesday that falls between November 2 to November 8 is the designated voting date for general elections of federal public offices. It is important to instill in our youth how important it is to be proactive



in having a voice as who runs our country. Of course, kids can't vote until they are 18 but there are ways to get your kids involved in elections.

You can introduce your child to elections by teaching them six simple concepts:

1. **Vote/Voting.** Your vote is how you say what you want. By voting, a group of people can come to a fair decision when they do not all agree.
2. **Democracy.** A democracy is a type of government. In a democracy, people vote to choose government leaders. Sometimes they may vote for or against certain laws or projects in their community.
3. **Candidate.** People who want to be government leaders declare that they are a candidate for the job. Usually, there is more than one candidate for each job, so people vote for the candidate they think would do the best job.
4. **Campaign.** A candidate has to persuade people to vote for them. This is called "campaigning" for the vote. In a campaign, candidates talk to people several ways, such as in person, in speeches, and in advertising.
5. **Election.** When a group of people votes, it is called an election. Another word for election is "poll." On election day, people go to polling places to vote. In some places, voters have several days to vote. Polling places are often in schools, community centers, or other public buildings. Sometimes, people can vote by mail.
6. **Ballot.** A ballot is a form that shows voters the choices they have in an election. Sometimes it is on paper, but some polling places use machines. Each voter is given a ballot so they can indicate their choice—their vote.

In the U.S. voting is a right and a privilege that no one should forfeit. Our forefathers had the intention of designing the right to vote so that everyone could be represented.

To help the middle schoolers here at Accelerated understand how elections work, we will hold a mock election. We'll design ballot suggestions. Everyone will get one vote and everyone will have a chance to pitch their favorite ballot choices. We will vote and ultimately count our votes.

Allowing students to gain power over their decisions, hopefully, will get young minds excited over the voting process.

## College Admissions for Neurodivergent Students: Navigating the Path to Higher Education

**Liam Murphy, Instructor, Enrollment Counselor and Community Outreach**

For neurodivergent students, the journey through the college admissions process can be filled with unique challenges and considerations. Accelerated Schools encompasses a broad spectrum of neurological differences, including but not limited to autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and anxiety disorders. Understanding and addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that neurodivergent students have an equitable opportunity to pursue higher education.

- **Accommodations Matter:** Neurodivergent students may require accommodations to level the playing field. Many standardized tests, like the SAT and ACT, offer extended time or a quiet testing environment for students with documented disabilities. It's crucial to explore these options and secure the necessary documentation. Colleges and universities are increasingly recognizing the importance of accommodating neurodivergent students, providing various support services and accessible facilities.
- **The Power of the Personal Statement:** In the college admissions essay, neurodivergent students can use their unique experiences to their advantage. Sharing personal stories about resilience, determination, and the perspectives that neurodiversity brings can set them apart from other applicants. It's an opportunity to show admissions committees how their neurodivergent traits have shaped them into

capable and resilient individuals.

- **Choosing the Right Fit:** Researching colleges and universities that actively support neurodivergent students is crucial. Seek out institutions with strong disability services, academic coaching, counseling, and peer support networks. The college environment should foster inclusivity, acknowledging that neurodiversity enriches the community.
- **Advocate for Yourself:** Self-advocacy is an essential skill for neurodivergent students. Don't be afraid to communicate your needs to teachers, counselors, and college admissions offices. Be clear about the accommodations that help you perform at your best.
- **Community and Peer Support:** Consider connecting with support groups and online communities of neurodivergent individuals who have successfully navigated the college admissions process. They can provide insights, share experiences, and offer valuable guidance.

Accelerated students bring a rich tapestry of perspectives and talents to higher education. While the college admissions process may present challenges, it is essential to recognize that neurodiversity is an asset, not a limitation. By planning ahead, advocating for necessary accommodations, and embracing their unique strengths, our students can overcome obstacles and thrive in the college environment. As colleges and universities continue to embrace neurodiversity and provide tailored support services, the path to higher education becomes increasingly inclusive and accessible for all.

## October Activities!

Ice Core Facility 10/18/23



Pumpkin Patch 10/19/23





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Spirit Week 10/23/23-10/27/23

Black and White Day





Sports Day



Hawaiian Day





Pajama Day



Costumes Day





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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