

Young Learners

Central School

Spring 2022

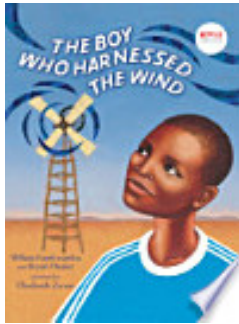
Our Program

Our Young Learners program is designed to challenge and enrich those 1st graders in our building who have been identified as gifted by the district. Students participated during a pullout period for 30 minutes every six day cycle. This year our Young Learners met in the Library Media Center every Day 1 from 2:15 to 2:45 p.m.

Throughout the year, students have been exposed to accelerated content and have worked on a variety of projects and activities that encourage critical thinking skills, creativity, higher level thinking and problem solving that enriched and broadened their learning experience. This program is project based and incorporates a variety of disciplines. As can be seen in our recent activities, reading a story was more than a Language Arts lesson and served as a springboard to a geography activity, a STEM project and a presentation that incorporated research, technology, and public speaking

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The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind

After the holiday break, our Young Learners read and discussed the book ***The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*** by William Kamkwamba. This nonfiction book tells the story of a boy who uses his curiosity, intellect and drive to overcome very difficult circumstances.

Unable to continue his own formal education and witnessing his family and community suffer from a severe drought, he makes use of the little reading material available at the village library to learn all that he can and build a makeshift windmill out of junkyard scraps. Though his contraption is mocked by others and requires lots of trial and error, it is eventually successful in bringing much needed electricity and pumping water to his family and other local farms. He went on to be recognized and achieve great things.

Discussions related to the book involved the importance of hard work and perseverance as well as a variety of relevant scientific and environmental concepts. We also used the opportunity to explore the geography of the region and examine the world map. This book served as a springboard for our next project and follow up presentation.

Building Windmills

Next we launched a STEM project that involved several weeks of designing, building and testing out our own mini-windmills. Blades for these windmills were cut from recycled cardboard and plastic and attached to a cork with paper clips. The cork was then pressed onto the rotor on top of a small DC toy motor and the entire mechanism was stabilized by attaching it to a ruler with a rubber band.



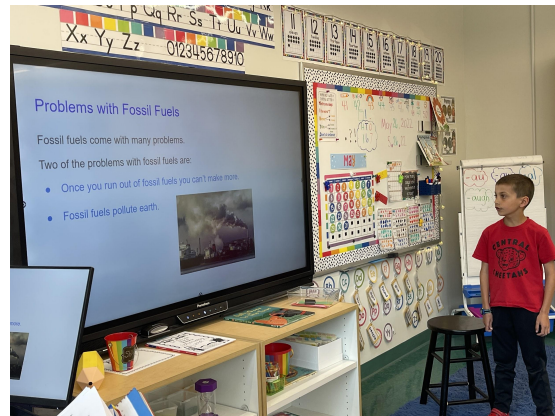
Through a series of trial and error experiments with varying blade sizes cut from a variety of materials, our Young Learners found what they felt worked best. Holding their windmills in front of a fan at just the right angle to maximize the spinning of the blades,, they were able to confirm that they were in fact generating power by connecting their windmills to a DC voltmeter and seeing the digital display.

Energy Presentations

Most recently our Central School Young Learners researched, produced and presented slideshows about energy. They began by reading books and age-appropriate reference articles, learning, discussing, and making sense of the issues with traditional energy sources as well as the alternatives that exist. Students answered guided questions about the problems with fossil fuels and the benefits of renewable energy sources.

During this unit, students brought their classroom Chromebooks to our sessions and became more proficient in using them. Using a template in Google Slides, they developed their slideshow. They searched for appropriate images to add to their slides and had fun learning how to adjust font size and colors and determining just how they wanted to present the information.

Once their slideshows were done, students spent some time practicing how to present. We discussed where to stand, how to use the slides as a guide and the importance of speaking clearly and making eye contact with your audience. After some rehearsing, our Young Learners were excited to present to teachers and classmates. They fielded questions afterwards and seemed to really enjoy sharing their new knowledge!



It's Almost Summer!

I encourage students to take advantage of all the GR Public Library has to offer, especially in the summer. They host fun events and a Summer Reading Program. Check their [calendar](#) and enjoy these opportunities to continue learning while having fun this summer!

