

# THE CAPITOL LETTER

FOR FRIENDS OF CAPITOL SCHOOL OF AUSTIN

## Student Spotlight: **Brandon W.**



Our son, Brandon, came to Capitol School of Austin (CSA) in September 2012 as a pre-school student. Prior to enrolling at CSA, Brandon was diagnosed with Sensory Processing Disorder. We knew Brandon was having some developmental delays since he was not meeting many of his milestones on target. Brandon was enrolled in a Mother's Day Out Program and would cry every time we dropped him off. He had extreme separation anxiety in addition to his sensory issues. He was beginning to reach school age and we knew a typical classroom setting would be too much for Brandon to handle.

Brandon's speech therapist recommended we check out CSA. I researched the school online and it looked like it would be a perfect fit for him. Brandon's first visit was very trying (I believe it took almost two hours for him to calm down) but each day got better and better. Soon, instead of being afraid of school, Brandon actually looked forward to going!

In May 2013 Brandon was officially diagnosed as having mild to moderate autism with ADHD. While the diagnosis was difficult to accept, the neuropsychologist who made the diagnosis stated that he is at the best school to handle his needs, stating that "I am optimistic that with the appropriate intervention and support, Brandon will continue to make progress." When Brandon moved up to Kindergarten he handled it well but still wasn't at full potential. A decision was made to have Brandon repeat Kindergarten to gain that extra year of skills. We struggled with the decision but felt that the staff at CSA knew best. It ended up being the best decision we ever made.

Brandon started thriving in academics as well as speech and social skills. He has gone from being shy and withdrawn to wanting to tell people, "Hi!" He's making friends at school and can't wait to see his teachers. The small classroom sizes and the individualized attention have really made a difference with Brandon. Others who knew Brandon before CSA have also noticed the difference. They can't believe how far Brandon has come. We can't say enough about how thankful we are to have found CSA. The teachers and staff make us feel like family and you can tell the teachers love and are passionate about what they do. Everyone is willing to answer any questions and they will do whatever it takes to help a child like Brandon succeed. The parents at CSA have also been so supportive and make us feel like we are not alone. CSA has helped our son achieve goals we never knew were possible and we are so excited to see what the future holds for Brandon.

**Kimberly & Cody**

## From the Director's Desk

The school year has gotten off to a great start and I can hardly believe that the winter holidays are just around the corner. As I write this today, students and staff are preparing for their classroom Thanksgiving

Feasts which remind me

of all that we have to be thankful for at CSA. We have a strong teaching and clinic staff, over 30 volunteers who donate their time weekly, a dedicated Board of Directors, and incredibly supportive parents.



Our theme this year is "Finding Our Best Selves." Staff and students will be focusing on working out of our areas of strength all year long. Currently, 41 students are enrolled and benefiting from the specialized small group instruction which occurs daily under the watchful eye of our speech pathologists and special educators. In fact, all of our classroom leads are returning staff, and just one assistant is new to the classroom. Language and academic enrichment are evident all over the campus. This year, we equipped each classroom with a camera to capture the good work going on each day and I'm amazed by all the creative activities happening each week. To see for yourself, please "like" our Facebook to see weekly updates, photos and stories in your news feed.

I'm thankful to work in an environment that positively affects so many lives. I'm looking forward to seeing where learning at CSA takes all of us this year. Stop by my office anytime!

**Jeannette Young, Director**

# School Administration

## Comings & Goings

We are thrilled to welcome former CSA parent Melissa Rachal to our Board of Directors. Melissa serves on both the Scholarship and Fundraising subcommittees and brings her perspective as a long-time parent to board decision-making.

It is with sadness, but warm wishes, that we announce Tami Leeper's retirement as Office Manager. Tami has been heavily involved with Capitol School since the day she enrolled her son Sam in our preschool in 1992. We wish her all the best as she begins a new chapter in her life!



### LS/1 - Ms. Vanessa & Ms. Kelly's Class

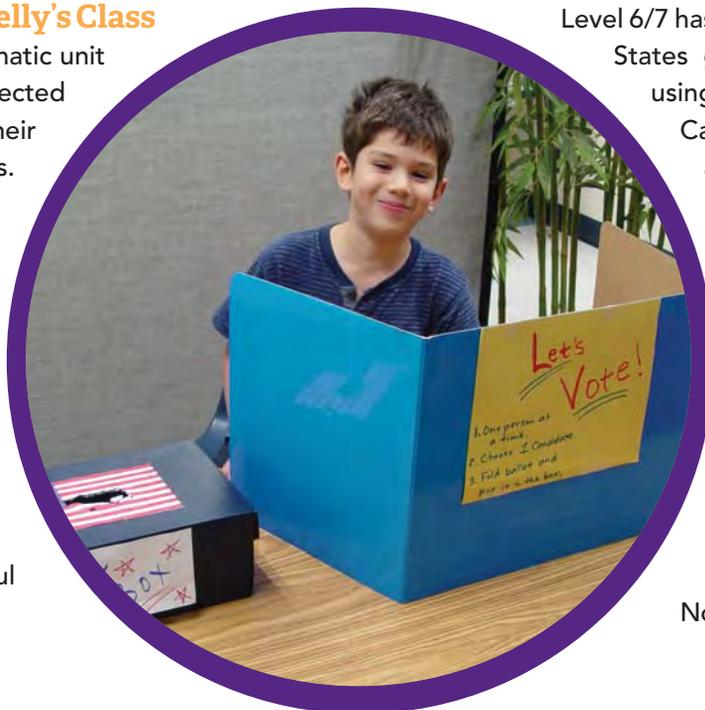
The Language Stimulation/Level 1 Buddy Bears are having a great year! Most recently, we've learned about community helpers, pumpkins, dinosaurs, and transportation. We've read a variety of books including *Firebears: The Rescue Team*, *Duck and Goose Find a Pumpkin*, *Dinosaur Dig!* and *We All Go Traveling By*. During Fire Safety Week, we had local firefighters come visit with their fire truck! We had a blast during our recent Fall Fest and trick-or-treating adventures around the school. We also enjoyed story time at a pumpkin patch nearby. The Buddy Bears have also enjoyed counting each day as we count towards 100 days of school. We've had a fun year so far and look forward to our continued growth as a group. Go Buddy Bears!

### Level 2 - Ms. Kristin & Ms. Corina's Class

The Level 2 Cool Cats have had a fun and busy semester so far! Our kids love science and we have focused on several science-related themes. We studied pond life earlier in September and took a field trip to see the pond at Northwest Park. One of our parents brought us some live tadpoles from her parents' ranch and our class has been observing them grow and change into frogs! The tadpoles now have back legs and hopefully by the winter break will have completed their metamorphosis. We also re-potted some beans that sprouted on our playground (they escaped from our sensory table). Another theme we have been working on is "team work" and we made class t-shirts to emphasize how we work together and are all friends. Cool Cats have lots to talk about!

### Level 3 - Ms. Ysidra & Ms. Kelly's Class

Level 3 recently enjoyed a thematic unit about fall and leaves. We collected leaves and wrote about their characteristics in our journals. We also counted and graphed types of leaves in math. We read the story *Leaf Man* by Lois Ehlert and created our own leaf boys and girls using the leaves and acorns we found. It was a fun-filled unit offering multi-sensory experiences to learn about the changes and vocabulary that accompany this colorful season!



### Level 4 - Ms. Terri's Class

Level 4 has enjoyed discovering the characters in the Superflex Social Thinking curriculum. We've learned about Unthinkables (characters that exhibit undesirable behaviors) and Thinkables (characters that exhibit desired behaviors). We frequently assess our own behavior to see which character we identify with. If we are focused and participating during group discussion then we are acting like Focus Tron, a Thinkable who is focused on our group plan. However, if we are causing distraction and being too silly during group discussion we know we're acting like Wasfunnyonce, an Unthinkable who makes the group fall apart by being way too silly. We strive daily to emulate the Thinkables and have fun doing it!

### Level 5 - Ms. Amy & Ms. Megan's Class

The L5 Bumblebees have been 'bizzy' this semester! Students have been learning addition concepts in mathematics and will soon start learning subtraction concepts. We had a great time celebrating Halloween at CSA with spooky themed language activities and visiting the annual Fall Festival. Students recently created unique, individualized pirates to decorate our classroom door in spirit of the upcoming book fair. In social studies, students have explored natural resources and have learned how people can change the environment. We are looking forward to visiting the Cedar Park Center soon for a basketball game field trip! Stayed tuned to see what else the Bumblebees get into this school year.

### Level 6/7 - Ms. Sharon & Mr. Oscar's Class

Level 6/7 has been learning about the United States government! The kids enjoyed using Google to view images of the Capitol Building and Congress, and the Supreme Court Building and the justices. They also viewed the White House, the President in the Oval Office, and the President's Cabinet members. The class discussed the concept of "checks and balances" and learned how the three branches of government work together to make decisions. The kids held a "mock" Presidential election on November 8th for Levels 3 - 6.

Has  
Everybody  
Talking!



Please include us in your Giving Tuesday or end-of-year giving by visiting [Capitolschool.com](http://Capitolschool.com) and clicking Donate Now or by using the enclosed envelope. Please invite your family and friends to participate as well. Your donation helps us continue to provide a positive, supportive setting for children who struggle with language and learning differences.

Giving Tuesday is an international day of generosity that takes place on the Tuesday following the shopping frenzies of Black Friday and Cyber Monday. The idea behind Giving Tuesday is to kick off the charitable season, when many of us consider our holiday and end-of-year giving. One of the best ways to get involved is to support your own personal community and the non-profit organizations, like Capitol School, that are important to you.

**Please Support Capitol School on Giving Tuesday, November 29th**



## Capitol School of Austin

Texas Language Learning Alternatives Corp.

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