

LaFayette Big Picture TGIF

2022

MARCH 18

We are PRESENT, POSITIVE and PASSIONATE!



Left: Kyler proudly displaying his first bottle of Maple Syrup! It was a fantastic day witnessed by his Mom and younger siblings. Above: Fourteen bottles made.

In the following pages you will read about how much of an impact Kyler and his Maple Syrup project has had on our school and students. This is exactly what a great project does!

Be sure to check out our work with Syracuse Stage too in David and April's reflection.

TGIF from Lenny

Our week kicked off Monday morning with a recognition of Pi Day. Erin and I were in charge of PMUs so the start to each day involved activities relating to Pi, The Ides of March and Irish heritage to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. Additionally, we had many opportunities to celebrate student successes. Here is a look.

If you have been reading our TGIFs you are aware of our maple syrup project. Many great experiences and learning opportunities have centered around this project. First, there was great leadership. Kyler had become proficient in the process of boiling, finishing and bottling, but he couldn't do it alone. So he recruited students, delegated responsibilities and trained those that needed instruction. That brings us to the second benefit, the involvement of many students. At one point there were at least a dozen



students working to collect sap, monitor the pans, split and stack wood, do the finish boil and bottle. Bruce in particular used his kitchen skills to oversee the final reduction on the stove top. He used a candy thermometer to closely monitor the temperature and the color of the syrup. He is very meticulous in the kitchen. The third opportunity that stood out was how Kyler would constantly monitor and adjust. Our first couple batches of syrup were on the lighter side. For the next batch we decided to reduce on the stove to have more control. The syrup became thicker but not much darker. Kyler decided

to leave the syrup in the finishing pan longer until it became a light brown and then draw it off and finish on the stove. The result was a considerably darker final product. This empirical approach to improving on a result was inspiring.

In ER we closed up our electricity and magnetism projects and began our planting project. Students had the choice to engage in one of three areas; hydroponics, microgreens, or soil germination. If they are soil germinating seeds, they can eventually bring their plants home or put them in the school garden. Next week we will be germinating large numbers of seeds that we hope to use for our pumpkin farm and a possible seedling sale.

Looking forward, we hope to keep collecting sap and making syrup for the next week or so. We will see what mother nature has in store. Either way, we are all excited to welcome spring and move more of our learning outdoors. Have a wonderful week!

TGIF from David

I have been engaged in a lot of dialogue about non-violent movements with students the past week. In US History, students have been learning about the non-violent Civil Rights Movement. In Global History, students have been learning about Gandhi's non-violent movement in India. Young people are easily engaged with stories of injustice. I think that is because young people always feel like injustices are being done to them. As over embellished those injustices may be, young people feel it in their bones. Our students in Global History are attracted to Gandhi's story. They are truly learning how one individual can alter history, influence millions of people, and spark revolutions across the world. The conversations we have in Global are some of the most enjoyable moments of the week. The students are thoughtful while contemplating harsh realities of the world and human nature. This is also a class that is not dependent on their phone to tell them how to think or feel. They are engaging in dialogue like historians.

If you came by this week, you would have seen students engaging with one another in many other ways. The Sugar Shack has become a center of student involvement led by Kyler. Kyler said to me this week, "They are listening to me." This was in reference to students doing whatever task he needed completed. It was a Field of Dreams kind of moment. Kyler built it and the students came. I mixed up my analogies even more by telling him, "With great power comes great responsibility." On Friday before the end of the day, Kyler was in the kitchen sitting in a chair with a pot of sap boiling down on the stove. Boiling the sap on the stove allowed Kyler to have more control over its final boiling point. He looked like he could easily fall asleep in the chair with his hands nestled on his chest. He said he was tired from the week, but said it with a little smile on his face. He was someone completely in control of his domain.

We had visitors from Syracuse Stage come this week to workshop a new play written by Native author, Ty Defoe. Students provided feedback that will be used to strengthen the play. Feedback from Syracuse Stage said, "Today was brilliant."

You can be brilliant too. If you have a lead on someone that would be a great mentor, let us know. If you would like to come in and share your expertise, you are welcome. Be like Kyler, show us the control you have over your domain. Be a Gandhi and help lead students.



TGIF from Walt

Much of this week was spent working on our last trimester's learning plans. Due to the focus on paperwork, things haven't been super exciting in advisory, but a number of my students have been helping Kyler with the maple syrup making. I love seeing students engaging with this project and becoming involved. It is what a Senior Thesis Project should be, one that benefits the community and leaves a lasting impact.

This week's highlights:

I worked with Yaya and Romeo this week to make fried dough. Yaya joined Ronnie's diner, and she is interested in making weekly specials. She chose fried dough because we are hoping to serve fried dough at this year's LaFayette Rock Fest, and this is a great opportunity to test out some recipes. We are starting with elephant ear style fried dough and then we are going to experiment with funnel cake and churros to determine which style of fried dough is the most popular. Yaya made two batches thus far, and she learned a valuable lesson about the difference between baking powder and baking soda. Hopefully the third time will be the charm, and we will try again next week.

Bruce has been helping Kyler with the maple syrup making, and this week he was responsible for finishing the syrup in the kitchen. This is a crucial but harrowing step because the syrup has to reach a certain temperature for the right viscosity- too low and it is runny, too high and it crystallizes. Bruce had a good deal of experience with this concept when we made caramel earlier this year, so he was the perfect person for the job. Thankfully, Bruce did a great job and was able to finish the syrup to an appropriate viscosity with no scorching, burning or crystal formations. Next week he is eager to help finish some more batches.



TGIF from April

This week in our lunch bunch group we took some time ‘off’ from the getting to know you/thinking activities and Crystal and I enjoyed simply playing Jenga with our students. It was competitive and filled with plenty of laughs! -It was really enjoyable. Another special group time we have with students during the week is our Lit Groups. Students read together and analyze articles through discussion; with each student having a specific role to tend to during the discussion period. This week Haj joined the Lit Group in my room and what a pleasure it was to have him! - He rolled the dice and on his first time in the group landed the role of director (which could be intimidating). Adam explained how the roles work and Haj jumped right in as the director, with such grace, and a beautiful speaking voice, it was very calming. He has proven he will be another great asset to our group and I am thankful he was added to our Lit Group.

In advisory we are furthering our study of economics. The students are recalling some of the work they did last year with the NYS federal court system on finances, debt and interest which is great! They are engaging with the new information and applying it to current events.

Thursday was a full day of unique learning. All BP students were invited to participate in the creation of a new play by Ty Defoe. The play will eventually be performed at Syracuse Stage. The students listened to a reading of the play draft and then the actors and director asked our students to write down a reflection on that particular portion of the play. They repeated the process for each section of the play. In the reflection students were asked to write down how they felt they would have responded if they were a character in the play with the circumstances

presented. The cool thing was students were ON the stage with the directors and actors for this process. Hollis accompanied the group of students to the reading and she said it was very, very moving, and she was impressed with how our students acted. The director indicated to Hollis at the close of the event

that our “students are wonderful, so honest and helpful, she said she loved them!”

Also on Thursday, I had the privilege of taking Elliana and Elaina to visit the shop/ workspace of a fashion jewelry designer. Michelle DaRin Jewelry is a local artist, who, last spring helped the girls get involved in Syracuse’s Fashion Week. Michelle has been building a new work-space studio and it was a terrific experience for the girls to see the ‘other side’ of fashion- the day to day operation of a business. The girls shared their written business plan with Michelle and discussed their work in building their own

unique fashion business from the ground up. Michelle directed them toward a number of local resources, told them about pitfalls that happen to all artists, how to be resilient and face the down times without giving up. She shared genuine excitement and amazement at the girls progress (as high school students) and the work they have accomplished toward their own start up business as well as college plans for a school of fashion. She also offered to connect them again with Syracuse’s fashion week- exciting stuff!!

