

## Character Building with Santiago

At *El Buen Amigo* Santiago uses tower building to teach about character building. Just as a structure needs balance, strength, integrity, so do people.

He removed pillars yet had us provide counterbalance so we better understand how we adjust to losses. As Chris said, “He is a very wise man.”



To learn more go to:  
[www.elbuenamigo.org](http://www.elbuenamigo.org)

Over time at Mandala we have noticed greater patience, gentleness, and serenity among our students. Visits to places like the Albright Knox, El Buen Amigo, and the Fredonia college class usually solicit comments about how “good” they are. Exposure to many different people in many different environments has its benefits!





## Bead making also at el buen amigo



### 1000 Locker Problem

Besides developing individual skills in mathematics, we use group problems to promote collaboration and the generation of many ideas. The pictures below show two different ways the problem was modeled. The give-and-take with the synthesis of ideas is very important for difficult problems.





After a study of the history of slavery from earliest civilizations up through Congressional attempts to control it, we simulated the trial of Dred Scott in 1857. Students were justices or attorneys. All were given the facts of the case but not its title so they could not research it ahead of time.

The attorneys argued for or against Dred Scott being set free. They argued with an excellent command of the laws of the time. The ensuing debate brought in natural rights along with the law.

The audience listened to the justices debate and come to the conclusion that the law kept Dred Scott a slave. They were not swayed by human rights.

Everyone then heard about the real case and the decision that not only was Dred Scott to remain a slave but slavery was permitted everywhere in the United States. In other words, Congress had no right to control it. Additionally, no person of African descent, free or slave, could be a citizen.

This decision led to the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858 which made Abraham Lincoln famous and resulted in his election. This, in turn, prompted several southern states to secede and “war came”.

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### Tai Chi

Pete Miller, a retired Buffalo State professor, has long been a supporter of Mandala School. He offered classes in Tai Chi. These began on Tuesday with everyone responding quite favorably. These are a set of slow-moving exercises backed by a strong ethic of care. Join us Tuesday at 12:45 at the Boys and Girls Club to try Tai Chi.

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### Country Research

Completing research in a timely fashion then ending with an adequate report is still a challenge for many of our students. Many have trouble meeting deadlines then rush to finish. Most have trouble using information and writing them in their own words. More research next year will help!

## Burning Questions

After studying ecology in the early fall, we began a chemistry unit. Students have been learning about the process and results of burning candles. This is based on Michael Faraday's lectures which are detailed in *The Chemical History of a Candle*.

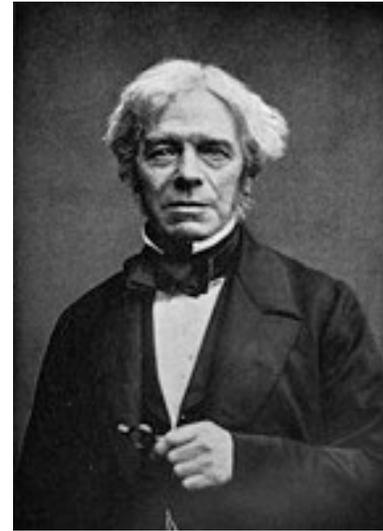
By manipulating the flame, students have learned that it is hollow because oxygen is consumed as it hits the flame's outside, therefore it cannot penetrate.



We also generated different types of smoke: white and black. The white smoke could carry a flame back to an unlit but hot wick while the black smoke put out the match. The latter was almost pure carbon caused by incomplete burning when we placed a screen over the flame.

Cool spoons were also brought near the flame and they fogged up. This proved that water is given off during this burning.

This unit is a good introduction to chemical processes, elements, and fire safety.



Michael Faraday

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## Trimester Reports

If you have not received the reports, please contact me. They were sent out over the last two weeks.

For more details about what your child is learning, you might want to review the math folders and writing samples. Nanowrimo (November is National Novel Writing Month) was very successful to most of them with a plethora of writing resulting.

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## Fundraising

Mandala School survives because I donate about 1500 hours a year. We still have expenses for mortgage, staff, supplies, and trips.

If you or someone you know is in a position to donate, Mandala School would grow that much stronger. Being 501 (c) (3) means the donations are 100% deductible.