



# Inside Track

A Model District Where Students Want To Be  
*Home of the Railroaders!*



First-graders learned about sound through our new Discovery Techbooks. Students explored the Techbooks during STEAM class (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics). The Techbooks are textbooks, but are completely online. They learned through videos, discussions, and hands-on experiences. They learned how sounds are made, what can make sounds, and how sounds vary in pitch and volume. Students also experimented with a variety of musical instruments and then created their own instruments. Pictured are first grade students from Mrs. Odette's class who created string instruments and shakers.



## Burns Grange Visits Robert Kerr

The Burns Grange visited the 3rd-grade students at Robert Kerr. During the visit they talked about the purpose of their organization and delivered free dictionaries to each student. The students were thrilled to receive their very own dictionary. Thank you Burns Grange!!



## Students of the Month

The following students were chosen by staff members as Railroaders of the Month for December: 8th-grader Mackenzie Pancheck, 9th-grader Kayla Jolly, 10th-grader Gabrielle Palmer, 11th-grader Brian Gorecki, and 12th-grader Heather Koons. Congratulations!



On Nov. 21st, a small group of Durand Middle School 7th-graders had the opportunity to see the 35th year of *A Christmas Carol* performed at Meadow Brook Theatre on the campus of Oakland University. The students had a wonderful time and were impressed by the special effects that occurred throughout the play, the amount of work that went into the acting, and in awe with how the actors had to keep performing even when an actor fell during the show.

This trip was a wonderful experience for our students and they still get excited about the performance when asked what their favorite parts were. That excitement indicates to us that we should continue to start the winter holiday season with this play.

## Education Beyond the Classroom

During the holiday season, it has been a tradition in Mrs. Long's English classes to have the students make blankets for families in need. This endeavor can be very costly, although this year costs were covered through a generous grant from the **Durand Educational Foundation**. In addition to making the blankets, Mrs. Long's Novels students will be taking the "giving" a step further. The Novels class, which is comprised of mostly 12-grade students, will travel to Owosso on Monday, Dec. 19th to give their time at the Salvation Army by helping pick out gifts and toys for local children in need. The students will accompany the families as they peruse the thrift store looking for those special gifts. In addition to the thrift store, Mrs. Long will also have students serving and helping out in the Soup Kitchen. Many people aren't able to provide food for their families, so the Soup Kitchen serves as their only source of food. Our students' willingness to help makes places like the Salvation Army and the Soup kitchen a reality. In return, Mrs. Long's students experience the act of giving and feel the sense of accomplishment as they know they helped someone in need.



## Hour of Code

The Hour of Code, a national endeavor to promote student exposure to computer coding, was a huge success for the 8th-grade students this year. Using self-guided tutorials, students placed code instructions in sequence to manipulate the movement of various characters on their computers. Also, students could view short messages about future career opportunities and possible financial reward for people with coding skills. However, the real benefit was the opportunity for the students to think differently in a fun and creative way. Thank you to Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Othout for making this a possibility for our students.



## #HourOfCode

All students in Mrs. Johnson's technology class participate in the global event known as Hour of Code this past week. With technology changing so many industries, computing knowledge has become part of a well-rounded skillset. The Hour of Code is a one-hour introduction to computer science, designed to demystify code and show that anybody can learn the basics. Shown here are students programming Dash the robot and kindergartners using directional code to control their characters onscreen. To learn more or to try it yourself go to [code.org](http://code.org).



## Supporting Local Charities

Robert Kerr students are holding charity drives during the holiday season. The students are collecting donations for Toys for Tots and the Shiawassee County Humane Society. We appreciate all of your generous donations.

## Superintendent News

Season's Greetings to all of Shiawassee County! It's the giving season so it fits that in this month's article I'll be sharing with you some information regarding Durand Area School's partnership with the Durand Educational Foundation led by an amazing driving force, Ms. Jan Harper.

Durand Educational Foundation has been in existence for three years and has helped fund a variety of educational projects throughout the district but there are still people who do not know about the Foundation.

**What is the Educational Foundation?** As a nonprofit charity, the mission of the Foundation is to partner with the community to enhance educational opportunities for Durand Area School students.

**How does the Foundation operate?** The

Foundation is independent of the school district and has its own governing board. Current board members include Jan Harper, Carla Sworthwood, Roger Zick, Teresa McKay, John Walworth, Merrie Jones, Jennifer Huff, Ginnie Sprague, Mark Pancheck and Bart Harris. The Superintendent of Durand Area Schools also serves as a board member without vote.

**How does the Foundation get money?** The Foundation operates on funds donated by community members, Durand graduates and businesses. Donations can be made in honor of teachers, classmates, friends and family or in memory of loved ones. Gifts to the Foundation are tax deductible.

**How is the money used?** Over 95 percent of donated dollars are used to support programs and projects within the district. Less than five percent of money is used for operations, primarily postage and mailing supplies.

**How are funds distributed?** Teachers and volunteers who work with student groups can apply for funding at any time throughout the year. The Foundation board determines which projects to fund based on educational benefit and the number of students served.

**Where can I get more information?** The school district website [www.durand.k12.mi.us](http://www.durand.k12.mi.us) contains additional information about the Educational Foundation including policies and bylaws, grants that have been awarded, honorees and memorials. Specific questions can be emailed to [durandeducationfdn@gmail.com](mailto:durandeducationfdn@gmail.com). Donations can be mailed to PO Box 124, Durand, MI 48429.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to you and your family,

Sincerely,  
*Craig McCrumb,*  
Durand Area Schools Superintendent.