

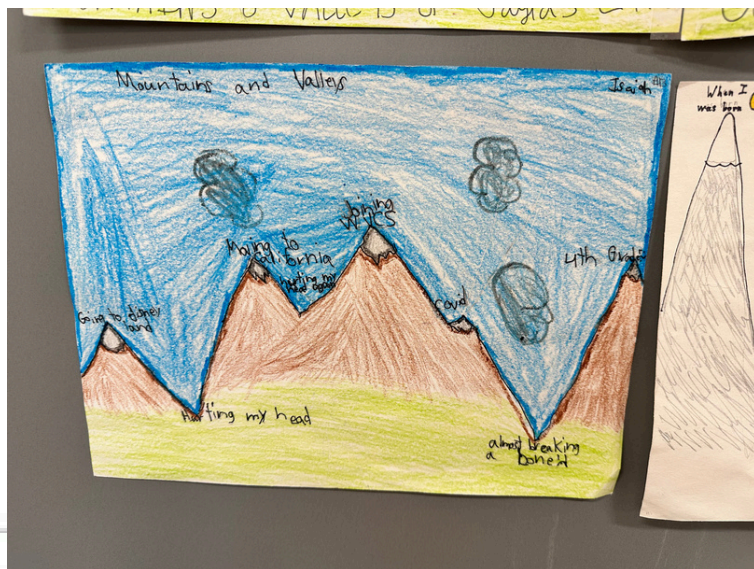
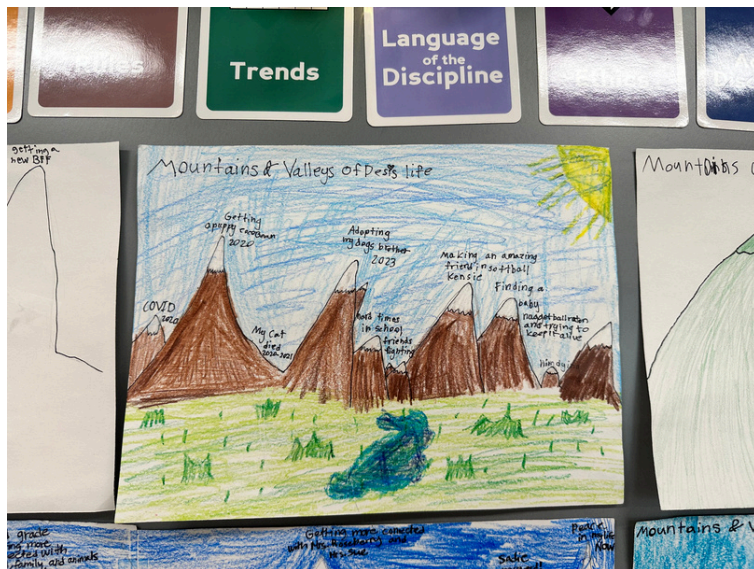
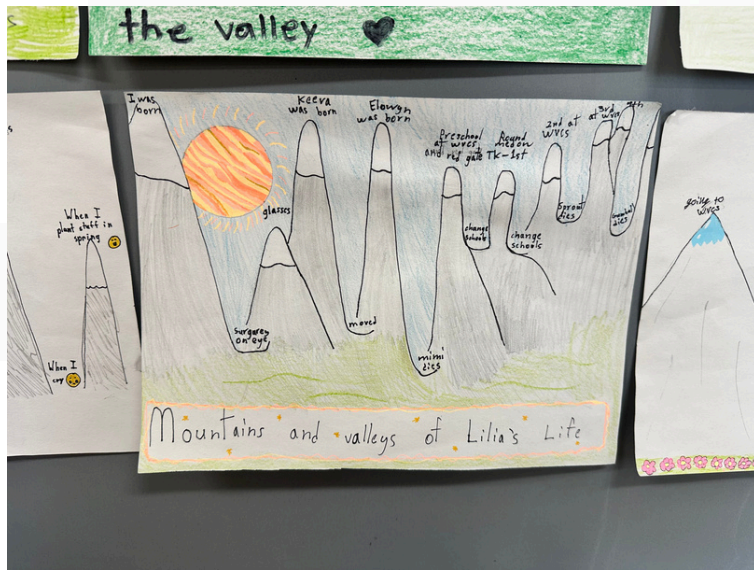


4TH GRADE READING: RISING HEARTS: EMPATHY IN ACTION

Fourth grade recently completed our class novel study on Esperanza Rising. From the very first chapter, students were enthralled by the plot and invested in the injustices being done to the main character and her family. The students hung on every word from this novel until the day they closed the book. The students loved this book so much; one 4th grader even dressed up like the main character during Read Across America Week!

“This is one of my favorite novels to teach,” Mrs. Roseberry said. “It exposes students to the ways of life of families who moved to California from other countries or other states during the early 1900s. This novel also gives us great opportunities to discuss real-world issues like equality, justice, discrimination, poverty, and how we overcome challenging events in our lives.”

During this study, students were challenged to think about how each event in the novel was either a “mountain” or a “valley” for the main character and used text evidence to support their thinking. Students then had the opportunity to use that same framework to create a “Mountains and Valleys Map” of their own life. “This was a really sweet project,” Mrs. Roseberry commented, “They really had to think about the events that have transpired in their 10 years and decide whether they were mountains or valleys. These maps also brought students closer together as they realized things they had in common with one another, or learned things about each other they hadn’t known before.”



After finishing the novel, students were tasked with using watercolors, crayons, and pieces of paper to make 3-D roses (an important symbol in the book). They then took their analysis of mountains and valleys from the main character's life and turned them into “roses” and “thorns”. Students used critical thinking skills to analyze passages from the book, evaluate their effectiveness in supporting their thinking, and created paragraphs explaining 3 thorns and 3 roses for Esperanza throughout the novel.



“One of my biggest goals as a teacher is for my students to come away from novel studies with a greater worldview and a deeper love for literature. I can confidently say that, through what I saw in their projects and what I heard from them in our discussions, that these 4th graders understand the importance of not letting challenging experiences get the better of them, treating all people like they are valuable, and having the courage to start over.”

Gianna Hanna - “My favorite part of reading *Esperanza Rising* was learning about when she moved to California and hearing how she had to learn to live in the camps and learn how to work. I think this book was important for us to read because it talks about actual history and encourages us to work hard and try new things”

Angelos Yennaris - “My favorite part of reading this book was when Esperanza learns how to work and be responsible instead of having people do everything for her. She never had to learn how to clean, but when she moved to California, she finally learned how to work and cook. This book was important for us to read because we should not treat poor people like they are less than or ignore them on the streets. My family had extra things from the market that we didn't need, and instead of returning the extras, we put them into bags to give to families in need that we saw.”