

## Mighty Monkeys Launch New School Year

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With the spirited enthusiasm instinctive to six and seven-year olds, Andria Petty's first grade students and Teresa Waterman's second graders stood in the wide open field of the Independent Day School-Corbett Campus (IDS-CC) athletic field and counted down.

"Five, four, three, two, one...!"

With rocketry specialists and middle school teachers Tom Bronson and John Scott assisting, a small spark ignited the fuse on the students' model rocket. And with a rapid "swoosh" and accompanying "oohs and ahhs," their rocket propelled skyward.

It was the perfect visual demonstrative to illustrate the theme of the discussions the teachers had been facilitating throughout the students' first day of school.

Using this school year to reach higher and go farther than ever before.

Known throughout Upper Primary Division at IDS-CC as the "Mighty Monkeys," the students began the first day of school "fired up" with the hope and promise of doing their best in the new school year.



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The teachers began the day's activities exploring the qualities that would make for a personal best year and quickly ignited a class discussion that was really about goal-setting. They started by showing students visual examples of familiar items and asked them what would make them better. For example, the students liked the image of a single scoop vanilla ice cream cone; however they cheered when they saw the banana split with all the sprinkles and toppings.

The teachers then asked students to think about and share some of the things they currently did well. The answers included: soccer, gymnastics, singing, video games, dancing, and tying their shoes.

Mrs. Waterman asked, "What are some things you do now that you think you might be able to do even better?"

An assortment of answers included: reading, writing, cleaning their room.

One student commented that they thought they were a good friend.

The teachers asked, "Could you be a better friend, or could you make a new friend?"

Challenging their thinking, Mrs. Waterman said, "As Mighty Monkeys, you will be on a mission this year to do better than you might even think is possible."

Encouraging their creativity, Mrs. Petty added, "We want you to be aware that a person can always reach higher by trying things in different ways."

And so students wrote on a small slips of paper what they perceived as their most important missions for the year. Then with their teachers, they walked across the street to the middle school field, goals and aspirations in hand, as well as their rocket.

In the end, the rocket soared perfectly skyward, high into the clear blue sky.

Just as the students' dreams and efforts, with the help of their teachers, will throughout the school year.

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