Spreading enthusiasm for Latin and Classics all across the country!

Above: Emma Vanderpool leads teachers in an activity during the “Let’s Learn Latin” workshop.

As part of our mission to share Latin and Classics with students on the elementary and middle school levels, Ascanius reaches out to teachers. By providing them with excellent resources and training, we can help them to bring Latin to their own students year after year.

At Let’s Learn Latin Lincoln (Nebraska) in April 2019, Ascanius volunteer Emma Vanderpool introduced elementary and middle school teachers to Latin and the world of the ancient Romans. In this one-day workshop, the participants took on the role of students, learning Latin with the same activities and lessons they could later implement with their own students.

The workshop was co-sponsored by the Classical Association of the Middle West and South (CAMWS) with a generous grant, and it took place in the same location as the annual CAMWS meeting. Emma mentioned, “This year we had college instructors stop by, and it was exciting for them to see the ways Latin could be taught and shared with younger students.” Thank you, CAMWS, for helping us to make these workshops possible!

In summary of the workshop, Emma said, “It was such a wonderful gathering of people, from all different teaching backgrounds, who were drawn together by their interest in bringing Latin to their schools. It was so enjoyable to share these activities and resources with them!”
Ascanius “Folded in the Fun” at the American Classical League Institute

In June 2019, Ascanius volunteers Kristen Bortner and Emma Vanderpool traveled to the American Classical League (ACL) Institute in New York, NY, in order to share materials and ideas with teachers. Their presentation, titled, “Your Community’s Youngest Scholars: Hook Them on Classics” took more than forty attendees on a journey into the world of elementary school Classical Studies. Kristen and Emma shared many tried-and-true Ascanius activities, as well as many new ones. Emma said, “Our presentation was very well-attended, and I think our participants walked away with ready-made, hands-on activities and strategies, which they can take and adapt to their classrooms.” The ideas that were shared could be used in a range of situations. Kristen explained, “We discussed how to develop and run after-school or weekend programs and also how high school teachers can get their own students involved.”

Ascanius also had an exhibit table at the conference and displayed samples of its most popular publications. In addition, visitors to the Ascanius table made 100 origami models in celebration of ACL’s Centennial. Teachers were encouraged to create an origami model using instructions that were written entirely in Latin! Emma said, “My favorite part of ACL was helping with the Ascanius table. This year we had visitors make origami tantum Latine. There’s clearly a draw towards both the approachable use of spoken Latin and hands-on activities.” Many teachers commented that they could use this activity with students, whether as part of a spoken Latin lesson for quiet time after a test. Emma concluded, “We had everyone show up, teachers from across the country and even the executive director of ACL, Sherwin Little, made time to stop by and make a paper crane!”

Access the materials and lessons shared by Ascanius at ACL Institute!

View and download the presentation materials, as well as the Latin origami instructions, at: www.ascaniusyc.org/ACL2019.
In July 2019, I offered an ancient pottery workshop at the National Hellenic Museum in Chicago for elementary and middle school students in grades 3-6. The students attended a summer day camp run by the museum and came from all over the city of Chicago. The workshop included a presentation about the role, fabrication, functions and decoration of pottery in the ancient world, as well as a word search activity that helped students learn and use the Greek names for common vessels such as the pyxis, alabastron and kantharos, and a hands-on art project designing an urn. We explored the central role of pottery in ancient Greek and Roman life and discussed how pottery was central to both daily life and ritual events. Holding the workshop in the National Hellenic Museum gave us access to examples of ancient pottery, and students were able to see what ancient olive oil jugs, wine jugs, perfume containers and funerary urns looked like. The combination of museum relics, an illustrated PowerPoint lesson and hands-on crafts activities engaged the students and enhanced their interest in the ancient world.

I offered the workshop in two parts. First, I presented a visually rich art lesson about pottery in ancient Greco-Roman civilization. I explained how pottery is made and where we find remnants of ancient pottery in the contemporary world. We looked at photographs of archeological excavations and replicas of ancient kilns that would have been used to fire pottery. We reviewed the steps involved in creating urns, focusing on shaping the clay on a wheel, decorating the clay with paints and glazes, and the chemical changes that take place when clay is heated to high temperatures. We discussed the kinds of geometric patterns and decorative figures that artists used on pots. The students discovered that potters made vessels in hundreds of different shapes and sizes and painted them with geometric patterns and scenes from daily social life, Greco-Roman mythology, athletic competitions and battle. The lesson communicated the historical importance of pottery, as I explained that the different types of vessels and their illustrations reveal much of what we know about life in Athens, Rome and other ancient cities.

After the art lesson, the students split into two groups. The first group completed an ancient urn word search activity, so that they were interacting directly with the vocabulary from the art lesson. The second group selected one of three types of urns—hydria, amphora or oinochoe—that were pre-cut from railroad board. Using dark orange construction paper, stencils, cut-outs of mythological figures, and black art markers, students had the opportunity to create and design their own two-dimensional ancient Greek pottery in the traditional black-figure style that was common between the 7th and 5th centuries BCE. Dividing the students into
two sequenced working groups enabled me to provide more hands-on help to the artists, who had more complex steps to complete.

The workshop was a great success. The kids enjoyed the word search and it was wonderful to hear them speaking aloud the new words that they had learned. They helped one another with the correct pronunciations and displayed a high degree of retention. The students also produced impressive renderings of ancient Greek pottery and developed an appreciation for the intricacy of painting graphic symbols and figures in relatively small sizes. Their finished work products were terrific, and they were delighted to be able to take them home and display them as finished artworks.

I valued the opportunity to teach Chicago students about what archaeologists and historians have learned about ancient civilization from studying pottery. The workshop enabled students to develop an appreciation for pottery’s aesthetic and utilitarian qualities, and sparked their interest in studying Greek and Roman civilization. Incorporating art activities into the lesson was a fun way to engage students and brought the concepts I was teaching to life. I plan to share this workshop with additional student groups in the coming academic year.
Flint Hill School has traditionally had a strong Latin program, starting in 6th grade with a mandatory exploratory course. Its goal is to encourage students to continue their education in the classics after it is no longer required. I am proof that this model works, because that class was the only reason I kept taking Latin and became so involved in the Junior Classical League. However, I thought that if students encountered the classics even earlier in their lives, perhaps they would form an even stronger connection.

This spring [2018], I helped students explore their interests and augment their curiosity. These 2nd-4th graders barely needed any encouragement, because they all already knew that they loved some part of the Greco-Roman world — mostly the mythology. I was there to guide them and to be a resource.

In the hour-long meetings, running once a week for six weeks, a standard format naturally emerged: we discussed a broad topic, like curiosity, for a few minutes, and then I told a myth that used that same theme, like Pandora’s box. The students were eager to fill in the details, but they were also ready to listen.

After the story, we moved on to an activity based on that day’s story. For Pandora’s box, they decorated their own boxes; for Perseus and Medusa, they made shields and then chased a cardboard Medusa by looking at her reflection in the shield. It was not all mythology, however. The students enjoyed making mosaics with candy tiles after learning about their glass-tiled counterparts, and they didn’t mind learning basic phrases in a short spoken Latin lesson.

Without the Classical Promise grant, the Pandora’s box activity would not have been in the budget, and I would not have even come up with the Medusa activity; not only did the funding help, but Ascanius’s Activitates Liberis series gave me plenty of ideas to interpret in my own way.

On the last day, when it became time to clean up, the students asked whether I was going to hold this program again next year. I told them that, even though I wasn’t sure, I would try. I know I will, though. Because of Ascanius, I feel confident that I can run an even more creative and in-depth program next time.

I ran my program for two days, one day for older participants and another for younger participants. The first session was about classical mythology, with a focus on the story of Heracles and mythology in astronomy. We examined a few of the labors of Heracles and then each participant created their own Herculean task or mythical monster. The second day’s program was about the life of the average Roman and the construction of Roman cities, focusing on aqueducts, the origins of Roman names and months, and artwork, specifically mosaics. For activities, we built an aqueduct out of Lego, Model Magic and straws and made it into a diorama, as well as replicating the famous “Cave canem” mosaic with paper. It was a great learning experience both for myself and the children who participated, and everyone had a lot of fun.
Classical Promise Grant Recipient Report

Sophie Pelzer
The Overlake School (Yarrow Point, WA)

Since early July, I have been volunteering every Saturday at Mary’s Place Family Center in North Seattle. Mary’s Place is a Seattle based homeless shelter dedicated to helping women and their children. The Family Centers provide transitional housing for single mothers and kids along with meals, and employment services. One of the programs in these facilities is Kids Club, which provides safe, supportive daycare and programming for these elementary school aged children. Kids Club is where I have been teaching my Greek Mythology course, with the help of my Ascanius Classical Promise Grant.

The grant money was used to purchase several copies of Usborne’s Greek Myths—used as source material—and a coloring book called Greek Gods and Goddesses. These books helped introduce the kids to Greek and Roman mythology and the Classical world—and all were donated to the shelter library. In the earlier classes, I used the coloring book to introduce the kids to the Olympians. Next, I used Greek Myths to tell the stories of Jason, Heracles, and Odysseus. Then we engaged in a discussion comparing and contrasting these three iterations of the hero’s journey. After my planned curriculum concluded over the summer, I continued to teach the remaining myths by Usborne into the fall.

Mary’s Place is an asylum for any woman regardless of her situation. As a volunteer, I received special training to work with these at risk children. Due to a privacy concerns, I was not allowed to take any photographs of the kids I was teaching because they may be fleeing domestic violence or be in another position that would have detrimental effects if their picture showed up online. I don’t have any actual pictures of the kids, but I do have one of me holding up a copy of Usborne’s Greek Myths. I am so grateful to the opportunity to share my love of the classical world with these amazing kids and appreciate the support of the Ascanius Classical Promise Grant to help make it happen.

Now Accepting Classical Promise Grant Applications

These grants are available to any high school or college student, teacher, or homeschool instructor who wishes to create or maintain a Latin/Classical Studies program geared towards elementary/middle-school-aged students. Middle school students may also apply in conjunction with a sponsoring teacher/parent.

Grant recipients will be responsible for providing interesting and exciting lessons to elementary/middle-school-aged students in their own communities. Mentors will be available to guide recipients in the creation, selection, and teaching of the lessons. Grants are available in amounts ranging from $50 to $200. We hope that you or someone you know may be interested in taking advantage of this unique opportunity. Visit www.ascaniusyci.org/classicalpromise for more details and for the application.

Applications for spring/summer programs must be submitted by January 15th.
Julia Byers, a Latin teacher at Eaglecrest High School in Centennial, Colorado, is working with three feeder middle schools to start an after-school Latin Club. Her high school students will design, prepare, and run the club for the middle school students each month using the Ascanius Roman Explorers activities. She looks forward to helping her own students learn leadership skills while the middle school students are sure to enjoy being taught by the older students.

Katie Close is a student of Mr. Eric Indgjerd at The Oaks Classical Christian Academy in Spokane, Washington. Inspired by her own "Grand Tour" to Greece and Italy this summer, Katie plans to create a Grand Tour experience for the 3rd grade beginning Latin class. She will make colorful passports for each student, also utilize maps and stamps, and then use them to "travel" through the ancient world of Chapter 1 in Hans Orberg's Classic text, "Lingua Latina". She will also use the passports and stamps to encourage speaking Latin in front of the class and in small groups. One of Katie's classes this year is "Senior Independent Study," which will give her the opportunity to student teach Latin at her school. She is excited to be a recipient of the Classical Promise Grant and hopes to get a lot out of the experience.

Sarah Shin of CHD Academy in Dublin, California, plans to establish an after-school Classics Club to supplement a Junior Classical League Club and reinforce language learning for a group of 24 middle school students. Her goal is to show students that learning Latin can be fun and engaging, by focusing on hands-on activities, games, and interactive workshops covering ancient geography, classical mythology, Roman civilization, daily life, and history, as well as Latin grammar and vocabulary. Her hope is that, as a result, the middle school students might choose to continue learning Latin at the high school level and maybe even at college.

Andrea Stehle is a Latin teacher at BASIS Shavano Middle School in San Antonio, Texas. For the past three years, her seventh grade students have conducted a mythology camp for younger students at their school. This year, they are conducting a monthly mythology program for elementary-school-aged children living at a long-term shelter called Magdalena House. Andrea and her students hope that bringing mythological stories and activities to the shelter will be a positive experience for the children living there.

Abigail Sullivan, a student of Ms. Maureen Haviland at Lexington High School, is creating a two-week summer program for middle school students in Lexington, Massachusetts. The program will be titled "Latina: Lingua Vitae" and will explore both the basic principles of the language as well as its emergence. Students will also study Greco-Roman culture and mythology. This program will be incorporated into Lexploration, a local summer day camp with one-week sessions.
COMING THIS SPRING: Let’s Learn Latin Birmingham

Our popular “Let’s Learn Latin” teacher workshop is coming to Birmingham, Alabama, on Friday, March 27, 2020! This free, full-day workshop will introduce elementary and middle school teachers to the world of Latin and ancient Romans through a variety of engaging approaches. **No prior experience with Latin is needed!**

Details and registration information will become available in early 2020.

Made possible by the Classical Association of the Middle West and South.

Support Ascanius by Becoming a Member

This is a perfect opportunity for teachers of all levels, parents who would like to help their children further explore Latin and the ancient world at home, and lovers of Latin of all backgrounds. You can receive great benefits and help support our mission at the same time!

Membership runs for one year from the season in which an individual joins. Members receive:

- “The Shooting Star,” an e-newsletter featuring full lesson and activity ideas
- Access to a Members-Only section of our website, including free lesson and activity ideas
- A **20% discount** on all Ascanius e-books

Membership costs only **$25**.

Join today at [www.ascaniusyci.org/members](http://www.ascaniusyci.org/members) and receive immediate access to the benefits.

Thank you to our donors over the past year!

Kevin Jefferson, Gilbert Lawall, Kevin and Trina Rae Lucido, the Pennsylvania Junior Classical League, Richard M. Popeck, Robert Scheid, Patricia Short, the Stuart Higley Foundation, and Maria Webb.

Thanks to your generous support, we have been able to reach countless students and teachers across the country.

**Multās grātiās vōbīs agimus!**