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Sky High

I soared through the open sky. Everything was below me. I was the King of the world. The freest of the free. It was an amazing feeling; being able to fly. A feeling of weightlessness. All of my cares and worries floating away like tiny invisible airplanes. I dodged through the branches of an oak tree and rose even higher through the clouds. The brightness of the sun caused me to squint. Oh, hi, I almost forgot you were there. As you may have guessed, I am a butterfly, a monarch to be specific, but this story isn't about me. It's about the children who are changing the world, one butterfly at a time. They have learned about the monarch's struggles and are inspired to make a difference.

When Mrs. Cuthbert found out that the monarch was on the endangered species list, she was shocked. The Connaught teacher had had no idea that this amazing butterfly might become extinct. Being the brilliant woman that she is, Mrs. Cuthbert decided that she needed to help monarchs regain power, and that if she put effort into it, she might be able to save them.

Mrs. Cuthbert joined a kind of monarch camp. There, she learned about a monarch's migration, life, and how to take care of them. She also learned about how they have become endangered and how to help them survive the 21st century. It seemed that Mrs. Cuthbert knew nearly all there is to know about monarch butterflies.

After lost of thinking and preparing, Mrs. Cuthbert was ready for action. She was going to teach her students about the monarchs. She was going to raise them in the classroom so that the children could see the true beauty of the butterflies. She was going to get her pupils to help her save the monarchs. Mrs. Cuthbert's plan was magnificent. It was show time!

The "Monarch Project" was progressing wonderfully. All of Mrs. Cuthbert's previous classes had thoroughly enjoyed raising the monarchs and learning about them. Her current 2010-2011 class especially liked watching the monarchs evolve and change stages. This includes the pupa dance, an event in which the caterpillar hangs upside down and jiggles and wiggles. This causes the chrysalis to form.

The release ceremony takes place at the end of the unit. It celebrates the release of the monarchs. In Mrs. Cuthbert's 2010-2011 class, she and her pupils held a very elaborate

ceremony. Everybody had a role to play. Some of the students put on a play called "The Lorax." A few were the MCs. A group of kids carried things outside, which I will explain in a moment. There were delicious refreshments. Jamie (Mrs. Cuthbert's husband) even made butterfly cookies. Did I mention that their parents were there? The class presented two slide shows about the monarchs. At the very end of the ceremony, we went outside to release the monarchs. But Mrs. Cuthbert didn't just open the cage and let the butterflies go. She released them in her own special way. First, Mrs. Cuthbert put sugar water on a student's finger. Then she gently placed a monarch butterfly on the sugar water. After eating for a while, the little winged creature takes off, fluttering into the heavens.

Mrs. Cuthbert has not only taught her students about monarchs, she has taught her students to believe in the power of ONE.

Fun Facts:

- Eastern monarchs migrate to Mexico, and Western monarchs migrate to California.
- A newborn caterpillar can drown in a raindrop.
- A male monarch has two black scent glands on its hind wings.