



The Keystone Voice

November/December 2011 — Volume Number 5, Issue 5



Keystone Montessori School

6639 Blake Street

El Cerrito, CA 94530

Office: 510-236-7479

Classroom: 510-236-8247

Email:

info@keystonemontessori.org

Website:

www.keystonemontessori.org

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

It was great seeing so many of you at the Back-to-School Nights, the Halloween Party, and Parent Conferences! It's been a very busy season!

We also had an interesting visit from the "Bug Mobile" this year. The children were introduced to : 1)"Darkling beetle" (California) 2) Eastern Lubber grasshopper (Florida) 3) Giant African Millipede 4) Australian Walking stick 5) Madagascar Hissing Cockroach. Of course every animal they bring is safe. The children love touching them and letting them crawl up their arms!

We will be closed November 23-25 for the Thanksgiving Holidays to give staff time to travel or to cook for the holidays.

I hope all of you have a healthy and joyous Thanksgiving Holiday! When we return on November 28 it will be just a week and a half until our annual Holiday party & Marionette show on December 7th- the children are already practicing their holiday songs!

Joy, Peace & Health,

Linda

Dear Keystone Families,

We've had some unfortunate news regarding our Head Snowy Egret teacher Jacquie Jones who has been out for the past couple of months recovering from surgery.

Jacquie has been diagnosed with the rarest form of appendix cancer. She has begun a regimen of chemotherapy treatments. After a reassessment in December, it will be determined if further surgery is warranted. In school we will be telling the children that Jacquie is sick—and leave it at that for now.

As you can imagine, this has been a shock not only to Jacquie but also to her family. At this time, out-of-state family members are with her to support her through the chemotherapy.

Please refrain from phone calls or visits, but you can show your support with cards or e-mails. Out of respect for Desmond (Jacquie's grandson) and his parents Jason Hasley and Sonya Castillo, please avoid pressing and detailed questions. A warm hug, reassuring smile, or expressions of concern would be most appropriate and helpful.

Jacquie is still sending us lesson plans and staying on board with curriculum during her treatment and is in communication with the school as much as possible.

We are hoping for a successful recovery and Jacquie's return to us maybe by Spring if we all send her our love & good wishes of support!

Please send your messages of support to:

Jacqueline Jones

6511 Hagen Blvd.

El Cerrito, CA 94530

E-mail: jonesjacquie@yahoo.com



Blake, Rocco, Nicolas,
Joy, Elai, and Lucia

CALENDAR FOR NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2011

Nov. 10- Bug Mobile 9:30 SE, 10:00
BH classes

Nov. 14- Parent Teacher Conferences
SCHOOL CLOSED

Nov. 23-25- Thanksgiving Holiday,
SCHOOL CLOSED

Dec. 7- Winter Holiday Party, 5:00-7:15, Pizza and
Marionette Show

Dec. 19-30- Winter Holiday, SCHOOL CLOSED

Jan. 2- Teacher Workday, SCHOOL CLOSED

Jan. 3- School Reopens



PARENTS' CORNER—by Leslay Anderson (Lucia Andersons' Mom)

Because so many of you have kids in elementary or middle school, and some of you work in schools as well as youth-related nonprofits, it might be interesting to explore the education program developed by my colleagues at the Heroic Imagination Project (HIP), a research-based organization. First, the quick overview of the organization, and then the 411 on the program.

HIP was founded two years ago by Dr. Philip Zimbardo, professor emeritus at Stanford University. Phil was the social psychologist who conducted the Stanford Prison experiment 40 years ago, and he has spent a lifetime wanting to transform his ground-breaking work on evil to good. He's accomplished that with HIP whose mission is to provide everyone

with the skills and awareness to stand up, speak out, and consistently act according to their values, no matter what the situational or external pressures might dictate. We have two programs - one in the corporate setting and one in schools.

Under the leadership of Clint Wilkins, the Ed Team as we call them, have been piloting a pro-

gram that combines a number of lessons on the power of the situation. Among the concepts taught, students begin to understand how they become bystanders, why we have a tendency to conform, and that what they do, and more importantly, what they don't do, matters. It's been a transformational program piloted both a middle school and a high

school that's netting powerful early results. Currently, they're teaching a course a UC Berkeley, so the program will span elementary through post-secondary education, and is currently on the ground in the US and Mexico.

The Ed program has struck a chord in schools where teachers and administrators are struggling with multiple conflicts, bullying notwithstanding. Even if they have the option of teaching empathy or compassion, they don't have a program that teaches kids the skills to

express themselves or deal with conflict effectively. We teach the skills through something called the Social Fitness Model, which has 25 years of research and results behind it. The awareness and skills we provide address common social problems that kids face, and em-

power them to help others in need. One example is bullying. According to the National Education Association, 160,000 kids per day do not attend school due to bullying. Various forms of social aggression translate to 30% of students being adversely affected. In 77% of aggressive incidences, bystanders did not intervene. This is precisely the social problem our program helps address, and it does so by engaging the students and allowing them

to define what is and is not acceptable and address unacceptable behavior in a mindful, skillful way.

I'm sorry I didn't get the word out sooner because pilots were free. However, they're currently offering workshops at cost, and are willing to partner to get what they're calling "micro community service" projects rolling. If you're interested in exploring the program or any other offerings this dynamic group has come up with, I'd invite you to contact Clint Wilkins at clint@heroicimagination.org. If I can be helpful in any way, let me know. It's been fun to share it with you.

Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed. - Maria Montessori



Happy Birthday to You!

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Snowy Egrets: Katelyn, David,
Blue Herons/Fledglings: Tom, Kyle, Nathan

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Staff: Gaby, Edna
Sandpipers: Jackson
Blue Herons/Fledglings: Adriana, Carson
Snowy Egrets: Gavin, Evan, Jeremy P, and Isabella



LETTER FROM DAWN NASH HEAD TEACHER- SANDPIPERS

Wow, it's November all right! The months have flown by. Well, we've had a very busy month; Halloween is a lot of fun to get ready for with all of the art projects and lots of fun activities. The classroom was full of spiders, bats, and ghosts. The children had a lot of fun trick-or-treating; some for the first time. The costumes were very cute.

Then we had back to school night. The children were very excited, pizza and ice cream, yum-yum! Sheri had taken pictures of the children working and playing in the classroom. The pictures were wonderful. Thank you Sheri!

For the rest of the year in November we will be working on fall projects and Thanksgiving and December we will be doing winter projects for the Holidays.



Dawn and Jackson

LETTER FROM JACQUIE JONES– HEAD TEACHER AND CLAUDIA “GABY” CHIRINOS– CO-TEACHER- SNOWY EGRETS

The Snowy Egrets have had a very busy October and November. We've studied trees, the solar system, invertebrates (mollusks, insects, and spiders), had a visit from the Insect Discovery Center, and began our study of the continents with a focus on North America and the USA. This ties in with the Thanksgiving story, and we're hearing some Native American legends and making a necklace- Its beads are symbols of all parts of planet earth and remind us to take care of it.

We are also studying about fish and leaves. You can see many art projects in our classroom: paintings of autumn leaves, fish made from popsicle sticks, giant fish painted on the easel hanging from the beams, fish made from paper plates "swimming" on the walls, and leaf paintings showing the veins of the leaves. Along with new sensorial and math work, we're practicing letter names and sounds and following our reading sequence. This sequence is two-pronged:

It incorporates "whole language" concepts of print by using pattern books, and it also provides a solid foundation in phonetics.

Our pumpkin and Halloween activities included doing a variety of artwork, reading and making Halloween books, doing Halloween math, drawing faces on our classroom pumpkin with marker, scooping out the pumpkin seeds, turning the pumpkin into a jack-o-lantern, eating the roasted pumpkin seeds and tasting pumpkin bread before we roasted the seeds.

Soon we'll be hearing Jon J. Muth's beautifully illustrated version of Stone Soup to prepare us for our own Thanksgiving sharing as we make and enjoy stone soup together.

In December, we'll continue to learn about North America and then study Antarctica and penguins. Of course, there will be many activities that involve winter holidays and festivals, and we look forward to seeing you at the Holiday Party.



Gaby is showing Shaun the Giant African Millipede

Announcements

"Nap Zone" 11:45-3:00: There is a very large bright orange cone inside the front door during nap time to remind parents to close the door quietly so children do not wake up.

Evening Pickup: Please leave the building once you have collected your child so staff can go home. Conversations with other parents can continue outside.

Snowy Egret Class Pickup: If children are inside the classroom, please wait at the class door for a teacher to help collect your child. If children are outside, walk through the classroom to the yard.

Do not leave your child unattended in the classroom unattended.

Thank You

Thank you to our dedicated volunteers! Many parents in October and November signed up multiple times to help out and we really appreciate your efforts!

Snowy Egrets- Laundry: The Chan's, The Lucia's

Flowers: The Piersol's, The Mires', The Schmitt's, The Urban's, The Peterson's

Food Prep: The Helman's, The Mires', The Schmitt's, The McCullough's, The Chens'

Blue Herons-Laundry: The Parici's, The Chien's

Flowers: The Duan's/Li's, The Lopez's, The Urban's. The Scarcella/Sommoulla's

Food Prep: The Castro's, The Duan's/Li's, The Zeitler's. The Chien's, The Lopez's

Laundry: The Parici's, The Duan's/Li's

Thank you to Joe Scarcella and Leslay Anderson for volunteering to cut out masks for the Halloween Party!

Thank you to Heather Sapp, Jennifer Zeitler, and Julia Lucia for making cookies for the Halloween Party!

Thank you to Margo Parisi, Karen Vilorio, Esther Chan, Tom Anderson, Julia Lucia, Maureen Urban, and Hailan Duan for passing out treats at our Halloween Party!

LETTER FROM JOE WEAVER- HEAD TEACHER- BLUE HERONS

Here we are in November already. Halloween has receded into the past. There were many interesting costumes this year. I want to thank the many parent volunteers who helped keep us on schedule so well.

Appropriately we are having a nutrition unit so the class has many food activities. The favorite activity must be the food project. We made porridge and we will make potatoes. We will prepare two more dishes that help the children understand the food we eat and where it comes from.

We have been recording the students' personal turkey experiences. Now that there is

a urban turkey population around El Cerrito, many of the children have seen or encountered turkeys. Talk with your children about the local turkeys if they haven't had a turkey encounter themselves, they might like to share an encounter another family member had.

We had a lot of fun with the visit of the insect discovery lab. He brought a millipede, a walking stick, a grasshopper, darkling beetle, and hissing cockroach. The children behaved and participated very well. They were quiet and patient, interested and followed the directions. They deserve to be applauded!

Joe and Marisol (below)



Communication

Keystone wants to promote an "open door" policy with families and keep open lines of communication. There are several ways we do this:

Blue Books: to write to teachers , pull out your blue child's blue book and write your note then place in the basket. We'll respond back and place the book in your mailbox. When the exchange is done please place the book back into the black box.

Office Hours for:

Linda, Director, 9:00-4:00 (Mon-Thu)

Windy, Operations Manager, 3:30-4:30

Ginger, Secretary, 8:30-5:00

Jacquie, SE Head Teacher, 11:30-12:00

Joe, BH Head Teacher, 2:00-2:30

Dawn, SP Head Teacher, 1:00-2:00

Email the Office:

info@keystonemontessori.org

Keystone Snack List

As of November 11'

Fruits

Giovanni's: Organic: oranges, cantaloupe, watermelon, strawberries

Costco: Craisins , Cheerios

Keystone's Apple Tree

Crackers

Trader Joe's: Organic Assorted Multi-grain crackers

EC Natural Grocery: Organic Annie's Bunny Crackers: cheddar, whole wheat, buttery, cinnamon graham and honey graham; Organic Stone-ground Wheat crackers

Drinks

Giovanni's: Organic 2% milk

Trader Joe's: Organic filtered apple juice

Monthly Cultural & Science Themes

Sandpipers-

November: Thanksgiving & Autumn

December: Winter Holidays

Blue Herons & Fledglings-

November: Plants We Eat, Living/Non-Living, Food & Nutrition, Thanksgiving

December: Insects/

Spiders, Winter Holidays

Snowy Egrets-

November: Mammals, Seeds, North America

Thanksgiving

December: Winter Holidays

HALLOWEEN PARTY



The Insect Discovery museum visit



Hello's & Goodbye's

Hello to-

Sandpipers- Salvador Guerra

Blue Herons- Shriman Sharma

Snowy Egrets- Juliet Seo

Goodbye to-

Gianna Griffo, Ethan Staib