



The Observatory



Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School ~ Issue 5 March 2006

Compassion

by Marie Imai, Director

Dear Families,

I am so thankful for each and every one of you that make up our Mountain School community, especially when we are faced with challenges like our recent case of exposure to TB. The first question I have heard from many of you concerns the health and recovery of the person who is sick and the well being of that family. Thank you for expressing your care and compassion for others before airing your own fears about your family's safety. Please remember that Mary Matlack and I are always available to answer further questions about the TB situation.

Compassion can really only be taught to children by modeling so this is where our behavior and our actions really count. I know that my own intentions are often much loftier than my actions but I have been very encouraged by the response of many of you to this crisis. The remarkable thing about small acts of kindness is that we never know who else will be touched or inspired to help yet another person. And that is the magic that I have seen in this loving community so often throughout the 30 years that I have been associated with Mountain School.

So, my list of actions for this week is as follows and these four things I promise to do: send a sympathy card in honor of a friend's mother's death; bring food to the 2nd Harvest barrel for the needy at school and remind my class to do the same; make arrangements for the 4/5s class to visit a nursing home and have the children make cards to take to the residents; read "The Quiltmaker's Gift" by Jeff Brumbeau to my class and to my grandchildren once again and get their ideas for ways to help others. Share your own list with me or a friend so that we can hold each other accountable.

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Board Positions Available

by Lori Lux, Board Chair

With the auction just around the corner, it means we're inching towards spring and the end of another spectacular year at Mountain School. As we anticipate another great year, we're looking for talented individuals (like you) to help run our school community through the Board of Directors.

Our board is an amazing group of individuals who volunteer their time in a variety of ways. Our dozen or so voting board members attend meetings (quite fun, really) on the first Tuesday of every month, while the non-voting members are not required to attend the monthly meetings, but are always welcome. Some positions are busy on and off throughout the year, while others have one specific task that requires only a short burst of time and energy for completion.

There's such a variety of positions on the board that there truly is something for everyone. Do you have a financial background that you can utilize, or a love for animals, a passion for event planning or a penchant for shopping? Would creating a newsletter be rewarding to you, or promoting our school to new families whose children can benefit from the experiences you've offered to your son or daughter? While the options are not limitless, choices abound and the success of our school is dependent on parents like you who volunteer their time to keep our special school ticking.

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An Honest Piece

Shared by: Mary Matlack, Administrative Director

Many of you knew or have heard of a former Mountain School family who lost a father to cancer. His name was Bob Williams and he was a great Dad! He loved MS and loved sharing the joys of our nursery school with his children in the same way he had enjoyed them as a child on the arm of his mother. When Bob became sick, the MS community rallied around him in such an amazing way. They cooked dinner for the family at least twice a week and followed the varying organic and obscure guidelines that cancer specialists suggested would help Bob. One parent donated Reiki healing while another came to the house every week to brew a special tea that Chinese medicine doctors though would help Bob. The support was endless. Bob passed away after living with stage 4 cancer for over a year. His memorial service was packed with MS families – they had become our family and we were so grateful. Bob was my older brother and I often wonder what it would have been like to share the MS experience with him – but during that year when he was sick, I saw and lived the power of community. It was awesome. His wife Dana and three kids, Tess, Cole and Riley, live in Davis now and Dana has begun to write wonderfully funny, moving and honest pieces. Here's one I'd like to share with you.

Mary Matlack

More than Matters of Taste

By Dana Williams

I turn the mixer off and offer him a beater.

“What is it?” he asks eyeing the dripping beater suspiciously.

“It's cake batter, Riley. It's good. It's sweet. You like sweet, right?”

My voice echoes back into my brain. What I am saying? I am actually trying to talk my six year old son into eating cake batter. For what? For the satisfaction of watching him actually eat something I have offered?

“Okay, I'll try it.” he replies, sticking his tongue out. I put the beater up to his mouth and a few drops of the angel food cake batter fall onto his tongue.

When the drops land, he shrieks “Awwhhh!” as though I have secretly replaced the cake batter with battery acid. He quickly takes his bony hand and frantically wipes out the raw cake from his mouth. When the contamination is gone, he calmly states, “I don't like it.”

(More than Matters of Taste, continued)

A few nights later, I have made cream of broccoli soup. I know this will not go over well, but I am tired of being held prisoner in my own kitchen. I am tired of cooking cheese and starch items: cheese pizza, macaroni and cheese, cheese quesadilla, grilled cheese. And besides, all I ask is for him to taste it. After much threatening on my part, he agrees to take a sip. The drama that ensues is more than I am expecting. When the tiny sip of soup enters his mouth, he grabs his face and starts gagging, retching as though he's on his favorite TV show, Fear Factor, and I've just forced him to eat a large African maggot with the million-dollar prize at stake.

Night after night, day after day, it continues this way. The two of us locked in a perpetual food battle, butting heads, arguing, bargaining, crying. If he could eat candy all day he would. I have to wonder, where did I go wrong? I want to believe this is a stage, but I don't know. I think I've wrecked him. The buck stops here. I'm to blame.

It wasn't always this way. He used to eat anything. The year his dad was sick, at mealtimes, Riley would climb into the old brown recliner where his dad spent his days. Riley would settle in on his father's lap and steal food off his plate: liver and kale, salmon and tabouli, spinach salads, hard-boiled eggs, anything.

But then, shortly after Riley turned two, his dad died and everything changed. I changed. I stopped cooking. I stopped putting my kids to bed and making them brush their teeth. I stopped being in control. Life became a blur of frozen foods in a chaotic mess. My children, who once ate little sugar, watched little TV and never played computer games, were left, in my mental absence, to their own devices, which largely consisted of eating sugar, watching TV, and playing computer games.

Though not what it once was, life is better for us now. It has been four years and we've managed to land on our feet. Like cats who have been dropped from high above, we are on all-fours if not a bit shaky and somewhat bruised up. The bruises are fading, but, because Riley was so little when his dad died, his injuries are harder for me to see. I understand his older brother and sister's pain, but Riley's pain is different. His laughter and easy smiles make triage difficult.

Still, I wonder if he knows what he's missing the way that my other kids do. I'm sure he doesn't know what his life is supposed to be like or, rather, what his dad and I had planned or thought it should be. But, what I am only realizing now is that, not only doesn't he remember his father, he doesn't remember what kind of a mother I was before his dad died. He doesn't remember me when I was energetic and idealistic. If I think about that too much, it makes me sad.

So I don't. I try to look on my husband's death as, it is what it is. And, I am what I am (in a Popeye kind of way). We are all doing the best that we can, even a little boy who just wants to eat candy all day and his mom who has let him eat way too much of it. I'm trying my hardest not to put too much value judgment on it all, and to love, not only Riley, but myself, regardless of what he eats.

Sometimes, though, before he falls asleep, Riley will say something which I can't help but feel sad about - no matter how successfully I've framed our loss in my mind. In the quiet of the night, as we lie on our backs in his little bed looking out into the darkness, he will say to me, "Tell me the story about when I used to eat salmon." — which to me is the story of when I felt in control; to him it is the story of a boy hanging out with his dad. ❧

(Compassion, continued)

Another remarkable aspect of our community is your willingness to come together and put on such wonderful fund-raisers to support our school's budget. My husband Kent and I are really looking forward to the auction on March 18. We love the chance to socialize with many of you that we don't see regularly and the opportunity to shop for such a good cause. Kent loves the excitement of bidding so I never know what special surprises we may bring home. I'm heading to the fabric store this afternoon for the supplies I need to make a quilt with designs from the 4/5s class. Thank you so much to all of you who are working so hard on this special event. I can hardly wait.

Love, Marie ❧

Fun With Flour and Flower

Observations by Angie Davidson

Marie likes to include an interesting observation from time to time to inspire people. Our school was founded 50 years ago based upon the learning that occurs through the writing of observations. We continue that tradition and methodology today. Below are a couple of beautifully written observations. Angie's notes will truly be a treasure for Sophie when she grows up. I hope you enjoy these observations and find them as inspiring and motivating as I do.

The girls discover the flour. Oh my goodness! Julia pats it on her face, all over her face. It is in her hair, and everywhere. Caitlyn, Brenna, Sophie and Emma howl with delight. Emma dives right in then: she pats it on her face, a huge smile there along with an inch of flour. Julia keeps patting. Brenna and Sophie are more reserved. But then, finally, they make a move too. Brenna puts it lightly on her cheeks; Sophie goes for it. It must feel so good! So cool and light and soft. She smiles from ear to ear, and laughs, and says, "Mom, can I do more?" Sure! Emma now has it in her ears, thick, and in her hair too. It's piled in the part of her hair. No one can stop grinning or squealing.

Emma climbs into the pan of flour. She is so petite that she fits, kneeling, and douses herself over and over. I run to get Jenny's camera.

I return; Julia, Brenna and Sophie are throwing the flour. James, Griffin and Aiden hear the commotion and come around the front of the schoolhouse to check it out. They immediately slow down; "Whoa!!" says James. "Hey, you shouldn't be doing that!" Teacher Amy tells him that it's OK, but that we should keep the flour in the bins. Everyone returns to the table. James, Griffin and Aiden tentatively feel the flour, look around at the girls – and then dive right in. Soon they too are covered in flour: hair, eyelashes, head and face, clothes. Jonah joins the group, a big grin on his face. Emma is still sitting in the pan, smiling; her lips look so red in such a white face. They are all ecstatic. Julia wanders away; so does Brenna. James is now really getting into it, slowly letting the flour fall through his fingers, then gently patting it onto his cheeks, his arms, his forehead.

Flour in a bin, outdoors. They have been completely engrossed for easily 30 minutes. It will take much, much

longer to clean all that flour out of five-year-old ears and hair, and clothes. They couldn't care less. They are rapturous.

Sophie is careful with the flour, or as careful as you can be entirely covering yourself with white powdery stuff. She does not fully "immerse" herself, as Emma does; her body language says she's not quite sure she'd like to be that covered in flour. But she explores it and warms up to it. Her grin widens, and she lets herself get right up, belly up, to the table. She digs deeper with her hands into the flour, and each time pats a little more onto herself. She is most excited about the hair: "Mom, can I put it in my hair?" Sure! How nice that she asks. But just go for it! Throw caution to the wind! She is thoughtful, though, too thoughtful for that. And it's lovely that she asks, especially when it's something not as safe as flour!

It goes down the back of her shirt, down the neck. She is laughing and squealing and shouting, "Oh! Look! Brenna!!! Look at Emma!" They feed off each other's energy.

Sophie's eyes are wide and round. Her whole body looks happy, excited, thrilled at this. "Look, Mom, look!!"

On another day, in the garden...

I see Sophie down in the garden, wandering slowly round with Andrew, touching the plants; she pauses at the rosemary. Then she runs up to the bathroom, but returns to the garden – "I want to show you something!" she says to me. She shows me where Hairy was: now he is a small, tall patch of wheatgrass. I say so, and she replies, "No, Mom! Look around Hairy!" He is all alone in his little patch encircled by stones. Then she says, "Look at the rosemary!" She gently reaches out and strokes a leafy branch. Sophie has a particular way of smelling and touching plants and flowers: very gently, very attentively somehow. Her body is still; only her hands reach out slowly. Her eyes are focused intently. It reminds me of when she was very small and would insist on smelling pictures and paintings of flowers.

She reaches out slowly and strokes the rosemary leaves, saying, "Mom, look at the flowers!" She gently picks one and hands it to me. She picks another and smells it, then

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Registration Packets

Registration Forms mail-in deadline:

Wednesday, March 29th

Registration forms must be completed, mailed and postmarked by March 29th.

Walk-in Registration:

Sunday, April 2nd

10am-1pm at the Schoolhouse

Walk-in registration is MANDATORY for everyone in the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 2's classes and open to all other interested families

If your registration packet is not complete and postmarked by the mail-in deadline or received at walk-in registration, your spot will be opened to the next available family on the waiting list.

For more information e-mail Tracy Halgren at thalgren@earthlink.net or call (408) 867-2701. ☎

Only One More...

Only one issue of the Observatory left in the school year. Is this your last year at Mountain School? Do you have a story or poem you'd like to share, people you'd like to thank? Would you like your voice to be heard? This is your chance. The deadline for submissions to the next newsletter is Friday, April 7th. Please e-mail all submissions to mtnmama@garlic.com.

Thank you,

*Sonia Casper
Newsletter Editor*

Calendar

3'S AND SATURDAY 3/4/5'S WORKDAY

*Sunday, March 5th at
12-4pm the schoolhouse*

CLASS PHOTOS

Wednesday, March 8th to Saturday, March 11th



RAFFLE TICKETS DUE

Saturday, March 11th

Proceeds from raffle ticket sales & any unsold tickets should be turned in to the Raffle Coordinator for your class by March 11th. The Raffle Coordinator contact for your class is identified on the information sheet included in the raffle packet distributed to each family.

BOARD MEETING

*Tuesday, March 7th
7:00pm at Jane Johnson's house, call Jane for directions*

SWANK, SWING & SWIZZLE, Mountain School Auction

*Saturday, March 18th
Los Gatos Lodge, 50 Los Gatos-Saratoga Road
6:30pm Auction preview, cocktails and Sparkling Punch
7:00pm Silent Auction and Dinner*

SPRING BREAK - NO SCHOOL

Monday, April 10th to Sunday April 16th

MOVE OUTDOORS

Monday, April 17th

SPRING PICNIC

*Sunday, April 30th
11:00am - 2:00pm at the schoolhouse*



Teacher Spotlight: Jill and Bruce Hyman

by Todd Davidson, father of Sophie in the 4/5's class

Q: First, for Teacher Jill: the contents of your freezer have become a Mountain School sharing institution. How did you get started collecting road kill, and what lessons does it have for young kids?

Jill: My freezer still contains a few found (not necessarily road kill) specimens, a pale version of what it used to be. (This was before teacher Bruce objected to them being nestled side by side with food items, though they were wrapped in multiple layers of plastic, etc.). At present there is a squirrel, a mole, an acorn woodpecker, and a ring necked snake. It's an old nursery school tradition, to bring animals, dead or alive, that are of interest to young, natural scientists and parents to be (nurturers). I should also admit to being a docent at Henry Cowell and Big Basin Redwoods State Parks. So I have contact with families there too. In the summer, I teach a Jr. Ranger program, with older children. So, the animals are of interest to them as well. The advantage of examining dead animals is that they don't run away. Children can see and feel the fur or feathers, notice the whiskers, the feet, the claws, spread out the wings, see the colors, notice the weight. Perhaps the most obvious area of interest is about life and death. Children aren't afraid to question. Why did it die? Will it wake up? Why is it cold (if it was housed in my freezer for a while)? They are trying to understand, to get close to the mystery of life, death, and the transition between. We may have answers for these, based on belief, but we really don't know. I recently witnessed my almost 20 year old cat's decline and death, and it was amazing. I'm not sure I know anything more about this mystery, but watching a living being go through an orderly process of losing functions, stopping eating and moving, and finally die made me see how that could be me too.

Q: Where did you grow up and what was your childhood like?

A: Bruce: I grew up on the south side of Chicago until the age of 9 when my family moved to a northern suburb of Chicago, Highland Park. Growing up in Chicago I remember the feeling of lurking danger as there were boundaries beyond which I was told not to go. I even remember looking at blood on the sidewalk in front of our apartment where there had been an attack on

someone the night before. Though we were aware that there was potential danger we were allowed to play out in the neighborhood freely which I remember as being lots of fun. I think about this in contradiction to our current relatively secure environments here in the South Bay where most of us live and yet I believe there is more fear due to media hysteria resulting in less free, neighborhood play. I see this a big loss for our children.

I feel blessed to have come from an intact family with two siblings and having had a rich growing-up experience. One highlight was that from age 9 to 15 I spent 2 months of the summer in Northern Wisconsin at a summer camp. It introduced me to canoe camping with all of the rigors and difficulties involved as well as the joy. It was not only good for character but I believe it had lots to do with choosing the Santa Cruz Mountains as my home and of course set the stage for our yearly back packing trips in the Sierras. Highland Park was closer to our situation here in the South Bay and I remember loving the new freedom to ride bikes wherever I wanted with my pals.

Q: What motivated you both to become teachers, and what do you like best about it?

Jill: I have taught my whole life. Before college, I taught swimming and worked as a day camp counsellor, then taught in special education for emotionally disturbed children (in institutional settings), special math, and finally preschool. I began at LGSONS when Greg, now 32, was in the 4's. I have been assistant, head teacher for the 3's and 2's, special materials teacher, and now in semi-retirement, assistant for the 4/5's (Marie and I were parents in the 4/5's 28 years ago!) I love the contact with parents and children, and see myself as someone who can stretch arms, so that everyone can reach just a little further. I love being silly and having fun, encouraging children to get wet and dirty, to be fully immersed in exploring & wondering about the natural world.

Q: Teacher Bruce: You are a rare breed among preschool teachers simply due to your gender. What significance (if any) does that hold? Also, were you active in school when your kids were little?

A: Bruce: I feel that a male presence has the potential to bring a new perspective to the school. At the risk of

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(Teacher Spotlight, continued)

stereotyping I hope I bring a sense of playfulness and perhaps a different tolerance for the “wild boys” in our class. In addition I feel it is important to provide a male role model of tolerance, compassion and non-violence to our kids. I find myself quite absorbed in the kids’ activities and the day flies by. I also love to do gentle, obvious teasing with a sense of silly playfulness. I believe this puts the kids at ease and seems to be well received. With my own kids, I was a busy practicing physician in the community. Though I did take a day off weekly during the kid’s growing up to spend more time with them it rarely coincided with school. I do remember attending a few times a year with both kids as well as going to work weekends and picnics. I liked the school environment very much.

I have gotten so much more out of Mountain School that I ever put in. I’ve just been so lucky to meet and work with such wonderful people. We have such dedicated parents and teachers, so willing to go more than the extra mile to make things happen and get things done. I have gotten to know such lovely people and found wonderful friends, as a parent in class, on auction committees, while serving on the board, and now as a teacher, and I am so thankful for that.

Q: What’s changed about parenting preschool-age kids in the time you’ve been a parent and teacher?

A: Jill: There is so much more distraction, both for adults and children. There are certainly more electronic forms of entertainment which I believe interfere with constructive & imaginative play. The quality of parent-child interaction has shifted away from play and story time. I hear from parents, a pervasive fear of ever present danger to children: kidnappers, child molesters, so sensationalized by the media. I feel saddened by the loss of freedom this represents to children. In former classes, the adults all spoke of their favorite childhood memories. They were all remarkably similar: they involved being outdoors, unsupervised, engaged in something often of questionable safety.

Q: How did you find Mountain School? And what is your favorite part of Mountain School?

A: Jill: When Greg was ready to begin, I observed sev-

eral preschools. When I visited LGSONS, I knew it was the best fit for both of us.

Q: What activities, (leisure, volunteering, or other) do you do in your spare time (together and/or apart)?

Bruce: Jill and I both have been quite involved in running a Buddhist meditation program at Salinas Valley State Prison for the last 4-5 years. In addition we have also created a pen pal program for the inmates. This work has been amazing for both of us offering up yet another example of how our preconceptions, either due to our own personal experiences or perhaps the media, may not be the way it really is. We are working with men, many who have come from extremely difficult circumstances. Some maintain innocence. Some admit guilt. Some have taken the rap for others due to gang codes of ethics and many are men of color way out of proportion to the general population. Both Jill and I have come to love (yes believe it or not love) many of the men who we see trying so hard to work on their issues and better themselves. It is very gratifying work.

We both are also on the board of directors of Vipassana Santa Cruz a meditation group. We are in the process of completing a new space for the group and this has taken quite a bit of our energy. In addition we teach beginning meditation for groups interested in exploring its benefits.

Jill: I love to run, swim, hike, backpack, kayak, bike, and roller blade (you can find me disguised with various pads, sunglasses, and a helmet on the Los Gatos bike path, skating). I also love to read with my 15 pound cat on my lap, cook, and explore. I am currently in a 2 and 1/2 year training program to become a community dharma leader, kind of a minor league teacher of Buddhist teachings & meditation.

Bruce: The only additional activity other than those mentioned by Jill is my involvement in Senior Softball. I play twice weekly in a league and for 2/3 of the year play in tournaments with a traveling team. The ages are bracketed in 5 year intervals and I have one more year to play in the 60’s division. Over the past 4 years our teams have won 2 national championships which was a blast. I have played baseball/softball since I was 4-5 due to a Father who was also a softball player. I find great joy in

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Once Again Hairy Gives His All

by Jan Eby, 3's Head Teacher

Hairy the Pumpkin has once again given all of himself to our beautiful garden. He began as a Jack-o'-lantern in the 3's class for Halloween. The following week the teachers and children stuffed him with dirt and shredded newspaper and sprinkled wheat berries on his head and in his eyes, ears, nose and mouth.

They carried him to the garden circle and watered him well. Every week they would visit him, water him and see how he was changing. He changed very quickly! At first he sprouted only a little grass, but soon there was tall grass growing on his head and out his eyes, ears, nose and smiling mouth. He was Hairy indeed. Before long you could barely find him because of all the grass. His orange body had become very squishy.

The children drew pictures, wrote stories and sang songs. They are now noticing that he is surrounded by beautiful flowers. Once again he has helped make our garden beautiful. Thank you Hairy. ☺

(Board Positions Available, continued)

It's with mixed emotions that I wrap up my board involvement at MS. I've held a variety of positions over these past six years -- facilitating the care of the schoolhouse, promoting the school and finally chairing the board of directors. Yes, it's been a lot of work, but what a return. I've gotten to know so many great people, come to know our amazing teachers and learned how a successful volunteer organization is run. And in the process, I've made wonderful friends, have felt good about giving something back to our community and have also learned a lot about myself along the way.

If you are interested in learning more about the board, what it does and what positions remain open, please feel free to give me a call (408) 244-9605 or e-mail lori@luxpr.com.

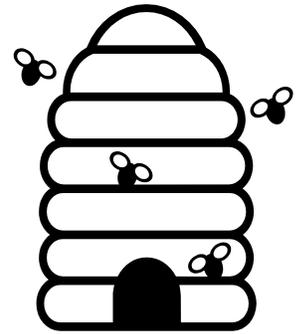
On behalf of the entire LGSONS board, thank you! ☺

Honey Roasted Nuts and Fruit

from Katherine White, Kindergarten teacher
at Lexington Elementary School

Cooking Spray

- 1 tsp butter
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/4 cup slivered almonds
- 1/4 cup chopped hazelnuts
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans
- 1/4 cup sunflower seeds
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ground cardamom
- 1/4 tsp salt
- Dash of ground cloves
- 1 cup raisins



1. Line a baking sheet with foil and coat with cooking spray.
2. Heat butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Stir in honey. Cook 2 minutes or until mixture bubbles around the edges of the pan. Add nuts and the next five ingredients (nuts through cloves) and cook over medium heat for 8 minutes or until nuts are golden, stirring frequently. Stir in raisins. Immediately spread onto prepared baking sheet and cool completely. ☺

(Teacher Spotlight, continued)

just being out there with the guys exercising my body and intensely focusing on the ball. Having grown up in Chicago it is particularly joyful to be playing on a sunny January or February day. I'll play as long as the body holds up.

Q: What advice do you have to new parents to MS?

A: Jill: Look at your child as your best and most important teacher. Try to see experience as it is, without preconceived ideas of how it should be. Leave behind expectations and judgement, of your child, yourself, and other parents. This is actually the work of a lifetime, but so worth while. ☺

The Daffodil Principle...

a timely story to make you think

author unknown

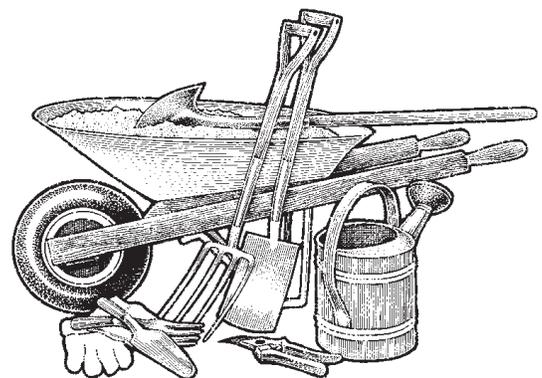
submitted by Lani Takano, 3's Assistant Teacher

Several times my daughter had telephoned to say, "Mother, you must come see the daffodils before they are over." I wanted to go, but it was a two-hour drive from Laguna to Lake Arrowhead. "I will come next Tuesday, I promised, a little reluctantly, on her third call. Next Tuesday dawned cold and rainy. Still, I had promised, and so I drove there. When I finally walked into Carolyn's house and hugged and greeted my grandchildren, I said, "Forget the daffodils, Carolyn! The road is invisible in the clouds and fog, and there is nothing in the world except you and these children that I want to see bad enough to drive another inch!" My daughter smiled calmly and said, "We drive in this all the time, Mother." "Well, you won't get me back on the road until it clears, and then I'm heading for home!" I assured her. "I was hoping you'd take me over to the garage to pick up my car." "How far will we have to drive?" "Just a few blocks," Carolyn said. "I'll drive. I'm used to this." After several minutes, I had to ask, "Where are we going? This isn't the way to the garage!" "We're going to my garage the long way," Carolyn smiled, "by way of the daffodils." "Carolyn," I said sternly, "Please turn around." "It's all right, Mother. I promise. You will never forgive yourself if you miss this experience." After about twenty minutes, we turned onto a small gravel road and I saw a small church. On the far side of the church, I saw a hand-lettered sign that read, "Daffodil Garden."

We got out of the car and each took a child's hand, and I followed Carolyn down the path. Then, we turned a corner of the path, and I looked up and gasped. Before me lay the most glorious sight. It looked as though someone had taken a great vat of gold and poured it down over the mountain peak and slopes. The flowers were planted in majestic, swirling patterns—great ribbons and swaths of deep orange, white, lemon yellow, salmon pink, saffron, and butter yellow. Each different-colored variety was planted as a group so that it swirled and flowed like its own river with its own unique hue. There were five acres of flowers. "But who has done this?" I asked Carolyn. "It's just one woman," Carolyn answered. "She lives on the property. That's her home."

Carolyn pointed to a well-kept A-frame house that looked small and modest in the midst of all that glory. We walked up to the house. On the patio, we saw a poster. "Answers to the Questions I know You Are Asking" was the headline. The first answer was a simple one. "50,000 bulbs," it read. The second answer was, "One at a time, by one woman. Two hands, two feet, and very little brain." The third answer was "Began in 1958." There it was. "The Daffodil Principle"

For me, that moment was a life-changing experience. I thought of this woman whom I had never met, who, more than forty years before, had begun one bulb at a time to bring her vision of beauty and joy to an obscure mountaintop. Still, just planting one bulb at a time, year after year, had changed the world. The unknown woman had forever changed the world in which she lived. She had created something of ineffable (indescribable) magnificence, beauty and inspiration. The principle her daffodil garden taught is one of the greatest principles of celebration. That is, learning to move toward our goals and desires one step at a time—often just one baby-step at a time and learning to love the doing, learning to use the accumulation of time. When we multiply tiny pieces of time with small increments of daily effort, we too will find we can accomplish magnificent things. We can change the world. "It makes me sad in a way," I admitted to Carolyn. "What might I have accomplished if I had thought of a wonderful goal thirty-five or forty years ago and had worked away at 'one bulb at a time' through all those years. Just think what I might have been able to achieve!" My daughter summed up the message of the day in her usual direct way. "Start tomorrow," she said. It's so pointless to think of the lost hours of yesterdays. The way to make learning a lesson of celebration instead of a cause for regret is to only ask, "How can I put this to use today?" ☞



What Do Our Children Really Need From Us

Submitted by Kathy Wilcox, Friday 2's Teacher

Security - They need the basics of course; food, clothing, shelter. But beyond that they need the sure knowledge that there will always be someone to care for them. They need to know that the adults in their life are competent to take care of their own problems and to handle the adult concerns of the family. When the concept of death and the possible loss of a parent develops, they need to know that there are other significant, caring adults who will be there for them.

To Be Truly Seen - Children need to be seen not as an extension of ourselves or the fulfillment of our wishes and dreams. They need to be seen not as the child we hope they will become, nor as the child we wish they were so life would be kinder to them. They need those shining moments when we stop our frantic pace, stop feeling responsible for molding and shaping them and just see them.

To Be Affirmed - They need from their earliest moments to see in our faces and how we treat them that they are good and worthwhile. They need for us to dance with them emotionally - joy with their joy, sorrow with their sorrow. They need to hear our delight in this person we are privileged to be sharing a life with.

Respectful Treatment - Who do we save our best manners and greatest tact for? Can we treat our children with the same respect we afford our friends? They learn to respect by being respected.

Empathy - they need for us to remember at our deepest emotional level what it is like to be a child; what we longed for from our parents, what difficulties we wrestled with inside ourselves. Only then can we hope to develop insight into our child's current experience, and what they need from us.

Our Faith in Their Ability to Grow and Develop - We need to deal with the developmental issues as they appear of course. Yet we need to realize at any point that this child is not a "finished product" and

communicate our intrinsic faith in them that they will continue to mature.

Time to Be A Child - children need time away from all the "enrichment" in their schedules; away from school time, lesson time, TV time and sports practice. They need time for rocks in the rocking chair, gathering pebbles, watching clouds or as Elkind says: time for "sitting and letting our feet hang over."

A Model of Adulthood that Makes Growing Up Look Attractive - Who will be willing to develop responsibility if adulthood looks to be all drudge and no joy: What child will want to develop emotionally if adults display no more self control than the child feels inside: How will the child risk intimate relationships as an adult if his experiences in his most defenseless time of life were fraught with danger and despair:

Parenting requires more from us emotionally than any other role in life. We need to be clear what legacy we will leave with our children. ☞



(Fun With Flour and Flower, continued)

picks a few leaves, crushes them and smells them, as I love to do every time I pass a rosemary bush. She runs to the pea plants growing up the "teepee" and approaches them in the same way as with the rosemary: body is still, face close to the flower, one hand up and pulling the flower close as she smells it. We wander some more, and she sees the lamb's ears. "Oh, cool! Let's go touch the lamb's ears because I don't have anything to feel!" She gets down on her knees and gently strokes the soft leaves. "Feel this one, Mom!...No, this one! It's the softest!"

We are feeling the leaves as Emma comes running up, wearing the cheetah outfit. "Sophie! Sophie! I'm Simba!" Sophie stays engrossed in feeling the lamb's ears for a few minutes, not responding to Emma, but then -- "Hey! I can change too and I can be Nala! Let's go!" Off they run. ☞