



Los Gatos-Saratoga  
Observation Nursery School

# The Observatory

Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School ~ Issue 2 ~ November 2010

## THE OLD AND THE NEW

by Jane Krejci, Director/Teacher

Our three year old grandson said to me, "Grandma, you are old. I am new." I have reflected on that statement when thinking about Mt. School. We incorporate both the "old" and the "new."

### **Families**

Our membership is comprised of many returning families and alumni, as well as 30+ new families. I love seeing old, familiar faces and welcoming new parents and children.

### **Children**

Our two-year-olds come in so new to our school setting. For most of them it is their first school experience. We see a whole range of reactions - curiosity, reticence, excitement, trepidation, wonder. By the 4/5s, the children are old pros. They know the ropes - the routine, the challenges, socializing, problem solving skills. What fun to see their growth in just a few short years.

### **The Board**

Our wonderful volunteer Board welcomes many new, first time members to serve alongside experienced members. I personally appreciate the continuity that Jill Hansen, Kyle Park, Priscilla Amend and Jane Dodge provide as they return for a second year in key positions.

### **Teachers**

Our dedicated teachers blend the best of the old and the new (aka young). The wisdom and experience of seasoned teachers along with the freshness of newer teachers is a winning combination. We welcome three new assistant teachers this fall: Sarah Glover-Hitchcock, Jenny Whitman and Ali Niemiec.

### **Schoolhouse**

Our charming schoolhouse built in 1919 is old compared to most schools. Its history (parents of some of our current families actually attended the old Lakeside School) adds to its uniqueness and a sense of permanence. There are many new aspects to our school, also. Check out the new Farmers Market stand and climbing pumpkin; and some improvements in the art and front rooms. Thanks go to families for their fundraising efforts and to teachers and parents who made these changes possible.

### **History / Philosophy**

Our beginnings as a farm school with written observations and a strong cooking program are still important to us. We will not throw over the old because we know these basics are good for parents and good for children. We do embrace the new as we challenge ourselves to constantly learn about how children grow and develop.

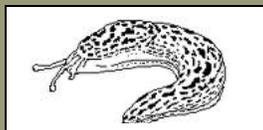
So thanks, grandson, for reminding me of our special bond - old grandma and new Cole. And a very warm welcome to all of you who have chosen this wonderful, rich community that blends the best of the old with the best of the new. May we all have a wonderful year!

### **What's Inside?**

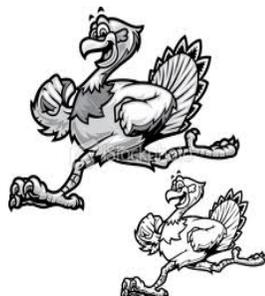
- eSCRIP.com – Joining is Easy
- How to Sign Up for the LGSONS Community Yahoo! Group
- Save the Dates: Open House & Spring General Meeting

### **Individual Highlights:**

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## Turkey Trot Raffle Winners & Thank You's!



We'd like to thank you all for your efforts at selling tickets for this year's Turkey Trot Raffle. It was a huge success.

1st Grand Prize: Eric Peterson

2nd Grand Prize: Marge Buse

2nd Prize: Wade Lardner

3rd Prize: Cameron Howard

4th Prize: Ruth Giacalone

5th Prize: Peter Byun

6th Prize: Rose Savich

Top Raffle Ticket Sellers:  
Jill and Erik Hansen  
Wednesday 2's & 4/5's

2nd Top Raffle Ticket  
Sellers: Angie & Dominic  
Giacalone Wednesday 2's &  
3/4's

Top selling class: 4/5's

2nd Top Selling Class:  
Wednesday 2's

Thanks again to everyone who sold tickets and to the prize donors.

*Liz Basallaje*  
*Erik Hansen*  
*2010 Raffle Team*

## LGSONS Board of Directors – The Inside Scoop...

*In each issue, The Observatory will highlight one of the board positions that will be vacant next academic year. If you are interested in learning more about any of the positions, please contact our Board Chair, Jill Hansen, at [jhansen@apple.com](mailto:jhansen@apple.com).*

This interview is with the **Turkey Trot Team**, 2009-2011. The Turkey Trot is a non-voting board position.

**The Observatory:** *What can you tell us about your current board position?*

The Turkey Trot organization is a team effort and split between four team members. The goal is to raise funds for the school while staging a fun event for mountain school families, friends and alumni.

**TO:** *What have you learned about LGSONS by being a board member?*

Mountain School is a very special place for kids and a lot of people care deeply about this place and put a lot of effort in to make it happen.

**TO:** *What's the hardest part of your job?*

Keeping track of all the many tasks that need to get in the months before the event to make the run a success

**TO:** *What's the best part?*

Seeing it all come together on race day.

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*“Stadiums  
are for  
spectators.  
We runners  
have nature  
and that is  
much better.  
–Juha  
Vaatainen*

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## A Mountain School Book Review

BOOK REVIEW  
by Teacher Jane

### The Childhood Roots of Adult Happiness

by Edward M. Hallowell

What can we do as parents and teachers to help our children build a foundation and scaffolding for happiness? Too often, we fall into the trap of doing too much for them and not saying “no.”

The author of this book maintains that we plant in childhood the seeds for adult happiness. He focuses on concrete steps that will help our children learn to deal with pain and adversity and develop tools to create and sustain joy.

He identifies five steps:

- connection,
- play,
- practice,
- mastery,
- and recognition.

“Play is the key step, but practice, mastery and recognition solidify it. And connectedness is what sets the whole process in motion.”

How do we incorporate these five steps into Mt.

School?

#### **Connection**

We strive to connect with one another, the natural world and the larger community.

#### **Play**

Play is central to our curriculum and activities. It develops the “whole child” – physically, cognitively, socially and emotionally. It fosters imagination and creativity. Play generates joy and becomes its own reward.

#### **Practice**

We all get many chances to practice – children, parents, and teachers alike. Sometimes we stumble and fall – and then get up and try again and again and again. We develop persistence and discipline.

#### **Mastery**

A “can-do” attitude is evident throughout our community.\* Children announce, “I did it!” Parents and teachers rejoice along with the children as they acquire competence and confidence.

It is important to remember that mastery is a feeling; achievement is a benchmark. Mastery also builds an attitude of optimism which is one of the strongest predictors of adult happiness.

#### **Recognition**

Children want approval. They

want to be recognized and valued for who they truly are – not some pretend or idealized child. Praise needs to be descriptive, specific and meaningful. Recognition is part of self-esteem – IALAC for short (I am lovable and capable.) Recognition goes “from longing to belonging.”

The author identifies 12 things we can do to encourage connectedness:

- unconditional love and family togetherness
- friends, neighborhood community
- chores, work, responsibility to contribute
- activities, sports
- sense of past, tradition
- the arts
- nature
- pets and other animals
- ideas and info
- institutions and organizations
- spiritual life
- connection with self

I encourage you to pick up this book to appreciate anew the journey your child is on and to enhance your parenting skills. And may we all deepen our relationships within our family and our connections with one another.




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\* “At our recent workday, we discovered a huge branch had fallen and crushed our fence and the gate to our nature trail. A few dads immediately went to work saying, “We can handle it – no problem.” And they did! What a wonderful – and infectious – attitude!”  
-Teacher Jane



*"The fire is the main comfort of the camp, whether in summer or winter, and is about as ample at one season as at another. It is as well for cheerfulness as for warmth and dryness."*

*-Henry David Thoreau*

## Camping in the Redwoods

*By Katja Wick (Mom of Marta and Sophia in the 4/5s)*

Nature beckoned and 23 families responded. It was the biggest turn out for a camping trip in the last couple of years. Big Basin Redwoods State Park is a magical place and the group campsites at Sky Meadow were the perfect base for this year's fall camping trip.

I was awed when our family arrived on Friday afternoon and I saw the beautiful forest that would be our home for the next two days. The Sky Meadow group campsites are far from the park's headquarters, very secluded at the end of a road. It was really quiet at first, since we had been able to come up early. Soon more and more tents sprang up between the trees and the air was filled with the smell of camp fire cooking. Kids were running around everywhere.

It was wonderful to watch the children play together. They had so much room to explore, and so many children to make friends

with that there was no time for fighting.

The kids weren't the only ones who had a good time. Everywhere you looked adults stood or sat in groups talking, having a drink, and sharing favorite camp foods.

Saturday was spent pretty much the same way as Friday afternoon. For me, that is the beauty of camping. You don't have to do anything, yet you still feel fulfilled because you are out there in nature, and all senses are filled to the brim. Most kids and parents took off for a little hike to a nearby waterfall and the few who stayed behind enjoyed a brief moment of total tranquility.

My favorite moment of the day happened when I tried to sneak away in the late afternoon to explore the nearby meadow by myself. My daughter, Marta, saw me leaving and decided to tag along. The meadow was beautiful and filled with sunlight. We found a private little spot and just sat, soaked in the sun and enjoyed each other's

company. Marta, being a twin, rarely has me to herself and she was clearly enjoying this special moment.

On Sunday, one by one, each family took their tents down and drove away. I love those Sunday mornings on a camping trip -- real life with its hustle and bustle is still far away, a warm coffee in hand helps one to get over the sleepiness after a late night at the campfire, and you know that at the end of the day a warm shower and a real bed are awaiting you -- perfect!

### **SAVE THE DATE FOR CAMPING WITH LGSONS:**

The next Mountain School camping trip will be **May 6th to 8th, 2011, at the beautiful Pinnacles National Monument.**

Registration will start end of March.

Keep your eyes open for my email...

### **LGSONS Community Yahoo! Group**

LGSONS has a Yahoo! Group to serve as an option to reach out to other current and former Mountain School families for non-school related items such as child care swapping, items for sale, community events, etc.

**To join:** please visit [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lgsons\\_community/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lgsons_community/) and click on "Join this Group."

## 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Benefit Auction ~ "The Three Mountain Hens"

### When is the Auction?

Saturday, March 12, 2011, at Redwood Estates Pavilion

### What is the Auction about?

The auction is a fun evening for parents to get together socially outside of school and raise some funds for a very special place for our kids. We will have a festive night complete with edibles, imbibers, and desires! We will have silent auctions running as well as an anticipated and entertaining live auction!

### What are my Obligations?

1. To get to know other mountain school families by attending the participating in the events leading up to the night of the event. And have fun.
2. To serve on an auction committee. You will be assigned to a committee with a lead person. And have fun.
3. To manage 5 business community solicitations as assigned. You may have a different Go-To person for your solicitations assignment. And have fun.
4. To donate an item or service to be used in the auction with a minimum value of \$50.00. And participate in

any class project your class may decide to contribute (shh, it's a secret, but these are really hot item, one-of-a-kind items!)

### When will my committee work start?

Committee work will start soon and many jobs can be accomplished via email and phone. Assignments are in process and many positions will start work right away whereas some may only necessitate time as the auction approaches.

### Ideas for class projects?

Talk with your class and see what creativity is around. Almost always but not required is some type of input from the kids either in the form of handprints, fingerprints, sayings, doings, or just inspiration! Look for some visual ideas coming soon from your class reps! We have a limited number of items collected than can be up-cycled or mountainized (are those really words?) to create something new and fabulous! Think vintage wooden see-saw, or a child's lift up desk, or how about a toddler's rocker?

### Can I bring my peeps?

Yes, yes, yes...the more the merrier. Bring your family or friends (make sure they don't forget their pocketbooks!) Tickets will be available for them and you can let us know the particulars when the invitations go out early next year! Tickets are \$20.00 each.

Here, Here...we the people think...Yes! Tell us what do you think!!

Go to a new survey to be distributed via email for some auction related questions (answers are anonymous).

Questions, Inquires, Uncertainties?

Don't hesitate to contact us...

**General Auction:** Sheila Della Ratta ~

408.605.9039 ~ [sadr@mac.com](mailto:sadr@mac.com);

**Finance/Logistics:**

Karen McVay ~ 408.608.4316 ~ [mcvay\\_karen@yahoo.com](mailto:mcvay_karen@yahoo.com)

**; Procurement:** Ashley Brickeen ~ 650.417.5653 ~ [anhb1996@gmail.com](mailto:anhb1996@gmail.com);

Angela Kobel ~ 408.839.1971 ~

[kobelangela@gmail.com](mailto:kobelangela@gmail.com)



### LGSONS HOLIDAY GIFT IDEA...

Special LGSONS logo 18oz. Klean Kanteen stainless steel water bottle with a loop-top lid. The bottles have the red school logo and schoolhouse image printed on the bottle.

Cost: \$18 each

For more information please contact Karen McVay at 408-608-4316 or [mcvay\\_karen@yahoo.com](mailto:mcvay_karen@yahoo.com).

Please be sure to include your name, class and quantity in your email.

## Mountain School's Outdoor Sites

by Teacher Jane

We are very fortunate to use Savannah Channele Winery and Saratoga Springs for our outdoor sites. The cost is reasonable. Most importantly, they provide unique nature experiences for the children and a welcome respite from the busyness of the Valley for all of us. Please take the opportunity to say "thank you" when you see the staff of these local businesses.

**Savannah Channele**  
Their tasting room is

open daily from 11-5. If you like wine, be sure to purchase some and let them know you are a part of Mt. School!  
<http://www.savannahchanelle.com/>

### Saratoga Springs

Five generations of the Giannini family have run Saratoga Springs. They host corporate events, team building, birthday parties, and reunions. Our alumna Jen Clark is on staff. For more information about special events e-mail [picnics@saratoga-springs.com](mailto:picnics@saratoga-springs.com)

**SUPPORT LGSONS WITH  
[www.eSCRIP.com!](http://www.eSCRIP.com/)**

**IT ONLY TAKES A FEW MINUTES...**

eScrip is a wonderful way to support LGSONS. 10% of your purchases at Safeway or with any credit cards you enter will benefit Mountain School. Go to [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) and follow the directions -- Mountain School's number is 3593396. If you've forgotten your Safeway card number, call 1-877-SAFEWAY and the nice people on the phone will ask you a few questions & give you the number over the phone.

*Please don't forget to update your credit cards and renew your Safeway participation at the start of every school year!*

## Fun Fundraising News!

### QUESTION:

What do 680 quarters, 1,200 dimes, 760 nickels, and 950 pennies equal?

### ANSWER:

The number of coins Freya (6) and Eli (8) Youssef donated to our SOS (*Save Our School*) campaign.

What a wonderful, heartfelt gift of \$337.50. Eli graduated from Mountain School in 2007 and Freya in 2009.

**Thank you, young alumni!**



## Mountain School Open House!

*Want to Introduce Your Friends to Mountain School?*

Invite them to our Open House, where they can:

- Meet the teachers
- Tour the grounds
- Say hello to the chickens
- Talk with currently enrolled parents

**Sunday, January 23rd, 2011  
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

More information on [www.lgsons.com](http://www.lgsons.com)

**SAVE THE DATE:  
SPRING GENERAL MEETING**

***"Raising Your Child to Love Learning"***

**Deborah Stipek, PhD**, Dean of the School of Education at Stanford University and co-author of the book Motivated Minds: Raising Children to Love Learning

**Thursday, February 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM**  
Location: TBD