

THE OBSERVATORY

Let's Give Thanks!

Calendar Highlights

- NOV 6** Turkey Trot & Fall Buy-A-Spot Begins
- NOV 9** General Meeting at Van Meter Elementary
- NOV 9 -** Community Service
- DEC 12** Angel Board Posted in Parent Room
- DEC 1** Flu Vaccination Follow-Up Due
- DEC 3** Los Gatos Holiday Parade - Join Us!
- DEC 7** "Looking Toward Kindergarten" Mini-Course
- JAN 19** Winter Raffle Begins
- APR 30** May Faire

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Why We're Grateful

Thanksgiving approaches, that special day of the year when we are reminded to stop and count our blessings: good health, family, friends and community, connection with nature, the laughter of children, healthful foods with which to nourish our bodies, the comforts of home, freedom to learn and to express ourselves...the list goes on. The family rituals which can develop around holidays are so important to children — coming together in an extended clan, developing ties to grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins they may not see regularly, gathering around the table and hearing family stories. Traditions create a sense of security for children and help them know who they are and that they belong (“Our family always...”). For some, with family separated by distance, these gatherings may center around friends and neighbors instead, but this sense of belonging and shared history can still be fostered.

But what a shame it would be if we only expressed our thankfulness on this day. Research has shown that the power of gratitude is transformational and offers serious health benefits to those who find ways to express gratitude regularly. Feeling thankful awakens our bodies’ pleasure centers and causes the release of bio-chemicals that activate a sense of our potential, well-being and connection dispelling some of the stress that accumulates in our 21st century lives. Whether you cultivate gratitude by writing a note to someone who has inspired you, taking time to thank your favorite barista for the excellent coffee with which you start your day, or looking for ways you and your family can be of help to others, you will begin to feel lighter and more at ease once this becomes a regular practice. It turns out that gratitude and anxiety cannot co-exist. Becoming more grateful may let us set aside some of the anxiety that comes with parenting. Backing off just a little may just be the best thing you can do for your kids! (*see the article on Helicopter Parenting at <http://www.dailycrackle.com/helicopter-parenting/>*)

With that idea in mind, I want to share with you Madeline Levine’s Ten Resolutions For Becoming a More Grateful Parent. Madeline, a psychologist in practice for 30 years has published several books on parenting and is a co-founder of Challenge Success, an organization that provides schools and families with the information and strategies they need to create a more balanced and academically fulfilling life for their kids.

I’m so grateful to all of you for sharing your beautiful children with us.

Love, Leslie



Ten Resolutions For Becoming a More Grateful Parent

- 1. I will make sure my child gets a full night's sleep.** Kids need between nine and 12 hours a night. Sleep deprivation impairs concentration, memory, and the ability to accurately read emotional cues. It makes kids crabby and compromises their ability to learn.
- 2. I will remember that I am a parent, not a CEO.** Results are down the line, not at the end of the quarter. This means the occasional “B” or “C” will not break your child’s future prospects. Stop catastrophizing. You won’t see the final fruits of your parenting until your child is grown and gone.
- 3. I will remember the success trajectory is a squiggle ... not a straight line.** Few of us become successful by simply putting one foot in front of the other. Most of us encounter a multitude of twists, turns, direction changes, and stops on the way to our goals.
- 4. I will love the child in front of me.** Appreciate and be thankful for your child’s unique gifts. Children are talented in a multitude of different ways. See your child’s particular talents clearly.
- 5. I will not push my child to be perfect.** Besides genetics, perfectionism is the strongest predictor of clinical depression. Life is full of mistakes, imperfect days, and human failings. Kids need to learn how to cope with these inevitabilities. They (and you) need to be able to feel happiness and gratitude in the face of imperfection.
- 6. I will not do for my child what he can do for himself.** This kills motivation and the ability to innovate. Both are missing from too many young people in today’s workforce.
- 7. I will not do for my child what she can *almost* do for herself.** At one time your child could almost walk. Now she can walk. Enough said.
- 8. I will not confuse my needs with my child’s needs.** This is the most toxic manifestation of overparenting. Get a hobby or a therapist instead.
- 9. I will honor the importance of PDF (Play Time, Down Time and Family Time).** Don’t overschedule. Kids need time to play, daydream, and just hang out. It’s in these precious “between” times that crucial developmental tasks are accomplished.
- 10. I will value my own (adult) life.** Being a happy, fulfilled, and yes, *grateful* adult makes you a better parent. It’s one of the best gifts you can give your child. It makes adulthood look like something worth striving for.



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Health & Safety

Jane Auh, Health & Safety Coordinator

INFLUENZA VACCINE REQUIREMENTS FOR 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR

Senate Bill 792 requires that all preschool volunteers and employees receive an influenza vaccination between August 1 and December 1 of each year. We must maintain documentation of proof of immunization or exemption from immunization to comply with state law.

Please provide before December 1:

1) Proof of flu vaccination from physician, clinic or pharmacy (given AFTER August 1, 2016)

OR

2) Statement declining flu vaccine for 2016-2017 school year (Form will be posted to Basecamp by Jane Auh this week)

Due to state law, volunteers cannot participate at Mountain School unless this flu vaccine requirement is met. Please note that volunteers can decline flu vaccine only (measles and pertussis vaccines cannot be declined).

You may turn in your documentation at the November 9th General Meeting or you may also mail proof of vaccination or statement declining flu vaccine to LGSONS , P.O. Box 776, Los Gatos CA 95031 before December 1.

Please email Forms Chair Christi Zenteno at christizenteno@gmail.com or Health and Safety Coordinator Jane Auh at janeauh@gmail.com with any questions.

Thank you for much for helping us comply with the law and for helping us keep our children healthy.

REMINDER: SICK POLICY

Children (and adults) should come to school only when healthy. Then, they are happier and full of energy for play, projects, and hikes. If they are sick, they have difficulty enjoying their day. They also put other children, teachers, and adults at risk for becoming sick.

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REMINDER: SICK POLICY (Continued)

Please use these guidelines to identify when an illness is contagious. Remember, this is in your child's best interest as well as in the interest of protecting other children from unnecessary exposure to illness.

Fever

A fever of 100° F. or above means a child is infectious. The child may return to school when her temperature has been below 100° F. for 24 hours without the use of medication such as Tylenol or Motrin, and her appetite and activity level have returned.

Eye Infections

Most eye infections are highly communicable. The child may come to school only after redness and drainage have resolved.

Ear Infections

A child with an ear infection is not usually infectious. He may come to school as long as he is feeling well enough and is fever-free.

Nasal Congestion and Cough

Many types of viruses cause colds and coughs, with some resulting in serious illnesses. Please keep your child home if she has a persistent runny nose (other than clear discharge) and/or persistent cough.

Skin Infections or Generalized Rash

A child with an unexplained rash or skin lesions that are draining should be evaluated by a physician. He may come to school after appropriate treatment or with his physician's consent.

Sore Throat

A child with a fever and sore throat should stay home until her temperature is normal and she is feeling well.

Vomiting

A child can come to school once he has been free from vomiting for at least 24 hours.

Diarrhea

Diarrhea is defined as two or more loose, watery, or mucous stools in a 24-hour period. A child who has had diarrhea should return to school only after all three of these conditions are met:

- Temperature is below 100° F.
- Stools are normal when eating a semi-solid diet
- She is feeling comfortable.



Parent Programming

Jordan Emmart & Patricia Darby, Programs Co-Chairs

Parent programming is an important element of our Mountain School experience. Every year, in addition to regular class participation, each family is required to attend our monthly circle meetings, the general meeting and two mini-courses. We (the Program Co-Chairs) are very excited about the general meeting and mini-courses we have to offer this year! There is a little something for everyone. A full schedule with dates, locations and times will be posted to Basecamp in a few weeks but we wanted to give you a preview of the offerings.

Our general meeting is November 9th from 7-9pm at Van Meter Elementary. Jon Young is back by popular demand! He was a huge hit last year. If you missed his 2015 talk, you can listen to it here at <http://lgsos.com/parents/courses/Jon%20Young.mp3>. His talk will be different this year but will still focus on the importance of being nature-connected.



Coming up on December 7th we will have a mini-course opportunity called Looking toward Kindergarten. This will be a table night for parents curious about the best fit for their child coming out of Mountain School. With so many charter and private schools in the area the options can seem daunting. Parents of Mountain School alumni will be present to discuss the school they chose for their children and why. This night is purely informational - no one employed by the elementary schools will be present to represent or sell you on their school. If you have older child who attends one of our major crossover schools and you'd like to be included please get in touch (jemmart@gmail.com).

The Common Ground Speaker Series (a consortium of schools who sponsor speakers to come to the Bay Area) offers a range of experts speaking on topics for all stages of childhood and parenting. **January 25th at 9am Dr. Scott Barry Kaufman will be speaking at Yavneh Day School in Los Gatos.** He will present "Wired To Create: Lessons in Unlocking Ingenuity" offering parents ideas to help child develop flexible thinking, and teachers tips for acknowledging the many pathways in which students can succeed. Tickets are \$20 at the door - sign in with one of us (we'll be decked out in Mountain School gear).

The majority of our remaining mini-courses will be offered in the months of February and April as there are no circle meetings required for those months. With new topics including storytelling to overcome struggles, child safety information from Kidpower, ideas for summer adventures from the Santa Clara County Parks Department, DIY household products, and the Hicklebees preschool book preview there will be some great choices for everyone.

Jordan Emmart (mom to Ezra, 3s) & Patricia Darby (mom to Ben, 3s)

Community Service

Caroline Forman, Community Service Liaison

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” Anne Frank

Every year the Mountain School Community comes together to help those in need in the larger community. We will have three organized community projects for the year: The Christmas Project, a Nursing Home Visit, and a Canned Food Drive. These service projects give us opportunities to demonstrate how we can make a difference in the lives of others and, in some measure, improve the world.

I encourage you to involve your children in these projects and to talk about service with them. You may also choose to brainstorm with them about ways to help others on a daily basis. If you are interested in more ideas you can do with your family, here is a link with many suggestions to get you started: <http://kidworldcitizen.org/2013/02/20/35-service-projects-for-kids/>. I welcome your ideas and comments about service and our service projects.

How wonderful it is that *we* do not need to wait a single moment to do our part, as it is time for our first project of the year...

The Christmas Project

November 9- December 12th

The Christmas Project is an inspiring program that collects and distributes toys, gifts and food certificates to over 300 families living in farmworker camps in Watsonville. It started in 1978 by Gladys Anderson who continues to run the program. She arranges for every recipient to be interviewed so they can receive a meaningful gift. She finds donors like us and gives us the angel tags which specify the name, age and wish of each person. Once the gifts are returned, she hosts a huge wrapping party then presents the gifts on Christmas Eve. The last 4 years, I have been moved by the abundance and quality of gifts given by our school and I even more awestruck to witness the hugeness of this project when I delivered our gifts. The large storage room was brimming with gifts that individuals had specifically requested. It was sweet to imagine the pleasure of the children opening their gifts.



The Christmas Project's Angel Board will be in the school house parent room. To participate, choose one of the angel tags, then return the specified gift, unwrapped with the angel tag firmly attached. If you want to help, but don't have time to purchase a specific gift, you can donate gift cards (Target, Safeway, etc.). The Christmas Project Board will be in the parent room at the schoolhouse until December 12th. If anyone is interested in helping to wrap the gifts, there will be a wrapping party on December 17th at Watsonville Community Hospital from 10am-4pm.

You can email me for more information at caroline_forman@yahoo.com or call me at 408-960-9406.

Teacher Profile

Leslie Bergh, Head Teacher 3/4s & LGSONS Director



I have been part of the Mountain School community since 1998 when my daughter Adrienne and husband joined the Sat PM class. The following year, I started the Wednesday 2s with our son August. Doug and I were both so grateful for the many things we learned about parenting, ourselves and our children that when I had the chance a few years later to assist in the 3s class, I eagerly accepted.

Before Mountain School I received a BA from SDSU and a MBA from Santa Clara University and worked in the computer industry for 15 years. After several years assisting at Mountain School, I started working on an Adult Education Credential which was required at the time to move into a head teacher position. (At the time, our program was classified as adult education under the LGSUHSD.) I consider myself a lifelong learner and would still like to take some early childhood classes - maybe next year.

Mountain School has been such a blessing. Starting off part time and in such a supportive environment left me plenty of time to volunteer at my children's schools and to be home when they were home. I feel so lucky that as my children got more involved in their own activities, I was able to take on more responsibility at Mt. School. I taught the Sat 2s for several years and then moved to the 3/4s when Laura Snyder, who had taught that class for 9 years, wanted to step down. Two years ago, I took over the administrative director role from our beloved Teacher Jane. I love meeting the new crop of children every year, working with our caring and talented teachers and with the dedicated parents who come forward each year to fill the board positions. What a wonderful way to keep people of all ages in my life!

I've always especially enjoyed our time outdoors. My earliest childhood memories are all linked to outdoor places: exploring the creek that ran through our neighborhood, whispering secrets under the canopy of a friend's weeping willow, building forts in the haystacks on my grandparents' midwestern farm. The adults didn't seem to worry if they couldn't see us which suited us kids just fine. I love that our time outdoors gives some of these freedoms back to the children in our care. Even though they are being observed, we try to stand back whenever possible to give them a sense of privacy as well.

I grew up in Sacramento and enjoyed many road trips, which always involved camping, as well as backpacking and cross country skiing with my first family. My dad is a keen outdoorsman who was happy to share his love of nature with us. One thing he always taught us was to leave each place better than we found it. If you ever notice my obsession for picking up trash, I guess this is where it started! I'm happy that Adrienne and August both seem to have caught the nature bug too. Hiking together is one of our favorite family activities. When I'm not at school or on the trail, you might find me at Breathe Yoga, in my kitchen or with my nose in a book!

Our School Library

Courtney Boitano, Librarian

November is here already and hopefully that means some extra time spent connecting with family and your child. Our parent library is filled with Positive Discipline parenting books that give tremendous insight to connecting with your child yet still creating firm limits with respect and kindness.

Here are the 5 tenants of Positive Discipline:

1. Is Kind and Firm at the same time. (Respectful and encouraging)
2. Helps children feel a sense of Belonging and Significance. (Connection)
3. Is Effective Long-Term. (Punishment works short term, but has negative long-term results.)
4. Teaches valuable Social and Life Skills for good character. (Respect, concern for others, problem-solving, accountability, contribution, cooperation)
5. Invites children to discover how Capable they are and to use their personal power in constructive ways.



Be sure to take a look at our parent library for books on positive parenting such as *Positive Discipline* and *Love and Logic*.

We also have some trail books and local guide books to inspire you to take a family hike and explore the beauty that is fall!

Marketing Corner

Have your friends check us and other local preschools out!

Las Madres Education Fair

Wednesday, November 9, 6pm-9pm

Campbell Community Center

http://www.lasmadres.org/content.aspx?page_id=87&club_id=177487&item_id=563844

Creating Memories

Jane Krejci, Teacher Friday 2's

I have recently been thinking about memories: their power and their healing qualities. Recently an 8 year old alumna came to class with her younger brother who is now attending Mountain School. She said, "Oh good - this is the place of my best memories when I was a little girl."

It reminded me anew that as teachers we are creating memories for your children here at Mountain School. I can't think of a better place - it is such a magical place for children where they can truly be children!

Memory is a way of holding onto the things we love, the things we are, the things we never want to lose.

The majority of the teachers are themselves alumni. We hold on to the memories of our own children at two and three and four and five. Many of you are alumni and are returning with your sons and daughters. I wonder what memories you have from your childhood here; and what memories your children will carry forward? What a wonderful shared legacy.

Your written observations (10 per semester!) become a precious history of your child's first schooling. I was flooded with memories when I read the observations I had written when our daughter was at Mountain School. I was able to reminisce with her about the experience; and also look with a keener eye at her children. It was fun to observe some similarities and then some traits unique to them.

I love the words to the song by Tom Hunter

May the memories wrap their arms around you,

May your childhood take you by the hand.

May what you remember find healing when it hurts,

So the memories will protect you when they can.

This fall we have had the opportunity to create memories at a new location – Cooley. Now we move back to the little red Schoolhouse. How lucky we are to enjoy these unique locations – and share them with you and your precious children.



Our circle meeting pertaining to screen exposure...

Sarah Hitchcock-Glover, Head Teacher Friday/Saturday 2's

Dear Mountain School families,

Among the teachers in our community, there has been much discussion regarding how pervasive electronic device use, and screen time have become for young children. Have you noticed how frequently the topic has surfaced in the media lately? Updated guidelines from the American Pediatric Association, TED Talks, NPR interviews and specials on PBS? Several articles on the subject were discussed in the Friday2s and Saturday2s Circle Meetings last month. The energized dialogue among our keen and dedicated parents made for such heartening, hopeful evenings. This topic truly inspired some parents to re-think about the perils presented.... behaviorally and developmentally, by the voluntary (initially) introduction to electronic devices at our children's tender early age.

Just two weeks after our Circle Meeting, a Friday 2s mom sent me a letter sharing thoughts on the remarkable positive changes that have taken place since their family shifted into a "no electronics mode". I in turn, feel compelled to share the Moreland family's discoveries with you. Enjoy the 'read'!

Warmly,

Teacher Sarah

Hi Sarah!

...I also wanted to write down some thoughts about our family's recent experience since we have shifted into a "no electronics" mode...

Our circle meeting pertaining to screen exposure for kids and modeling behavior for parents was very timely for our household. Quinn (our 2-year-old) seems innately uninterested in screens unless it is to look at pictures of herself or our family/adventures. Our 5-year-old (Jackson), however, had been becoming more and more addicted to screen time over the last few months. It started with being allowed a show while I would put Quinn down for a nap. As he got older the protests grew louder when I would wrap up that screen time. Over the summer he was occasionally allowed to play games on my husband's phone or iPad and his behavior around this kind of screen time really unraveled quickly. We started seeing addictive behavior: asking to "do electronics" over and over (to which we said yes a few times throughout the day), finding the iPad and hiding with it in order to play, and (most heartbreaking to me) wishing he could have screen time over doing other things.

At the circle meeting we decided we would start anew with (1) a 10-minute timer for any game time and (2) that he would be allowed strictly one show while I put his sister to bed for her nap. This worked for about 3 days. On the third night we watched a movie as a family and he had a meltdown of epic proportions when it was time to turn it off and head to bed. His screaming, crying tantrum let us know that simply trying to reign it in was not enough. We both looked at each other and simultaneously said we needed to go cold turkey for awhile.

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The first few days with the no electronics policy were disappointing for him, but he handled it better than I would have ever anticipated. I noticed his drive to play increase within those first few days. Instead of playing for spells and then asking for electronics, he was back to playing for hours (interrupted only by meals and other planned activities).

It's been about 10 days now and I'm just amazed by the shift in his behavior and our renewed connection. He seems sillier and more vibrant, his creativity is a joy to behold, and his patience and kindness is vast compared to a couple weeks ago. His observations and chatter while we are driving is funny, interesting and never-ending. And, mind you, this is not a child who was allowed hours and hours of screen time at the peak. I think the significance for us is that he is a kid with addictive tendencies towards screen time. And whether that addiction is fed for 10 minutes or 2 hours, it is just never enough, never quite satisfying, and becomes an all-encompassing want for him.

For us we are being challenged to model the same tough behavior we are asking of him: devices put away! Even though I am in the height of my event season I am finding it completely reasonable (and blissful) to check my emails very infrequently (and when my kids are otherwise engaged) during the day. Catching up at night makes for a little less of a sharp, speedy mind for me...but it is so very worth it. I'm being spared my annual mommy guilt of the couple months each year when I'm less present with my kids and more wound up in general.

Quinn is benefiting too: she wasn't very interested in screens in the first place but now she isn't around it at all. She also has a brother who is available to play, play, play rather than being more interested in a screen than her. Putting Quinn down for her nap is a trickier daily task with an older brother who wants to "help" or who is yelling for me at top volume for a snack just as she is about to nod off. But I think I will remember forever their giggles and belly laughs as he tries to snuggle her to sleep. Once she is finally down, I'm relishing our one-on-one time together playing endless board games of Sorry or doing hidden picture puzzles for an hour. And, in true Mt. School fashion, the newest solution to the nap time juggle was his idea: he gets to make mud outside and get as dirty as his heart desires while mommy gets kid sister down for a snooze.

Best,

Amy Moreland

