

JOURNEY SCHOOL NEWS

Volume 3, Issue 14

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*Journey School * 23431 Knollwood * Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 * (949) 448-7232 * www.journeyschool.net*

Dear Parents,

Noel entered my class in third grade. She had been enrolled in a public school and now in the middle of third grade, the district wished to place her in special day classes. This was not just for academic reasons, but for maturity and developmental reasons, as well. This would also extend the age range in the group from oldest to youngest to 20 months. I could see in the interview why the local school felt that way about her. Her academic abilities were weak and her emotional development was slower than it should be, but thinking that seemed out of the question. The faculty elected to offer her placement in the school at my recommendation.

Noel was a sweetheart. She was bubbly, happy and ready to try most things except classroom assignments. I soon found out that she would rather be with the kindergarten and first grade children than with peers. She loved animals and had several at home and had great sympathies for them. She did not always know the difference between truth and fabrication, but she was always ready with a warm hug and the look in eye that she was sorry even if she didn't realize what she had done. She was the youngest in the family and mom and dad spoiled her. She could take hours to get her school work accomplished. Her peers tried to be friends with her, but eventually gave up on her as she was not one to attempt to fit in. She had her own ways of doing things and her preferences for what she wanted were not always socially acceptable. She traveled with me on field trips, hung out with me at recess or with the younger children, and her love for animals and young children only increased.

I spent many evenings with her folks attempting to find ways where we could mutually support her. Yet her ways simply brought scorn and no matter what I tried, I never felt successful in helping her feel accepted. These patterns continued through 8th grade when she attempted to enroll at a Christian school, but alas they would not take her, and she arrived back for the year. The great maturity that I saw in the class could not include acceptance for her. Towards the end of the year, she began to find a voice to speak with her peers but she hid her resentment and this resentment often came out as intense bitterness even if she wished not to speak that way. She wrote a final essay about her experience over the years comparing herself with the lower castes of India that we had covered during the 8th grade year with the biography of Gandhi.

I thought about her often after that and would hear from her and her parents that high school was going well as the larger school offered a larger social group to fit into, and that academically I would be proud of her. She graduated high school as a mid year senior, proud and happy to get a break from school. She accepted a teaching position in a pre-school and to spend her free time riding horses. The last time I spoke with her, she was moving to Nevada to be closer to her folks and the wild horses of the desert.

The year before she graduated from high school, I received a phone call from two former students who told me that they had been thinking about Noel and now as they turned 17, they finally understood the message of acceptance that I had tried to bring to them. They wanted me to know how sorry they were for the way they had treated her in their lower school days and how terrible they felt about it. I urged them to call her and they did. True to her nature, she kindly accepted their apology.

I imagine that there are many of these stories. It indeed could be a better world if we could find in our hearts an acceptance of others who seem different than us.

My best to you...Tim Connolly, Administrator

Parent Survey Review

During the first eight months of the year, the school invited an evaluator to review our teachers, used both external and internal mentors, peer evaluation and recently the faculty completed self evaluations. The Parent Review completes this cycle of assessment for the school and of the individual teachers that is important to our overall program improvement. We received responses from 17% of you versus 25% from last year. The individual teacher surveys are being shared with each teacher in conjunction with their self evaluation. The administrative feedback has been compiled as well. If you recall, the survey requested that parents rate their satisfaction level on several topics. I have calculated the survey responses into percentages indicating levels of satisfaction. I have also included the percentage from last year's survey.

	05-06	06-07
Availability of staff	92%	87%
Availability of administrator	97%	97%
Communication with staff	93%	90%
Communication with Administrator	99%	98%
Administrator's management of school	98%	93%
Newsletter as a communication tool	96%	92%
Emailing of newsletter	82%	86%
Communication with School Council	69%	86%
Communication with Parent Cabinet	71%	77%
Education Support program	78%	78%
Aftercare program(JASP)	88%	79%
Kindergarten Parent Evenings	94%	95%
Grades Parent Evenings	88%	84%
Parent education about the Curriculum	80%	82%
Information/how parents can support	86%	83%

In addition, the survey requested feedback on the three highest priorities for the school. These priorities are listed from highest to lowest and these represent the priorities most often suggested:

- 1.) Hire an administrator with experience
- 2.) School to obtain better facilities as well as their own!
- 3.) Hire a foreign language teacher
- 4.) Continue to bring a quality curriculum
- 5.) Find a way to bring an end to the litigation pending against the school

You were also requested to share your opinion of the positive accomplishments over the past year. Again in order from highest to lowest, these were the ones most often mentioned:

- 1.) Cohesiveness of staff, faculty and parent body
- 2.) Smooth running of the school
- 3.) Festival life of the school
- 4.) Moving to a new site

This survey will be shared with the three governance groups of the school, and I offer thanks for your feedback and it is received with gratitude and appreciation.

Council Meeting of April 19

In my humble opinion, the meeting of last Thursday was the finest Council meeting I have attended at Journey. The agenda was an overzealous one including three interviews with administrative candidates, discussion of whether to add a third kindergarten to the school for the 2007-08 school year, a review of the finances of Journey Treasures, the results of the open enrollment, the holiday calendar for 2007-08 and to respond to the faculty about their recommendation to divide the administrator's job description into two separate positions. The quality and tone of the meeting was one of collaboration, dedication and love for the school.

The Council did indeed concur with the faculty proposal to divide the administrative position. The administrative person would oversee the business aspects of the school focusing on community development, interaction with the volunteer efforts of the parents, school finances, fundraising, grant writing and execution for the school's long range plan. The pedagogical position would focus on faculty mentoring, teaching classes, communication with parents and students on issues surrounding the classroom, evaluations and overall execution of the curriculum. The Council asked that the Faculty to further define the job descriptions for these positions and return then to the Council for final approval.

The financial status of Journey Treasures was also reviewed. At the end of March, the finances of the store show a loss of over \$5,000. The question of continuing the store was brought into question and the Parent Cabinet was given until the Council's June meeting to bring back recommendations for its future. In the meantime, paid staff to operate the store will be discontinued after May 31, 2007.

Open enrollment which closed on April 19, 2007 resulted in 109 new applicants for the school with 59 of those resulting in kindergarten applications. We expect at this point to have waiting lists with filled classes for the KG through 6th grade. The 59 applications for kindergarten renewed the question of whether or not to open a third kindergarten for the upcoming school year. The Council voted in favor of such an endeavor and sent their recommendation to the faculty for review. The Faculty elected to not follow this course. With the advent of two new administrators next year, moving to a new campus, the first ever graduating 8th grade class and the addition of 25 more families for the 2007-08 year, the faculty elected to defer the initiation of a third kindergarten so that this next step could be considered by the community as part of the school's long range plan.

The calendar for next year was under consideration as well. The Council elected to increase the number of school days for the grades to 180 from this year's 176, concluding that the kindergarten calendar year would remain the same at 175. The faculty will provide final consideration to this calendar at their upcoming meeting and holiday dates will be noted soon thereafter to allow for finalization of holiday travel plans for the upcoming year.

Lastly, in light of two recent resignations from the Council, the Council reviewed its own by-laws to begin the process of adding new members. At the Council's May 10 meeting, a resolution will be brought to the group to recommend that the maximum number of members allowed under the bylaws be sought which would bring the group total to eleven. The Council currently has eight members with two of those being non-voting positions. With the resignation of Parent Cabinet Representative Erika Allen due to "healthy baby reasons", the PC will be nominating one member while Council President, Michael Graber will create an ad-hoc nominating committee as allowed under the by laws to seek two new members.

The Council scheduled a closed session meeting for this past Monday to discuss personnel matters including the hiring of administrative and faculty positions as well as to review salary and benefits for the 2007-08 school year.

Dear Administrator: Is Journey a public school? What does that exactly mean? What are the standards for admission?

Yes indeed, Journey is a public school. Journey was approved as a charter school by Capistrano Unified School District in the year 2000, and they serve as the school's authorizing agent. The school receives state funding for the operation of the school, and there are no mandatory fees and tuition. Any child in the State of California may attend the school, with priority given to in district children. Journey has no screening regulations for families or children accepted into the school. If a child presents for admission and has educational issues that the school cannot meet based on the required criteria in the charter and the availability of staff to teach a specialized curricula, then a child can be referred to a different school. The school offers informational evenings, classroom tours and one on one conversation to allow for a family to gather enough information about the school to make a decision that is an informed one. The student and parents for each class have a required interview which further attempts to help the family make a healthy choice in choosing Journey. Yet throughout this process, except in the case of educational issues, the school cannot refuse entrance to a student.

Faculty Hiring

The Faculty continues to work on finding the right teacher for the 2007-08 1st grade class. We feel fortunate to have candidates that we feel very good about. The Faculty Search Committee serves as the screening group for candidates and recommends a second interview with the whole faculty. We are diligently in the midst of this process and hope to have news for you soon!



May Day Festival Set For May 4th

Journey School's May Festival is set for Friday, May 4th at 11:45 am with Maypole dancing, a school wide lunch provided for the students and lucky parents, also the 5th grade class will have ice cream available for a \$1 donation as a fund raiser. Old fashioned games will round off the fun! Please have your student dress in white or pale colors. Students will be making their flower crowns in the morning with their teachers. All parents are invited to attend.

Fifth Grade Pentathlon
@Highland Hall Waldorf School
Saturday, April 28, 2007
8:30 AM...opening ceremonies

This weekend, our fifth grade will be participating in the Olympiad that is held as an annual event for the schools in this region. Including the two charter schools and the six independent Waldorf schools in the region, up to eight schools will be represented and 175 participants. The day begins with a lovely ceremony, complete with the singing of "Glorious Apollo" and recitations of the student's odes. The students are then split up into one of four city-states as aligned in Greek times, and the day of athletic competition begins. The students will throw the discus and the javelin, have an approximate 500-meter run, compete in "Greek" wrestling and participate in the long jump. There are victors in each city-state for each event and awards are given as well for sportsmanship better known as awards for "beauty, style and grace". The parents and students at Highland Hall will be selling lunches and snacks all day as a fundraising opportunity. The event will end with a closing ceremony, during which the awards will be given. If you have not attended an event like this, please let me tell you that they are delightful events to attend. You need not be a parent of a fifth grader to attend.

6th Grade Medieval Games
@Waldorf School of Orange County
Monday, May 7, 2007

In ten days, our sixth grade will travel to Costa Mesa to participate in the Waldorf Medieval Games that have become a rite of passage for our young knights and ladies. One of the components of the 6th grade curriculum is undertaking the history of the feudal system, Charlemagne and the overall gesture of these times. A culmination of these studies is often represented through these games. The games are held in great secrecy for each 6th grade so that as they arrive for the day, what they undergo will serve as a surprise. In preparation for the day, they have undertaken the practice of archery, tug of war and strength of body, mind and spirit. The student in anticipation of the event are guided by their class teacher to be mindful of the questions: "Can I remain aware of myself in my task? Am I doing what is right and good? Am I striving to overcome my weaknesses?"

Please wish our students well on this exciting day as they join with 175 students to live deeper in the experience of this period.

**WOW, WE RAISED
\$47,517
IN OUR 2007 ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN
WITH 70% of our families PARTICIPATING!**

Our Annual Giving campaign is officially over and we almost achieved our aggressive fund raising goal of \$50,000-- we raised \$47,517!

We are so proud considering our Annual Giving campaign raised ~\$30,000 last year with roughly the same number of families. Congratulations to all of you who have donated for giving so generously, as it goes directly to the quality and variety of classroom activities our children can participate in.

We also moved closer to another important goal in the campaign: 100% participation. It's very important to achieve this goal because of the sense of community spirit and pride it generates. The Journey School depends on 100% family participation to reinforce the values of our Waldorf-based school. For those of you who were out of town, or forgot to give last week, there are Annual Giving envelopes in the office. Let's reach this goal too!

HERE ARE THE FINAL CLASS PARTICIPATION LEVELS:

Morning Glory Kindergarten	65%
Sunflower Kindergarten	68%
First Grade	65%
Second Grade	80%
Third Grade	65%
Fourth Grade	54%
Fifth Grade	76%
Sixth Grade	70%
Seventh Grade	66.6%

We heartily thank our newest donors from the last two weeks:

Maysoun and Abdullah Alhariri
Eric and Erika Allen
Monica and Gunther Anderson
John and Cathleen Aram
Adam and Adriana Bitterman
Jerry and Debby Bower
Hellene and Ben Brodsky-Blake
Rita and Fabio Cabezas
Hannah and Brian Carlton
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James and Gaylen Corbett
Lisa and Norm Crow
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Stacey and Chris Cussen
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Kimberlee and Abel Fernandez
Jackie Wilson (Fino)
Donald and Toni Garcia
Ginger DeLong (Gaul)

Jamie and Jan Geisendorfer
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Johneric and Tammara Tanner
Robert and Robyn Thompson
Shannon Quayle (Topping)
Mauricio and Marisela Vela
Alex and Erin Warrack
John Whitfield
Rick and Nicole Yancey

And we wish to acknowledge our heartfelt gratitude to our donors from previous weeks:

Marc and Betsy Abrams
Imelda Ayala
Tiessa Bandy
Chris and Maica Belknap
John and Frances Bennett
Michele Bennett
Richard and LuAnne Biggs
Michael and Amy Burk
Jen and David Burlison
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Jochen and Bettina Spretke
Lisa Thornburg
Kanji Tsuchida and Ritsuko Imuta
Glenn and Miki Watanabe
Lisa and Damon Wells

Thank you to Friends and Family:

Sharon Diskin
Sheldon Eskow
Nancy and James Johnson
Gayle Lillie
Doris and Miro Sumich
Elaine Viele

**Ever grateful for your support,
The Annual Giving Campaign Committee**

JOIN US FOR OUR LAST TWO COMMUNITY FORUMS IN MAY

We had a great crowd for our April 25th Forum about the effects of media on the growing child. Thanks to Liz Clark for her presentation. Remember as well that CHILDCARE IS AVAILABLE for only \$5 per child. Pre-registration is required by calling the office at 448-7232.

MAY 16
7:00-8:30 pm

PARENTING MADE EASIER WITH UNDERSTANDING THE TEMPERAMENTS

Patti Connolly will speak about how parents can use their knowledge of the four temperaments to make their parenting easier. The four temperaments, basic personality styles in their essence, were first identified in the Middle Ages but still are a huge help to adults in understanding and working with children and each other.

MAY 17
9:00 – 10:00 am

PARENTS' EURYTHMY

Come experience eurythmy for yourself! You will be led through a progression of the grades, sharing both tone and speech eurythmy with Amy Schick, Eurythmy teacher.

Please note that this last Forum is in the morning

DONATIONS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED UNLESS FEE IS NOTED

You are invited to attend Journey School's

"MOVIE NIGHT"

*Monday, May 21
7:00 p.m.*

Wood Canyon Elementary School

Be the first to see the premier of the Journey School Movie!

(Okay, it's not a "real" premier, so don't call your stylist. However it is a 40-minute presentation about education at Journey School).

Join us in celebrating Journey's teachers, community and your children!

Popcorn will be served!

Adults Only
Babysitting Provided \$5 per child
call office for reservations.

Journey School Yearbook Photos NEEDED

Please upload and e-mail any photos you may have for our yearbook to OhJoyFoto@hotmail.com
Or call Joy Halverson at 949-697-9625.

*Also - Order forms for the NEW class photos are available in the office!
You may also call or e-mail your orders to Joy Halverson at above.
Make payments to Joy Halverson.*

Come join us for a Kayak Experience!

Saturday, May 12 at 10:30 am
Dana Point Harbor, Baby Beach
24200 Dana Point Harbor Drive

If you have a Kayak bring it, if not come on down and you can borrow one of ours!
For more information contact Michael Burk or Cheryl Moe

A blood drive and bone marrow screening will be taking place at Journey School.

Wednesday, May 16 from 12 to 6

This is in honor of Kennedy Kraus, a former Sunflower Kindergartener who would be in Ms. Emery's class, if she had not moved from San Clemente to Carlsbad. Her brother Cole would be in Ms. MacLeod's class. Kennedy's mom Terri has been an instrumental parent at our school and even co-chaired our last silent auction.

Kennedy along with 6 other children in north San Diego County were diagnosed with Aplastic Anemia last November. This is a one-in-a-million disease that is rare but treatable.

"Aplastic anemia is a disease that involves failure of the bone marrow to produce the cells it normally makes: the white blood cells which fight infection, red cells which carry oxygen, and platelets, which promote blood clotting," said Dr. Peter Reissmann.

Kennedy has been receiving treatment at the City of Hope and is now on the Bone Marrow Transplant list, while she is finishing an ATG treatment. Every week she receives several blood and platelet transfusions to keep healthy and has not been home since early January. When Kennedy and Terri are not living at the hospital they are able to stay at her Aunt Marla's house, in Newport Beach. Marla worked at the OCWS.

So please plan on scheduling a time to donate the gift of life Wednesday afternoon.
For more information or to schedule a time to donate or if you would like to help please email Cheryl Moe at cmoearchitecture@cox.net
Or Patty Wallace at pswmail@cox.net



Important Dates

April 28

5th Grade Pentathlon @ Highland Hall
All Day

April 30 - May 2

5th Grade to Catalina

May 3

Spring Concert 3rd, 4th and 5th grades
7pm

May 4

May Festival

11:45 Dances

12:30 Lunch

1:30 Old Fashioned Games

May 7

6th Grade to Medieval Games @ WSOCC

May 9

Re-enrollment packets due

4th Grade Bake Sale

2:45 pm

1st new parent orientation meeting

7:00 pm

May 10

1st Grade Play

10 am and 6 pm

Council Meeting

7 pm

May 16

Understanding Temperaments with Patti Connolly

7 pm

May 17

Eurythmy for Parents with Amy Schick

9 am

May 21

Journey School Movie Night

7 pm

June 15

Kindergarten Rainbow Bridge

June 18

Last Day of Kindergarten

June 20

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR GRADES