



The Observatory

Los Gatos-Saratoga Observation Nursery School ~ Issue 2 October/November 2007-2008

Fall Traditions

by Marie Imai, Lead Teacher

Dear Families,

When we talk about family traditions it's usually the winter holidays of Christmas and Hanukkah that come to mind. But I think we may have been missing the very best season of all for families to establish traditions that are not dictated by commercial exploitation. Instead, think of Fall and all the wonderful ways that you can celebrate this special time of year. The children are already gathering huge bouquets of dried maple leaves and finding the acorns that the squirrels have missed. Remember that it only takes doing something twice to make it a family tradition and it can be as simple as visiting a pumpkin patch. My favorite is Rodoni Farms (<http://www.rodonifarms.com/pumpkins.html>), in Santa Cruz, located 4 miles North on Hwy. 1. Take Mission Street through the center of town and continue on to Hwy. 1 towards San Francisco/ Halfmoon Bay. It sits up on the hill facing the Pacific and there are pumpkins of every color and shape, squashes, gourds and hay bales to climb on and jump off. Even a corn maze in which to get lost or at least have lots of fun playing hide and seek. I also enjoy their fresh fall produce and always come home with a whole stalk of brussel sprouts still attached to the stem. Teacher Jan says that you can steam them just like that in a big kettle and then slice off your very own "baby sprout". This wonderful pumpkin patch is open daily from 9am to dusk throughout October. On your return, stop at Historic Wilder Ranch, a state park about 2 miles north of Santa Cruz for a picnic. It is an old farm with chickens, goats and the most amazing cedar tree you've ever seen. This special tree is located just in front of the yellow farm house and has many, many huge branches laying on the ground or close to it that are just perfect for young children to climb and play in. It's fun to explore the farm on your own and there is also going to be a wonderful Heritage Harvest Festival,

(http://www.parks.ca.gov/events/event_detail.asp?id=1683) there on Oct 27 from 11 to 4. Of course, you can also end your day at Natural Bridges State Park and Beach (http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=541) and maybe even see the first monarch butterflies returning to their winter home.

For more local fall adventures there are 3 places to hike and explore off Sanborn Road that connects to Highway 9 just beyond Saratoga Springs. Go to Sanborn Park (<http://www.sanbornparkhostel.org>), hike around their trails and check out all the insects in the nature center. Or follow the signs to the Youth Hostel, park there and then go exploring on the fire road found through the green metal gates behind and to the left of the hostel. There's a creek and a big landslide and you can even get to the Savannah Chanelle Redwood Grove, which is about a mile down the trail from the hostel. Another great place to explore is Lake Ranch Reservoir at the end of Sanborn Road past the park about a half mile or so. Park there and follow the fire road and trail steeply uphill for about 20 minutes until you reach this old reservoir. There are picnic tables and lots of water and mud to play in and it's downhill on the way back. At this time of year the big leaf maples found in our Santa Cruz Mountains are shedding their beautiful yellow and green spotted leaves constantly and I can never resist the urge to collect a bunch myself. When you're out leaf gathering beware of the small reddish and light yellow ones that provide our best fall color along the roadsides and trails of northern California. They are most likely poison oak and much safer to enjoy with your eyes only. "Leaves of 3, let it be" is a helpful rhyme for identifying poison oak but when they've fallen to the ground you often just see a beautiful, single, pink leaf.

Last, but not least, plan your own harvest potluck with another Mountain School family that could start with a trip to your local farmers' market where the children get to pick the vegetables and fall flowers. This can be the impetus to actually fill your house and porch with those

CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

Fall Traditions

Page 1

Table of Contents

Page 2

Mountain School Fall Picnic

Page 2

“Co-Chairs”

Page 3

Community Service Drives

Page 4

Tuition

Page 4

Calendar

Page 5

Turkey Trot Sponsors Needed

Page 6

Fundraisers

Page 6

Raffle

Page 6

Go Green

Page 6

eScript

Page 7

Artwork Notecards

Page 7

“Service and Volunteerism”

Page 8

Fresh Ideas

Page 8

Book Report

Page 9

Baked Apple Recipe

Page 9

Halloween Safety Tips

Page 9

Craft a Pumpkin Candle Holder

Page 9

Turkey Trot Time!

Page 10

(Fall Traditions, continued)

pumpkins, corn stalks and other fall treasures for everyone to enjoy. I'm such a procrastinator that it takes a party or a gathering for me to actually do this. So together let's really celebrate fall for the wonderful season it is. Children thrive (and so do we) by observing and truly experiencing the regularity of the cycles of life – day followed by night, the sun by the moon, and each season in its place. The earth does nourish our spirits and restore us when we take time to recognize its bounty and its wonders. I feel blessed each day I can spend outdoors with the families in my class and I hope that you, too, return home from nursery school with a little more peace in your heart.

Love, Marie



Mountain School Fall Picnic

Where: Saratoga Springs

When: Sunday, October 14th

11:00am til 2:00pm

A fun event for the whole family. Enjoy arts and crafts, music and fun!

Please bring your picnic supplies (utensils, plates, cups, napkins), drinks, a potluck dish to share, something to BBQ.

We need your help to run this event!

To volunteer, please contact

Claudia Yore, Social Chair at (408) 395-2892.



“Why We do It”

by: Sonia Casper, Co-Chair

Dear Families,

Please allow me a moment to thank Tracy Halgren and her family for all the time, energy and hard work she's given to our community. We were all so fortunate to have her lead the way last year, and grateful to her family for their willingness to share her with us. Tracy will be greatly missed, but we wish them all the best in all their adventures that lay ahead. I have all confidence they will be very happy in their new home and community.

With that said, Tracy has left some big shoes to fill, she certainly made a difficult job look easy. Knowing this, and the need the school had, Marina Rush and I whole-heartedly decided to take on the challenge. I feel very fortunate to have Marina to be my partner in this adventure. We know the job ahead is a big one, but rest assured we are both completely dedicated to Mountain School and its families, and are at your disposal should you need us.

As most of you know, our school could not function as it does without our volunteers and the fundraising we do. It's become a necessity in the world of education. The Auction has always been a large part of our fundraising effort. To take some pressure off of the Auction this year, we are trying out a couple new fundraisers such as the Art Cards, dinners as well as some opportunities to do some holiday shopping. In addition we have brought back the very popular Turkey Trot and have moved the raffle to this event. Because of this it has been a busy fall with a flurry of fundraising activities. As the year progresses we will be paying close attention and will evaluate each fundraiser to determine which should be done again. We try hard to make our fundraisers ones that are functional, unique and/or fun, and although your participation is greatly appreciated and every bit helps, each of these fall fundraisers is optional. We look forward to your feedback as to which ones you've found valuable and worthy.

In the meantime we would like to thank the many people who have already put in countless hours of work and dedication to our school. Just to mention a few, Julia

Yee, Annette Rau and Kuni Shira have truly picked up the reins to their respective fundraisers with great energy and dedication. I know that Julia is very appreciative of every raffle ticket that you sell. Annette is looking for volunteers for the Turkey Trot. If you are available to help, even in the smallest way, I encourage you to give them a call. All help is graciously appreciated.

With so much talk about business, let us not forget the reason why we are all here, the reason we do all this fundraising...the children, the fabulous teachers, the community, and the beautiful outdoor locations. Each day I spend at the creek seems to be a gentle reminder to pause and appreciate all that nature has to offer.

I was thinking about that tonight as I walked outside to get something out of the car. The sky was filled with stars, the air was crisp and clear and a few crickets and frogs were still around to serenade all that nature presented. This is always one of my favorite times of the year. I love the cool breezes that clean the air, the rustle of the leaves and the gentle way they fall from the trees, floating down to the ground where we can rake them up into piles and let the kids jump in. I know that many see autumn as a time of dying off, but I always feel a sense of rebirth and newfound energy, not only within nature, but also within myself.

I hope that you too can find the time to stop and listen to that moment of silence in nature, or pause to watch your children and see how every moment with them is special, a gift to cherish.

Happy autumn! I hope to see you all at the Fall Picnic on Sunday, October 14th.

Best regards,

Sonia Casper



Holiday Gift Boutique Cancelled

Due to logistical issues the November 15th, Holiday Gift Boutique has been cancelled.

Mountain School 2007 Community Service Drives

Submitted by: Stevie Caceres

Greetings to all new and returning families. I am happy to continue my participation as the community service liaison. I am very excited for this year and the opportunity we have to make a difference to all those in greater need. I kept hearing how much you enjoyed the drives last year and I am pleased to say we will be helping the same organizations. I would also like to add one more drive and help the Second Harvest Food Bank later in the school year.

I want to encourage you to participate in these drives and especially to involve your child in the process. Children learn best by doing. For example, they can help you pick the PJs or they can help pick the tag and gift. Take these drives as an opportunity to model compassion to your children and to discuss how important it is that we are thankful for what we have.

The first two drives of the year are as follows:

Oct 1st – 19th:
Pajama Program Drive:

<http://www.pajamaprogram.org/>

This organization provides a new set of pajamas and books for children staying at local emergency shelters. This program was started because many children in these circumstances have to sleep in their street clothes and have no books to read.

I encourage you to visit the web site. This year they are especially looking for PJs in teen sizes and books for older children. They only accept new PJs because they want the children to feel they have something that is just theirs.

Nov-Dec: The Christmas Project

This program provides gifts during the holidays to over 300 families living in Watsonville farm camps. This is a wonderful opportunity to give a little joy to less fortunate children and hard working families. In November, gift tags will be displayed in the schoolhouse. Each tag has a name, age, and gift wish. Simply choose a tag, purchase the gift, and return it to the schoolhouse unwrapped with tag attached. They also like to receive \$5 gift cards to Target, Kmart, Walmart, and major grocery stores. They request us not to purchase cards in excess of \$5, since many families do not receive any cards. Last year we filled all of our gift wishes, donated 50 gift cards, as well as 300 books donated by the school using our scholastic points. I was so overwhelmed with your generosity that I am excited to be able to run this again this year.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments. I look forward to working with you this year!

☺



Tuition

Submitted by: David Casper,
LGSONS Treasurer

The second LGSONS tuition payment is almost due. Please make sure it's delivered or postmarked by October 15th.

If you have any questions about your tuition balance or any special circumstances, please let me know.

Thanks!

Make Checks payable to: LGSONS

Mail to:
David Casper, C/O LGSONS
P.O. Box 33091
Los Gatos, CA 95031

Tuition by Class:
2's 1/3 tuition payment is \$244
3's 1/3 tuition payment is \$430
3,4's 1/3 tuition payment is \$600
4/5's 1/3 tuition payment is \$600
S3,4,5's 1/3 tuition payment is \$244

Tuition Policies:

Tuition fees may be paid in one single payment or in three equal installments due on or before May 15th, October 15th and January 15th. Any payment not received or postmarked by the due date shall result in a \$15 late fee. If a payment is more than 15 days late, then an additional \$25 late fee shall be assessed.

Returned Check Policy: There is a \$15 charge for the first returned check. If a check is returned a second time, there is an additional \$15 charge. After return of a second check, cash, cashier's check or money order in person will be required for all further payments during the current school year to the Treasurer.

☺

Calendar

GENERAL MEETING & ROUND TABLE PIZZA FUNDRAISER

Thursday, October 11th
6:45 pm at Van Meter Elementary,
Cafeteria
Round Table Pizza (Present Flyer)
57 North Santa Cruz Ave
for Dine-in, Take-out or Delivery

FALL PICNIC

Sunday, October 14th
See page 2 for more details.

LGSONS TUITION DUE

Monday, October 15th
For more info see page 4.

PAJAMA PROGRAM DRIVE ENDS

Friday October 19th
For more info see page 4

ARTWORK NOTECARD ORDERS DUE

Saturday October 20th

CLASSES MOVE INSIDE

Monday, October 29th
Red School House
19601 Black Road

HALLOWEEN “TRICK OR TREAT”

Wednesday, October 31st-Dusk
Thursday, November 1st Pumpkin Recycle
Whole Foods Los Gatos Blvd

MINI COURSE, “MAKING A SOCK STICK HORSE”

Monday, November 5th
7-9 pm at Red School House
19601 Black Road

BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, November 6th
7:00pm at Van Meter Elementary,
Clubhouse Portable

MIMI'S RESTAURANT & LEARNING EXPRESS FUNDRAISER

Thursday, November 8th
For more info and Flyer check email

TURKEY TROT 5K RACE & FAMILY FUN RUN

Sunday, November. 11th
9-2pm at Vasona Park

CHRISTMAS PROJECT BEGINS

Tuesday, November 20th
For more info see page 4

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Tuesday, November 20th-24th

LOS GATOS HOLIDAY PARADE

Saturday, December 1st
11:00 am North Santa Cruz Ave.
For more info check email

BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, December 4th
7:00pm at Van Meter Elementary,
Clubhouse Portable

WOODEN HORSE PURCHASING DAYS

Thursday, December 6th-9th
796 Blossom Hill Road
For more info and Flyer check email

MINI COURSE, “EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE”

Monday, December 10th, Location TBD

HOLIDAY BREAK December 22nd- January 4th

Turkey Trot Sponsors Needed

Submitted by Annette Rau, Turkey Trot

Would you like to draw attention to your business for a good cause?

We are looking for SPONSORS for our upcoming Turkey Trot 5k Race at Vasona Park in Los Gatos taking place Nov. 11, 2007.

Sponsors will get their name/logo on the back of each runner's t-shirt as well as placement on a large banner, and on other promotional materials for the Turkey Trot (posters, flyers, etc.).

For T-shirt placement, we have a deadline of Oct.30, so if interested, please contact me as soon as possible (408) 395-2892; annette.rau@hotmail.com

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Dates to remember to support our school-

by Amoreena Lucero

Hello Mountain School!

November 8th, is our third Restaurant and Purchasing Fundraiser! Just in time to start your Holiday Shopping, you can raise money for our beloved Mountain School at the same time!

Please share the flyers with friends and family, but remember, no soliciting in or near the restaurant. Thank you for making this a successful event.

Nov 8 - Mimi's Restaurant & Learning Express Fund raiser (and possibly one other restaurant, stay tuned!)

Dec 6-9 - Wooden Horse Purchasing Days

You MUST bring the flyers with you & present them at the time of purchase for our school to receive the % donation. ☞

Raffle

Submitted by Julia Yee (Fri 2's and 4/5's)
Raffle Ticket Coordinator

Each family has 50 tickets to sell. They are \$2 each. You are not required to sell any or all your tickets.

We have two fabulous prizes which should make the sale easy. Grand prize is a one week stay in a condo in Maui's Kaanapali area. First prize is a four course dinner for 8 by our own Chef Victor. I personally stayed at the condo in Maui with my family, including my Mom and Mother-in-law, and it is a wonderful property. Sunset from your living room looks just like in the picture! And of course, Chef Victor is famous for his wonderful meals!

It's very important that the tickets, sold and unsold, along with money collected be returned to your class liaison at the October Circle Meeting. If you want more tickets, please let your liaison know.

- BY OCTOBER CIRCLE MEETING (WEEK OF OCTOBER 22 FOR ALL CLASSES) : Return all tickets, sold and unsold, along with money and checks collected to your class liaison.

- NOVEMBER 11: Prizes drawn at the Turkey trot.

Please let me know if you have any question.

Happy selling! ☞

GO GREEN

Jack-O-Lantern Compost Drive
Thursday, November 1st - Friday November 2nd
Whole Foods, Los Gatos Blvd.

Don't add your jack-o-lanterns to the landfill! Have an Eco-Friendly Halloween and drop off your pumpkins in the collection bin in front of the store for free composting. Participants will receive a free green bag.

eScrip

Easy Fundraising for Mountain School

What is *eScrip*?

eScrip is a hassle-free way to raise funds for Mountain School through everyday purchases made at *eScrip* merchants. Once you have registered your grocery and debit/credit cards, a percentage of your purchases will be automatically donated to our school.

Simple Registration. Just 3 Steps!

1. Logon to www.escrip.com and go to "sign up"
2. Designate our group to receive contributions-

Group ID is #3593396

3. Register any or all of these cards-

Grocery Club
Debit
Credit



From the Editor

The deadline for the next newsletter is Monday, December 10th. Please send request for the eNewsletter and all submissions for consideration to newsletter@lgsons.com

Warmly,

*Theresa Bond
Editor and Publisher* 

Artwork Notecards

Submitted by Letty Flohr

Don't miss this unique opportunity to purchase artwork notecards created by our talented Mountain School children and our community. If you order by October 20th via the school, you will receive them before Thanksgiving.

A box of twelve 4.5"x6" cards and envelopes is \$25.

A 12"x18" poster is \$9.50.

Each notecard is blank inside so its uses are unlimited. The back of the notecard credits the artist with their first name, their age (if it's a student), school, and notation that this card is a direct contribution to our school. Imagine what a treat it will be for family members and friends to receive your child's artwork in a notecard, an instant keepsake, ready-to-frame!

If your family didn't contribute to the art collection, there are still many options for you:

1. Order a box or two of your favorite artwork in the catalog
2. Order the school assortment of adults artwork featured in the catalog
3. Order a special assortment of children's artwork we are creating in-house (not featured in the catalog). Letty & Mike Flohr will be assembling a box containing 12 different artworks created by our children (see the catalog insert to learn what 12 artworks were selected so you know exactly what you are getting). This offer is limited and we need at least 12 orders to get this started. Same pricing, \$25 for a box of 12. This will not go on the order form, contact Letty Flohr for this special offer. **
4. Order all of the above!

Not only will you own one-of-a-kind artwork notecards but you will be directly supporting our Mountain School with 60% of the purchase price after shipping. Bring your order form and check payable to: LGSONS to class and there will be a fundraising bin for you to drop them off in (this applies to all orders except for the children's assortment box assembled in-house**).

ORDER EARLY ... deadline is October 20th, 2007.

“Service is the rent we pay to be living. It is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time.”

-Marian Wright Edelman

I am constantly amazed and grateful for the many moms and dads who share their time and talents for the good of our Mt. School community. All of our lives are busy and full, yet so many of you take time to serve.

One definition of volunteerism is “work on an impromptu basis, recognizing a need and filling it.” A real-life situation presented itself with Chair Tracy’s move to Colorado. Two very busy (and talented) people recognized the need and agreed to fill her position. My heartfelt thanks go out to Marina Rush and Sonia Casper for accepting the position of Co-Chairs. They compliment each other very well and I look forward to working with them. I know they can count on the support of others in our school community, too –thank you!

Volunteerism and service is about giving and so much more. It is really a two-way proposition. I know when I give, I also receive much in return. Sometimes it is new friends and contacts; sometimes new insights and challenges; and sometimes something I cannot even articulate. It often results in my personal growth.

So, whether you open your home for a Circle Meeting or Chair a major committee, I hope you will not hesitate to give a little extra of your time

and talents. Your children will learn early that reaching out to others is a good thing and an integral part of life.

Thank you, Tracy, for the hours (and years!) of service you have given to Mt. School. You have made a difference! Our best to you as you embark on a new adventure. We will miss you.

Jane Krejci, Director & Teacher

 Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?

-M.L. King, Jr.



Thanks to Teachers Marie, Jan, Jane and Sally for decorating our new teepee. ☺

FRESH IDEAS for EATING FRESH

Los Gatos Farmer’s Market
 Los Gatos Town Plaza
 Sundays 8 a.m.

Campbell Farmer’s Market
 Downtown Campbell
 Sundays 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
 Downtown San Jose Farmer’s Market - Farm Fresh Friday’s
 San Pedro Square
 Fridays 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Farmers’ Market
 Santana Row
 Sundays 10 a.m.- 3p.m.

Farmers Market on The Alameda
 Corner of The Alameda and Hanchett Avenue
 Saturdays 8:30 a.m.
 Cambrian Park Farmer’s Market
 Cambrian Park Plaza
 Wednesdays 1-4 p.m.

Saratoga Farmers Market
 West Valley College
 Corner of Fruitvale & Allendale
 Saturdays 9-1 p.m.

CSA SHARES (Community Supported Agriculture)

Many Mt. School Families have shares in one of these Farms. They pick-up boxes of local, in-season produce each week at a convenient location. Both farms have Newsletters and ideas and recipes for using what is in the box. These shares are usually available from March to November. If they are sold out for this year, get on their list for next year! You will not only be eating well – you will be supporting the small farmer.

1. Live Earth Farm
www.liveearthfarm.com
2. Two Small Farms
www.twosmallfarms.com

Book Report

Submitted by Sally McElravey, Assistant Teacher in the 3's and 4/5s

“The Perfection of the Morning”

by: Sharon Butala

Though not your typical fast summer read, this book is so well written and addresses the pertinent topic of the vital role that Nature plays in our lives with such wise reflection that I know many families at Mt. School with be enthralled. Her anecdotes of how her life changed once she married a Canadian rancher when she was thrust into daily encounters with quietude, wind, stars, wild animal life, and her reactions to all the stimuli that we often ignore or miss in our busy modern lives are tantalizing. It made me realize that our school's emphasis on providing play in the midst of Nature is critical but not the whole answer for recovering many of the lost arts that humans of other cultures had achieved. It is a thought provoking read ...for the writer finds many fresh ways of enjoying life and herself within it through her new awareness of “how to be “one with Nature.

Do let me know your take on this if you should decide to try it.

Sally



Baked Apple Recipe

by: Katherine Jabba, Age 9, Mrs. Torres Class
Our Lady of Mount Carmel School
Redwood City, California

Ingredients:

Apple

Potato Peeler

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1teaspoon brown sugar

Directions:

Peel your apple with a peeler

Cut the apple into slices

Put the apple slices in a microwave bowl

Sprinkle on the cinnamon and brown sugar

Put in the microwave for 3 minutes. Let it cool and enjoy!



Halloween Safety Tips

GO TRICK-OR-TREATING WITH A GROWN UP

VISIT ONLY PEOPLE YOU KNOW

MAKE SURE YOUR COSTUME LETS YOUR SEE AND HEAR PERFECTLY. YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO WATCH AND LISTEN FOR CARS.

MAKE SURE YOUR COSTUME FITS. ITS' EASY TO TRIP ON COSTUMES THAT ARE TOO LONG OR SHOES THAT ARE TOO BIG.

WEAR BRIGHTLY-COLORED CLOTHING. PUT “GLOW-IN -THE-DARK” PATCHES OR STRIPS ON YOUR COSTUME SO DRIVERS CAN SEE YOU.

CARRY A FLASHLIGHT.

DON'T EAT TREATS UNTIL YOUR SHOW THEM TO YOUR PARENTS OR A TRUSTED ADULT.



Craft a Pumpkin Candle Holder

What you need:

Mini-pumpkins

1 taper candle for each

Sharp knife

What you do:

1. Ask a grown-up to help you carve out a hole in the top of a mini-pumpkin. Make sure tat hole is no bigger than a quarter.

2. Remove the seeds with a small spoon or the tip of an apple corer.

3. Stick a candle into the hole. Then, ask a grown-up to light it at the dinner table!



Turkey Trot Time!

Be sure not to miss everyone's favorite annual event, the Turkey Trot!

This years Turkey Trot 5k Race & Family Fun Run will take place on Sunday Nov. 11 at Vasona Park in Los Gatos.

Race Day Schedule:

9am: Registration begins

11am: 5k begins

12-2pm : Food & fun at Gateway Pavilion

Want to advertise your business at this event? Sponsors will have their name/logo placed on runners' t-shirts and on our banner. Please contact Annette Rau for more information (408-569-9484, annette.rau@hotmail.com).

Interested in working with a great group of people on Race Day? We are still searching for the following:

- o Race day registration volunteers
- o Volunteers to staff course
- o Volunteer to maintain list of runners' times
- o Volunteers to stay in kids area, face paint, crafts, etc.
- o Volunteers to set up & distribute food & drink on race day

If interested in any of these volunteer positions, please contact Annette Rau as soon as possible at (408) 395-2892 or annette.rau@hotmail.com.

Dust off your old sneakers and getting running... see you there!