

# NO SCHOOL TOMORROW—Parent-Teacher Conferences

## The News Digest

### 45 Minute Parent Conferences

Parents, plan 45 minute Parent Conferences tomorrow, FRIDAY, October 9th. Please be prompt and call if you will be late or if you need to reschedule. If you miss your conference, you will be rescheduled at 7:30 am any morning the following week.

### Math Pentathlon Update

Students interested in playing Math Pantheon games on Mondays (no fee) please meet in Commons (bring a parent) on the following dates:

- Oct. 12, 26 (not 19th)
- Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
- Dec. 7, 14

### Hearing Screening Update

Oakland County changed the date of hearing screening to Friday, 12/4/09. They will screen 4-year-olds, grades K, 2, and 4. If your child is not being tested and you have concerns about their hearing, please let the office know and they will be included in the testing.

Monica Finkelstein has an **Auction Update** ..... Page 1

Ms. Powell asks, **What's Happening?** ..... Page 2

She also has a new program, the **Snack Shack** ..... Page 2

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And about **Catastrophic Events** in science ..... Page 2

Ms. Schultz encourages her students to **Write, Write, Write!**..... Page 3

Ms. Morse has an article on **The Specificity of Enzymes** .. Page 3

Remember, **Friday is the Final Day for the Book Fair** ..... Page 3

Coming at the end of the month is our **Literary Character and Ice Skating Day** ..... Page 3

Career Day was a success, and we wanted to say **Thank You Greeters and Presenters.** ..... Page 4



**Auction Update**  
Monica Finkelstein, Auction Chair

In a few weeks, we will be launching our new online auction link on Steppingstone's website. Soon, anyone will be able to give from anywhere in the world. If you have extended family or friends who are not local, this is a great way to get them to contribute to our cause. More details will follow soon. We are still looking for volunteers; if you would like to be a part of our wonderful event, please call Monica Finkelstein at (248) 882-0470.

## NO SCHOOL TOMORROW—Parent-Teacher Conferences

### Upcoming Events ...

**FRI, Oct 9**  
Last Day of the Scholastic Book Fair  
Parent-Teacher Conferences

**WED, Oct 14**  
9 am - Noon, Rouge River Testing Day  
12:30 pm, Spirit Day Lunch  
1 pm, Spirit Day Assembly

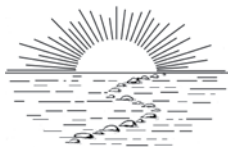
Deadline: Fridays, one week prior to Thursday publication dates.

Email articles to:  
jroder@steppingstoneschool.org

cc:  
therbst@steppingstoneschool.org



Conductor Nan Washburn shows how it's done



*Steppingstone is an independent state-approved 501(c)(3) non-profit elementary school (K-8) for gifted students. Steppingstone does not discriminate based on race, color, creed, gender, religion, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of any school policy or program.*

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## What's Happening?

Ms. Powell, Early Elementary

Next week in writing, we will continue learning how to plan a story. Children are spontaneous storytellers and have vivid imaginations. It is easy for young writers to "tell" a story or to draw a picture that tells a story. Children naturally include story elements such as characters and what happens. Helping children put words with their pictures makes the story come to life. Students will learn to plan stories by answering questions about the characters and what happens. From there they are reminded that stories have a beginning, a middle, and an ending.

To help your child prepare for writing, have them draw a picture about something they like to do. Next, have them share the "story" with you asking them what happened in the beginning and so forth. Prepare to find out, "What's happening!"

## Snack Shack

Ms. Powell, Early Elementary

Beginning Tuesday, October 20 the Early Elementary will launch their SNACK SHACK. The "SHACK" will be open everyday in the afternoon. Some items offered at the shack will be: granola bars, apples, pretzels, crackers, carrots, and Ranch dip. Items are subject to change. Bring a dollar and grab a snack to go...How convenient is that!

The revenues will be used to cover our expenses for fish care, special projects, and field trips. In addition, students will apply their math skills and learn a little about sales, shop-keeping, and counting money. The Early Elementary students thank you in advance for helping to support their classroom ventures.

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## Lansing Field Trip

Linda Hoff, Upper Elementary

When was the last time you read the Constitution of the United States of America? For adults, the last time was in our high school civics class. The Constitution of the United States of America is the supreme law for our country. It provides the framework for the organization of the government of the United States and the relationship of the Federal government to the states, to citizens, and to all people in the United States.

Upper Elementary students were able to experience government first-hand when they took a tour of some of the government buildings in Lansing. A guided tour of the Capitol building gave us an overview of the history, restorations, and legislative process for our state. Students learned that the State Constitution was completed in 1835 and is on file in the Michigan State Archives Building. In our social studies classes, students have been learning that the federal Constitution takes precedence over the Michigan State Constitution, but it is still important for the Michigan State Constitution to exist. The Michigan Historical Museum was full of artifacts and history from Michigan's rich past, from the time of the state's earliest peoples to present day. Thank you to Sherry Kahn for organizing this trip and to all the parents who took time out of their busy days to serve as drivers and chaperones for our students.

Next week, we will be learning about how representative government began in England, what constitutional government is, and some of the basic ideas about rights and constitutional government that colonial Americans believed.

Parents, consider having a family night where everyone sits down to watch *1776*, the musical about the writing of the Constitution. Research indicates that families find value in their own personal observations and experiences by working, talking, and solving problems together. Let *1776* be the conversation starter for one evening in your home!



## Catastrophic Events

Linda Hoff, Upper Elementary

Where do hurricanes and tornadoes form, and how are they different? Why do earthquakes happen more often in California than in Virginia? What causes volcanoes in Hawaii? These are some of the questions Upper Elementary students will be answering this year in science. The first nine lessons provide students with the opportunity to study how the heating and cooling of the earth's surface, the movement of air, and cloud formation affect storm formation. The next eight lessons allow students to investigate plate movement and faults, study the earth's interior, and use historical and scientific evidence to estimate future earthquake risk. The last eight lessons explore igneous rocks, volcano types, and how volcanoes change the landscape.

Next week, students will be investigating the effect of surface temperature on the temperature of air above the earth's surface. Students will be simulating warm land and cold land using a convection tube, hot water, and ice and will be recording air temperature above the land in each situation.

Parents, on your ride to school, ask your children to observe the open fields that they pass and observe what they see. Fall and spring are perfect times of year to illustrate the cooling and heating of the earth's surface and how the air above the ground is affected. Also, engage your child in conversation about weather patterns during daily weather forecasts.

Research indicates that students should be provided opportunities to engage in scientific inquiry so that they can acquire the skills necessary to develop investigative thought processes. Scientific inquiry needs to be guided by knowledge, observations, ideas, and questions. Making real world connections to the scientific inquiry process makes science learning more meaningful.

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## Write, Write, Write!

Ms. Schultz, Intermediate Elementary

Research tells us that students create their best writing when they feel safe and comfortable. What better place to do your best writing than in school? Over the next week, that is exactly what the students will focus on. They will write as much as they can, giving them the opportunity to open up and to be as creative and insightful as possible. By giving students the guidance necessary, great writing is possible. Students can listen to the classical sounds of Mozart and Beethoven "as the ink flows from their pens." This is their chance to express themselves and to say whatever is on their minds. At the end of the week, students will have the chance to sit in the Author's Chair and share their work.

Parents, a great way to spark the inner author in your child is to ask them to reflect on everyday events. Many great authors get their best ideas from writing about what they know. One way to encourage students in this habit is to ask them to keep a journal. In that way, wherever they are, they can write down what they are noticing. Help them begin to collect a plethora of thoughts about their surroundings so that they will have endless options when they sit to write.

Go on...have some fun, and write, write, write!

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## The Specificity of Enzymes

Ms. Morse, Pre High School

Next week, the PHS class will study digestion in the stomach. Once food has been processed in the mouth and swallowed, it enters the stomach. Students know that some sort of digestion process involving stomach acid occurs and breaks up the food, but they do not know exactly how that occurs. They will find this out in this inquiry.

Students will observe the "digestion" of egg whites by setting up several experiments with different substances used to digest food. They will be comparing their experiment to a control set up by the teacher. The volume of egg whites will be measured before and after the experiment. Learning how to run an experiment and observe a control group is one of the aspects of the curriculum that is invaluable.

Parents, to help your child review these experiments after the lesson next week, you could discuss with your child various machines whose functions are analogous to those of the stomach.

## Friday is Final Day for Book Fair

Friday, October 9th is the final day for the 2009 Scholastic Book Fair at Steppingstone. Please be sure to visit the fair before or after your parent teacher conference(s). The fair will open at 9:00 am and close at 6:00 pm.

Books make great gifts for children on your shopping list: birthdays, holidays, and other special occasions. I find that a new book keeps my gifted son busy and happy when we are traveling. In fact, the entire family takes along a new book for out-of-town trips to pass the time on trains, planes, ships, and in the car.

Steppingstone teachers also appreciate the gift of books for their classrooms. "Wish baskets" filled with books that the faculty would like to share with their students are on display at the book fair. Please consider making a special donation of a book to Steppingstone before the fair ends.

Thanks so much for your support of the Scholastic Book Fair—JaNele Jordan

## Literary Character and Ice Skating Day

**Classroom and/or Teacher:** Whole School

**Date:** Friday, October 30, 2009

**Activities and How they Enrich the Curriculum:** On Literary Character Day, students can test their literary knowledge by playing 20 Questions and guessing each other's characters. Students will also give a book preview while in costume (2-3 minutes). Ice skating is one of our physical education field trips designed to encourage an interest in life-long sports.

**Literary Character Event:** 8:45 AM - Noon

**Ice Skating Departure Time:** 12:00 pm

**Ice Skating Return Time:** 3:15 pm

**Ice Rink Address:** Farmington Ice Arena, 35500 Eight Mile Rd., Farmington Hills 48335

**Directions:** Turn right out of Steppingstone's Driveway onto 12 Mile Rd. and proceed 4.4 miles to 8 Mile Road. Turn right and proceed 3 miles to Farmington Hills Ice Arena.

**Contact:** Al or Beth  
**Phone:** (248) 478-8800

**Literary Character Apparel:** Students should dress in costumes of one main character in their book. These should be home-made and not expensive. Please avoid any masks as they can be scary for young students.

**Ice Skating Apparel:** Students may skate in costumes, but should remove any loose or cumbersome articles. Students are required to bring helmets and should also bring mittens/gloves, scarves, and warm jackets.

**Other Needs:** \$1.50 for hot chocolate (optional). Helmets required. Lunch served and at the rink (hot dog, chips, drink).

**# Drivers Needed:** 20  
**# Seatbelts Needed:** 52

**Pre-Trip Activities:** Power Reading and a review of skating rules and appropriate behavior. Students should practice their character presentation at home prior to the event.

**Trip Activities:** 2 hours of ice skating



## Thank You Greeters and Presenters!

Special thank you to parents and staff who made our 2009 Career Conference such a success!

Parents and staff who volunteered to greet and introduce speakers were: Donna Coffin, Trina Deming, Tom Herbst, Linda Hoff, Wendy Mayer, Janelle Schultz, and Susan Sheth. Parents and friends who presented were: Michelle Adair, Toshi Adair, Krishnan Anantharaman, Dr. C. Bansil, Elaine Dublel, Lisa Dunbille, Mary Gage, David Gaines, Don Gaines, Kelly House-Seaman, Shelly Jacoboni, Dr. Elizabeth Kraus, Joe Kucharski, Dr. Olga Mondrusova, Dr. Reef Morse, Tim Nichols, Dr. Barbara Nixon, Dr. Lori Warner, Jerry Wojchihosky, and last but not least, our very own Kiyo Morse.

In addition, we had two back to back presentations by Nan Washburn, conductor and director of the Plymouth Canton Symphony, and three officers from Homeland Security. Even officers from the Farmington Hills EMS unit made a special presentation to our Early Elementary classroom! Thanks to all.



Painting, Jackson Pollock style



Art teacher Mary Gage presenting at last week's Careers Conference

### ADMINISTRATION

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Assistant Head	Thomas Herbst
Admissions Director	Donna Coffin
Special Programs Director, & Office Manager	Sandra Blay
Business and Facilities Manager	

### STAFF

General Assistant, IT Specialist	Jason Roder
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### FACULTY

Early Elementary	Carol Powell
Intermediate Elementary	Janelle Schultz
Upper Elementary	Linda Hoff
Pre High School, Faculty Chair	Keiko Morse
AIMS/TSC Representative	Carol Powell

### INSTRUCTORS

Art	Mary Gage
Japanese	Mieko West
Spanish	Ana Maria Gonzalez
Mandarin Chinese	Hong Lin
Computer	Dr. Reef Morse
Extended Day	Mary Gage
Fencing	Jerzy Radz
Performing Arts	Kathy Nellett

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