

Web Safety Seminar Tonight @ 7:00 pm

The News Digest

Booster Carseat Required For Children Younger Than 8 Years

Michigan law requires children younger than age 8 and shorter than 4 feet 9 inches to be properly buckled in a child safety seat or booster seat while riding in a motor vehicle. Therefore, each Steppingstone student who is not yet 8 years old and who is not 4'9" tall must bring a booster car seat in the morning in order to ride in a carpool to swimming or to a field trip such as cross-country ski. If you are a driver, we assume the car seat will be in your car. If there is no car seat at school by the time of boarding and departure, your child may not attend the activity and will await your pickup at school. Thank you for your help.

Page 1 *Greetings and Welcome!* To our new music teacher
 Page 1 We have some news on fundraising in **Update: Capital Campaign**
 Page 2 The Early Elementary class is *Bobbing in Science*
 Page 2 Ms. Schultz talks about *Exagggggggerations!!!!*
 Page 2 The Upper Elementary is studying *Earthquakes*
 Page 2 Ms. Morse talks about Writing Myths and Folklore
 Page 2 **Congratulations, Mollie Litt, In the Spotlight** student for December
 Page 2 Let's congratulate the *Mileage Club* top runners
 Page 3 **Congratulations, Allison Epshteyn, Typist of the Month**
 Page 3 **Congratulations, Olivia Deming, Computer Programmer of the Month**
 Page 3 **Congratulations, Jamal Nichols, Writer of the Month**
 Page 3 *Cross-Country Ski Day* is coming up
 Page 3 Ever wonder *How to Study Math Facts?* Mrs. Morse gives a few pointers.
 Page 3 **Booster Carseat Required For Children Younger than 8 Years**
 Page 3 We have had some problems at dismissal and need **Help In Circular Drive**
 Page 4 We have some *PHS Student News*
 Page 4 Have some questions about *Swim Groups & Instruction?* We have answers!
 Page 4 Good news and a request for help in **Update: Property**
 Page 4 **Congratulations, Noel Dyde, December Artist of the Month**

Update: Property

Kiyoo met with the Phase-I project manager last Friday. It was a mighty cold meeting since the building had been winterized. However, the initial examination of the property was positive, and the report should be returned on or about January 19th.

Trustee, Rich Houdek, has been busy taking photos and beginning the visuals for those of us who need to "see" pictures of the potential transformation. By the time he had finished taking the photos, he was very excited by the amount of space we will be acquiring. This weekend, Trustees, faculty, staff and SPARC officers will have the opportunity to tour the building and talk about the following:

1. Transformation to an ideal school for gifted, including the SMART Center
2. Brainstorming ideas for public announcement and media releases that will excite, motivate, and attract the attention of new students, granting agencies, foundations, and philanthropists
3. Brainstorming ideas for resources for large dollars to fund the transformation.
4. Coaching on how to ask for donations

If you have ideas in any of these areas or would like to work on one of these areas, please give Donna a call so she can direct you to the appropriate committee.

Update: Capital Campaign

We are moving into the next stages of our Capital Campaign. This will involve the research of granting agencies and foundations to target for the renovations of our property. If you have any expertise with grant writing and would like to contribute in this way, please let Donna Coffin know so she can put you in contact with others who are working on this.

There are very few grants available for a relatively small elementary school for gifted children. There is much more potential for bricks and mortar monies for the SMART Ctr. This weekend, the Board will be strategizing at their January, day-long planning meeting to prioritize the next steps.

Web Safety Seminar Tonight @ 7:00 pm

Upcoming Events ...

MON, Jan 18
NO SCHOOL—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

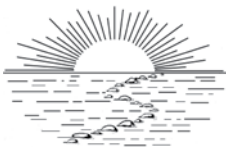
THURS, Jan 21
1:45 pm, Swim Departure

SAT, Jan 23
MATS "Explore" Test

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

Email articles to:
jroder@steppingstoneschool.org

cc:
therbst@steppingstoneschool.org



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.

28555 Middlebelt Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
Phone: 248.539.1666
Fax: 248.539.1929
www.steppingstoneschool.org



Language Instruction? Origami? Snacks? It's all good!

Contents

Greetings and Welcome!	1
Update: Capital Campaign	1
Bobbing in Science	2
Exaggggggggerations!!!!	2
Earthquakes	2
Writing Myths and Folktales	2
Congratulations, Mollie Litt, In The Spotlight for December ..	2
Mileage Club	2
Congratulations, Allison Epshteyn, Typist of the Month ...	3
Congratulations, Olivia Deming, Computer Programmer of the Month	3
Congratulations, Jamal Nichols, Writer of the Month.	3
Cross-Country Ski Day!	3
How To Study Math Facts	3
Booster Carseat Required For Children Younger than 8 Years	3
Parents, Help	3
PHS Student News	4
Swim Groups & Instruction	4
Update: Property	4
Congratulations, Noel Dyde, December Artist of the Month .	4

Greetings and Welcome!

Steppingstone would like to welcome Oliver Thompson, our new music teacher! We will have a full bio for him next week.

Update: Capital Campaign

We are moving into the next stages of our Capital Campaign. This will involve the research of granting agencies and foundations to target for the renovations of our property. If you have any expertise with grant writing and would like to contribute in this way, please let Donna Coffin know so she can put you in contact with others who are working on this.

There are very few grants available for a relatively small elementary school for gifted children. There is much more potential for bricks and mortar monies for the SMART Ctr. This weekend, the Board will be strategizing at their January, day-long planning meeting to prioritize the next steps.



Bobbing in Science

Ms. Powell, Early Elementary

Next week in science, students will move their focus to the buoyant force of water by measuring and comparing three different fishing bobbers. Students will measure the buoyant force directly by using a spring scale. They will discover that there is no downward force of gravity on the bobbers. Through a series of measurements, students will see the relationship between the buoyant force and the size of each bobber. This experience gives students practice in making predictions, investigating, and analyzing their results. Students may even predict if the suction cups will stick to the bottom, or if they will get wet when they pull off the bottom of the tank!

To help your child prepare for next week's lesson, find objects around your house, and ask them to estimate the weight of each object. Then, have them push the items under water to see how buoyant they are. Be ready to get wet when bobbing in science!

Exaggggggerations!!!!

Ms. Schultz, Intermediate Elementary

We all know kids love to do this, and so do adults. None of us would be hard-pressed to name a time when we exaggerated to make a point. Remember the "big fish" story? It is the one that starts with "I caught a fish the likes of which you won't believe!" It is always told with arms stretched out at least two feet and with wide eyes. Fortunately, the human tendency to exaggerate serves the tall-tale writer well.

The ability to exaggerate is one of the qualities every person possesses, and in this next writing lesson, it will be praised if they use it! Students will be expected to establish characters, setting, a problem, and solution. They will learn how to enrich their writing with details, dialogue, and figures of speech. In tall tales, students are able to play with language and situations, stretching them beyond their usual boundaries.

Parents, please help your child brainstorm any ordinary occurrence or idea, and then stretch it beyond the usual boundaries. Devise a list of descriptive words your child can use to help enhance his/her story and keep the reader's attention! This may be the one and only time your child will be asked to exaggerate the truth.

Earthquakes

Mrs. Hoff, Upper Elementary

Did you know that most fault lines in Michigan run in a northwest to northeast pattern, and there have been several fault lines identified in Michigan? Upper Elementary students will begin studying earthquakes next week as part of the science curriculum. Initially, students will explore reading and writing myths about earthquakes, which allows them to make connections to the literature curriculum that focuses on Greek mythology. Then, students will move into studying waves and how earthquake waves impact building design. They will have the opportunity to record vibrations on a homemade seismograph, and they will complete the study of earthquakes by investigating plate movement and faults.

Coincidentally, the physical geography questions that students are responding to each day focus on many of the geographic features that are being investigated in science. Providing cross-curricular instruction makes learning more meaningful for students.

Writing Myths and Folktales

Ms. Morse, Pre High School

This month, all students are focusing on writing myths and folktales. Both of these types of stories come from an oral tradition of storytelling and therefore are usually very entertaining.

Myths likely began when ancient cultures observed their natural world and tried to make sense of it (such as six months of winter, which occurred when Persephone went down to the Underworld, according to Greek myths). Myths were also meant to be teaching stories as well as a method of passing on values and ethics of a society.

Folktales were usually about animals that live in a magical world and relay a moral or lesson. These are also meant to be read or told orally.

To help your child prepare for this lesson, you could check out folktales and myths from the library and read them together to find how the qualities of each differ. Also, brainstorming possible ideas for their own stories will help students to get a jump start on their writing assignment for this week!

Congratulations, Mollie Litt, In The Spotlight for December

Congratulations to Mollie Litt, our student who is "In the Spotlight" this month! Mollie is a new student to Steppingstone who has had to catch up to the veterans. When she first arrived, she was a little overwhelmed by the schedule and responsibilities she was now expected to fulfill. She made it through the adjustment period and came through on the other side a much stronger student.

Mollie and her parents have worked hard to figure out a schedule that will work for her so that she could complete assignments each day. She completed her first Social Studies Expo project and paper, and she now is working on applying herself to her current studies with much success. Mollie is learning calligraphy, completing artistic art projects, and doing well in all her studies...and when she has a question, she now asks for help. It has been a big change to come here from her former school, but Mollie has figured out what works for her and is doing really well. For this, faculty voted unanimously for her to be "In the Spotlight." Great job, Mollie!

Mileage Club

November/December Top Runners

Early Elementary:

Brittany Butler 14.9
Dylan Allen 14
Katarina Jevtic 13.5

Intermediate:

Garrett Kucharski 12.5
Natalie Corrigan 10
Maya Sheth 9.5

Upper Elementary:

Danny Mondurso 14.8
Diego Collazo 11.5
Ian Gilmore 8.5

Pre High School:

George Elias 7.5
Jamal Nichols, Melissa Wood 5



Congratulations, Allison Epshteyn, Typist of the Month

The Typist of the Month for December is Allison Epshteyn. Allison won this award by typing 20 words per minute with only two mistakes on a random sequence of letters (Dr. Morse reports that he did not do nearly so well). This is a difficult test because the letters are generated randomly in groups of five, much like some kind of speed typing tests. Her performance is remarkable!

Congratulations, Olivia Deming, Computer Programmer of the Month

The Computer Programmer of the Month is Olivia Deming. Olivia has applied herself with consistency and creativity to "Alice," the software programming language her class is using (it is worth noting that the worksheets Olivia's class are using were originally used at the college level). She is generous with her time in helping others when they are stuck. Her ability to follow directions, solve problems in non-traditional ways, and be a leader in the class were all traits that have helped earn her this award. Congratulations, Olivia, keep up the good work!

Congratulations, Jamal Nichols, Writer of the Month

Congratulations to Jamal Nichols, a Pre High School student, winner of Writer of the Month! Last month's submissions were poetry pieces that were unstructured, or "free verse" poems. These poems do not require rhyming, metered syllables, or syllabic patterns. They are completely free of rules. Jamal's poem was about Sharpie markers. It was chosen because it showed insight and depth—it delved into the realm of abstract thinking and went below the surface of the marker and into its potential. It was unanimously chosen by the teachers and Mrs. Morse! Please make sure you congratulate Jamal when you see him next!

Cross-Country Ski Day!

Classroom and/or Teacher: Whole school

Activities & how they Enrich the Curriculum: To round out the P.E. program, Steppingstone students participate in several recreational physical activities. Cross-country skiing is a fun way to get physical activity in the winter months.

Date: Wednesday, January 27

Departure Time: 9:00 am

Return Time: 3:45 pm

Address: Kensington Golf Course

Directions: RIGHT onto MIDDLEBELT

- RIGHT onto 12 MILE RD.
- LEFT onto ORCHARD LAKE
- RIGHT onto 696 WEST
- To 96 WEST (towards Lansing) to Exit 151 at Kensington Rd. (back entrance)
- Follow signs to Kensington Metro Park and, once inside, follow signs to the Golf Course

Contact: Bill Rose

Phone: 800-477-3178

Apparel: Layered warm clothing, gloves, hats, snow pants, jackets.

Meal Arrangements: DISPOSABLE bag lunches (even those who usually purchase hot lunch)—please do not send in lunch boxes.

Other Needs: Please dress students in cold weather wear prior to arriving at school. Booster seats needed for anyone under the age of 8

Drivers Needed: 23

Seatbelts Needed: 47

Pre-Trip Activities: Reviewing of differences between cross-country and downhill skiing.

Trip Activities: Skiing around golf course with chaperones.

How To Study Math Facts

Parents, if the set of math facts to be tested the following week is not on your child's Friday planner sheet, ask him/her to call the teacher so s/he can study. This is one of the structures that allows students to learn that if they study in advance, they will have less work in the future. It is an option that allows the student to practice initiative and take responsibility for learning.

To make flashcards, in large letters to fill the card, print the problem on side-A (e.g., 4 + 6) and the answer on the other side-B (e.g., 4 + 6 = 10). The student should stare at side-B to imprint. When s/he can close his/her eyes and see the entire problem and answer, s/he should turn it over to side-A and read the problem, finishing with the answer.

The next step is to shuffle the cards, show side-A, and have the student read and finish with the answer. If the student hesitates for more than three seconds, the answer should be given and you should move on to the next card.

Booster Carseat Required For Children Younger Than 8 Years

Michigan law requires children younger than age 8 and shorter than 4 feet 9 inches to be properly buckled in a child safety seat or booster seat while riding in a motor vehicle. Therefore, each Steppingstone student who is not yet 8 years old and who is not 4'9" tall must bring a booster car seat in the morning in order to ride in a carpool to swimming or to a field trip such as cross-country ski. If you are a driver, we assume the car seat will be in your car. If there is no car seat at school by the time of boarding and departure, your child may not attend the activity and will await your pickup at school. Thank you for your help.

Help In Circular Drive

Please be patient in the dismissal line. Pulling around other cars that are loading makes for a dangerous situation in the line and we are dedicated to keeping everyone safe! No car is ever loading for more than three minutes. If you are in a hurry, please park in the parking lot and come up to the door for your child.



PHS Student News

Congratulations to Melissa Wood and Noah Finkelstein who participated in community theater during the months of November and December. Melissa was in the play, *The Music Man*, and Noah was in *The Nutcracker*. Both of these students had a great time performing and are looking forward to participating in the school's Fine Arts Fair performance this spring.

Pranav Gopalakrishnan, a Pre-High School student, is participating in the Math Pentathlon club this year. If there are other students who would like to participate and learn some of these games, please let Donna Coffin know. Pranav would love to have some company, and it is definitely good practice in concrete math skills.

This year, the Pre-High School is participating in biweekly fencing lessons. The students chose a captain for the team, Leighton Gaines. Leighton is responsible for leading warm-ups, demonstrating strategies to students, reviewing what occurred in past classes to those who were absent, and is the last one out of the gym after class (once he does a check to make sure we didn't forget anything!). So far, he is doing a great job and has taken to fencing like a fish to water!

Swim Groups & Instruction

The goals of the swimming classes are to assist students in learning water safety and survival skills. A benefit of the classes is that students naturally progress to being able to swim as they gain more experience.

The certified lifeguards will assess all students' abilities on the first day of class, making sure that they have mastered a majority of the skills before being promoted to the next level. Some students may move from one group to another based on their skill set.

The 30-minute lessons are given by the lifeguards. The teachers are in the water, as well, and practice the skills taught by the lifeguards for the remaining time in the pool.

Update: Property

Kiyo met with the Phase-I project manager last Friday. It was a mighty cold meeting since the building had been winterized. However, the initial examination of the property was positive, and the report should be returned on or about January 19th.

Trustee, Rich Houdek, has been busy taking photos and beginning the visuals for those of us who need to "see" pictures of the potential transformation. By the time he had finished taking the photos, he was very excited by the amount of space we will be acquiring. This weekend, Trustees, faculty, staff and SPARC officers will have the opportunity to tour the building and talk about the following:

1. Transformation to an ideal school for gifted, including the SMART Center
2. Brainstorming ideas for public announcement and media releases that will excite, motivate, and attract the attention of new students, granting agencies, foundations, and philanthropists
3. Brainstorming ideas for resources for large dollars to fund the transformation.
4. Coaching on how to ask for donations

If you have ideas in any of these areas or would like to work on one of these areas, please give Donna a call so she can direct you to the appropriate committee.

Congratulations, Noel Dyde, December Artist of the Month

I am very happy to announce that December's Artist of the Month is an expressionist! This young expressionist artist is none other than: Noel Dyde, a student in Ms. Schultz's Intermediate Elementary class. Noel creates beautiful, sensitive, and very expressive artwork. He approaches his drawings and paintings with a keen sense of excitement and happiness. He enjoys sharing his artwork and explaining the inner experiences that inspire each piece he creates. For Noel, every picture tells a story!

Congratulations, Noel!

ADMINISTRATION

Head of School	Kiyo Morse
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
----------------------------------	-------------

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	Oliver Thompson

SPARC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Jackie Robbins
Vice President	Tom Collins
Secretary	Susan Sheth
Treasurer	Sherry Kahn

AUCTION STEERING COMMITTEE

Chair	Monica Finkelstein
Vice-Chair	Jenifer Lampi
Sponsors & Program Ads	
Board Representative	Nancy Furman
Admin Representative	Donna Coffin
Decorations Coordinator	Meir Finkelstein
Acquisition Coordinator	Susan Sheth
Publications Coordinator	JaNele Jordan
Printing and Publications	Tom Herbst
Immediate Past Chair	Wendy Mayer

BOARD of TRUSTEES

President:	Richard Niemisto
Executive Committee Chair	
1st Vice-President:	Irene Wojchihosky
Admissions & Recruitment Chair	
2nd Vice-President:	Nancy Furman
Development & Fundraising Chair	
Secretary:	Thomas Herbst
Accreditation & Curriculum Chair	
Treasurer:	Jerry Wojchihosky
Finance Chair	
Marketing & PR Chair	
Trustee:	Yong Hwa Son
Building & Grounds Chair	
Trustee:	Donna Coffin
Trusteeship Chair	
Trustee:	Dr. Reef Morse
Trustee:	Dr. Olga Mondrusov
Trustee:	Lev Mondrusov
Trustee:	Richard Houdek
Trustee:	Antonio Blackburn
Capital Campaign Chair	
Ex Officio:	David Jeshurun
Immediate Past President	
Ex Officio:	Kiyo Morse
Head of School	

Inside This Sharpie

by Jamal Nichols

age 13

Inside this Sharpie Jar
are colors from dull to bright
and pictures not drawn,
a place untamed by the pencil or pen
that can only be captured by a
Sharpie.

From mountains to hills,
valleys to rivers,
most basic of colors,
to the most bizarre,
turned into life on paper.

It's known for its writings and drawing
but known itself,
sitting there on the artist desk.

Sharpie

It's never really told
"I like your work"
yet it sits content with what it's done
not caring for credit
for it knows what it did
it likes what it did
and it's there for the next picture to be
Sharpie