

Welcome Back, Steppingstone!

The News Digest

Auction Chair Monica Finkelstein gives an early ***Auction Update*** Page 1

One of our students won a contest. Read it ***In The News*** Page 1

It's just a reminder, but read the short version of our ***Student Dress Code***
 Page 1

Our new Upper Elementary teacher introduces herself in ***Welcome Back! Welcome Back! Welcome Back!*** Page 2

How about a hearty ***Welcome!*** from Early Elementary teacher Carol Powell?
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We're ***Gearing up for Careers Conference*** Page 2

A thoughtful ***Welcome Back*** from PHS teacher Ms. Morse Page 2

A free trip to the museum—read ***Free Museum Passes*** Page 2

Several students were took part in the Farmington Library Summer Reading Club. ***Congratulations!*** Page 2

Worried about swine flu? Read our article on ***H1N1 Precautions*** Page 3

We're Back! And Intermediate Elementary teacher Ms. Schultz has a story about our Summer Camp Page 3

Assistant Head Tom Herbst has some ***Power Reading (for Parents)*** . . . Page 3

Before sending notes abroad, Read the ***Distribution Policy for all Written Material*** Page 4

Enjoy the ice cream sale? It's ***Continuing by Popular Demand*** Page 4

We will be listening to the President's address to students across the nation. For more information, read ***President to Speak to America's Students***
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After School Program Update: After School Spanish will be held on Thursdays, from 4 pm to 5 pm

Welcome Back Steppingstone!

Upcoming Events ...

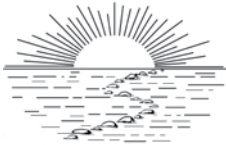
MON, September 7
NO SCHOOL—Labor Day

FRI, September 11
9 am, Field Day
6 pm, Welcome Back
Potluck

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.

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Steppingstone...kids?...waiting in line for ice cream



Auction Update

Our eager Auction Steering Committee has already kicked off plans for this year's Benefit Auction, "Stepping with Our Stars," scheduled for March 10, 2010, at St. Mary's Cultural Center in Livonia! Our spectacular evening will feature silent and live auctions, two raffles, a gourmet dinner, dancing, and a professional ballroom exhibition. Tickets are only \$65 if purchased before the December break, which you can pay in four installments. Also, we have group discounts for parties of 10 or more. If you have not received a ticket order form, you can request one by writing a note to your child's teacher in his or her planner.

If you'd like to help with our event, please contact Monica Finkelstein at (248) 882-0470. We want everyone to step out and support our school. Look for more details in the next newsletter.

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In the News

Over the summer, our own Pranav Gopalakrishnan won the Farmington Library's Talent Show. Apparently, he's quite the comedian. Congratulations, Pranav!

Student Dress Code

This is discussed in the Parent/Student Handbook (pp 9-10), but the short version is that students need to be modestly attired in neat, clean clothing in good repair. Students who do not meet these standards will be asked to change into substitute clothing from our supplies, and parents will be asked to supervise more closely. Thanks for your help, parents!



Welcome Back! Welcome Back! Welcome Back!

from Linda Hoff and the Upper Elementary

I hope that everyone had an enjoyable summer with many opportunities to sleep in or stay up late, vacation, read, play, attend camps, learn, and just plain relax. The beginning of fall means the beginning of a new school year, and this school year begins with meeting a new Upper Elementary teacher—me.

Teaching has always been in my blood: from the moment I began playing school on the front porch during summer vacations in elementary school, to teaching students in the Nuclear Medicine program at Beaumont Hospital, to teaching laboratory technicians in hospitals throughout Michigan how to utilize radioactive blood analysis kits to assist physicians with patient diagnoses, to supporting under-achieving elementary students in mathematics and language arts, to teaching three years of middle school mathematics prior to arriving at Steppingstone.

I obtained a B.S. in biology from the University of Michigan-Dearborn. My teacher certification course work was obtained at Oakland University, where I received endorsements in mathematics and science to teach kindergarten through eighth grades. I am presently enrolled in graduate courses at Oakland University, focusing on a master's in Teacher Education Studies, with a specialty in mathematics.

My husband and I are the proud parents of Andrew, who will be attending law school this fall, and Katie, who is still a college student pursuing a degree in psychology with aspirations of becoming a clinical psychologist.

I will strive to recognize each student's unique gifts and talents and nurture his or her positive emotional, social, and intellectual growth. I will provide an environment conducive to learning, where each student is encouraged to explore, inquire, evaluate, and develop the skills necessary to become a life-long learner. To become a better teacher, it will be imperative that I continue to be a life-long student as well.

I am looking forward to hearing about your summer and to begin learning this year. Our literature selections will explore myths and the many lessons they teach us about life. In social studies we will be learning about the United

States Constitution and how the rules established by our Founding Fathers affect our everyday life. In science we will be learning about storms, earthquakes, and volcanoes and how they continually change the world in which we live.

Check the newsletter each week for updates and news briefs from the Upper Elementary.

Welcome!

from Ms. Powell's Early Elementary Classroom

A warm welcome to both students and parents! I am so excited to be back at Steppingstone! Each year gets better and better, so who wouldn't be happy to be back!

For those who are new to Steppingstone, I am a Michigan native. Although I was "gone" for 27 years, I am thrilled to be "home". I have a BA in Journalism, a BS in Elementary Education, and a Masters in Education. My daughter, Roxie, relocated this week to Michigan too. She is a catering manager for Corporate Dining Concepts. This summer my son, Clint, has been landscaping in the area.

I look for exciting things to happen this year in our classroom. During the course of the year, we will travel across the United States – region by region – and learn the ups and downs of floating and sinking. Math will include critical thinking activities and exploration. I truly believe that learning is a lifelong process. Parents, I look forward to being part of that journey with your children.

Gearing Up For Careers Conference

This year the Careers Conference will be held Friday, October 2 from 9:30 to 11:45 and 1:30 to 2:35. Our purpose is to provide students with concrete connections between completing lessons and what needs to be done in order to prepare themselves for successful careers. In addition, children will be exposed to professions that they have not as yet considered. Students will have a variety of fields from which to choose. Watch future newsletters for updates!

P.S. If you'd like to share your profession, call me—Donna Coffin @ (248) 539-1666

Welcome Back

from Ms. Morse and the Pre High School

We're off! The start of a new year is always exciting for me. There's a new class, new lessons to plan, information to be gained, and new students to get to know. I always have a difficult time falling asleep the night before the first day of school, and this year was no different. In that respect, I can sympathize with the students. And while the moaning and groaning of being back to school will be prevalent in the PHS classroom, there is always an underlying gladness to be back.

This year, we will be learning about what it means to be a hero for literature, how the ancient world was populated and the cultures that developed for social studies, and how the human body works for science. In addition, the PHS class will be learning to fence as well as speak Japanese. It's going to be a busy year.

I hope that everyone had a relaxing summer and that you are all looking forward to this new school year.

See you in class!

Free Museum Passes

Smithsonian Magazine is sponsoring a museum day on Saturday, September 26th. For more information, to print out your passes, or to find a museum nearby, visit their website at:

<http://microsite.smithsonianmag.com/museumday/>

Congratulations!

The following students registered for the Farmington Community Library Summer Reading Club, kept a reading log, and completed at least 12 hours of reading between June 8 and August 2. WAY to GO!

Mohit Bansil
Pranav Gopalakrishnan
Katarina Jevtic
Filip Jevtic
Alaina Lurie
Maya Sheth
Ann Thomas



H1N1 Precautions

At our Parent Registration and Orientation last week, we were asked what Steppingstone would be doing to minimize the spread of the H1N1 virus (swine flu) this fall. We will, of course, be following the guidelines and directives of the Oakland County Health Department, which is the health agency to which we report.

On-site, we will be following our normal hygiene protocols—washing hands before eating or preparing food, using tissues to cover coughs and sneezes, not sharing food and sending students home if they show symptoms. We will also be asking the janitorial staff to sanitize the door handles each evening. The greatest difficulty, however, is not the use of protocols, but the management of children who do not practice basic hygiene.

Parents, you can do the most to control the spread of any illness by having your child practice some simple hygiene, such as the following:

1. Direct coughs or sneezes to the armpit; use tissues
2. Wash hands with soap before eating or after covering a cough or sneeze
3. Refrain from sharing or trading food
4. Keep fingers out of mouths and eyes
5. When eating, keep food neatly within lunch containers. Remind students to clean and wipe desks with disinfectant after eating

Dr. Olga Mondrusov also mentioned that early vaccination for seasonal flu and H1N1 is recommended for anyone younger than 24 years, so this is another follow-through where parents can help.

We will continue to separate and then send children home if they are running a fever or showing any other symptoms of illness, such as vomiting. In the case of the H1N1, we will be alert to "sudden onset" of symptoms, such as high fever, dry cough, or muscle ache or pain. We routinely isolate children who seem ill, so this will not be a new protocol.

Parents, you have the most power towards controlling the spread of any illness by keeping your child home if:

1. S/he shows any symptoms of illness (e.g., vomiting, chronic cough, unusual lethargy)
2. S/he has a fever
3. Has not been fever or symptom free for at least 24 hours

Also, be assured that we are reasonable people. We do not expect your child to do assignments when s/he is ill, and there is a reasonable protocol and time-line in place (see Handbook) for getting your child back on schedule. Please do not send your child to school if s/he seems ill. S/he won't be able to work effectively anyway, and s/he will be infecting others.

To help us provide information about contagious diseases to the Health Dept., please call us as soon as you decide to keep your child at home and describe the symptoms of any illness. If you are keeping your child home for other reasons or if s/he will be late, please let us know that as well.

Thanks for your help!

We're Back!

from Ms. Schultz and the Intermediate Elementary

Hello, and welcome back, students and families! I am so thrilled to start my second year at Steppingstone as the Intermediate Elementary classroom teacher and am looking forward to all of the wonderful adventures ahead.

Over the luxurious summer months, I was able to spend a lot of time boating, reading, and cooling off during those hot days on the beach. In addition to relaxing this summer, I was able to read several new books that I cannot wait to share with my students this year.

In July I had the privilege of being at Steppingstone's Summer Day Camp as the teacher for the Leadership and Teambuilding section where I was able to meet new faces and discover real leadership and team-building talent.

Again, I am excited for the year to begin and cannot wait to meet the students as well as their wonderful families. I hope everyone had an amazing summer and are all as excited as I am about the new year.

Power Reading (for Parents!)

from Tom Herbst

I am constantly on the lookout for relevant books and articles on education and parenting; I have two to recommend.

The first is an article that I have used with both parents and teachers in the past because it deals with the essential concept of open and honest communication in the teacher-parent relationship. As we begin a new year, this is an opportune time to address this issue. The article is entitled "The Fear Equation" by Michael G. Thompson. In it he writes, "Children flourish when the adults in their lives...see them in a unified way...parents and teachers need to create a sturdy alliance between them." He illuminates and punctures common myths and fears on both sides of the desk and argues for parents and teachers to move beyond the fears that afflict their relationship and create that "sturdy alliance" to which he refers. It is not a terribly long read; if you would like to read it, here is the link: <http://www.nais.org/publications/ismagazinearticle.cfm?ItemNumber=144311>

Next, is a wonderful new book, *The Parents We Mean to Be* by Richard Weissbourd. He asserts that, despite the heavy impact of peers and popular culture on children, we parents "are the primary influence in our children's lives." He relates – without jargon and in a bit over 200 pages – just how important parents are in guiding their children's moral lives. In his research, he has affirmed that "it was [the] day-to-day details of our relationship with our children – far more than our talk of values – that formed their moral code." He also may help us to understand where some of our own foibles in childrearing may originate. He refers to the work of Selma Fraiberg who wrote of "ghosts in the nursery – visitors from [our own] unremembered pasts." I cannot do it justice here; but it is a very worthy "read," one I would very much like to have had when our own children were in their elementary years.



Distribution Policy for All Written Material

Our policy is that only materials that have been approved by administration are allowed to be distributed at school events or to our mailing lists. The reason for this is that parents would assume that such materials were being distributed by the school with school approval and this could be misleading.

If you would like to issue an invitation for a private event, unless you are inviting all members of a group, class, or the school, our policy is that the materials for a private function cannot be distributed at a school function. An example of this policy is in the Parent/Student Handbook in regard to a child's birthday party invitations.

Parents, whom you choose for your social interaction is not our concern; however, we feel that invitations that do not involve all individuals should be delivered privately and not at school. In the case of birthday parties, we will even mail invitations for you if you choose not to invite all students (see: *Parent/Student Handbook*, p. 24), but it is not our policy to distribute them at school only to part of your child's class. We do not want to exclude individuals publicly.

If you have any questions, please give Tom a call.

Continuing by Popular Demand!

from your SPARC Executive Committee

Thanks to the Steppingstone Family's enthusiastic support and encouragement, SPARC representatives will sell \$2.00 ice cream treats from the Carvel cart at the end of the school day on the last day of the school week (Thursday or Friday).

The next day will be, Field Day, Friday, September 11, at Maybury Park. Subsequent weeks we will be right at Steppingstone!

At the First Day Celebration, SPARC raised close to \$100 to support its programs! Thanks, again, for you support!

President to Speak to America's Students

President Obama will be addressing America's school children at Noon on Tuesday, September 8. Steppingstone is making arrangements for our students to view the address.

For more information, go to:

<http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/academic/bts.html>

To be prepared to discuss this with your child, you can watch it live at 12 pm ET at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/live/>

or on C-Span.

If you prefer not to have your child watch the speech, please let your teacher know through a note in his/her daily planner.

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Assistant Head
Admissions and Special
Programs Director,
Office Manager
Business and Facilities
Manager

Kiyo Morse
Thomas Herbst
Donna Coffin

Sandra Blay

STAFF

General Assistant,
IT Specialist

Jason Roder

FACULTY

Early Elementary
Intermediate Elementary
Upper Elementary
Pre High School,
Faculty Chair

Carol Powell
Janelle Schultz
Linda Hoff
Keiko Morse

INSTRUCTORS

Art
Suzuki Violin
Japanese
Spanish

Mary Gage
Mary Stolberg
Mieko West
Ana Maria
Gonzalez

Mandarin Chinese
Computer Tech
Extended Day
Fencing
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Hong Lin
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