

Raffle ticket sales end next Wednesday, December 16!

Capital Campaign Update

Our property search and acquisition is currently focused on a few options but is still interested in hearing about new options from any source or resource. It has been two steps forward and one back ... slow going, but progress nonetheless.

Raising more money sooner would provide increased options for departure. We are grateful for the early contributions of those who have donated on faith that the Board will make the best decision for our students and hope to have more concrete news in the future.

This week, I will be sharing descriptions of the working committees that were defined at the Strategic Planning session a few weeks ago. A summary of the tasks follows, and we hope these consolidated descriptions will encourage more parents to join one of the groups:

SMALL GIFTS SUB-COMMITTEE

TARGET GROUPS: Parents, alums, relatives, friends, small businesses
 ACTIONS: (1) updates in the weekly newsletter even if the situation remains at status quo, (2) personal contact to share news with and get views from our target group, and (3) communication and coordination of efforts with the other committees.

LARGE GIFTS SUB-COMMITTEE

TARGET GROUPS: Individuals, corporations, granting agencies, and foundations
 ACTIONS: (1) identification of specific prospects and decision-makers (e.g., community relations director), (2) creation of strategies and action on calls and appointments based on information from the Research Committee, (3) development of personalized presentation and discussion materials.

RESEARCH SUB-COMMITTEE

TARGET GROUPS: All of the above
 ACTIONS: (1) research individuals and organizations identified above for mission, purpose, and history of giving, (2) research and identify decision-makers, contact information, hot buttons, internal processes, (3) research and create incentives for giving such as tax incentives, recognition, ways of giving.

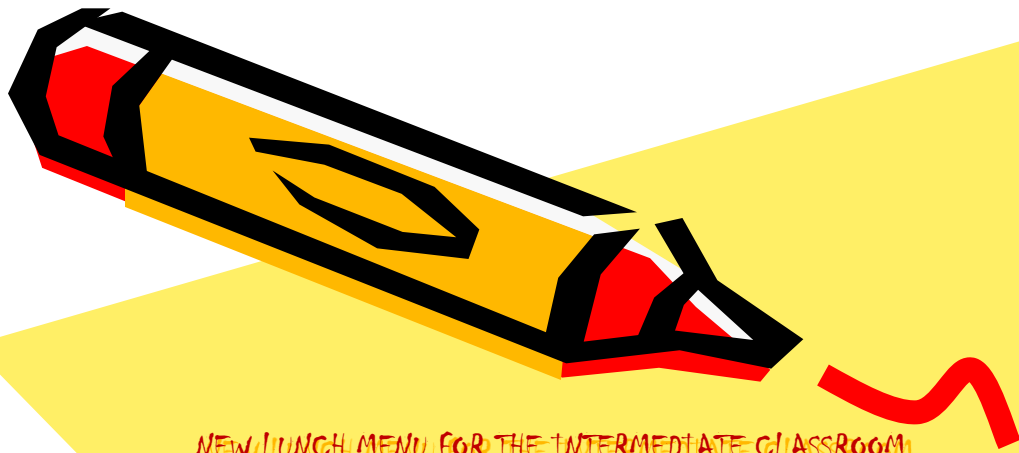
WRITING SUB-COMMITTEE

TARGET GROUPS: All of the above
 ACTIONS: (1) preparation of printed materials for "askers" to use when calling or meeting prospects, (2) collection of testimonials that describe the heart and mission of Steppingstone, (3) publication of a book that could be used by "askers" to describe our students, what we do, and why we do it.

One of the key individuals in this process is JaNele Jordan (mother of Ryan Learned). She is a development and fund-raising professional who is donating her time and expertise to keep the "asking" process organized and productive. If you can identify prospective donors (see target groups above), please contact JaNele and let her know so she can alert the appropriate researcher, writer, and "asker."

The News Digest

- Page 1 Kiyo gives us a **Capital Campaign Update**
- Page 2 The PHS takes a trip down **The Silk Road** in Social Studies class
- Page 2 Ms. Schultz explains how **Teachers Make Reading MAGIC**
- Page 2 Check out the **Hearing Testing Update**
- Page 2 There's an update on the **Picture Day** retake
- Page 2 Mrs. Hoff asks, **How Does Myth Explain Nature?** in the Upper Elementary Social Studies class
- Page 2 Student Pranav Gopalakrishnan tells about last week's **Grandparents' and Special Persons' Day**
- Page 3 Assistant Head of School Tom Herbst has an article **From the Bookshelf** that might interest you
- Page 3 Students Katarina and Filip Jevtic will be part of the **Noel Night** celebrations in Midtown Detroit's Cultural Center Area
- Page 3 The Early Elementary class is **Foil Boating**



NEW LUNCH MENU FOR THE INTERMEDIATE CLASSROOM

Starting January 7th our NEW menu will feature Trident Ultimate fish Sticks. They are called Ultimate because they are really in a category of their own - offering more fish, better fish and less breading than any other brand! 100% natural breading, no preservatives or artificial ingredients. There's no mince - just whole fillets of deep-skinned, once frozen, Genuine Wild Alaskan Pollock in a lightly seasoned crumb coating offered baked with Ketchup for dipping. For side dishes we've selected organic carrots and organic applesauce.

Kids will love them, and we are proud to offer such a healthy lunch menu for \$5.00

We are very thankful for your support,
Intermediate Classroom

The last day for Nacho Lunch is December 17th. If you have ordered past that date, please contact Ms. Schultz at jschultz@steppingstoneschool.org and explain if you want to pay the difference or receive a refund!



Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: 4 Sticks, (125.3 g) 4.4 oz	
Amount per Serving	Calories from Fat 93
Calories 240	% Daily Value *
Total Fat 9.3	15%
Saturated Fat 1.3g	7%
Cholesterol 20mg	7%
Sodium 280mg	12%
Total Carbohydrate 18.6g	7%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 1.3g	
Protein 18.6g	37%
Vitamin A	0%
Vitamin C	0%
Calcium	3%
Iron	8%
Est. Percent of Calories from:	
Fat 35.0%	Carbs 31.1%
Protein 31.1%	



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Upcoming Events ...

FRI, Dec 4
1:30 pm, Hearing Screening

THURS, Dec 10
10:00 am, Picture Retake

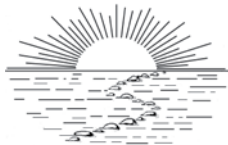
Deadline: Fridays, one week prior to Thursday publication dates.

Email articles to:
jroder@steppingstoneschool.org

cc:
therbst@steppingstoneschool.org



From Grandparents' Day last Wednesday



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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1. Small gifts
2. Large gifts
3. Research
4. Writing

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The Silk Road

Ms. Morse, Pre High School

Next week in social studies, the Pre High School class will be learning about the Silk Road during their study of ancient China. The Silk Road was actually a network of smaller trade routes that stretched more than 4,000 miles across Asia. The road connected the two empires of the Han and Romans. On it, goods and ideas traveled back and forth.

The students will be participating in an experiential exercise. This means that they will travel along a simulation of the road. Students will encounter sandstorms, bandits, mountains, and scorpions as they travel from trading center to trading center.

To help your child prepare for this topic, students can research the Han dynasty for background information. For example, one interesting fact is that the Chinese people were put to death if they revealed the secrets of processing silk. Happy researching!

Teachers Make Reading MAGIC

Janelle Schultz, Intermediate Elementary

Why teach critical thinking skills to our young learners? There are several reasons to answer that important question. Many recognize the importance of teaching critical thinking to older students; but why not start much younger, when the mind is in a surge of learning?

Just recently at a conference, Jennifer Bullcock from Detroit Country Day School, shed light on the importance of critical thinking for the young minds and paid special attention to highlighting critical thinking skills in literature.

Why start with literature? Literature is accessible. It allows children to cope in our ever-changing society. Students can learn to question the validity of material and construct independent, informed opinions, which allows for better-informed choices. Critical interactions with text can enhance a child's enjoyment of reading and is often taken at face value and readily influences children, no matter what the content.

At Steppingstone, students are exposed to this way of learning and thinking. Through critical thinking implications and practices, students are able to link their skills into the world of literature and transfer these skills to other areas of critical thinking interplay. Literature can be linked to class units and themes, and it also allows for contextual learning. In today's world, literature translates to marketing, and children must be prepared to cope.

Parents, I challenge you the next time you pick up a book to dig deeper with your children. Ask the questions that require critical thinking skills such as inferring, synthesizing, and analysis of thought. I think you will be surprised at what these beautiful minds can share!

Hearing Testing Update

Hearing testing is coming up for students in Kindergarten, 2nd grade, and 4th grade on Friday, December 4th, at 1:30 pm.

Picture Day

If your child is having their pictures retaken—they must return their packets. Please send packets to school on Thurs., Dec. 10th.

How Does Myth Explain Nature?

By Mrs. Hoff, Upper Elementary

Upper Elementary students have begun reading several myths that explain the causes of natural phenomena. Students will be challenged to consider the scientific explanations for several natural phenomena, such as thunder, wind, lunar eclipses, and tides. Afterwards, they will compose their own mythical explanations using the knowledge that they acquired about the qualities that gods and goddesses possess.

Next week, students will be reading "Demeter and Persephone," a Homeric poem that could have been presented at a public festival during the sixth century B.C., most probably as a song. Students will explore the idea of songs that tell stories or deliver moral lessons. They will also learn about Hades, the god of the underworld and ruler of the dead. Often, Hades is referred to as "He Who Receives Many Guests" and "He Who Has Many Names."

As you know, students are presently studying storms in their science curriculum. Integrating literature and science teaching provides students with an opportunity to transfer learning from one subject area to another, apply what they have learned using thinking and reasoning, and be a part of a curriculum that is more relevant to students. Steppingstone prides itself in being able to present learning opportunities that allow the students to analyze and synthesize information.

Grandparents' and Special Persons' Day

Pranav Gopalakrishnan, age 11

Grandparents' and Special Persons' Day, which was held on Wednesday, November 25, was packed with fun! Almost every student had a guest to tour the school and participate in activities with. Everyone who attended had fun learning programming in Computers with Dr. Morse. We conducted an experiment in the Science Lab, did portraits of our favorite memories in Art, and shared a laugh in Drama class. Then we assembled in the gym where each classroom demonstrated their foreign language and watched a fencing demonstration by the Pre High School Class. I sure hope that we have another great Grandparents' Special Persons' Day next year!



From the Bookshelf

from Tom Herbst

This was supposed to be a quick reminder article about the widely acclaimed and common sense laced parenting book, *The Blessings of a Skinned Knee* by Wendy Mogel. It was her book that helped to popularize the term: "helicopter parent" in the minds of many. However, the assignment took a couple of interesting turns along the way...

When I went to pull the book from Steppingstone's parenting shelf, both copies were missing. No problem, I thought, I will use the copy from my own collection at home. No luck there, either – I must have loaned it out. Over Thanksgiving while walking through my local Barnes & Noble, I noticed a recent issue of *Time* (complete with the picture of a bubble-wrapped child on the front, no less!) with the accompanying cover story: "Helicopter Parents: The Growing Backlash Against Overparenting," (November 20, 2009). Following the leads in this informative and interesting article – available online at: <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1940395,00.html> – led me to consider several recent books that take Mogel's thesis (i.e., that we are overindulging, overscheduling, and overprotecting our children) to a next logical step.

One book that consistently receives high marks from Amazon's customer reviews is

***Nurture Shock:
New Thinking About Children*
by Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman.**

The *Washington Post* reviewer piqued my interest with the following summary:

"...many of modern society's most popular strategies for raising children are in fact backfiring because key points in the science of child development and behavior have been overlooked...[The authors] in 10 provocative chapters...cover such issues as the inverse power of praise (effort counts more than results); why insufficient sleep adversely affects kids' capacity to learn; why white parents don't talk about race; why kids lie; that evaluation methods for giftedness and accompanying programs don't work; why siblings really fight (to get closer)."

In addition, there are extensive chapter notes and a bibliography citing further sources and references. Unfortunately, it was not in stock

at B & N, and I had to order it. At a later time, I will offer my impressions.

In the meantime, you may want to check out the original impetus for this article or the *Time* cover story or look for *Nurture Shock* yourself. Let me know what you think.

Foil Boating

Ms. Powell, Early Elementary

During the last few science lessons, students have been investigating boat designs. They made clay boats and predicted the buoyancy when weight was added. Students learned that the boats that hold the most cargo are the "best floaters."

Next week students will see if the size of the boat makes a difference to how a boat moves up and down in the water. Using aluminum foil, students will make three different kinds of boats to test their theories. As students conduct their experiments, new ideas about buoyant force will begin to emerge. Although students are not using scientific terms to explain their ideas, they are engaged in the observation of their boats.

You can help your child investigate buoyancy at home. Design and construct a boat that will keep eight identical items afloat, but will sink when the ninth is added. Have fun boating at home!

Noel Night

Steppingstone students, Katarina and Filip Jevtic, will be part of the 37th annual Noel Night festivities that will take place on Saturday, December 5th from 5:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in Midtown Detroit's Cultural Center Area. Katarina will be playing with the Suzuki Royal Oak orchestra from 5:15 to 5:45 pm at Detroit Public Library, 2nd Floor Cass Mezzanine. Filip will perform as a junior member of the Suzuki Royal Oak Camerata orchestra that will be playing at the DIA from 6:00 to 6:30 pm.

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

STAFF

General Assistant,	Jason Roder
IT Specialist	

FACULTY

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