

All Raffle Tickets Due Wednesday, December 16

The News Digest

Winterfest Arrival Time

7 pm
Concert Attire
Bring a snack to share
No candy, please

**Be the Lucky Winner!
Record Low for
Raffle Ticket Sales Means...**

...The odds are great for winning the Disney trip... about 4 times better than last year.

School Closings

Since we've recently had our first snow, this is probably a good time to remind everyone that Steppingstone closes with the Farmington schools. If Farmington schools are closed, so are we.

Page 1Leighton Gaines and Evan Houdek have a *Winterfest Request*

Page 1The search for a home of our own continues, in *Update: Property*

Page 2Ms. Powell encourages her students to *Imagine...* in their literature class

Page 2It's *Performance Time!*, and Ms. Schultz writes about the upcoming Winterfest.

Page 2The Upper Elementary has been working on some *Free Verse Poetry*. Check it out.

Page 2Tax time is coming up. *Update: Capital Campaign, For Tax Benefits, Donate Before Winter Break*

Page 2Mrs. Morse writes about *Performing Arts* in the PHS class

Page 2Wondering how the Power Reading lists are chosen? Read *A Note on Power Reading Lists*

Page 3Mrs. Morse has an update on former student Hikaru Suzuki in *Young Alum News*

Page 3Mr. Herbst has some *IRS Information You Can Use*

Page 3*Winterfest 2009* is coming! Read about it here.

Page 3Not to be outdone, the Intermediate Elementary has written a poem about *Mrs. Morse*.

Page 3We have an update on the upcoming *Swimming Lessons*

Page 3Winter's coming, and it usually brings *School Closings*

Page 3There's a *Record Low for Raffle Ticket Sales...* Think of it as an opportunity.

Page 4*Looking for a Piano?* We can help you.

Page 4*Auction Tickets* are still available at the discounted price.

Update: Property

We continue to move forward with our best option for next fall. We and the seller seem to be in agreement, and the documents are now in the hands of the attorneys. Nevertheless, we remain open to new possibilities, so do not be shy about letting Donna know about leads that she can forward to the Building & Grounds Committee.

As you probably realize, there are no properties that are perfectly designed for Steppingstone. Redesign is expected, and the rapidity with which this will occur will depend largely on how quickly Capital Campaign funds are raised.

The Building and Grounds Committee is setting the design priorities. Of the many to consider, here are the first three:

1. Primary is function—we will be redesigning for the pod structure that has worked so well in our current space.
2. Inherent will be the design for safety—classrooms locked to the public while the entry lobby (with Mrs. Coffin) will still be welcoming and open to the public.
3. First impressions—this is important for recruiting and longevity so we will be considering how to make the location attractive and inviting for the least cost.

**Update: Capital Campaign
For Tax Benefits, Donate Before Winter Break**

The Capital Campaign consultants will be meeting with Parent Coordinator, JaNele Jordan, tonight. Committee Chair, Tony Blackburn, has done his research on about 150 corporations and will begin the follow-up on his first 50 prospects. It is a big job to find the few philanthropists among them.

In the meantime, your donations and donations from your referrals are steadily trickling into the coffers. Be reminded that your donations made before the end of the tax year will be eligible for tax credits as defined by law. Remind your prospects of the same. While we will appreciate contributions at any time, donations made early in the campaign help us to plan most effectively.

2009 Raffle Ticket Update

as of 12/10/2009

Let's Get Selling! Good Luck!

Goal - 1200 Tickets (\$10,000)

Number of Tickets Sold - 336

Amount Earned - \$2,830.00

Percent of Goal Reached - 28.30%

Powell - 30 Total Tickets Sold

\$22.73 - Earned per class member

2.73 - Tickets sold per class member

Powell, Carol	0	Dwyer, Holden	30
Allen, Dylan	0	Jevtic, Katarina	0
Anantharaman, Savitri	0	Lock, William	0
Asmi, Natasha	0	Mondrusov, David	0
Butler, Brittany	0	Velasco, Sara	0
Corrigan, Melissa	0		

Hoff - 75 Total Tickets Sold

\$40.63 - Earned per class member

4.69 - Tickets sold per class member

Hoff, Linda	12	Jevtic, Filip	0
Baker, Lea	0	Kahn, Jessica	0
Collazo, Diego	0	Learned, Ryan	63
Collins, Cailey	0	Lurie, Alaina	0
Dekker, Alexander	0	Mondrusov, Daniel	0
Deming, Korina	0	Robbins, Thomas	0
Finkelstein, Emily	0	Seaman, Taylor	0
Gilmore, Ian	0	Thomas, Ann	0

Schultz - 123 Total Tickets Sold

\$79.23 - Earned per class member

9.46 - Tickets sold per class member

Schultz, Janelle	0	Kucharski, Garrett	30
Collazo, Isabel	0	Lampi, Jacob	39
Corrigan, Natalie	0	Robbins, Michael	0
Deming, Olivia	0	Sheth, Maya	0
Dyde, Noel	0	Warner, Sydney	24
Gilmore, Heather	0	Yamamoto, Celina	30
Keast, Meghan	0		

Morse - 30 Total Tickets Sold

\$16.67 - Earned per class member

2.00 - Tickets sold per class member

Morse, Keiko	0	Houdek, Evan	30
Bansil, Mohit	0	Kahn, Jacob	0
Collins, Thomas	0	Litt, Mollie	0
Elias, George	0	Nichols, Jamal	0
Epshteyn, Allison	0	Shah, Milan	0
Finkelstein, Noah	0	Varns, Joseph	0
Gaines, Leighton	0	Wood, Melissa	0
Gopalakrishnan, Pranav	0		

Board

& Staff - 78 Total Tickets Sold

\$34.21 - Earned per class member

4.11 - Tickets sold per Board & Staff member

Blackburn, Tony	0	Nellett, Kathy	0
Blay, Sandy	9	Niemisto, Rich	0
Bozin, Keith	0	Qyteti, Hektor	0
Coffin, Donna	0	Radz, Jerzey	0
Gage, Mary	0	Roder, Jason	0
Gaines, Don	9	Son, Yong	0
Herbst, Thomas	6	West, Mieko	0
Lin, Hong	0	Wojchichsky, Irene	0
Morse, Kiyo	1	Wojchihosky, Jerry	0
Morse, Reef	23	Furman, Nancy	30

All Raffle Tickets Due Wednesday, December 16

Upcoming Events ...

FRI, Dec 18
7 pm, Winterfest

MON - FRI, Dec 25 - Jan 1
NO SCHOOL—Winter Break

MON, Jan 4
School Resumes

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

Email articles to:
jroder@steppingstoneschool.org

cc:
therbst@steppingstoneschool.org



Just a few last minute corrections....

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Winterfest Request

If anyone has a bird cage, two Pre High School students would like to borrow it for their Winterfest performance on Friday, December 18. Please call Mrs. Coffin if you can help. Thanks! Leighton Gaines and Evan Houdek.

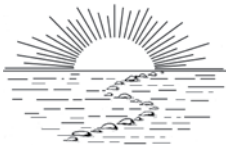
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Steppingstone is an independent, state-approved 501(c) (3) non-profit elementary school (K-8) for gifted students. Steppingstone does not discriminate based on race, color, creed, gender, religion, or national or ethnic origin in the administration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

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Farmington Hills, MI 48334
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www.steppingstoneschool.org



Imagine . . .

Ms. Powell, Early Elementary

Next week in literature, we will use our imaginations as we read about snowmen. Although this story is not a part of the read-aloud series that we have been studying, students will still be able to use interpretive language as they retell parts of the story in their own words. Children are also able to make real life connections when they listen to picture book stories. Everyone has a favorite story that they heard when they were young. Even though children may hear a story many times, they are still able to imagine something different.

To help your child get ready to use their imagination, pick an object and ask them what they think that object would do if it came to life! You can draw pictures or just re-tell the story with another ending or a different version altogether. What ever you do, your child will love the interaction as you use your imaginations!

Performance Time!

Ms. Schultz, Intermediate Elementary

Winterfest is one of Steppinestone's proudest moments, when students can showcase all of those wonderful talents they have practiced so hard outside of school. Winterfest is typically a music-based performance event that is structured around a Variety Show. All students participate with their classmates for some portions of the program. However, other individual participation occurs that calls for practice at home and is dedicated time set aside in preparation for the big night.

For those students who are involved in Winterfest, this is a big moment where all eyes are on you. To ensure that your performance runs smoothly, you will want to make sure you have practiced your piece to perfection. Practice, practice, and practice! I know all of the students involved will do just fine, but do remember to relax and to breathe.

Good luck to all of our participants. I cannot wait to see everyone Friday night, December 18, 2009 at 7:00 pm

Free Verse Poetry

Mrs. Hoff, Upper Elementary

M.L. Rosenthal defined poetry as "a human and personal activity. It is both expression and communication. It is a form of speech, and, while the raw material of poetry is experience, its medium is language. It is an ordering of words."

During the months of November and December, students have been exploring writing free verse poetry. Free verse does not require attention to meter, or regular rhythm, or rhyme scheme. Free verse poetry allows students the opportunity to write without normal punctuation and explore alliteration, or the repetition of the same or similar sounds at the beginning of words, such as Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.; assonance, or the repetition of vowel sounds within a phrase, such as crave and rave; and onomatopoeia, or words that sound very similar to they sound the name, such as the buzz of bees.

Carl Sandburg and Robert Frost are two well-known writers of free verse poetry. Students have been enjoying their poems, along with many other poets, in the classroom. Make it a point to check out some poetry books the next time you visit your public library. You may even want to challenge family members to participate in your own poetry slam!

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Performing Arts

Ms. Morse, Pre High School

As many of you know, the Winterfest is next week. This is one of the events that we have planned that allows our students an opportunity to perform in front of an audience. All students will be participating by performing as a class, and some students will also showcase a talent.

One of the very clear ways that I have experienced how these types of experiences help develop Steppinestone students was through one of our alum. Without naming names, this boy was one of the shyest and quietest students I have ever had. He was very contemplative, took his time when speaking, and generally had to be encouraged to speak up in large group discussions.

One year, while we were in the cabin avoiding a thunderstorm during the camping trip, he started to act out a skit that he had heard. It was really funny, and he entertained us better than any television could have. The following year, he performed that same skit for the Winterfest—and received the same positive reaction from the audience. He went on to try out for plays in high school and participate in the theater program—the boy who would not speak in front of an audience before!

Having known this student since he was in second grade, we were all amazed to see him up on the stage and loving the spotlight. It just goes to show that when you allow for a well-rounded curriculum and strive for development of the whole child, you never know what you are going to get in the end!

A Note on Power Reading Lists

It is important for parents to understand that the books on Steppinestone's Power Reading lists are books that were selected by librarians for the literary value—from the librarians' perspective. We leave it to parents to screen these books for what is appropriate for their particular child from their own family's perspective.



Young Alum News

Often our students must leave Steppingstone for reasons other than graduation. In this newsletter, we have news to share about Hikaru Suzuki (Grade 4, '09), whose family returned to Japan last summer at the end of his 4th grade year.

Hikaru still believes that "Steppingstone School is the only school for me!" However, he now attends a private school, Tokoha Tachibana Elementary School (<http://www.tokoha.ac.jp/fuzoku/>) where he can play in an excellent school orchestra and where English is taught by a British teacher twice a week.

To get to school, he must rise at 5:30 am every morning and catch the train at 6:54 am! It takes about one and a half hours to get there by train and school bus. He is back home around 5:30 pm. Sometimes his mom takes pity on him and drives him so he can sleep an extra one and a half hours in the car. I guess we ought not to be complaining about our commutes again! In addition, he goes to a Karate class four times a week with his brother, and then there are piano and violin lessons and the practice that is required for those instruments, as well. I guess we shouldn't be complaining about homework again either! Uniforms were another adjustment to make.

On the positive side, he is home in Shizuoka, beneath beautiful Mt. Fuji, and he is happy to have fresh seafood and other Japanese foods, green tea, and Mom's Steinway piano again. He has also found a new violin teacher and is working on a Viotti concerto.

In another year and a half, Ms. Morse hopes to take her students and any other interested families to Japan over spring break, If you'd like to visit with Hikaru in Japan, keep this in mind.

IRS Information You Can Use

Parents, are you aware that the IRS allows .14 cents per mile when driving for charitable purposes (i.e., field trips)?

Winterfest 2009

DATE: Friday, Dec. 18, 2009 (LAST DAY)

TIME: 7:00 pm

PLACE: Gymnasium

ALL STUDENTS HAVE A PART IN THE WINTERFEST. If your child cannot attend due to another commitment, please let his/her teacher know immediately. It is very difficult for other children to perform when there are unexpected absences within their performance groups.

ATTIRE: Students should be dressed in clothing appropriate for a concert. We want them to be attractively attired ladies and handsomely dressed young men for their audience. No denims or sneakers.

BRING A SNACK TO SHARE: Help us celebrate this last performance event of the year with a snack to share. Most welcome are fresh vegetables or fruit, dips, cheeses, crackers, breads, chips, pretzels, or ethnic treats. If you bring baked goods, please make them low sugar, and **DO NOT BRING CANDY.** Punch will be provided.

FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF ALL, parents, please keep all your children with you, especially during the refreshment period. Let's make this an enjoyable event that doesn't require disciplinary redirection of your child. Remember the Winterfest is a wonderful time to talk to other parents and to get to know new families and staff members.

Mrs. Morse

A poem from the Intermediate Elementary

This is the Intermediate Classroom's poem about Kiyo written last week during our writing block. The focus was figurative language, using similes and metaphors in their writing. They decided to compare Mrs. Morse to a President.

MRS. MORSE

She runs Steppingstone
like a President runs the country.
She is the law.
She works as quiet as a mouse.
When she speaks it sounds like a soft lullaby.
She walks as smooth as the wind blowing.

Swimming Lessons

Drivers Still Needed

Thank you to parents who have already volunteered to drive students to the Costick Center for our swim program.
January 14, 21, 28
February 4, 11, 18, 25
March 4

If you must cancel, please give us as much notice as possible because last minute cancellations create major organizational problems (e.g. with emergency driver packets and faculty assignments).

We leave Steppingstone at 1:45 pm. Dismissal at 4:00 pm will be from the Costick Center. Extended Day students and students not picked up by 4:15 pm will return to Steppingstone with faculty.

Students who are not able to participate for health reasons and are not enrolled in the Extended Day Program need to be picked up at 1:30 pm. from Steppingstone.

SUPPLIES

- 1 Waterproof tote
- 2 Towels (1 for pool, 1 for shower)
- Bathing suit:
 - Boys: Trunks under clothes
 - Girls: Modest 1-piece tanks (change in Costick Center locker room)
- Dry underwear in gallon-size ziplock bag for wet suit after class
- Goggles
- Extra snacks for afternoon after swimming
- NO TOYS
- Children under 8 years of age must have a booster seat

School Closings

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Be the Lucky Winner! Record Low for Raffle Ticket Sales Means...

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Looking for a Piano?

Steppingstone has five pianos for sale for \$300 each. If you (or someone you know) would like to purchase one, please contact Sandy Blay in the office at 248-539-1666. Two are slightly damaged and are free.

Auction Tickets

If you want tickets to the Auction at the discounted price, you need to order them by Friday.



So, what is this supposed to do?

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
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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
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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

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	