



NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS

DECEMBER 2008

Contents

[Dates to Remember](#)
[Kim's Korner](#)

[Students' Accomplishments](#)
[Campus Happenings](#)

[Resources for Parents](#)
[And then there's...](#)

Dates to Remember

Report Cards sent home: Lesson 16 (Dec. 15 – 18)

Christmas Holidays: December 19 to January 4

Grades 1 – 4 SMS Competitions: February 23 to February 26

Ontario SMS March Break: March 13 to March 29

Manitoba SMS Spring Break: March 27 to April 5

Grades 4 – 10 SMS Exams: Lesson 33 (May 11 to 14 in Ontario, and May 5 & 7 in Manitoba)

Grades 1 – 3 SMS Exams: Lesson 37 (June 8 to 11 in Ontario, and June 2 & 4 in Manitoba)

[Contents](#)

Students' Accomplishments

Congratulations to the following students for their outstanding accomplishments:

Grades 4 to 6 Mathematical Olympiad Part 1 (American Competition)

Perfect Scores	"Off by One"
Christabel Chan, Ansh Goyal, Karan Jain, Matthew Ban Kim, Christian Murillo	Brandon Chan, Jackie Ho, Jasper Ho, Wilson Ho, Anthony Hua, Gabriel Ip, Anne Kim, Shakir Lakhani, Tiffany H. Leung, Arthur Li, Kelvin Ng, Evan Ngo, Frederick Ngo, Sean Purcell, Marie Song, Emma Tse, Aaron Vuong, Wilson Wu

Other Accomplishments

Amy Kim, Grade 4, has been accepted into the Young Artists Performance Academy (YAPA). It is quite a privilege for Amy to be part of this very challenging and demanding program. Congratulations on this wonderful accomplishment Amy, and good luck with your studies!

Rebecca Gerster, Grade 8, and her teammates at Branksome Hall won two CISAA championships this fall, for U-14 girls basketball and hockey. Their hockey season concluded with a tournament at York University on November 19-20, with Rebecca scoring the game-tying goal with one minute to play in the final, followed less than one minute later by the game-winning goal. What an exciting finish!

Kim's Korner

Written by Kim Langen, Spirit of Math® Schools CEO and Co-Founder

Persistence, Attention to Detail, "Sticking with It", and The Discipline to Follow-Through

Bright kids who are used to getting answers quickly, and not having to work very hard at questions can develop habits that encourage speed, and the “easy way out”. Somehow, students must change those habits so that they realize that speed is not necessarily the critical route to success. Bright students must be given questions that force them to slow down, and to look more closely at their work. If they were ever in a situation, in their future, where they had a large amount of data to analyze, such as financial statements, scientific research, medical results, or even legal matters, they must have the skills necessary to be able to look at the details. These skills include having the patience to painstakingly go through what appear to be “non-consequential” numbers.

When sitting with a student a couple of weeks ago, going over the grade 6 material, she told me that she understood how to do the work on rationals, but kept making “little” mistakes, such as missing the negative sign. That negative sign changed the whole answer. She was feeling a little frustrated because it was those “little” mistakes that brought her mark down, even though she felt that she understood the concept. What she was missing was some more basic skills required for this course.

The skills needed for the grade 6 course are very similar to those needed in much of the Spirit of Math program. For example, as students progress through the grade 5 *Order of Operations* unit, one question, which is at least 10 steps long, is only worth 1 mark, and to get that mark, EVERYTHING in the question must be perfect – not just the answer. The procedures in the process are crucial, and are just as crucial as is the ability to find their mistake, if they made one. Students are held accountable to find the mistake by comparing their complex answer with others in their group. If they decided to do the question their own way, then they will very likely have got it wrong. They quickly learn that having a consistent method makes a task easier and much more efficient in the long run – that sometimes just following procedures in a certain way just works much better than being creative. There is a time to follow procedures and a time to be creative.

Students these days are inundated with technologies that have been specifically created to satisfy an immediate demand. Technology is fast, simple to use, stimulates a quick “good feeling”, and can be turned off when it gets frustrating. I feel that media has gone overboard with their promotion of quick fixes, and that marketing is so sophisticated now, that it is tough not to get “sucked in”. This sincerely concerns me because it is much harder now for parents to justify to their kids that hard work, patience, discipline and persistence are necessary skills. I strongly urge you to look closely at our curriculum, and look beyond the surface. Students who are able to succeed well in our program are those who work hard, and have the patience, discipline and persistence to do the questions. Even if your child doesn’t master the concepts behind all the math, they will have developed very valuable skills that are tough to instil. And, yes, it does take some work.

What are some of the skills we want students to learn to value?

1. Patience.
2. Discipline to stick with a problem until it is properly completed.
3. Learning how to follow procedures.
4. The discipline to work hard to meet a standard; paying attention to the details and procedures.
5. The discipline to double-check your work, and to take it one more step: to go back and correct your work. It is OK to have a wrong answer. It is not OK to let that wrong answer stay there, if you know it is there, and if you have a chance to correct it.
6. Ability to talk to others in a meaningful way, to help others with their work.
7. Ability to find out where you went wrong, if you did.

Resources for Parents

World Council for Gifted and Talented Web Site

www.worldgifted.ca

BBC News Article: 'Infomania' worse than marijuana

“Workers distracted by email and phone calls suffer a fall in IQ more than twice that found in marijuana smokers, new research has claimed. The study for computing firm Hewlett Packard warned of a rise in “infomania”, with people becoming addicted to email and text messages.”

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4471607.stm

Candy Counting Winners

Don Mills: Jason Kwok – Grade 5

High Park: Camille Tsang – Grade 1, Allison Greaves

Markham West: Clarabelle Lee – Grade 7

Mississauga: Candice Chow – Grade 1, Daniya Muhammadi – Grade 6, David Lee – Grade 8

North Toronto: Christina Au – Grade 1, Robert Martin and Karina Matys – Grade 2 (tie), Andrew Vasila – Grade 4, Nathalie Trinh – Grade 5, Aneeka Ratnayake – Grade 7

Oakville: Daniel Guoussev – Donskoi – Grade 2, Joseph Nasato – Grade 1

Ottawa: Yasin Kherani – Grade 5, Jasmine Kherani – Grade 6

Richmond Hill: Ryan Mark – Grade 1, Jaime Chong – Grade 2, Amanda Foo – Grade 3, Adrian Yip – grade 4, Harrison Hui – Grade 5, Marc Ting – Grade 6, Kimberly Phan – Grade 7

Willowdale: Stephanie Chan – Grade 1N, Ariana Zargar - Grade 1E, Brandon Leung – Grade 1E2, Ryan Pourzal – Grade 2N, Claudia Marin – Grade 3E, Andrea Haw – Grade 4E, Caitlin Chua – Grade 5E2, Christina Rakitzis – Grade 6E, Jack Katz – Grade 7N, Andrew Tau – Grade 7W, Noelle Yan – Grade 8W, Justin Chau – Grade 8E2, Gabriel Lam – Grade 9E, Porey Lin – Grade 10W, Rehana Jamani – Grade 11N2

Winnipeg: Sara Knox – Grade 2, Sarah Ledger – Grade 5, William Page – Grade 4, Jordan Smallwood – Grade 5

Campus Happenings

Mississauga West and Oakville:

A thank you letter from a parent of the Mississauga West campus, sent on Wednesday, Nov. 26, 2008:

Thanks, Salima. Josh got his first term results [from day school] and we are thrilled with his progress. He seems to be thriving under the guidance of Mrs. Mazur, and we can see the good work habits developed in his SMS classroom impacting his overall learning attitude.

Your slogan "to promote cooperation, inspire confidence, and release the genius in every child" is no exaggeration indeed!

Best regards,

Betty Yu



Bring a Buddy at Mississauga West and Oakville.

The Mississauga West and Oakville campuses had a "Bring-A-Buddy" event in November. Students and their buddies participated together in drills, POWs and a candy counting contest! Thank you to all parents and students who brought a friend to this event. Look out for another bring-a-buddy in the new year!

North Toronto

The North Toronto campus held its first Bring a Buddy Night on Thursday November 20th in the Grades 1 and 8 classes. We had three guests in the Grade 8 class and two in the Grade 1 class. Each of our guests really enjoyed the experience, learning a great deal from our teachers and their Spirit of Math friends! Candy counting contests and a short rally at the end of class added a special touch to a fun and exciting evening. Thank you to each of our students in these classes, for inviting their friends and for making our guests feel so welcome!

Ottawa

On Monday, October 27th Ottawa held their Grand Opening celebration at the Boys and Girls Club for the two campuses in the Capital Region; Kanata and downtown Ottawa.

Richmond Hill

Thank you to all our parents for your co-operation and understanding with regards to closing the parking lot at Richmond Hill United Church. Parking is available on Church Street and in the parking lot behind Singer shoes. Keeping our parking lot clear of vehicles will help maintain a safe environment for our students. (Becky Belzycki, Campus Director)

Willowdale

On Weeks 11 and 12, students in Grades 1N, 1E, 6N and 7N brought their friends to the "Bring-A-Buddy Night."

Toronto

This year, our teachers and staff will be donating toys to the CP24/CHUM Children's Wish. We hope to donate 20 or more new, unwrapped gifts to this great cause! If parents and students are interested in donating, please contact your campus director.

Teacher News



Congratulations to Mr. Lalli and his wife, Samar, upon the arrival of their first-born baby girl – Gunar – whose name means: "A person with good qualities." Gunar was born on October 12th, 2008.

Mr. Lalli is a teacher in Mississauga and Toronto

Registration for National Math Competitions

We are pleased to announce that this year we are providing our students with more opportunities than ever before to participate in national mathematics competitions. See your campus for details.

[Contents](#)

Important News about Tuition Increases:

Effective immediately, some campuses will be increasing tuition fees for **new student registrations only**. This does not apply to those students who are already enrolled with Spirit of Math Schools. Please contact your campus for more details.

And then there's...

Drill Books

Do you want to mark your child's drills at home, without having to figure out the answers yourself? Now you can! Solution books are available for sale. Please see below.

Spirit of Math® Schools Drill Books are available for sale!

Student Drill Books - \$19.95

Teacher/Parent Drill Books - \$49.95 and includes a Teacher/Parent Training DVD. Use these to mark your child's "at-home" drills.

For more information, please call 416-223-1985 ext. 110

Other

Spirit of Math bags, pencil cases and magnets are available. Flyers are being handed out to all students this week. You can also view the flyer online by visiting spiritofmath.com/flyer.

[Contents](#)