



NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS

MARCH 2010

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Dates to Remember

Ontario SMS March Break: March 5 to March 21. Classes resume the week of March 22nd

Manitoba SMS Spring Break: Week of March 29th. Classes resume April 6th

New Jersey SMS Spring Break: Week of March 29th. Classes resume April 6th

Grades 4 – 10 SMS Exams: Lesson 33 (May 10 to 13 in Ontario, and May 4th and 6th in Manitoba and May 4th in New Jersey)

Grades 1 – 3 SMS Exams: Lesson 37 (June 7 to 10 in Ontario, and June 1st and 3rd in Manitoba and June 1st in New Jersey)

Mathematical Olympiads:

Toronto: Friday, March 26 from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm – open to registered students in grades 4, 5 or 6. **Venue:** Newtonbrook United Church, 53 Cummer Avenue.

Winnipeg: March 12th from 5:00 – 6:00 pm. Contact this campus for more information.

Mathematica Competitions:

Date and time: Wednesday, April 14th, 2010; 9:30 am – 11:00 noon;

Grades: Thales (Grade 3), Byron-Germain (Grade 4), Fibonacci (Grade 5), Pythagoras (Grade 6), Euler (Grade 7), Lagrange (Grade 8) and Newton (Grade 9)

Venues:

Toronto: St. Elizabeth of Hungary Roman Catholic Church, 432 Sheppard Ave. East.

Brampton: Contact this campus for more information

Don Mills: Donway Covenant United Church, 230 The Donway West, Toronto

Markham East: Contact this campus for more information

Markham West: 8787 Woodbine Avenue, Suite 240

Mississauga West and Oakville: St Elizabeth's Anglican Church, 1051 Eglinton Avenue West, Mississauga

Ottawa: Emmanuel Alliance Church, 4 Thorncliff Place

Winnipeg: Portage Avenue Church, 1420 Portage Avenue

Students' Accomplishments

Congratulations to the following students for their outstanding accomplishments:

Spirit of Math Competitions Honour Roll

GRADE ONE HONOUR ROLL:

Highest Score: Juliann Jiang (20/20)

Honour Roll: Mia Amiel, Zaynah Bhanji, Kathleen Botha, Ryan Chan, Katelyn Chung, Victoria Chung, Ben Cobbold, Clara Copeland, Amanda Chen, Tyler Chung, Andrew Fedors, Valerie Fernandes, Andre Fong, Katheryn Gao, Amsal Gilani, Zessay Gyaltsan, Alykhan Jamal, Doen Kim, Jinoo Kim, Aansh Kotian, Tony Lazar, Carter Lee, Sydney Lum, Rachel Malone, Julian Matta, Sophia Mattarazzo, Victoria McCarvell, Ethan Parikh, Karun Ram, Priyanka Rao, Hana Samji, Aditi Sandhu, Tayin Seeton, Nirav Sharma, Alicia Stack, Eric Tu, Annika Venkatesh, Brendan Younker-Tsaltas.

GRADE TWO HONOUR ROLL:

Highest Score: Laurie He, and Anna Wang, with a score of 20/20

Honour Roll: Alexander Alexiev, Meher Bhatia, Kylie Chan, Jacob Chen, Flavia Codreanu, Alex Davies, Eric Dong, Amanda Gaide, Maggie Gao, Molly Gautreau, Jack Ginocchi, Andrei Grovu, Rachel Ho, Daniel Horton, Kiri Hunter, Alyna Jamal, Ryan Jerome, Sameer Jessa, Minjung Kim, Soliel Krcmar, Rehana Lalani, Joshua Lee, Justin Lee, Samantha Lenaghan, Sangavi Muthuswamy, Max Paraschiv, Jiwon Park, Vinay Sharma, Hannah Sidon, Paul Staadecker, Arielle Suarez, Kyle Sue-A-Quan, Sarina Sukhiani, Katelyn Thien, Camille Tsang, Anisha Vatti, Matthew Walford, Hannah Wei, Timothy Yip, Arianna Yu, Albert Zhu.

GRADE THREE HONOUR ROLL:

Highest Score: Victor Paraschiv (29/30)

Honour Roll: Dhana Abdo, Simi Agarwal, Harrison Chiu, Lucas Choi, Meera Chopra, Daniel Chua, Jared Chung, Larisa Ciotmonda, Eesha Dhanker, William Fung, Jalen Gu, Callum Kipin, Daniel Kopae, Ansh Kuckreja, Ivan Kwong, Natalie Kwong, Nathan Lee, Sydney Leung, Andrew Marin, Alec Mak, Karina Matys, Ayesha Mohamedally, Sebastian Negulescu, Thomas Neustadter, Christopher Ng, Nikita Pasricha, Krisha Patel, Matthew Penn, Madeline Pinizzotto, Balen Seeton, Evaan Shetye, Cassaundra Shim, Neha Singh, Spencer Soo, Amanda Tang, Jason Tao, Celeste Ulicki, Shrimad Vora, Eric Wei, Steven Zhang, Emily Zhong.

GRADE FOUR HONOUR ROLL:

Highest Score: Shuli Jones (30/30)

Honour Roll: Nathan Au, Clark Bei, Kyle Chang, Benedict Cheung, Christopher Cheung, William Cheung, Matthew Choi, Jonathan Chung, Matthew Connell-Tombs, Aly Muhammad Dayani, Rahim Dhalla, Jack Douglas, Kevin Fan, Esme Govan, Michelle Huh, Aydan Jiwani, Diya Jhuti, Edmund Kong, Aaron Leung, Daniel Li, Fabiola Ji-Ying Li, Zachary Li, Benjamin Ma, Daniel Mak, Claudia Marin, Noah Merali, Dasha Metropolitansky, Ismaeel Mohamedally, Naeem Mussaji, Aryan Paliwal, Ioana Pitu, Peter Potaptchik, Stephanie Ralph, Kumar Tharmaratnam, Iulia Vatamanu, Michael Wan, Anna Marie Westland-Tegart, Morgan Wolfe.

Math Olympiad Competition Cumulative Results for the first four contests (Grades 4-6):

Honour Roll (80% or higher): Shuli Jones, Abby Karunakaran, Jeffrey Lee, Rebecca Moranis, Frederick Ngo, Marie Song, Emma Tse, Tiberiu, Vatamanu, Michael Wan, Gregory Wong

American Mathematics Competitions Results (Grade 8):

Gold : Clare Moffatt

Silver: Gabriel Ip

Bronze: Tariq Haji

Honour Roll (80% or higher): Clare Moffatt and Gabriel Ip

Congratulations to Helen Ng in 6E who came in 2nd out of 2000 entries in the Meaning of Home writing contest. To see Helen's winning submission, visit: www.meaningofhome.ca and click on '2009 Winners'

Kim's Korner



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

A few weeks ago a parent was a little concerned because her daughter's grade 5 class was spending a lot of time working out their solutions together, rather than having the teacher explain or take up many of the problems on the board. Her concern and question was excellent and I thought I would share my answer with you:

One of the hardest skill sets to teach kids is the ability to take ownership for their own learning, rather than having the teacher as the "centre" of the learning process with the student waiting for the teacher to tell them how to do everything. In the grade 5 course we spend a lot of time teaching other very important "learning" skills and the Order of Operations unit is an incredible opportunity for the students to learn a huge amount about "learning".

1. First, in this unit they learn how to find their mistakes themselves, rather than having someone tell them what they did wrong. (I have had grade 12 students who, at their age, are still waiting to be told what to do and where their mistakes are: they don't seem to be able to do it themselves, nor do they realize that they should be looking themselves.) This attitude of expecting someone to tell them everything is a very serious concern of mine. We are trying to get the kids to be more proactive by learning how to first find where their problem was, then to figure out how to fix it, without relying on someone else telling them what to do all the time.
2. Secondly, students need to be able to look at other people's work and have the ability to discern the difference between their own work and the work of others. In the Order of Operations unit there are many steps to the final solution. Trying to figure out, from someone else's work, where you went wrong is tough, but an important skill to learn. In addition, you will learn very quickly that you need to do all the steps **exactly** the correct way so that you can easily compare your answers. This can be quite a struggle for some students to begin with especially if they aren't used having to follow each step properly.
3. In this unit, in each question, there are so many little places to go wrong. The kids have to learn how to pay attention to detail and these questions are an ideal way to do that. It can be frustrating if a student doesn't pay attention to detail especially if a teacher doesn't tell them exactly where they went wrong. But, the student will learn that paying careful attention to the details when they first do the questions will alleviate a lot of problems. Again, students (even adults who I have worked with in the past) want others to just let it go: we would like to students to learn that the "simple" errors do make a big difference, and they are responsible for figuring it out.
4. This is also a very special unit in that once the students understand the basic procedures, they are able to do all the questions as it is the same method for all questions. The difference is the length of the questions and the combination of numbers. The questions therefore test the student's skill sets and consolidate them. Consequently, the teacher should not be going over all the questions as the students need to struggle through and figure them out. This idea that the students have all the skill sets and knowledge needed to do every question must be understood by all these students. They now need to work through it so that they can empower themselves to "stick with it" on hard questions in the higher grades. This is what builds confidence in the students.

I understand what you are saying in that it appears that the teacher could be doing more teaching, however, I really hope that you understand what we are trying to do at this point in the kids' learning. There is a transformation that happens with the students during this unit if this is done properly. They seem to mature quite a bit and take on much more of a responsibility for their own learning.

Once the kids finish this unit they should know how to work with numbers well, know the order of operations, be able to follow steps well (this is especially important for their grades 6, 8 and 9 work), their time working with others is usually of a higher quality, and they are more careful with their work, paying more attention to detail. It is a tough way to do it, but it works!

A teacher told me the other day that she was quite impressed with the skill sets that the students had in grade 6 who came from grade 5 SMS. She figured it was because the kids learned all the skills mentioned above in the grade 5 Order of Operations unit and those students learned how to work very well in the class and take responsibility for their work.

Resources for Parents

Saturdays at the Fields Institute

MATH CIRCLES September-December; January-June; Saturday afternoons 1-3 p.m.

If you would like to be informed of the classes please subscribe to our mail list at: <http://www.fields.utoronto.ca/maillist> or contact as at mathed@fields.utoronto.ca

All high school students are welcome. Math circles are free to attend and no pre-registration is required. Join us each Saturday from 1-3 pm at the Fields Institute for interactive mathematics sessions led by our esteemed leaders.

Held at the Fields Institute , 222 College Street , Toronto - Organizer: Daniel Deaconu, Previous Organizers: Larry Rice and Radford de Peiza

OVERVIEW: Math Circles have been active in Toronto for several years. While some of the students who attend simply like to work on challenging problems, many others use the weekly circles meetings to help them prepare for competitive mathematics contests, either individually or as members of a team. Some of the past participants in this program have gone on to represent Canada at the International Mathematical Olympiad, the most elite and prestigious of these competitions. A generous grant from Angoss Software Corporation will allow some of the participating students to take part in competitions outside of Toronto.

American University Admissions Process: Information Available through Prepskills

Joanna Severino, President and Founder of Prepskills conducts information seminars discussing the American University Admissions process and requirements. Joanna will be happy to answer any questions you may have related to the process. For more information visit www.prepskills.com

Gifted Development Center: A service of the institute for the Study of Advanced Development

A good resource for gifted students: <http://www.gifteddevelopment.com/index.htm>

An Incredible Site for Gifted Education

www.hoagiesgifted.org

The "All Things Gifted" resource for parents, educators, administrators, counselors, psychologists, and even gifted kids and teens themselves! Find everything you ever wanted to know about giftedness at this award winning site.

University of Manitoba Summer Camp

www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/science/departments/mathematics/undergrad_info/486.htm

The University of Manitoba is offering its ninth summer camp for mathematically interested and talented grade nine and grade ten Manitoba students. The purpose of the camp is to enable mathematically gifted students to pursue knowledge in a subject they enjoy, in an environment that encourages and fosters such pursuits. Selected participants will gain mathematical knowledge and skills, emphasizing problem solving. The camp will afford participants a chance to meet and make friends with fellow Math Camp students - students who enjoy and value the pursuit of higher learning.

Canadian Mathematical Society



Visit: <http://cms.math.ca/>

The Romanesco cauliflower demonstrates nature's use of self-similarity and fractal forms.

Math Zoom Summer Residential Camp 2010 Dates and Locations Announced -- Two Sites This Year www.mathzoom.org

Math Zoom Academy announced the dates and locations for the 2010 residential summer camp. There will be two sites this year.

The Western Camp Site is at the prestigious technology institute Harvey Mudd College, located in Claremont, California. It has been several years since Harvey Mudd hosted a youth program like Math Zoom, "The Cabinet was enthusiastic about Math Zoom and the President has approved moving forward", said Dr. Marguerite Browning, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Harvey Mudd College. "This is certainly a group of students we would like to introduce to Harvey Mudd ", said Thyra Briggs, Vice President for Admission and Financial Aid at Harvey Mudd College. The dates for this site are from July 25th to Aug. 14, 2010. It runs for 3 weeks.

The Eastern Site is to be held at University of North Carolina at Charlotte, which is the home school of our faculty Dr. Harold Reiter. We are all excited about running this new site in the east coast. The dates for this site are from July 11th to 24th, 2010. It runs for 2 weeks. Headed by Dr. Reiter, a teacher's program The Math Zoom Teacher's Institute will also be piloted at this site this year.

Summer Institute for the Gifted Residential Program.

The mission of this program is to provide the highest quality educational and social opportunities for academically gifted and talented students through programs designed to meet their abilities and needs. This is a US program based out of Stamford, CT and has locations throughout the States. For more information, please visit their website at www.giftedstudy.com or call toll free number 1-866-303-4744.

Campus Happenings

Markham East: The Markham East campus teachers and administration would like to thank all parents, friends and students for their support and generous contributions in making the Christmas sale a success. The event raised \$150.00 which was donated to the Sick Kids Foundation. Hundreds of remaining items (books, games, DVD's, etc.) were donated to the Salvation Army.



Pictured above: students shopping at the sale.

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

Others

Spirit of Math bags, pencil cases and gator clip magnets are available. Please enquire at your campus.

The Spirit of Math Competition Book is \$29.99 + GST and available from your campus. This book is a compilation of questions and answers from SMS Mathematics Competitions for Grades 1 to 4 from 1999 – 2000 and 2002 – 2005. It is a great reference and review for SMS students as they prepare for the upcoming competitions. Students who don't attend Spirit of Math also find this book a great resource for problem solving questions.