



Spirit of Math schools

NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS DECEMBER 2006

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Dates to Remember

Lesson 16 **Report Cards** given to students in class

Christmas Holidays: December 22 to January 5

Grades 1 – 4 Spirit of Math Competitions: February 26 to March 3

Ontario SMS March Break: March 12 to March 25

Manitoba SMS Spring Break: March 27

Grades 4 – 10 SMS Exams: Lesson 33 (May 14 to 19 in Toronto, and May 8 in Winnipeg.)

Grades 1 – 3 Exams: Lesson 37 (June 11 to 16 in Toronto, and June 5 in Winnipeg)

Students' Accomplishments

Congratulations to the following students for their outstanding accomplishments:

Zoe Beckerman, a grade 7 SMS student in Toronto received a third place award for the National Pony Jumping Competition at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair at the Canadian National Exhibition in November.

Vanessa Nguyen, a grade 6 SMS Toronto student has been selected to receive the Royal Conservatory of Music Silver Medal for attaining the highest marks in RCM Grade 5 Violin exam in the province of Ontario during the 2005-2006 academic year.

Alvin Law, a grade 5 SMS student, earned first place in ABACUS for level 5.

Omer Strumpf, a grade 4 SMS Toronto student, in December, was awarded the Royal Conservatory of Music highest honorary prize, the Silver medal, ranking first in the province of Ontario for the year 2006, for his achievement on his Grade 4 Cello RCM examination.

Orli and Arielle Silverberg, grade 4 and 5 SMS Toronto students respectively, each earned first place finishes in their violin competitions at the Arts Richmond Hill Music Festival.

Claudia Chen, a grade 6 SMS Mississauga student, was awarded the First Place Award for piano study (16 and under) and the Patrick Meany Memorial Scholarship, at the 2006 Peel Music Festival.

Congratulations to you all! If you know of any outstanding accomplishments that we have missed, please speak with one of our staff.

Top Award Given to Sheridan College Students for Work Done with SMS

Final year students in the Computing Program at all Sheridan College campuses are given one large final project, for which they create a database for an outside client. We were fortunate this year to have a group of students agree to create a registration/class schedule database for SMS. This group was awarded the first place prize for their work. We would like to congratulate Andrew Godden, Richard Southcott, Les McDonnell and Brandon Kucybala for their terrific work.

Kim's Korner

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

You have enrolled your kids into good programs, but are you able to follow-up? Parents' work begins when the students' work begins.

Knowledge is a treasure but practice is the key to it. Proverb

This article is the last in a four-part series based on what I have seen by watching and talking to parents who have made exceptional educational decisions for their child. This series consisted of: "Know Your Child", "Desired Outcomes", "What is out There?", and "Follow-Up". The "Follow-Up" is discussed here.

Once parents have decided what is best for their child, they then have the responsibility to ensure that it continues to be the best. What does this mean? It first means that their work had just begun when they enrolled their daughter or son.

This work necessitates a need to be proactive. You also need to know yourself. You need to know how much effort **you** are **able** to put into supporting your daughter or son. Also, you must be clear as to how much effort/time/money you are able to, or want to put into the programs.

One child recently was asked to leave the Spirit of Math program and his mother was feeling quite badly because she felt that she had failed since her child was not doing the required homework and not keeping up. The mother was not able, for one reason or another, to ensure that the work was done. Due to other pressures, she could not make the commitment needed for her child. Being realistic is often tough to do.

If you are going to enrol your child in an intensive program, you too will have to put in a great amount of effort. Dropping off your daughter or son in a program, then telling them to do the homework themselves sometime during the week does not work; Period. YOU need to follow-up. Even with your high-school adolescents. A University of Alberta math professor noted that "80% of her successful students have parents who are involved in their education." This profound statement refers to *university* students.

I have seen students come into Spirit of Math who weren't focused, seemed to be interested in everything but what they were there for, and were not working at the level of their potential. Behind these students were very supportive parents who knew what their child could do, believed in them, and were very clear as to what they wanted their child to get out of the program. These parents were on top of everything that their child did (often this was not easy.) These kids, however, often turned around even as late as grade 10 or 11. They turned out to be very successful in their endeavours and were quite clear as to where they were going in their lives. Isn't this what every parent prays for?

"Knowledge is a treasure but practice is the key to it." As a parent, are you able to dedicate the time it takes to ensure follow-up is properly done? If not, then it could be rather frustrating for your child.

If you are a student reading this, then think about it a bit. Are you ready to take the responsibility needed to do certain programs? Attending a class is only the beginning. Those who soar are not those who have naturally been given all the brains. Year after year, I see that those students who put the effort in, after the class, are those who soar.

Resources for Parents

An Excellent Book

"A Whole New Mind, Moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age". Daniel H. Pink.

I recommend this book to every parent to read. It is a provocative book that got me to rethink my own kids' education. Pink explains the latest trends in today's world, pointing out that the era of abundance is upon us, that the effect of the Asian outsourcing has changed what North Americans are doing, and that automation has begun to affect this generation's white-collar workers. I was very excited to see that right-brain thinking has become quite important, because this is what we stress with our problem-solving and co-operative work at Spirit of Math. As a synopsis of the book, I have inserted the contents of the inside sleeve:

"Lawyers. Accountants. Radiologists. Software engineers. That's what our parents told us to be when we grew up. But Mom and Dad were wrong. The future now belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind. The era of "left-brain" dominance – and the Information Age that it engendered – is giving way to a new world in which artistic and holistic "right-brain" abilities mark the...

Resources for Parents Continued...

...fault line between who gets ahead and who falls behind. That's the argument at the center of this provocative and original book, which uses the two sides of the brain as a metaphor of understanding the contours of our times."

We welcome any other suggestions from our parents.

Competitions

Math Competitions to Be Offered This Year by SMS Campuses

SMS campuses will be offering the following competitions to their students. If you are interested in writing any of these non-SMS competitions then please email either your campus principal, or Joshua Markham, the vice-principal of SMS Corporate campuses (jmarkham@spiritofmath.com). It is important that you let us know as we have to register separately for these. You must register through a school to do these competitions as students cannot register individually. If you wish to write any of these competitions and your day-school doesn't offer them, then you can do them with Spirit of Math. (You can also do them with Spirit of Math, instead of with your school, even if your school is offering it.) Please note: you cannot write a competition twice, both at your day school and at SMS.

Grades 1 – 12: Tournament of Towns, Kangaroo Contest (An international contest that was just brought to Canada last year.) In Canada: <http://www.math.concordia.ab.ca/~marinova/kangaroo/>

Math Kangaroo in USA (site has samples of contest papers in English): www.mathkangaroo.com

Grades 1 – 4 Spirit of Math Competitions Written, in class, by all SMS students in grades 1 – 4.

Grades 3 and 4: CNML (Canadian National Mathematics League) <http://www.mathleague.com>. ALL grade 3 and 4 students write this competition during class time as part of the SMS program. You do not have to register your child as they are automatically registered.

Waterloo Competitions <http://cemc.uwaterloo.ca/english/contests/>

Gauss (Gr. 7 & 8), Pascal (Gr. 9), Fryer (Gr. 9), Cayley (Gr. 10), Galois (Gr. 10), Fermat (Gr. 11), Hypatia (Gr. 11), Euclid (Gr. 12).

Mathematica Competitions www.mathematica.ca

Byron-Germain (Gr. 4), Fibonacci (Gr. 5), Pythagoras (Gr. 6), Euler (Gr. 7) and Lagrange (Gr. 8).

Campus Happenings

Markham

The Markham campus hosted a Christmas party with the staff on Sunday December 10. Twenty students and their friends enjoyed two hours of fun and good food. We started off with a Rally of Math Questions where the kids tackled the Grade 3–4 questions with enthusiasm. Then came matching games, which were a big hit. After a round of food and drinks, the kids and their families gathered once again for a Scavenger Hunt. The game was tied three ways after 15 questions. The team that finally won correctly answered a 'Mental Math' question, courtesy of SMS student and assistant teacher Clinton Leung, and presented the answer with the correct number of dollars. In the end, it was unanimous that everyone had a good time (which is obvious from this picture!).



The Markham campus will be offering a March Break "Camp". More details will be coming in January.

Brampton

Classes in Brampton were recently visited by the Brampton Guardian and were highlighted in the newspaper on Friday, November 24. It featured Mr. Ladak and his grade 3 class.

Campus Happenings Continued...

Mississauga



All of the Mississauga teachers recently went to a "Stand Up and Speak" workshop. The experience was terrific. One teacher wrote: *"The knowledge, the experience, the power of inspiration and the way we communicate are just several things that determine our success in this sophisticated process of changing the verb "GLOW" into "GROW" (another inspired association that reminds me of the reason Spirit of Math Schools exists). I could talk for a long time about the wonderful experience we had and the things we went through in just 2 ½ hours at "Stand up and Speak".*

Winnipeg

Tiffany McGregor, the acting principal until December, will be leaving the great city of the west just before Christmas. Tiffany has been phenomenal in all that she has done for the Winnipeg students and teachers. We thank her for all her work and will miss her. (Note: Tiffany in the past has been a teacher at the Toronto SMS campuses, and continues to work with SMS helping with curriculum.)

Toronto/Richmond Hill

Our campus in Richmond Hill has been growing since September, both in terms of the number of students and the personal growth shown by these students.

At this time, we are excited to announce that **we have introduced a Grade 1 class in Richmond Hill which began on Saturday December 2nd**. As of that date, our class schedule at this location will be:

Room 1	Room 2
Grade 2 (1:10 – 2:40) Miss Dankwa/Mrs. Langen	Grade 3 (2:40 – 4:10) Mrs. Vatamanu
Grade 1 (2:50 – 4:20) Mrs. Langen	Grade 4 (4:20 – 5:50) Mrs. Vatamanu

If you should have any questions about the class offerings at this location, please contact Mr. Markham by phone (416-223-1985 ext. 27) or email (jmarkham@spiritofmath.com).

And then there's...

Drill Books

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

Student Drill Books - \$19.95

Teacher Drill Books - \$49.95 and includes a free Teacher Training DVD. For more information, please call 416-223-1985 ext. 21

New Campuses to Open September 2007

We will be opening new campuses in the GTA and Ottawa next September. If you know of anyone interested in running a campus, please refer them to Raymond Yip Choy at franchise@spiritofmath.com.