



# Spirit of Math

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## NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS

### MAY 2007

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#### Dates to Remember

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##### Registration for 2007-2008 school year:

Registration for the upcoming school year is on-going for new and returning students. Please contact your campus for registration times and locations.

##### Competitions:

Gauss (Gr 7/8) – May 16

CNML (Gr 3, in class) – Lesson 34 (May 21 to 26 in GTA, May 15 in Winnipeg)

CNML (Gr 4, in class) – Lesson 35 (May 28 to June 2 in GTA, May 22 in Winnipeg)

##### Exams:

Grades 4 to 10 – Lesson 33 (May 14 to 19 in GTA, and May 8 in Winnipeg)

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

##### Recognition Ceremonies:

Winnipeg – June 19

Brampton, Markham, Mississauga, Richmond Hill, Thornhill, Toronto – June 22 (details to come)

##### Last Day of Classes and Rally:

Winnipeg – June 19

Toronto, Thornhill, Richmond Hill South – June 25, 26

Markham – June 26, 28

Brampton – June 26, 27

Mississauga West – June 28

##### Summer Programs:

Keep an eye open for summer program brochures – they will be handed out in class shortly.

#### Students' Accomplishments

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##### Congratulations to the following students for their outstanding accomplishments:

##### Spirit of Math Competition Results (Grades 1 to 4):

Congratulations to all of our students who wrote the 2007 SMS Competition!

We are especially pleased to recognize the following students who had outstanding results:

**Grade 1 Highest Score 19/20** (3-way tie): Kieran Emerson, Armaan Lalani, Azum Nanji

**Honour Roll:** Alex Braun, Ambrose Chan, Kelly Cheung, Matthew Chiu, Matthew Choi, Jocelyn Chow, Aly Dayani, Kanghyoun Kim, Annabel Koivu, Norene Lach, Mitchell Li, Benjamin Ma, Naeem Mussaji, Ioana Pitu, Aliya Rajwani, Megan Yip

**Grade 2 Highest Score 20/20 Perfect!** (3-way tie): Grace Broadley, Frank Ding, Khalisa Valani

**Honour Roll:** Allyson Aberg, Fred Boyd, Matthew Chang, Sydney Cheung, Pauline Chow, Ethan Chung, Jonathan Clements, Jeffrey Ding, Tyler Gilmore, Andrea Haw, Anthony Hua, Charmaine Koo, Wesley Leung, Manuel Lok, Tamara Mahbubani, Hasan Muhammadi, Aaron Park, Andrew Vasila, Joshua Weisz

**Grade 3 Highest Score 28/30** (3-way tie): Jude Dimond-Bauer, Mehul Gupta, Matthew Kim

**Honour Roll:** Daniel Balicki, Mark Chan, Valiant Chan, Michelle Chung, Peter Hull, Jeffrey Lee, Arthur Li, Yi-Keong Man, Hana Mussaji, Frederick Ngo, Rachelle Ngo, Safiya Rajwani, David Zhang

**Grade 4 Highest Score 30/30 Perfect!:** Tiffany Leung

**Honour Roll:** Sam Bean, Georgia Besant, Brandon Chan, Christabel Chan, Florence Chan, Clement Cheng, Rachelle Cheung, Emily Cho, John Ivan Davis, Sabrina Dhalla, Joshua Finkelstein, Jackie Ho, Andrew Hu, Jordan Hu, Gabriel Ip, Dhiya Jagota, Alykhan Kara, Stefan Keith, Shakir Lakhani, Alisia Lalji, Enoch Lam, Jonathan Lau, Michelle Lau, Diane Lee, Jeffrey Leung, Kristy Liu, Lauren Liu, Chantel Lui, Emma Miloff, Rahul Mor, Evan Ngo, Jacob Norman, Brooks Ralph, Robbie Redelmeier, William Rein, Jeffrey Seto, Omer Strumpf, Ryan Ting, Clement Wan

## Canadian Math Kangaroo Contest Results:

Congratulations to all of our students who wrote the 2007 Canadian Math Kangaroo Contest! We are pleased to announce the following outstanding results:

**Grade 3:** Emma Maninnen 1<sup>st</sup> place in Canada, Arthur Li 3<sup>rd</sup> place in Canada, Frederick Ngo 5<sup>th</sup> place in Canada, David Zhang 6<sup>th</sup> place in Canada (out of 97 participants)

**Grade 4:** Tiffany Leung 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Canada, Joshua Finkelstein 3<sup>rd</sup> place in Canada (out of 130 participants)

**Grade 6:** Zoe Norman 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Canada, Shannon Wong 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Canada, Max Norman 3<sup>rd</sup> place in Canada, May Wang 3<sup>rd</sup> place in Toronto (out of 79 participants)

**Grade 7:** Nathan Kong 6<sup>th</sup> place in Canada (out of 90 participants)

**Grade 8:** Adrian Wu 4<sup>th</sup> place in Canada (out of 73 participants)

There will be more exciting competition results to come in our June newsletter!

**Kimberly Phan**, a grade 5 SMS student in Toronto, recently earned five gold medals and one silver medal at a provincial swim meet.

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

## Kim's Korner

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

### Challenge is Not a Four Letter Word

"The harder your brain is obliged to work, the greater will be its capacity for work." Lewis, D., Greene, J., *Thinking Better*

**Explore how much of a challenge your child is able to accept.** We all have the innate desire to be challenged and conquering a good challenge delights us.

Everyone likes to do something easy, but only for a short period of time. Think of the last time you had something challenging and you succeeded in conquering it. You probably felt a great sense of satisfaction. It may have been very frustrating going through the process, but once you did it, WOW! You likely felt good about yourself and realized that you could do something you didn't think you could do. Your self-confidence skyrocketed, even if only for a short period of time. You felt that you were now armed and equipped to do more.

Why is it then that people believe that giving a child something easy to do is the key to improving the child's self-confidence? An easy task may be a start, but the effects are short-lived. This "easy" idea has permeated the education system so much now that educators are frightened to challenge students. Programs have been developed based on this premise, and in the US alone, billions of dollars have been spent focusing on the problems of the weakest kids, rather than on programs designed to challenge them.

I believe that as a society as a whole, we CANNOT be scared to challenge others. If it is our intention to help a person improve his/her intelligence, or to prepare him/her for their future challenges, then isn't it our responsibility to challenge them when they are young?

### How can you, as a parent, help your child meet a challenge with "zest"?

First: a child needs to learn **how to approach** a challenging situation or problem. They need to know how to mentally deal with something that they think cannot be done. By going through a difficult process and experiencing success, they will develop better self-esteem. They won't be as frightened of a tough situation or problem the next time it comes to them. Teach them that there are always solutions to problems, even if

the problem doesn't look possible, or the challenge appears to be way beyond what they think is possible. This is when your attitude "kicks" in. If you as a parent approach your own challenges with a positive attitude, believing in yourself and believing that you can do it, then your kids will see this and react in the same way when they are in similar situations. They also need to see that you can't always solve all your problems on your own, and that often others are needed to solve the problem too. Let them hear how you ask questions and work with others in a positive way.

Second: a student needs to learn the **basic "question solving" skills**. First teach them to look for the right question(s) to ask. They need to learn techniques on how to approach a challenge and be armed with a set of skills they can refer back to, so that they can find the right question. Once the question is known then their other skills will help them. A strong skill set in this area is transferable to many types of situations. If kids are given opportunities to use their problem-solving skills in a variety of combinations, then they will learn how to approach any type of new challenge without fear. Another fact that becomes apparent to them very quickly is that they won't be able to solve all their problems/questions on their own, and that is OK. They will learn that they will need to work with others, and that working with others, as a team member, is crucial to success. Learning to depend on others at times, and learning that others need to depend on you too is important. We are not alone in this world and it isn't just about "me".

Third: the fear of a challenge. If the challenge seems too great, many of us will stop in our tracks and freeze, or turn around and go back; or worse, just ignore or avoid the situation. You need to set realistic expectations for your child, but make them tough enough that your child will be stretched just a bit. I believe that God gives us challenges in life so that we are the best person that we can be. In the classroom, and at home, it is important that we continue to challenge children.

Our main focus with math problems at Spirit of Math is not just to improve math skills. We want kids to develop the skills necessary to deal with difficult situations. Using math as the means to do this is very effective. Learning how to get kids to work on their own and with their peers without telling them how to do everything is our teachers' challenge.

Your expectations and your attitude are crucial. Challenging kids takes courage, self-confidence, and confidence in your kids' abilities.

## Resources for Parents

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### The Society for Quality Education [www.societyforqualityeducation.org](http://www.societyforqualityeducation.org)

This is a terrific site as a resource for parents interested in the progress of education. This organization is independently funded and consequently is able to do independent research and highlight positive progress in education without a political agenda. Their research is comprehensive. They have a terrific newsletter that is a "must" resource for parents who want to keep on top of Canadian education. In addition they have a beginner's reading program based on phonics that can be downloaded free of charge at [www.societyforqualityeducation.org/stairway.html](http://www.societyforqualityeducation.org/stairway.html). (K. Langen)

The following comes directly from their website:

*The Society for Quality Education is a charitable non-profit organization whose mission is to provide the facts arising from research about quality education to policy makers, legislators, educators and the public. We maintain a particular focus on the positive consequences of the introduction of market-like forces in education including **charter schools**, parental choice, education tax credits, and vouchers.*

*Do you want to hear the latest about school choice - as it happens? Would you like to stay in touch with SQE - without always having to check our web-site? You can sign up to receive occasional e-mail information updates and notification of newsletter publication and other events by clicking [here](#).*

*The Society for Quality Education is generously supported by grants from the Donner Canadian Foundation and the W. Garfield Weston Foundation.*

**We welcome any other suggestions from other parents.**

## Campus Happenings

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### New Campuses

We are excited to announce that two new campuses will be offering classes for the 2007-2008 school year:

**Markham East** – Campus Owners Mohammad Rezai and Ramzan Khuwaja

Location: Markham Community Church, 9329 McCowan Road (at 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue)

Please call (905) 642-0900 for class schedules and registration details

**Don Mills** – Campus Owners Kaynan Anshur and Nimo Hussein

Please call (416) 291-1330 for class schedules and registration details

## Richmond Hill South Campus

Our Richmond Hill South classes will be moving to a new day and location for the 2007-2008 school year. Classes will be held on Wednesday evenings at St. Matthews United Church, 333 Crosby Avenue (near Major Mackenzie Road and Bayview Avenue). For class schedules or registration information, please contact the SMS corporate office at (416) 223-1985 or visit our web site.

## Corporate Campus Registrations – Toronto, Thornhill, Richmond Hill South

Registration is on-going at 120A Willowdale Avenue during normal office hours. On Monday evenings, registrations will be accepted at Newtonbrook United Church (53 Cummer Avenue) between 4:30 pm and 6:30 pm. On Thursday May 3<sup>rd</sup> and Thursday May 10<sup>th</sup>, registrations will be accepted at Castlefield Christian Fellowship (27 Castlefield Avenue) between 4:30 pm and 7:00 pm. Please call our office at (416) 223-1985 if you have any questions.

## National Mathematics Competitions

This has been a busy time of year for national math competitions at all of our campuses. **Brampton** campus hosted a competition preparation day on Saturday March 24<sup>th</sup>, which was attended by 43 students, including many non-SMS students from their community. They were also a host site for the **Canadian Math Kangaroo Contest** on Sunday March 25<sup>th</sup>, with 39 participants.

Each of the other campuses were sites for the **Mathematica** competitions on Wednesday March 28<sup>th</sup>. Over 150 SMS students wrote the Byron-Germain (Gr 4), Fibonacci (Gr 5), Pythagoras (Gr 6), Euler (Gr 7) and Lagrange (Gr 8) competitions at our **Mississauga West, Markham, Brampton** and **Toronto** campuses.

Congratulations to all those students who participated in these events!

## Globe and Mail Article

On Monday, February 12, the Globe and Mail ran a story about Dr. Nima Arkani-Hamed, a Harvard professor and one of the foremost theoretical physicists of the time, with my father Charlie Ledger and Spirit of Math. If you missed the article, you may want to look it up on the Globe and Mail website. The name of the article is "Master of the Universes Shakes up World of Physics". The reporter is Anthony Reinhart. Dr. Hamed was a student of Spirit of Math and is an incredibly strong proponent of what is happening in the Spirit of Math classes. It was a true pleasure to meet him and hear his stories of his time with Mr. Ledger. He said that his time learning in a Spirit of Math class was "an amazing atmosphere not replicated until late into graduate level at college". We are hoping that he will be able to come and speak to SMS students in the near future. (K. Langen)

## New Class Offerings

Each of our current campuses will be expanding their course offerings for the 2007–2008 school year. Please refer to your campus' schedule for times and locations.

**Toronto** will be offering a Grade 12 level Senior Problem Solving course

**Richmond Hill South** will be offering Grades 5 and 6

**Brampton** will be offering Grades 7 and 8

**Mississauga West** will be offering Grades 7 and 8

**Markham** will be offering Grade 7

**Winnipeg** will be offering Grade 7

## Job Opportunities

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Due to expansion, several Spirit of Math campuses are looking for new teachers for full-time and/or part-time positions. If you or someone you know would be interested in joining our team, please send a cover letter and resume to [jobs@spiritofmath.com](mailto:jobs@spiritofmath.com). Only those applicants who fit our requirements will be contacted.

## And then there's...

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### Drill Books

Spirit of Math<sup>®</sup> 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. 22