



NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS

Contents

Dates to Remember

Kim's Korner

Students' Accomplishments

Campus Happenings

Resources for Parents

And then there's...

Dates to Remember

Lesson 16 **Report Cards** sent home

Christmas Holidays: December 22 to January 5

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

Ontario SMS March Break: March 11 to March 25

Manitoba SMS Spring Break: April 10

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:

David Dai, a graduate of the Spirit of Math program and currently an assistant teacher in one of our Calculus classes, earned a scholarship for “Embracing a Senior”. This scholarship, offered through the United Way, involves a series of interviews with a member of the senior community to understand their lifestyle and unique challenges they experience.

Nicola Yang, a Calculus student at SMS was recognized at an awards ceremony last month for earning the 2nd highest grade in her year at UTS.

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

Resources for Parents

Sources to Search for Good Programs

City Parent - newspaper found at public library and other public places where kids hang out

Help! I've Got Kids - book containing categorized information on after-school programs.

Local Community Newspapers

Resources for Parents Continued...

The Globe and Mail often has upcoming events

Toronto.ca/kids

The Perimeter Institute in Waterloo - a think tank with cool Public Outreach programs

The ROM, Ontario Science Centre, Art Gallery of Ontario, Zoo ... members of most get newsletters and check their web sites...

The National Film Board - same as above

Thank you Marnie Landon-Brace for submitting these suggestions.

We welcome any other suggestions from other parents.

Kim's Korner

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

Do you know what is available for your child?

Searching for the right educational program for your child can be the most complicated decision you will make with some of the most far-reaching consequences. These consequences can be extremely positive if your decision is the right one for your child.

Understanding how your child learns, solves problems and makes decisions is your responsibility and an educator's job. It is also a parent's job to ensure that their child is provided with proper education that will train a brain to work efficiently and effectively. You want your child to learn the skills needed to open doors to their future. A parent is thus responsible for finding the right program and effective educators. A strong marriage of the two – a solid program with good teaching, will give the greatest benefit to your son or daughter.

Let's first examine the teaching. This starts with the teachers. One of the key ingredients to a good teacher is their expectations of students. If they expect students to do well, the teacher's perceptions of the students' abilities rises and the children's own self-image is enhanced. You want to find a teacher or set of teachers who work together to build a positive environment that does not limit a child's intellectual growth. Perceptions influence the way a brain works. If a child is told that he/she is very smart and can learn easily then the child will more likely respond appropriately. If a person has a negative perception of themselves then they will also act it out. **Look for a teaching environment where students are encouraged to perform at peak efficiency, and expect positive results.**

Content and how it encourages different ways of learning is a key to a good program. In Spirit of Math the content was chosen to expose students to different ways of learning. Charles Ledger (2004) stated this as follows: "... **content must exemplify ways of learning, for these are more important than knowledge about any particular subject of investigation.** Knowledge of methods makes it possible for a person to continue learning, and to undertake inquiries on their own. Every discipline has its own methods that allow for the simplification of learning. A key element in the Spirit of Math approach is the emphasis on group, or team, work – developing an ability to work with others, an understanding of the great advantages available through a team effort, building up respect for others' ability and a realistic understanding of one's own strengths and weaknesses."

Finally, materials must help a teacher impart a sense of the extraordinary and surprising so that learning becomes a continuous adventure. An imaginative use of materials generates habits of thought that will enable a student to respond to changes in knowledge and belief with zest instead of dismay. Many young people have lost their fear of mathematics, and have found that they approach the learning of mathematics with excitement simply because they have mastered the drills! Students develop a sense of meaning and value simply from being challenged in appealing ways.

Kim's Korner Continued...

When looking for the best program for your son or daughter, do your research:

1. Listen to others.
2. Find out what other concerned parents are doing.
3. **Look at the progress of those kids in the program.** Watch the children who go to various programs. Are those kids succeeding? How do they conduct themselves around adults and around other children? How are they doing at school? Have their parents noticed differences in them since beginning the program? What types of differences? Is it that their child is getting better marks, or is the child both getting better marks and also able to apply their knowledge in other areas too? Do they have a better understanding? Are they self-confident, motivated, etc.?
4. **Look at the kids in the program.** Your child is going to be spending time with these children in the classroom and associating themselves with them. They learn not only the material taught in class, but how to act, what is important in life, and what values others hold.
5. **Examine the people who will be working with your child.** Do they exemplify a person who can be a good role model?
6. Don't just get caught up with the "in thing" as it might not be right for your son or daughter.
7. Read educational columns and get to know those journalists who aren't frightened of stating their fundamental beliefs.
8. Ask good educational authorities. Apparently someone at OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education) has been recommending Spirit of Math. You might want to ask an educator there for further information regarding other programs.

Become knowledgeable about what educational programs are available and how they have been developed. Ask the following questions:

Do they have a proven record?

Who created it and how was it created?

Who is teaching it? What is the training required for the teachers?

Campus Happenings

Winnipeg

The Winnipeg Campus is ready to grow! We had a very exciting Open House ("Buddy Day"), where our students had the opportunity to 'Bring a Buddy' to class. Everyone enjoyed the classes and the spooky Halloween math problems and, of course, some treats as well. Congratulations to Kang Hyoun, a grade one SMS student, who guessed that there were EXACTLY 159 jellybeans in the jar!

It was also nice for our students to have the chance to 'show off' the work they have done this year. I am very excited about how quickly our students are progressing under the guidance of our fantastic teachers and their very dedicated parents. Thank you to all involved at Winnipeg SMS for your support and enthusiasm!

Tiffany McGregor
Acting Principal, Winnipeg Campus



Grade 3 students at Winnipeg campus working on their drills

Campus Happenings Continued...

Toronto

It has been a very busy start to the academic year at the Toronto Corporate Campuses. In addition to our four established campuses, we have been running two classes each evening in the newly renovated classroom at our Willowdale Head Office. Also, we are very excited to be offering classes on Saturdays this year at our Richmond Hill campus in the Langstaff Community Centre. Currently, we are offering Grades 2–4 at this location, with a Grade 1 class on the way shortly!

On Saturday September 30th, many of our Grade 6 students enjoyed a very full day of preparations for the upcoming entrance exams to several private schools in the area. Good luck to you all as you continue to prepare for this important day!

This past week the Hallowe'en jelly bean contest took place. Here are the winners from each grade:

Grade 1/2: Sarah Kabani (1N), Braeden Kwan (1E), Frederick Boyd (2E), Adrian Yip (2R)
Grade 3/4: Pascale Tsai (3E), Orli Silverberg (4E)
Grade 5/6: Macaulay Sze-To (6E)
Grade 7/8: Erika Tsang (7W2) , Razak Pirani (7C), Victor Foo (8W)
Grade 9/10/Calculus: Bernard Ho (9W), Yuhan Zhuang (10N)

Personally, it has been a true pleasure to visit many of our classes and get to know so many of our exceptional students and their parents during these first two months of the school year. I look forward to seeing more great work and endless enthusiasm in our classes in the coming months!

Joshua Markham,
Vice-Principal, Corporate Campuses

Mississauga West

The Mississauga West campus also held a jelly bean counting contest. Congratulations to the winners:

Grades 1, 3, and 5: Amir Sooknarine (Gr. 5)
Grades 2, 4 and 6: Austin Duong (Gr. 6)



Grade 1 students at Mississauga West campus taking up the Problem of the Week

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