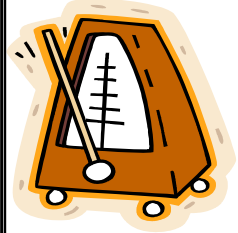


The Conservatory Lab Charter School Newsletter November 2007



Making Minds Sing

“Nobody has ever measured, not even poets, how much the heart can hold.” - Zelda Fitzgerald

From the CLCS Principal, Mr. Mark Jacobson

Dear Families,

My last two letters to you have been about developing a strong partnership between you and us.

In staying on the theme of family involvement, I'd like to ask for your help. My goal is for every student in our school to achieve, to reach academic success. I want to see every child achieve in reading and math at least at grade level or higher. We are doing everything in our power to get them there in school. I would like to know how we could help you to help them get there as well.

My idea is to start with conversations between you and us. I would like to hear about your child's life outside of school. I'd like to hear about the struggles and successes in his or her life. From that conversation I hope to create a strategy with you that will support a greater level of learning for your child/our student. This conversation is not about us judging you. It is about learning, building trust, and helping kids.

I, along with other interested folks here, are willing to come to meet with you. This could be at your home or a local coffee shop, library, or other convenient location. If you are interested in meeting with me and possibly other, I would very much welcome the opportunity. If even a few of you step forward it would be a great start. Please send me a note or call to express your willingness. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mark Jacobson
Principal

Important Dates In November

Thursday, November 8th
Parent Teacher
Organization Meeting
(at school)
6-7.30 pm

Thursday, November 8th
School Advisory
Council
(at school)
4.30-6 pm

Monday, November 12th
No school

Tuesday, November 13th
CLCS Board Meeting
4.30-6.30

**Wednesday, November
14th**
Early Release Day School
is out at 11.45

Thursday, November
15th
Family Potluck
(see page 2 for details)

November 21st-28th
Thanksgiving Break
NO SCHOOL

**Wednesday, November
28th**
Early Release Day
School is out at 11.45

***Reminder-No school November 21-26
Thanksgiving Break!***



Family Potluck
November 15th, 6 pm to 8 pm.
Brighton Allston Congregational
Church United Church of Christ
404 Washington Street
Brighton, MA 02135
(More details about the event
will come soon!)

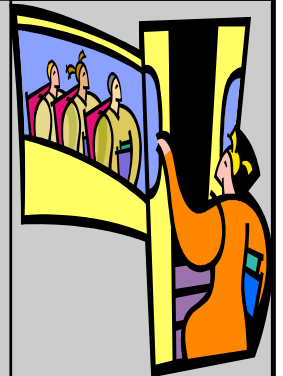
The next PTO meeting of the 2007-2008 school year is
Thursday, November 8th, from 6:00 to 7:30 pm *at the*
school!

We welcome one and all be a part of the PTO!
(Child care is provided.)

The CLCS Enrichment Fund

Would you like to financially support the CLCS community?
The money will go towards academically enriching activities, such as
fieldtrips!

Please send contributions to:
CLCS Enrichment Fund
25 Arlington Street
Brighton, MA 02135



**CLCS invites its parents and family members to join the Parent and Teacher
Organization (PTO).**

The purpose of the PTO is to:

- **Assist in communication between the school administration and PTO.**
- **Help build a supportive community between parents, administrators, teachers, and children.**
- **Support parents in being effective parents and partners in our children's education.**
- **Assist and work as a team with teachers and administrators to educate our children.**

Interested in learning more? Please call Staverne Miller at 617.361.3786
or Kate True at 617.983.4058. They can answer your questions!

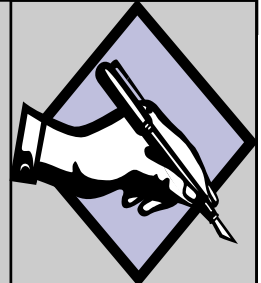


In the Classrooms

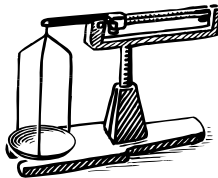


The **KINDERGARTEN** has been very busy in the past few weeks. October was full of lots of learning and fun. The kindergarten class gave their premier performance during the morning assembly. Our Disco ABCs seemed to be a hit and we had so much fun! We have been studying pumpkins, investigating their weight, circumference, and counting seeds. Kindergarten welcomed many families for art projects and a very exciting Halloween party. We are looking forward to November and we hope to have some more performances so keep on the look out!

November has been a busy month for **FIRST GRADE**. The students have been embracing the new writing program this year and concluded the first unit this month with an Author's Celebration. The Celebration included a Reading Circle and a "special sparkling cider" toast for all the learning the students' have been doing as writers. The students have already begun a new unit and will look forward to another Publishing Party with new surprises at the end of this unit. If you see a First Grader, ask them how their life as an author is going and what they have learned that writers always do.



The **SECOND GRADE** is getting very involved in our heritage study. Each week we focus on a different country during co-teaching. We learn a song or singing game from that country and see a slide show. The children reflect on what they are learning about the countries of origin of each in our class. This month we will be starting a new science unit - Balance and Motion. The hands-on activities will be engaging and educational. It should be lots of fun as well. In writing we are focusing on small moments in our lives and stretching out our stories using details. Base 10 and place value are a big focus of our math at this time and of course, we are reading, reading, reading.



The **THIRD GRADERS** had a very productive October. They explored three different Native American cultures through stories, slideshows, discussions, and hands-on activities. The class created tepees and totem poles which will be on display prior to Thanksgiving. They also tackled concepts such as multiplication, nouns, compound words, and base words. Reading strategies such as evaluating, questioning, and inferring were also taught. For the month of November the class will focus on money, place value, the Pilgrims and Wampanoag's beliefs and community, plural nouns, contractions, and revisit reading strategies such as summarizing, main ideas, evaluating, and predicting.

The **FIFTH GRADE** continues to be filled with enthusiasm for learning. In math, students are learning about factors, multiples, and divisibility rules. Students are thrilled that we've started studying the solar system. We have a project/performance piece coming up soon. We continue to work on reading strategies in our reading groups. Our current theme is "Voices of the Revolution," which allows students to read pieces about the American Revolution prior to our unit in social studies. Students are also doing a great deal of independent reading. Parents, please make sure your children are reading every night at home for at least thirty minutes. Our new writing program is getting a "thumbs up" from our fifth grade writers. Many of them are saying that our step-by-step lessons and new way of looking at writing is really helping them to develop as writers. I agree! Finally, in our LTM co-teach, students are writing folktales, having studied folktales and song tales.

Parents, we would love it if you could donate healthy snacks to our class. The longer school day and bus commute make for a long day, and we'd like to keep the kids energized.



Around the School



OT Tip of the Month

By Ellie Meyer, Occupational Therapist

I am very excited this year to be working collaboratively in kindergarten and first grade with the teaching staff to create fine motor activities that will compliment classroom learning. Based on “The Fine Motor Olympics” by Marcia P. Bridgeman, OTR/L, children will develop good hand skills which will serve them well in all aspects of their daily life including tying their shoes, coloring, writing, and playing the violin. Good shoulder stability is needed to position and support the arm and hand for fine motor tasks. The shoulder, the joint where the arm attaches to the body, provides both stability and mobility to the arm. Development of shoulder stability begins as the infant props on the elbows when lying on his or her stomach. It continues to develop with propping on extended arms, followed by getting up onto all fours (hands and knees), and then crawling. Signs of decreased stability at school include; a student with shoulders hunched up close to their ears, a student who holds their arms close to their body while doing a fine motor task, and/or a student who holds his or her pencil too tightly, limiting fine hand movements. Activities performed on a vertical surface such as an easel, white board, or bulletin board help to improve shoulder stability. Specific shoulder strengthening exercises like arm circles, jumping jacks, windmills and wheel barrel walks are also great.



A Quick Note from Annie Sevelius, Assistant Principal

A few weekends ago, I had the privilege of joining families at Ms. Janice Wood’s house. We all gathered together as part of the CLCS’s Community Nights. Ms. Wood is a learning specialist in our school and graciously opened her home to me and other families in the West Roxbury/Roslindale area of Boston. Over the days of October 25th-28th, these types of CLCS community gatherings were taking place all over the city. I hope that you were able to make the event that happened in your area.

There were 5 families that came to Ms. Wood’s house. I went with my daughter and I was glad to speak with families during the afternoon while the children ran around the front yard playing together. Usually I meet with families under much more formal circumstances in my office. And I hardly ever see students outside of the school! It was so nice to just sit together and talk, not parent to Assistant Principal or Assistant Principal to student, but just as parents, friends, and people with a love for our school community.

I spoke with another parent who hosted the same kind of event at her Hyde Park home. She spoke of the one other family that joined her for the Community Night event. She said that though the turn out was not very high, the family that came was awesome! Together we felt very strongly that this event should happen next year, too, and that slowly we can build up excitement and that next year more family’s will join us.

It is that hopefulness and willingness to try again that is the true spirit of this school and our families. People opened their homes to others and some folks decided to visit. I hope that as time goes by we will feel the school walls tumble down and that we will see that school happens all around us all the time– learning is everywhere and we are all ready to support each other. See you soon.

(A special thanks to Ms. Wood’s mom who was a delightful hostess!)



Around the School

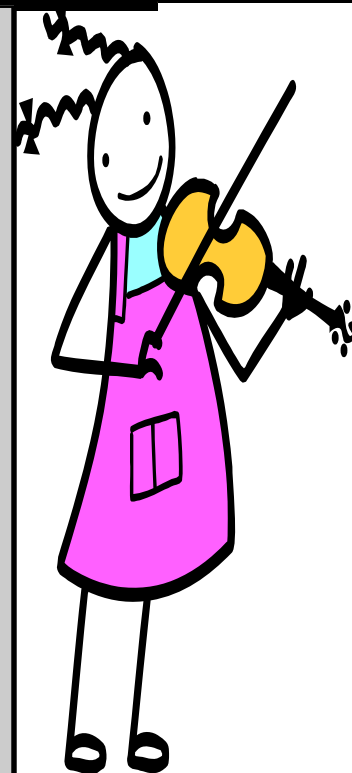


VIOLIN This month we will begin sending home violins to children who started this year. This is how the process will work:

A violin teacher will call home to tell you that your child is ready to bring home the violin, and to schedule a time for a family member to come to CLCS to see a lesson and meet with the violin teacher.

At the meeting, we will show you how much your child has learned about the violin, talk about how to take care of the violin, and go over our expectations for practice at home. We will let you know what days the violin has to come back to school for private and group lessons. Finally, we will make sure that the violin is signed out to the family, and then your child can bring the violin home that day.

We will make phone calls home once a student shows us that he or she can remember how to hold the violin and bow, take care of the violin and bow, and can be responsible for practicing at home and bringing the violin binder on his or her violin day. Please be patient- we have found that sending home a violin too early can lead to frustration, bad practicing habits, and even damage to the violin. We want to make sure that your family has a positive experience with the violin and practicing.



MUSIC WITH MS. HAKIM

The Kindergarteners have been singing songs like 'Big Pig' and 'Let Us Chase the Squirrel' to help them learn the difference between high and low. They have also been playing singing games such as 'Our Gallant Ship', 'Listen, Listen' and 'Little Red Caboose' to help them keep a steady beat with their bodies, as well as on instruments. Steady beat is one of the most fundamental concepts a child needs to learn in order to be able to read and write music.

The 1st grade is beginning to read, write and decode simple rhythms. They know how to keep a beat, and are now working on writing the rhythms that belong within each beat. Ask your 1st grader to show you how to write the 'heartbeat and rhythm' to songs like 'Miss White', 'Closet Key' and '2, 4, 6, 8'.

The 2nd grade has just learned how to read a simple melodic pattern that they have been practicing. In solfege, it is: la, do; and in note names it can be 'e and g' or 'a and c'. They can listen to a song and find out where this particular pattern is. The next step will be to write it down on the music staff!

The 3rd grade is working on some more complicated rhythms. They are learning how to write rhythms in the time signature 6/8. Songs in this time signature have a 'lilt' and you can easily rock back and forth to them as you count '1 2 3 4 5 6'. Ask your 3rd grader to write down songs in 6/8 like 'Old Raggy' and 'Oh My, Fish in the Sky'.

The 4th grade is working on a similar skill as the 2nd grade. While the 2nd graders are learning to hear, read and write melodic patterns with 2 notes, the 4th graders are now able to hear and read patterns with 3 notes. In solfege, this pattern is made up of: so, la, do. And in note names we use: 'd e g' and 'g a c'. They are learning this skill through songs like 'Band of Angels' and 'Chickama Chickama Craney Crow'.

The 5th grade is also working on the time signature 6/8. They are able to read and write these rhythms, and will soon compose their own patterns and rhymes in this time signature. They have been working very hard on learning the song 'Charlie's Neat'. They will be performing this in the Winter Concert, and will be playing on instruments, singing and dancing as well.

*****Beginning November 5, I will be out of school. I am getting married, and upon my return after Thanksgiving, I will no longer be 'Ms. Hakim'. My new last name will be Mrs. Athanasiou (A-thon-a-SEE-you). It sounds difficult, but many of the kids are mastering it already! And if it's a real tongue-twister, feel free to say 'Mrs. A'! Taking over my classes will be Ms. Rotolo. Many of the students know Ms. Rotolo from having Learning Through Music classes with her. They will be in great hands! *****