

THE OBSERVATORY

Cheers to 2017!

Calendar Highlights

- JAN 19** Winter Raffle Begins
- JAN 22** Prospective Student Open House
- JAN 23** "Emotional Intelligence," Janis Keyser at Van Meter 7pm
- JAN 25** "Unlocking Creativity," Dr. Scott Barry Kaufman at Yavneh Day School 9am (Common Ground Speaker Series \$20 at the door)
- APR 30** May Faire

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A new year, a new beginning. I've always appreciated the opportunity the beginning of the year brings to reflect and set a goal for the coming year. Traditionally, these have been expressed in the form of resolutions, but in recent years, I've come to prefer the term "intentions" instead. Unlike resolutions which tie goals to a particular timeframe and often fade to the background before the year gets fully underway, intentions invite us to remain mindful moment-to-moment, day-to-day of the desires that are closest to our hearts. If we slip up, as we will of course — we're human, we can take a deep breath, remind ourselves of our intention and step into the next moment.

When we go through a day wearing our intentions, it doesn't matter what we are doing, our actions begin to take on a different quality. "Kindness" may extend from how we treat our child to allowing room for the driver who wants to pull into our lane. "Adventurous" may lead to saying 'yes' to more invitations outside of your comfort zone and go on to inspire the choice of different menu items, music or clothing than is your norm. "Focused" may not only keep us from following link after link on the internet, but also prompt us to give our children our full attention. You get the idea; intentions can help us change in small ways that bring us closer to how we want to live.

The new year also brings us to the halfway point in our school calendar. January will be a busy month with open house (please tell your friends!), the start of priority registration and Janis Keyser's talk on Monday, the 23rd. Board members are starting to recruit members for next year so if you think you might be interested, let Elizabeth Wallace, our board chair, know.

I'll see you on the 23rd; until then, enjoy the rain-washed outdoors!

Love, Teacher Leslie



MOUNTAIN SCHOOL PRESENTS THE

Winter Raffle

January 19th - February 17th
Tickets are \$10 each or 5 for \$40

Public Drawing will be held on March 7th
@ the Board Meeting

CHOOSE A PRIZE!



SPLENDID MAUI VACATION

Enjoy a one week stay at the Aston Mahana at Kaanapali in a premium two bedroom (4-6 people), two bath oceanfront condominium in beautiful Maui, Hawaii. Amenities include: direct oceanfront view, floor-to-ceiling windows, private lanai, pool, hot tub, outside garden BBQ, and one mile of beach only steps away. Located within walking distance of Duke's newest location, grocery stores and unique coffee shops. Guests rave about this ideally-suited Maui condo! Prize includes **\$1,000 Airfare Stipend for the airline of your choice.**

Restrictions: Dates available year round and must be coordinated with donor. Travel must occur by February 28, 2018.



PICK YOUR APPLE

Choose yourself a shiny, new Apple product! With a **\$1000** shopping budget, the winner can select from several models of the iPad, iPhone, or the Apple Watch. So many amazing choices—what will your Apple prize be?

Restrictions: Model must not exceed \$1000 in value. If contract is required, the winner is responsible for contract.

Fundraising: Fall, Winter & Spring

Thuan Pham, Fundraising Chair

Fall Wrap-Up: Upcoming Buy-A-Spots Still Have Space!

- Come relax with Afternoon Candlelight Yoga! This Vinyasa Flow yoga class will be led by fellow Mountain School mom Amy Moreland, on Sunday, January 22nd from 3-4:30pm at the beautiful Breathe Los Gatos studio. For beginning to advanced students; prenatal gals & anyone with injuries welcome. Cost: \$20 per person.
- Dad's Poker Night is coming up Saturday, March 11th at the Negrini House in Los Gatos. Mountain School men can bond over cards and poker chips, pizza, beer and whiskey, and an outdoor campfire. No tournament experience is necessary. Mommies will stay home and put the kids to bed--get ready to have some fun! Poker buy-in is \$50 per person.
- Teacher Leslie and Teacher Sally will lead a special hike in the Santa Cruz Mountains on Saturday, April 22nd at 8:30am. Be restored by our wonderful community and your time away, and enjoy the beautiful scenery. They will be treating you to a light lunch, then finish the loop around noon and have you back to your family! Cost: \$25 per person.

For more information, please contact Ellie Chou or Thuan Pham via Basecamp

Winter Raffle Is Here!

Winter Raffle tickets will be distributed throughout the classes next week. The Winter Raffle runs from January 19th until February 19th, so please start selling those tickets! Tickets are \$10 each, or 5 for \$40.

Each family is expected to sell 25 tickets, but please do try to sell more! If you know you can sell more than 25, please let us or your Class Fundraising Liaison know so we can get them to you ASAP. As an incentive, you will receive 2 free raffle entries for every 25 tickets you sell. The top selling class will win a spaghetti dinner at the schoolhouse! More info will be included with your packets, which will be distributed starting January 19th.

Big thanks to Emily Liu-Elizabeth and Kuni Shira for the coordinating of this huge fundraising event, and all the Fundraising Liaisons who will help support their efforts in the coming weeks.

Dennis Anzano (with some updates from Katie Bernacchi) created a wonderful Winter Raffle Media flyer that you can post or email to your friends/family. It is attached [here](#) for easy download and use, and can also be found on Basecamp.

Spring Planning: BBQ Save the Date, and Seeking Donations!

This fun-filled family event will feature homemade BBQ, carnival games, music, fundraising activities, Buy-A-Spots, the sale of Class Projects, and of course, the beloved dance around the Maypole. This is the event of the year--not to be missed! Mark your calendars for Sunday, April 30th and stay tuned for more information soon from our Spring BBQ Coordinators: Britta Kinkeldej, Jennifer Axelrad, and Marisa Mibach.

The Spring BBQ is also our final fundraising event of the year! If you have handcrafted speciality items (needlework, woodwork, artwork), wine, gift cards, restaurant certificates, local services (spa, salon, fitness classes) or special event passes that you could donate for fundraising purposes, please contact Marisa Mibach at marisa.mibach@gmail.com.

Parent Programming

Programs Co-Chairs: Jordan Emmart (Ezra 3s) & Patricia Darby (Ben 3s)

The Parent Programming schedule is taking shape! Below you'll find a list of our upcoming speakers and mini-courses. The attendance of two mini-courses is a requirement of the school. Watch Basecamp in the coming weeks for finalized dates/times, more thorough descriptions, and SignUpGenius links to reserve your spot.

JANUARY

1/23: Janis Keyser will speak to our entire school community at 7:30pm in the Van Meter multi-purpose room. She will discuss emotional intelligence (our kids' and our own). Before she speaks, classes will meet around/ outside the room for a quick 30-minute circle meeting. *Required*

1/25: Dr. Scott Barry Kaufman will be speaking at 9am at Yavneh Day School in Los Gatos. He will present "Wired To Create: Lessons in Unlocking Ingenuity" offering parents ideas to help child develop flexible thinking, and teachers tips for acknowledging the many pathways in which students can succeed. This is part of the Common Ground Speaker Series, a consortium of schools who sponsor speakers to come to the Bay Area, which offers a range of experts speaking on topics for all stages of childhood and parenting. Tickets are \$20 at the door - sign in with one of us (we'll be decked out in Mountain School gear).

FEBRUARY

2/1: Songs to Sing with your Children with Gramma Phyllis, 7pm at the Schoolhouse

2/2: Child Safety with KidPower, 7pm in the Van Meter Multipurpose Room

2/8: Using Stories to Overcome Struggles with Mindy Dirks, 7pm at the Schoolhouse

2/27: DIY Household Cleaning Products with Adrienne Cox, Time and Location TBA

APRIL

4/13: Ideas for Summer Adventures with Santa Clara County Parks

4/19: Using Stories to Overcome Struggles with Mindy Dirks, 7pm at the Schoolhouse

4/27: DIY Personal Products with Adrienne Cox, Time and Location TBA

Date TBD: Stick Horses with Teachers Karyn and Jan

Date TBD: Best Preschool Books for Summer with Valerie Lewis, Hicklebees Bookstore

Date TBD: Developmentally Appropriate Toys with Teacher Jane

(April dates will be finalized soon and we will let you know about these dates ASAP.)

We look forward to seeing you all soon!



Our School Library

Courtney Boitano, Librarian

"Childhood has its own way of seeing, thinking, and feeling, and nothing is more foolish than to try to substitute ours for theirs."
- Jean- Jacques Rousseau as quoted in *The Hurried Child*.



As January gets underway, it is a time of fresh starts and new beginnings and of looking ahead to the next year. Before we know it, registrations are due for the 2017-2018 school year and you may be thinking about your child's development. In our parent library, we have so many books about reading, child development, milestones, and *The Hurried Child* by David Elkind, Ph.D. is among them. In *The Hurried Child*, Elkind mentions why this happens in our society, the role of media in rushing along child development, and offers some strategies about what we can do about this.

Take advantage of our parent library and check out this among other fabulous books and take time to slow down.



Prospective Families Open House

Invite your friends to meet teachers and families, tour the school, and see what makes Mountain School a unique educational experience for children and their parents.

Saturday, January 22, 11am-1pm

19601 Black Road, Los Gatos, 95033

www.lgsons.com and info@lgsons.com

Teacher Profile

Carolyn Mulcahy, Teacher 3s



I grew up moving around due to my father's job as a Chief in the Navy. The coastal places I lived the longest were Seville, Spain and South Carolina. In Spain I spent most of my childhood on the beach. In South Carolina I ran around in the woods with my younger brother playing with sticks and building forts. So naturally, I love California because I get the best of both worlds here. I spent some summers visiting my mother in Washington State where we camped in the beautiful Pacific Northwest Redwoods. Other summers were spent in Iowa with my paternal grandparents. My grandfather had a cabin in the woods with no electricity or indoor plumbing, just an old water pump, and an outhouse. We slept outside by the fire on a cot. We fished and ate foods from his garden. My stepmother was raised on a working farm in Virginia. So we spent some summers there helping raise chickens and learning to cook southern dishes. We came to California when I was in High School for my dad's second career at Lockheed Martin. I feel very lucky that I grew up at a slower pace; in natural surroundings and that I experienced such wonder and diversity at an early age. So you can see why Mountain School feels like home to me.

I have been working with children as long as I can remember. I decided I wanted to be a teacher in high school after I volunteered in a kindergarten class as a teacher's assistant and tutor for three years. From there I went on to Gavilan College in Gilroy where I received a Children's Center Permit. The certification is now known as a Director Level Child Development Teaching Credential. I studied child development from birth to adolescence and received an Associates Degree in Liberal Studies at West Valley College in Saratoga. I'm currently a full-time student at San Jose State University. I'll graduate in May with a BA in psychology. I taught preschool, kindergarten and worked as a camp counselor for school age children before I became the Director of several preschools, after school programs and summer camps throughout the South Bay and Peninsula. I was very involved in NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) and PAEYC (Peninsula chapter). Through these organizations I became a mentor/trainer to other Teachers and Directors and spoke at some conferences and other schools.

In 2000 I decided I wanted to make a career change so I worked in Property Management until 2010. I thought about retuning to work with children and families for years but I couldn't find the right school that fit my philosophy. I visited and observed at numerous schools before I finally found Mountain School. I sent my philosophy statement to Teacher Jane, who was the Director at the time. She invited me to come and observe even though there were no openings at the time. I meet and followed Teacher Marie and Sharon around at Savannah Channel and then went to the schoolhouse where I witnessed Teacher Angie work her magic in the three's class. Parents were so warm and welcoming and I could feel the closeness and warmth immediately. At the creek a child came up to me with a bug in hand and said, "This bug has family. We don't kill bugs because the mommy and daddy will miss it." I fell in love at that moment. Unfortunately there were no openings at the time, but I kept in touch with Jane until the Saturday two's class became available, and the rest is history. I began as an assistant in summer school and as a lead teacher in 2012. Everyone made me feel welcome as I learned to be a teacher again. I feel that I am still learning and growing as a person everyday since I returned to "work" that I am passionate about. Children are the best teachers, mirroring back to us what we give to them.

Kindergarten Bread

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups warm water
- 3/4 cup honey
- 3 tbsp baker's yeast
- 1/4 cup oil
- 5 cups whole wheat flour (in Betty and Anna's classrooms, 1 cup of this was from wheat berries, millet or barley the class ground together)
- 3-4 cups additional flour

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the warm water, honey and baker's yeast.
2. Set aside and allow the yeast to soften and bubble, 5-10 minutes. (Betty and Anna sung a little yeast song with the children, or took them for a short walk to pass this time.)
3. Add the 5 cups of whole wheat flour (1 cup of this could be freshly ground wheat berries, millet, or barley.) Beat by hand with a wooden spoon for at least 100 strokes. If the dough is not beaten sufficiently, the bread will be heavy.
4. Stir in 2-3 cups more flour-- just enough to make a stiff but manageable dough.

Betty Peck, the founder of Mountain School, was recently honored with inclusion on the "Cooking With Grandmothers" website by Jessica Theroux. <http://www.cookingwithgrandmothers.com>.

For those of you who haven't been fortunate enough to meet Betty — now 95! — I thought reading this delightful profile would serve as an introduction to her magical approach with children that still inspires us. —Leslie

BETTY PECK, 1921 - SARATOGA, CALIFORNIA, USA

Tea at Betty Peck's house is at four-thirty, and it is every day. Green tea, the simple bagged kind, is Betty's favorite and there is always a big, very well brewed pot of it at teatime. Betty provides the tea and inspiration, and I almost always bring the sweets: frosted cupcakes, peanut butter cookies, and chocolate chip ones with ice cream to make sandwiches on the Fourth of July. She likes really, really sweet stuff, and even makes her Christmas ornaments from leftover Haagen-Daz ice cream sticks, spray-painted gold and formed into stars. They are surprisingly elegant; Betty is elegance personified, and everything she touches follows suit.



A big California oak tree shades most of her property in Saratoga, CA, and when you walk up the driveway you enter an enchanted land. It is a relatively small property, littered with crispy leaves the oak has dropped everywhere, and sprinkled throughout with things to delight: mourning doves coo in one corner, a childrens' narrow gauge train runs on its tracks, a regal peacock stands proud in The Great Hall, a small outdoor amphitheater sits ready for a variety of the annual performances, such as May Day when a hundred people dance around the pastel-ribboned pole then eat strawberry shortcake together at 8am.

Betty is a pioneer of holistic early childhood education, specializing in Kindergarten. She taught thousands of kindergarteners during her career, giving children all over northern California a magical and grounded start to their educational life. I met Betty through my dear friend Alec, one of her daughter Anna's former Kindergarten students, who invited me to one of Betty's teatimes. Alec had raved about the Kindergarten Bread he learned to make when he was four, and still makes to this day. I first went to Betty's to learn about this renowned

Kindergarten Bread

(Continued from Previous Page)

5. Sprinkle ½-1 cup of flour over a bread board or other clean surface, and knead the dough until it is smooth and elastic. Sing about kneading as you go!
6. Separate into small balls, about 1/3 to 1/2 cup of dough each.
7. Roll the balls into long strands (each child and adult can do their own). Then cut the strands into the shape of wheat stalks, by making two or three diagonal snips downwards on each side of the top of the dough. To make a sheaf of wheat, place the stalks of wheat next to one another and then on top of one another on a baking sheet. You can wrap place a strand of dough crosswise around the middle to create the bundle effect. For fun, make the shape of small mouse, to put on top.
8. Set aside to rest for 10-15 minutes, and bake in an oven preheated to 350F for 50+ minutes, depending on the size and shape of dough you have



bread, but what unfolded during our dozens of lengthy conversations was Betty's philosophy on learning and life.

In Betty's Kindergarten, everything came back to one of three things: the garden, the body, or the cosmos. Food-- the result of the garden and sustaining of the body-- was therefore a regular topic, and cooking a frequent activity. Earth Eggs (small, warm new potatoes, wrapped in foil, with a knob of butter tucked inside) were hidden on Easter for the children to find, Kindergarten Bread was made weekly, and Angel Food Cake with Betty's Quick Lemon Curd was served whenever there was a birthday to celebrate.

Things developed organically in Betty's Kindergarten out of the wisdom and creativity she found inherent in young children. For me, the Angel Food Cake was the most touching of these stories: One year, one of Betty's sweetest kindergarteners became very ill and was hospitalized. Each day the other Kindergarten children would gather together and draw a card to send her. One day, the little girl passed away. When Betty told the other children of the news she asked them "My dears, what should we do to celebrate the life of this little angel who has been in our midst." They became very quiet and then responded, "Why, we should have an Angel Food Cake and remember all the wonderful things about her." So that is what they did—they ate an Angel Food Cake, Betty creating the world's easiest lemon curd to go along with it. From that day on, whenever there is a birthday to be celebrated in Betty's classroom or home, it is done through cake and curd.

Special stories like this abound from Betty's teaching; however, the mainstay of Betty's classroom cooking was the Kindergarten Bread. Baked weekly, the making of the bread takes children through all the stages of wheat, from kernel to loaf. The children plant the wheat each year, harvest it, grind a small amount to add to the bread, and learn about kneading, rising, and baking, singing songs about the different stages along the way. Each student even practices the letter of the week by forming it with dough (the tactile, three-dimensionality of which has been found to help students with reading and writing skills.) Every little thing in Betty's classroom had its purpose- to show how everything in life is connected. The bread was a delicious, regular example of this.

If you want to make Kindergarten Bread yourself, you can find Betty's recipe here:

<http://www.cookingwithgrandmothers.com/recipes/recipekindergarten-bread/>

They Are Watching Us

Laura McBride, Submitted by Jane Krejci, Teacher Fri 2s

I like this poem by Laura McBride (from the book We Are Called to Rise). It reminds me that it is the little, ordinary things (the way we live our lives) that our children deposit in their memory banks. It is often the small things, rather than the expensive gift or fabulous trip, that resonate with children. They learn by watching us; just as we learn when we observe them at Mt. School.

-Teacher Jane

“It all matters.
That someone turns out the lamp,
picks up the windblown wrapper,
says hello to the invalid,
pays at the unattended lot,
listens to the repeated tales,
folds the abandoned laundry,
plays the game fairly,
tells the story honestly,
wipes the counter,
waits at the yellow,
makes the bed,
tips the maid,
remembers the illness,
congratulates the victor,
accepts the consequences,
takes a stand,
steps up,
offers a hand,
goes first,
goes last,
chooses the small portion,
teaches the child,
tends to the dying,
comforts the grieving,
removes the splinter,
wipes the tear,
directs the lost,
touches the lonely
...is the whole thing.
What is most beautiful is least acknowledged.”



Watercolor Resist with Crayons

<https://www.artforkidshub.com/water-color-resist-with-crayons/>

Water color resist with crayons, is a classic art activity. Meaning, you probably remember doing this project when you were a kid. The great part about this activity (like using rubber cement), it's a great way to show kids how different things react with water color.

Resist, means that the crayon will repel the water color away from it. If you use a white crayon during this activity, your kids eyes may pop out!

MATERIALS

- Paper
- Water Color Paints (preferably dark colors)
- Paint Brush
- Crayons (preferably light color crayons, even white)
- Water Color Resist With Crayons Step by Step

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Draw a picture on the paper with crayons.
2. Now use water color to paint over the entire paper.



Artwork by Hannah & Marissa Tuttle

Employer Gift & Volunteer Matching

Increase your charitable giving by asking your company to match your contributions of money or volunteer time to organizations such as LGSONS.



Many companies will match your volunteer time and monetary donations.

WE NEED A NEW BOAT!

The time has come to replace our beloved boat in front of the schoolhouse. Do you know of a boat preferably wooden and 12-14 feet that is available for donation?

If so, please contact Facilities Chair, Pedro Perez, at 650-421-1997. Thank you!

