

THE OBSERVATORY

“In the Spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.” - Margaret Atwood

Calendar Highlights

FEB 6 - MAR 31 Second Harvest Food + Fund Drive

APR 30 May Fair + Buy-A-Spots Open

MAY 5-7 Spring Camping Trip

CLASS PHOTO SCHEDULE

MAR 17 9:45 Friday 2s

MAR 17 12:30 4/5s

MAR 20 9:45 3/4s

MAR 21 9:45 3s

MAR 22 9:45 Wednesday 2s

APR 1 9:45 Saturday 2s

APR 1 12:45 Saturday PM

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Dear Mountain Schoolers,

This is our last month at the schoolhouse. Creek levels cooperating, we will soon be back outdoors and find ourselves marveling at the growth the children have achieved as we watch them encounter old obstacles with grace and ease. Spring also marks the time of year we ask for your feedback. Our annual membership survey will soon be available online and we encourage each of you to tell us how the year has gone for your family — we truly value your feedback and use it to help us identify and make needed changes. The survey should only take 10 minutes or so to complete and, if you let your teacher know you did it, you will get credit for an observation! Keep an eye on Basecamp to find out when and how to access it.

I know we all struggle from time to time with how much help we should be offering our children. One goal of parenting after all, is to help our children acquire the skills they’ll need to be self-sufficient. If we offer too much help, we take away an opportunity for learning. If we don’t help enough or are critical of their efforts, we risk breaking our connection with our children. Something my husband and I learned in a mini-course we took when we were students at Mountain School has stayed with me all these years: every negative thing you say to a child needs to be offset by 5 positive things. They really need our confidence in their goodness.

When we are connected, we are relaxed and able to think more clearly — this is true for both parents and children. We can listen fully not only to what the child is asking, but to his emotional state as well to hear what he truly needs at the moment. Does he just need encouragement or is he truly overwhelmed and needing us to step in? Receiving encouragement from a parent is often enough to help a child figure out a solution on his own.

If needed, you can help your child come up with possible solutions. I personally found it hard not to give too much information. I had to learn that my children’s “pretty good response” was probably good enough and not to shift the focus away from their own ideas by asking unnecessary questions. As children’s abilities develop, we need to hang back. By intervening less and listening more, we give our children the opportunity to develop the skills they’ll need to move forward. Allowing them to make mistakes and figure things out by trial and error helps build resilience along the way.

One might look at this situation through the lens of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. “Too cold” is a parent who is unavailable; if things are “too hot” perhaps the parent is a bit over-involved — we are always reaching for the sweet spot of “just right”. Give them some space, encourage problem solving and lend your experience when asked.

Enjoy each moment,

Teacher Leslie



Parent Programs

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

Check out these exciting programs in April and attached links to reserve your spot!

4/12 Wednesday 7pm School House

Make your own Stick horses with Teacher Karyn. <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f094faba828a0fa7-making>

4/13 Thursday 7pm Van Meter Elementary

Ideas for Summer Adventures by Santa Clara County parks. <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f094faba828a0fa7-summer>

4/19 Wednesday 7pm School House

Using stories to overcome struggles by Mindy Dirks. <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f094faba828a0fa7-using>

4/25 Tuesday 7pm Hicklebee's Bookstore

Best preschool books for summer. <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f094faba828a0fa7-summer1>

4/26 Wednesday 7pm School House

Developmentally Appropriate toys with teacher Jane. <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f094faba828a0fa7-toytalk>

4/27 Thursday 7pm School House

DIY Personal care products- by Adrienne Cox. <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f094faba828a0fa7-diynatural>





**FAMILY BBQ &
FUNDRAISER**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 2017
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

THE SCHOOLHOUSE
Ticket Sales Open April 2nd

**Mark your calendars
and join us for the largest
all school event of the year!**

We will gather together at the
Schoolhouse to celebrate May and
all the gifts of Springtime.

Festivities include:

BBQ and country home cooking by our
very own alumni, Chef Jason Jillson

County fair games for the kids

Live auction of the class projects

Silent auction

Buy-a-Spots

Dances & music around the Maypole

Children's book walk

And so much more!

Spring Buy-A-Spots

Opening at the May Fair!

Spring Buy-A-Spots (BAS) will open at the May Fair on April 30, 2017.

Some of the BAS offered this spring are Family Weekend Campout with Teacher Marie, Mommy's Day Out at Capitola Beach, Summer Berry Picking with Teacher Leslie, Yoga with Amy Moreland, Oak Meadow Train Ride & Play Date, Ukulele Class with Gramma Phyllis, Making French Macarons with Maggie Cattell and Mountain Mamas & Margaritas hosted by Tandem Hayden.

If you would like to host a Buy-a-Spot or donate items or services to a Buy-a-Spot, please contact Ellie Chou, BAS Coordinator at chou.ellie@gmail.com.

Our School Library

Courtney Boitano (Brooke 3s), Librarian



An article in the March/ April 2017 magazine Scientific American Mind entitled "The Right Start: How to Fix Our Preschools," highlighted the push for academic preschools despite the evidence that children learn best from play. As Mountain School parents, we know this the best but may find ourselves getting caught up in the societal pressures of pushing our children to do more and know more. One of my favorite quotes from the article is that, "amid a growing emphasis on math and reading tests, 'somehow, somewhere we decided that success for our children is how well they do on math and reading tests. We kind of forgot that what's really important is raising humans.'"

Preschools often feel the pressure to move from child-centered play to teacher-led instruction. Recent research suggests that "scaffolding" play, open-ended play, hands-on, and child-led activities helps children learn concepts more thoroughly and when they are developmentally ready. The article goes on to talk about some of the reasons for the curriculum shift as well as providing studies identifying what kind of play has helped children learn. Please take a look at this article the next time you are at the school house! I will have copies available.

Happy reading!

Spring Camping Trip

Xi Sheng (Sequoia, Sat PM), Social Chair

Dear Mountain School Families,

Please join us for our annual **Spring Camping Trip!**

The original campsite I booked got cancelled due to maintenance problem caused by the storms, so once again we will return to *Mt. Madonna County Park* for this camping trip. The date is Friday, May 5th to Sunday May 7th. We didn't get the group site, instead, we have 10 consecutive family campsites located at Valley View 3. These sites have easy access to flush toilet, tap water, and the beautiful trails to the nearby "Giant Twins" redwoods. Please bring your families, your bikes/scooters/helmets, as well as ukuleles/guitars!

The cost will be \$15 per person for two nights (adults and kids cost the same). There are two ways to register:

1. Register and pay via **paypal.com**
 - a. Select the "Send Money to Friends and Family" option
 - b. Enter my email (xisheng@gmail.com)
 - c. Enter the payment amount and click "Add Note"
 - d. In the Note section, include the following information:
 - i. Family Name and Mountain School Class
 - ii. Contact person name, email, and phone #
 - iii. Number of family members attending
2. Leave your registration and payment in the **Parent Library** at the Schoolhouse, in the envelope marked "LGSONS Spring Camping"
 - a. Leave a check payable to LGSONS
 - b. Attach a paper to your check with the following information:
 - i. Family Name and Mountain School Class
 - ii. Contact person name, email, and phone #
 - iii. Number of family members attending

Book your spot early since we have very limited spaces. A waitlist will be established if necessary. I will notify you by email when I receive your registration and payment. The campsites will be available from 3pm Friday until 1pm on Sunday. We will go camping rain or shine. *NO refunds will be given unless there is a waitlist and your spots can be filled.*

Let me know if you have any questions. Hope to see you there!

Xi Sheng (Sequoia, Sat PM)
Social Chair
xisheng@gmail.com