

REACH

A Creative Arts Magnet Program
Brook Haven Middle School, Sebastopol, California

Tuesday, January 22, 2008

A Weekly Newsletter from the REACH Parent Foundation

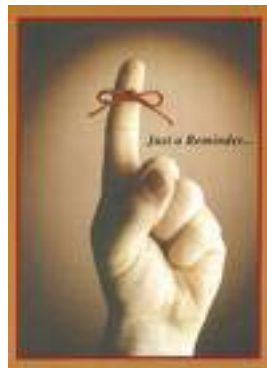
Important Reminders!

Many parents have asked about the field trip schedule. The following is a list for the week-long field trips this year. Don't forget that you can always log on to www.reach-program.com and click on the calendar section to find out what's going on at REACH.

- Sun. Apr. 13 to Fri. Apr. 18, 8th grade to Yosemite
- Mon. Apr. 21 to Fri. Apr. 25, 7th grade to Ashland,
- Mon. Apr. 21 to Fri. Apr. 25 6th grade to Marin

**Informational Meeting for Prospective Families –
Wed. Feb. 6:30 pm**

Brook Haven library – Music performances, introductions, open classrooms, student hosts. Applications available. Current parents encouraged to come assist in hosting and sharing. Current students interested in participating also welcome.



**Yearbooks On Sale This Week thru
Feb. 8 ONLY**

Return envelopes will go home with students on Wednesday. All orders must be completed by Fri. Feb. 8. No yearbooks available in June, except for pre-orders. Cost: \$30. Place checks made out to RPF in envelope in gold box in school office.



A Peek Inside Clubs

What would you do if a bunch of wood scraps were put in front of you and you were told to sculpt something fabulous? Sounds vague doesn't it? Not if you were in Charles Churchill's Industrial Scrap Magic class Friday afternoon! Mr. Churchill showed examples of his own work and students took one look at his and ran with it. He brought in a plethora of materials, which allowed students to create diverse interpretations of wood scrap sculpture. Students also created sculpture using other "industrial" materials. This week's focus was "gluing components onto a format" using random leftover materials from different industries. The wonderful, inspired sculptures that arose from the scraps were not only breathtaking, but beautifully abstract and I would say belonged at the SF MOMA.

When I stopped by Chess Club I was keenly aware of the focus and interest the students had in mastering their game. I was also aware of my own self-consciousness about the game and how fun it would be to sit down and play a few rounds at the beginners' table! It was great to see the different leveled tables and the diverse groups of students at each level. The students' feedback and excitement in later discussions clearly showed their desire to improve their games and to have the opportunity to beat

www.reach-program.com

Mark Your Calendar

Tues. Jan. 22

7th grade field trip to San Jose, 8:30 - 3:30 p.m.
Body World

**Thurs. - Fri.
Jan. 24-25**

4/5 Field Trip to Ft. Ross

Fri. Jan. 25

No clubs, schoolwide due to field trips

Fri. Jan. 25

6, 7, 8th Concert
Jazz with Wynton Marsalis
Wells Fargo Center
10:30am - 1pm

Mon. Jan. 28

6th grade field trip
Rosicrucian Museum
San Jose, 8:30 am - 3:30 p.m.

Fri. Feb. 1

7th & 8th Field trip
"Not A Genuine Black Man," a one-man show
Wells Fargo Center
9:10am - 1pm

Sat. Feb. 2

Community Service at Animal Rescue
All grades welcome

For long range planning,
check out the REACH
calendar on our website:
www.reach-program.com

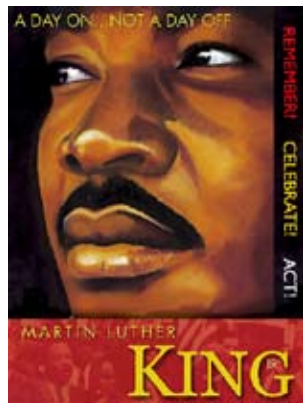
an opponent in the game of all games. There were 3 adult teachers there supporting the 16 students in the class.

Next door in French Club was a horseshoe-shaped table with students sitting around the outside. When I came in toward the end, Eric Switala was talking to each student asking a question in French and they were answering with a quick reference to their typed sheets at times. All the students had enjoyed home-made crêpes with jam or 'Nutella,' (a hazelnut-chocolate spread enjoyed by the French) or just sugar, which they had to request in French. Eric, 6th grader Celeste's dad, is so gentle and joyous in encouraging the students they could not help enjoying the class. They all went home with their typed sheets of phrases to practice on parents who know some French.

- Melissa Hall and Nancy Higham

MLK Speech Contest

On Sunday, January 13th, 8th grader Emily Lucia went to the Martin Luther King Jr. speech contest to represent the



Creative Arts Magnet Program. Though all of the speeches were meaningful, only three could place. Emily's speech highlighted how many are discriminated against for many different things. Though Emily did not place, she still set a very good example for the audience.

Some of the speeches were very long and boring while others were very well written. There was only one other student from Brook Haven and he placed second place. His name is Nathaniel and his was very powerful. Hopefully every person learned a good lesson at the contest.

- Jasper Lane, 8th Grade

Organization in a Backpack

Reprinted from the New York Times on 1/1/08

By Alan FINDER

"Can we take a look at your backpack?"

Ms. Homayoun with Chris Picetti, a junior, and her dog, Mason.

Ana Homayoun repeats that question countless times a day. No, she does not screen airline passengers or work security at a basketball arena.

Ms. Homayoun is a tutor. She helps teenagers with subjects like math and science, but she particularly specializes in teaching boys how to become more organized.

One afternoon in her cozy office suite in this affluent suburb south of San Francisco, she asked John Ferrari, 14, to go through a two-inch stack of papers he pulled from

his backpack. He sorted through the papers, placing them in separate piles — writing, spelling, vocabulary, tests — to bring order to his loose-leaf binder.

"Oh, here's my class schedule, what a relief," said John, an eighth grader.

A moment later, he stumbled across something even more valuable. "I have to turn this in tomorrow," John said. "It's the name I want on my diploma."

With girls outperforming boys these days in high school and college, educators have been sparring over whether there is a crisis in the education of boys. Some suggest the need for more single-sex schools, more male role models or new teaching techniques. Others are experimenting with physical changes in classrooms that encourage boys to move around, rather than trying to anchor them to their seats.

But as they debate, high-priced tutors and college counselors have jumped into the fray by charging as much as \$100 an hour and up to bring boys to heel.

The tutors say their main focus is organizational skills because boys seem generally to have more difficulty getting organized and multitasking than girls do.

And so private counselors in places as diverse as Chicago, New York City, Sarasota, Fla., and Bennington, Vt., who guide juniors and seniors in applying to college, have devised elaborate systems — from color-coded, four-month calendars that mark dozens of deadlines to file boxes that students must take to each session.

Donna Goldberg began working with students in Manhattan on how to get organized 17 years ago. Her inspiration was her own son, then in seventh grade. Mrs. Goldberg was astonished to learn that he had not been turning in any homework.

"He opened his backpack, which was really a black hole, and he said, 'Here it is,'" she said. He had not understood that in seventh grade he was responsible for handing in his homework, instead of waiting to be asked.

Some educators think the tutors are on the right track, whether or not there is science to back them up. "The guys just don't seem to develop the skills that involve organization as early," said Judith Kleinfeld, a psychology professor at the University of Alaska and founder of the Boys Project, a coalition of researchers, educators and parents to address boys' problems.

Mrs. Goldberg, Ms. Homayoun and other private tutors



say boys must learn not only how to organize, but also how to manage their time and even how to study.

Robert Gittings, a sixth grader, has been coming weekly to work with Ms. Homayoun since September. He, too, is asked to empty his backpack, and on one visit, cheerfully removed a vast collection of textbooks, binders, workbooks, paperback books and hardcover library books.

Most of the binders were orderly and reasonably neat. But there was a stack of papers from science, nearly an inch thick, that needed to be sorted.

“Do you have homework for tonight?” Ms. Homayoun asked.

He replied, “We have a work sheet.” But it was not in the homework section of the science binder or in his daily planner.

Then Robert remembered where he put it. From a side pocket of his backpack, he pulled a sheet of paper that has been folded into a tiny rectangle.

Ms. Homayoun laughed and said gently, “Maybe we should put that in the homework section?”

Ms. Homayoun opened her business, Green Ivy Educational Consulting, not long after graduating from Duke University in 2001. She created her organizational system — basically an elaboration of the ways she studied in high school — after she began tutoring six years ago.

“I would ask, What’s the class that troubles you the most?” she said. “I would ask to see the binder, and it would always be the messiest.”

She requires her clients to have a three-ring, loose-leaf binder for each academic subject, to divide each binder into five sections — notes, homework, handouts, tests and quizzes, and blank paper — and to use a hole puncher relentlessly, so that every sheet of school-related paper is put into its proper home.

Students must maintain a daily planner; they are required to number the order in which they want to do each day’s homework and draw a box next to each assignment, so it can be checked off when completed.

Homework must be done in a two-hour block in a quiet room, with absolutely no distractions: no instant messaging, no Internet, no music, no cellphone, no television.

While some girls need help getting organized, at least three-quarters of her students are boys, Ms. Homayoun said. Girls usually adopt her methods more quickly.

“Girls pick up on this much faster,” said Ms. Homayoun, 28, who has a relaxed but firm manner and a gift for diplomacy with teenagers and their parents. “Boys, you still have to be on them for a while. They’re not going to pick up on it immediately. You have to roll with it.”

Two seniors arrived for weekly appointments, expecting to complete their college applications and file them online. But the tutor discovered that one boy left out sections of

basic personal information on his application, while the other missed a requirement for three short essays by the University of Virginia. Each was disappointed that there was more work to do.

“Sorry,” she consoled one. “It’s like thinking you’ve finished a marathon and finding out you have three miles left.”

With guidance and constant follow-up, boys can make significant progress, Ms. Homayoun said. Ernie McMillan, 17, a high school senior who has been working with her since the summer before his junior year, is one example. He created orderly binders, kept on top of his daily planner, took notes while reading and even agreed to eliminate distractions during homework.

In the spring of his sophomore year, Mr. McMillan had a 2.8 grade-point average, a B-minus. After working with Ms. Homayoun, he raised his average to 3.1 in the first semester of his junior year. Last spring, he brought it up to 3.5, a B-plus.

“I was really happy about that,” he said. “I always thought I could do it, and I didn’t understand why I couldn’t. I just needed that backing, that structure. I was turning in my assignments on time. I was working ahead on my classes. I was organized in a way I never had been before.”

Mr. McMillan stopped for a moment, before adding, “She totally reworked my backpack, too.”

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Just Write! Creative Writing for 11-14 year-olds with author Lisa Shulman

Explore poetry, short stories, scripts, and other types of writing. We’ll play with elements of writing such as character, dialogue, sensory details, and metaphor in a fun, relaxed setting. Let your imagination soar and your pen go wild! Each class will include fun group and individual writing activities, as well as time to give and receive supportive feedback on your current projects.

Session 1: Thurs, Jan 24-Feb 14, 3:45-5:15 pm

Session 2: 4 Thurs, Feb 28-Mar 20, 3:45-5:15pm

Register with Sebastopol Center for the Arts

Chess for Kids

Thursdays, 3:30-5pm

Rincon Valley Christian School – Rm 24

4585 Badger Rd., Santa Rosa

A chess club for kids. Open to kids of all ages and skill levels. Come have fun, meet new people, and learn the game of chess. Bring a friend and get a prize! Chess coaching available. \$2 donation requested. For info, contact Jolie Cook at 527-6427 or 540-1831, or chessforkids@hotmail.com