



The St Michael Steiner School

NEWSLETTER

8th May 2009

5 Merton Road London SW18 5ST

Tel: 020 8870 0500

Email: info@stmichaelsteinerschool.co.uk

Website: www.stmichaelsteiner.wandsworth.sch.uk

Dates for Your Diary

May

Mon 11th Open Day 3.30 - 5pm

Mon 11th Meeting for parents of Class 1&2, 2009/2010 12.45 - 1.30pm

Mon 11th Class 1/6&7 parents evening

Fri 15th Class 4&5 play (for class parents)

Sat 16th Parents' Workday

Mon 18th Class 2&3 parents evening

Thur 21st School ends for half term

Thur 21st School Support Teams Meeting 7 - 8.30pm at school

Fri 22nd Staff INSET

23rd - 31st HALF TERM

June

Mon 1st BACK TO SCHOOL

Mon 8th Management Team meeting

Sat 13th Open day 10 - 12.30pm

Mon 15th Class 1 Parents' evening

Fri 19th St John's festival

Wed 24th Class 4&5 Olympic camp

Sat 27th Olympic Games 7.30am - 1pm

July

Thur 9th End of term festival 11am

Fri 10th END OF TERM 12.30 for all

My Day at The St Michael Steiner School By Eugene Schwartz

Eugene Schwartz is a former Class Teacher and lecturer on education from the USA. He first came to us in October 2007 for a teachers' conference and, at the beginning of this term returned for a one day conference, which was attended by teachers from all over Britain. The following day, he visited classes 1 to 7. This is what he had to say.

The first day back after a long vacation is often a challenge to pupils and teachers alike, as everyone readjusts to returning to their common spaces and rhythms. I was therefore pleasantly surprised - or actually amazed - at the alacrity with which the children of the St. Michael School found their way back on Tuesday, April 21st. It was clear that they were pleased to return to their classrooms, eager to hear about the new subject that they would be studying, and overjoyed to be with their classmates. What a wonder - a school that children really want to attend!

Taking part in the welcoming assembly and then observing all of the classes, it became clear that the children's love of their school was based in reality. The attentiveness of the teachers to each and every pupil, the excitement of subjects that are tailored to the developmental level and learning styles of the children, and the dynamic interplay of active and quiet activities, add up to a rich and full educational experience.

In the course of my one day visit I saw seven year-olds alternating between exuberant rope skipping while they identified number patterns and focused work with the four arithmetic operations; I was the audience for an enthusiastic Class Five play rehearsal that reflected the class's immersion in Ancient Egyptian mythology, followed by a hands-on Botany lesson in which compost and peat pots were turned into a rooftop garden; I watched a lively Class Two/Three grow still and contemplative as they painted a tree in blossom, and I gazed admiringly at the main lesson books being created by the Class Six/Seven students.

The calibre of the students' work was high, and their level of joyfulness and enthusiasm for school was incomparable. And what I wouldn't do to be able to bottle their clear and elegant pronunciation of English and take it back to children in the United States! Thank you, teachers and staff, for cultivating this oasis of education. And thank you, parents, for helping this wonderful Steiner school serve Southwest London.

Eugene Schwartz

School Support Teams

Can we really have fun at fundraising?

It was an enthusiastic evening at Magda's (Jan, Eleni and Theo's mum) house when several of us met to generate some new ideas for fund raising for the school. While champagne and canapés certainly helped the ideas to flow we did come up with some short and long term goals and plans to achieve them. Here are few goals and ideas we came up with. Detailed minutes are available on request.

- Set a target for raising £10,000 this year. Social and outreach raised around £4000 last year. Each fundraising activity will have a project plan with projected figures.
- A fun Challenge all parents of the school to raise £100 from now till next April.
- Monthly fundraising newsletter will give tips, ideas and success stories – encouraging all to raise money for the school.
- Communication plan – up-to date contact details for all parents – first newsletter to include details of group google mail for those interested in joining the support groups.

Our next meeting will be on the 8th of May 2009 at 8.30pm at Magda's. This is a fun and informal meeting where you can get to know other parents and share ideas as well as achieving something worthwhile to help the school. We welcome all new and old parents to join us to share your knowledge, energy and enthusiasm.

Venue: 147 Elsenham Street,
Southfields, SW18 5NS.
Magda: 07973 289 907,
mdevaris@yahoo.co.uk

Mihiri Lim

The Newsletter is now available on our
new website at:
www.stmichaelsteiner.wandsworth.sch.uk

TERM DATES 2009 - 2010

Michaelmas Term 2009

INSET Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd September

Term starts Thursday 3rd September

Half term week 26 – 30 October

INSET Monday 2nd November

Term ends Friday 18th December

Winter term 2010

INSET Monday 11th January

Term starts Tuesday 12th January

INSET Friday 12th February

Half term week 15 – 19 February

Term ends Friday 26th March

Summer Term 2010

INSET Monday 19th April

Term starts Tuesday 20th April

INSET Friday 28th May

Half term week 31 May – 4 June

Term ends Friday 9th July

Orchestra

We would like to invite you to join the school orchestra. Membership is open to children, parents and teachers of the school. No experience is necessary and all levels of ability and instruments are welcome. We would also welcome the loan of your instruments, if you are not able to join us yourselves! We are especially seeking cello and double bass players. The orchestra meets every Wednesday from 3.10-4pm. There is a charge of £3.50 per session. Please contact Juanna (juanna@dsl.pipex.com) if you are interested.

Bursaries for 2009/2010

The school allocates 10% of its income each year to support families who are struggling to pay their fees for one reason or another. Bursaries are means-tested and are awarded for one year at a time by the Bursary group, a team of independent people - ex parents and staff of the school - who consider each application and try to allocate the available funds in the fairest possible way. (Please see your Parents' Handbook for more details)

The Bursary group will be meeting at the beginning of June and the deadline for applications for the 2009/2010 academic year is Thursday May 21st. Applications received after this date cannot be considered as all the available money will have been allocated.

Application forms are available from reception.

Community item

20s Costumes Needed

Threshold Theatre - a theatre group based in Forest Row - are producing a 20's version of Oscar Wilde's 'An Ideal Husband' this Summer. Being a student initiated company we do not have the funds of a professional theatre and would be very grateful if anyone could help us create a wardrobe for this production. Does anyone have fabric, or even 20's style dresses or suits which they would be willing to donate or lend to us? If so, please could you email us at thresholdtheatre@hotmail.com, or speak to Stella (assistant in Alejandra's Kindergarten).

Stella Bell Ottewill

On behalf of Threshold Theatre

What's Happening in the classrooms?

Class 1 are working on their 2 and 3 times tables and also touching on the others to which they will return in the next block. They are also continuing to work with the 4 processes, going more deeply into them. All of this is worked with through a balance of mathematical games, mental arithmetic and written sums.

Class 2&3 have returned to measuring, recalling time and linear measurement and beginning to look at volume. They are working out problems based on measurement, for example, "If we start school at 8.15am and go home at 3pm, how long are we at school?" and "I measured the room in inches and it measured 273 inches. How many feet is that?" and even, "How many seconds are there in a year?" They modelled cubic centimetres and then tried to guess how many would fit into a litre jug. They were very surprised to find that the answer was 1000 so they probably won't forget that ...

Class 4&5: The incredible world of the plant kingdom has been the subject of Class 4/5's main lesson. They have been learning about fungi, algae, lichen, moss, ferns, conifers, and flowering plants so far. Strange words like calyx, pistil, sepal, stamen, and reticulated are now heard regularly in the classroom. Drawings, poems, paintings and compositions have captured something of their experiences of the Botany main lesson and there is a good working mood. They have also planted beans and marigolds and eagerly await the first appearance of one of our mushrooms. If that wasn't dramatic enough, the class has been working very hard on an Egyptian play. It always amazes me how children can remember their lines so well, and, now that they have learned them, we have been working on how to say them, how to bring expression and meaning into the words so they don't become mere words. There is still much to do with props and costumes and staging and... but we look forward to sharing it with the other classes and to the class parents next Friday. Olympic training every Tuesday has also been a weekly highlight as we prepare to join the other 10/11 year-olds from UK Steiner schools at Michael Hall at the end of June.

Class 6&7 would like to thank everyone who supported them last term with their class play, Eleanor The Queen. Our current main lesson, The Age of Exploration and Discovery continues the theme of meeting cultures, something which had been forgotten until the Crusades. As with the explorers, we study how these cultures met each other, what was gained and what was lost. Although the journey of Vasco da Gama was lengthier and more arduous, the voyage of Columbus was unique because he went into waters that were not guided by a coast. We are exploring how different people viewed the world and how one view (that the earth was flat) could become so powerful. In this main lesson we are also learning about the geography of the North and South American Continents. We study

this through looking at the contrasting features of the land. From there we look at how culture and economics arise through the meeting of the people with the land; how people harness and modify their resources and what some of the effects of these processes can be.

From the Parents' Handbook

This month:

Procedure for arriving and collecting children

In the morning:

Children should not arrive at school before 8am. PLEASE DO NOT GO INTO OR WALK THROUGH THE CAR PARK AT ANY TIME.

Children and parents should wait in the back playground for the bell to ring. If the weather is very bad, teachers may decide to let the children in early, but otherwise, they should not come inside until the bell rings. *Please note that before 8:15am all children must be supervised by an adult.*

When the teachers come to collect the children in the morning, Kindergarten parents may come inside with their children to settle them; **PARENTS OF CHILDREN IN OTHER CLASSES SHOULD NOT DO SO UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.**

At the end of the school day:

The children will be brought to the front playground and should be collected from there: *Children on half days at 12:30pm and those on full days at 3pm.* Kindergarten children should be collected from the Secret Garden at 12:20pm.

Please note that the school gates will be opened at 12.20 and again at 2.55 in the afternoon. **PLEASE DO NOT RING THE BUZZER BEFORE 12.20/2.55 UNLESS YOU HAVE SCHOOL BUSINESS OR NEED TO COME INTO THE BUILDING FOR SOME OTHER REASON.**

If your child is going home by him/herself, please inform your class teacher in writing. Please make sure the teacher on duty knows that you have taken your child and anyone else's. If your child is going home with someone other than you, please let his/her teacher know in the morning, preferably in writing.

If children have not been collected within 15 minutes of pick-up time, they will be taken back inside and parents must then come upstairs to collect them. *Please note that for lateness beyond 15 minutes, financial penalties may apply.*

Newsletter Contributions

The next newsletter will be distributed on Friday 12th June. The deadline for contributions is Wednesday 10th June. Email them please, to: amandabell@mac.com or put them in the 'Newsletter' box at reception.