

# Serra Preschool Newsletter

January, 2014



a cooperative preschool in South Orange County  
where children and parents learn and love together

## Upcoming Dates

Jan. 24- Whale watching field trip  
Feb. 12- Celebrate Valentine's- 3day  
Feb. 13- Celebrate Valentine's- 2day  
Feb. 14- no school (Lincoln)  
Feb. 17- no school (Washington)  
Feb. 22- 6 Week Clean Up  
March 5- Registration and fee due  
for returning students  
March 10-14 is Teacher  
Appreciation Week! ☺



## Kids' Birthdays

Sophia Azzam turned 4 on 1/1  
Amelia Moag turned 5 on 1/17  
Noah Lahr turned 4 on 1/18  
Yaretzi Camarillo turned 4 on 1/19  
Arjun Sheokand turns 4 on 2/3  
Andrea Trejo turns 4 on 2/11



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## Our Board



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## Sponsorship Rates

Business Card: \$5 per issue or \$30 for the year  
¼ Page Ad: \$10 per issue or \$50 for the year  
Email your ad to Cori Preisler at [CoriPreisler@hotmail.com](mailto:CoriPreisler@hotmail.com)  
Serra Preschool does not endorse any advertisements listed.

## Shamans

Stomping, singing, shaking their  
rattles  
the children enter my home  
tribal healers  
Evil spirits: Begone!

Recently sent from the otherworld  
they consult, heads together  
devise each day  
ways to cure the ills here

Re-arrange my furniture  
spill their milk to read the patterns  
speak in tongues, gaze into space  
climb trees, call to birds  
pierce themselves, fling  
themselves from heights.

Gyrations, chants and yells  
all mystery to me  
but I know their incantations change  
the very air they're spoken into  
so I feed them, follow them, clean  
their messes, bandage wound  
bend and bow and kneel before them  
wash their feet  
know my house is  
the most blessed on the block.

~Chriss Bazzett~

Ah, if I had written this poem I  
would Have changed the last line  
to "our **school** is the most blessed  
on the block." -Mrs. Nowicki



## Announcements

A big thank you to everyone who has helped me or offered to help me with the kids. Especially a big thank you to Katie Erspamer, Monica Lewis, Vero Morrow and Adrienne Matheson.

~Gina Arciniega

Robyn O'Brien speaks about the dangers on GMO's in the following link, courtesy of Shawn Johnson. Please read more if you are interested!

<http://gmosummit.org/empowerment/>



## Field Trip

Whale watching this Friday, January 24!

## Ways & Means

Reminder that each family is required to raise \$75 worth of pledges for the upcoming Trike-a-Thon (or pay the buyout of \$75).

## Membership

**Feb 20th 12-2 pm:** Prospective student Open House

**Feb 26th 7 pm:** Prospective parent Open House

**March 5<sup>th</sup>:** Registration Form and Fee due for returning students

**March 12<sup>th</sup>:** New student registration begins

## Director's Message

~ What Children Are Good At~

This week I have been thinking about the kids and about our school. Mostly, I have been thinking about what makes our school great. There are many things that make our school a wonderful place for children, but one thing that stands out in my mind is the way we talk to the kids and the development of our understanding about what preschool kids are really good at.

This is what I think preschool children are really good at:

- Taking what they see and like.
- Keeping it until they are done with it.
- Taking it home if they really like it.
- Pushing and grabbing to get something.
- Letting everyone know something belongs to them.
- Yelling above everyone else to get their words out or their point across.
- Giving a toy to someone when they are done with it.



Children are not "bad" because they push, take, or leave activities not interesting to them. They are displaying behaviors that fit their growth and development.

- Preschool children don't share well; they are egocentric and believe that everything that is provided in our programs belongs to them.

- Children frequently don't recognize that someone else might have the same needs and wishes they have, they often take objects that another child is playing with because they think that child wants them to have it.
- Children only remember what is relevant to them, if it is not relevant it will be forgotten. This is why your child may not remember the story I told at circle and only talks about firefighters and astronauts (some of you know who I am talking about) :)
- Children can't express themselves using words, they often use physical means of communication ex. pushing, shoving, yelling even hitting.
- Children have difficulty understanding the differences between right and wrong; they often don't relate to cause and effect relationships.

Parents at Serra have the opportunity to learn how to speak to children in a way that addresses these issues and that goes way beyond the blanket statement of "good job." Rather than simply reacting to behaviors, parents can learn ways of speaking and interacting with children that promote attachment, belonging, self-regulation, collaboration, contribution and adaptability.

At Serra, we learn not to say "good job," use time outs, or say things like "if you hit you sit" because those ways of trying to guide children do nothing to promote the skills mentioned above.

How we behave with children today models skills and teaches them social and emotional choices they will use for the rest of their lives. The journey from childhood to adulthood is a long one. There are many paths a child might take, each one leading to a unique future. Teachers and parents working together in an environment like the one at Serra have the opportunity to guide children along their path for a short distance.

I think we work really hard at making that time count. I know that because I see the change in kids over time who began the program being good at hitting, pushing, grabbing, running and yelling, not yet being able to find the words to express themselves and doing all the things preschool age children are great at. Over time the kids learn to use their words to get what they need, instead of grabbing a toy and running for the hills they ask for a turn. I see kids trying to help a child who is crying and missing his mom by saying hello and bringing him toys to play with. I see kids remembering to give a child a toy they were waiting for without having to be reminded that someone was waiting for it. I see the change at the painting easel when kids all find a way to use colors together. These changes all happen without using time outs, reward charts or adults controlling a situation by making children share a toy after 5 minutes.

Children at Serra feel a sense of belonging; it's their special school, a lovely safe place for them to be or do what they are good at and learn how to be good at something else.

This is the message I gave to parents who were interested in our school at the Talega MOMS Club Preschool Fair last week. Stephanie and I represented our school. Many parents came to our table asking about our program. They wanted to know what made it unique or different from the other preschools in the area.

Thank you for being a part of our school, for trying to encourage the children instead of saying "good job". Thank you for all of the many things you do to contribute to the well being of the children and our school.

Fondly,  
Mrs. Nowicki

## President's Message

As I was reading a mommy blog that I rarely get a chance to read. It caught my attention because it posed the question..... "What kind of questions do you ask your family?" Are you getting a real response? Does it really create a conversation?

In our house, at least between Eric and I, by the time he gets home, we are both so exhausted. SO it's the standard- "How was your day?" I respond with "Fine" or "Good", as I hand him a food covered Baby or a Monkey wrapped in a towel. So he can continue with our routine. But as I think about that question, "How was your day? Hmm. Well how do I explain the highs and lows of each part of the day, when you stay home with small children? Oooofff.

Do I say my heart felt like it was going to burst as Nate runs out of school and said he missed me! OR how I was so over them fighting I wanted to scream and run out of the house!!!

The same goes for your children. Ask questions that create a conversation.

Maybe say, "When did you feel special today?"-

"What made you really happy today?"- Or really sad?



Questions are like gifts – it's the thought behind them that the receiver really FEELS. We have to *know* the receiver to give the right gift and to ask the right question. Generic gifts and questions are all right, but personal gifts and questions feel better. Love is *specific*, I think. It's an art. The more attention and time you give to your questions, the more beautiful the answers become. "Life is a conversation. Make it a good one."- Momastery.com

Happy January! Cindy

