



THE MEHER SCHOOLS



# Wednesday Messages

January 29, 2020 • Parent Resource Center: [www.MeherSchoolsParents.org](http://www.MeherSchoolsParents.org)

## ILD

*Independent Learning Day is an opportunity for fifth graders to apply their creativity, resourcefulness, and research skills on a project related to some aspect of a lesson they'd like to know more about.*

The first of the year's two planned ILDs happened on January 21. The focus was the Colonial period, which the class has been studying, though students had the option of choosing something having to do with their recent astronomy unit. They usually work independently but on more complex projects are allowed to work with one or more partners.

Planning for an ILD begins well in advance. After choosing a topic, the students create a detailed plan that includes the goal and purpose, a detailed description of their project, with sketches, and a list of materials they'll need. After fine-tuning the plan with their teachers, they take it home and explain it to their parents, who help them gather any needed materials.

ILD begins first thing in the morning and lasts till after lunch. When everyone has finished their projects, the students give presentations about them in front of the class.

The students in the photo at right pinned together a period dress to sell at their tailor shop, which they made from a pattern they found online. Using *(Continued on page 2)*



## Tips for Parents by Susie Kohl

### *Helping Children Feel “More Blessed Than Stressed”*

HELP YOUR CHILD TO BE MORE AWARE OF JOY than frustration and disappointment.

Start by avoiding questions that predictably produce negative answers. Was your test really hard? Did your friend argue with you again today? Was your lunch okay? Expressing our intense concerns for children through the most well-intentioned questions can easily turn them into complainers. “That test was so unfair.” “My friend was so mean to me.” “Why did you give me cheese again in my lunch?”

For survival purposes, our brains tend to skew experience with a negative bias, surveying life for threats or problems. People of any age have to work hard to remember moments that are positive or joyful because negative experiences leave a more powerful imprint on our experience. This tendency to look for the negative is so ingrained that in our Western culture, it is deemed realistic.

Our children will complain because they are human, and listening to their concerns empathically is crucial to their development. We can nurture their capacity for joy by noticing and commenting when they are happy or able to rise above difficult circumstances—“I saw you and your friend were happy playing together after you worked out your argument” rather than “What a hard argument you had with our friend. Are you still feeling angry?”

As the saying goes, we can help our children feel “more blessed than stressed.”

Our brains have plasticity, and we can encourage a sense of well-being by asking questions at the end of the day that stir positive reflection and resilience. “What were the best parts of today?” “Did anything funny happen?” “Were you able to help anyone today?” “Did anyone help you?”

## ILD *(Continued from page 1)*

some of the same material, the girl in the other photo made a matching hat. Another student crafted a gold-plated necklace in a Colonial design for his jewelry store.

The boys in this photo elected to do a project related to their astronomy unit. Here they’re piecing together the asteroid belt between Jupiter and Mars, where most of the asteroids in our solar system orbit the sun.



**Will your child be returning to our school next year?** If you haven’t yet, please let us know by turning in the Enrollment Form our registrar, Daniela Alder, sent via email January 22—even if you’re not certain of your plans. The form is due Friday.