



THE MEHER SCHOOLS



Wednesday Messages

February 5, 2020 • Parent Resource Center: www.MeherSchoolsParents.org

Founders Day for Grown-ups: Dinner, Discussion, and Delight

Event Tickets Go on Sale Today—First Come, First Served

We'll be celebrating the school's 45th birthday this year with a daytime celebration for children on February 25 and a one-of-a-kind evening program for parents and community members on Saturday evening, February 29. At the evening event there will be a casual international buffet dinner, a special keynote speaker, small-group discussions about compassion, and presentations by experts on important aspects of child development. The program will kick off at 6 p.m. with a performance by Meher School's White Horse Youth Chorale and end by 8:30.

Tickets go on sale today. They're \$20, including dinner. Space is limited, so you'll want to purchase yours as soon as you can. Tickets are available in the Office. You can pay in cash or by check made out to The Meher Schools.

Sharing the Gift of Reading

Volunteer readers have a special place in our preschool program

Giving preschoolers a rich reading experience is a life-long gift. We're looking for parents (and grandparents) who have an hour in the morning once a week that they'd like to share with children in one of our preschool classes.

During morning free-play time, some children migrate to the reading corner to leaf through and "read" books. Having an adult there with nothing to do but read to them makes it even more special.

Our preschool readers treasure the special role they play in the children's lives and are renewed by the wonder and funny perspectives the children bring to the world. They know that being read to instills a love of reading and promotes language development.



If you'd like to be a preschool reader (or know someone who would), contact Karen Wells at wellsnewlife@hotmail.com or (925) 360-0733. (Volunteers need to be fingerprinted. Karen will explain that to you.)

Hearing Our Own Voices

ARE YOU USUALLY AWARE DURING INTENSE COMMUNICATIONS whether your tone sounds harmonious and soothing or irritable and defensive? We can all be oblivious to the effects of our own voices, yet we feel puzzled when children use a tone that challenges us or upsets someone else. Giving children a sense of their voice provides one of the richest tools they can possess in achieving happy relationships with others.

One of the basic challenges for children is learning to consciously adjust their volume. They often can't tell if their voices are too soft or too loud. Excitement, strong desires, or intense frustration produce loudness that can seem inappropriate to our adult ears. Sensitivity, new situations, or tentativeness often makes children's voices too soft for others to hear.

Taking time to role-play about ways of using one's voice helps a child of any age. For example, having a quiet child practice saying "No" in a strong voice or finding the words and voice strength to assert what they want in a social situation can help them set strong boundaries. Role-playing is a safe way we can offer feedback that doesn't sound critical.

One helpful tool for awareness is helping children distinguish between a "talking voice" and a "fighting" one. Arguments often get out of hand simply because we use a "fighting" tone without realizing it. We can stop ourselves and reflect out loud about whether we are using a talking or fighting voice and invite children to do the same.

Our voices can be soothing, compelling, or accusatory simply depending on our awareness. Reflecting on our voices is really a way of tuning into ourselves and aligning with our highest intentions, so taking time to explore how our voices sound is a lifelong gift.

Valentine's Day Guidelines: Treats, Gifts, Cards

Valentine's Day is a week from Friday, which falls on Presidents Day Week-end. Check with your child's teachers to learn what their plans are. Not all rooms will observe Valentine's Day.

- ♥ Please don't let your child bring edible treats or gifts to distribute.
- ♥ Children who wish to bring cards for other children may do so only if they bring one for everyone in the class.
- ♥ Preschool parents, please don't write children's names on cards. Parents or teachers, not the children, should put the cards in children's cubbies.

Have You Turned In Your Enrollment Form?

Two weeks ago we emailed Enrollment Forms for the 2020–21 school year to all K–4 parents and the parents of preschoolers who will be continuing in preschool next year. The forms ask parents to tell us whether their children will be returning to our school in 2020–21.

Our registrar, Daniela Alder, will be communicating separately this spring with the parents of preschoolers who will be moving up to kindergarten.

If you've turned in your form, thank you! If you haven't, please do—even if you're not sure of your plans. These forms are an important first step in our planning process for the coming school year.

Room 15 co-teacher Joseph Schneider's first novel, *One Day You'll Burn*, was published yesterday, and it had already garnered some glowing prepublication reviews. Dick Wolf, creator of TV's Law & Order franchise, describes it as "a brilliant first novel," adding, "Joseph Schneider's contemporary writing evokes some of Hollywood's most classic crime stories, from *Chinatown* to *LA Confidential*." Joseph knows the Hollywood scene well: his father and mother are television producers and writers.

Joseph stresses that his novel is not appropriate for children. Geared to fans of hard-boiled crime fiction, "This book is strictly for grown-ups," he says.

Joseph is a man of many talents—he's also a professional magician and ballroom dance instructor. "He's a modern Renaissance man," laughs his co-teacher, Terry Johnson.

"Joseph's love for learning is remarkable," she says. "In my 37 years of teaching, I've worked with many fabulous and inspired teachers. Joseph is in his own category. He's one of the best science teachers I've ever known. And he comes to school dressed sharply every day, wearing a charming tie that celebrates anything from Loony Tunes to unicorns to the Periodic Table of the Elements."

Joseph and his wife, Anna, who taught in our preschool and elementary school before becoming a mom, have two children. Their older child is in our kindergarten.

Fifth Grade Teacher's Novel Published

How many children do you know who can say their writing teacher is a published author? As of yesterday, our fifth graders can.



CALENDER NOTE: Presidents Day Weekend is February 14–17. School will be closed on Friday, the 14th, and Monday, the 17th.