

Trillium Charter School is a public school that nurtures each child's inherent curiosity, creativity and connection to community. We support diverse learning styles and use democratic processes to help students grow fully as human beings and contribute to and enhance the world.

Newsletter

January 2010



Trillium Charter School
5420 N Interstate Ave.
Portland, OR 97217
Phone: 503-285-3833
Fax: 503-249-0348
info@trilliumcharterschool.org
www.trilliumcharterschool.org

Trillium Charter School

LEARNING FOR CHANGE

Dear Trillium Families

By Stephanie Hinkle, Director

I hope you all had a good winter break. I didn't do much except work around my home and spend time with my family. It was a nice, relaxing time.

School is now back in session and students are hard at work. The semester ends January 29th, so many students will be working hard to complete projects and other class work. It can be stressful for them. Help make sure they are getting enough sleep and eating well. There is no school February 1st and 2nd as we work on report cards and getting ready for second semester.

During my break I had opportunities to have interesting discussions with family members and I have decided that one such discussion topic should be the focus of this letter. I see children at all different developmental levels on a daily basis. I am currently spending a lot of time with a one year old family member. This experience reminds me of the importance of the first few years of life. So much that affects emotional stability, academic success, self worth and identity development happen at this stage of life. It is a critical time. It is also often a time that is stressful for parents, family incomes tend to be lower, and just getting through the day and not losing your mind is the goal. Parents of young children are often more isolated than later when children hit school age and family to family relationships increase.

The most effective and most used learning technique in our world is modeling. Most of us learned the bulk of our parenting skills (or lack thereof) from our parents. We learn to parent as we are parented. This factor is of critical importance for parents of small children. They are just discovering who they are as parents, and will tend to fall back on

what they know. If what they know is sound, that is great. If what they know is dysfunctional, they will struggle more and often recreate similar experiences for their own children because they haven't developed something to take its place.

Back to the needs of young children. Young children are creating identities for themselves. Imagine that you land on a planet that you have never seen before and everything you experience has no context that you are familiar with. You will struggle to understand what you are experiencing and will look for clues from your environment. Maybe it is feedback from the experience itself, such as successfully locating a food source; or maybe it is feedback from another life form such as a frightening or loving encounter. You will shape your understanding of yourself and your success in your environment based on those experiences. This is pretty much how young children are developing their own understanding of themselves and their world. By the time a child is 5 to 7 much of the foundation of this personal development has happened. Therefore, the messages young children are given about themselves especially from caregivers become critical to life long success and happiness. Children see themselves as they are seen by those who care for them. This is a very important point. Really "seeing" your child instead of behaviors, work, hassles, etc. is very important for your child to begin to develop an identity that is confident, secure, and trusting.

There is a new public service campaign that shows adults saying bizarre and goofy things in public places. By the end of the commercial you see the adult having these conversations with young children, often babies. This issue of communicating

(Continued on Page 2)

High School Social Justice Symposium By Ken Gadbow, High School Advisor and Social Studies Teacher

Friday, December 18th was the High School Social Justice Symposium, held in the Multi-purpose Room, and throughout the upstairs hallway and classrooms. This was a culminating event for students working through their advising on the year-long Upper School theme of “Be the Change.” Each high school advisor pursued the theme from different perspectives, investigating a variety of social justice issues including hunger, HIV/AIDS, the effects of depleted uranium, source and control of food production, migrant farm worker issues, and many, many more. The event was opened in the MPR with an inspiring speech by Elizabeth Johnson followed by a moving presentation by Eric Mwarabu from Tanzania about his work with World Water Day. High School sophomore J.J. Ross then proceeded to steal the show with his speech and slideshow on the rights of people with disabilities.

On their way to attend a series of workshops created and run by high school students on a variety of social

justice issues, attendees found themselves in a security checkpoint bottleneck on the east stairs, complete with guards and searches to simulate an Israeli border crossing in the Palestinian Territories. The Symposium was the largest event of its kind yet held at Trillium and promises to become an annual event.

On Friday, January 29th, students in grades nine through twelve will defend a significant project or experience from their semester’s work during High School Exhibition Day. Exhibition Days are held at the end of each semester and feature each high schooler in a seven minute slot in front of a panel of their peers, community members, and parents. Exhibitions run the entirety of the Friday half-day, and are held in the classrooms of high school advisors. Any Trillium community member is welcome to attend. See any of the high school advisors, Elizabeth, Jess, Ken, or Will, for more information.

From the Director (Continued from Page 1)

with young children is so important that we now spend millions of dollars on public service announcements to promote better practices.

Talking to your children is key. The bulk of the type of talk to your children is also important. Society has used the ideas of positive and negative feedback in parenting for decades now. Positive and negative feedback are important aspects of communication, but they are useful for behavior modification. You use them to get children to stop or start a behavior. How you use both positive and negative feedback is also important, but not the true focus of this discussion. So much of our lives have nothing to do with behavior. So much of a person’s identity can either be viewed through a behavioral lens (“I am a bad person because I did so and so”) or it can be viewed through a truer holistic lens (“I am not what I do, but I am a loved and loving person”). Often when I talk to kids about what their qualities are, they link it to behavior (I do what people want me to so I am a nice person; I stole my sister’s candy so I am a bad person). This rollercoaster of behaviors leads to fluctuations in self-concept. Our communication with our children will reinforce one or the other of these routes to building self-concept. Either we increase their ideas that they are how they act, or they are whole, loved, with personal strengths that will help them recover from bad choices and events, and a sense of growing maturity that will lead to healthy choices and intrinsic positive self-regard.

So, a good way to look at the types of interactions we have with children is this: no more than 20% of my

interactions with my children will be about behaviors-getting them to do or not do what I want them to do. 80% will be interactions that don’t have a behavioral goal. They will be about spending time, getting to know ourselves and them at a deeper level or in a different way, having conversations, asking questions that are open and not meant to evaluate, but to understand. I often see parents approach interactions with their children in the reverse. They mostly only talk to them when they want to get them to do or not do something. Children gain a sense of unconditional love based on the interactions that are not behaviorally related. This is why it is important to spend the bulk of your interactions in this area. Sometimes it is a simple smile, or kiss on the head, or discussion of their experiences. When children link behavior to acceptance within their family they struggle to believe that they are unconditionally loved. The foundation for building a belief that a person is unconditionally loved happens in those first four years of life. The need for unconditional love is the most supreme need we have, except maybe basic life support such as food and water.

On to other things. We are working on Safe Routes to Schools projects, Beautiful Trillium projects, Humble Hearts projects, and many other important things. We have our school wide project fair Thursday, January 28th. The next single parent group will be held in February. If you are interested in a group for parents of students with disabilities, please let me know and I will try to get one scheduled.

Take care of each other and yourselves. Please vote!!

All School Meeting By Rob van Nood

Trillium All-School Meeting is governed by the Meeting Rules and Decisions, which is a living document. It provides a list of rules and decisions made by the All-School Meeting that apply to the whole school. Everything can be changed or added to at any time by submitting a proposal to the All School Meeting for a vote. When a proposal is passed by a majority of the All School Meeting Voting Members present, the All School document will be changed to reflect the All School Meeting decisions.

Here are some recent proposals that have been presented as well as their outcomes. The language of each proposal reflects the final language that was hammered out in the meeting (sometimes it looks quite different than the original).

| Date of Meeting | Name of person or people bringing up issue or making proposal | Issue or Proposal | Time Needed | In Favor | Opposed | Passed or failed? (or comments) |
|---------------------|---|---|-------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| 01/22/10 & 01/15/10 | Tabith & Ana (Amy) | We would like to host an upper school Valentines dance. It will be a masquerade ball. It will be held on February 11th. Thursday. It will be \$2.00 at the door and \$1 for a photo. It will be from 7-10. There will be decorations and snacks, but NOT dinner. We would like to borrow \$60 from the all school budget to spend on decor and snacks. We would like any decorations and snacks to be given Ana, Tabitha or dropped off in Amy's room. Ana, Tabitha, Reggi and other helpers will come at 5:00 to help set up. Ana will DJ. You are required to wear a mask. If you don't have one you can make one at the dance for 50 cents. We would like permission to hang posters around the school to advertise the dance. People from outside of Trillium may come with a signed permission slip turned into Amy 24 hours before the dance. When you first come into the dance you must take off your mask to show who you are. | 15 min. | 10 on 01/15; 67 on 01/22 revote | 19 on 01/15; 7 on 01/22 revote | Failed (but will re-vote on it when more); Passed on revote on January 22nd |
| 01/15/10 | Scott Bullock (Will) | I propose that the k-3rd graders and those under 42 inches tall be required to ride the spinner in the playground (Bob) one at a time. It will be implemented by student and staff who have park duty by just watching & making sure no more than 1 person gets on the spinner (Bob) at the same time | 15 min. | 25 | 1 | passed |
| 01/15/10 | Rob | I would like to use the lower school hallway (outside Kirk's room) to hang the mobile that used to hang in the Resource Room. | 10 min. | 32 | 0 | passed |
| 01/08/10 | JC | We'd like to amend the Bob rule regarding the age and replace it with a new height guidelines that state anyone 3 1/2 feet (42") cannot be on Bob with another person. There will be some kind of marker on the playground to show 42". | 5 min.. | 118 | 10 | passed |
| 01/08/10 | Parker (Lyndsey) | On 22 of December Humble Hearts School in Nairobi Kenya was bulldozed. We would like to send \$75 to help rebuild. We would like to send the money immediately and then have fund raisers to feed back into the ASM budget. | 5 min. | 128 | 0 | passed |

If you want to know more about how the rules are created, what the rules are, or more about this democratic structure at Trillium, visit the Governance page on the web site: <http://www.trilliumcharterschool.org/governance/all-school-meeting>, click to look around the rest of the wikispace, or send your questions to Rob. To have an issue put on the All School Meeting agenda, download the form from the website, fill it out completely, and return it to the drop box in the common space three days prior to the meeting. All School Meetings begin at 8:35 a.m. on each Friday which there are Issues or Proposals are received.

.....

Sign Up For Trillium-Parent Email List

Stay updated on important announcements, meetings, and community events via email. **To sign up for the trillium-parent email list, go to the Trillium website and click on the link**, or go to: <http://lists.trilliumcharterschool.org/mailman/listinfo/trillium-parent>.

.....

Let's Be Safe!

Please be extra cautious when dropping off and picking up children, and when parking to come into the school. Much risky driving/parking behavior of parents has been observed.



Remember, even if you are in a hurry, the potential costs of unsafe driving behavior can be extremely high. **Please slow down and pay attention while driving, biking, or walking in the vicinity of school. Don't forget...for everyone's safety, please:**

- No parking in the front lot
- Do not use the IFCC driveway or parking lot
- No double parking on Maryland Ave.
- Watch for pedestrians
- Remind your kids to look both ways before crossing! Big kids, too!

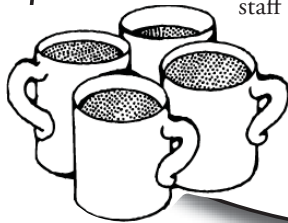
Come Join the TFT Coffee Klatch

What: Monthly First Friday Coffee for parents and staff

When: Friday, February 5, 8:00 a.m. for staff & 8:30 a.m. for parents

Where: The Garden Classroom

Why: Stop by to chat and enjoy some treats. Trillium's director, Stephanie Hinkle, will be on hand to talk with you.



2010-2011 K-12 Admission Process

We are currently accepting applications from new students for admission to Trillium for the fall term. Go to www.trilliumcharterschool.org/admission for more information and to download a current application form. **Prospective students are required to attend the Information Session on February 24th, 2010.** This event will be held from 6:30-8:00 pm, in the Multipurpose Room at Trillium.



Trillium's newsletter is produced monthly by parent volunteers Jodie Throckmorton and Susan Millhauser. Submissions to the newsletter are due by the third Monday of the month and can be directed to Jodie. Please contact Jodie at jodie@trilliumcharterschool.org. Photos or other images along with your submissions are also welcome!

Important Dates

*(Details on the Trillium web calendar.
All events at Trillium unless otherwise noted.)*

Monday, January 25

Board Meeting (All are welcome)
6:00pm – 8:30pm, Ken's room

Thursday, January 28

All School Project Fair. Project displays and performances by students in grades K-12.
6:30pm

Monday, February 1 & Tuesday, February 2, 2010 SCHOOL CLOSED

Teacher Planning Days

Friday, February 5, 2010

TFT Coffee Klatch--and pick up SCRIP orders
8:00am

Monday, February 8, 2010

TFT Meeting
6:30pm – 8:00pm
Childcare provided. Please sign up ahead-of-time at the front desk

Monday, February 15, 2010 SCHOOL CLOSED

President's Day

Thursday, February 18, 2010

Preschool Open House for
Prospective Families
6:30pm – 7:30pm

Monday, February 22, 2010

Board Meeting (All are welcome)
6:00pm – 8:30pm, Ken's room

Wednesday, February 24, 2010

Admissions Information Session
6:30pm – 8:30pm