Mountain Oak School

THE TUESDAY NEWSLETTER

Issue 28
March 22, 2011

SPRING ALL SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

This Thursday, March 24

Students arrive at 5:45pm (6th graders at 5:30pm)

Assembly begins at 6pm

At the Willow Creek Property, 1455 Willow Creek Rd

Please refer to your Handbook for dress requirements.

Explaining the Childhood Brain-Drain

By Jane Healy, PhD

Is a brain that has watched a lot of TV or played countless hours of video games different from one that has not – and would it be harder to educate in a traditional classroom? The answer to both questions appears to be "yes." Growing brains are shaped physically by experiences. Neurons in the brain, responding to sensory stimuli, build new physical connections, called synapses, to neighboring cells. The synapses form networks that are the neurological foundations for reading comprehension, analytical thinking, sustained attention and problem-solving. Active interest and mental effort by the child are crucial to the formation of these networks. Every response to sights, sounds, feelings, smells, and tastes makes more connections. The more work the brain does, the more it becomes capable of doing. Yet by ages three to five - the brain's critical period for cognitive and language development – the average child is watching television approximately twenty-eight hours per week.

Research indicates that intensive viewing has the potential for at least three effects on the growing brain, any of which could interfere with a child's natural potential for intelligence and creativity. First, excessive television watching may reduce stimulation to left-hemisphere systems, critical for development of language, reading and analytic thinking. In addition, it may affect mental ability and attention by diminishing mental traffic between the hemispheres. Finally, it may discourage development of "executive" systems that regulate attention, organization and motivation.

Children who never learn to understand and remember language without pictures attached have difficulty in school when they must listen to a teacher or to the author of a textbook. They look around for meaning instead of creating it inside their own heads. They may also have difficulty patterning information; that is, organizing and associating new information with previously developed mental connections.

According to Dr. Jerre Levy, biopsychologist at the University of Chicago and an internationally known authority on hemispheric development, "When children commit time looking at TV, they're not spending time reading. When a child reads a novel, he has to self-create whole scenarios, he has to create images of who these people are, what their emotions are, what their tones of voice are, what the environment look like, what the feeling of this environment is. These self-created scenarios are important, and television leaves no room for that creative process…..Brains are designed to meet cognitive challenges. It's just like muscles; if you don't exercise them they wither. If you don't exercise brains, they wither."

Jane M. Healy, Ph.D. TVFA's advisory board member, is an educational psychologist. Her latest book is *Failure to Connect: How Computers Affect Our Children's Minds – For Better And Worse*.

March 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
EVERY Wednesday & Sunday: *Garden Workday @ Burning Daylight Farms*		1	2 12:30 PM Dismissal 1st-8th gr	3 Parent Assoc. Mtg 5:30pm	4 Contra Dancing @the Armory7:30pm	5
			6th Grade Medieval Games Field Trip			
6	7 Board Mtg 3:30pm	8	9 12:30 PM Dismissal 1st-8th gr	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 12:30 PM Dismissal 1st-8th gr	17	18	19
		Spring Break	No School			
20	21	22 TODAY! APRIL Lunch Order forms ready! Yav Coll. Performance 9:15am 1st, 5th,7/8th gr	23 12:30 PM Dismissal 1st-8th gr	24 Walk thru the Grades (RSVP) SPRING ALL-SCHOOL ASSEMBLY	25	26
27	28	29 APRIL Lunch Order forms DUE TODAY	30 12:30 PM Dismissal 1st-8th gr	31	April 1	2

ANNOUNCMENTS

BIKE FOR SALE Dahon Stow-Away bike. Good condition, rusty chain--$30 or best offer. Contact Michelle 277-5245

SCHOOL LUNCH DRINKS ARE BACK! Did you know that you can have a drink with your lunch every day at school? We have apple and orange juice available each day and we'll have some additional options coming soon. Place your drink orders on the monthly lunch order form.

April Events:

AIMS TESTING begins the week of April 11

Every Wed. & Sat: Garden Workday
1:Contra Dancing @Armory 7:30p
4: Board Mtg 3:30p
7: Parent Assoc. Mtg 5:30p
16: Spring Fair & Open House
21: Walk Thru the Grades (RSVP)
22: No School/Possible Snow Day Make-up

April 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30