

Greetings!

Dear WINS parent:

Hello again! Despite the recent unseasonably warm weather, 2006 is drawing to a close! Hopefully the back to school things have winded down, and you are able to catch your breath. Just in time for the holiday season and all the craziness that brings!

This issue's focus is on *Adding the Arts to Your Family Time*. With the impending budget cuts for our schools, some of the proposed things to go will be the already constricted arts programs. We alienate an essential part of ourselves when we ignore our creative side and stop noticing the gorgeous things around us. Therefore, included in the newsletter are ways to incorporate the arts and artistic appreciation into your lives. *Please note: all the information contained in the main articles consists of general, simple, helpful ideas for navigating the teen years—not meant at all to be specific instructions for parenting your child. Please accept them as “gentle reminders” of issues that you have probably already considered.* This issue's theme: **Adding the Arts to Your Family Time.**

Reminder—If you have things that you want to share, or ideas about the topic, please drop it in the mail or give us a call..

Working with you for your child's success -

Assets:

What are assets?

Assets are key building blocks that help kids succeed.

Each month will feature a different asset.

This month's asset:

Adding the Arts to Your Family Time

Students are more likely to grow up healthy when they spend three or more hours a week involved in theater, music, or the other arts

Winter

The Winter session is quickly coming to a close. Fortunately, we have Spring session to look forward to. There are many things coming up, so make sure you mark things down on your calendar!

WINS 1

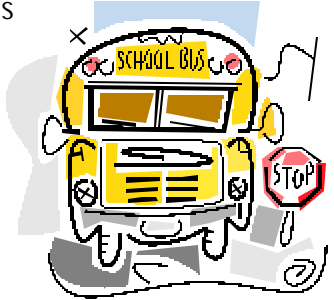
- Classes - every Wednesday, unless noted
- Dec. 13 - Last Wednesday class
- Dec. 16 - Amer. Museum of Nat. History
- Jan. 10 - Spring semester classes begin!
- Jan. 15 - MLK, Jr. Day of Service project - TBD
- Jan. 27 - Ind. Seaport Museum
- March 10 - Baltimore Aquarium

WINS II

- Dec. 9 - meeting with Sylvia James
10 am - Noon (pizza will be provided)
- Dec. 20 - Jan. 27 SAT registration
- Dec. 26 - (Explainers) Diorama Day
- Jan. 15 - MLK, Jr. Day of Service project - TBD
- Jan. 31 - Feb. 3 - College Tour

Phenomenal Fall Festivities!

We have been having an amazing time! I finally feel like I am starting to get a handle on school being back in session! Things have been exciting as WINS I has fallen into the normal routine of meeting on Wednesdays. We have also raised our class numbers slightly (still might have more coming...). It has been great meeting Geneva, Hadiya, Nadiah, and Sharonda. All four girls seem to fit in nicely with the original WINS class and have enhanced our classes! The Winter syllabus has dealt with terrestrial ecology, so we have talked about topics ranging from animal adaptations to geomorphology, or how land changes over time.



Fall trips

WINS I has taken two trips this fall - the Bronx zoo and Lakota Wolf Preserve.

While at the Bronx zoo, the girls had a scavenger hunt to complete, where they had to find things from an example of endangered species to facts about the zoo itself. The weather was gorgeous and many of the animals were active.

The next trip, to the Lakota Wolf Preserve, was



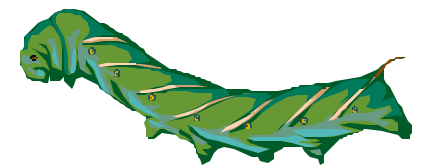
apparently destined to happen!

Originally we were told that our group was too big and we would not be able to go, so we planned to go somewhere else (and were secretly not as excited). However, when the day came, not everyone was able to make the trip, and Lakota said we could come!

At the preserve, there are several sub-species of gray wolves, which are the largest members of the dog family! The weather was rather brisk and while the talk about the wolves was interesting, everyone was glad to get back into the van.

In November, WINS II hopped on a bus and headed down to Beltsville, MD to visit the US Department of Agriculture. We heard a little about what types of research occurs at the site and got a run-down of some of the jobs that are available. Next, two scientists came out and said they were biological terrorists!

The two women then went on to explain they they test out different chemicals to determine the best pesticides. Soon we were holding beetles and caterpillars! There may be an entomologist among us yet....



The articles focusing on Incorporating the Arts are taken, with permission, from:

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Adding the Arts to Your Family Time

Mention painting, many people think of Picasso. Mention music, and Beethoven, Bill Withers, or Beyoncé come to mind. Rarely do we think of ourselves—or our children—as painters or musicians.

Yet, all of us are artists in some way. We think of creative ways to surprise someone on his or her birthday. We hum a few notes along with the radio. Some of us create songs for astronomers.

These small bursts of artistic expression are important ways we communicate our uniqueness. By bringing more art and music into our homes, we can help to develop another side of our children's personalities, talents, and skills.

Some easy ways to do this:

- Become clothing critics. During a shopping trip, critique the colors, designs, and patterns you see on clothes.
- Play magnet art. Visit a museum together

and walk toward the first painting that really catches your eye (draws you to it like a magnet). Let family members each explain what they like about the painting they chose. (Hint—Sunday is pay what you wish at the Museum of Art and the Academy of Fine Art's Morris collection is free every day)

- Incorporate the discipline of art. Have your child take music or art lessons. Have the family gather around the piano, guitar, or radio once a week and sing. Or make time to daily sing, dance, do an art project, or do a humorous creative skit.
- Welcome the "noise" your daughter makes when practicing an instrument—treasure the moments when you can hear her being creative.

Helpful Hints: Tips that make bringing out the artist in your daughter easier:

- Set up an arts area in your home. Some families have a "hobby art" room or an art supply shelf. Others set up a cardboard table stocked with construction paper, paint, glue, string, scissors, and other supplies.
- Encourage your child's musical interests, but do not push for perfection.
- Model creativity. Cook an old recipe in a new way. Mix and match shirts and pants.
- Comment positively about some of the songs your adolescent listens to—parents often surprise their teens by enjoying an occasional song by a popular artist.



Talk Together Questions to discuss with your daughter:

- Which do you enjoy the most: music, art, theater, or dance? Why?
- If you could take private lessons, what would you take? Why?
- How can we incorporate the cultural arts more into our lives?

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Time Together

Three ways to enhance music, art, or theatrical training with your child:

1. Investigate which artistic abilities are evident in your family history. Discuss which ones your child seems to have an interest in and talent for.
2. Tour the arts in your home. Talk about the art on the wall, the music you listen to, and other signs of art.
3. Look in your community phone book for theaters, museums, or other cultural organizations. Choose one to visit. (Don't miss out on some of the fantastic "smaller" museums, such as the Doll Museum on Broad in North Philly.)

The Power of Music

"Music should be prized as an invaluable way to boost human brain power," says Frances Rauscher, Ph.D., a research psychologist.

She and her colleagues at the University of California, Irvine, have found these positive effects of music:

- Children who receive eight months of music lessons had a 46% improvement in reasoning skills; kids who didn't take lessons had only a 6% increase.
- Kids who listened to 10 minutes of Mozart before a test had a higher score than students who sat in silence or listened to relaxation tapes.

Birthday Announcements

Jonuka Warren - Oct. 5 (15)

Danielle Porter - Oct. 17 (15)

Najwa Smith - Nov. 6

Anissa Daniel - Nov. 11 (16)

Nadaysha Screven - Nov. (12)

Jasmine Martin - Nov. 21 (17)

Josenia Toribio - Nov. 24 (17)

Jazmin Cradle - Nov. 25 (15)

Jamie Lewis - Dec. 10 (16)

Chantel Harley - Dec. 14 (16)

Sarah Burg - Dec. 17 (16)

Final Word

"Why should you care about your child's creativity? Because all of human progress requires adult creativity, and people are more likely to do creative work as adults if they develop the skill and the motivation for creativity as children."

Teresa Amabile, researcher and author of *Growing Up Creative*