



Holiday Giving

As the holiday season envelopes us, as we revel in festivities and the pleasures of our loved ones' company, one's thoughts may occasionally turn to the less fortunate. My heart is often full of those who may be lonely, afraid or sad at this time of year and giving just a little makes my Christmas, which is my primary holiday each winter, a little brighter. I know it is a priority for many parents to bring their children up with the habit of giving of themselves. Through established organizations, this is often difficult. These organizations require efficiency to accomplish their missions and little ones, while well-meaning, are usually inefficient. Therefore, I think it is in the best interests of everyone for families with young children to provide small, spontaneous and low-key opportunities for kids to think of and to act on behalf of others.

One such opportunity is the many Giving Trees we see at church, the gym, in elder-care facilities and in our local businesses. One can select a tag and provide wished-for gifts for a needy child, an elder or a homeless pet. Your old towels and bedding are needed items at Heartland and Safehaven Humane Societies. One can donate gently used toys, stuffed animals and clothing to Vina Moses or another local charity and one can, of course, donate food for the hungry. I see grocery bags, full of desirable items at the grocery store to purchase and donate there on the spot as I shop.

One can also provide a small labor of love. Maybe your child would like to make some cards and take them around the neighborhood putting them in mailboxes or on people's doorsteps. Maybe you know a neighbor who has a dog that needs to be walked. When you are headed out for a walk, you can stop

by and ask your neighbor if they or their dog would like to accompany you. Maybe there's a neighborhood child who would like to join you. Even if no one is home or the answer is "no, thank you," at least you asked! If you don't get to walk the dog, now everyone's hands are free to pick up litter. That is a gift for the whole neighborhood! Take a couple of plastic grocery bags and be sure to wash your hands once you get home. You can make treats for the area's wild bird population.



Our kinara for Kwanzaa.

There are probably lots of ideas on-line, but the old pinecone on a string slathered with unsalted peanut butter and birdseed never fails. Pauline just recently read aloud a wonderful book called "The Night Tree" by Eve Bunting. A family decorates a special tree each winter with fruits, nuts and other treats for wild animals.

I used to volunteer weekly at Timberview Care Center, a nursing home, in Albany. Facilities such as this make a great effort to make the holidays cheery and bright for their residents, but, when one rarely or never leaves one's environs, there can be an unrelenting sameness that is anything but cheery. You can provide the best holiday cheer of all...the face and voice of a little child. I have called several area facilities, which I will list for you, who welcome your little family to come and visit a resident or two. This would be a gift of gladness, indeed. And

you can tailor the visit to your child. You can come at any time, no call necessary, check in at the front desk and ask if there is anyone who would like a visit today. You will be directed to particular elders or invited to walk the halls and knock on doors. Some children will be too shy to initiate much conversation, but they can deliver a card and who knows where that will lead. Just seeing the children will be a treat, even if it is Mom or Dad who does most of the talking. Perhaps a child will bring his/her favorite book and that will be a conversation starter. Perhaps the person being visited would like to see and talk about the book or perhaps Mom or Dad would read it aloud while the child holds hands or sits with the senior. Maybe you and your child would like to sing a song, whether Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or Other. Everyone loves “Row, Row, Row Your Boat!”

What I like about the above ideas is that they can take place whenever the spirit moves you, whether home, restless, needing a project or out running errands and wanting a break from shopping. When the activity ceases to be enjoyable for the giver or the receiver, Mom and Dad can clap their hands and say, “well, this has been great! We have to run along, now!” Some seniors may be irascible and make a child uncomfortable and then, there is that nursing home smell to which some may be sensitive. End the mission on a high note and perhaps your child will be all the more enthusiastic for trying another Good Deed or returning to that same care center or making more pinecone birdfeeders another day. And it’s not a huge commitment of time on your part. Most of these outreach efforts can be accomplished in an hour...oh, yeah, you have kids....make that 2 hours!

Now, bear in mind, these are suggestions, meant only to support like-minded people in their efforts. It’s not an exhortation for you to drop the wrapping paper and your cup of hot spiced wine and go out Do-Gooding. I think everyone should enjoy their own holidays in their own special ways doing what is meaningful and important to them. I wish you all such holidays and a wonderful winter break. Oh! And if you’re looking for child-friendly boredom busters for the winter break, please check out my blog post from December 15, 2010. It was a good one. Go to the school’s webpage at www.philomathmontessori.org and scroll down to “blogspot” to access the archives.


Area Nursing Homes Welcoming You and Your Kids

Corvallis Manor
160 NE Conifer Blvd
541-768-4000


Regency Park Place
2595 NE Jack London St
541-754-5808

Regency Park Place requests that families call ahead of their visit. Please ask for Caelin.

Timberview Care Center
1023 6th St SW Albany
541-926-8664

Timberview is where I used to volunteer. They were especially enthusiastic. I know it’s in Albany, but maybe you’re going to Heritage Mall and you can stop by. It’s easy to find. Just follow the hospital signs. It’s right across from Albany Samaritan. 

Newsline

- There will be art class and extended care on December 21. **Winterbreak begins Monday, December 24** . School resumes on Monday, January 7.
- Please join us for our next **parent meeting on Thursday, January 17 at 6:00**. This is an important meeting – just 3 weeks before our big fundraiser! Free child care will be provided.
- There will be **no school on Monday, January 21**. We will be celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- Our big fundraiser of the year – **The Love of Learning Auction**, Raffle and Family Fun will be on **Saturday, February 9** from 5pm to 9pm at the Philomath Elementary School.
- There will be **no school on Monday, February 18**, President’s Day.
- We are having an **Open House for prospective parents on Saturday, February 23** from 10am to 1pm. We will be giving an introductory presentation at 11am. Please “bring a buddy” to the Open House and spread the word! 

Art Fridays

Our Fridays continue to take some interesting turns as unexpected possibilities keep coming up. As the year began and the children were working on rectangular yarn weavings, we also began painted water color weavings and then water



Watercolor paper weaving

nature collage

color collage. The donation of paper umbrellas followed and this brought colorful paintings on the tops with yarn ball bangles hanging down. With all the beautiful fall leaves, interesting seeds, pods, and other plant findings, this led us into nature collages—some made into patterns, mandalas, people or random designs. From there we studied these leaves, their shapes, coloring and veins. The class was very focused on drawing these and then embellishing their designs to add highlights and other details with colored pencils and chalk pencils on black paper. As December began, the idea of luminaries which could be internally lighted became appealing as the holidays and more darkness approached. Our next surprise turn has come with the donation of gourds to be made into bowls this week and next. ~Jennifer Smith

Farewell to the Irwin Family



A farewell hug to Charlotte

Brian works on adjusting the height of our Practical Life stand with Mia in the foreground.

Yes, it's true — the Irwin family left last week leaving a big hole in our community. Brian and Audrey have done so much for our school in the two and half years that Charlotte has been with us it's hard to know where to begin. Actually, it's not. Brian came to the first parent meeting offering to build a guitar for our auction which launched our priceless raffle enterprise. This incredibly gorgeous guitar sold all 500 tickets!! Audrey, no slacker, too, took on the solicitations, and helped bring the auction to its very successful end. Throughout their time here they have helped us with endless repairs and building projects — a new gate, our huge and popular slate chalkboard (their donation, too), and new tabletops.

Brian was also ready to work with Allan putting up walls around our covered area until we put that considerable project on hold. They were also there for every event and for the smaller projects, too. Charlotte and her family were embraced by a very tight community and we will miss them all very much. Our very best wishes go with them to the north with high hopes that Brian's work will bring them back. Please take care.



Left to Right: Anika, Charlotte, Zaiya, Lucas, and Connor with Cedric in the background.

Thank You

Classroom Projects

- Replaced tires on tire tree: **Ryan Johanson**
- Trace & cut shapes for drawing: **Liesl Rolston**
- Trace & cut shapes for art projects: **Meagan Johanson**
- Installed lock box: **Irwin Family**
- Prepared sewing cards: **Lara Lee-Reavis**
- Changed light bulbs in the classroom: **Lanny McGaughy**
- Prepared sewing cards: **Audrey Irwin**
- Outdoor extension project planning and solicitation: **Shawne Johnson**
- Built and installed a new gate for our school yard: **Brian and Audrey Irwin**

Terra Madre Day Volunteers

- Coordinators: **Lua Siegel & Joy Ueng**
- Booth volunteers: **Lara & Duncan Reavis, Christian & Cedric Petrovich, Heidi & Lucas Junge, Audrey & Charlotte Irwin**

Donations

- School laptop computer and set up: **Rory Plaire**
- Security lock box: **Rory Plaire**
- Extra clothes: **Kenoyer & Boysen Families**
- Rocks for our Outdoor Extension: **Kenoyer Family**
- Pin pricking tool: **Audrey Irwin**

Gift Books & Music

- *The Lotus Seed*: **Alice Johnson**
- *In November*: **Jai Braxton**

Many thanks to all of the Families who are working hard on the upcoming Annual Love of Learning Fundraiser event!

Our sincere and humble thanks for the many things you do for us and give to us!! We are so fortunate.