



## Custom Learning Academy Newsletter

November 5, 2010

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### Dates to Remember in November:

**Friday, 11/5/10:** End Date of First Quarter, no Friday Reports! Report Cards will be sent home with each student in a sealed envelope on Tuesday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

**Thursday, 11/11/10:** SCHOOL HOLIDAY: Veteran's Day

**Sat. & Sun. 11/13/10 & 11/14/10:** Photo shoot Dates for Family Holiday Photos with Daphne (see article)

**Wednesday, 11/17 2010:** Parent Team Meeting (This is the "Last Wednesday of November".)

**Sat. & Sun. 11/20/10 & 11/21/10:** Photo shoot Dates for Family Holiday Photos with Daphne (see article)

**Monday-Friday: 11/22/10-11/27/10:** Thanksgiving Holiday Week

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### Upcoming Dates for December:

**Thursday, 12/2/10:** Tree Lighting Ceremony and B of A Holiday Music Event at B of A Downtown

**Friday, 12/10/10:** 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade Play in our Friday Performance at the regular time of 2:30-3:00pm

**Friday, 12/17/10:** Music Recital for our last Holiday Friday Performance, beginning at 2:00 pm! Make a note of the special time! Please plan on attending.

### Thankfulness and having an "Attitude of Gratitude"

This month of November, with Thanksgiving right around the corner, it seems fitting to implement a school wide theme of thankfulness. Students are reminded how it is generally good manners to be grateful to those who teach, help, share, and are generally kind to them. Everyone *appreciates* being *appreciated*, and this is the month to practice those good manners. Thanksgiving is a time to remember the peaceful celebration between the Native Americans and the European settlers in our early history, and remembering that our finest moments as a nation are ones of understanding, appreciating and having compassion for each other and our differences.

### Parent Team Update:

I just wanted to bring everybody that has attended the past "CLA fundraiser" meetings up to date on where we are at. In this process of processing this GREAT idea with our motivated parents, we have learned that to make each interested family informed, it is imperative that we have a system for reference for all parents to keep abreast of the Parent Team minutes. In addition, an automated system for reminders for meetings would alleviate the time cost to lan.

The particulars of the Thursday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 event are:

**Tree Lighting:** Held from 3:30-6PM, to coincide with all the Truckee Elementary Age Students (from all schools in town) decorating the downtown trees.

**Evening to follow at Bar of America:** Hot Cocoa for the kids, libations for adults and live music, all for a reasonable door fee. Come support CLA and have a fun evening!

**UPDATE:** Unfortunately, the Gingerbread House and "Winter Faire" idea will be tabled until next year with the excitement from the various other schools' PTO groups. This will allow the FIRST annual event to happen with ALL the schools participating. This update came to fruition this week at the Wednesday, 11/3/10 committee meeting. A special thank you to Dionne Pope is in order for making those contacts and collaboration efforts.

In addition to the schools, the Downtown Merchants Association is in full support for the bigger idea next year. So the bullet points below are part of the "bigger concept" that I would like on the agenda to revisit planning beginning in April, 2011. This will allow a task list to be established for implementation in Sept, 2011 and that will make the event planning flow smoothly next fall!

Marketing would heavily rely (but not solely) on the PTOs of these schools getting the word out (flyers sent home with the kids for instance) and with all the schools, the WHOLE TOWN will be involved and invited!

A few pre-framed gingerbread houses will be set up on tables. Kids can decorate these houses for free, and the decorated houses will be donated to various worthy causes (Senior Center, Project Mana homes, etc). Signs in front of each house will indicate to whom the homes will be donated. These homes would be larger than the ones we were originally planning on selling.

The fundraising aspect is to sell edible holiday decorations (gingerbread men with holes in their heads) for \$5 each. The kids would then decorate them at the firehouse and take them home. All proceeds going to the charity(s).

Based on the fact that roughly half the Truckee Elementary and Glenshire Elementary kids attend the tree decorating and that of those maybe half will attend our event, it was estimated that roughly 200 kids would participate. The current thinking is that if we can find pre-packaged edible holiday ornaments we can significantly over-order (400 cookies) to ensure that we don't run out and that the leftovers could be sold to interested parents or used for some other worthy cause.

Elijah Blue will provide complimentary hot beverages at the Fire House.

Please come to the November Parent Team Meeting Wednesday, 11/17 2010 at 7pm at CLA

**NOTE:** There has been a suggestion that maybe the Parent Team meeting should occur on Fridays at 3:00pm after the Performance? Please express your opinion on that to the [parentteam@customlearning.org](mailto:parentteam@customlearning.org). If it is a popular time to change to, we can then move the meeting time. PLEASE express your opinions, positive or negative!. Thank you!

## 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Outdoor Holiday Family Lifestyle Photo Fundraiser:

This opportunity is open to all CLA families and the entire Truckee Community! For \$200, your family can bring and unlimited number of people to a 30 minute photo shoot, and pets are welcome too! (Retail value of \$350) The cost includes \$50 to CLA directly, and a \$25 gift certificate on Pictage for prints, 3 digital photo files to keep which includes all photos professionally "polished". Beautiful family photos are wonderful holiday gifts; you can have a professional photo for your greeting card at any source you choose with the digital files. Pictage offers many types of formats for your photos, from quality prints to unique high end ready to hang options. We are very lucky to Daphne and her talent as our school photographer, as well as out Photography teacher for our upper level students. Support Daphne and CLA by scheduling your Holiday Photo shoot now! Email her to book your time: [daphne@daphnehougard.com](mailto:daphne@daphnehougard.com) or call her at 415 302-0733.

The dates and locations are as follows:

Sat, November 13 <sup>th</sup>	8am-10am at Martis Valley Wildlife Loop	3pm-5pm Martis Valley Wildlife Loop	30 minute photo shoots, by appointment
Sun. November 14 <sup>th</sup>	8am-10am at Truckee RR Tracks, Downtown Scene	3pm-5pm Daphne's Home with beautiful Fall color for background	30 minute photo shoots, by appointment
Sat. November 20 <sup>th</sup>	8am-10am at CLA in the Meadow behind the Kinder Yard	3pm-5pm at Dog Beach on Donner Lake	30 minute photo shoots, by appointment
Sun. November 21 <sup>st</sup>	8am-10am at Martis Valley Wildlife Loop	3pm-5pm at Dog Beach on Donner Lake	30 minute photo shoots, by appointment

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You can see more of her work at [www.daphnehougard.com/people2010](http://www.daphnehougard.com/people2010)

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## Opportunities for Parents to get involved at CLA:

(Restated from October's Newsletter) Last year, the Parent Team debated implementing mandatory service hours from each family in the school as a suggestion from a family whose previous private school required hours. Many Private Schools mandate service hours in addition to tuition, but that has not been mandated in the past at CLA to date. After speaking with a couple parents, it seemed that many felt that a 10 hour per year mandatory volunteer commitment was reasonable, and the option to "buy out" the hours was an option suggested and discussed. As Executive Director, I decided not to mandate the volunteer policy in this 2010/2011 school year, **but to encourage this time commitment from each family**. The opportunities to improve our school and contribute to school improvements will be communicated through this newsletter, and if a need at CLA strikes a skill or talent you possess, please consider donating your time. If this time commitment is made by many, we will certainly make progress that is very meaningful to your student and to the school. Thank you.

**Carpentry Skills Needed:** Building stabilizers for our indoor greenhouse and privacy wall for students, installing coat hooks for winter apparel, build a storage shelf for Art Supplies in upstairs area and in Kinder Bathroom for bins.

**Holiday Party Planners:** Two Elementary parent **Holiday Party Coordinators** are needed each month, beginning this month for the Elementary grades to assist teachers in planning holiday festivities. Email Ian to volunteer for November OR December... Please step up, your kids will be excited to have your help.

If any parent has an idea that would help improve the school, please don't hesitate to contact us. We are always open to suggestions.

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## Thank You's and Appreciation:

Thank you to Janet Feick and Kate Wagner for baking the wonderful Halloween Cookies for the Elementary students!

Thank you to P.J. Antilla for baking gluten-free cupcakes for the Halloween Party!

Thank you Jaime Gemme for teaching Yoga for this first quarter to all levels of our students!

Thank you Tim Crosby for cooking for the Open House!

Thank you Amy & Michael Zanfagna for donating a case of wine to the Open House and lending galvanized tubs and all the support.

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## General Elementary Policies at CLA:

In our weekly meetings with all Elementary Teachers, we discussed the need for general policies and consequences to be specifically defined so that when teachers are supervising students NOT in their class (like in PE, or lunch times) situations can be handled with uniformity. Here is the outcome of how we will handle these behaviors when they occur. Ian Madan, Dean of Students, approved these for school wide implantation.

### Rules:

**No gum at all.** (They want to reserve it as a "privilege" to offer students when testing, and NOT have it be a "regular" privilege!)

**Hitting, kicking, pushing, punching, etc.** (anything done purposefully and with the intent to hurt someone): Report to Ian and large fine (\$30-50 depending on age group)

**Language (including "that sucks"):** 1. Verbal warning 2. Fine (\$5-10 depending on age) 3. Repeat offenders sent to the office for implantation of our progressive discipline plan.

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## Curriculum Questions that have reached the Office:

Q. Since 4<sup>th</sup> graders had "Bible Stories" as a unit of Literature, a parent asked, if other religious folktales will be covered?

A. First, I want to iterate, CLA is not affiliated with any religion. Yes to the question, as the holidays approach, we will cover other religions such as Judaism, Buddhism and Native American beliefs in our Art Program, and in literature areas throughout the curriculum and various grade levels. Religious beliefs are not a part of any curriculum, but history, literature and celebration traditions of their religious culture will be acknowledged with an appropriate curriculum tie-in or holiday correlation. For example, today students voted on Field trip ideas for November and December, and one VERY popular option that won the vote was the UNR Planetarium. A show the kids want to see is called "Seasons of Light", a full dome digital star show that celebrates many of the world's holiday customs and explores how diverse cultures light up the season. The other show in the "Double Feature" at the planetarium will be determined by class vote and the options are: "Mummies, the Secrets of the Pharaohs", or "Saturn, Jewel of the Heavens" or "Live Sky Tonight Star Talk". I whole-heartedly support this type of exposure to diverse cultures and world religions.

Q. Is CLA planning on teaching "Sex Education" in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, as public school does?

A. No. CLA is focusing on your child's academic skills in the core content areas, while improving their personal and academic self esteem along the way, in a culture of moral integrity. I would like to say that I am glad this question was asked, so I can convey to our school community that this important topic of their body maturing and information on reproduction should be a topic covered at home. As a school administrator, I do make sure that female students, grade 6 and above, feel comfortable discussing any problems they have with their monthly menstrual cycles with myself and I discretely make sure they know that supplies are provided for them in the girls bathroom.

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Thank you for reading, and parents & guardians may submit questions to [office@customlearning.org](mailto:office@customlearning.org) to be answered in our monthly newsletters.

Sincerely, Lisa Crosby, M.Ed.

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