



A Word from Ms. Mall

Dear Winterberry Families

Thank you for all you do to support Winterberry and your children. In line with this month's theme, **Rest and Restore**, I would like to address the topic at hand through the lens of intention and balance. Both of these are new to me as I was raised in a "check it off the list, live in the future (ie: that magical day when everything comes into perfect alignment and all things are wonderful) biological family.

In the past, I have shared ideas for evening routines that worked when our family had a stay-at-home member and when our children were younger. Now we find ourselves in a different stage of life where rhythm is still paramount to our success, but it is much more difficult to find. When the adult(s) in a family do not arrive home until 6 or 6:45 it is very difficult to maintain a 7 o'clock bedtime. In light of this reality, it is important for us to identify realistic ways we can capture the heart of what we hold dear while also making realistic goals for ourselves and our families.

For us, this meant beginning by identifying the one essential thing we could do consistently as a family each day prior to bedtime. Reading a nighttime story was where we began. Regardless of our days or evenings, we commit ourselves to reading to our boys each night. Do we fall asleep during reading sometimes? Sure, but that adds to the joy of the experience. When we began this commitment we were lucky to be in bed by 9:30. Now, we consistently make it to bed by 8:30 and are sound asleep by 8:45. Is this the ideal? No, but it is the striving that counts.

Another thing we did was to simplify their toys. It has been almost a week and (knock-on-wood) they have not even noticed the absence of three bags of trash (broken toys, etc) and four bags of toys donated to Value Village. Shhh, don't tell!

There are other things we have added into our lives as well, but instead of sharing them one-by-one, I would ask you to consider the question: What is important to you in regard to establishing rhythm and where do you believe you can find success? Begin with one thing you know you can be successful in implementing, find success, and then add another thing. One-by-one you will build a sustainable base for your family.

Blessings,
Shanna

Upcoming Events

December 2012

6 th	WPG Meeting, 6p
7 th & 8 th	Winterberry Circus
13 th	WCC Meeting, 6p
20 th	All-School Assembly, East High, 6p
21 st	Last Day of School 2012

January 2013

1 - 6 th	Winter Break
7 th	First Day of School 2013
10 th	WPG Meeting, 6p <i>NOTE CHANGE</i>
13 th	WCC Meeting, 6p
18 - 20 th	APWE Annual Conference in CA
21 st	MLK, Jr. Day, NO SCHOOL

Announcements

Welcome back to Mary Robicheaux!

Awakening the innate potential in every child

The Next Big Things: Upcoming December Events In Anchorage

Anchorage offers lots of great family fun activities for you and your loved ones, especially through the winter! Here are a few of the events happening this December. Get out and enjoy some of what the city has to offer!

Dec. 2 (Free to attend; Giving is in the spirit of the event) **Mitzvah Mall: 12:00pm – 3:00pm:**

Congregation Beth Sholom

(7525 E. Northern Lights Blvd.)

Congregation Beth Sholom is hosting Anchorage's annual "Mitzvah Mall." Last year's event raised more than \$10,000 worth of goodwill in three hours. Think of a bizarre bazaar: an alternative gift fair. There are still rooms filled with booths, but the "vendors" are nonprofit organizations and charities. Instead of buying more material gifts and stuff, shoppers can donate to local non-profits on behalf of friends, family or others on their holiday gift list. Give a gift that keeps on giving

Dec. 3 & 4 (FREE) **Sounds of the Season 2012**

Alaska Center for the Performing Arts

Celebrate the holidays with the USAF Band of the Pacific-Alaska. This "Sounds of the Season" will be the final public performance by the Alaskan Air Force Band! Join us for an evening of festive entertainment at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts in Anchorage, AK.

- * The concert is FREE and open to the public.
- * Doors open at 6:15pm; concert begins at 7pm.
- * Tickets are not required; however, seating is limited so arrive early!

Dec. 7th (FREE) **First Friday Gallery Walk**

Many of us have visited our local galleries. You can also enjoy free admission to the museum between the hours of 6:00 – 9:00 with live music.

Get into the holiday spirit with the "Wonderland of Toys" exhibition, enjoy live music by Mike Gorder in Muse, and pose for a photo with a cuddly polar bear mascot.

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Kids with Candles: *Winter Festivals Celebrating Light*

December brings festivals of light in many different traditions and cultures. Soon, two traditional Winterberry festivals will be celebrated in the kindergarten, first grade, and second grade classrooms. While these two festivals focus on the youngest students, they often include older students and parents.

The Spiral Walk

The Winterberry Spiral Walk festival has been celebrated sporadically in kindergarten over the years. It was based on the Advent Spiral (or Advent Garden) celebrated in many Waldorf schools, but focused on the Winter Solstice as a turning point for all of us in Alaska. The Winter Solstice is both the darkest day of the year, but also signals the beginning of increasing daylight.

The festival has been held both indoors and outdoors, but always with a spiral of spruce boughs laid on the floor (or in the snow) with a large candle burning in the center. Before the children begin their walk, spiral is at its darkest. Then, each child in turn walks the spiral path to the center and lights his or her own candle from the center. Then, as he or she follows the spiral back out, he or she gets to choose a spot along the boughs to leave his or her candle. As each child lights his or her own light, and then contributes it to the spiral of boughs, the light of the path is increased for each next traveler. Children are well prepared for their participation in the Spiral Walk by their teachers through songs, stories, and preparing their candles. Parents and older students are often invited to sing or to play music with the waiting children.

This year at Winterberry, the Spiral Walk will include the kindergarten and the first grade students. Please contact Ms. Lisa or Ms. Glaser for more information

Lucia Day

Part of the second grade curriculum emphasizes examples of the best in human nature. In Scandinavia, the ancient example of Lucia has long been celebrated for her dedication to serving others. She is depicted with a crown of candles because it is said that she wanted her hands free to carry more

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December in Anchorage – Continued from pg 2

Dec. 7th (FREE)

Eagle River Winter Wonderland Walk and Community Tree Lighting. Tree lighting is at 7:00pm. The event runs from 5:30 – 8:00pm.

Downtown Eagle River Commons is the site for the annual tree lighting and features the elementary school choirs. Santa and a team of his eight real reindeer visit the event. Free horse-drawn sleigh rides along with lots of giveaway treats and fun. Share in the spirit of the season with donations of food to the E.R. Food Pantry and donations of gifts to families in need through the Sleeping Lady Lions. Just bring your canned goods or unwrapped gifts to the event

Dec. 7th and 8th (FREE)

Eagle River Merry Merchant Munch is on Friday from 2 - 6 pm and Saturday from 11am - 4pm

On the first Friday and Saturday in December the businesses in downtown Eagle River host an old-fashioned holiday competition. The public is invited to go on free horse-drawn sleigh rides and enjoy the sounds of holiday carolers from Chugiak High School. Between 45 and 55 merchants compete annually to create the best holiday munchie, and the public is invited to visit each of the participants and sample their culinary creations."

Dec. 9th (FREE)

Wells Fargo Family Free Day at the Museum from 1:00 – 4:00 PM - Music by Anchorage Concert Chorus. This is another opportunity to enjoy the Museum's annual "Wonderland of Toys" exhibit, on display from November 23rd to January 13th, with your family for free.

Dec. 9th (FREE)

6:00 pm at Cyrano's Theatre Company (413 D St.) "The Tempest," film (2010) is NEXT as part of the **Shakespeare Cinema Sunday series**. The Tempest is believed to be Shakespeare's last complete play and his farewell to the stage. In this production the celebrated actress, Helen Mirren, plays the lead role as "Prospera," a female version of Shakespeare's Duke Prospero. Directed by Julie Taymor (of Lion King fame), with Alan Cumming, Russell Brand, Chris Cooper, Alfred Molina, and others. This is FREE gift to the community from Cyrano's Theatre Company, the Alaska Humanities Forum and UAA professors and Shakespearean experts, Rob Crossman and Toby Widdecombe.

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Storytelling At Home

As vacations and holidays approach, it seems we are pulled in many directions, busy with even more activities than usual. At the same time, the winter break from school is often a time when we seek out closer connections with our families and honor old traditions or make new ones. Storytelling can be a means of strengthening family bonds and traditions during the holidays or anytime throughout the year.

For parents, telling stories can sometimes seem as intimidating as staring at a blank piece of paper when faced with a creative writing assignment. Fortunately, children are often eager to help the process along. One way to begin is by inviting children to hand the storyteller three objects they would like incorporated into the story. My children often create a plot outline of sorts, telling their parents what characters will be in the story, and what they expect those characters to do. They like to direct the story as it is being told. Sometimes it's also fun to take a well-known story and tell it from another character's point of view.

When families come together during the holidays this is a wonderful opportunity to share family memories and stories from childhood. These may be the easiest stories to tell, and they can be the ones our children appreciate the most. They are fascinated to hear about family members' earlier lives and the ways in which they may be similar to, or so different from their own.

Constant exposure to storytelling at school and at home has inspired my children to tell stories to each other, and this has proved to be a wonderful way of bridging their four-year age gap. The drive to and from school frequently consisted of negative attention-seeking behavior from my preschooler, particularly when we had other older children in the car and the conversation revolved around school. Then, the older children began making up stories or retelling stories they had read. The drive home from school became much more peaceful, and everyone eagerly awaited the next installment in the stories.

This storytelling happened spontaneously with my children, and made our driving time much more pleasant, but parents can always take the lead to get the stories going. When I was a child, my family used to pass the time in the car by making up group stories. One family member would begin the story, and at some point would break off by saying, "...and then the boiler burst!" (I have no idea where that phrase came from!), which was the cue for the next person to continue the story.

Whether you invent new stories, retell old favorites, or share family memories, storytelling provides the opportunity for families and friends to spend a peaceful moment together.

December in Anchorage – Continued from pg 3

Dec. 12th (FREE)

Alaska Zoo Gateway Lecture Hall (4731 O'Malley Rd.) Wildlife Wednesdays Free Science Lecture Series are upon us again! Stay warm and scientifically enriched this winter on the second Wednesday of each month at the Alaska Zoo Gateway Lecture Hall. Each lecture begins at 7 p.m. and covers a different topic focused on wildlife research in Alaska.

These lectures are aimed toward an older audience, adults with an interest in science or university students. Series partners include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Geographic and the Alaska Zoo. These lectures are free to the public and coffee and tea are always available. Join us this winter, October through April for yet another season of educational and enriching, Wildlife Wednesdays! For more information on this and other Alaska Zoo Education programs, please contact Stephanie Hartman, Education Director, at (907) 341-6463 or slhartman@alaskazoo.org.

Dec. 13th (\$3 per child in advance/\$5 day of event)**Flashlight Candy Cane Hunt at 6:00 pm at Goose Lake Park**

Santa has hidden candy canes all around the park. Bring your flashlight and help us find them! You may even find a special candy cane with a prize winning ribbon. Enjoy hot cocoa after the hunt.

To register, visit the Fairview Recreation Center, call 343-4130.

Dec. 15 (\$5/ child \$10 day of event)**Gingerbread House/Holiday Carnival**

1:00p to 3:00p at Spenard Recreation Center, Anchorage, AK Get into the holiday spirit with this fun event! Children will make and decorate their own gingerbread house, get their picture taken with Santa and make a present for a friend all in the celebration of winter. Pre-registration and pre-payment required. Parents must stay with children. For ages 4-13 yrs. Min 45/Max 125. For more information contact [Jennifer Thorne](#), 343-4495 or [Margaret Timmerman](#), 343-4147

Dec. 28th (\$5 per family)**S'more Skate from 1:00-3:00pm at Cuddy Park**

Combine the crisp winter air with sweet, warm delights of hot chocolate and marshmallow S'mores. Join in on family skating fun and games on the cleared ice rink. Recover and refresh in the radiance of the warming barrels provided by Parks and Recreation. For all ages. To register, visit Fairview Recreation Center, call 343-4130, or fax your completed [registration form](#) to 343-6049.

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Kids With Candles – Continued from Page 2

(Lucia Day – Continued)

food and drink to the poor. Her day, December 13th, is also the old Julian calendar Winter Solstice. Lucia Day offers us a chance to celebrate the light of generosity and sharing that we all hope to embody in our daily lives.

Lucia Day has also been celebrated sporadically at Winterberry, and each second grade instructor has guided the festival in different ways. Winterberry's Lucia Days have traditionally drawn from the Scandinavian holiday. The children wear white, and carry stars and/or candles as they process through the school grounds. They sing during their procession and for other classes. They may deliver treats, as well.

Parents may be asked to prepare treats, find white clothes, and to help provide other materials. Making candles and crowns of spruce boughs or other components of the celebration have been tasks in the past. Please contact Ms. Besch for more information on this year's Lucia festival.

The Lights of the Winterberry Community

Many other traditions offer beautiful and meaningful celebrations of light. If your family celebrates other winter festivals at home, please consider sharing your practices, whether spiritual, cultural, or individual, with us. Learning about other traditions and perspectives enriches all of us. The Moving Traditions Committee would welcome your contributions.

Fundamentally, our children are the light of our lives, our school, and our world. Children bring hope to us all. Perhaps this is why they carry the candles in so many celebrations of light.

December in Anchorage – Continued from pg 4

December 31st (FREE)

NECA/IBEW Fire & Ice New Year's Eve

Celebration in town Square: Bring the family to Town Square in downtown Anchorage for the NECA/IBEW Fire & Ice New Year's Eve Celebration featuring fire jugglers, silk acrobats, light show, live music and more! 8 p.m. fireworks spectacular "

Dec. 31st (FREE)

Alyeska Resort: New Year's Eve Torchlight Parade & Fireworks Display

Girdwood, AK 99587-0249

Skiers and snowboarders traverse the slopes of Mount Alyeska with torches attached to bamboo poles, lighting up the mountain with a red glow. One of the biggest firework displays in Alaska will be shown immediately following this spectacular parade.

Box Tops for Education

Box Tops for Education is a simple and efficient way to earn cash for our school. We are requesting that you bring an envelope or lunch bag to your friends and family members and request that they collect box tops over the holiday season if they are not collecting for another school or organization. You are not requesting them to purchase anything only collect something they may have thrown away. Our goal is to have 800 collected and submitted by February, 1000 by the end of the year. The collection basket is in the front office.

Thank you for helping us with this endeavor.

Attendance & Timeliness

As you may be aware, the ASD is focusing its attention on attaining a 90% graduation rate by the year 2020. In examining the primary factors behind why students fall through the cracks attendance and timeliness were identified areas of focus for families and school personnel. When we consider this it seems fairly obvious that in order for children to have the maximum opportunity for learning they need to be in attendance and be on time.

These two issues have long been a focus of families, staff, and teachers at Winterberry. As we move into the coming semester, however, we will be using many of our district's resources in order to ensure student success. Thank you if you consistently arrive on time and avoid unnecessary absences. We know it is not easy for any family to make the commitment to transporting their child(ren) to school and back home each day. You are giving an amazing gift to your children.

If this is an area where your family struggles, please take some time to examine how you can make small adjustments to your schedule in order to begin second semester strong. We will be closely monitoring attendance trends beginning January 7th. Any excess tardies and absences will be addressed via conferences and attendance plans. Please email Shanna Mall at mall_shanna@asdk12.org if you have any questions.

Free Flu Vaccine Available

ASD school nurses are administering Nasal Mist Flu vaccine free of charge to students. Information sheets and permission slips are available from Pam in the front office. To receive the vaccine, students must have a signed permission slip returned by Tuesday AM, Dec. 4th.

If you have questions for the Anchorage School Board, their names are below. Contact information for these board members can be found at www.asdk12.org.

Anchorage School Board

Jeannie Mackie, president
 Tam Agosti-Gisler
 Gretchen Guess
 Pat Higgins
 Natasha Von Imhof
 Kathleen Plunkett
 Don Smith

ASD Superintendent

Jim Browder, Ed.D.

"Happiness is not a matter of intensity but of balance, order, rhythm and harmony."

– Thomas Merton

A Healthy Holiday Treat

VEGAN GLUTEN-FREE CARROT MACAROONS

Cooking time: 30 min @ 350 degrees Makes: 2 dozen

Ingredients

1 packed cup of raw grated carrots

1/4 cup water

1/2 cup canola oil

2 cups sweetened coconut flakes (adjust sweetener to taste if using unsweetened coconut flakes)

3/4 cup rice flour

1/2 tsp salt

1 tsp vanilla

3 Tbs honey

Optional garnish: 1 handful semisweet chocolate chips melted



Cooking Instructions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Mix all the ingredients together except for the chocolate in a large bowl.

Lightly grease a cookie sheet. Wash your hands and pat the mixture into 24 balls, slightly smaller than golfballs.

Place balls on pan 2 inches apart and bake for 30 minutes, rotating once. Use a spatula to remove the macaroons from the pan.

If desired, drizzle melted chocolate over the macaroons with a fork.

Vitamin D: Are You Getting Enough?

By Robert Lawrence, M.D

alaskafamilydoc.com

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The National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine's (IOM) released a report earlier this week slightly raising the Dietary Reference Intake (DRI) levels for vitamin D considered adequate for most Americans. The report states that most people are currently getting the required amount of vitamin D. However, questions remain for special populations, including those living in the far north, regarding how much vitamin D is needed to protect against chronic disease. Long known to be an important nutrient in bone health and calcium metabolism, vitamin D, also known as 25-hydroxy vitamin D, has become a focus of research in recent years. This research has shown that a deficiency in vitamin D is associated with over 50 diseases affecting every system in the human body.

In 2007, Michael Holick, M.D., Ph.D. published an article in the *New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)* in which he described how a deficiency in vitamin D is associated with a growing list of medical problems including bone disease, certain cancers, diabetes, and heart disease. Since then, other researchers have shown that a healthy vitamin D level may prevent or reduce the risk for influenza, autoimmune arthritis, obesity, multiple sclerosis, and asthma. There is even evidence that vitamin D supplementation may help ward off the common cold. In 2004, researchers demonstrated that vitamin D given daily as cod liver oil reduced the average number of wintertime pediatric visits for respiratory infections in a group of New York City children.

Vitamin D is naturally produced in the skin after sun exposure. It is not actually a vitamin but a pro-hormone, a molecule that the body converts to a hormone in order to regulate important functions at the cellular level. Receptors for vitamin D are found in every organ of the body. Sunlight is the primary catalyst for the body to produce vitamin D. People who live in the far north are at risk of vitamin D deficiency because dark winters and poor UVB radiation penetration of sunlight at northern latitudes inhibits the synthesis of vitamin D in the skin.

Unless supplemented in the diet, vitamin D levels in the blood drop significantly in the winter months due to reduced exposure to solar radiation. This effect is seen year-round in those who remain exclusively indoors, like some nursing home patients, or in those who persistently use sunscreen. When sunlight exposure is limited, vitamin D must be acquired through diet or supplementation. Regular consumption of salmon, seal oil, or marine foods can prevent vitamin D deficiency. One 3.5 oz serving of salmon contains between 600-1000 units of vitamin D₃. Supplementation with vitamin D₃ can also prevent vitamin D deficiency. The IOM committee recommends 600 units of vitamin D₃ daily for anyone over age 1, and 800 units of vitamin D₃ daily from all sources for adults over age 71.

A number of physicians now believe these recommendations are overly conservative and recommend at least 2000 units daily from all sources for otherwise healthy adults. Patients with chronic diseases are often prescribed even higher doses.

For comparison, a short time in direct summer sunlight can cause the body to produce around 10,000 units of vitamin D. Toxicity does not occur because the body quickly degrades any unneeded vitamin in the skin.

Vitamin D has become one of the most common screening labs drawn at health fairs or during primary care preventive health visits. The results are used to define a person's risk of deficiency. Vitamin D deficiency is defined as a level less than 20 ng per milliliter. Between 20 and 29 ng milliliter, a person is said to have vitamin D insufficiency. Results of 30 ng per milliliter or higher are considered normal; although it should be noted that people who live in more equatorial regions with plenty of direct sunlight maintain a level between 50 and 60 ng per milliliter. Patients should discuss proper dosing of vitamin D with their provider. There are wide variations in the amount of vitamin D people need to supplement to attain healthy blood levels.

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Vitamin D - Continued

People who consume salmon or who travel to lower latitudes during the winter will not require the same dose as someone who eats little marine food and spends most of the year indoors. Blood tests may need to be repeated every 6-8 weeks until an optimum dose is determined.

Supplementing vitamin D can cause problems for the relatively few number of patients with diseases that affect calcium in the body. Patients with hyperparathyroidism, sarcoidosis, and certain cancers must cautiously monitor their Vitamin D and calcium levels during supplementation.

Vitamin D deficiency causes damage slowly. Levels may remain low for years before any symptoms develop, and even when present, symptoms are vague and non-specific. Some patients with vitamin D deficiency describe a diffuse bone or muscle pain, general fatigue, or feelings of depression. Often patients do not recognize any symptoms until the low levels have caused irreversible damage as in osteoporosis, diabetes mellitus type I, or multiple sclerosis.

As a part of good preventive health care, patients should consider having their vitamin D levels checked at least annually followed by a discussion with a medical provider regarding the need for supplementation.

Robert Lawrence, MD • Alaska Family Doctor
www.alaskafamilydoc.com

Winterberry Charter Council

November Meeting Report

The WCC met November 18th in the 7th grade classroom. Present were Shanna Mall, Harris Colors, Alicia Besh, Meg Eggleston, Erin Fleischer, Melissa Janigo, Meggan Judge, Della Swartz, Tara Smith, Bob Steinmann, and Kyle Vander-Schrier.

We viewed the draft ASD informational video on Winterberry Charter School to be posted online. We heard reports on the APC meeting with Dr. Browder, the administrators report and the budget report. We voted to approve paying RIM to pursue permitting of yurts. In consultation with the WPG and the Faculty Council, we took on individual and subcommittee board goals on parent education, teacher training, ASD organization, and intra-body communication. We will give updates on our progress at all future WCC meetings this year, including our next meeting on November 13th. Please note that this is the second Thursday so that we do not conflict with the evening Assembly, and please join us if you can!

Winterberry Circus Is Coming To Town!

The Winterberry Annual Circus is coming! This year, the eighth grade is preparing an exciting circus around the theme of past decades, specifically the 60s, 70s, and 80s: we're calling it "Psychedelic Circus!"

It will feature period costuming, great music, and, of course, juggling, tumbling, body-balancing, dancing, clown and mime acts, unicycle, diabolo ("giant yo-yos), spinning sticks, and much more. It will be a great show for toddlers up through middle school.

We will offer three shows, all at the Bartlett High Theatre:

Friday, December 7, at 7 pm.
Saturday, December 8, at 2pm and 4pm.

Tickets are \$10 for individuals, or \$25 for a family. Children 3 and under are free. We will also be offering sets of juggling balls, clown noses, and other circus goodies for sale at the shows.

Tickets may be purchased beginning November 27th at the 8th grade coffee cart, from the front desk, or from any 8th grader; they will also be available the day of the show at the door.

See you there! Thanks for supporting the Winterberry 8th grade!

Faculty Council

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VACANT, Grade Eight Representative

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Becca Bernard, Grade One Rep., becca_bernard@yahoo.com

Rayna Swanson, Kindergarten Representative, yitzu@mac.com

Volunteer Coordinator Needed!

We are still in need of an enthusiastic individual to fill the vital role of Volunteer Coordinator for the school. Please contact Ms. Mall for details!

Moving Traditions Committee

Vision:

To hold the heart of Winterberry through the transitional first year in our new home

Charge:

Ensuring that all the intangible components of the community, who we are and who we aspire to become, are transferred to our new location; Realizing the possibilities the new location brings to help the community towards our shared vision for the school; Supporting community members in transitioning their work and participation to the new location; Listening to concerns from community, gathering information, and helping channel ideas to the appropriate committees or individuals.

Members:

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Della Swartz, daveanddella@gci.net

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments.

Winterberry nurtures and promotes the development of healthy, responsible and creative human beings. Our aim is to provide a holistic learning environment and demonstrate that all children are natural and inspired learners who can achieve. Inspired by Waldorf educational methods, our integrated curriculum seeks to provide each student with meaningful, hands-on, developmentally appropriate experiences that inspire learning and personal growth.



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