



December 16, 2011

Happy New Year Joyful Learning/Southbrook Academy!

I hope you enjoyed your holidays and some time off with family and friends! The children arrived this week ready to get right back into the swing of things! We've had plenty of fun, and learned so much!

The **Joyful Learning** music program with Kerry Campbell began this week. This is a special treat offered to our two-day students. Kerry's brings her class, Exploring Music, to us with the goal of creating a lifelong love of learning in the children. She uses so many wonderful music activities, exploring several different types of music, and the children love it! Thank you to the Parents' Association for supporting this fantastic opportunity! The children also enjoyed some excellent open-ended art activities this past week including "popsicle painting" with frozen paint on sticks, glue and glitter fireworks and using pine branches as paint brushes. Open-ended art activities encourage the development of creativity and stimulate the use of descriptive language.

The **Southbrook** anti-bullying activities continued today with a terrific article from Scholastic News, written from the perspective of a former bully. Our kindergarteners made Veggie Vests to apply what they learned about the letter "V". When I stopped into 3B today to deliver a message, I learned all about convection heat from the sun!

In correlation with our schoolwide theme of Literature, we will be holding a **Read-a-Thon** at the Bridgewater Public Library on **Tuesday, January 24th**. This will be a wonderful family night with reading games, snacks, and other related activities. Please contact your child's teacher if you are interested in volunteering to read to our children that night. You will also be able to "pledge" a certain amount of money towards the amount of time the children read. Every dollar will go to the Friends of the Bridgewater Public Library, a non-profit organization that enriches the library's services. Information about them can be found at <http://bridgewaterpubliclibrary.org/index.php/about/friends/>.

Registration for the 2012-2013 school year is well underway! I am excited to see so many families anxious to come back next year! Families who are not currently enrolled will be able to register for the 2012-2013 school year starting on **January 19th**, which is the date of our **Open House**. The Open House is scheduled from 6:00-7:30 pm. Computers will be available for online registration that evening.

The **2012-2013 school year** has many exciting changes in store. Based on the survey results and other input we have received, we have lengthened the times of the three and five day **pre-school programs**. Overwhelmingly, families were in favor of a longer session. The three-day preschool program has been extended from 2 ½ hours to 4, and the five-day program has been extended from 2 ¾ hours to 5, with an optional wrap-around program. The longer class times are more consistent with the children's developmental levels, and will give us the opportunity to provide even more engaging learning activities. The five-day, or "Junior Kindergarten" program is a wonderful alternative for children who do not meet the September 1 cut-off for kindergarten. It is also an option for students who may need an additional year before starting kindergarten. Studies show that when children start kindergarten when they are ready socially, academically, and chronologically, they maintain a solid academic performance throughout their school years. It gives them a strong foundation that will carry them throughout their academic careers. The length of the day for these two programs has almost doubled, and the increase in the tuition rates is proportional to the increase in hours. The two-day program will remain at 2 ½ hours, giving our youngest students a terrific "first taste" of the school experience. As a preschool parent, please be sure to set up a conference with your child's current teachers to determine the best placement for them for the fall.

We are also excited to offer a **7th grade** class for the 2012-2013 school year. This is a wonderful opportunity for families who have enjoyed their Southbrook experience and wish to continue it. I must admit, it is nice to hear a family say "We don't want to leave!" The class will be as challenging and supportive as all of our classes, with a focus on further fostering children's accountability and independence.

During the next several months and into the 2012-2013 school year, there will also be many **improvements** made in the areas of technology, curriculum, and the facilities. We have listened to families' concerns and ideas, and are looking to make appropriate steps forward. This is a very exciting time to be a part of the Joyful Learning/Southbrook Academy family!

For the month of January, the 5/6 classroom will be "in charge" of the **Adopt a Soldier** donation box. At the end of the month, we will send it to a soldier currently serving in Afghanistan. He also happens to be the uncle of one of our students! Typical items to donate are toiletries, snacks, powdered drink mixes, etc. Please be mindful of our nut-free policy when donating items. The box is in the classroom for the entire month until we ship it. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Some concerns have been raised regarding the **carpool procedures** at dismissal time. **ONLY** Families who are picking up children in addition to their own can avoid the line of traffic and pick students up in the front lobby. All Southbrook students are dismissed at 2:45 and those who are in carpool come to the front lobby at that time. We have noticed many children still waiting in the lobby for their rides at 3:00 and later. Please be sure to pick your children up from the carpool lobby promptly at 2:45. Any students who are still in the lobby at 2:55 will be brought outside to regular dismissal. At this point, the line of cars is quite short and parents can drive right up to the dismissal area. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

With the gift-giving season in the most recent past, it is important to remind families of our **electronics policies**. Please see the following excerpt from our Student Handbook:

Electronic Devices

Cell Phones

- *Cell phones may not be used on school property at anytime during school hours, including arrival and dismissal times, and Extended Day.*
- *If a student chooses to use a cell phone during school hours, the phone will be taken away and must be picked up by a parent/guardian.*

Please contact the school at any time to relay information to your child, rather than using a cell phone.

Electronics/Toys

Because there is a risk of loss or damage, all electronic items (games/music etc.) must be left at home unless prior permission is granted.

Students are also discouraged from bringing other valuable toys from home to school. (With the exception of "Pass the Rock" or "Show and Tell" items) This also includes playing/trading cards, etc. This is to avoid potential loss/damage, as well as disruptions in class and hurt feelings.

We have noticed many children using new "gadgets" this week. I realize they are exciting and the children want to play with their new things. After this week, please be sure the gadgets stay at home, including cell phones. We would like to avoid loss and damage, as well as any potential disputes that may arise.

Well that ought to sum things up from this corner of the world! I hope you have a terrific weekend and enjoy the warmer temperatures!

Jennifer L. Berry
Head of School
Joyful Learning/Southbrook Academy
792 Plymouth Street
Bridgewater, MA 02324
508.697.9131
Fax 508.697.9141
www.southbrookacademy.org