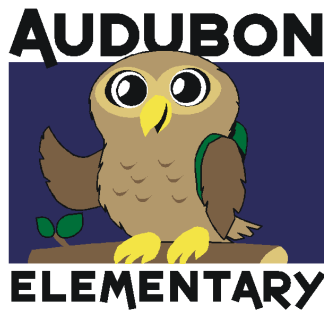




THE OWL'S NEST



Audubon Elementary School, November, 2009

2009 10—Issue 3

Principal's Message:

Dear Families,

It seems that I just turned the calendar page to November and here we are nearly at mid-month! With that brings a wonderful opportunity for families and teachers – parent conferences. As a teacher I always enjoyed this time to get to know families, learn more about each child in my class and share progress. As a parent, it was great to hear about my daughter from an objective perspective – to get a little snapshot of who she was as an individual in her own independent world. In either case, it was a time for celebrating accomplishments. I hope that you will enjoy this opportunity to reflect with your child, celebrate accomplishments and help him or her to select goals for the next trimester. Please see some tips in this newsletter for making the most out of parent-teacher conferences.

You will notice on your child's report card that the top section focuses on important life skills. Along with academic success, our teachers assess your child's skill at being a student and a citizen of the school. Recently we began a new program to raise awareness of these life skills among students and adults in our school. Our Bucket Fillers program is based on the book, "Have You Filled a Bucket Today? – A Guide to Daily Happiness" by Carol McCloud. Please see page three of this newsletter for more information about this program. We appreciate your support at home with our emphasis on life skills for student success.

I wish you all a fabulous fall season and Thanksgiving break later this month. I give thanks to all of you for your support and for trusting us with the education of your children.

Karen Dickens, Principal

NOVEMBER CALENDAR:

11/11 Veteran's Day Holiday—
no school

11/20, 11/23, 11/24
Parent-Teacher Conferences
school dismissal @ 11:30

11/25 School Dismissal @
11:30

11/26, 11/27 No School
Thanksgiving Holiday



QUEST Applications and Meeting Schedules:

The **Quest Elementary Program for Highly Capable Students** (Grades 1-6) will accept applications for the 2010-2011 school year beginning **November 2, 2009, until 4 p.m. on November 30, 2009.**

The Elementary Quest program offers two options for students who demonstrate superior ability, who exceed grade level standards in literacy and math, and who exhibit exceptional creativity in the classroom. Full time students are enrolled in an accelerated, self-contained classroom for the full day, five days a week. Enrichment Pull-Out students attend their home school four days a week and a pull-out enrichment classroom one day a week.

More information can be found in the Quest Information packet that will be available at all elementary schools, on the Quest Web site (www.lwsd.org/quest), and at the Quest Office on the third floor of the Resource Center (425-702-3238; Quest@lwsd.org).

All parents interested in the Quest Program are invited to attend one of the **Quest Elementary Information Night** sessions on **Thursday, November 5 from 4:30-6 p.m. or 7-8:30 p.m.** at Rose Hill Junior High School (13505 NE 74th St, Redmond, WA 98052). This program will explain more specifically what Quest offers to highly capable, academically gifted children. If you plan to bring your children to the information session, we would recommend that you attend the early meeting.

Parents and teachers are working toward the same goal...the well being and success of your child. Keeping this goal in mind is the first step to having a successful and productive parent-teacher conference. Some other tips for parents include the following, summarized from a variety of articles on the subject:

- Take a few minutes before the conference to reflect and prepare, especially if this is your first experience. Jot down some notes about your child's strengths, areas for growth and concerns you might have to share with the teacher. Know what you hope to gain from the conference before going in.
- Talk to your child before going to the conference. Ask them to self evaluate by asking, "How do you think you are doing? Is there anything you would like me to ask or tell your teacher?" If your child is invited to attend the conference then allow him/her to actively participate.
- Keep an open mind when the teacher offers opinions. Parents look at their children with different eyes. That is the way it should be. Teachers, on the other hand, are more objective...they have the benefit of seeing many children of the same age everyday..and every year! That gives them the basis for seeing where one particular seven-year-old is in relationship to other seven-year-olds.
- Have a conversation with the teacher about your role at home with regards to homework, help with assignments, or signing reports. Ask for clarification and/or examples if you do not understand something the teacher tells you.
- Share important information about your child with the teacher. There is more to your child than his/her school performance. What are his hobbies? What are her goals? Is anything going on at home that affects school performance? Teachers benefit from your insights into what makes your child tick.
- Keep the conference focused on the student—his or her success and possible goals for bringing about greater success in the future. Also, be sure to celebrate the positive growth and hard work of your child.
- Honor the short timeframe of the conference, usually about 15-20 minutes. If you would like more time then schedule another conference with the teacher at a later date, so he/she can continue to be on time for other parents who are scheduled.

The parent-teacher conference is an important moment in the school year, but it is not your only opportunity to be involved in your child's education. It is not even the best one. Throughout the year, make your commitment to your child's education visible. Visit with teachers and administrators regularly, make sure your child does his/her work, and volunteer when you can. Then the school conference will be what it is meant to be, a well-child checkup instead of an emergency room visit. View the conference as not just about fixing problems, but avoiding them.



Updated information on the flu:

Flu season is definitely upon us. There is a lot of information in the media, on the internet and as part of personal conversations everywhere. Our goal is to keep all students safe and healthy so we want to provide you with the latest information from our district regarding how we handle flu cases at school:

If your student has symptoms of flu or a flu-like illness they will be sent home to get proper care and to reduce the spread of the illness.

As a reminder, here are the symptoms of flu:

Fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater). Your student may appear flushed, be sweating or shivering, or feel warm to the touch.

Cough

Body aches

Fatigue

Diarrhea

Headaches

Chills

Sore throat

Vomiting

Please keep your student home for at least 24 hours after the fever has passed without the use of fever-reducing medications. Young children should not be in child care and students need to stay home from activities, sports practices and games. Public Health has indicated that testing for H1N1flu is necessary only when patients are sick enough to be hospitalized or have severe illness. Those with flu symptoms should follow the same protocol regardless of the strain of flu. According to Public Health Seattle & King County, antiviral medications are not recommended except for people at higher risk for complications or with severe illness. Go to www.kingcounty.gov/health/h1n1 for more information on caring for individuals with flu.



HAVE YOU FILLED SOMEONE'S BUCKET TODAY?

You may have heard your child talk about filling buckets. They are referring to a new program at Audubon this year. The concept of Bucket Filling originates from the book, *How Full is Your Bucket*, by Tom Rath and Donald O. Clifton. The concept was adapted by Carol McCloud in her two children's books, *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* and *Fill a Bucket*.

What is Bucket Filling?

To encourage the use of life skills, all of the students have been introduced to the theory of the bucket and the dipper (from the books "How Full is Your Bucket?" and "Have You Filled a Bucket Today?"). Each of us has an invisible bucket that is constantly emptied or filled depending on what others say or do to us. When our bucket is full, we feel great. When it's empty, we feel awful. Each of us also has an invisible dipper that can be used to fill or empty other people's buckets. We fill buckets by saying or doing things to increase their positive emotions - when we do this we also fill our own buckets. When we use the dipper to dip from others' buckets - by doing or saying things that decrease their positive emotions - we also diminish our own. Every drop in our bucket makes us stronger and more optimistic. But an empty bucket poisons our outlook, saps our energy, and undermines our will. So we face a choice every moment of every day: We can fill one another's buckets, or we can dip from them. It's an important choice - one that profoundly influences our relationships, productivity, health, and happiness.

Why should we fill buckets?

- Gallup Research: 9 out of 10 people say they are more productive when they are around positive people.
- Studies have shown that Social Emotional Development (like bucket filling) in schools actually raises the average test scores by a minimum of 10%.
- According to Barbara Fredrickson (Director of the Positive Emotions and Psychophysiology Laboratory at the University of Michigan), positive emotions:
 - Protect us from, and can undo the effect of, negative emotions
 - Fuel resilience and can transform people
 - Broaden our thinking, encouraging us to discover new line of thought or action
 - Break down racial barriers
 - Build durable physical, intellectual, social, and psychological resources that can function as "reserves" during trying times.
 - Produce optimal functioning in organizations and individuals.
 - Improve the overall performance of a group (when leaders express more positive emotions)

What you can do to encourage caring and bucket filling at home:

- Shine a Light on What is Right
- Compliment your children - Point out when they are caring, responsible, respectful, etc...
- Model positivity
- Give drops at home. (you can find a drop template on www.bucketbook.com)
- Set high standards and clear expectations
- Coach them
- Ask your child, "Are you filling buckets or emptying?"
- Praise the *process* not just the result.
- Talk to your children about how to learn from their failures - Celebrate failure as an opportunity to learn through honest and constructive feedback.
- Create 5 positive interactions for every 1 negative interaction (this is the optimum ration to keep positive and negative moments in balance).
 - Keep in mind; more than 13 positive interactions for every 1 negative interaction could decrease productivity.

Bucket filling is most effective when it is individualized, specific and deserved.

Books:

"Have You Filled a Bucket Today? - A Guide to Daily Happiness" By Carol McCloud

"Fill a Bucket - A Guide to Daily Happiness for Young Children" By Carol McCloud

"How Full is Your Bucket? - Positive Strategies for Work and Life" By Tom Rath and Donald O. Clifton Ph.D