

Little Bridges News



February 2010

Calendar of Events

CLOSED – President’s Day
Monday 2/15

Valentine Orders Due
Friday 2/5

Open House
10:00 am – 1:00 pm
Saturday 2/20

Enrichment Classes

Art & Soul (3-4 yrs)
Tuesdays

Tuff Tumblers (2-4 yrs)
Thursdays

Science/Math/Magic (3-4)
Thursdays

Kinderdance (3-5 yrs)
Wednesdays

Soccer Shots (3-5 yrs)
Mondays

Art & Soul Music (K-5)
Piano Lessons Mondays

Canyon Creek Church

**Sunday Services &
Sunday School**
8:30 am and 10:00 am

Open House February 20th 10am – 1pm

You are invited to come to our Open House on Saturday, Feb. 20th. All classrooms will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This is the perfect time for your child to show off his/her school to you and for you to visit other classrooms. It also provides a wonderful opportunity for prospective families to tour Little Bridges.

Teachers will be available to talk informally with parents about our philosophy, curriculum and daily schedules. If your child will be “moving up” any time this year, please use this Open House as a chance to review next year’s curriculum and to get a preview on what your child’s experiences will be like.

All pre-k families should make a stop at the Gathering Hall, which is where our after school program takes place.

Everyone is welcome – so invite your family, friends and neighbors!

Soles4Souls

Thank you to all the families who donated gently used or new shoes this past week. We loaded up the back of our vans with over 300 pairs of shoes to take to Sports Chalet. All the shoes collected will be sent directly to Soles4Souls for distribution to the Haitian people.

Soccer Shots

Soccer Shots starts February 1st at Little Bridges. The program is designed to introduce soccer to young children in a fun way. There are two Monday sessions and we have tried to coincide the times with your child’s regularly scheduled morning playground time.

Valentine’s Day Card Fundraiser

Art & Soul has partnered with us again to sell cards made from your child’s artwork. Order forms will be sent home soon and you can choose whether to have your card say “Happy Valentine’s Day” or just be left blank to use for any occasion.

School Age Summer Camp

Our School Age Summer Camp brochures will be going home with all our current school age families at the end of this month. **Space will be limited this year!** Please return these by March 15th for priority enrollment.

Little Bridges offers a fun-filled summer program for school age children ages 6 to 11 years. Our program alternates between structured activities such as academic review, book time and journal writing with summer time traditions like crafts, organized games, swimming, free time and fieldtrips. Campers are on-site all day Monday with special classes that include Budding Geniuses Science, Cooking and Art. On Tuesdays and Thursdays we swim at the local high school pools and every Wednesday our campers and staff travel by chartered bus for a weekly field trip. On Fridays we spend part of the day at a local park and focus on sports, organized games and outdoor crafts.

Teaching Children to be Unselfish

This weekend, my oldest child (25) and my youngest child (9) both acted in ways that surprised me.

My oldest son, who is on his own now and lives in So. Cal, and I were talking about the tragedy of the Haiti Earthquake and the efforts others were making to help the victims. He surprised me because as he spoke he was so compassionate in his words. He was touched and driven to help. He had already made an appointment to donate blood and even mentioned that he had given \$50.00 to the Red Cross. Now this may not seem like much to you, but it filled me with pride that my oldest had decided to get involved on his own.

My youngest, on the other hand, and I were going through items in his room this weekend to give to the United Cancer Research Society. Our conversation went more like this:

"Here's a toy you never play with anymore."

"Mom! I LOVE that. I can't give that away!"

"Okay, how about this puzzle that is way too easy for you now."

"But, that's my favorite SpongeBob one."

"You haven't watched that video in a year and you certainly haven't touched this puzzle."

"I want to keep it."

"How about these big legos? You like the smaller ones now that you are older."

"No way! The big ones make the best forts."

"Liam, we are looking for toys to give to children who have very little."

"I know," he says as he digs to the bottom of his toy box. "Let's give this away," he says as he pulls out a Happy Meal toy from two years ago.

At this point I am ready to tell him what a spoiled brat he is; that others have lost everything, that he has so much compared to other kids; that he is being selfish; that he is being stingy; that the world does not revolve around him and that he should be thankful he has so much.

I pull myself together instead and think about how I can use this situation to help my child grow. Why is it important for my son to be involved in this donation process? After all, it would be much easier if I just rummaged through his bins of toys while he was outside or at a friend's house.

What is it that I want? I want my kids to be unselfish, kind, and empathetic towards others. I want them to feel empowered and good about giving. I want them to know that they can and **should** make a difference whenever and wherever they can. I want them to realize how small their world really is and that it is their duty to take care of others. I want my youngest to turn out like my oldest.

I know that this transformation does not just happen. Raising unselfish children in this "look out for No. 1" society, with its emphasis on independence and individualism, is difficult. Parents often encourage their children to triumph over others in school and at play. This can snuff out a child's natural inclination to help others, make an effort for the team, or do what's right for the good of all.

If you're concerned that you're raising selfish, self-centered children, recognize that as children travel the developmental years, their degree of selfishness comes and goes.

Your most important job is to be a warm, generous, empathetic parent. Children from homes where generosity and selfless behavior pervade feel that the world is basically a safe place. They're unthreatened. If you provide an environment of consideration, compassion, and kindness, your child's unselfishness will flow naturally.

Once you establish that, your parenting job is to seize opportunities to teach the intricacies of unselfishness. Start when they're preschoolers with sharing.

- Teach that sharing doesn't mean owning. "Jayme is playing with your truck, but it still belongs to you. He won't be taking the truck home."
- Encourage borrowing. If your child's friend really likes your daughter's Dora figurine, encourage your child to lend it to her overnight.
- Voice your disapproval of selfish actions. "I don't like you hoarding all the fruit snacks. You have a lot. Give your sister a piece. In this family, we share."
- Encourage giving. Prompt your children to give away unused or duplicate toys.
- Call attention to sharing. "I saw you give your brother half your cookie--that's sharing, that's kind. I'm proud of you."

Once children become a little older, you can extend your focus from sharing to consideration and empathy for others, and by encouraging altruistic actions.

- Point out your unselfish ways. "You know, I received two CD's for my birthday. My sister really likes this one. I'll give it to her."
- Define unselfishness as part of family identity. "Mrs. Smith is just home from the hospital. I'm baking the family a casserole. In our family, we help others."
- Include your children in your volunteer activities. If you donate your time to a homeless shelter, involve your children.
- Explain your altruistic motives. "I feel so sad for those people who lost their homes in the earthquake. I'm writing a check--it's what I can do to help."
- Set limits for altruistic actions. "I know you want to keep that puzzle. Nevertheless, this is our family's way of helping out. You need to pick out 10 toys to give away."
- Spend time with your children. Children can't learn a parent's unselfish ways unless they witness your goodness in action.
- Promote empathy. "Look, your friend is sad. He doesn't have any Pokemon cards. You have more than 50. Couldn't you give him a few of yours? Doesn't it feel better when everyone has some?"

Through all the years you parent your children, take time to notice and call attention to their unselfish actions. By doing so, selfless acts will multiply. It took many years for my oldest to get to his present altruistic self. Liam will get there too.

After the Happy Meal toy incident I calmly told Liam that we needed to take a break. We left his overly stocked, and, at this point, thrashed room, and sat on the couch. I told him that our family had decided to help others. Mom and dad had sent money to Haiti, his big brother was giving blood, his other big brother was purchasing music from the Hope for Haiti concert and his contribution was to pick out ten toys – ten good toys, not McDonalds gifts - to give to another child. This seemed to make sense to him and I think I even saw a glimmer of empathy from my self-centered kid, as he not only gave away his SpongeBob puzzle and big legos but even pitched in \$5.00 from his piggybank into the Earthquake relief effort.