It’s time for our great Spring Picnic

The date is Sunday, April 26. Don’t you dare not be there! It starts at 1 PM

The theme will once again be splishing and splashing – everyone loves that. The kids arrive in their swimsuits, ready and eager to get soaked.

The Spring Picnic menu includes all of our favorites: James Coney Island hot dogs, chopped beef sandwiches, sliced brisket, baked potatoes, Fadi’s sandwiches, salads, sweet treats, coffee, water and Slushies. Everything else, too: inflatables, rock wall, crafts, hairstyling, face painting, fishing pond and Woods High School student talent is back by demand!

Admission includes everything but raffles and fundraisers. Pre-event ticket sales will save you $5 per person: $20/$15 for adults, $15/$10 for children older than two years.

In addition to the above advisory, parents whose children will be advancing to the next level will be interested in the Bridge Meetings, scheduled for May 20.

These meetings are for parents of current Kindergarten, 3rd, 6th, and 8th grade students. Also of interest is the article on pages 2 and 3, an informative discussion to read ahead of time about what each new level will involve.
Helping Students Make Those Big Transitions
When It’s Time to Move Up to New Classrooms

By Elizabeth Stepankiw, with Mary Clemer, Jane Collins, Margi Dhruv, Suzy Josef, Heidi Harbaugh, Lise Lawrence, Michelle Romero, Ginger Schwarz, Galina Seager, Kay Shields, Liz Shpata, and Chie Stephens

In May of every school year, the oldest students from each multi-age group look forward to new challenges and to moving to different classrooms. All of us at School of the Woods strive to make the moves stress-free and positive experiences. We offer here observations and suggestions which may assist you, the parent, help us accomplish that.

One aspect of our transitions programs is having the students visit their new classrooms in May before school is out for the summer. Also, parents of these students are invited to their own bridging meeting on May 20.

General Information

Your child's Social Life:

Because of the three-year grouping in Montessori classrooms, moving to a new classroom means returning to the position of being among the youngest in the classroom.

Children continue to experience the art of growing from the humbling position of being "new" students to positions of leadership.

When children visit their new classrooms, they will have the opportunity to experience what is coming next and see models for maturity in the new classroom.

Because your child is entering an age of intense social learning, the classroom will provide opportunities to learn how to work cooperatively as well as guidance in how to be courteous and solve problems when they arise.

It is not unusual for children to experience "bumps" along the way as they learn patterns for healthy interactions. Conflicts with peers may occur; parents can help their children by encouraging them to communicate with their teachers and ask for help as soon as it is needed.

Your Child's Academic Life:

As is appropriate for your growing child, the work requirements expand with each year and the opportunity for your student to plan ahead becomes greater. Students will be asked to continually play a larger part in constructing their own education.

The Montessori curriculum responds to cognitive and social needs of the children as they build an understanding of the world around them and their own place in society.

The First Big Change:
From Early Childhood to First Grade

You can expect your new elementary student to be tired at the end of the day during the fall months. Because your child is striving to become more independent, she may not share as much information about the school day as you are used to.

If your child is anxious about moving to a new classroom, the best thing you can do to help is to show confidence in your child's ability to handle new situations.

Reading at this age is of primary importance and includes phonics instruction, as well as whole language materials placed in every area of the classrooms.

We begin learning cursive writing in the first year of elementary with the goal of all writing to be cursive by the end of third grade. Research, journaling, and story writing are part of the beginning curriculum with an emphasis on content at first and editing skills being added once the child has gained confidence in writing.

Maria Montessori developed an extensive sequence of math materials beginning in early childhood and continuing through upper elementary that will give your child the opportunity to discover math concepts and practice facts.
The continuing manipulation of materials will provide your child with a foundation for understanding the decimal system as well as basic algebra and geometry concepts. Your child's growing imagination will be nourished through the study of history, geography, and science intended to spark interests that last for life.

In elementary, art and music classes are held in three-hour blocks of time on a weekly schedule. This schedule provides your child the opportunity to be part of a smaller group in the regular classroom on those days.

Goal-setting for academic work begins one-half day at a time and by third grade will be expected to occur on a weekly basis.

Homework for the elementary student begins with recording at-home oral reading and keeping track of a folder that goes to and from school on a weekly basis.

Research tells us that parents have the power to dramatically increase both comprehension and vocabulary by reading aloud to your children at home and discussing the reading together.

For elementary students, holiday and cultural celebration events are shared with all lower and upper elementary classrooms and with less parent involvement.

Beginning in the first grade, children are asked to be present at conferences and participate in the conversation about their learning.

From Third Grade to Fourth Grade in Upper Elementary

Independence for the nine- to twelve-year-old upper elementary student continues to increase.

Students plan their work for longer periods. More class work is expected daily as the year progresses. Children assume more responsibility for meeting many of their own needs at this level.

This includes preparing their own lunches if they are not already doing so. They may choose to purchase lunches some days from the middle school catering business, as well.

Homework expectations include independent work in math skills. Children practice abstractly what they have learned to do in class with concrete math materials.

Students use the Saxon Math 65 textbook, read and work the problems for each chapter, check their own work, making corrections as necessary, record the number correct out of total, and do a timed test of math facts each evening. This is turned in upon their arrival at school the next day.

The primary purpose of this work is to help students build a life skill. However, our in-house research has shown an improvement in math skills as well.

Students participate in field studies in areas of archaeology, paleontology, and history. The field studies are an integral part of the curriculum.

In addition to the content, students also grow in independence as a result of personal money management and managing themselves in public for an extended time without their parents in attendance. Regular library trips and other local outings are also part of the Upper Elementary curriculum.

Science work is conducted in multi-age groups to prepare students for the real world where few projects are performed by a lone person without interaction with others. Students work in informal study groups in other areas as well.

Social interactions become more complex during this period. This is the age in which peer relations bloom. Friendships tend to revolve around a small group of close friends. Children will need guidance from teachers and parents while they build communication and social skills.

Parents can be most helpful to their children at this time by encouraging them to ask the teacher for help when it is needed.

NOTE
On May 20, these expected changes will be discussed in person at separate meetings on campus at 11:45 AM. The meetings will also pertain to transitions from 6th grade to Middle School and from 8th grade to High School.
Introverts and extroverts may seem the same on the surface, but if you look at the way they respond to life's everyday occurrences, differences begin to emerge.

Recently, for example, Science of Us writer Melissa Dahl reported on findings from psychologist Brian Little's latest book on personality science, *Me, Myself, and Us: The Science of Personality and the Art of Well-Being*, which showed that introverts are better off avoiding caffeine before a big meeting or important event.

Little cites the theory of extroversion by Hans Eysenck and research by William Revelle of Northwestern University, explaining that introverts and extroverts naturally differ when it comes to their alertness and responsiveness to a given environment. A substance or scene that over-stimulates the central nervous system of an introvert (which doesn’t take much) might cause him or her to feel overwhelmed and exhausted, rather than excited and engaged.

In her 2012 TED Talk titled “Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking”, author Susan Cain reiterated this point in her definition of introversion, explaining that the trait is "different from being shy."

"Shyness is about fear of social judgment," Cain said. "Introversion is more about how do you respond to stimulation, including social stimulation. So extroverts really crave large amounts of stimulation, whereas introverts feel at their most alive and their most switched on and their most capable when they are in quieter, more low-key environments."

Now it goes without saying that most of our societal constructs cater to the former -- from open office spaces to loud events to the structure of our educational system -- despite the fact that anywhere from one-third to half of the population has an introverted temperament.

“We hit the 20th century and we entered a new culture that historians call the culture of personality,” said Cain in her TED Talk. "We had evolved from an agricultural economy to a world of big business, and so suddenly people are moving from small towns to the cities, and instead of working alongside people they've known all their lives, now they are having to prove themselves in a crowd of strangers."

The resulting crowd, which is often loud, noisy and congested, easily over-stimulates introverts and drains them of their physical energy. They end up feeling more physically isolated than supported by their surroundings, and would rather be anywhere but in that sea of people.

Here are 10 ways introverts physically interact with the world around them differently than extroverts.

**Small talk stresses them out, while deeper conversations make them feel alive.**

While most extroverts are energized by such interactions, introverts often feel intimidated, bored and exhausted by them. It’s not uncommon in large conversations for introverts to take on the role of the quiet listener and then take time alone once it’s complete. As Sophia Dembly, the author of *The Introvert’s Way: Living A Quiet Life In A Noisy World*, explains in her book, it ultimately comes down to how a person receives (or doesn’t receive) energy from his or her surroundings. Instead, introverts prefer deeper conversations, oftentimes about philosophical ideas.

While a person’s introverted or extroverted tendencies fall within a spectrum -- there is no such thing as a pure introvert or pure extrovert, according to famous Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung -- an introvert is most obvious and vulnerable when he or she is in an over-stimulating environment.

**They withdraw in crowds.**

**They succeed on stage -- just not in the chit-chat afterwards.**

“At least half of people who speak for a living are introverted in nature,” according to Jennifer B. Kahnweiler, Ph.D., a certified speaking professional, executive coach and author of *Quiet Influence: The Introvert's Guide to Making a Difference*. They simply play to their strengths, and prepare extensively. In fact,
Some of the most successful performers are introverts. Remaining on a stage, removed from a massive audience, proves far easier than the small talk-filled conversations that follow.

**They get distracted easily, but rarely feel bored.**

If you're looking to destroy an introverted person's attention span, just put them in a situation where they feel over-stimulated. Due to increased sensitivity to their surroundings, introverts struggle with feeling distracted and sometimes overwhelmed in large crowds and open office spaces.

However, when they are in peace and quiet, they have no issue tending to a favorite hobby or delving into a new book for hours. Having that time to take care of their inner selves helps them recharge while enjoying an activity they already enjoy.

**They are naturally drawn to more creative, detail-oriented and solitary careers.**

Introverts naturally prefer spending time alone or in a small group, delving deeply into one task at a time and taking their time when it comes to making decisions and solving problems. Therefore, they fare better in work environments that allow them to do all of these things. Certain professions -- including writers, in-the-field natural scientists and behind-the-scenes tech workers -- can give introverts the intellectual stimulation they crave without the distracting environment they dislike.

**When surrounded by people, they locate themselves close to an exit.**

Introverts not only feel physically uncomfortable in crowded places, but also do their best to mediate that discomfort by hanging as close to the periphery as possible. Whether it be by an exit, at the back of a concert hall, or an aisle row on an airplane, they avoid being surrounded by people on all sides, according to Dembling.

"We're likely to sit in places where we can get away when we're ready to -- easily," Dembling previously told HuffPost.

**They think before they speak.**

This habit of introverts is often what earns them their reputations as listeners. It is second nature to them to take their time before opening their mouths, reflecting internally, instead of thinking out loud (which is more common among extroverts). They may seem more quiet and shy because of this behavior, but it just means that when they do speak, the words they share have that much more thought -- and sometimes power -- behind them.

**They don't take on the mood of their environment like extroverts do.**

A 2013 study published in the journal *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* found that extroverts and introverts process experiences through the brain's "reward" centers quite differently. While extroverts often sense a feel-good rush of dopamine related to their surroundings, introverts tend to not experience such a shift. In fact, people who are naturally introverted do not process rewards from external factors as strongly as extroverts do.

**They physically can't stand talking on the phone.**

Most introverts screen their phone calls -- even from their friends -- for several reasons. The intrusive ringing forces them to abandon focus on a current project or thought and reassign it to something unexpected. Plus, most phone conversations require a certain level of small talk that introverts avoid. Instead, introverts may let calls go to voicemail so they can return them when they have the proper energy and attention to dedicate to the conversation.

**They literally shut down when it's time to be alone.**

"Solitude matters, and for some people, it is the air that they breathe." - Susan Cain

Every introvert has a limit when it comes to stimulation. HuffPost blogger Kate Bartolotta explains it well when she writes, "Think of each of us as having a cup of energy available. For introverts, most social interactions take a little out of that cup instead of filling it the way it does for extroverts. Most of us like it. We're happy to give, and love to see you. When the cup is empty though, we need some time to refuel."

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This article appeared on HuffingtonPost, 11/7/14. Alena Hall is an associate editor for HuffPost.
TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) is a global set of conferences run by the private non-profit Sapling Foundation, under the slogan "Ideas Worth Spreading". TED began in 1984 as a one-time event, then as an annual conference series since 1990. TED's early emphasis was technology and design, consistent with its Silicon Valley origins, but it has since broadened its focus to include talks on many scientific, cultural and academic topics.
This year's speech and debate team has been extremely successful! On March 11, 2015, the National Speech and Debate Association officially promoted School of the Woods High School to a charter membership. Charter chapters are the highest membership honor a school can achieve in the national league. To achieve this honor, the school must demonstrate active participation and success.

Our team consists of four Public Forum teams, six Lincoln-Douglas debaters, one congressional debater and three members who participated in speech events. Public Forum debate, also known as PF debate, is a two-person team event that advocates or rejects a position posed by the monthly resolution. Lincoln-Douglas debate, also called LD debate, is a one-on-one debate event that advocates or rejects a bimonthly resolution. Congressional debate, also referred to as Student Congress or Legislative Debate, is a mock congressional session.

The three speech events that team members participated in for the first time this year are: Humorous Interpretation, Extemporaneous Speaking, and Impromptu Speaking. Humorous Interpretation is a speech event where you have ten minutes to portray a published script in the most humorous way possible. Extemporaneous and Impromptu Speaking are very similar in the way that you have to improvise your speech with a limited preparation time, however they differ in the topics you speak about. Extemporaneous speaking tends to focus more on foreign or domestic policies, whereas impromptu topics tend to be about quotes, objects, proverbs, or one-word abstracts.

This year, one of our PF teams (a novice team) placed three times in Texas Forensic League tournaments, they got third two times and second once, and one of our LD debaters also placed third in a Texas Forensic League tournament. One of our team members received third place for speaker points at one tournament, and second place for speaker points at another. Speaker points are points allocated to individual speakers based on their speaking skills.

Over the years, the speech and debate team has grown to become the success it is now. We hope that in the future, it will gain more members and its success will grow as well. We’re looking forward to the district tournament at George Ranch High School on April 30-May 2, and the debate banquet two weeks later.

We would welcome the participation of parents at lower school levels as judges during next school year – we always need judges for tournaments. If you are interested, please contact Coach Val McAvey by email at Val@McAvey.net. We will hold training sessions at the beginning of next school year.
Life while you wait

Life while you wait.
Performance without rehearsal.
Body without fitting.
Head without reflection.

I don’t know the role I’m playing.
I only know it’s mine, non-convertible.

What the play is about
I must guess only after it’s begun.
Poorly prepared for the dignity of life,
I barely keep up with the pace of the action imposed.

I improvise, though I loathe improvisation.
At every step I stumble over my lack of expertise.
My way of life smacks of provincialism.
My instincts are those of a rank amateur.
Stage fright, although an excuse, is all the more humiliating.
Extenuating circumstances I perceive as cruel.

Not to be retracted are words and reflexes,
unfinished is the count of stars,
character buttoned up on the run like an overcoat –
these are the pitiful results of such haste.

If only Wednesday could be practiced ahead of time,
Or if only one Thursday could again be repeated!
But here it is nearly Friday, with a scenario I don’t know.
Is it fair – I ask, (with hoarseness in my voice,
because I wasn’t even allowed to clear my throat in the wings).

Illusory is the thought that this is just a pop quiz
taken on temporary premises. No.
I stand amid the scenery and see how solid it is.
I am struck by the accuracy of all the props.
The revolving stage has long been in operation.
Even the most distant nebulae have been switched on.
Ah, I have no doubt that this is opening night.
And whatever I may do
will be forever changed into that which I have done.

Wislawa Szymborska
Nobel Prize for Literature, 1996

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