

SELF EXPRESSION - COMPASSIONATE CONNECTION - PURPOSEFUL LEARNING

Highlights SEPT 2012

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CALENDAR

Oct 8 (Mon)	Staff Development no school
Oct 23 - 25	Student Conferences noon dismissal
Oct 29 (Mon)	Fresh & Easy Mira Mesa 4 - 8 pm fundrasing
Nov 12 (Mon)	Veteran's Day no school
Nov 19 - 23	Thanksgiving Break no school





Every 1st and 3rd Wednesday morning from 9:15 - 10:30 am.

Meet in the front office.

CHRISTINE'S MONTHLY MESSAGE

Is my child really learning?

Welcome to a new year of learning and challenge. In this edition of our newsletter I would like to address two frequently asked questions: "How do I gauge my child's learning?" and "What about homework?" The homework question is addressed within the newsletter. I use a real email from a prospective parent to explore that topic.

As primary educators of their children, it is best if parents understand their own child's learning style, academic strengths and challenges. Knowing this information about your child helps you support them as they journey through life. We are here to help you understand this information.

Some things you can do at home:

- Read with your child. Look for fluency, comprehension and decoding. Fluency will be noted by how smooth and expressively your child reads. Comprehension is easily monitored by simply having a conversation with your child about what is happening in the story. You can also ask questions about character, inference and plot. Decoding is how well a person translates the symbols on paper into sound.
- Point out the mathematics in everyday life and engage your child in solving problems. Time, measurement, estimation of length and weight and distance are everywhere. Generate simple computation problems and ask your child to solve them. A child does not need to do 10 problems for you to see how well they calculate.
- For Social Studies students study such diverse disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology. Discuss the elections and other current events with your child at their level. Ask them their opinion. Can they enter into a discussion? Do they have an opinion? Grab an atlas or globe and ask your child to locate cities, states, countries and continents. This will help you gauge their knowledge in this area.
- Science. Does your child ask you questions about science topics? If so, do you quickly answer them or do you play Socrates and engage in thoughtful questioning? You can determine where your child's understanding is by asking deep questions about where the question is coming from and by helping your child find the answers.

At School:

- Communicate with the teacher
- Ask the teacher what book your child is reading in class.
- Come in and read from your child's journal, blog, and other in school writing materials.
- Ask to see your child's math journal. Look for computation levels within the journal.
- Send an email with a specific question that you have about your child.
- Read the blog for the academic skills being covered that week.
- As your child's primary educator know that you can see their work and ask their teacher any question that you may have about their learning. If interested, set up a private meeting with the teacher. Include your child if you choose.

We understand and welcome your participation, interest and questions. Please leverage our knowledge and time with your child in order to be in a place where you are aware of your child's academic needs and standing. We are all here because we want your child to succeed academically and socially. Let's have an outstanding year.

Chrístíne



MEET THE TEACHER: Cassie Baker & Tami Hermann

This month we are featuring our new ladies that work in the front office.



Where I grew up: I was born and raised in San Diego

What I do for fun: Spending time outdoors with my family. We love camping at Carlsbad State Beach every summer!

What I like you to know about me: I'm so enjoying my new

role as Attendance Clerk! Having a seat up " close and personal" lets me get to know the students well. Having Donna and Tina at my side to "show me the ropes" is a blessing! My goal is to eventually know each student's name! I've been a part of the IA family since it started and have been so moved by Christine's dedication and determination to create the most positive of learning environments!

How I relax: reading--one of my favorite authors is Gail Tsukiyama, What I collect: tins, My favorite food: my mother-in-law's fried shrimp, My favorite color: red, My favorite animal: dolphins, My favorite movies: comedies.



or sign up in the office



My name is Tami Hermann

I have 3 teenage sons including Trevor who is in the 8th grade here at IA-I work in the front office-my birthday is March 8-I grew up in several different places due to my dad being in the army-I went to Point

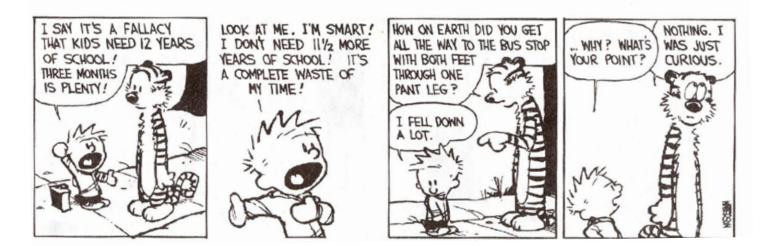
Loma Nazarene College for 2 years and worked on a degree in child development. I love to spend time with my family especially at the beach or the lake. I spent the last 18 years doing daycare and now that my oldest son graduated from high school I decided to go back go work! I love the kids and staff at IA! I love pasta and diet cherry coke and my favorite colors are green and purple!





ASKA QUESTION! Every month we will ask our teachers a question. If you would like to ask YOUR question, please contact **newsletter@innovationsacademy.org**.

This month's question is: "What academics are you focusing on in the classroom these first couple of weeks?"



Cindy Jensen-Elliot - 2nd Grade: In grade 2, we are starting our year by warming up to writing, math and reading after a summer off. We are learning to use our Writer's Notebooks to write our thoughts, feelings and ideas. We are using our math journals to record Problems of the Day and other math work. And we are using our science notebooks to record our observations from our first two experiments, Gummy Bear Science, and our Ant Study, testing which substances from our homes will keep ants away. In addition, we are assessing reading levels, writing needs, and math skills.

In the social-emotional realm, we have almost completed our class agreements, and have decided what a class that supports our hopes and dreams should look, sound, and feel like. We have already had one great group project, building a "Not-A-Box". You can see it on our 2nd grade blog! We are off to a great start in second grade!

Bill Thomas - 5th Grade (SS/LA): In 5th grade humanities, we are working on our Writer's Workshop. We are expanding details in our writing and using proper paragraph format. We are also analyzing the Constitution and using it to create our class rights and responsibilities.

Stephanie Robinson - 6th Grade (Math/Sci): In sixth grade math and science we are focusing on several academic areas. First, we are gaining knowledge about our own personal learning styles by taking a multiple intelligences test. Once the results are in, students begin working on a rough draft graphing their results. Then, students get to practice feedback and revision, giving and receiving at least three pieces of written feedback and applying that to their beautiful final drafts. We are focusing on the process of creating beautiful work, while also finding out our personal learning style. This week we are moving on to writing a math autobiography and profiling ourselves as mathematicians.

Tony Spitzberg - 8th Grade (SS/LA): The 8th grade students are beginning Humanities by taking a look at themselves and then at the world, almost literally! They are drafting "Where I'm From" poems which they will peer-critique and beginning to work on student-narrated digital versions in Media Arts. They are also building their own globes and familiarizing themselves closely with the locations of continents and oceans as well as with the major climatic and geographical features. Once students have "mastered the earth", we will use our globes to follow the routes of explorers to the Americas, where our studies of our country will begin.



Inquiring Minds Want to Know... What about homework?

By Christine Kuglen

I received the following email from a thoughtful, responsible parent who wanted to understand our homework philosophy. Once I responded, it occurred to me that other members of our community may be wondering the same thing.

Hello,

My 7th grade daughter has expressed an interest in attending your school because her friend said IA doesn't require homework. I've visited your website and located a comment confirming the no-homework policy.

My question is: How does a school sell the notion (or prove effectiveness) of 'no homework' being a good practice? (it seems like a missed opportunity).

At a point in time when a good education is more important than ever....

Getting a good 'rock solid' knowledge base to draw upon for the future is and has traditionally been built by reinforcing tasks and routines so that kids remember how to solve complex math and other lessons. Homework; reinforcement of formulas and theories learned during school, practiced at home for retention.

When the student enters higher education, homework (lots of *it*) is a necessity. One would assume preparing the student at an early age is paramount.

I'm anxiously awaiting your response to this inquiry. My curiosity is sparked.....

Sincerely,

An Interested Parent

And here is my response:

Regarding Homework: Yes, we have a "No Meaningless Homework" policy. To clarify, we give students enough time in class to do all of the project, skill building and inquiry, critique and feedback work that is expected but if a student does not finish they can choose to take work home or stay on Friday (our minimum day) for extra support.

To answer the question: How does a school sell the notion (or prove effectiveness) of 'no homework' being a good practice? (it seems like a missed opportunity).

There are volumes written about the subject. I will do my best to summarize a few of the best points, at least to me (I refer you to some articles and books for deeper inquiry). We do not want to sell anything to anyone. We are offering a meaningful learning experience which does not necessarily have to include homework. Research has shown that there is no correlation between academic success and homework. (see attached articles and books mentioned below). Our "No Homework" policy is based on research that can be found in the following books:

"The Homework Myth" - by Alfie Kohn

"The Case Against Homework" - Nancy Kalish and Sara Bennett

"The End of Homework" - by Etta Kralovec



At a point in time when a good education is more important than ever....

I do agree that education is more important than ever. But I would add, that depth of learning, critical thinking and other higher order skills are more important than ever and those are not typically skills learned from worksheet and textbook homework. We are not training our students to work in factories performing only rote work. We are helping them develop into people who can think, solve problems, collaborate, have integrity and do beautiful, respectful work.

Getting a good 'rock solid' knowledge base to draw upon for the future is and has traditionally been built by reinforcing tasks and routines so that kids remember how to solve complex math and other lessons. Homework; reinforcement of formulas and theories learned during school, practiced at home for retention.

Rote learning, which is one component of a good education, does require practice and repetition. We spend time in our classrooms doing skill building. Our no homework policy does not stop any student or family from practicing these important rote skills (multiplication tables, penmanship, keyboarding skills...) both at home and at school. Our policy allows this differentiation. In fact, those students who need more of this practice are encouraged to practice at home as needed. Other students who have social issues are encouraged to set play dates or join a team to learn those skills and even other students, who are high in energy, are encouraged to get outside and get the most exercise they can get in the limited daylight hours post school day. Rote learning is simply one part of a larger education which includes critical thinking skills, public speaking skills, problem solving and conflict resolution, how to give and receive feedback and critique, debate etc. Those are hard to create in a homework packet or page.

Allow me to throw some ideas to consider regarding homework:

- Imagine this scenario: your boss comes up to you after you have worked hard all day and tells you, "Hey, by the way, I know you are getting ready to leave, but do this 2 hours of work tonight and if you don't have it tomorrow you don't get lunch. Bring it in complete, first thing in the morning." Not only that but you had planned to spend extra time with your children, you are taking a yoga class and this same situation plays out daily. How would you feel? Would you love your job?
- All families deserve to have sacred time. Many of our students are involved in sports, music, foreign languages, church activities, boy and girl scouts etc. All of those activities are valid and contributing to their learning, social and emotional well being. I would rather your first question when you see your child not be, "Do you have homework? Did you finish your homework?..." How about, "Let's go for a walk on the beach, play some chess or have a flash card race for adding positive and negative integers..." There are so many enriching things you can do with your child that can not happen while homework is in the space.
- Every educator and school board member that I have ever met agrees that one size does not fit all in the world of education. If this is true, and I believe it is, then how does the same worksheet, textbook page, reading log, or assignment of any kind respect that truth? If we assign all students to do the same 20 problems, there will be some of them that already understand the concept thoroughly (for them it is a waste of their precious time), others who do not have help at home and are very lost (for them it is either stressful, unproductive or they practice making mistakes as they do the work) and some that it can work for. This practice seems unproductive.
- Research shows that when teachers assign homework, they often count on the parents to teach the concepts.Many parents feel they are home schooling. If they want to home school, they don't need the 6 hours of classes.
- Much homework is just busy work and often unrelated to what is being done in class. This is because it can be a burden to teachers to find homework, assign, collect, hold accountable, record, assess and grade homework. The time they take doing all of this work takes away from planning for lessons. I would rather have my teachers fully engaged in the projects and other work that they do have control over.

"When the student enters higher education, homework (lots of it) is a necessity. One would assume preparing the student at an early age is paramount."

This is a myth. In college, students do not go to school Monday through Friday 6.5 hours per day. Each class meets either T, Th or M,W, F. The other days they are able to do the class work. Students do work outside of class but are not in classes 5 days per week, 6.5 hours per day. Additionally, they are 18 years old and over. They are choosing to take on the responsibility and they are more mature. A 7th grader to a college student is like a Kindergartner to a 6th/7th grader. You can expect different things.



Another thing to consider regarding the preparation for college:

A teacher I worked with did his thesis on students in the International Baccalaureate program. The IB program is highly rigorous, lots of homework and high amounts of work. He found that IB students do poorly in college, find themselves on academic probation more often and drop out at a higher rate than other students. Why would this be? They are brilliant, 'A' students who are "good at school." Well, it is because they are burned out. The best gift we can give our children at these ages is to keep their love of learning alive, keep them inquisitive and feeling that school is fun and engaging. Then they will do better later on. At least that is my experience and I have experienced many children who had no homework until they got to college.

I'm anxiously awaiting your response to this inquiry. My curiosity is sparked.....

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address your questions. I truly enjoyed revisiting this topic. I hope I have given you some new ideas to think about. I honor your inquisitive nature. I wish all parents that wondered about Innovations Academy would take the time, as you have, to get their questions answered. With modeling like that I am sure your daughter will have success no matter what path she takes.

Sincerely,

Christine Kuglen

SCHOOL H	IOURS		
Kinderga	arten	Mon - Thur	9:00 - 2:30
Grades	1-8	Mon - Thur	9:00 - 3:30
Grades	K-8	Friday	9:00 - 12:00
	HLC	Tues & Thur	9:00 - 3:00
LUNCH & PLAY			
Grades	K-5	Mon - Thur	11:45 - 12:30
Grades	6-8	Mon - Thur	12:30 - 1:15
	HLC	Mon - Thur	11:45- 12:30

TEACHER BLOCS

All teachers have their own classroom blogs. Here you will find information about what's going on in the classrooms, projects the students are working on and the wishes and needs that the teachers and students have.

Make sure to check the blog on a weekly basis to stay updated!

Go to innovationsacademy.org and click on 'teacher blogs'

Innovations Academy 10380 Spring Canyon Rd. San Diego, 92131 Phone: 858-271-1414 fax: 858-271-1418 info@innovationsacademy.org

CONNECT WITH OUR TEACHERS

Gabriela (Gaby) Badillo - Kindergarten gabriela@innovationsacademy.org Jennifer KirkbyTatro - Kindergarten jenniferkt@innovationsacademy.org Alicia Wescott - 1st Grade alicia@innovationsacademy.org **Cindy Jenson-Elliott- 2nd Grade** cindy@innovationsacademy.org Patrick Garland - 3rd / 4th Grade (SS/LA) patrick@innovationsacademy.org Elizabeth Grimes - 3rd / 4th Grade (Math/Sci) elizabeth@innovationsacademy.org Alexis Stoner - 5th Grade (Math/Sci) alexis@innovationsacademy.org Bill Thomas - 5th Grade (SS/LA) bill@innovationsacademy.org Michael Grimes - 6th Grade (SS/LA) michael@innovationsacademy.org Stephanie Robinson - 6th Grade (Math/Sci) stephanie@innovationsacademy.org Jennie Ganesan - 7th Grade (SS/LA) jennie@innovationsacademy.org Wes Davis - 7th (Math/Sci) wes@innovationsacademy.org Tony Spitzberg - 8th Grade (SS/LA) tony@innovationsacademy.org Lisa Moncrief - 8th Grade (Math/Sci) lisa@innovationsacademy.org Teresa Draguicevich - (K-1) teresaD@innovationsacademy.org Jill Keltner - HLC (2,3,4)

> Jennifer McMakin - HLC (5,6,7,8) jennifer@innovationsacademy.org

jill@innovationsacademy.org

Steve Smith - Media Arts steve@innovationsacademy.org Brian Kane - PE brian@innovationsacademy.org

Innovation's Traffic Flow Plan



There has been some confusion about how the parking lot is used, so these are the guidelines.

For those who wish to stay in their vehicle and drive up to drop off or pick up their

children, there are two loading zones for this purpose, both denoted by a white curb that says "Loading Zone - 3 minutes max." Volunteers have begun monitoring these loading zones to ensure that traffic keeps moving so everyone can get through the line quickly.

If you enter the campus at the traffic light, you'll turn left and go past the front of the school all the way down to the white curb. Stopping is not allowed in the fire lane (red curb) or handicapped crosswalk (blue stripes). There is a pedestrian gate where the students can enter the school near this loading zone or they can choose to walk back to the main entrance of the school.

If you'd prefer to be able to drop off and pick up closer to the main entrance, you'll want to drive onto the campus ½ block south of the main entrance. This driveway goes through a small parking lot in a park and leads to our largest loading zone, which is directly in front of the Kindergarten/1st grade playground. Please remember to pull forward when space becomes available. If the line of vehicles becomes too long, you may need to find a parking spot as it is not acceptable to wait in the red curb zone or block other vehicles. **Student volunteers are available in the morning to escort younger students who are not yet confident walking in alone to their classrooms.** Be sure to let your children know where you plan to pick them up so they can wait for you in the appropriate area.

If you need to get out of your vehicle to escort a child, drop something off, volunteer at school, speak to a teacher, etc., you'll need to find a spot in the parking lot.

Parking is never allowed in the loading zone (white curb), fire lane (red curb), or in the handicapped crosswalk (blue stripes).

Please remember that the white curb is now being used for active loading and any vehicles left unattended may be towed.

Occasionally the school's parking lots will be full; when this happens you can try to find a spot in the dirt lot at the northeast end of the campus or use street parking on Brookville Drive. Another alternative is to use the loading zone and let your children out at the curb. Student volunteers are available to escort younger students who are not yet confident walking in alone to their classrooms.

RED CURB

Fire Lane

No Stopping any time

WHITE CURB

Loading Zone / Drop off and pickup only

No unattended vehicles

Parking Space / Parking Lot

To be used anytime a vehicle is left unattended

A big thanks to all of you who are taking the time to find an appropriate place to park or drop off and pick up.

We look forward to a continued smooth, speedy and safe traffic flow throughout the school year. The response to the new plan has been overwhelmingly positive and the volunteers appreciate all of the kind comments and thanks they have received.

Save your receipts \$20+ from Fresh & Easy Dated: Sept 12, 2012 - December 31, 2012



Save the Date: Monday October 29, 2012 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.

> 6755 Mira Mesa San Diego, CA 92121

Shop For School Night Innovations Academy

Need volunteers to help.

Contact LuAnn Wherry @ luann.wherry@gmail.com



EXPLORATIONS PLUS Extended Care at Innovations Academy



Extended Care

This program is fee-based and is offered to all IA students. We are offering the following:

Mon - Fri	7:00 am - 9:00 am		
Mon - Thur	Grades 1-8	3:30 pm - 6:00 pm	
	Kindergarten	2:30 pm - 6:00 pm	
Friday	12:00 pm - 6:00 pm		

Students in the Extended Care Program can choose from a variety of activities including outdoor sports, art, cooking, games, and construction activities. The After School program includes a nutritious snack.

For more information about the IAEC program, please contact Brandy:

brandy@innovationsacademy.org or 859-559-1640.

5th)

In addition IA offers:

After School Enrichment Classes

These classes are fee-based and are offered to all IA students and are taught by outside third parties. We are offering the following:

Monday:	Sewing
Tuesday:	Chess and Dance 2B Fit (starting Oct. 2nd)
Wednesday:	Cheer/Tumbling and Music
Thursday:	Fencing, Capoeira, and Music
Friday:	Music and LifePlay Productions (starting Oct.

Enrichment opportunities coming in the fall and spring include PlayWell Technologies Lego Engineering Class, foreign language, science exploration, art, Zumba Fitness, and more. Class information flyers and registration forms are available in the front office.

A PARENT ASSOCIATION



Innovations Academy is proud to announce the newly formed Innovations Academy Parent Association (IAPA).

It was formed to help parents effectively organize support for Innovations Academy. The purpose is to support all goals and objectives of Innovations Academy, encourage participation in school activities, facilitate communication between home, school, and community, and fundraise.

The group consists of our Board Members who will meet monthly, or more often as needed. Many IA parents have signed up to form various committees as well and will meet separately as needed for each event.

The IAPA does not charge dues or fees. ALL IA parents are considered members. There are so many ways which to support our students, teachers, and our school. It is our hope that all our IA families will support our school in any way they can. We look forward to working together for an exciting and productive year at Innovations Academy!

Below is your 2012-2013 Innovations Academy Board:

President

Debbie Kutyla (dkutyla@san.rr.com)

Vice-President

Kim Knox (kim@kk2.com)

Secretary

Carrie Interlandi (cinterlandi@gmail.com)

Treasurer Marla Anthony (marla.anthony@hotmail.com Ans De Ranther (ans.paepen@gmail.com)

Communications Chair Lon van G. (reginavangee@gmail.com) (IA Newsletter)

Gifts and Grants Chair Jennifer Franklin (jenfranklin@san.rr.com)

School Support Chair Brenda Loveall (bnbloveall@yahoo.com)

Fundraising Chair Debbie Kutyla (dkutyla@san.rr.com)

Sustainability Programs

Beth Foster (beth@innovationsacademy.org)

Tech Support Chair John F. Wherry (GTH JFW@yahoo.com)

Community Outreach Chair

Pernille Frandsen (pernille.frandsen@hotmail.com)

Teacher Hospitality Chair Elise Potter (elisepotter@sbcglobal.net)

Volunteer Coordinator Kara Ramirez (kiramirez6@hotmail.com)

Yearbook/Photo Coordinator Patty Martinez (posoria@gmail.com)

FUNDRAISING FOR INNOVATIONS

Here at Innovations Academy, the Parents Fundraising Group belief is, we do not want our IA families bombarded with a feeling of asking for money every time you turn around. We feel that with a mixture of passive and some event fundraising, we can achieve our goals and receive what our school needs.

There are many ways our families can help fundraise at Innovations. Below are fundraisers that run all year round. Please take a moment and go through these. All these organizations make donations to Innovations! If you are not signed-up for some of these, please do so. Every penny counts for our school!

Thank you for your support and if you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

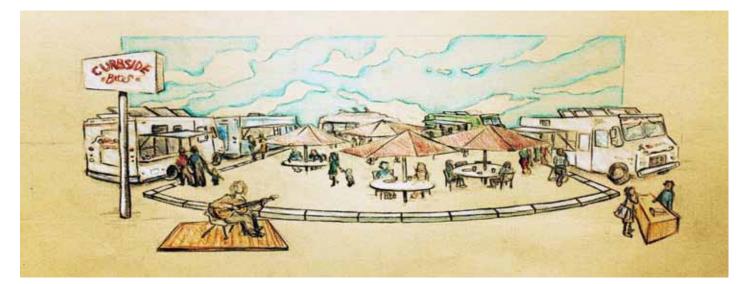
Debbie Kutyla Innovations Parents Associations President, Fundraising Chairperson dkutyla@san.rr.com

PASSIVE FUNDRAISERS:

- 1. <u>Box Tops: www.boxtops4education.com</u> Cut out the small Box Top labels off participating products and bring them into the Front Office and place them into the Box Top box.
- 2. <u>eScrip: www.escrip.com</u> Click on "Members/Supporter" Sign-up if not a member iGive: www.iGive.com Sign-up for an account Shop while making money for IA!
- Fresh & Easy Friends Rewards: www.freshandeasy. com Go to the bottom and click "Friends Rewards" Sign-up!



Innovations FUNdraising



Scripps Ranch Food Truck Thursdays

This weekly gathering of gourmet food trucks is a fundraiser to benefit the non-profit Innovations Academy S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) program. Innovations Academy is a free, public K-8 charter school.

EVERY THURSDAY 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Innovations Academy 10380 Spring Canyon Road San Diego, CA 92131



For weekly updates and a current list of trucks, visit

http://www.facebook.com/IAFoodTruckThursdays

