

Special Report

HOW TO HELP CHILDREN GET READY FOR THE STANDARDIZED TESTS

Ruffing's second through eighth grade students take standardized tests during the week of January 21st. Though the tests do not exactly correspond to the Montessori curriculum, they are useful in monitoring students' progress and in familiarizing students with test-taking skills. It takes the second graders all week, for example, to stop asking why they can't do the work with their friends. Middle school students typically take the tests in stride with no special practice.

Students have been preparing all year for these tests. There is no way to cram in facts the night or week before. There are, however, several steps they can take to get ready. Parents can help.

1. Get a good night's sleep. Students need to be alert to do their best. Regular bed-times all week are essential.

2. Eat a nutritious breakfast. Students need a healthy breakfast that will sustain their energy through the whole morning.

3. Arrive ten minutes early (8:15 or 8:20). Arriving a little early allows students to calmly get ready for tests. Late students have to rush and may even miss the directions needed for the work. First graders should arrive early as well. They will be collecting work and moving to Paula's classroom for the morning. If they arrive late, they may be disoriented and may not have their own work until testing is completed.

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Andrew Fraser

VACATION VOLUNTEERS

On the first day of their winter vacation, four members of the 8th-grade class traveled to MetroHealth Medical Center with teacher Cary Seidman. There they performed a day of volunteer work with the outreach staff at the Cuyahoga County Tuberculosis Control Clinic. Casey Pollock, Melissa Mauter, Annie Miano and Elysa Chao packed holiday baskets for delivery

to indigent or homeless patients who are in treatment for TB. They packed fruit baskets and packages with needed personal items, such as gloves, hats and personal hygiene materials. Outreach nurse Gretchen Collins expressed her gratitude for the students' efforts, noting that for many of the recipients, the basket the students prepared would be "the only Christmas present these people would receive this year."

News & Notes

A Ruffing mother interrupted the conversation I was having with my son and made the following statement: 'He should speak English, if you want him to learn to speak English well.' ”
(see "Letter from a Parent")

BUSING

We're sorry that we were not informed that bus service would not be provided by Cleveland Heights for Tuesday, January 2. The Cleveland Heights schools were still on their winter break during that week. They assure us, however, that bus service will be provided for the rest of the school year, including during public school breaks.

PARENTS MEETING

The Parents Meeting listed for January 17 on the master calendar that was sent out before the school year began has been postponed. Mark your calendars for Thursday evening, March 1, for our annual Meet the

Alumni meeting, where several Ruffing alumni now in high school, college and beyond will discuss their experiences at Ruffing and how those experiences affected them in subsequent situations. Watch for more details about this event.

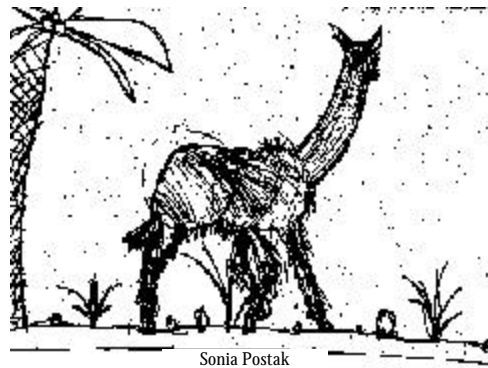
PICK-UP PEOPLE

Our annual reminder: At after-school pick-up time, please don't leave your vehicle unattended in the pick-up lane. And please don't park in the driveway next to the wall; during the winter, the snow gives us less space to drive than usual. If you need to come into the building for any

reason and for any amount of time, please park in the school's lots or on one of the side streets (not on Fairmount Boulevard).

ENCYCLOPEDIA

We have two sets of lovingly used encyclopedia on sale for the nominal fee of \$10 each. If you're interested, call the office (321-7571).



Sonia Postak



Miriam Chelimsky

Letter from a Parent

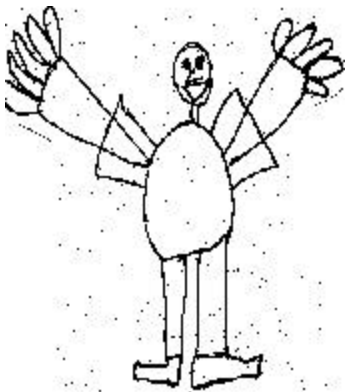
Recently, I came to pick up my son from Aftercare. As we were walking out of the school, my son and I were speaking Spanish, which is one of the languages spoken in our home. A Ruffing mother then interrupted the conversation I was having with my son and made the following statement: "He should speak English, if you want him to learn to speak English well."

I was appalled to hear this comment coming from a parent from this school.

Furthermore, I would like to invite all of us to learn to tolerate and respect our differences, with the goal of providing our children with a loving environment that allows them to grow and understand that "differences" do not mean "bad."

All of us Ruffing parents care for our children deeply and make the effort to send them to this wonderful school. Let's help our children love each other regardless of color, ethnicity, religion or economic status. Let's teach our children to love one another in hopes of a better future.

-- Mirna Corrigan-Carias,
mother of 3rd-grader Liam Corrigan-Carias



James Lee

Special Report

(continued from page 1)

4. Have confidence. Students have been working all year. They have learned a lot. It helps to remind children that they are NOT expected to know everything on the test. Tests need to measure where the child's knowledge stops. Just as at the doctor's office, a child is not expected to be as heavy as the scale can register, a student is not expected to know all the questions on the test.

5. Relax. Students do their best work when they are confident and relaxed. Parents can help their children practice relaxing routines that take only a few seconds but can improve performance. The children can take one or two deep breaths; go limp like a rag doll, count to ten slowly, or close their eyes and visualize something peaceful.

Make-up tests will be given to children who are ill. Please reschedule any doctors' appointments or vacations so that students are at school for testing. Thank you for your help.

-- Janet Wells, reading specialist

Calendar

WEEK OF JANUARY 15, 2001

Monday, Jan. 15 NO SCHOOL - MLK JR DAY.
 Wednesday, Jan. 17 Girls basketball vs. Hathaway Brown, here, 4:00
 Thursday, Jan. 18 Boys basketball at Solomon Schechter, 4:00

WEEK OF JANUARY 22, 2001

Monday-Friday (a.m.) Standardized testing, grades 2-8
 Monday, Jan. 22 Girls basketball at Hathaway Brown, 4:00
 Brownie Troop 1288, French Room, 6-7:15 p.m.
 Tuesday, Jan. 23 Boys basketball vs. University School, here, 4:00
 Thursday, Jan. 25 Girls basketball at Ratner, 4:00
 Friday, Jan. 26 NO CHILDREN'S HOUSE CLASSES
 (prospective student interviews)

LOOKING AHEAD


Sunday, Feb. 4 Contra Dance & Chili Dinner, 5-8 p.m.

REMINDERS

* Dana's Upper El class is collecting used ink cartridges from computer printers. The students can sell them to a recycling company, so the cartridges won't go into landfills and the class can earn money for its trip to Colonial Williamsburg.

* And keep those Giant Eagle receipts coming in. Our collection seems to be growing nicely. The "Apples for the Students" campaign ends at the end of next month. For the past two years, we've been able to obtain computer-related equipment with these cash register tapes.

summer ruffing it 2001
wants you



you are invited to our open house on
Feb 25, 2001 at 1PM at Ruffing to

d i s c o v e r
who and what we are and how your
child can spend a summer with us!

summer 2001 june 18 through july 27
ages 3 through 12

2 1 6 . 9 3 2 . 7 8 6 6

photo class 1998

Contra Dance & Chili Dinner

We've heard from some parents that they never received the Ruffing Today newsletter that went out just before winter break (and others have mentioned that they didn't see it until they opened their children's lunch boxes on Tuesday, January 2, and it jumped up and ran away, along with the leftover lunch from December 22).

Some of these people tell us that they know nothing about the Contra Dance & Chili Dinner, so we'll paraphrase what we wrote in the previous issue:

One of the most-fun family events here at Ruffing is the annual Contra Dance & Chili Dinner.

This year it's taking place on Sunday, February 4, from 5 to 8 p.m.

As the name implies, there are two parts to this event. For the uninitiated, here's how it works: Contra dancing is an early-American form of dancing, not unlike square dancing (but square dancing sounds so uncool -- this is definitely much cooler). We'll have our favorite band, Mud In Yer Eye, playing live (all 138 of them, or however many show up this year).

And we'll have a caller, who will teach each of the dances and then lead us through them. You don't need to be a good dancer -- or good

anything -- to do contra dancing. It's something that anybody, and all ages, can do together.

Then, about halfway through the evening, we'll take a break for dinner. Several people (and you can be one of them) will be bringing chili and corn bread for everybody to share. You can bring drinks, plus anything else your family wants in addition to or instead of chili. And every family is asked to bring a dessert for all to share.

Then we dance some more.

Mark your calendars now for February 4. We hope to see you there.

...ONE MORE THING

We need you to volunteer in one of two ways (or, of course, both) for the Contra Dance & Chili Dinner:

* We need about 20 people to make and bring large pots of chili, and about the same number to bring plates of corn bread.

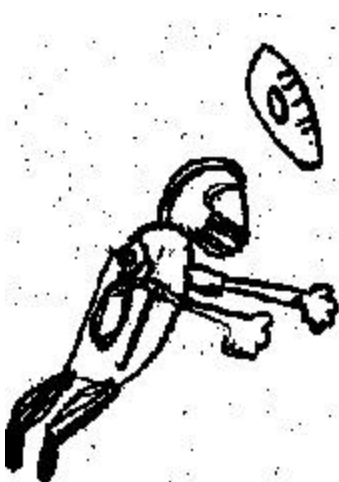
* We need several people to help set up the gym for the event, which means, mainly, bringing tables and chairs over from the Upper El (it's just a few steps from the gym), setting them up for the dinner, and cleaning up afterward.

If you're coming to the Contra Dance & Chili Dinner anyway, please volunteer to help out while you're there. Contact Parent Volunteer Coordinator Melissa Antrobus right away -- you can e-mail her at AntroDezyn@aol.com, or leave a message at 321-7571.

"It helps to remind children that they are NOT expected to know everything on the test. Tests need to measure where the child's knowledge stops."
(See "Special Report")



Nicholas Bi



Nick Spain



India Pitts