



## LDVA NEWS SEPTEMBER 2015

### LDVA STAFF

Mrs. A. Barba, Italian, Art, Religion, After Hours  
Mrs. E. Grimaldi, Casa Montessori Directress  
Mrs. M. Gologota, French  
Mr. T. Jewell, Grades 7/8, Science, Phys. Ed.  
Mrs. S. Lee, Academic Head, Grade 4/5  
Mrs. B. Lobo, Lower Elementary Montessori  
Ms. C. Marcuz, Lower Elementary Montessori Assistant  
Ms. A. Pinto, Casa Montessori Directress  
Mrs. M. Ricciuti, Scuola Materna Directress  
Ms. M. Maiatico, Admissions/School Secretary  
Mr. G. Sheehan, Music  
Mrs. S. Ursino, Scuola Materna Directress, Italian

BURSAR/ADMISSIONS: Mr. J. Cap

FOUNDERS: Mr. S. Ritacca, Mr. D. Tassielli

### ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

We are off to a great start to the year. In the interest of security we are continuing the morning drop off routines initiated two years ago. To help us better control access to the building parents are discouraged from entering the school without an appointment. Students not enrolled in "Extended-Hours" should arrive no sooner than 8:20 am. The morning bell will ring at 8:40 am to signal the start of the day. Doors will be locked after the bell for security reasons. Children arriving after 8:45 am should be brought to the office and a staff member will escort them to class. For safety reasons, students have been instructed to never open doors to people. Parents are requested to comply with established routines and help keep our school safe.

Since parents will not be accompanying their children into the classroom, preschool children especially will need help adjusting to this routine. We have had our usual "First Day of School" tears from some of the new preschool children, but most have done a great job coming in on their own and getting ready for class. It is great to see how independent and responsible our students can be as they come in to school on their own. Our afternoon dismissal also appears to be running smoothly. The support of parents in implementing these procedures is much appreciated.

Parents who wish to speak to a teacher on a given day are invited to write in the student's agenda (elementary students) or email the teacher at the email provided. Teachers have given parents their email addresses and the times that they will be checking them. This can serve as an effective way to communicate with the teachers without distracting their attention from the students under their care during arrival and dismissal times.

### LEONARDO'S CHALLENGES

The *Leonardo's Challenges* are a series of school-wide activities to encourage students to "Think Like Leonardo". Teachers take turns challenging students at all levels to think outside the box. All students participate in an activity designed to highlight and cultivate one or more of the *Da Vincian Principles* (see LDVA Student Handbook or web site for details). The first challenge of the year will take place on October 23. Please refer to this year's school *Events Calendar* for the other "Challenges" dates.

### CURRICULUM NIGHT

On September 17th, parents have an opportunity to meet the 2015-2016 LDVA staff and receive curriculum information. Parents will receive Course Outlines (Elementary) or Parent Manuals (preschools) and have an opportunity to discuss curriculum and the school's educational philosophy. Parents who are not able to attend are invited to pick up the handouts from the office.

### TERRY FOX RUN

On September 30th students of LDVA will once again pay tribute to Canadian Hero Terry Fox and his annual *Marathon of Hope* by running or walking for cancer research. As in past years, Mr. Jewell will be coordinating the run and the pledge form distribution. The funds raised will be donated in the memory of LDVA staff members and students whose lives were ended by cancer. Parents are asked to support their children in this proud Canadian tradition.



**DEVELOPING BRAINS** S. Ritacca, Co-founder, LDVA  
Parents are strongly urged to monitor and limit the time their children spend with digital screens and electronic devices. These include digital games, TV's, computers, cell phones, and ipads. Excessive use will not only have detrimental physical ramifications, but will impact negatively on social skills and brain development. Children who experience too much exposure to TV and computer screens become **passive learners** and grow to be dependent on external sources for stimulation - they do not learn how to problem-solve or think outside the box. Passive learning is the antithesis to creativity and "Thinking Like Leonardo". Excessive engagement with programmed electronic or digital screens tends to shut down the circuits responsible for **social interaction** and **deductive reasoning** in developing brains. This is especially true for younger children whose brains are at the early stages of development.

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

On most days, the period from 3:20 pm to 4:00 pm offers a variety of opportunities for elementary grade students to participate in selected activities or receive extra help. This year, after school clubs and activities include: Band, Sports, Italian Conversation, and French Studies. *Special Programmes* will also be offered by outside organizations throughout the year. During lunchtime, elementary students also participate in Intramural Sports with Mr. Jewell.

Extra-curricular activities are a privilege extended to students meeting their responsibilities. Detentions and academic requirements take priority over extra-curricular activities. The support from parents by picking up their children promptly is much appreciated and helps make these offerings possible. Parents are reminded that students not scheduled in an after school activity should be picked up promptly upon dismissal unless other arrangements have been made (such as Extended Hours). On staff meeting days students not enrolled in Extended Hours must be picked up by **3:20 pm** - please refer to the School Calendar for Staff Meeting dates.

## SCHOOL PHOTO DAY

Parents are reminded that October 19th is LDVA Picture Day - students are to be in complete **official school uniform** (parents are asked to please refer to the "School Clothing Requirements" form for specifics).

## Casa & Scuola Children Back to School "Hard at Work"



## MUSIC

Very few areas of the curriculum can promote "whole brain thinking" or *Arte/Scienza* as does Music. The study of Music can provide an excellent way to develop the balance between art, logic, and imagination - a core aspect of "Thinking Like Leonardo". For this reason music education is given a high priority at LDVA. Music classes are scheduled throughout the week for all LDVA students, including preschools. The Music curriculum encompasses theory, performance, and music appreciation.

Mr. Sheehan, the Academy's Music teacher holds Ontario qualifications in honors music education and has had experience teaching a wide range of age groups. His commitment to "fostering lifelong learning and a love of music" are a perfect fit to LDVA's objective of balancing the study of Music as a discipline with an appreciation for Music as artistic expression. The aim will be to nurture an innate love and appreciation for Music as a unique form of human experience.

**BAND** is compulsory for students in Grades 4 to 8. The **LDVA Band** meets on Tuesdays (Grades 7/8) and Thursdays (Full Band) from 3:20 pm to 4 pm.

**CHOIR** for students in Grades 1 to 3 is held once a week as part of their daily timetable.



## LIBRARY TRIPS

Students will be visiting the local library at different times throughout the year to promote reading. The first trip is on September 30. Please refer to the LDVA School Calendar for the dates of all the scheduled library visits for the year.

Students and parents wishing to renew borrowed library books may do so online at <http://www.tpl.toronto.on.ca/>. Please note that your child's library card number will be required to renew books on line. Students are advised to write their library card number in their planner. Students are responsible to turn in their library books as they enter the library during each visit. See Mrs. Lee for details.



*"Principles for the Development of a Complete Mind: Study the science of art. Study the art of Science. Develop your senses - especially learn how to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else."*

*Leonardo Da Vinci*



## SCUOLA MATERNA NEWS

Signora M. Ricciuti/Signora S. Ursino, Scuola Directresses

*Un bentornato a tutti i bambini della Scuola Materna, che dopo le vacanze ritornano pieni di entusiasmo e voglia di imparare, pronti ad esplorare e curiosare nella nuova classe montessoriana. L'inizio dell'anno scolastico è sempre molto entusiasmante per tutti, ed è per questo motivo che invitiamo i genitori a rassicurare i bambini e prepararli per nuovo ambiente. Nella Scuola Materna, si continua a guidare i bambini alla conoscenza e alla scoperta del metodo Montessoriano, dove il bambino è il protagonista della propria educazione.*

*Ricordiamo, inoltre, che per un perfetto e completo svolgimento del programma, l'orario d'entrata è dopo le ore 8:20, e quello d'uscita alle 15:30; a meno che non si abbia un permesso per "Extended Hours".*

*E' molto importante vestire i bambini in modo appropriato, cosicchè possano essere indipendenti ai servizi igienici, inoltre mettere sempre il nome sui grembiolini, e sulle giacche e scarpe.*

*Si informa i genitori che lunedì il 19 di ottobre ci sarà il primo "Show & Tell". Questa attività, che sarà sempre di lunedì permette al bambino di acquisire padronanza e spontaneità di espressione nell'apprendimento della lingua italiana. Altri eventi da ricordare:*

*17 settembre - "Curriculum Night": alle ore 19:30 ci sarà una serata d'incontro tra insegnanti e genitori.*

*19 ottobre - "School Photo Day"*

Felice anno scolastico a tutti !

## CASA MONTESSORI NEWS

Mrs. E. Grimaldi/Ms. A. Pinto, Casa Directresses

We wish to take this opportunity to welcome all families to the new school year. It sounds like many of our students enjoyed the wonderful sunshine and took advantage of the summer. The Casa class extends a special warm welcome to our new students Abby, Ryder, Julia, Elle, Liam, Gabriel, Ethan, Nicolas, and Alice. Our newest classmates are quickly making friends and finding their way around the classroom with the help of our familiar faces who are happy to guide them. We look forward to an exciting and fun-filled year!



Parents are reminded that during drop-off and pick-up times the children need our undivided attention. Parents who have questions or need to talk to one of the Directresses, are please asked to email us at [casa@ldva.on.ca](mailto:casa@ldva.on.ca). This will enable us to properly answer questions, receive information, or schedule a time to address concerns without disruptions to the classroom routine.

With the weather changing, please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately and in uniform. Also, since we work with materials that can sometimes result in spills, parents are reminded to ensure that children have a change of clothes in their cubbies at all times.

We strongly encourage all Casa parents to join us on Curriculum Night on Thursday, September 17th at 7:30 pm. This will be a great opportunity to see our new classroom, meet the teachers, and familiarize yourself with our daily routine. We look forward to seeing new and familiar faces!



## LAPA NEWS

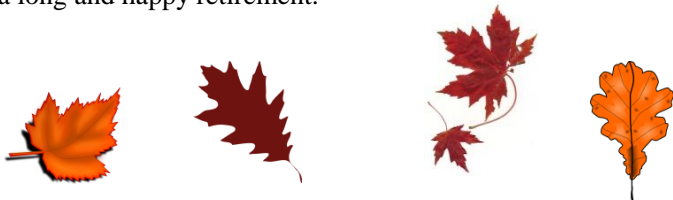
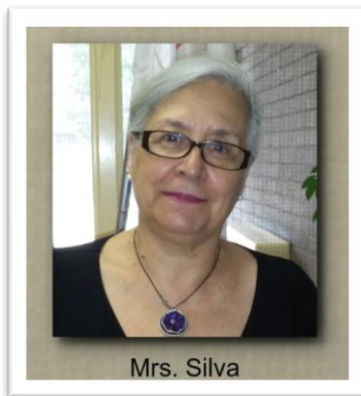
Welcome to all the families new to the LDVA Community. A special welcome to all the families new to the Toronto area.

The Leonardo Academy Parents Association or LAPA provides a valuable way for parents to participate in the enrichment of the LDVA experience. Ways LAPA has contributed in the past include: Social Events, Fundraisers, Year-End Picnic, and Parent Workshops. Funds raised independently by LAPA have been used to subsidize student activities and productions or to sponsor parent workshops.

From year to year the business of LAPA has been coordinated by an Executive Committee made up of parent volunteers and a staff member. Parents who would like to serve on an Executive are encouraged to submit their names to the office as soon as possible. If parents are interested, an Executive will be formed. In any event, parents will be invited throughout the year to volunteer for specific events as needed.

### MRS. SILVA RETIRES

After almost 28 years of service as the LDVA Secretary, this year Mrs. Silva will not be returning to her post at her desk in the front office. Instead she will be travelling and spending quality time with her own children and grandchildren. Over the years, Mrs. Silva not only served as the school's receptionist and administrative assistant, but was "den mother", nurse, and friend. For many students and parents, Mrs. Silva helped make LDVA their home away from home. Though she will be dearly missed we wish her a long and happy retirement.



**LDVA 2014-2015 YEARBOOKS  
WILL SOON BE AVAILABLE - \$20 EACH  
A SPECIAL THANKS TO MRS. GRIMALDI  
FOR PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER  
PLACE YOUR ORDER WITH MS. MAIATICO,  
LDVA'S NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

## ENCOURAGING "DIMOSTRAZIONE"

Sal Ritacca

*Dimostrazione*, one of our seven Da Vincian Principles, is "a commitment to test knowledge through experience, persistence, and to learn from mistakes". This "commitment" is a key component of learning that requires continued reinforcement by teachers and parents.

Perseverance, a quality of character often associated with success, is a key element of *Dimostrazione* and something that children who are overly praised tend to be short on. Child experts continue to warn that giving children exaggerated compliments or too much **false** praise is **counter productive**.

Praise which is not deserved or earned can often send the wrong message, especially if children know they didn't try hard. Parents and teachers are advised to be careful with phrases like "You're so smart" as this may cause children to view mistakes as something to be avoided and discourage them from trying. Unsubstantiated compliments could instill a fear of failure and discourage learning by "trial and error" - another important component of *Dimostrazione*. If our goal is to help students to focus on the joy of learning rather than on test scores, we must be more specific with praise and reserve generic comments like "good job" for when they are truly deserved.

Rather than emphasize 'grades' (that are often a subjective assessment) it is more important to recognize effort as an essential life skill. Parents are encouraged to keep gushing to a minimum and not to use praise as a form of control. Let the child do the talking. Ask questions to try to make your child assess her/his own efforts like: "What did you learn from the test?" or "What did you like about the audition? ". Promote autonomy over their own learning by encouraging them to "Think Like Leonardo" instead of telling them what to think.

Children who "Think Like Leonardo" have been encouraged to learn from their mistakes, ask questions, be open minded, and embrace mystery. With growing confidence they learn to balance their creative and logical sides (see diagram), use all their sense, and appreciate their physical nature. They are well prepared to discover patterns and explore connections within their world. These children become autonomous learners with a life-long love of learning who are not afraid to fail.