



LDVA NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2016

LDVA STAFF

Mrs. M. Adamo-Monardo, Junior Casa Assistant
Mrs. A. Barba, Italian, Art, Religion, After Hours
Mrs. S. Cimini Leonzi, Scuola Materna Assistant, Italian
Mrs. S. Gravina, Admissions/School Secretary
Mrs. E. Grimaldi, Junior Casa Montessori Directress
Mrs. M. Golgota, French
Mr. T. Jewell, Grade 8, Grade 6, 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. I. Marozzo, Junior Casa Montessori Directress
Mr. A. Moljgun, Music, LEM Physical Education
Mrs. M. Ricciuti, Scuola Materna Directress
Ms. G. Ritacca, Senior Casa Montessori Directress
Mrs. Y. Mesbah, Senior Casa Assistant
BURSAR/ADMISSIONS: Mr. J. Cap
FOUNDERS: Mr. S. Ritacca, Mr. D. Tassielli

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

We are off to a good start to the year. In the interest of safety and security we ask that parents follow the morning drop off routines as in past years. 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. For safety reasons doors will be locked after the bell. Children arriving after 8:45 am should be brought to the office and a staff member will escort them to class. For security students have been instructed to never open doors to people. Parents are requested to comply with established routines and 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 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. Teachers have provided 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 20. Please refer to this year's school *Events Calendar* for the other "Challenges" dates.

CURRICULUM NIGHT

On September 15th, parents have an opportunity to meet the 2016-2017 LDVA staff and discuss curriculum. Parents will receive Course Outlines (Elementary) or Parent Manuals (preschools) and have an opportunity to learn about 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 29th at 11 am, 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, and Italian or French Conversation. *Special Programmes* will also be offered by outside organizations throughout the year. During lunchtime, on certain days elementary students also participate in Intramural Sports.

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 17th 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).



Happy to be back in school

MUSIC

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. Moljgun, the Academy's new Music teacher holds a Bachelor of Primary Education and a Bachelor of Music with Honours. He has been teaching music to children since 2007 and is the co-leader and musical director of a local Glee Club. Under Mr. Moljgun's guidance, the LDVA Music Programme aims to promote the innate love and appreciation for Music as a unique and joyful form of human experience.



BAND is compulsory for students in Grades 4 to 8. The **LDVA Senior Band** (Grades 6/8) meets on Tuesdays (Grades 6/8) and the **Junior Band** meets on Thursdays (Grades 4/5) from 3:20 pm to 4 pm.

CHOIR for students in Lower Elementary is held once a week as part of their schedule.

LIBRARY TRIPS

Students will be visiting the local library at different times throughout the year to promote reading. The first trip is on October 18. 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.





Un bentornato a tutti i bambini della Scuola Materna ed un benvenuto ad i nuovi bambini, che dopo le vacanze estive ritornano pieni di entusiasmo e voglia d'imparare, pronti ad esplorare e curiosare nella nostra 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 il 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. Ma soprattutto ad esporli alla lingua italiana che gradualmente imparano attraverso canzoni, poesie e varie conversazioni. Ricordiamo, inoltre, che per un perfetto e completo svolgimento del programma, l'orario d'entrata è alle ore 8:20, e quello d'uscita alle 15:30 ; a meno che non si abbia un permesso rilasciato dall'ufficio per " extended hours". E' molto importante vestire i bambini in modo appropriato, cosicché possano essere indipendenti ai servizi igienici, inoltre mettere sempre il nome sui grembiulini, sulle giacche e scarpe.

Si informa i genitori che lunedì il 17 di ottobre ci sarà il primo "Mostra e Racconta" ("Show & Tell"). Quest' attività, che sarà sempre di lunedì permette al bambino di



acquisire patronanza e spontaneità di espressione nell'apprendimento della lingua italiana. Inizieremo con la prima lettera dell'alfabeto, la 'A', e ricordiamo che l'oggetto che si sceglie da portare deve iniziare con questa lettera ma in italiano(es.A, aereo).

Eventi da ricordare:

" Curriculum night " - giovedì 15 settembre alle ore 19:30; sarà una serata d'incontro tra insegnanti e genitori.

"School Photo Day" - 17 ottobre

Felice anno scolastico a tutti!



The Casa Montessori staff would like to welcome new and returning students to the 2016/2017 school year. It sounds like many of the students enjoyed their summer holidays and are ready to learn!

Parents are reminded that during drop off and pick up times, the children require our undivided attention. If you have questions or concerns, please email casa@ldva.on.ca for Junior Casa and srcasa@ldva.on.ca for Senior Casa. This will allow us to respond to any questions, receive information, or schedule a meeting without any disruptions to the classroom routine. If your concern is time sensitive, please phone the office at 416-247-6137.

With Fall approaching, please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather and is in proper uniform. All clothing including shoes, hats, scarves and mittens should be labeled with your child's initials. It is essential to provide your child with a complete change of clothes to keep in his or her cubby in case of a personal accident or water spill (many of the activities in the Practical Life area of the Montessori classroom involve water).

We look forward to seeing all Casa parents on Curriculum Night on Thursday, September 15th at 7:30 pm. During this time parents will have the opportunity to see their child's classroom, meet the Casa staff, and become familiar with our daily routine.



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.

LET THEM BE FREE TO LEARN

Sal Ritacca

What the new science of child development tells us about parenting

In her latest book "*The Gardener and the Carpenter*" psychologist Alison Gopnik contends that children are such naturals at learning, playing and creating that most parents should just loosen up, get out of their way, and "let them learn". Gopnik presents evidence that children raised in a relentlessly outcome-based culture are not better off than their unprogrammed peers. She argues that regardless of the amount of programming parents impose on their children in an attempt to affect their development, the children will turn out the same as they were going to be anyway. Her book is full of various research that demonstrate children's intuitive grasp of concepts like probability, reliability and the nature of being - things can be learned but not imposed on a human mind. She argues that "modern parents too often approach their tasks like a carpenter, attempting to shape the raw material into a particular finished product." She advises that parents be gardeners instead by cultivating "a protected and nurturing space for children to flourish" and where excessive and unnecessary control is relinquished. It is counterproductive to over-schedule children's time and over-determine their interests.

Most parents agree that raising children is about love. The role of the parents then becomes one of facilitating the healthy growth of who the child already is and to prepare them for an unknown future. This cannot be accomplished in isolation but in a culture that encompasses paradox, mystery, and moral depth - elements of "Thinking Like Leonardo". Much in keeping with Maria Montessori's teachings, Alison Gopnik's book is a testament to the innate ability of children's curiosity and desire to learn. Parents should nurture and encourage these at every opportunity and, at the very least, allow them to develop naturally by lightening up on their own irrelevant agenda for their child. This does not imply that parents have a minimal role to play in their child's development but, on the contrary, that parenting is a challenging and delicate balance between allowing freedom to learn, nurturing a healthy growth, and providing meaningful and safe boundaries.

Self-directed learners

