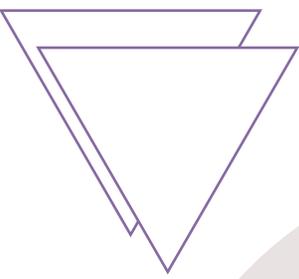


THE

PURPLE KANGAROO

AN IRVINE COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL PUBLICATION



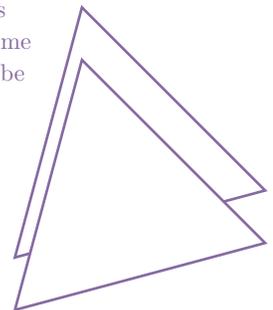


Over the holidays, I kept dreading the inevitable question from Kylie-Lynn (age 5), “Is Santa real?”. I was always able to distract her in previous years, however I knew this year I wouldn’t be able to get off so easy. But I was prepared. I had done my Pinterest research and I knew exactly what to say. And my dear fellow co-opers I am going to share with you my long, hard research (Pinterest search; letter about Santa). The below is a letter from a mother written to her daughter, and it’s beautiful:

A WORD FROM YOUR EDITOR

Dear Lucy, thank you for your letter. You asked a very good question: “Are you Santa?” I know you’ve wanted the answer to this question for a long time, and I’ve had to give it careful thought to know just what to say. The answer is no. I am not Santa. There is no one Santa. I am the person who fills your stockings with presents, though. I also choose and wrap the presents under the tree, the same way my mom did for me, and the same way her mom did for her. (And yes, Daddy helps, too.) I imagine you will someday do this for your children, and I know you will love seeing them run down the stairs on Christmas morning. You will love seeing them sit under the tree, their small faces lit with Christmas lights. This won’t make you Santa, though. Santa is bigger than any person, and his work has gone on longer than any of us have lived. What he does is simple, but it is powerful. He teaches children how to have belief in something they can’t see or touch. It’s a big job, and it’s an important one. Throughout your life, you will need this capacity to believe: in yourself, in your friends, in your talents and in your family. You’ll also need to believe in things you can’t measure or even hold in your hand. Here, I am talking about love, that great power that will light your life from the inside out, even during its darkest, coldest moments. Santa is a teacher, and I have been his student, and now you know the secret of how he gets down all those chimneys on Christmas Eve: he has help from all the people whose hearts he’s filled with joy. With full hearts, people like Daddy and me take our turns helping Santa do a job that would otherwise be impossible. So, no. I am not Santa. Santa is love and magic and hope and happiness. I’m on his team, and now you are, too. I love you and I always will.

Mama



After reading this letter, I thought how appropriately it applies to our little co-op. Because aren't we all Santas, ensuring that every child at our school has the best experience and their learning filled with joy? Weren't we the ones that worked together and donated all the necessities for the holiday party? I used to feel bitter towards Santa, I mean the guy gets all the credit for the hard work my husband and I go through during the holidays. He wasn't the one that had to stand in line for 1.5 hours to buy that ridiculous 3 ft. tall dinosaur. But I knew even before having children that I wanted my children to experience the magic of Santa Claus, to be able to believe in things that they could not measure or hold in their hands. Plus, Santa is a good scapegoat, on who ate all the Halloween candy (Darn, that Santa!).

So now if your child ever asks you "Are you Santa?", you can pull up this newsletter from your junk inbox and be prepared...to take all the blame for eating your kid's halloween candy.

Hoping my fellow Santas had a wonderful holiday,

Evelyn Le

**"I'M ON HIS TEAM,
AND NOW YOU ARE TOO"**

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Our ICNSers were asked the following questions:

- 1. What is the most wonderful smell in the world?*
- 2. Who is your hero?*
- 3. What is your favorite food?*
- 4. Would you rather dance or sing?*
- 5. What is your favorite thing to do at school?*

These were their responses

Alexander Bardis



- 1. Most wonderful smell - Popcorn*
- 2. Hero - Grandma*
- 3. Favorite Food - Bread*
- 4. Sing or dance - Sing*
- 5. Favorite thing to do at school - Play with trains*

Audrey Speirs



- 1. Most wonderful smell - Cotton candy*
- 2. Hero - Scarlett*
- 3. Favorite food - Chicken, rice and melon*
- 4. Sing or Dance - Not dance, I love to sing*
- 5. Favorite thing to do at school - Play family with my friends*

Chole Cottone



- 1. Most wonderful smell - Smoke (from a fire)*
- 2. Hero - Mommy*
- 3. Favorite Food - Sausage and pizza and ice cream and vanilla and corn*
- 4. Sing or Dance - Sing*
- 5. Favorite thing to do at school - Play with my friends.*

Connor Oakley



- 1. Most wonderful smell - Chocolate*
- 2. Hero - Myself*
- 3. Favorite Food - Peppers*
- 4. Sing or Dance - Neither; I would rather sit down and have my drink and my food.*
- 5. Favorite thing to do at school - Paint*

Dylan Blanco



- 1. Most wonderful smell - Flowers*
- 2. Hero - Mommy*
- 3. Favorite Food - Ice scream*
- 4. Sing or Dance - Sing*
- 5. Favorite thing to do at school - Buy presents for mommy*

Breyton Le



- 1. Most wonderful smell - Fried rice*
- 2. Hero - A monster chase me and daddy get him*
- 3. Favorite Food - Fried Rice*
- 4. Dance or Sing - Sing*
- 5. Favorite thing to do at school - Play with Toys and Maggie and Felecity*



Felicity Nguyen

1. *Most wonderful smell - Paint*
2. *Hero - Fluke the mermaid*
3. *Favorite Food - Just cheese*
4. *Sing or Dance - No, I don't want to. I just like to eat cheese.*
5. *Favorite thing to do at school - Painting*



Micah Tong

1. *Most wonderful smell - Buzz Light year*
2. *Hero - Noah my brother*
3. *Favorite Food - Yogurt*
4. *Sing or Dance - Sing - last Christmas*
5. *Favorite thing to do at school - Wash hand*



Julian Johnson

1. *Most wonderful smell - Pancakes and Cookies*
2. *Hero - Superman and Connor*
3. *Favorite Food - Pizza*
4. *Sing or Dance - I like to dance and sing. (both)*
5. *Favorite thing to do at school - Play with Connor, this the best year ever.*



Reagan Marshall

1. *Most wonderful Smell - Mommy's perfume*
2. *Hero - Superman*
3. *Favorite Food - Milk*
4. *Sing or Dance - Dance*
5. *Favorite thing to do at school - Play with playdough*



Rebecca Chen

1. *Most wonderful smell - Chocolates*
2. *Hero - Superman*
3. *Favorite food - Avocados*
4. *Sing or Dance - Sing*
5. *Favorite thing to do at school - Painting*



Sean Rennels

1. *Most wonderful smell - Cookies*
2. *Hero - Dusty*
3. *Favorite Food - Chicken*
4. *Sing or Dance - Sing*
5. *Favorite thing to do at school - Trucks*



Oliver Best

1. *Most wonderful smell - Chocolate Food*
2. *Hero - Nathaniel*
3. *Favorite Food - Train cheese sandwiches, fruit snacks, natural cheese, noodles and garlic bread*
4. *Sing or Dance - Dance*
5. *Favorite thing to do at school - Play in the sand*



Rylee West

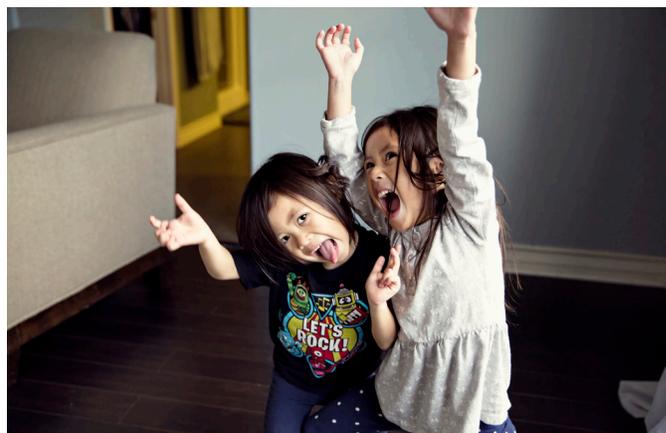
1. *Most wonderful Smell - Hot dogs AND cake*
2. *Hero - Sis*
3. *Favorite Food - Cake*
4. *Sing or Dance - Dance and Sing!*
5. *Favorite thing to do at school - Play with my friends*

ASK MS. DONNA

Donna Schwartze shares her wisdom on the inner workings of the child mind and how to survive as a parent

Dear Ms. Donna,
My children are constantly fighting over toys. Even if they each have the exact same toy in front of them, they will only want to play with the toy that is not theirs but will refuse to give up their own toy for sharing. I am at my wits end, and I do not think a glass of wine will fix this.

Anonymous



Dear Anonymous,
If there is anything that annoys parents more than siblings fighting I don't know what it is! It's an absolute in the universe: if there are siblings, there will be fighting. What's a parent to do?! I am going to answer this based on my own parenting experience with my three kids. They are adults now, and times have changed, but they were still squabbling siblings. I am also the oldest sister of 2 brothers and a younger sister, so I've experienced first-hand fighting with siblings. It all comes down to attention, control, and power—who has it and who wants it. Attention from the parents, control over the other siblings, and power to manipulate everyone!
Kids know that their parents are in control and have all the power, but that doesn't stop them from wanting power and exhibiting behaviors that are meant to wear a parent down and nearly destroy parental sanity. Whining is the first round of offense, then comes crying and anger. As a parent, you must learn to read your child's signs of assault. This behavior is learned from infancy, and the parent must determine if the crying is real distress or manipulation. This is difficult to do as a child may start in distress and then become angry or frustrated when their expectation wasn't met. The lesson is to know your child!
For whatever reason, kids have an itch to irritate their sibling that needs constant scratching! They want the parents to intervene, take their side, and pay attention to them. I think the best thing to do is ignore the yelling, whining, and "he said, she said" arguments. When my kids came to me with a complaint about one another, I would point to my chest and calmly say "Do you see this badge on my shirt?" Of course there was no badge there, so I would then say "I'm not the sheriff and this is not my fight to figure out". When they got older and started brawling, without a word I would send them outside, telling them that I would not listen to their noise and they could yell at each other outside. (I did worry about the neighbors complaining, but as soon as they were out the door they usually cooled down)
Physical danger or harmful behavior is not to be tolerated at all. Extricating the siblings from physical fights is a must, but any conversation about the conflict needs to wait until both sides have calmed down and can hear each other's and your message to them. Acknowledge their feelings and reasons and try to lead them to a truce based on mutual respect. I would guess that the majority of sibling fights are about nothing more important than who's in control at this moment.
Giving your kids control of other areas of their lives—such as what they wear, their hair, the books they read, the activities they choose, and what toys they want to share (because I do not believe that children should share everything, but that they can decide which of their belongings they are willing to share with their siblings or friends)—gives them the opportunity to learn about self control and responsibility. Also, children learn by observing parents who model loving respect for each other and all their children.
There are many books written about sibling rivalry that have specific conflict resolution techniques and words to use that can guide you in minimizing the fighting. But if you have more than one child, be prepared for sibling fights! And although a glass of wine won't solve the problem, it certainly can make it more bearable!

Peace out,
Ms Donna

Dear Ms. Donna,
My daughter is exhibiting “mean girl” syndrome, where she and a friend will gang up and ban other girls from joining their play group. Is this something I should worry about? How do I nip this in the bud?

Sincerely,
Nice girl mom



Dear Nice girl mom,
We can all recognize mean girls, and mean boys for that matter, and most of us have been subjected to mean people at some point in our lives. We know what mean people look like and how they behave, and as adults, we have concluded that they are not attractive or desirable people to be around. Therefore, we do not want to see our daughters and sons acting this way. Two questions come to mind: why is this mean behavior developed and what behaviors and attitudes do we want children to develop instead? Empathy (also referred to as pro-social behavior) is the quality of character that is the opposite of mean, and the development of empathy depends on the temperament, personality, and nature of the child. Some children are more loving, caring, and naturally more empathetic than others. Even in the same family of several children, some will demonstrate different attitudes towards others. But don't despair-the awareness of the feelings of others and empathetic behaviors can be learned and that's what we want to teach our “mean girl” so we can help her move from mean to pro-social. Mean people have learned to get something from this behavior-what's the pay off or the anticipated response for this mean /negative behavior? Are they looking for attention or a certain reaction to their mean behavior? Do they want power or to be in control of others? Preschoolers often try on different behaviors just to see what happens or how they feel. Observe your girl in action and first remove the pay-off -be it attention or control. Ignore the attention getting mean behavior during the observation, but then in a non-judgmental conversation point out what you observed. Ask how she feels about the effect her actions had on the other child and what she could have done differently.
(cont. onto next page)

It's OK to not want to play with someone, but there is a kind and friendly way to say this, such as "I want to play by myself now but later I will play with you". A group of children may not know how to include someone new to their play, so give them some guiding words to use, such as "What do you want to play with us?" Conversely, someone on the receiving end of a mean kid saying "You can't play with us" can respond with "I will find another friend to play with". Give your girls and boys some specific scenarios to practice and verbal responses to use in potential hurtful feeling situations.

It is important that the adults in children's lives model and promote kind and friendly behaviors and point out the effect of their child's negative attitudes on others. This is what we want to do in preschool-model the appropriate behaviors for the children and guide them toward empathetic behaviors. When we allow the children the time to decide if they want to play with another child or share a toy; when we acknowledge their feelings; and when we foster conversations between children, we are teaching them control of their own feelings, responsibility for their actions, and the realization that being kind feels good.

Here are a few research findings on the development of empathy that have identified the relationship between the use of certain parental childrearing practices and the development of empathetic feelings, understanding, and pro-social behavior in children.

- Mothers whose behavior toward their preschool children is responsive, non-punitive, and non-authoritarian have children who have higher levels of affective and cognitive empathy and pro-social behavior.

- Reasoning with children about the effects of their behavior on others and the importance of being kind is effective in promoting empathy and pro-social behavior.

- Parental modeling of empathetic, caring behavior toward others in the children's presence is strongly related to children's development of pro-social attitudes and behavior.

- When children have hurt others or caused them distress, research supports the practice of giving explanations as to why the behavior is harmful and suggestions for how to make amends.

I've observed in preschool that most negative or unattractive behaviors are temporary once the effects of said behaviors have been pointed out to the child and alternative behaviors have been suggested, tried, and learned. Some behaviors require more effort and several techniques, but we cannot give up on the ability of our children to learn how to be empathetic.

With kindness,

Ms Donna



2015

ICNS

ANNUAL

HOLIDAY

BASH

I sit down with Mrs. Colleen Nguyen, one of the amazing organizers of the 2015 holiday party.

1. Ms. Nguyen, Can you tell me a little bit about the theme of the party and the amazing committee that pulled it all off?

The theme this year was a “Holiday Hoedown”! Tracy & I thought it sounded fun and festive to use as a theme because of colors, music, and decor that the kids, teachers, families could all be a part of with the thought blending “hoedown” and “holiday” in mind with visions of hay, horses, red gingham, country music, etc! Ye-haw!

2. The holiday party was a huge success! Can you tell me how much ICNS earned? What do you think contributed to it being so successful?

Through silent auction winnings & gift baskets raffle tickets, ICNS earned \$2,595! The fundraising success can be attributed to the hard work of Sara Willis & Christine Tully reaching out to parents, local businesses, ICNS family connections, and the community for items or services that could be auctioned off. Lindsey Speirs was yet again a HUGE HELP to Sara with wrapping & assembling gift baskets the weeks leading up to the event! Thank you Lindsey, for ALWAYS offering such A+ work & dedication to our school!

3. I can't even imagine the prep that was involved. What do you think was was the most challenging part?

The most challenging part is that so much of the event kind of comes together in the last few days before the event, and we're on a very tight budget of almost nothing.... And trying to collect all donated food & drink supplies, child made decorations, photo/Art centerpieces, and anything needed for eating, drinking, set up, before the party itself, then transporting it all to the location was a challenge for all fundraising and general holiday party planning.

4. What was your favorite memory of the holiday party?

My favorite memory was watching the kids sing & dance with their teachers on stage. I loved watching & listening to songs & dances the kids learned at ICNS! They are the best singers, dancers, entertainers out there!
;))

5. If you can do it all again what would you change?

It would be fun to include alumni in future holiday events of space permitted!

6. Any other comments?

My side kick & partner in Hoedown crime, Tracy West needs 2 huge thumbs up! Super thanks, my Trace! I love planning parties with you!
Tammy Hom, thank you for your assistance the day of the event!

Thank you to Sara Willis for getting Santa to attend the ICNS party! He was wonderful! Thank you to Ray for his donation of hay to make the hoedown more official, to Lindsay LaBonge for her mini hay bale, to Priscilla Cottone for letting us borrow her real horse saddle, to Lisa Lee and her husband Dave Mariano for helping us before, during, and after the setup! Dave, Tracy, & I all met at the party site to set up the night before the event from 10-12 midnight!
Such dedication! THANK YOU!

THANK YOU TO ALL ICNS FAMILIES, who donated food, supplies, drinks, cash donations, raffle basket items, silent auction items & services, and for those who donated themselves for set up & clean up!

THANK YOU SO MUCH!



HUGE THANK U'S



I want to especially thank Rooter Hero for their generous donation of \$250 so we could have the lottery tickets and gift cards. Also Mattel for their \$500 toy donation. Lindsey for all of her time in helping with the baskets and her donations. All of the families donations that made it a success.

And a special thank you to Ray Ensing for graciously being Santa for the day. You made the day that much more memorable for the children.

Sara Willis



*The following sponsors
also made it possible
for a successful event*

Mattel Toys
 Rooter Hero Plumbing
 Pampered Chef
 Renu Michelson, Dentist
 Coach Kyle's Mobile Gymnastics
 Waterworks Aquatics
 Brush Strokes in Tustin
 The Vintage Steakhouse
 Improv Comedy
 Irvine Lanes Bowling

Tanaka Farms
 Kardena Pauza Personal Training
 Hudson Salon Gift Certificate
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 Bean & Co. Custom Dresses
 Dove Chocolates
 Seacret Skin & Haircare

Momentous Volleyball Lessons
 Hair by Stephanie Darcy
 Dessert with Miss Donna
 Babysitting with Miss Bushra
 Storytime with Miss Tanya
 Santa Ana Zoo



The Yellow Table

Recipes that feed
your soul and
your sweet tooth

Layered Caramel Banana Pudding

Here's what you will need to make this beautiful layered dessert:

2 packages Cook 'n Serve Vanilla Pudding mix
5 cups 2% or whole milk
20 graham crackers
1/2 cup sugar
2/3 cup melted butter
1 pint whipping cream
2 tablespoons powdered sugar
1 t. vanilla
1/2 jar (give or take) ready made caramel ice cream
topping
6 ripe bananas



Step 1 – Prepare both boxes of pudding mix according to directions, but use only 5 cups of milk instead of 6. Allow to cool, then refrigerate until ready to assemble.

Step 2 – Crush the graham crackers into coarse crumbs and stir in the sugar. Drizzle in the melted butter and stir to combine. Press into a 13 x 9 baking pan and bake at 375° for 10-12 minutes. Remove and allow to cool. Break apart using a fork. This will be crunchy and crumbly! Set aside until ready to assemble.

Step 3 – Just before assembling, whip the cream, add the vanilla and slowly sprinkle in the powdered sugar. Whip on high speed until fluffy and the whipped cream forms soft peaks.

Assemble the dessert in the trifle bowl in this order:

1/3 of the graham cracker crumbs
1/2 of the pudding
2 – 3 ripe bananas, sliced
1/2 of the whipped cream
1/3 of the graham cracker crumbs

Drizzle with some caramel topping

1/2 of the pudding
2 – 3 ripe bananas, sliced
1/2 of the whipped cream

Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until ready to serve. Just before serving, sprinkle on the remaining graham cracker crumbs, more banana slices and drizzle the top with more caramel topping!