



NORTHERN EXPOSURE

The Newsletter of Village Academy North, Inc.

I'm sure we would all like to hear some good news about the economy, but I think it will be 6 or 8 months yet before there are signs of improvement. Meanwhile, we will continue to provide our same high level of quality, even in the face of challenges like the state breaking their VPK contract with us. Plus, the challenges faced by school systems mean we benefit by having degreed teachers in almost all of our programs.

VILLAGE
ACADEMY NORTH

PEANUTS OR
NOT?

WHEN IS IT NOT
REALLY A
CONTRACT?

THINK SUMMER

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I LIKE PEANUT BUTTER...

Most of our parents aren't even old enough to remember that song...that's ok, because the lead singer had a truly awful falsetto voice.

I had one of our employees ask me a couple of weeks ago if we could just go peanut free in our schools. That avoids all the risks and stress over children who have peanut allergies. Great question...but I want to know what our parents think. Should we go peanut free?

Having asked the question, let me add some fuel to the thought fire. There was a study reported in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology that involved a total of over 10,000 children in the UK and Israel. The incidence of peanut allergy was over 10 times as high in the UK. The difference in the populations? In Israel, 69% of the population is

exposed to peanuts by 9 months of age, whereas only 10 percent is exposed in the UK. So the study concludes that the earlier the exposure the better.

The question stands, and I would really like to hear from our parents: should Village Academy North go peanut free?

SCHOOL BUDGETS

We got another letter from St Johns County schools today. Their budget has been chopped again, both for this year and for 2009-2010. Please go to their web site and find out all the details; it is really grim.

While we recognize everyone is feeling the pain, I want to tell you what has happened to us in the VPK program. We signed a contract with the state last July as a VPK provider, and it specified the amount we would be paid for teaching VPK for 3 hours

each day. The fee was specified; it wasn't a negotiation. When the school year actually began, we were informed we were going to be paid less than the contract rate. A month ago, we were again informed that we were going to take another 5% cut for the remainder of the school year.

We cannot charge our parents the difference. And from our perspective, we will not dilute the quality of the service we provide. So...we just grin and bear it. The state of Florida is absolutely appalling in their support of early childhood education. We think you should contact your state representative or senator and tell them so.

LEAVE TOYS AT HOME

Please do not bring your child's toys to the Village. They lead to conflict, and we can't be responsible for any loss or breakage.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Early registration for children entering kindergarten in August, 2009, will be held tomorrow, February 25th. . Parents need to go to the school for which they are zoned. You need your child's birth certificate, shot record, and proof of a physical. Early registration will also be available on March 26 and April 28.

DATES TO REMEMBER	FEB 25 Early Kindergarten Registration	MAR 26 Early Kindergarten Registration	APR 6-13 County Schools Closed (<i>North</i> Open, No VPK)	APR 28 Early Kindergarten Registration
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CHILDREN NEED RECESS

We include recess - outdoor play - as part of our curriculum. While that may seem odd, an article in the New York Times confirms that it is an essential part of a child's daily activities..

The Times reports on a series of studies related to exercise and play time at school. In one study of 11,000 children ages 8 and 9, the children were better behaved if they had more than 15 minutes a day of recess. Another demonstrated that recess helps improve the concentration of children with ADD. A Harvard study concluded that there is a link between academic performance and the number of physical fitness tests that a child passes. Read the whole article at: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/24/health/24well.html?_r=1&8dpc

SUMMER CAMP

It's time to start thinking about Summer Camp - hard to do when there's frost on the ground again this morning. We're going to do camp like we did two years ago. Each morning, we will take our campers down to the main campus on our seat-belt equipped, air-conditioned bus. There they will have the best summer experience available in Northeast Florida. For the first time we will also offer a part-time option. Flyers will be available at the front desk beginning next week.

SUMMER VPK

St Johns County Public Schools has again contracted with Village Academy *North* to provide Summer VPK for eligible students. This program is free, but it is only for children who will begin Kindergarten this fall and have not participated in School Year VPK. If you have friends or neighbors that have moved into the area and who have children that missed out on School Year VPK, please tell them about this program. Summer VPK gets them ready for Kindergarten and it lets children be at parity with their peers who attended VPK during the year.

SWIM LESSONS

We offer swimming lessons at the main campus of The Village Academy. They fill up fast, so let the front desk know if you are interested. Sign-ups begin March 2.

ADMIN NOTES

Please take the opportunity to congratulate Miss Jenn in our Senior PreSchool program - she has received her National CDA credential...Check with the front desk and see if the reach numbers we have for you are current. Too often, cell phone and work phone numbers change, and we can't reach parents when their child is sick or has been hurt... If you need a 2008 Tax statement, please advise the front desk...Parents: our policy is that if your child has a green discharge from their nose for 3 days running, they must leave and cannot return without a doctor's note.