**Message from the Principal**

Greetings Parents and Happy February!

In the spirit of whole child education, we here at JAMS have been working very hard to bring our JAMS community its first annual **Heart Month**. Throughout the month of February, classes will be linking parts of their curriculum to the various concepts of heart: from the beating muscle and how to keep it healthy to the idea of all-embracing, heart-felt love. Through the month, and especially on our **Heart Day (February 14th)**, we will be working on expanding our entire community’s concept of love, from that of romantic relationship, to love of self, love of one another, and love of community.

Love of self will take several forms: taking good care of our bodies through eating nutritious food and engaging in regular, joyful, exercise; taking good care of our future by developing dreams and engaging in the hard work needed to make them a reality; reaching out for support when you need it. In short, learning to believe in all the possibilities of self. Recognizing that nothing is impossible but, rather, believing I’mpossible.

Love of other will take the form of supporting the heart and dreams of one another. Exercising compassion. Embracing, not just tolerating, the uniqueness, the perspectives, the gifts, and the imperfections in self and other. Working together toward the common goal of success for all. Embracing the idea that conflict is natural and can be resolved without attempts to destroy or defame the other. Grappling together in classrooms to explore and refine our logic as we unravel the mysteries of literature, language, science, social studies, and mathematics.

The gift of living this love is community, where everyone is safe to learn and grow. In this family, everyone can share their knowledge and support one another along the journey through and beyond JAMS. This is the dream.

Every teacher will integrate different facets of the heart in their particular curriculum. At the end of the month, presentations of these lessons will be posted in the center hall to create a Heart-Walk. Possible lesson ideas include figuring out what makes a love song a love song; looking into the impact of love songs on the listener; analysis of different forms of exercise; analysis of nutritional labels; dissection of hearts; mathematical determination of the volume of a heart; the writing of persuasive letters to friends or family members to eat better; exercise more, quit smoking, lose weight, or to stop bullying; the writing and analysis of love poems; the creation of anti-bullying public service announcements;... the list goes on and on. As assignments come up during the month, we hope they will serve as topics of rich and powerful conversation with your children.

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“I believe the children are our future, teach them well and let them lead the way. Show them all the beauty they possess inside, give them a sense of pride to make it easier...”

from Whitney Houston’s Greatest Love of All

**PTSA PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

by Joan Krenik

February is Heart Month, February 14th is Valentine’s Day and it is “Heart Day” at JAMS. Students will be discussing emotions and the importance of communication and will write or create a “Message from the Heart”. They will be asked to think deeply about someone and how they have impacted their life and create a meaningful message. It could be a letter, a poem, a picture – anything that communicates their feeling and says “thank you” in a thoughtful way.

I would like to encourage our parents and caregivers to complete this “assignment” as well. So often we are busy and do not take the time to really communicate with our children. Set aside time to sit down and think of all the important memories and how your child has touched your life. Give examples, provide them with a thoughtful recollection of a small moment that was meaningful or a way they inspire or help you. “Show them all the beauty they possess inside.”

Write your child a “Message from the Heart”. They will appreciate it. They will remember it. It is important.
HEART DAY ♥ February 14th

On Heart Day we will take a break from the regular curriculum to focus on the concepts of love of self, love of other, and the building of a strong, compassionate, community. Students will meet in their advisory class first thing in the morning where teachers will distribute a “love of self” T-shirt to each student (thank you PTSA!). This shirt will say “I’mpossible” on the front (thank you Student Leadership), and “JAMS Dream Big Work Hard” across three lines on the back. All classes will then report to the field, with everyone wearing their shirt. We anticipate all classes will be on the field by approximately 8:30am. We invite parents and members from the extended community to join us from 8:30-10am to enjoy this part of the program. We will be working to free up as much parking as possible in both our 16th Street lots, but all visitors are also encouraged (in the spirit of good health) to walk or bike to campus. The media will also likely be present, including a possible KTTL flyover. (Please contact Ms. McGrath in the office if you have concerns about media coverage.)

The morning program will include the unveiling of our JAMS Commitment Board (Thank you Deb Chandler, Mark Milinich, and artist Duff Moses). This board will feature our commitment:

“I hereby commit to help build and maintain a strong, positive, and compassionate community at John Adams Middle School.”

Representatives from the extended community will publicly commit by signing their name on the board. Later in the day, and throughout the whole month, the board will be accessible so that every student, parent, faculty, staff, and extended community member can sign. The morning will end with an exciting Zumba lesson.

After a nutrition break, there are three activities. There will be an assembly featuring the dynamic Dr. Terrance Roberts, a motivational speaker who was one of the Little Rock Nine.

In 1957, the Little Rock Nine were the first African American students to attend an all-white school in Little Rock, Arkansas through forced integration. The other two activities available to students are, one, team building and physical fun on the field and, two, notes from the heart: where students will create tributes to those who have made a significant difference in their lives. Students will also collaborate to create a large heart graphic to represent their collective class message to the rest of the student body which will be laminated and posted on campus. Lastly, students will create their own link in the JAMS family chain, representing themselves through their strengths, dreams, or unique attributes. These links will be connected with all other members of their class, and ultimately the full school, for display in the library.

We are looking forward to an incredible day and month!

Eva Mayoral, Principal

And the prize goes to... Gabriel Rosen!

In November, JAMS students were invited to enter the National PTA Reflections Art Contest. This year’s theme was “Diversity Is...” We are very pleased to announce that our very own JAMS student Gabriel Rosen submitted the winning district entry! District judges have selected his wonderful and imaginative artwork to be submitted to the state contest. This is the first step that could lead to submission at the national level.

Gabriel received a certificate of recognition, a gift card prize and this article for his efforts. The Reflections contest is held every year in the fall -- students can submit entries in six categories -- literature, visual art, photography, film and video production, dance choreography and musical composition. Keep an eye out for announcements and get your kids involved next year. We want more JAMS winners!!!

UPCOMING IN FEBRUARY...

Students w/ Parents In Action invites you and your student to an evening with renowned motivational speaker, Jewel Diamond Taylor, on 2/23/12.

For more information, please contact Donna McCoy, Community Liaison.

JAMS students say... I’mPOSSIBLE.
Grease is the Word at JAMS

Excitement has grown as 53 students from JAMS and SMASH were cast in JAMS Theatre Company’s GREASE! After weeks of acting, singing, dancing and stagecraft workshops, production has begun on the beloved musical set in the 50’s, and the auditorium hums with the shoo-bop song stylings of the greaser era. You might see the Pink Ladies and the T-Birds of Rydell High rehearsing under the direction of Dana Murphy, JAMS Theatre Company’s Creative Director. “Thanks to funding from the Santa Monica-Malibu Ed Foundation, JAMS PTA, and family donations, our students have this wonderful opportunity to learn about theater, grow in confidence, display their talents, and support one another in a safe and creative community,” says Patti Braun, JAMS parent and the Company’s Producer. The Company hopes the whole school will come and enjoy the show May 3rd, 4th and 5th.

Parent Education

One of the most important roles for PTA is to provide helpful information to parents regarding issues they care about and which are relevant to middle schoolers’ age and developmental stages. Our parent organizations take this role very much to heart.

Here at JAMS, we have a wealth of opportunities for parent education, including PTA parent education nights which are held four times annually as well as ELAC- and SPIAAA-sponsored parent education nights.

Topics include everything from helping your child adjust to middle school, to cyberbullying to sex education, to the education revolution. We have multiple experts available to us in the community, including experts from nearby Rand and UCLA, and we are continually talking about bringing helpful cutting-edge information to our parents. Most meetings provide refreshments and translation for Spanish-speaking parents.

So far this year we have had presentations on the developmental changes in adolescents, peer mediation, and communication skills. If you have a topic you would like to suggest or a resource you think would be helpful please contact our parent education chair, Lisa Balfus at dr.golden@roadrunner.com

Karamu Community Dinner: A JAMS Pathway Extravaganza!

On Thursday, December 15, 2011, Will Rogers Learning Community K-5 hosted the JAMS Pathway Karamu Community Dinner. With an abundance of contributions from local businesses and many individuals, JAMS Student w/ Parents In Action, Rogers, and Grant E.S. were able to coordinate one of the best family events of 2011. Nearly 200 people came to celebrate Kwanzaa and its seven principles: Unity, Self-Determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity, and Faith. Families representing various SMMUSD schools, teachers, staff, and administrators, immensely enjoyed a program which featured elementary, middle and high school student performances. The cafetorium at Rogers was transformed with festive African themed visual art, handcrafted by John Adams and Will Rogers students. This fabulous affair culminated with guests being served a bountiful and scrumptious array of cultural entrees, side dishes and desserts.

JOIN JAMS PALS an informal mailing list for the JAMS community. Contact: jamsmoderator@yahoo.com to have your name added to the list.

Black History Month Show: History of Black Dance in America

Returning to the stage after performing to sold-out audiences in 2011, The Central Avenue Dance Ensemble presents “A History of Black Dance in America.” This two-hour multi-media dance retrospective chronicles the history of African and African-American inspired social dances that have been popularly danced in the United States from the 1800s to today. Historical dances included will be Zulu, Work Songs, Cakewalk, Buck Dance, Black Bottom, Charleston, Lindy Hop, Foxtrot, and the African inspired Latin-American dances. Post-Swing era dances include “fad dances” such as Urban Ballroom and Chicago Style Step.

Performances: February 23, 24, and 25 at 7:30pm at the historic Santa Monica Bay Women’s Club, 1210 4th Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401. General admission is $22.50, VIP Seating $45.00. Discounted tickets (20% off general admission) are available at http://historyofblackdance.eventbrite.com, enter code PTA. For group rates, contact Livia Squires at 310.273.4340.
Yosemite 2012!

On January 22, over 160 JAMS 7th graders, 21 parents, and five teachers went on the Science Magnet Yosemite Trip. In the first 3 days, they experienced rain, wind, sun, snow, sleet and slush. And, the plans had to be readjusted due to a major rockslide that impeded transportation within the park.

Nonetheless, the JAMS group remained happy, healthy, safe, well-fed and actively engaged in a variety of learning activities both in the Valley and at Crane Flat.

JAMS science magnet students came to Yosemite well prepared and everyone made the most of this fantastic outdoor learning experience. One morning, one group tested the water quality of Yosemite Creek as part of a special project with the National Parks Service. Another group was looking at bear tracks that they had found and discussing how animals survive in the cold, winter climate. A third group was observing a group of deer and talking about they survive during the winter.

All of the students will be bringing home amazing stories about their experiences and memories that will last a lifetime.

Some news updates during the week in Yosemite:

The kids played a game in the dark snowy woods last night - half were “coyotes” half were “rabbits”. The rabbits would go and hide then the coyotes would try to find them. OMG - how fun (and scary). All were exhausted from their 5 mile hike.

It is a beautiful sunny day and the trees and grounds are set with snow. The kids are about to head out on a snowshoeing adventure. Yesterday was filled with cross country skiing. One group used their skis to make a bench and ate lunch in the snowy outdoors, others were eating lunch under cover. Lots of snoring at nighttime. Great home cooked food. Beautiful nature and experiences in how to adapt. Kids are reported as being great.

This evening, the sky cleared up and we had an amazing view of the stars.

In the next issue: Update on the 8th grade Science Magnet Astro Camp experience!
Why bother with Science Magnet?

Parents – student applications for the Science Magnet program are due soon. Joining the JAMS Science Magnet program has so many benefits for your student. Statistics show that Science Magnet students perform better in their science classes in high school! For those students who have a passion for science and want to learn more than what is taught in a book, being a part of Science Magnet offers numerous opportunities. Student can enjoy expanded science classroom experiences, opportunities to participate in cross-grade-level science seminars that include hands-on activities, field trips, quest speakers or visits to museums; extended science trips such as the 7th grade Yosemite Trip and Astrocamp in 8th grade which feature activities taught by expert teachers; family nature trips to Morro Bay in the fall and Joshua Tree in the spring. Finally, Magnet students have more opportunities to take honors and advanced placement science classes in high school.

We encourage all students who have the desire to learn and do more science to apply for admission to the Science Magnet Program. Please contact your child's science teacher if you have questions about this program and to receive an application.

Important Dates for 6th graders interested in Science Magnet

The applications for 6th graders applying for 7th Grade Magnet go out on Feb. 10 and are due Feb. 22/23. The application outlines the requirements for admission into the Magnet Program. Eligible students need to have at least four science seminars completed by March 2nd, which is the end of the 4th grading period.

8th Grade Science Magnet Update

Our 8th Grade Magnet Students are in the process of building their Mousetrap Cars. These cars are powered only by the spring of a mousetrap. During this project our students will apply their knowledge of forces; potential, kinetic, and thermal energy; and Newton’s Laws of Motion. The cars will be tested on Jan. 24/25 and will be on display at the Magnet year-end celebration in June.
Recycling at JAMS – Measure BB Construction

Throughout the month of October 2011, the District recycled a remarkable amount of construction debris on the job site at JAMS. The District is working towards achieving a low rate of landfilled construction waste and is currently averaging a recycled waste percentage of 98% in the Measure BB program!

Approximately 1,201 tons of debris and waste were hauled away from the job site. Of that amount, about 1,176 tons were recycled. So far, the JAMS modernization project has recycled 97.96% of its waste!

A variety of construction debris was removed and recycled from the job site by Crown Disposal Co. Inc., including, copper wiring, glass, concrete, stucco, metal, steel and wood framing. Copper is 100% recyclable without any loss to the quality or strength of the material. Copper can be melted and re-used to make new wire, faucets, or water pipes. Glass can also be melted and re-used to make windows or glass bottles.

Concrete and stucco can be crushed and used as a base material for roads or as a compound for making new concrete. Recycled concrete can even be used as landscaping stone!

Metal and steel are easily recycled due to their malleability and ability to resist decomposition. These materials can be re-used for building bridges, skyscrapers or apartment buildings. The wood that was removed from JAMS was sent to Crown Disposal’s Madera power plant to be used as fuel. This power plant is equipped with a baghouse, air pollution control equipment designed to remove dust and filter the air.

Although exercising sustainability is often challenging to incorporate, the District strives to consider the environment throughout each phase of construction. Recycling construction debris minimizes the District’s carbon footprint by saving landfill space and reducing water use, as recycled cement requires less water than new cement.

Questions, comments or suggestions for the next Measure BB JAMS Gazette article, email: measurebb@smmusd.org. For more information on Measure BB projects, visit: http://fip.smmusd.org.

Construction Update at JAMS

Solar Chimneys
Solar Chimneys, a natural air-cooling process, is being installed in the new 80’s east wing. Earthtubes, the underground air-cooling system for the Solar Chimneys, continue to be installed. Over-excavation and re-compaction are a process of preparing the soil before construction starts. This phase of construction ensures that the soil is able to withstand the weight of the new building. This process is complete for the new classroom buildings in the 80’s east wing.

Gravity Systems
The next phase of construction will begin with the installation of underground utilities to support the new buildings. The gravity systems, which include sewer and storm drains, will be the first utilities to be installed. These utilities are called gravity systems because the materials traveling through these systems depend on the element of gravity to work properly. Because of this process, these systems are required to be set in the ground at specific angles.

Foundations
A Foundation is the lowest portion of a building’s structure. The foundations support and balance the weight of the building. Construction is progressing with the over-excavation and re-compaction for the new Attendance Office, which will be located at the main entrance. Once this process is complete, the contractors can begin to pour the concrete foundations for the new building.

Questions, comments or suggestions for the next Measure BB JAMS Gazette article, email: measure bb@smmusd.org. For more information on Measure BB projects, visit: http://fip.smmusd.org.
NJHS Updates
The National Jr. Honor Society had a very successful toy drive. We collected over 70 toys and purchased an additional 30 toys from Target with the proceeds from selling Jamba Juice and hot chocolate during the lunch periods. We were also able to donate $225 in gift cards from Target by selling Holiday Grams to the student body. All of these donations were given to the Westside Children’s Center located in Culver City.

Our next service learning project will be our annual Pennies for Patients fundraiser. The purpose of this project is both to make the students aware of the struggles children with leukemia or lymphoma have while undergoing chemotherapy and to raise money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The money we raise will go towards research and to the families who need medical support. The fundraiser will take place Feb. 6-23. Our members will conduct a student body assembly to discuss details of this fundraiser. Those parents who wish to donate can make checks out to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and give it to Mr. Brown or Mr. Silvers the Co-Advisors for the NJHS.

Immersion Program Celebrates!
The Friends of John Adams Spanish Immersion (FOJASI) families celebrated during the month of December and kicked off the holidays with a special dinner. A yummy and overflowing potluck of delicious foods and treats greeted all the families. The students and their families shared in delicious food, sang songs led by Constanza Murcia, and participated in the always entertaining “Cake Dance”. The evening ended with children participating in a traditional white elephant gift exchange.

Special thanks go out to the FOJASI committee: Traci Wallace, Wendy Mejia, Susan Savage, Kjersti Luneng, Teresa Reyes and Delia Lopez. Our heartfelt thanks go out to the hard-working Immersion teachers Mrs. Alex Kusien, Eliana O’Keefe and Kat Valentiner who help communicate with the students. Thank you to those parents that volunteered to help before, during and after the celebration as well as to the parent that provided prizes for our raffle. Final thanks to our janitorial staff that always helps ensure that JAMS and our cafeteria remain impeccable.

Be sure not to miss upcoming FOJASI/Immersion activities this year including:
- Immersion Alumni Program gathering with alumni and current students – March 8, 2012, 1:30 – 3:30pm, organized by Ms. Valentinier;
- FOJASI Spring get-together – come meet other families and hear how you can be part of the FOJASI Committee next year! – May 4, 2012, 6 – 8pm in the Cafeteria;
- 8th grade Promotion – families gather to celebrate the successful promotion of our 8th grade class, June 8, 2012, 1:30 – 3:30pm, location TBC.

*Dates and times subject to change. Information will be provided via email or through flyers sent home by the teachers with the students.

Attendance at JAMS
Are you a parent who has received a phone call or email informing you that your child has been absent or tardy from class? You are not alone. This automated system is one way the district maintains contact with you regarding your student’s attendance. Sometimes these messages come as a surprise or a cause for concern to a parent that knows their child was at school. There is no need to worry when this happens. If you get a message that says your child was absent from one class period and your child assures you they were there, then check with the teacher. Sometimes it is a mistake that can be fixed with a phone call or email. Other times, your child may have been late to class, and was therefore marked absent when attendance was taken by the teacher. In these cases, the automated message may have been sent before the teacher has had a chance to update their attendance. Finally, while we like to think that your child would never skip a class, this system helps you find out if they did.

Sometimes illness or other factors prevent children from attending school. Remember to contact the school to let them know the reason. You can send a note with the student when they return, call the attendance office (ext. 72212 or 72211) the day of the absence by 3pm, or send an email (kmicham@smmusd.org or bstout@smmusd.org). Sometimes even if you have contacted the school about your child’s absence you may get an automated message due to a delay in the inputting of the information. Please be patient and trust that, if you have contacted the school, we will clear the absence.

Finally, it is the law that students attend school. As a school and district it is our legal responsibility to inform parents when their child has reached a certain number of unexcused absences (truancies) from school. You will receive a letter with the dates of the absences or tardies. Sometimes the dates on the letter may include dates you previously contacted the school about. However, all absences are not considered excused absences. The state defines every absence that is not due to illness, bereavement, religious holiday or natural disaster as unexcused.

Please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Culpepper, fculpepper@smmusd.org or ext 72206, if you need additional information.

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PTA®
every child. one voice.
Greetings from JAMS Clubhouse! We are very excited about our fourth year serving the students at JAMS. Our programming enriches the mind and foster relationships that will last beyond the middle school experience.

For only $20 a year, we offer five opportunities at our JAMS location: Social Recreation (Gamesroom), Creative Arts Corner, Learning Center, Media and Technology Center, and the Sound Studio. We are fully staffed with trained individuals who love middle schoolers.

In our very own Sound Studio, which is a musician’s dream, we are equipped with recording and editing software: ProTools, Garage Band and Reason. We have new DJing equipment for our new Scratch Academy that allows a class of four to learn the art of mixing and controlling two turntables which is offered on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. We also have two acoustic, an electric, a bass guitar, a piano, and drums. Our very own Maya McComsey has created a song that won 1st place among thousands of entries in the Digital Arts Festival. This is a huge accomplishment because her song competed with thousands around the country.

This school year we started a new Healthy Habits program called “Eat and Learn” where members learn to prepare healthy snacks and meals without a stove and they learn the nutritional value of the food they eat. So far they have made Spring Rolls and Smoothies.

In our Learning Center, we have continued our L3 Tutorial Program, offering one-on-one tutoring for our members who are in need of a little assistance in a subject they may find challenging. Our tutors have been phenomenal! They are volunteers from Santa Monica College honor clubs who contractually commit to three months of tutoring at a time. Currently, we are in our fourth session and have served more than 60 members. We also have continued our mandatory homework hour called PowerHour where our members quietly do their homework, supervised by staff and volunteers. Our Chess Club has members who engage in healthy competition and even travel to tournaments. Last but not least, our Journalism Club has released their 16th issue of the JAMS Clubhouse Scoop. This newsletter is written, formatted, produced and edited by the members and facilitated by two of our staff members. The Club elects a new editor every issue and gives everyone an opportunity to lead. Journalism Club is an ongoing program that meets every Tuesday and Thursday.

This fall, our LegoRobotics team traveled to Manhattan Beach and competed against other organizations and schools and placed. They are continuing their efforts and meet every Tuesday with an array of fun and exciting activities learning to create, build and troubleshoot.

We are open year-round including winter and spring break. Orientation and Registration Days fall on the first Monday of each month at 6pm so come and hear about all of our programs and what we have to offer you and your middleschooler.

THE WORLD AT OUR FINGERTIPS

When we feel love, we feel we can achieve anything.
Because our parents have made us feel good about ourselves,
we feel the sky is the limit.
Friendships are stronger, school work becomes easier
and we feel much excitement when thinking about the future.

– Norma Budden