



Silver Pines  
Public School

## *January/February Calendar of Events*

### *Extra Curricular at Silver Pines*

Junior Volleyball for Boys & Girls is ongoing.  
Intermediate Basketball for Boys & Girls is ongoing.

### *Important Reminders*

#### **Professional Activity Day In January:**

There will be no school for students on **Friday, January 20th**, It is a teacher assessment day for preparing report cards.



#### **Professional Activity Day In February:**

There is also another PA day for staff development on **Monday, February 3rd**. There will be no school for students. **February 20th** is Family Day. There will be no school.



What a wonderful turn out by Silver Pines families at the Kindergarten to Grade 5 Winter Concert! Our students really shone and put on a fantastic show! Thank you so much for dropping off Food Bank donations and contributing to our Gift Card drive. Your generosity is appreciated! Happy Holidays!

*Principal: Lindsey Diakiw | 905.508.7303*  
*Vice Principal Trish Yeates | 905.508.7303*  
*Superintendent: Rita Russo | 905.884.4477*  
*Trustee : Corrie McBain*

<http://www.silverpines.ps.yrdsb.edu.on.ca>



## ***A Message from Administration...***

We are well into winter this year so don't forget to send your child ready for possible outdoor recesses: hats, scarves, mitts, boots and snow pants go a long way! We also thank you for keeping very sick kids at home. We will continue to encourage our students to wash their hands and to follow proper hygiene to ensure minimal spread of germs this season. Students too sick to go outside for recess are too sick to be at school.

Students this month are busily engaged in many culminating activities as term 1 is coming to an end. Report cards will be distributed on February 16th.

Please take the time to discuss the reports with your child/ren. Remember that the Learning Skills part of the report card is just as important, if not more so, as the subject area part of the report card. Learning skills are life skills. They are part of what makes a child grow up into an adult who's a responsible, collaborative and contributing member of society. Please review that section of the report card carefully with your child/ren and discuss next steps and plans ahead.

As a staff we have been analyzing our school's data sets and come up with our greatest area of need with regards to student learning. This learning need is that students need to communicate their thinking to multi-step, meaningful problems in the area of spatial reasoning. We have begun our journey with staff in looking at how to improve our teaching practice to address this area of need. To find out more about spatial reasoning and its impact on mathematical thinking go to this link:

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/lnspayingattention.pdf>

Best Regards,

*Lindsey Diakin*

Principal

*Trish Yeates*

Vice Principal

### ***A Message From Our Trustee***

As we near the end of 2016, I hope everyone has had a great school year so far and found opportunities to get involved with the life of the school.

It is wonderful to have opportunities to see not only what our students are learning, but to see how they are learning – collaborating and problem solving, using technology in exciting new ways, and engaged in hands-on activities.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the dedicated staff members, students, families and community members across our Board. Thanks to all of the great people we have in our system, we continue to advance student achievement and well-being.

Our Board continues to have a strong commitment to creating welcoming, inclusive learning environments that enable all of our students to thrive. Engaging families in your child's education and the school community is in an important part of creating that environment.

There are resources for families available on our Board website at [www.yrdsb.ca/parents](http://www.yrdsb.ca/parents), including information on Board programs and supports, and tips for parents to support your child's learning at home and at school.

Best wishes to everyone for a safe and happy holiday season and a wonderful start to 2017. I hope you are able to enjoy time with family and friends.

Corrie McBain

# Our School Is a Healthy School!

The Lunch Lady provides a hot lunch service to our school every week: Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays.

**Order Online within 2 days of any lunch date at:**



**[www.thelunchlady.ca](http://www.thelunchlady.ca)**

Offering families healthy lunch choices in our school!!!

## January Workshops from Jewish Child and Family Services

**MIND, BODY, CONNECTION for Women I** : Join us in a 7 session group for women who want to learn the practice of mindfulness and meditation in a safe and supportive group setting. Topics will include: stress and anxiety reduction, connecting with your mind and body, enhancing your self-worth and self-esteem, and learning about general relaxation and happiness. **Monday, January 30/17 from 7 to 8:30 pm at 4600 Bathurst St.- Lipa Green Centre**

**SEPARATION 101**- Join us for a one session workshop being provided by Gelman and Associates for those who have questions about many of the common issues that arise when dealing with the prospect of divorce. Topics to be discussed include: child custody, spousal support and division of property and assets. **Monday January 30/17 at 4600 Bathurst St.- Lipa Green Centre from 7 to 9 pm**

**As with all of our programs, registration is required. Our groups and workshops are open to all members of the community regardless of cultural, religious and/or racial background and we offer a sliding scale for those who require fee reductions.** For more information or to register please call Shawna Sidney at 416-638-7800 Ext # 6215 or go to our website at [www.jfandcs.com/groups](http://www.jfandcs.com/groups)

### 10 What Questions to Develop a Growth Mindset in Children

1. What did you do today that made you think hard?
2. What happened today that made you keep on going?
3. What can you learn from this?
4. What mistake did you make that taught you something?
5. What did you try hard at today?
6. What strategy are you going to try now?
7. What will you do to challenge yourself today?
8. What will you do to improve your work?
9. What will you do to improve your talent?
10. What will you do to solve this problem?

## School Council ( NEW DATES)

Our second School Council Meeting of the year will take place February 6th at 7pm. All parents are invited to attend and we are looking for new School Council Members. We hope to see you on February 6th and at our other meetings scheduled for April 3rd, and June 5th!



**Meetings are open to all parents. We hope to see you there!**

## School Bus Cancellation Notice

School bus service may be cancelled from time to time due to inclement weather, extreme temperatures and/or poor road conditions. In these cases, parents and students should develop alternate care/ transportation arrangements.

Since some bussing schedules begin by 7:00 a.m. or earlier, all cancellation decisions must be made by 6:00 a.m. to ensure the safety of our students. Cancellation decisions will only be made after thorough consultation with school bus companies servicing York Region. Decisions are based on several factors including precipitation, air temperature and road conditions.

Please note the following:

- A decision to cancel school bus transportation may be **system wide** (where all buses in York Region are cancelled) **or municipality specific** (where buses in one or more municipalities are cancelled).
- If school bus transportation in your municipality is cancelled and your child attends school in a different municipality where service is operational, your child **will not** be transported to/from school.
- If school bus transportation in your municipality is operational and your child attends school in a different municipality where service is cancelled, your child **will not** be transported to/from school.
- **If buses are cancelled in the morning, they will not operate in the afternoon. Therefore students transported to school by parents will require the same transportation home.**

Parents, students and school staff are asked to access the following radio and television stations after 6:00 a.m. to receive bus cancellation information:

### RADIO

590 AM 640 AM 680 AM 860 AM 1010 AM 1050 AM  
1540 AM 1580 AM

88.5 FM 89.9 FM 92.5 FM 93.1 FM 94.9 FM  
95.9 FM 97.3 FM 98.1 FM 99.1 FM 99.9 FM  
101.1 FM 102.1 FM 104.5 FM 100.7 FM 107.1 FM

### TELEVISION

CITY TV THE A-CHANNEL CFTO TV CP24 GLOBAL NEWS

**A bus cancellation message will also be available at [www.schoolbuscity.com](http://www.schoolbuscity.com) and by calling**

**1-877-330-3001. If you need to cancel a pickup for your child,**

**kindly contact the bus company di-rectly to inform them of the change, you must state the Route # and address.**

**First Student—905-833-5351 Sinton Transportation - 905-967-9020 Sharp - 289-467-4998**

The above procedure is not applicable to school charters. Please confirm the cancellation of these trips with school administration.

*Thank you for your support as we focus on providing safe transportation for all of our students.*

Student Transportation Services of York Region 320 Bloomington Road West, Aurora, Ontario L4G 3G8 905-713-2535, FAX: 905-713-2533 Web site: [www.schoolbuscity.com](http://www.schoolbuscity.com)



## Kindergarten Registration for September 2017



Kindergarten registration will commence on January 20, 2017 for the 2017-18 school year. Registration forms are available on YRDSB's website: [www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca](http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca). Children who turn 4 or 5 years old during 2017, live within the school boundary and whose parents are public school tax supporters will be eligible to register for kindergarten. A kindergarten information session for parents is being planned for this spring. For more information on registration please visit the YRDSB website or contact your local school.

## French Immersion Information Sessions and Registrations

Information sessions for the French Immersion (FI) program will take place at French Immersion schools on January 19, 2017 at 7 p.m. Your designated FI school is Michaëlle Jean Public School, 320 Shirley Drive, Richmond Hill. FI registration will begin January 20, 2017. In order to streamline the registration process, parents or guardians of Senior Kindergarten students entering Grade 1 in 2017, and wishing to enrol in the FI Program, can visit or call the current school office and request an *Office Index Card - short version*. The Office Index Card must be signed by the principal of the home school where your child attends Senior Kindergarten. Parents or guardians then take this form, along with one piece of identification showing their address to Michaëlle Jean Public School to register between January 20 and February 10, 2017. This eliminates the need to provide duplicate enrollment information or to pre-register.

YRDSB's FI Accommodation Plan provides long-term consistency and equity of access to all students in York Region and will enable YRDSB to continue to offer the FI program to all who wish to enrol. The FI program will be offered in Dual Track or Single Track settings, in a variety of configurations. In order to meet community needs and optimize available space in our schools, a community's Grade 1-8 FI program may be provided over more than one school during the course of a student's FI education. This will allow flexibility in addressing community needs and the opportunity to use existing space in schools. More information is available on the Board's website: [www.yrdsb.ca](http://www.yrdsb.ca). Please note: Some of the FI accommodation plans will require facility modifications or the development of new schools and will require short-term transition plans that might include overflow while we work toward the long-term vision. Overflow refers to situations in which the Board directs students to attend a school other than their community school or optional program for a specific period of time, as defined in Policy #108.

## Dressing for Cooler Weather



All our students will be expected to be outside before, during and after school in all weather conditions (i.e., rain or shine, snow or heat). Students need to come to school dressed to play outside during recesses. Boots (for rain or snow), rain jackets, hats, mitts, scarves and snow pants will help make recess an enjoyable time. It is advisable for children to keep extra pants and socks at school in case they get wet. To avoid adding to our clothing collection in the Lost and Found Bin, please be sure to label all articles of clothing. **Try Mabel's Labels**

# Encouraging Spatial Sense

## 1. Encourage active, physical exploration of the real world

Experiments suggest that infants can learn rapidly about three dimensional shapes. Within days of birth, babies seem to understand that the apparent size of an object will change as it moves closer or farther away. Newborns also show signs of visually recognizing objects they have previously touched, but not seen. This suggests babies can map tactile information onto some sort of internal, visual simulation of the 3-D world (Streri et al 2013; Slater et al 1990).

So the capacity is there, but it doesn't develop by magic. Children need raw data. They need to feel shapes and textures, and explore objects *hands-on*. By 9 months, researchers have detected differences in the spatial skills of infants. The babies with superior mental rotation abilities are the ones who spend more time handling and investigating objects (Schwarzer et al 2013). Other experiments indicate that hands-on experiences with objects can improve a toddler's ability to track items through space (Frick and Wang 2014). When we insist that kids "look but don't touch" we are likely hampering the development of spatial skills.

## 2. Seize everyday opportunities for spatial thinking and spatial talk

In their review of the research on spatial skills in young children, psychologists Nora Newcombe and Andrea Frick (2010) note that opportunities to practice spatial skills are everywhere. Adults can stimulate spatial thinking by asking kids questions, and engaging them in conversation:

*"Which way does the sheet fit on the bed? Does the left shoelace go over or under—and which one is the left? Will the groceries fit in one bag? Which shapes do I get if I cut my bagel the other way—and will it still fit in the toaster? For young children, these questions are challenging and provide ample opportunities to learn and think about space."*

These conversations are also opportunities for children to learn new vocabulary -- words that will help kids reason about spatial properties, like *over* and *under*. *Tall* and *short*. *Bent* and *curvy*. *Triangle*, *rectangle*, *cube*, and *sphere*. Common sense suggests that kids who learn such terms are more likely to use them when they talk, and that will help them tap into the power of verbal explanation. Studies show that [children learn concepts better when they are asked to explain](#) what they discover to other people.

Moreover, longitudinal research hints that youngsters who are chatty about spatial concepts end up with superior spatial skills. When Shannon Pruden and her colleagues tracked the development of 52 babies, the researchers found that early exposure to spatial language predicted higher spatial ability later on. Kids who had heard and used a lot of spatial terminology scored higher on spatial skills tests when they 42 months old. For details, see my blog post ["Early IQ boost: Beyond language and math."](#)

### 3. Provide kids with tools for building structures, and boost enthusiasm by getting involved yourself

An array of evidence suggests that children develop better spatial skills when they build and create with blocks. For more information, see [this article and the accompanying list of tips](#) for sparking a young child's interest in block play.

### 4. Introduce construction games that challenge kids to "match the design"

Research hints that a particular form of block play, called [structured block play](#), may be especially valuable. This is when kids are shown the "blueprints" for a structure and given a set of blocks to recreate it. In recent experiments, 8-year-old children showed measurable improvements in their mental rotation abilities after just five, 30-minute play sessions. Post-training, they also showed changes in brain activity, suggesting that these kids had changed the way they processed spatial information (Newman et al 2016).

You can create your own sessions of structured block play at home with wooden blocks, interlocking plastic blocks (like [Lego](#) or [Mega Bloks](#)), [Keva planks](#), Lincoln Logs, and Tinker Toys.

For the budding engineer, I also like the [Equilibrio Game](#), a set of 18 plastic blocks that come with 60 illustrations of structures to be erected. As the name suggests, part of the challenge is getting the structures to remain in balance, so concentration and fine motor skills are required.

And whatever your chosen medium, don't forget to keep up the conversation. "Match-the-design" construction games may be helpful, in part, because they stimulate spatial talk (Ferrara et al 2011).

### 5. Encourage children to use and create maps

By the age of 3 or 4, most kids are ready to learn simple lessons about maps. For instance, young children can learn to interpret a map of their living room floor plan, and then use a map to show where, in the real room, they have hidden a toy (Shusterman et al 2008; Vasilyeva and Huttenlocher 2004).

Older kids can handle more complex maps, and they benefit from structured mapping activities, especially ones that require them to *explain* their choices.

For example, in a study of American 4th graders, kids were given incomplete maps of their school yard and asked to (1) locate unmarked features (like a flagpole) and (2) place stickers on their maps to indicate where these features could be found (Kastens and Liben 2007). Some kids were quite accurate. Other kids were far off the mark. But when kids were asked to write down what clues they used to decide where the stickers should go, they performed much better. It's a finding that's consistent with other studies: [Kids learn better when they have to explain how they solve problems](#).

Do such mapping exercises improve a child's general spatial skills, and, if so, how? That's not yet clear. But the sticker-placement study suggests that guided activities force children to pay close attention to spatial cues and shifting visual perspectives. They're practicing spatial thinking, and they are learning how to read maps – which is an important spatial skill.

## 6. Expose kids to tangrams and other spatial puzzles

I haven't seen any controlled experiments testing the effects of tangrams or jigsaw puzzles on the development of spatial skills. But it seems pretty clear that puzzle-solving ability and spatial intelligence are linked.

For example, in an observational study, researchers tracked the behavior of toddlers from the age of two, and then tested the children's spatial abilities when they were four and a half. The more frequently kids played with puzzles, the more likely they were to finish the study with high test scores (Levine et al 2011).

The U.S. National Council of Teacher's Mathematics promotes the use of tangrams to teach spatial skills. Read more about tangrams – and find links to several tangram resources -- [here](#).

## 7. Let kids experiment with photography

As Nora Newcombe points out, photography encourages kids to experiment with different camera angles and different senses of scale (Newcombe 2010). For ideas to inspire children's photography projects, see my article "[Digital cameras for kids: Cool tools and windows into the minds of children.](#)"

### Immunization Records

If you should receive a letter from York Region Public Health requesting immunization information, here's what to do:

Update York Region Public Health on your child's immunization status in one of the following ways:

- Online at <https://eimmunization.york.ca>
- Fax documents to 905-895-6066 or 1-866-258-2026
- Mail immunization information to Immunization Services, Box 147, Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1
- Call York Region Public Health at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 73456

## ARTonomy 2016



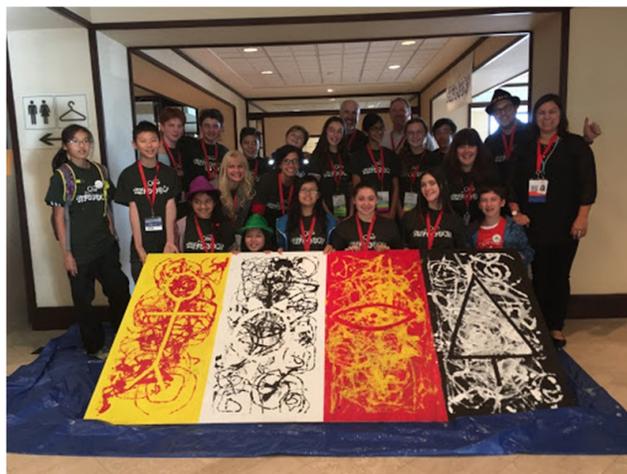
This fall six intermediate Silver Pines students were invited by Ms. Leppington and Mrs. Battaglia to participate in a collaborative inquiry project that involved programming robots to paint Indigenous art on a canvas. There were four schools from York Region that participated in this ARTonomy project: Aldergrove, Silver Pines, Rick Hansen and Pleasantville. They began this project by meeting with our First Nations Metis Inuit consultants to learn about wampum belts and treaties between Indigenous groups and various government groups. The schools met twice to collaborate and design their artwork, as well they promoted their work on the local Rogers channel and they met online through Google Classroom to finalize and coordinate their programming and coding. All of this hard work was on display for two days at the annual QUEST Educator Conference held in November. Our school is so proud of the work, the learning and growth these intermediate students demonstrated in this amazing experience. Here are some of their personal stories.

### **ARTonomy Through the Eyes of Sara P.**

To me, Artonomy was an opportunity to develop many important life skills. Not only did I learn how to program and build with lego, but I learned how to communicate with others while being a part of a team. It was also a great opportunity to show my leadership skills and develop them further. During the ARTonomy project, I had the opportunity to be a guest on Rogers TV along with a fellow ARTonomy student. It was a surreal experience that I learned so much from. Being on TV taught me to enunciate my words and to think on the spot for a certain topic. Before ARTonomy I wasn't a confident speaker in front of audiences, and now it's just a natural thing. ARTonomy also taught me how to program using different apps like Lego Mindstorm Education and Spark Lightning Lab. I met new friends from other schools and became closer to fellow Silver Pines students. Overall, I thought ARTonomy was an amazing learning experience and I am thankful I was a part of it.

### **ARTonomy and Me - written by Matthew W.**

ARTonomy was a great project that combined robots and art together, as well as incredible students from Silver Pines, Pleasantville, Aldergrove and Rick Hansen. There were also six teachers helping with this project and motivating the kids. In ARTonomy we had to program a Lego Mindstorm robot through an APP to paint a wampum belt. A Wampum belt was used to represent Treaties and gifts between Indigenous groups and the government. The Mindstorm robot was completely programmed and we did not use our hands to paint any of the artwork on the canvas. Our robots, the programming and how it painted the canvas was presented at the QUEST conference. It was a great experience and I would do it again!



### **ARTonomy Thoughts from Victor T.**

QUEST was full of people that were education guest speakers, teachers and principals. It was exciting and nerve-racking at the same time, since it was my first time presenting at a conference. There were two groups of Artonomy students, high school and the four elementary school students from Aldergrove, Pleasantville, Rick Hansen and Silver Pines. We got our ARTonomy t-shirts and we proceeded to plan our art piece with the other schools. After we finished discussing and finalizing our plan, we began to prepare the canvas to be painted. We used the Sphero robot to start rolling around on the canvas board to create lines and shapes. It was supposed to be like a doodle but the artwork ended up as random lines. We did some more doodling until the board was covered. It looked nice. We all decided to prepare the second board for the second day of QUEST before leaving for the day. My overall experience was the best and I liked presenting our project at QUEST and I really want to be a part of ARTonomy next year.

### **Thoughts from Tyler S-**

I think Artonomy was a good learning experience for me, there was a lot of great people there and a lot of fun things to do. While I was at QUEST (Day 2), I had the job of painting the canvas using the Lego Mindstorm robots that we created at school before going to QUEST. Although the ARTonomy process took a long time it taught me a lot of things: teamwork, building and coding robotics, etc. If ARTonomy were to come around again, I would definitely do it again.

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