



School Community Newsletter — May 21, 2021

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DEAR PARENTS & FRIENDS OF SPARK,

As we approach the end of the school year, I want to thank everyone in our school community for pulling together to make the last year and a half work as well as it did. We have certainly all been on a roller coaster ride through this pandemic. Through the various forms that teaching and learning have had to take, everyone at Spark set aside personal anxieties and produced a year that we can be very proud of!

I need to thank the Spark staff for their constant willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty. I was able to see the immense level of expertise and effort that went into our sudden transition to the all-remote model last March. Our staff assembled all of the kits and software needed to make home instruction work in the best way possible. Though our staff was as traumatized as anyone by our sudden move to remote learning last year, they remained

focused on

one thing, a positive and meaningful experience for your kids. The sudden move to Zoom instruction was successful only because our staff never lost their sense of purpose. Through daily Zoom staff meetings from March through the summer, they proved to me that we have the best team possible for your kids!

GEAR UP...

As we look ahead to the summer, Spark will be joining with MCC in providing a daily portion of the "Gear Up" program sponsored by the Manchester School District to provide academic recovery opportunities for Manchester students entering the 8th and 9th grades. Plans are still forming, but as I understand it now, Spark and MCC will provide afternoon activities for "Gear Up" students. Again, plans are still gelling; however, Spark may be helping to provide robotics and drone (yes, drone) activities to these students.

Other activities are being considered as well. There should be opportunities, perhaps paid, for our current Spark students to join us as student leaders and mentors to the "Gear Up" kids. We will be speaking with our students directly about this as plans unfold, and I will announce more as plans become more firm. As far as I am concerned, this program will be a great way to celebrate the fact that we are moving on to a post-pandemic phase of life while providing current Spark students with leadership experiences!

What will Spark look like in the fall?



My crystal ball falls short of being able to make predictions, but I think we can expect far more normalcy in the fall. I will let you know more as the summer progresses through a rapidly changing landscape. Our goal is to restore as much normalcy as possible in the fall.

VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE...

We will continue with the virtual open house format for now and move to in-person open houses in the fall when MCC facilities are more fully open. Our next virtual open house date is **Thursday, June 24th, from 6:30 to 7:30pm**. As some families are beginning to look forward to registration for the 2022-2023 school year, they are finding our current virtual open houses valuable. Please continue to help us spread the good word about our school!



MEMORIAL DAY...

Just a reminder that we will all be taking a day off from classes on Memorial Day, Monday, May 31st.

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL...

Wednesday, June 16th, will remain our final day of classes, ending at Noon.

PARENTS & PIZZA...

One parent has offered to bring pizza in for the da Vinci cohort — date to be chosen. Perhaps parents of the Newton and Wright cohorts would care to do the same for their kids. If so, please contact Mrs. Larochelle so that we can coordinate a date.



WEDNESDAYS...

Wednesday activities have expanded to include outdoor fun along with limited use of MCC's MPR and of one of its auditoriums and the addition of afternoon chess sessions. All the students seem to be enjoying chess, and our Year 2 kids have demonstrated great leadership skills as they provide coaching where needed. While our Wednesdays do not yet look as they did last year, they have been a great opportunity for the Spark student community to grow in face-to-face style.

Please have your student bring insect repellent or apply it at home on Wednesday as we are outdoors. We haven't experienced any tick problems yet, but it's always better to be prepared.

THANKS TO MCC...

We have so many reasons to thank the MCC Community. At this moment, I want to thank MCC for installing a bottle-refilling water station in our area — another sign that we can begin looking forward to normal life!

THIS WEEK'S PHOTOS...

I am sharing a few snapshots of our outdoor action and chess time this week. It's great that our kids are interacting and getting to know each other by having fun together!

Sincerely,

Denis Mailloux
Director