

# Cornerstone News



January 20, 2017

## Already?



**Every year seems to go by faster than the previous one and this year**

**seems to have passed with the blink of an eye.** Students are in the thick of it right now at all levels. New presentations, advanced work, student maturity, and the like make January a satisfying time for students and teachers. Parent nights and conferences add to the intensity of this time of year.

In contrast to the level of engagement “in the moment” that can be witnessed in classrooms, I am engaged in planning for next year. Next week we will be mailing out re-enrollment agreements for the 2017-2018 academic year! Please read your contract carefully. All financial policies are outlined therein. Your packet will include tuition and fees policies and a contract. This year the Board of Directors approved a 2.5% increase in tuition. This increase allows us to continue to meet the needs of classrooms and students, maintain our beautiful environment and still remain competitive in the independent school market. Tuition assistance is available to families who find it difficult to continue

at Cornerstone for financial reasons. The application process is easy and confidential. I encourage you to apply early if you feel your family will need assistance next year. Just call the office for an application and return it with your enrollment agreement. The first meeting of the tuition assistance committee is in late February.

For students moving to the next plane of development next year, and therefore a new classroom, only the level of enrollment is indicated on your enrollment agreement. Decisions will be made regarding specific classroom placements later in the spring. You will be notified of those decisions during the first weeks in May, which will allow plenty of time for your student to visit and become familiar with his or her new classroom. In each classroom we look for a good balance of age, gender, learning needs, and opportunities for new social experiences for all children. All of these aspects of school life are taken into account as we make class placements. Our faculty is supported by their peers and mentors in a collaborative effort on behalf of all children here at Cornerstone. You can be confident that your student’s individual needs will be considered carefully as we decide upon class placements.

As always, if you have questions or concerns, please give me a call.

*Lee Anne*

## Parent Volunteer Group Links

This year the Parent Volunteer Group is utilizing two websites to facilitate events and opportunities to volunteer at Cornerstone. The link will stay constant, but the events and opportunities will change so Favorite or Bookmark these sites!

1. SignUpGenius - [PVG Volunteer opportunities](#). Here you can find all volunteer opportunities and sign up at your convenience.
2. EventBrite - [Cornerstone Family Connections](#) - A PVG initiative to promote connections amongst Cornerstone families/caregivers via social events outside of school. Anyone can post an event (ex. apple picking, hiking, beach clean ups, walks, coffee meet-ups, etc.). Please contact Tamara (a parent volunteer) at [tdenneen@comcast.net](mailto:tdenneen@comcast.net) to add your name for new events, notices and to post an event idea.

Cornerstone is an Amazon Affiliate which means Cornerstone receives 4% cash back on purchase you make. This link can be found on the bottom of the Cornerstone School homepage. Please note this is different from Amazon Smile however is still an Amazon sponsored fundraiser.

## Parent Volunteer Group News



### PVG Volunteer Opportunities

Thank you to all those parents who donated meals for the teachers for Parent Nights, the teachers really appreciate it.

### PVG Updates

Please join us at the next parent coffee scheduled for Friday, January 27th in the school gym after drop-off. There will be speakers to discuss the Spanish, Art, and Music Curriculum at Cornerstone as well as a discussion on upcoming coming events and volunteer opportunities. The PVG would like to hear from you, would appreciate your feedback on PVG and CFC activities and would like to start the planning process for the 2017 school year. Hope you can join us!

### Fundraiser Updates

Our Annual Appeal is still going strong, the goal is for 100% family participation (of any dollar amount at all). These funds go toward improving the school/classroom environment. This year's appeal, will focus on the outdoor play equipment, if you have not received your annual appeal in the mail or if you know a friend or relative who might like to make a contribution please contact the front office (Pam, Susan, or LeeAnne).

## Cornerstone Class of 2013 Checks In!



**We love our alumni!** **Anthony Megliola** was accepted to his first choice, Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, to pursue a BFA in dramatic writing. Anthony credits the Junior Class with fostering his ability and willingness to take chances and to write well. **Lachlan Mountjoy** was accepted to Steven's Institute of Technology in December and will be studying cyber security, with a minor in business. Steven's is in Hoboken, NJ right on the Hudson River and the campus overlooks the Manhattan skyline--beautiful! This spring **Una O'Brien-Taubman** will be graduating from Berwick Academy, where she

consistently achieved High Honors. She will be attending Barnard College in the fall and is looking forward to being back in New York City. Una attributes her success at Berwick in large part to her great preparation at Cornerstone. **Emma Weir** will be attending Hobart and William Smith, she has also earned a spot on their rowing team. She is first taking a gap year and will be training and working with a professional rider in Florida with the hopes of making it to the North American Junior Young Rider Championships in Colorado.

**Called to a Lesson** (a regular feature explaining key components and concepts of a Montessori pedagogy)



*“A long time ago there was nothing. Nothing. No stars, no mountains, no earth. Nothing. There was only a great space which had no beginning*

*and no end. There was darkness and cold, and there seemed nothing more. We think that the night is dark, but our night is like daylight compared to the darkness then. When we think of ice, we think of cold, but ice is positively hot compared to the coldness then. But there was something in the midst of this darkness, something that was not seen.”*

So begins “Life and Its Beginnings”, the Montessori version of a Creation Story. In our last newsletter, we began an exploration of Dr. Montessori’s Five Great Lessons. They are Creation, the Coming of Life on Earth, the Coming of Humans, the History of Language, and the History of Math. The phrase “Great Lesson” is a bit of misnomer. “Lesson” implies a teacher dictating information to students that will be tested a later date. Montessori’s Great Lessons should be thought of instead as impressionistic stories. Their aim is less to impart specific facts but to spark interest and generate questions. Questions that the child will then investigate on their own.

The First Great Lesson, Creation, tells the story of the Big Bang that reveals the origins of the universe in language broad enough to encompass both religious and scientific explanations for the universe’s inception. Normally presented close to the start of the school year in Lower Elementary, it is accompanied by four charts/illustrations and six simple experiments. It is meant to

give the child a context for the entire curriculum. As the universe contains everything, any study the child undertakes will be inter-connected. The stars, the planets, stones, all form a unified story. A study of a stone eventually leads the child to a study of the sun. According to Dr. Montessori, the six-year old child possesses an ability, unique to their plane of

“All things are part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity. The idea helps the mind of the child to become focused, to stop wandering in an aimless quest for knowledge. He is satisfied having found the universal centre of himself with all things.”

Maria Montessori

development, to see things as a whole and is especially suited to receive this large, unified, launching concept with which to order their world.

With each succeeding story, with each Great Lesson, more and more is revealed. Truths as we know them are presented to the child, and assimilated into the larger idea presented in the first. Creation of the universe sets the stage for the Coming of Life on Earth, the second “Great Lesson”, and the topic for the next “Called to a Lesson” .



Rob Keys directs micro-economies in the Junior Class and Cornerstone Admissions. He is the author of “Follow the Child”, available in the office and at Amazon.com.

**The Photo Album**

**Lower Elementary I - Parent Night**

