



**Antelope Valley  
Learning Academy**



# The Learning Academies Parent Post

Volume 4, Issue 6

February, 2012



## Principal's Corner

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### Mark your calendar:

- \* Feb.10– Parent Workshop: "Motivating the Homeschooled Child from Within"
- \* Feb. 16– End LP 8
- \* Feb. 17– Lincoln's Birthday: NO SCHOOL
- \* Feb. 20– President's Day: NO SCHOOL
- \* March 2– Parent Workshop: "Test-Taking Tips"
- \* March 6– 4th & 7th Grade STAR Writing Test
- \* March 9– Field Trip: Gentle Barn
- \* March 13,14– Physical Fitness Testing (5th & 7th)

February 2<sup>nd</sup> is Groundhog Day. This is a popular tradition in the United States as it is the day that the famous groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil, comes out of his hole after a long winter nap to look for his shadow. According to legend, if Phil sees his shadow (if it's a sunny day), then there will be six more weeks of winter. If he does not see his shadow (if it's a cloudy morning), then spring has arrived. You can go to <http://www.groundhog.org/groundhog-day/about-groundhog-day/>, click on Groundhog Day, and find out all sorts of interesting information such as the history of Groundhog Day, past predictions, and also what Phil's 2012 prediction is. Update—Phil saw his shadow, so we are in for six more weeks of winter!

Happy President's Day! This month, we are taking a long four-day weekend to celebrate Abraham Lincoln's birthday (February 17)

and President's Day in honor of George Washington (February 20). You can help your child understand the significance of these two important men and the strides they made for civil rights and the American political system by studying the government, our flag and our electoral system. You can go to this website published by the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, which is aligned to the California History/Social Science Curriculum, to find information about Abraham Lincoln and George Washington:

[http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/score\\_lessons/special\\_events/presidents\\_day/](http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/score_lessons/special_events/presidents_day/)

We are beginning to prepare for the annual California Standards Tests for all AVLA students in grades 2 – 8. First up is the STAR Writing Test for all 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students on Tuesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>. This will be followed by Physical Fitness

Testing for all 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders, and finally, the STAR tests in April-May. Your Supervising Teacher will be providing you with the important testing dates and other information, and we will have another Parent Workshop on Test-Taking Tips to assist you with preparing your student for these all-important exams.

Thank you for your commitment to your child's education and your support of our school and programs. We continue to work hard to meet the goals we have set, the commitments we have made, and to ensure that we are providing the educational programs that our students deserve and the parents and community expect.

If you have any questions or comments, my door is always open.

Erin Wade  
Principal, AVLA

## Reading Connection



**SIMPLE READING PRACTICE**—Here is a way to give your children reading practice—and improve their behavior at the same time. Write short notes to your kids and leave them around the house.

Mention good be-

havior ("Thanks for helping with the dishes!") or write reminders ("Please hang me up. Signed, Your towel"). Sometimes, the notes are about not-so-good behavior. ("I was disappointed when you yelled at me. Can we talk about it?") Leave notes for treats, too ("Let's go fly

your kite this afternoon!")

Look for unique places to put the notes such as on their pillow, in front of the dog's water bowl, or pinned to the shower curtain. The kids enjoy discovering the notes and reading them aloud.

## My Point of View...

by Dawn Fox, AVLA Education Specialist



I had a discussion with a colleague today about the teenage brain. I guess National Geographic has done several studies on the issue of the differences found. Interesting...just to think that there really is (finally) something documented. So with that said, we can all agree, kids' brains are different. They think differently, they speak differently, they process information differently, and sometimes you might even wonder if the baby got switched at birth. But in reality, all children are intrinsically (internally) motivated in a different way. Can we motivate a child that seems uninterested in school and working hard for goals they don't care about? You know the scenarios; many of my parents have shared them with me.

Researchers agree that some children are born highly motivated from within; they require little outside (extrinsic) force to get their work done. They have all the dreams, plans and ambitions that you want for them. Then there is the little guy who doesn't have the same level of motivation and requires the

perpetual carrot dangling in front of his face just to get his bed made. It's tough, especially if you have one of each living under your roof. There are a few studies that tell us what and why this may happen. From my research I can see that children are born with a different "pace" in life and may require a little more nudging than others. But one thing all children benefit from is the opportunity to feel they have some control of the world around them. When a child is made to feel a part of his learning experience, he is more likely to engage in the learning process. When a

**"When a child is made to feel a part of his learning experience, he is more likely to engage in the learning process."**

child's ideas and choices are heard, the child feels valued and his self-perception increases. With that, he or she becomes more motivated. When the child's learning experience is centered on their interests, they become more internally motivated to engage. For the learning dis-

abled child, when they are made to feel successful, their perceived abilities increase and they become more interested and internally motivated. This is one reason home-schooling is such a positive experience for children with learning disabilities.

So the next time you go to sit down and plan the week of school, ask your child, "What do you want to read?" "How would you like to show your teacher what you learned?" Give some choices... and let *them* decide. You may be surprised by what they say. Please join me on February 10th for my next workshop when we will dive deeper into these issues of *motivation* and explore the concept of *failure, state of helplessness and increasing self-efficacy in your child*. It will be fun...and motivating!

Happy learning!!

*Motivating the Home Schooled Child from Within* is being presented by Dawn Fox on Friday, February 10th at 10:00 AM at the LRC. Call 661-952-6028 to sign up.



## Character Counts—February

The pillar of character for

**February** is **RESPECT**

Go to:

<http://charactercounts.org/six-pillars.html>

Once there, click on Resources and Lesson Plan Bank to get age-specific activities for the trait of *Respect*.

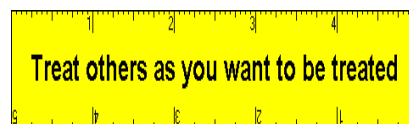
### RESPECT

Treat others with respect; follow the *Golden Rule* • Be tolerant and accepting of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • Be considerate of the feelings of others

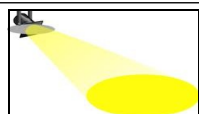
- Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone
- Deal peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements

Parents—please remember to notice and praise respectful behavior at home. And don't forget to model it yourself.

*The Golden Rule*



## Spotlight on...Learning Resources



With the upcoming STAR Writing Tests for our 4th and 7th grade students,

these two websites may provide some much needed resources and support for you at home. Even if you don't have a 4th or 7th grader, with our increased focus on writing this year, I am certain you can find something useful here!

Educational articles for parents, giving practical advice on how to give your children the best possible start in life. Topics covered include character building, health awareness, study habits and a series of *how to* guides for a variety of leisure and educational activities:

[http://www.teachkidshow.com/category/children\\_education/page/2/](http://www.teachkidshow.com/category/children_education/page/2/)

This one uses the Four Square Writing Graphic Organizer we are using with our students this year:

<http://jc-schools.net/write/>



The achievements and contributions of African - Americans to U.S. history

have been celebrated in this country since 1926. February became the month for recognition because it marks the birthdays of two men who positively influenced African Americans in the U.S.: Frederick

Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Rides, which occurred in May 1961. Representative John Lewis (D-Georgia) was a key civil rights activist during that time. He spoke to Kid Reporter Henry Dunkelberger about those days when he was beaten and jailed for fighting for a law that was on the books but

not being observed in the south. A video of his powerful interview is contained in the link below.

You will find many similar stories from Kid Reporters recognizing the achievements and accomplishments of African American leaders in this country.

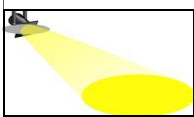
<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/collection/black-history-month>

## Academy Action... Chess Club

On Tuesday, January 24th, Desert Montessori Academy hosted AV Learning Academy in our first ever Chess Match! DMA won the traveling trophy but all the kids seem to have had a great time. Ms. Daa reports, “The synergy was wonderful and the learning experience was more than I could have hoped for them!”

Thank you to the parents and the students for participating and a special thank you to Ms. Daa for organizing this special event for our students!

If your child is interested in playing Chess, our Chess Club class meets every Friday from 11:00—12:00 at the Lancaster Resource Center with Ms. Daa. You can sign up via your Supervising Teacher. All students are welcome to attend no matter their Chess level. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend and play, as well!



### Student Spotlight



#### I Go to a Great School

By Lissette Mullineaux, AVLA student, grade 4

**I go to a great school because it helps me learn. The materials are free, we have field trips, Mrs. Mercado is nice, and Ms. Anna is very helpful.**

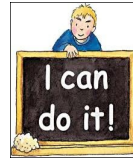
# School Events...



## Parent Workshop: Motivating the Homeschooled Child from Within

Join AVLA's Education Specialist Dawn Fox to learn about:

- Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Motivation
- When and how to use incentives
- How to create self-determination and competency skills in your child
- How self-efficacy affects your child's learning experience
- How student's with learning disabilities are affected academically by their perceived abilities
- Why tapping into your child's interests increases self-determination and intrinsic motivation



Friday, February 10th  
10:00 AM—12:00 PM  
Lancaster Resource  
Center  
1240 Commerce Center Dr

Call 952-6028 to sign up!

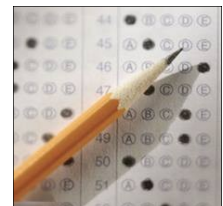
## Parent Workshop: Tremendous Test-Taking Tips

Friday, March 2nd  
10:00 AM—12:00 PM  
Lancaster Resource  
Center  
1240 Commerce Center Dr.

Call 661-952-6028  
To sign up!

Join Supervising Teacher Karen Walters for her annual workshop on preparing for the upcoming STAR tests. In this informative workshop, you will receive:

- An overview of testing preparation
- Suggestions for setting up a mock testing environment in your home
- Internet resources for extra practice
- Tips for helping your student overcome test-taking anxiety



## Field Trip: The Gentle Barn



Come groom the horses, brush the cows, hold the chickens, give the pigs tummy rubs, and hug the goats and sheep.

Friday, March 9th  
11:00 AM—1:00 PM  
The Gentle Barn  
15825 Sierra Highway  
Santa Clarita, CA 91390  
\$10 CASH per person

Flyers and Permission Slips available at all Resource Centers.

Permission Slips and cash due by February 24th. Drop at any Resource Center.



# **STAR Writing Test**

**For ALL 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade AVLA  
students**

**Tuesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

*4<sup>th</sup> grade test will begin promptly at 9:00 AM\* at the PTC  
7<sup>th</sup> grade test will begin promptly at 10:30 AM\* at the LRC\*\**

***\*Please arrive 15 minutes prior to start of exam for sign-in***

*The test is untimed, however most students complete the test in about an hour.  
Please plan your time accordingly.*

*\*\*7<sup>th</sup> grade testing will take place during the regular 7<sup>th</sup> grade ELA class time.*

## LOCATIONS:

### **4<sup>th</sup> Grade STAR Writing Test:**

Parent-Teacher Center  
1601 E. Palmdale Blvd., Suite C  
Palmdale, CA 93550  
661-952-6028

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade STAR Writing Test:**

Lancaster Resource Center  
1240 Commerce Center Dr.  
Lancaster, CA 93534

## P.E. in the Park

# Physical Fitness Testing

For all 5th and 7th grade  
AVLA students



Tuesday,  
March 13th  
OR  
Wednesday,  
March 14th  
at  
10:00 AM

*Please be on time!*

### Antelope Valley YMCA

43001 10th Street, W.  
Lancaster, CA  
93534  
661-723-9622

*\*Physical Fitness  
Testing is a CA  
mandated test for all  
5th, 7th and 9th  
grade students.*

If you are a 5th or 7th grade student, you must take the PFT!

Join us at the Antelope Valley YMCA on one of the above dates (not both)

Remember to wear comfortable clothing and tennis shoes as we will do the following activities:

- Mile run or walk
- Abdominal curl-ups
- Push-ups
- And more...



\*Parents/Guardians must attend this event with their student and remain present until finished