Cultural Bridges
INFORMATION TO HELP FAMILIES NAVIGATE THE ISSAQUAH SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Readers,

When my daughter was six, I organized the first Cultural Fair for Grand Ridge Elementary. One day, as I was busy preparing flags and signs for this event, she approached me and asked, “What is culture, mom?” I told her that culture is what makes us special or unique. Culture is what you like to eat, languages you use to communicate, what you believe, and traditions and customs that you and your family follow and value.

Then she went quiet for a while. I could see her mind working while she considered all these concepts. A minute later, she jumped with another question, “Why is culture so important? Why do we have a fair to celebrate these things?”

I decided to answer with this question, “How would you feel if you got to learn these things about a friend from school?” She immediately answered, “Well, I would know my friend much better!” So I told her, “that’s what we will do at the Cultural Fair, my dear; we will get to know our friends, neighbors and community better. This celebration is important because it gives us the opportunity to understand each other and to see our differences as our strengths.” I heartily invite you to attend one of these events (see page 7 to read more about them).

In this issue, we are showcasing Indian culture, three Indian community leaders, and presenting information about Holi (page 23). I hope you enjoy this issue and find helpful information about all of the wonderful resources available for every student’s success at school.

Happy New Year to all!
Alicia Spinner
Magazine Editor

On the cover: Issaquah Middle student, Amogh Desai, and Pacific Cascade student, Advika Balaji.
Picture by Minal D. Monga.
These are just three of many contributions that the Issaquah Schools Foundation has made to my educational career: a calculator, a field trip, and professional guidance in the classroom. These three areas also pertain to my interest in the STEM field, an area of study I will pursue at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo.

My educational career has come a long way since building roller coasters in elementary school, and the Foundation has been with me along the way. In high school, I have been using Foundation-funded graphing calculators in higher-level math classes. Having a newer and customizable calculator drastically helped me with homework, quizzes, and tests. These calculators are impactful and useful because students in difficult math classes should not have to worry about having out-of-date calculators that are frustrating to use. Also, students who strive to push themselves in the growing field of STEM, but come from low-income backgrounds and are unable to afford an expensive graphing calculator should not be held back from reaching their fullest potential.

I also enrolled in the AP Computer Science course a couple of years ago. Imagine a program that involves Technology Education and Literacy in Schools. TEALS’s mission is to put computer science education in every high school and the Issaquah Schools Foundation furthered this mission by funding TEALS Teacher Support and the TEALS Field Trip to Microsoft for computer science students. In the classroom, the TEALS advisors would roam the room, ready to help with any programming conundrum. These helpful individuals were another resource that we could seek out quickly in order to gain advice regarding our code. Secondly, the TEALS Field Trip to Microsoft was a very exciting field trip that I looked forward to. This field trip was basically a computer science fair, and by attending it, I was able to talk with different organizations and get intrigued by a summer internship that I hope to receive. The annual TEALS field trip exemplifies a great opportunity for students to get inspired by the vast world of computer science and its countless possibilities.

But the Foundation has not only positively impacted me in the STEM field, it has also enhanced my social and artistic sides as well. The Foundation funded the Where Everybody Belongs program, or WEB, at my middle school, which ensures that 8th grade leaders help new 6th graders transition smoothly into middle school. By being a WEB leader myself in 8th grade, I was able to meet Charlie, an energetic and hilarious 6th grader who later became my cross-country running buddy. In addition to its success in making more 6th graders comfortable in middle school, the Foundation-funded WEB program stimulates friendships across grade levels and specifically helped form the bond between Charlie and me.

The Issaquah Schools Foundation also funded theatrical lighting equipment for my school’s Black Box Theater. This was where I performed scenes from Shakespeare’s plays in my freshman English class and my Senior Shakespeare class. The Foundation also supports the "Bringing Shakespeare Alive" program where representatives of the Seattle Shakespeare Company visited my school and give students engaging Shakespeare lessons. These lessons cover topics from Shakespearean attire to engaging stage combat.

Overall, the Foundation funds a large breadth of programs in the Issaquah School District that can help YOUR kids explore themselves and discover their true passions. As a student who has been in the Issaquah School District since 1st grade, the programs funded by the Issaquah Schools Foundation have given me the tools for success and made my academic career much richer. Your support of the Foundation will result in confident, appreciative and intelligent young adults ready for an increasingly competitive world.

Visit the Foundation page and learn how you can donate: http://isfdn.org/donate/

Text taken from the speech of Deon Lillo given at the Nourish Every Mind 20th Annual Luncheon, May 2018.
Riding the Big Yellow School Bus

By LORNA GILMOUR
Equity and Family Partnerships Specialist ISD

Coming from India at the age of 10, I had never been on a school bus. As a child and even now, public school transportation was not provided in India. In researching other countries, I found that most countries do not have them. The American School system is unique in the provision of big yellow school buses to ensure that all students have access to public education.

Riding a bus in India is nothing compared to riding a public bus in America. Buses in India are loud. Nearly always, people push and shove their way onto very overcrowded buses. Aisles are packed with people and bags and there is no concept of personal space. People lining up for the bus? Never happens! However, after coming to the US, I had to learn these rules, especially as I rode the public school bus.

As a teacher, parent, Dean and staff member in the Issaquah School District, I have realized that many of our families are unfamiliar with the rules and etiquette of riding school buses. For many of us, it is not part of our normal day-to-day living and culture. As a result, students and parents new to the concept of public school bus systems often have problems and concerns as they ride the bus.

Listening to the bus driver is the biggest issue. In India, there was always an assistant to the bus driver on the public buses to help manage problems (and collect bus fare). The bus driver was not in charge of the passengers, he just drove the bus. However, in the US, bus drivers are also responsible for managing the behavior of the passengers as well as safely driving the bus. Bus passengers are expected to follow bus etiquette and procedures as defined by the school district.

It is critical that parents and students all listen to the bus driver and follow their instructions. In public schools, bus drivers are respected adults along with the teachers, paraprofessional and other school staff. In general, all bus drivers have four simple rules for their students:

- Stay seated
- Hands and feet to self (no touching others)
- Keep noise level down (inside voice)
- Keep aisles clear (no backpacks, feet, bags)

US school buses are safe and an excellent mode of transportation. Our bus drivers are valued members of the school staff. In order to ensure that our buses can safely transport our students, it is important that students follow the bus rules and all directions given by the bus driver at all times. Parents can ensure that students have a positive experience coming and going to school by reinforcing the school bus rules with their children. If students are happy on their way to school, they are more ready to learn!

Before and After School Bus

- Arrive at the bus stop five minutes early.
- Stand at least five giant steps (10 feet) away from the edge of the road.
- Wait until the door opens and the driver says it’s okay before stepping onto the bus.
- Be sure the bus driver can see you and you can see the bus driver.
- Stop at the edge of the bus and look left-right-left before crossing.

During the School Bus

- Always sit fully in the seat and face forward.
- Do not distract the driver.
- Never stand on a moving bus.
- Obey the driver.
- Speak in a low voice.
- Don’t throw things.
- Never stick anything out the window – arms, legs, head, backpacks, etc.

Don’t Miss the Events of the Cultural and Family Partnerships!

Monthly meetings at 9:30 a.m., Issaquah Valley Elementary, Portable 6:
January 14th, February 11th, March 18th, April 22nd, May 20th, and June 17th. All families are welcome.
Research confirms the advantages of having fathers and significant male role models in children's lives helping at schools, regardless of the level of maternal participation. And of course, families are not always formed with a mom and a dad. My own family wasn’t but having my uncle come to school during each Father’s Day event sure made me feel special.

Our district schools offer many opportunities for fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and other father figures to volunteer and to get involved in the education of a young family member. The table below shows programs that some schools offer mainly during recess and lunchtime. For many of these programs volunteers don’t have to commit to more than a couple of hours, and don’t have to join every month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apollo</td>
<td>Events “powered by Dads”</td>
<td>Contact Jamie McCotter or Rupy Rihal: <a href="mailto:events@apollopta.org">events@apollopta.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cascade</td>
<td>Parent Play Day</td>
<td>Contact Andrea Obert or Tiffany Parker: <a href="mailto:aobert11@gmail.com">aobert11@gmail.com</a>, <a href="mailto:tparker91@comcast.net">tparker91@comcast.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>Dads at Recess</td>
<td>Contact Chris King at <a href="mailto:programs@clarkpta.org">programs@clarkpta.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creekside</td>
<td>Parent Play Days</td>
<td>Contact Marissa Corona for more information, <a href="mailto:marissa.creekside.ptsa@gmail.com">marissa.creekside.ptsa@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issaquah Valley</td>
<td>D.I.V.E. (Dads and Dudes of Issaquah Valley Elementary)</td>
<td><a href="http://ivepta.org/Page/Programs/DIVE">http://ivepta.org/Page/Programs/DIVE</a> Please contact Jamal Siddiqui and Tim Baynes at <a href="mailto:DIVE@ivepta.org">DIVE@ivepta.org</a> with any questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Ridge</td>
<td>Grizzly Guys</td>
<td>Contact Peter Fitzgerald at <a href="mailto:prfitzgerald1@gmail.com">prfitzgerald1@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Hills</td>
<td>Watch D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students)</td>
<td><a href="http://maplehillspta.ourschoolpages.com/Doc/Public/What%20is%20WatchDOGA.pdf">http://maplehillspta.ourschoolpages.com/Doc/Public/What%20is%20WatchDOGA.pdf</a> For questions, email <a href="mailto:watchdogs.mh@gmail.com">watchdogs.mh@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunset</td>
<td>Parents at Recess</td>
<td>Contact Mike Fritch at the PTA website: <a href="http://sunsetsockeyepta.org">http://sunsetsockeyepta.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering that many parents work during the day, the PTAs of the schools also organize events and activities in the evenings. Everyone is welcome to participate during these events. Ask at your child’s school for opportunities to volunteer. Start as early as when your child is in Kindergarten; enjoy every year because I promise you, it goes very fast, and every year is special and unique. Besides, kids don't enjoy having their parents around as much once they hit middle school! Let them know that you care about their school, meet their friends, play their favorite games, let them show you around and observe your kids in their school element!

2019-2020 School Year

Find your school and registration schedules. The window to register your child for Kindergarten for the 2019-2020 school year begins in early February, and packets should be completed and returned by March 9th. Please look for detailed information on the District website: https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/district/Kregistration.

Welcome to the Issaquah School District!

This is an event to help incoming Kindergarten parents. January 30th at Clark Elementary, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. For updated information, please visit: https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/family/cultural-and-family-partnerships.
Make Valentine’s Day a Season of Kindness!

During the month of February, students of some schools participate in a letter exchange. Everybody gets to write and receive letters. Sometimes, even parents are encouraged to send mail to their children. Ask your child’s teacher if they will be doing this activity. It is a great way to practice writing, and to promote kindness.

Also with the exchange of Valentines, kids will be given the chance to write notes to their friends. Use this activity to help your children be kind to all the kids in their classroom; even the ones they don’t have much in common with.

The month of February gives us an excuse to focus on generosity and to reach out to others. The Doing Good Together non-profit organization encourages families to create a 28 Days of Kindness challenge. The idea is to write a list of 28 things that you can do in the month of February and to work as a family to get them done. Some of the ideas are:

1) Write a poem for a far-away relative.
2) Write on paper hearts the names of people you love and decorate your house with them.
3) Leave a thank you note for your mail carrier.
4) Make a thank you note for somebody who works at your school.
5) Bake cookies for a neighbor.
6) Take a walk and pick up litter on the way.
7) Go out for cocoa and pay for the person behind you in line.
8) Talk to someone new; make a new friend.

Check the website of this great organization for more ideas: DoingGoodTogether.org/BigHeartedFamilies.

Health Room

Health Room Life-Threatening Health Conditions

If your student has a life-threatening health condition, you need to communicate this to the school nurse. Life-threatening health conditions include severe food allergies, diabetes, severe seizures, severe asthma, severe bee sting reactions, and other at-risk conditions. It is required to have medication and/or a treatment order and nursing plan in place. Meet with your school nurse now; they will be happy to help you.

Cold and Flu Season is Here!

Influenza is severe this year and it’s important to protect yourself and others. If your child is sick, please keep them at home. If you’re not sure if your child has the flu, ask these questions: Is there a fever? Are there other symptoms such as a cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, diarrhea or vomiting? If the answer is YES to both, your child might have the flu and should stay home.

Ways to protect yourself and your family are to ensure everyone has a flu shot, wash hands thoroughly, drink plenty of fluids, get plenty of rest and stay home when ill.
Every student in third grade will be taught to write in the flowing and ornamental form of cursive. Some parents don’t understand why the district is using instruction time for this form of writing when teachers could focus instead on technology, such as mastering keyboard skills or even coding. The reality is that the time spent on this form of writing is valuable for all kids, and particularly important for the ones who have problems transferring thoughts from their heads to the keyboards of their computers.

Kimberly Goodman, a 3rd grade teacher at Grand Ridge Elementary, shares three positive aspects that she has seen while teaching cursive.

1. The kids REALLY love it. It’s one of those things that has become a “rite of passage.” Students love getting to 3rd grade and finally being able to learn cursive.
2. Kids who have always felt their writing is sloppy, love cursive! It builds confidence and is a fresh start for everyone.
3. Cursive lessons don’t take much time, each of them lasting only about 10 minutes throughout the entire year.

Allison King, Instructional Coach at Creekside and Grand Ridge, explains how the district adopted cursive as a part of Writing core curriculum in 2013: “The district uses Handwriting Without Tears, which covers print skills in kindergarten and 1st grade, and cursive in 3rd grade. Cursive is not a large portion of instructional time per week- the school district recommends 5 minutes per day (or 25 minutes per week). Many teachers have students working on this during Read Aloud time or snack time. Cursive (and handwriting in general) is helpful to support the development of fine motor skills as well.”

In regards to tech skills, Ruth Cerna, Elementary Literacy Specialist for the district adds that it is important for parents to know that “the District suggests that 3rd grade teachers begin teaching cursive in the spring – sometime after state testing to allow for keyboarding instruction to occur during fall and winter.”

If you have questions about the teaching of cursive, don’t hesitate to ask your child’s teacher!

Cultural Events

During the first few months of the year, many elementary schools will be celebrating their diversity with cultural events. Kids love to teach their friends about their heritage. They talk about countries that they visit every summer to see their relatives, the places they moved from, or what they know from their family’s background. Kids understand that there is something singular about their families that make them different. And the objective of these events is for them to understand that those differences are what make them special — those unique features about their families that come to life inside their homes.

Every morning at school, students recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag of their birth or adopted country, and they do it with a lot of pride and respect. For some students, there is another flag at home that they are also attached to. And when schools give kids the opportunity to see and show off those flags to their classmates and community, an atmosphere honoring diversity is created.

Kids understand that our differences don’t divide us if we learn how to recognize, accept and celebrate them. Don’t miss the opportunity to celebrate the heritage of your family and the ones of your children’s classmates. Save the date for these important events - everyone is welcome!

Feb. 6: Culture Night at Endeavor
Feb. 7: Cultural Night at Creekside
Mar. 13: Cultural Fair at Grand Ridge
Mar. 1: Multicultural Night at Briarwood
Mar. 8: Multi-Cultural Night at Apollo
Apr. 2: Cultural Fair at Issaquah Valley

Parenting with Identity in Mind with Rosetta Lee

January 23, 11:30 a.m. at Mercer Island Community and Event Center,
8236 SE 24th Street, Mercer Island, WA 98040

Don’t miss this event! Rosetta Lee, local and national expert in diversity, inclusion and equity will discuss parenting with identity in mind. Learn how to create positive self-identity in our children and teach them to have a positive influence on others. The goal is to create inclusive communities that support everyone’s success. This event is for parents of children of all ages!
I arrived in Washington State at the beginning of April 2016, but it was not until May that I started summer school. That first month I had a very pleasant experience. My life seemed perfect, and although I still missed Mexico, I was very happy to have moved.

This feeling only improved once we got a place to live in Issaquah, and when I saw my new school, Pacific Cascade. It was so different and amazing; I could not stop comparing it to the facilities of the other schools I had attended before. This school seemed even more beautiful and modern. I was fascinated by the functional computers and laptops that can be used by the students, according to their needs. Apart from that, the chairs were surprisingly comfortable, and the tables were in excellent condition. There were many tables with chairs in the corridors where students could spend their time, and great furniture in the library for sitting down to read or do homework.

However, what the school hid inside their facilities surprised me much more. The heart of the school: the teachers! They were amazing. Once I entered the school they always made sure I understood the class and that I was following what we were doing. Teachers looked for ways to help me with the language barrier; they taught me to use some online translators, and made me feel comfortable using their knowledge of Spanish and even of Mexico. All of the teachers were very kind to me, I knew I could talk to them when I needed to, I could even tell them about my life in Mexico, as memories suddenly came to my mind, things I missed daily. It was equally important to me to be able to share the things I liked about my new life in Issaquah.

Even though I had taken English classes before coming here, and I had been exposed to the language the summer before school started, it was still sometimes very difficult to understand exactly what my teachers were saying in class. However, I knew I could always ask the teachers and they would help explain things to me with a lot of patience. I will always be grateful for the wonderful educators in the Issaquah School District!

Do You Know What FLASH is?

FLASH (an acronym for Family Life and Sexual Health) is a comprehensive science-based sexual health education curriculum designed to prevent pregnancy, STDs and sexual violence. It is designed to be used in school classrooms, as a part of a health unit. It includes a strong family involvement component, creating opportunities for families to talk with their children about important sexual health topics. It is an inclusive curriculum, comprising examples and activities that will resonate with youth from a variety of geographical regions, racial identities and sexual orientations. It is highly interactive and is respectful of students with a variety of sexual experiences.

FLASH includes a variety of strategies designed to create positive attitudes, beliefs and norms, and to build skills and self-efficacy in order to reduce rates of pregnancy, STDs and sexual violence.

- There are activities that focus on building positive attitudes about abstinence, condoms and birth control.
- There are activities that focus on building positive peer norms about abstinence, condoms, birth control and respecting others’ decisions not to have sex.
- There are activities that focus on building self-efficacy, by teaching skills and offering ample and appropriately scaffold practice, so that students can have the experience of successfully using the new skill.

For more information, visit: https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/academics/core/FLASH.
Parent Project

Are you a frustrated parent trying to get your child to complete their homework and/or chores? Is there a little too much “drama” in your home? Address these issues now when things are not as bad as they could be! Parent Project is a nationally recognized program designed for raising children in these challenging times. Many parents have taken advantage of this opportunity to gain more confidence in their parenting skills.

Offered by the Issaquah Police Department, the idea is to empower parents with difficult or out-of-control adolescents. Parents learn and practice specific prevention and intervention strategies for destructive behaviors ranging from truancy, alcohol and other drug use, gangs and other criminal behavior, running away, to violence and suicide. Parents are self-referred or can be referred to Parent Project classes by school officials.

This program will help you to:
- Create a home discipline structure that works.
- Improve school performance.
- Prevent or stop alcohol and drug abuse.
- Especially designed for parents of strong-willed children!

The Issaquah Police Department will run the next session of the Parent Project in January, 2019. Please visit the Issaquah Police Department website to learn more about the project. To join the next session, please contact the Issaquah Police Department Community Resource Officer: Corporal Ryan Smith at: RyanPS@issaquahwa.gov.

If you want more information, watch the video that the Police Department has on their website: https://www.issaquahwa.gov/index.aspx?NID=2937.

Binder Checklist Quiz

Ask your student to take this helpful quiz to determine how organized their binder is!

- The pencil pouch is at the front of the notebook.
- I have at least one pencil or pen in the pouch.
- My planner is behind the pouch.
- The “Take Home” pocket divider is behind the planner.
- There are only homework assignments or important messages in the “Take Home” pocket divider.
- There is a pocket divider for each of my classes besides Homeroom.
- There are only assignments that I am currently working on placed in or behind each pocket divider.
- All assignments that have been graded or handed back are in my “Graded/Handed Back” pocket divider OR in the dividers attached to the front of my zip binder.

If they score less than 6 points, they are struggling with organization. Remember that the journey to success in middle school starts with an organized binder! Once they make it a habit, they will see the results, and won’t have more missed or misplaced assignments!

Middle School Information Night

Topics will include: courses offered in middle school (math and science pathways, foreign languages, PE, band, orchestra and choir), how counselors work, etc. February 27th, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. For updated information, please visit: https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/family/cultural-and-family-partnerships.
Special Education Peer Tutors

Do you know that high school students are given the opportunity to be Special Education Peer Tutors?

Issaquah High, for grades 11 and 12

Special Education assistants work as peer tutors and may assist students with basic math, reading and computer skills, cooking and other home management tasks, physical education, and vocational skills. Good attendance is necessary. Tutors receive a letter grade and earn elective credit.

Tutors must sign a contract with a staff person, which lists specific duties and staff expectations. Students may enroll for only one tutor position per semester. All tutor positions are for one semester.

Skyline, for grades 9 to 12

Learning Recommendations: Students assist with the LRC II classroom and work with the Center Based Life Skills. They need to be mature, able to hold confidential information, be disciplined, and flexible.

General Description: As a peer tutor, students are assigned to a special education classroom with students having mild to severe disabilities. Tutors are responsible for assisting with special education students in academic, life skills, or even in general education classes. Tutors are expected to work with students one-on-one or in small groups.

Content:
• Students will learn about disabilities and their manifestation through active learning and research.
• Students are required to keep a daily journal of their activities in class, must present a power point presentation of a disability, and attend peer tutor trainings as arranged by the LRC II teacher.

Liberty

This opportunity is also offered at Liberty, please ask your child’s counselor.

Diego Dorta
Issaquah High School student, grade 12th

“This year I decided to be a peer tutor for special needs students at my school. These kids are often overlooked and underappreciated. I never entirely took the time to get to know them until I made this decision. It has been a goal of mine to get to know them and make them feel like a significant part of the community. Their endless joy has helped me in my own life, making me want to find ways to better theirs. To do this, I think it is essential for them to feel appreciated and have as close to a regular high school experience as possible. They have come to all of my football games sitting front row with my friends and all the other students cheering me on, and I will be there for their events to support them as they did for me. The bond I have made with every one of them is one that will not fade and one of true friendship.”
Why is There a Police Officer at the School?

Scott Behrbaum, the Chief of Police of the Issaquah Police Department answered this question:

“The Issaquah School District and the City of Issaquah partnered in 2000 to install a School Resource Officer (SRO) serving the Issaquah High School, Issaquah Middle School and other surrounding schools within the City of Issaquah. The position was created to assign a police officer to work full-time within the schools to help create a safe environment within the schools. The Issaquah School District also has School Resource Officers in Skyline and Liberty High Schools.

The SRO is a resource to students, families and school staff members related to safety, human services, and community issues. A School Resource Officer can serve as a mentor, counselor and even guest lecturer in classes related to law topics. Additionally, the SRO is in the schools to foster a positive relationship between the police department and the school community. Overall, the School Resource Officer is available to help everyone in and around the schools.”

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The Garage is Open!

235 First Avenue SE
Downtown Issaquah
kaylee@issaquahteencafe.org

Hours:
3:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday
11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturdays

9th—12th graders ONLY (proof of age required)

* find friends * hang out * free coffee *
* homework help * video games *
* board games * community resources * music *
* clubs * meeting rooms * celebrations *
* what would you like to add to this list? *

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High School Information Night

Two separate sessions, one for incoming 9th graders and one for parents. For more information, please visit:
https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/family/cultural-and-family-partnerships.
## Elementary Schools

### Challenger
- **Feb. 8:** Spelling Bee
- **Feb. 12, 6:30 p.m.:** Second Grade Concert
- **Mar. 1:** Eager Reader Begins
- **Mar. 1:** Book Swap
- **Mar. 13, 2:45 p.m.:** Plateau Choir Festival
- **Mar. 15:** PTA STEM Fair
- **Mar. 26:** Kindergarten Musical A
- **Mar. 28:** Kindergarten Musical B
- **Clark**
  - **Mar. 21, 7:00 p.m.:** Third Grade Concert

### Cougar Ridge
- **Jan. 30-31, 5:00 p.m.:** Spelling Bee
- **Feb. 12, 6:00 p.m.:** Art Fair
- **Mar. 21:** Fun Run School Fundraiser
- **Mar. 29:** Science Fair and Invention Convention

### Creekside
- **Jan. 18, 6:00 p.m.:** Family Movie Night
- **Feb. 7, 5:30 p.m.:** Cultural Night
- **Mar. 19, 5:30 p.m.:** Family STEM Night

### Discovery
- **Jan. 4-8:** Eager Reader
- **Feb. 12:** Choir Club Plateau Festival
- **Mar. 4-7:** Music in Our Schools (1-2 grades)
- **Mar. 7-8:** Class Picture Days
- **Mar. 11-15:** Music in Our Schools (3-4 grades)

### Endeavor
- **Jan. 4:** Popcorn Friday
- **Jan. 8:** Students Baking Day
- **Jan. 10:** Eager Reader Kickoff
- **Jan. 24:** Staff Appreciation Lunch
- **Jan. 30, 6:30 p.m.:** Fourth Grade Musical
- **Feb. 1:** Popcorn Friday
- **Feb. 5:** Student Baking Day
- **Feb. 6, 1:40 p.m.:** Kind Kids
- **Feb. 6, 6:00 p.m.:** Culture Night
- **Feb. 7, 6:30 p.m.:** Third Grade Concert
- **Feb. 8:** Eager Reader Ends
- **Feb. 13, 6:30 p.m.:** Second Grade Musical
- **Mar. 1:** Popcorn Friday
- **Mar. 5:** Student Baking Day
- **Mar. 7, 6:30 p.m.:** Fifth Grade Themed Concert
- **Mar. 8:** Staff Appreciation Lunch
- **Mar. 13, 1:40 p.m.:** Kind Kids
- **Mar. 13, 6:30 p.m.:** Plateau Choral Festival
- **Mar. 15, 6 p.m.:** Science Fair

### Grand Ridge
- **Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31:** STEM Club
- **Jan. 4:** Popcorn Friday
- **Jan. 9, 1:20 p.m.:** After School Movie
- **Jan. 16, 5:30 p.m.:** Grizzlies Got Talent
- **Jan. 23, 1:20 p.m.:** After School Movie
- **Feb. 1:** Popcorn Friday
- **Feb. 7, 14, 28:** STEM Club
- **Feb. 7, 6:30 p.m.:** Fifth Grade Concert
- **Feb. 12-13:** Spelling Bee
- **Feb. 27:** After School Movie
- **Mar. 1:** Popcorn Friday
- **Mar. 7, 14, 21, 28:** STEM Club
- **Mar. 13:** Cultural Fair

### Issaquah Valley
- **Jan. 24:** Fifth Grade Music Program
- **Feb. 7:** Second Grade Music Program
- **Feb. 8:** Variety Show
- **Feb. 12:** Math Adventure Parent Info
- **Feb. 28:** Orange Ruler Fundraiser Assembly
- **Mar. 7:** Fourth Grade Music Program
- **Mar. 8:** Bingo Night
- **Mar. 18:** Orange Ruler Donations Due
- **Mar. 22:** Orange Ruler Fun Run
- **Mar. 26, 6:30 p.m.:** Cougar Chorus

### Maple Hills
- **Jan. 4, 18:** Popcorn Friday
- **Jan. 23, 1:30 p.m.:** Variety Show Auditions
- **Feb. 1, 15:** Popcorn Friday
- **Feb. 1, 2:15 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.:** Variety Show
- **Feb. 7:** Eagle Reader Clubhouse
- **Feb. 7, 7:00 p.m.:** Kindergarten Orientation
- **Feb. 12, 5:30 p.m.:** Kindergarten Dance
- **Feb. 12, 6:30 p.m:** Family Dance, First Grade
- **Feb. 28:** Fifth Grade Transition Forum
- **Mar. 1:** Class Photo Day
- **Mar. 1, 22:** Popcorn Friday
- **Mar. 6-7:** Science Fair
- **Mar. 8:** STEM Night
- **Mar. 11:** Fifth Grade Maywood Night
- **Mar. 14:** Eagle Reader Clubhouse
- **Mar. 15:** Club/Yearbook Photo Day
- **Mar. 26:** Family Dance Night, Second Grade

### Newcastle
- **Jan. 7, 2:50 p.m.:** Geography Bee
- **Feb. 7, 5:30-7:00 p.m.:** Choir Fest at Liberty
- **Mar. 1, 6:30 p.m.:** Science Fair Expo
- **Mar. 30, 5:30 p.m.:** PTSA Auction & Dinner

### Sunny Hills
- **Jan. 24, 6:00 p.m.:** Fifth Grade Musical
- **Jan. 9, 6:00 p.m.:** Spelling Bee, Class Competition
- **Jan. 9-Feb. 13:** Eager Reader
- **Jan. 23:** After School Movie
- **Jan. 24:** Fifth Grade Musical
- **Feb. 4-15:** Box Tops Fundraising Drive
- **Feb. 6:** Incoming Kindergarteners Round Up
- **Feb. 7, 6:00 p.m.:** Bingo & Brownies
- **Feb. 12, 6:00 p.m.:** Second Grade Musical
- **Feb. 13, 6:00 p.m.:** Spelling Bee, School Competition
- **Mar. 4-18:** Spirit Wear Online Spring Store
- **Mar. 16:** Spring Book Fair
- **Mar. 19:** Class Picture Day
- **Mar. 20:** PCMS Choir Concert
- **Mar. 21:** Science Fair/STEM Night
- **Mar. 28, 6:00 p.m.:** Fourth Grade Musical

### Sunset
- **Jan. 4:** Parents at Recess
- **Jan. 11:** Science fair Kick Off
- **Feb. 1:** Parents at Recess
- **Feb. 4 and 7:** Talent Show Rehearsals
- **Feb. 8:** Talent Show
- **Feb. 12, 6:30 p.m.:** Second Grade Concert
- **Mar. 1:** Parents at Recess
- **Mar. 20:** Sunset Singers to Spring PCMS
- **Mar. 26:** Science Fair

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*Grades and activities are subject to change and may vary by school.*
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS

ALL MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS
Jan. 1: Winter Break, No School
Jan. 21: Martin Luther King Jr. Day, No School
Jan. 28: Teacher Work Day, No School
Feb. 18: President’s Day, No School
Feb. 19-22: Second Winter Break
Mar. 22: Grading Day, Early Release

Beaver Lake Middle School
Jan. 10: Meet the Principal & General Membership Meeting
Jan. 24: Plateau Choir Festival
Jan. 28: PTSA Lunch for Teachers and Staff
Feb. 1: PTSA Lunch for Teachers and Staff
Feb. 27: Winter Orchestra Concert
Mar. 13: Winter Band Concert
Mar. 15: PTSA Lunch for Teachers and Staff

Issaquah Middle School
Jan. 14-18: We Rise Above Week
Jan. 22-Feb. 4: Clash of Cans Food Drive
Jan. 25: Spirit Day
Feb. 7, 6:30 p.m.: Band Concert
Feb. 8: Career Day
Feb. 12, 6:30 p.m.: Orchestra Concert
Feb. 13: Winter Concert
Feb. 24: Wintergrass Performance
Mar. 7: Orchestra Festival
Mar. 9: Solo and Ensemble
Mar. 19: Orchestra 11 Festival
Mar. 21: Spring Choir Concert

Pacific Cascade Middle School
Jan. 18: MLK Living Voices Assembly
Jan. 22: Clash of Cans
Jan. 30: Eastshore Jazz Festival
Feb. 15: Winter Social

Pine Lake Middle School
Feb. 9, 5:00 p.m.: Hoe Down
Feb. 27, 12:00 p.m.: Membership Meeting
Mar. 4, 7:00 p.m.: Orchestra Cookie Concert
Mar. 9: Eastshore Solo and Ensemble Festival

Skyline High School
Jan. 26: Eastshore Solo and Ensemble Competition
Feb. 6-9: Winter Play
Feb. 11: Spartans United Week
Mar. 12: ASVAB Career Exploration Program test

When School Schedules Change
School closures and delays are usually announced very early in the morning. If you anticipate emergency transportation conditions, check for an announcement on TV, radio, or the Internet. To receive closure information straight from the district:
• Make sure you are receiving District eNews. Sign up on our website at https://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/news/ Weather delay notifications will not be sent via individual school eNews.
• Check the ISD homepage, www.issaquah.wednet.edu.
• Subscribe to receive ISD emergency news at www.FlashAlert.net (for weather emergencies only)
• Check the recorded messages at (425) 837-7000 (Administration) or (425) 837-6333 (Transportation).

When “Schools Closed” is Announced
All meetings, field trips, and after-school activities are cancelled. Morning and afternoon school-age care is cancelled. When there is early dismissal due to emergency conditions, after-school programs and school-age care are cancelled.

When Bus Stops Must Change Due to Emergency Conditions
When the district announces “buses on snow routes,” students from certain areas of the district will need to go to Emergency Stops—different bus stops than usual. If you do not see your neighborhood or streets listed in the alternate Emergency Stops, go to your regular bus stop. When the district announces “buses on snow routes,” students will be picked up in the morning and dropped off in the afternoon at the same Emergency Stop, regardless of weather improvements.

When “Busses on Snow Routes” is Announced
Students will be picked up in the morning and dropped off in the afternoon at the same Emergency Stop, regardless of weather improvements. Please note: special needs and regular education students use the same Emergency Stops. (No door-to-door service.)

For the locations of the emergency stops, go to this webpage: https://issaquah.wednet.edu/docs/default-source/district/emergency/etb.pdf.

Maywood Middle School
Jan. 19: Liberty Solo and Ensemble
Feb. 12: Jazz Night
Feb. 23: Winter Concert
Feb. 24: Wintergrass Performance
Mar. 7: Orchestra Festival
Mar. 9: Solo and Ensemble
Mar. 19: Orchestra 11 Festival
Mar. 21: Spring Choir Concert

Issaquah High School
Jan. 15: First Semester 5K Run
Jan. 26: Eastshore Solo/Ensemble
Jan. 31: Choir Bash
Feb. 2: Vocal Solo and Ensemble
Feb. 2: ACT or SAT Practice Test
Feb. 6: PTSA Staff Appreciation Breakfast
Feb. 9: Swingin’ In Vienna, Jazz Bands
Feb. 12: UW Band Festival
Feb. 12-13: Senior Exit Interviews
Mar. 1: Men Making a Difference Essay Deadline
Mar. 5: Spring Sports Night, Parents Meeting
Mar. 6: PTSA Staff Appreciation Breakfast
Mar. 6: Band 1 Festival
Mar. 14: Band 2 Festival
Mar. 26: Choral Classics Concert
Mar. 30: TOLO dance

Liberty High School
Jan. 7: Class of 2019 Parent Meeting
Jan. 26: Solo and Ensemble Festival
Feb. 2: Bellevue Jazz Festival
Feb. 12: Running Start Information Night
Feb. 12: UW Band Festival
Feb. 13: Jazz at Tula’s
Feb. 14: Symphonic Band Festival
Feb. 27: Band Concert
Mar. 6: Wind Ensemble Festival
Mar. 12: ASVAB Career Exploration Program test

Gibson Ek High School
Mar. 20: Showcase
Cultural Bridges (CB): Tell me a little about your position and the work you do on a day-to-day basis.

Christy Otley (CO): My role is to carry out the vision and mission of the school, to create a safe environment where all students feel excited to come to school and learn. Every day is a new adventure. Supporting students, staff and families in whatever capacity that might be. Connecting with students on a daily basis to develop relationships that are lasting.

One of the BEST parts of my job is getting to know students individually. My goal is to get to know every student’s name and a little bit about them. I love to be in classrooms seeing the great learning that is taking place, having students share their learnings – coming to the office to celebrate their hard work, reading stories in the classroom, greeting them in the morning, having lunch with them and connecting with them in any way possible.

CB: Why did you choose to be a Principal?
CO: I love that I have the opportunity to impact so many students in a positive way. Being a principal allows you to develop strong partnerships with families to support students and their academic and emotional growth. I feel honored that I can support all staff in their own learning which in turn supports students and families.

CB: What advice would you give to a parent who has a student in the Issaquah School District?
CO: To develop a partnership with your child’s teacher. We all have a common goal – for students to learn and grow both academically and emotionally. And that looks different for every student. To be involved in any way possible with your child’s school - a feeling of connectedness has such a positive impact.

CB: Tell us a little bit about yourself outside school.
CO: I enjoy spending time with my family and friends. I love sporting events, entertaining, skiing and cooking. I am committed to volunteering for several organizations that support children in our area; Athletes for Kids, Eastside Baby Corner and Kids Quest Museum. I am always looking for ways to give back to the community.

Number of years in Education: 24
Number of years with ISD: 24
What is your favorite thing about being a principal? Making connections with kids and supporting their growth.
What is your favorite book? Thank you Mr. Falkner
What is your favorite food? Mexican
What was your first job? Seamstress
Who was your childhood role model? My dad
Where is your favorite place to go on vacation? The Beach
Give us a Random Fun Fact about you: My first principal job interview was in a train station in Italy.
When I am visiting my colleagues, I get to hear stories about the day-to-day life inside the schools where they work, and I just heard a good one from a teacher in Endeavor.

The parents of Endeavor PTSA put on an event called Spooky Spaghetti. The name alone is priceless, but there’s even more. At a recent Spooky Spaghetti, one of my members asked a youngster, who was clearly in a homemade costume, what exactly he was dressed up as. He responded, I am a ____. The word he said is X rated and I don’t mind telling you that I blushed when the teacher said it to me.

My colleague said something like, “Hmm….”, did the awkward tight-lipped-teacher smile, and then shared it with that little one’s parents. So it turns out, this is a creative little kid who made his costume out of random pieces of clothes, jewelry, hair accessories, and his older sister’s makeup. His teenager brother (every good story almost always has a mean big brother) told him he looked like a _____, and that, apparently sounded good enough to him. Needless to say, the parents appreciated knowing they had some re-teaching to do, but I sure enjoyed the story about Spooky Spaghetti. I sort of hope that little guy, wherever his excellent education from Endeavor and the mean streets around Klahanie launches him, gets a chance to tell that story when he is in polite company.

Events such as Spooky Spaghetti and Newcastle Elementary’s Costume Carnival form the little small moments that we stitch together into a memory of childhood and adolescence. These events take hours of preparation, aggravation, and laughter, and they form the threads that bind a community together. As a child, I always loved the classroom Halloween or Harvest parties you got to have at school, and it was so much fun to engage in some less-structured time to enjoy your friends and their moms and dads, to see your teacher in a superhero or giant insect costume, and to form those memories.

PTSA’s role in helping teachers create these types of experiences is immeasurable. All of the classrooms in schools are little mini-communities who depend on the many events that teach us academics along with soft skills like sharing, waiting your turn, celebrating, and when and how to be silly in public.

A colleague at Maywood just told me about the fall chili lunch that PTSA parents organize for the staff, and she said on her birthday a couple of parents brought her a cupcake to show appreciation and care. Why is this so important? Well, for one thing, she remembers it - it’s special and makes you feel that life isn’t just a long series of frustrating challenges you’re in a hurry to finish while people are telling you it’s not enough. Someone taking the time to celebrate you, in these little ways, forms memories that grow joy. I firmly believe that finding joy is essential to a good school experience. It isn’t the only thing, of course, and I don’t mean to suggest there aren’t serious things like school finance and best practices for ELL students. Those will always take up a lot of Superintendent Ron Thiele’s and all his staff’s busy brains. And I acknowledge that it takes up a lot of all the PTSA’s as well, as they show by helping schools acquire materials for book rooms and money to give out as classroom grants, as the Skyline High School PTSA does.

I simply wanted to shine a light on the importance of the PTSA celebrations - they enhance the community in ways I don’t know how one would measure, and frankly, trying to measure it might take the fun out, so let’s just forget that I mentioned it. Just keep helping kids and staff enjoy their time together with events like Spooky Spaghetti, a birthday cupcake, and the myriad ways PTSA’s help communities find joy amidst the business of school.
Cultural Bridges serves Issaquah School District families to increase parent engagement and lead to greater student success.

We provide navigation support, host parent/student events and publish quarterly magazines translated in six languages.
Father-Daughter Valentine Dance

Join us for our 14th annual favorite tradition enjoyed by hundreds of dads and daughters over the years. The event will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. (grades K-2) and 7 to 9 p.m. (grades 3-5) on February 9th at the Issaquah Community Center.

Dress casual or formal – just arrive ready to dance and make memories! Light refreshments are provided. The accompanying adult is welcome to bring more than one daughter for no extra cost.

If you have daughters in both age groups, choose either time frame. Photo packages are available. Pre-registration is encouraged. Cost is $26 per adult, and $22 per adult for residents. At the door, the cost is $40 per adult.

Register Soon: Summer Day Camps

Online registration for 2019 City of Issaquah summer camps begins at 8 a.m. on Saturday, March 2.

Go to issaquahwa.gov/daycamp for the latest and greatest information!

Sammamish Lunar New Year Celebration

Join us in celebrating the Year of the Pig, featuring the diversely talented international community of Sammamish and activities centered around Chinese culture and ceremonial traditions. Event highlights include a vibrant performance by the International Lion Dance Team, a martial arts demonstration, music, dance, visual arts and a variety of interactive booths for kids. This event is free, open to audiences of all ages and will offer translation.

A collaborative partnership between the City of Sammamish, Central Washington University, Greater Sammamish YMCA, Skyline High School, Sammamish Chinese School and the Seattle New Chinese Immigrants Center.

Get Outside & Enjoy Winter Fun in Washington!

Winter sport enthusiasts and families can spice up the cold months with a variety of snow activities sponsored by Washington State Parks’ Winter Recreation Program. Sledding is one of the most fun winter activities for children.

Where to Go Sledding?
The Winter Recreation Program manages Sno-Parks (cleared parking areas) in close proximity to groomed and backcountry trails. Hyak Sno-Park is one of them. This sledding hill is located off of 1-90 at exit 54, near Snoqualmie East. Note that the parking lot can fill up quickly, although it has 150 spaces. Arrive early to secure parking space. Dogs needs to remain in vehicles at all times so it is better not to bring them. Hyak is open daily from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

If you want to make sure if the hill is open, call (509) 656-2230.

Pass & Permit Information
There is no admission fee, but you need to have a Daily Snow-Park Permit and Daily or Annual Discover Pass; or a Seasonal Snow Park Permit plus Special Groomed Trails Permit sticker, without Discover Pass.

Sno-Park permits are available online from November 1 through April 30: https://fortress.wa.gov/parks/ecomm/prod/Store/SNO/SnoChoice.aspx.
Influence the Choice

Parents, you are the biggest influence in your teen’s life. Kids who say they learn a lot about the risks of drugs at home are significantly less likely to use drugs. That’s why it’s important to talk regularly with your teens. Approach your conversation with openness and empathy. Be clear that you do not want them to use drugs or alcohol, but that if they make a mistake that you want them to come to you first. Remind your teen of your support and be sure to listen to what he or she has to say.

We are very lucky in Issaquah to have the wonderful organization, Influence the Choice. Their mission is the promotion of mental, physical and social wellness for middle school through high school-aged youth in the greater Issaquah community. They accomplish this mission through networking community resources and facilitating strategic action planning aimed at changing community norms. Influence the Choice - Drug Prevention Alliance for Youth is a prevention alliance working for a healthy, thriving community. It is comprised of a minimum of twelve community sectors: parents, youth, schools, business owners, medical professionals, government, media, faith-based organizations, organizations serving youth, civic or volunteer organizations and law enforcement, all working together to build a drug-free community.

You can learn more at influencethechoice.org and like them on Facebook and Instagram to get the latest information on upcoming events and facts.

And if you are interested in getting even more involved by joining Influence The Choice, contact andie@influencethechoice.org or katie@influencethechoice.org for more information.

Issaquah Community Services

Neighbors Helping Neighbors
for Over 45 Years in the Issaquah School District

Issaquah Community Service (ICS) provides emergency financial assistance that helps families avert crisis and recover from an unexpected financial setback. With financial assistance for expenses like rent, utilities, transportation for work, and in some cases medical or dental expenses, ICS clients can continue working toward a brighter future for themselves and their families.

In 1973, residents and businesses, concerned for the welfare of community neighbors who needed a bit of financial help to get them through a difficult situation, joined forces to establish Issaquah Community Services. ICS is a non-profit that operates with a 100% volunteer staff and our operating costs of just 2.5% are covered through grants from generous community partners. That means 100% of the donations received go directly to families in need. ICS conducts just one fundraiser all year, Merry Christmas Issaquah & Sammamish, but needs and appreciates financial donations all year. If you or someone you know could use our services and resides in the Issaquah School District, ICS is here to help. For information about ICS, including office location and hours, please visit www.issaquahcommunityservices.org.

Safe Crossing Foundation

Kids feel so isolated when they experience death in their family. They feel that nobody else understands. Safe Crossing Foundation is dedicated to helping grieving children who have lost a parent, a sibling or other loved one heal and thrive. They offer wonderful programs for children. For more information visit their website: http://safecrossingsfoundation.org.
As a parent, you are understandably focused on your children’s present needs, but preparing for the future is equally important. Specifically, it is critical to: (1) plan for who would care for your children and finances if you (or both parents) become incapacitated or even die and (2) give those plans legal effect through appropriate estate planning documents. While these concerns apply to all parents, the issues can be especially fraught with complication and uncertainty for international families.

Make a Plan

What would happen if you (and your spouse) became temporarily incapacitated: who would take care of your children? Who would make decisions about your medical care? How would bills be paid if you were unable to pay them? A legal document called a Power of Attorney allows you to answer these questions ahead of time. A Power of Attorney allows you to delegate your right to manage, invest, and spend assets owned in your individual name, or in the joint names of you and your spouse, to someone else, called your “Attorney in Fact.” The same document can empower the Attorney in Fact to make health care decisions for you while you are incapacitated. The effectiveness of a Power of Attorney generally ends upon your death.

In the worst-case scenario (death) consider again who would care for your children and how the money you leave behind would be managed. While you might think of these as issues for family members, it is ultimately a court that would decide. A legal document called a Will allows you to express your intent regarding the distribution of your assets after death. For minor children, the surviving biological or adoptive parent usually automatically becomes the children’s guardian, but if both parents die simultaneously (e.g., in a common accident), the guardian of the children also can be established in the Will. (Technically, your choice of a guardian in your Will is just a recommendation to the court. However, state laws give high priority to your recommendation.) If you die without a Will, the court will make an independent judgment about who would be the best person to take care of your kids. When naming a guardian, you should identify relatives or close friends who you would choose and discuss your desire with those people. It is important to consider their obligations and values to ensure they could take good care of your children. Also, make sure that these people know that you have created a Will and/or Power of Attorney and where the documents are located.

Citizenship Issues

For some families, the possibility that a deportation could separate parents from children is a terrifying concern. In such cases, it is best to consult an immigration attorney who may help you draft guardianship documents if a parent is forced to leave the United States.

Finding Legal Assistance

Ask friends or colleagues for referrals to local estate-planning attorneys. If you are employed, some companies may assist you with low-cost services estate planning available to employees. Ask your human resources representative if your employer has an estate planning benefit. If hiring an attorney is financially impossible or burdensome, see the resource below for assistance.

A Caution About Do-it-Yourself Forms

If possible, the best course of action when creating documents includes consulting an attorney. If English is not your native language, the assistance of an attorney can be especially important to ensure that any documents that are created express your exact wishes should you become unable to care for your children and finances.

Resources

Washington’s Northwest Justice Project maintains a website called Washington LawHelp that provides civil legal resources. Washington LawHelp is sponsored by the Washington Courts and other organizations; the website may be able to direct you to low or free legal services for low-income families. Their website, washingtonlawhelp.org, is maintained in English, Spanish, and other languages.
Reading with Rover

Reading with Rover is a community-based literacy program working with schools and libraries throughout the greater Seattle. They have a therapy dog program that help children with reading difficulties. For many kids it is very hard to read aloud to adults. But when a dog is the one who is listening, it feels easier!

The dogs involved in the Reading with Rover program help turn the reading environment into a non-threatening place where children can read for the fun of it. There is no risk of being embarrassed when the student mispronounces a word, reads at a slow speed or does not comprehend the exact meaning of sentences.

It is proven that the presence of a dog lowers people’s blood pressure, and the emotional connection that people feel with dogs can be so strong, that the companionship makes the kids feel totally comfortable and safe.

Where you can go to meet a Reading with Rover dog?
At the Renton Library, every second Tuesday of the month: January 8th, February 12th, and March 12th from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. This is an event for kids ages 4 and up, and all children 6 and younger must be accompanied by an adult.

Special Needs Children...
By RINKU JAIN
Para Professional at Pine Lake, LRCII

What do we mean by special needs? Don’t we all have special needs? Physically, emotionally, socially, academically? Yes, we are special and unique. “Flowers of a same garden but with different fragrances”. But today, I am talking about children who are really special. They may need extra support from their parents, teachers and the community. These children perceive things differently. They often see, hear, feel and experience what others miss. These special children have special parents too. Parents who have hearts filled with patience, love and care. Although this doesn’t mean that they don’t still need support from their community.

Persons with special needs may need lifetime guidance and support while dealing with everyday issues such as housing, employment, social involvement, and finances. It takes unimaginable strength to continually endure, persist and overcome. People with disabilities aren’t weak; they are the strongest human beings you will ever meet.

I work in a LRC11 class at Pine Lake Middle School, and I learn from all the children how to be calm and patient, to be more creative, and to stay happy. I also volunteer my time at Club Inclusive of Issaquah Highlands. I invite you to join us, and support this great group. Join us and bring your children. Have fun with our members; show them that they are not only accepted, but also included. Meet their parents, make connections, leave inspired.

Every second Thursday of the month, our club gets together at Blakely Hall (2550 NE Park Dr, Issaquah, WA) from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Check our Facebook page: Club Inclusive.
We cannot deny that our society is suffering from high consumption of sugar. There is no celebration where sugar doesn’t show up as a special guest!

Moderate amounts of sugar may provide energy to growing children and adolescents but in excess, sugar raises cholesterol, triglycerides, blood pressure and causes damage to the pancreas. Sugar may curb hunger temporarily due to its rapid contribution of energy, but in the long run sugar can trigger various diseases, such as hyperactivity, anxiety and depression.

The World Health Organization recommends that the consumption of sugar in children and adolescents should not contribute more than 10% of daily calories. This equals a maximum of six teaspoons a day. In adults, the maximum consumption should be no more than eight teaspoons per day. Keep in mind that a single 12-ounce can of soda contains more than 9 teaspoons!

**Five Ways to Help Reduce Sugar Consumption**

1. **Do Not Prohibit**
The desire to take sugar away completely will only make our children want it more. Being too strict can result in them wanting more, or even hiding their consumption from us.

2. **Inform Yourself**
Reading food labels is extremely important, there you will see the ingredients, and the amounts of each ingredient, as well as the amount of sugar. This information is not always easy to see, be sure to read serving sizes to understand the amount of sugar in the package.

3. **Finding Better Alternatives**
Look inside your cupboards and find the foods with the highest content of added sugar. Whether this is cereals, sweets, sweetened drinks and/or processed foods, can you find something similar but with a lower sugar content?

4. **Dose**
With patterns of behavior, whether it is eating a sweet cereal or drinking a sweetened beverage in the morning, or eating sweets every day as a dessert, try to reduce consumption step by step. Substitute refined foods for natural foods wherever possible and find a time of day to eat just a small sweet treat.

5. **Do Not Add More Sugar**
For example, a fruit smoothie made with orange juice or bananas doesn’t need more sugar because the fruits contain natural sugars. A habit of adding sugar only increases sugar cravings, since the taste for sweets grows.

**How to Read Food Labels**

- Start by reading the size of the portion and the total in the package. For example, a package might contain a portion or might contain three and with this the amount of sugar and calories is greater.

- The first three ingredients listed are those that are found in greater quantity in the product. For example, if a bread is marked “whole grain bread” or “with whole grains,” those ingredients should be first, before the refined wheat flour, otherwise it is not integral.

- See that the ingredient list is short. The more ingredients contained, the more processed the food will be. Foods with only one ingredient are not required to list ingredients.

Sugar is necessary, we should not remove it from our diet completely. It provides energy, good mental health and helps to metabolize fats, but we must find balance in our consumption. The best way to consume sugar is from natural sources, such as fruits, vegetables, dairy products, etc. in moderation, and as long as they are in their natural state and not in sweets, processed foods and/or sweetened drinks.
Building Community

By DARPA MARWAH

We moved from Delhi to California in 2001, and after moving around we started looking to buy a home in Issaquah in 2006. Luckily we came very early one morning to see a house in Issaquah Highlands. The serenity, birds chirping, the mountains and all this natural beauty here just made us buy the first house we got to see. That day, we fell in love with this community!

A couple of years later, when my son was born, I understood how important it was to volunteer my time to build a community where we could celebrate our culture. And when in 2015 the Indian Cultural Club (ICC) was founded, I was very excited. I have been part of this group since it’s beginning. ICC’s motto is to keep the Indian cultural heritage alive with celebrations & togetherness, thus promoting the uniqueness and diversity of Indian culture in the community.

We welcome new families and thanks to the support of Highlands Council at Blakely Hall, the events are free.

Indian Cultural Club Events
At Blakely Hall:
2550 NE Park Drive, Issaquah, WA 98029

January: Meet & Greet
February: Folk Dance Workshop
March: Antakshri Game
April: Art Workshop
June: Bollywood Workout
July: Seniors Get Together
October: Diwali

*For more information, please check our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/IndiaCulturalClubICC.

A Passion for Dance

By OJASVI SINHA BALAJI

Being here, far away from our country of origin, makes it more important to teach our culture to our children, so that they are aware of their roots.

I moved to Seattle in 1998 to work at Microsoft, and in 2003 I fell in love with Issaquah, so my husband and I settled here to expand our family.

I always had a passion for dancing, so in 2011 I started a dance school that offers Bollywood dance style classes that incorporate Indian classical, contemporary, folk and hip hop style.

Through the dances, we present many stories and legends from India. This is a fun way to remain connected to where we come from or to learn about another culture. Many of our students don’t have any Indian heritage.

Parents enroll their kids in our classes to be in touch with our culture but also to gain confidence, increase self-esteem, improve their social skills, and enhance their mind-body coordination.

Adults are also encouraged to dance, as it improves their mood and is also helpful in preventing dementia. We offer classes for ladies and for couples.

If you are interested in seeing one of our performances, or would like to participate in one of our classes from basic to a higher level, please visit our Facebook page: Ojasvi Dance School. We offer classes in Issaquah, Bellevue and Bothell, and we have scholarships available for families.
Holi Celebration

The traditional Hindu celebration of good over evil and the thwarting of a demon king has led to a modern and very colorful festivity adopted in many places around the world. Communities these days celebrate Holi with the passing of the winter, the beginning of the spring and all the new colors it brings to nature.

Issaquah is not an exception. Thanks to the leadership of Menka Soni, in collaboration with the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission Folk & Traditional Arts in the Parks Program, Lake Sammamish State Park comes alive in the month of March with the annual charity event “Holi: Festival of Color.” This group has been organizing the event for eight years now. This event is open for all the community and the idea is to celebrate arts and culture together with food, and all kinds of fun.

Menka, along with her husband Ashish and two daughters moved here from Michigan in 2008 when Ashish got a job with Microsoft and Menka started working for Starbucks corporate office in the IT department. They fell in love with Seattle and made it their home.

Menka is well known in the community as a leader. She founded the non-profit organization Ravishing Women to encourage, inspire, appreciate and empower women. Menka also founded Redmond Fashion Week in collaboration with the City of Redmond to bring fashion, media and technology together, while celebrating diversity.

To continue observing your own traditions or to understand the ones that your neighbors celebrate, don't miss the Holi celebration this year. Powders of different colors will form bright clouds in the air and the community will come together by playing and singing songs in the spirit of this holiday while welcoming a new season.

Details about this event will be posted on the Lake Sammamish State Park website and on the Facebook page: EastsideHoli.
Fueling success for every student at every school.

The Issaquah Schools Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that raises money to support students in the Issaquah School District in Issaquah, Sammamish, Bellevue, Newcastle and Renton. We work together with community members, donors, educators, volunteers and PTSAs to fund programs that help students find their “spark”—a love of learning that keeps them excited about school and connected to their education.

Foundation-funded programs include:

Art Education
After-School Homework Help
Backpacks & School Supplies
Coding Clubs
Cultural Bridges
Food Aid
One-to-One Mentoring
Orchestra, Choir & Band
Robotics Clubs
STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) Clubs