



DaVinci Connection

DATES TO REMEMBER

Communications Committee

Tuesday, March 6
5:00 pm
Room 302

Middle School Party

Thursday, March 8

No School

Friday, March 9-Monday,
March 12

School Resumes

Tuesday, March 13

All-School Celebration/ Chili Feed

Thursday, March 15
5:30 pm
Gym

Fundraising Committee

Monday, March 19
4:30 pm
Room 302

Compensation Committee

Monday, March 19
6:00 pm
Room 302

Finance Committee

Monday, March 19
7:30 pm
Room 302

Find more upcoming events on the DaVinci Academy home page, or go to the "Calendar" page for future important dates.

<http://davincicharterschool.org/Calendar.aspx>

13001 Central Ave NE
Blaine, MN 55434
763-754-6577

www.davincicharterschool.org

TWO SCHOOL BOARD POSITIONS STILL OPEN

(by Terri Sheehan, School Board Chair)

DaVinci Academy currently has two open school board positions. One of these positions must be filled by a DaVinci Academy teacher, and the other "at large" position can be filled by a teacher, parent, or community member. The teacher position has a term of two years, while the "at large" position has a term of one year.

Both of these positions will be filled by appointment of the board, rather than via election. More information on both positions will be sent out within the next week. On behalf of the entire DaVinci Academy School Board, I encourage you to give board membership serious consideration. Our school is growing and developing, and with that growth and development comes a critical need for greater participation by members of the DaVinci Academy community.

The two open positions carry terms of one and two years, rather than the usual three-year term. This is a great opportunity for you to make a shorter term commitment and gain a better understanding of what it's like to help direct the future of our great school. Please look for more details and consider getting involved.

DAVINCI ACADEMY BOARD WELCOMES TWO NEW MEMBERS

(by Doug Dinndorf, Communications Committee Chair)

As announced in the February 14 newsletter, the DaVinci Academy School Board is pleased that two new members have made a commitment to help lead our school. They help fill a critical need for strong parent and teacher involvement on the school board.

In January, **Kamille Peterson**, a DaVinci Academy parent with five

students attending our school, submitted her application and was appointed to fill one of the open parent positions on the board. Kami comes to us with experience in technologies, project management, and operations management. Her skills will serve the board and DaVinci Academy well.

At our February 27 board meeting, **Therese O'Meara** formally joined the board. Therese came to DaVinci Academy in January as a Special Education teacher, and was elected to the board in our recent election. She has a background in Special Education Emotional/Behavioral Disorders and has worked extensively with individuals with autism disorders in both school and residential settings. We welcome Therese as our new teacher representative on the board.

Review more details on Kamille's and Therese's [biographies on our website](#).

OLD CHICAGO FUNDRAISER

Starting on March 5th, the DaVinci Academy School Development Committee is selling Old Chicago Pizza Palz certificates. This is an awesome deal for you and our school! The certificate costs you \$11, but is good for one large pizza for a maximum value of \$22. DaVinci Academy will get \$5 per card sold, with all proceeds going directly to the school. We have 100 certificates, so we expect to make \$500 to purchase new batteries for some DaVinci Academy laptops.

There is a great Old Chicago located at Northtown Drive. Please stop by the office if you would like to support our effort.

2012-13 LOTTERY

(by Cory Klabunde, School Director)

DaVinci Academy is expanding by another grade next year, and our attendance should be approximately 450 students. On February 15, we held our annual lottery for the 2012-13 school year.



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On that date, we had 291 applications to attend our school.

Next year's kindergarten classes are already full with 18 students in each section! The remaining families have been contacted either by phone or email to let them know where they are on the waiting list. Thank you to Marcia Bouwman, Melissa Kaiser, and Terry Moffatt for managing the lottery process. It went very smoothly due to all of the pre-planning to minimize the time to draw the names for each grade.

I want to assure everyone that DaVinci Academy **will have 9th grade next year**; the curriculum for Math, Science, English, and Social Studies is already planned, aligned, and mapped for the whole year. We are also on track with organizing the high school curriculum for the remaining high school grades.

If you are interested in hearing how the high school planning is coming along, please attend our next "Town Meeting" at the end of March. Look for more details in an upcoming newsletter article from Patrick Hobot. Also check out the [high school planning web site](#).

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

(by Caroline Carritt, Special Education Director)

DaVinci Academy's first Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) meeting will be held on Thursday, March 22, at the school. The meeting will begin with dinner at 6:00 pm, and last until 8:00 pm. Childcare will be provided.

DaVinci Academy invites staff, parents, and community members to participate in SEAC. SEAC provides input on special education issues in an advisory capacity to the school administration.

SEAC provides an opportunity for participants to:

- Support the school professionals;
- Help other families and children;
- Learn information and skills that help to work more effectively with our school and its Special Education Department;
- Meet others with similar goals;
- Become more knowledgeable about special

education;

- Support, advocate, and advise on special education matters; and
- Help our school work more effectively with families and improve outcomes.

If you have any questions, contact [Mary Walker](#) or [Caroline Carritt](#).

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE UPDATE

(by Ravi Raghavapudi, Technology Committee Chair)

Some very exciting things are going on with technology at DaVinci Academy, and you will be surprised by how much technology access students and staff have. For example, did you know?

- We have a computer-to-student ratio of 1:1 for grades 5-8 and nearly 1:3.5 for K-4th grade;
- We have 20 Apple computers and 11 iPads in the school;
- All classrooms are equipped with StarBoards / SMARTboards and projectors;
- And Cory Klabunde, School Director, can fix anything from a leaking faucet, to a malfunctioning projector, to the wi-fi system for the entire school!

As with any technology, things become outdated and obsolete. We are currently working on updating our 3-year technology plan that outlines current and future technology needs of DaVinci Academy. This includes anticipating needs for our high school expansion, changes in technology, obsolescence of devices, a needs matrix of students in various grades, newly released learning software, and changing technology needs of our staff.

I want to put out a sincere request for volunteers; we need your help! Whether you are a technology whiz or someone who cares about DaVinci Academy and has enthusiasm for all things technology, please help out. We are currently undertaking some very interesting planning work for future technology needs.

As DaVinci Academy matures and grows, we want to continue to lead and stay ahead of the technology curve. We want to provide the best possible learning opportunities for our students and the best possible teaching options for our staff. The Technology

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Committee typically meets on the first Monday of the month at 6:00 pm at the school.

One last word – please don't forget Stephanie Severson's recent plea for used iPhones. If you have an unused iPhone at home, donate your older iPhone to DaVinci Academy. We'll delete all your information and use it like an iPod touch! We can load many of the same iPad educational apps onto the iPod touch. Students love practicing their math facts with technology, and although disguised as games, they really are educational tools!

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Become Part of an Exclusive, Adored Group (by Lee Swearingen, Volunteer Coordinator)

Do you want to volunteer at DaVinci Academy on a regularly scheduled basis? Are you available during the school day on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday for a few hours a week, a month, or more? Are you open to trying many different kinds of projects? Join the DaVinci Academy Office Volunteer Pool!

The Office Volunteer Pool is a group that comes in on a pre-arranged schedule to work on various, wide-ranging projects. We hope to schedule three volunteers each week for at least 2-3 hours a week. Projects may include copying, laminating, organizing, or any other project that our staff and teachers need help with. This is a great way to become involved in our school community, get in some volunteer hours, or simply spy on your child! Okay, no spying allowed, but our staff really would be ecstatic to have your assistance.

If you are interested in being part of the Office Volunteer Pool, contact [Lee Swearingen](#) so she can put you on the calendar. You can indicate your availability as specific days and times (i.e. March 7 from 9-11 am, March 16 from 2-4 pm, etc.) or as a rotating schedule (i.e. the first Wednesday of every month from 12-4 pm, every other Thursday from 9 am-12 pm).

Background Screenings ~ To ensure the safety of our students and staff, every volunteer is required to have a current background check on file with DaVinci Academy. If you do not have a background check on file, please obtain the form from the front office, or visit <http://www.davincicharterschool.org/CMSUploads/Background%20check%20form.pdf> to print the form from our web site.

Volunteers are asked to pay a \$10 processing fee for each background check submitted. Checks should be made payable to DaVinci Academy. Return all forms and payments to the front office (Attn: Volunteer Coordinator). Please *do not let the processing fee keep you from volunteering at school. If you cannot afford the fee at this time, contact Mr. Klabunde to make alternative arrangements.*

Check out the [volunteer opportunities web page](#) for more information on volunteering at DaVinci Academy, or contact [Lee Swearingen](#) directly. Also, each time you volunteer, please stop at the front desk, sign in, and take a volunteer badge. You will also need to stop back at the front desk to sign out. This not only allows us to accurately gather the number of hours our volunteers put in, but also provides us with the names of everyone who is in the building at all times.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

DaVinci Academy 4th grader Sierra S. will be a cupcake dancer in the upcoming musical, "Pinkalicious," at Lyric Arts Theater in Anoka. This musical is patterned after the popular children's book by the same title. Performances begin Saturday, April 21 and go through Friday, May 4. Visit www.LyricArts.org for more information.

BASKETBALL TEAM HOSTS MARCH MADNESS EVENT

(by Terry Moffatt, Academic Director)

On Saturday, March 3, the DaVinci Academy boy's basketball team (pictured on page 4) hosted a mini-tournament to celebrate the end of the season. This was the first time DaVinci Academy hosted a sporting event, and it was extremely successful! Three teams were involved in the event – DaVinci Academy, Coon Rapids, and Risen Christ. There was a three-point contest as well as a DaVinci Academy staff vs. team game. The event was very well orchestrated, and a huge thank you goes out to everyone involved. Thanks also to all who came out to support the boys basketball team; they have had a great season! In fact, the team is heading to the State Tournament in Buffalo, MN, on March 10-11. Good luck, DaVinci Academy!



PTO PLACE

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 8 – Tentative Middle School Party (for meeting Read-a-Thon goal)
 March 15 – All-School Celebration/Chili Feed and Awards Night
 April 1-30 – Box Top Collection Contest
 April 12 – Spaghetti Dinner/Silent Auction

READ-A-THON REMINDER

If you haven't turned in your child's reading minutes or pledges from the Read-a-Thon, please do so by this Friday, March 9, to ensure enough time to count everything before the March 15 celebration.

GET TO KNOW YOUR PTO

This month's Officer of the Month is our Parent Liaison position, which is filled by Mike and Julie Fulton. Here's a little bit about them:

Tell us briefly about yourselves – Julie has a school counseling license and is presently working as an in-home skills therapist. Mike has a degree in auto cad and is currently in college gaining a degree in solid works. He has worked designing homes, irrigation design, and irrigation sales and installation. Mike and Julie have three children: Janelle (5th grade), Henry (kindergarten), and Mikey (2 years).

What do you love about DaVinci Academy? – We especially love the focus on science and the arts and the kindergarten-8th grade environment. We love the opportunity for older kids to work with the younger children, and the younger children having such wonderful mentors.

What do you love about the DaVinci Academy PTO? – We love the chance to serve the kids and parents in our school.

What do you enjoy outside of DaVinci Academy? – Outside DaVinci Academy, we attend Eagle Brook Church where we volunteer in the elementary ministry. We are very close with our extended family and are blessed to have all of them living close by.

WE NEED YOU

We still need extra hands with the April silent auction and spaghetti dinner. To volunteer, please contact [Lisa King](#)

PTO MEETING RECAP

We had two wonderful guest speakers at our February 28 PTO Meeting! Our first guest, Karen Gunter, talked about ways to get free or very reduced groceries by clipping coupons. It was eye-opening how much money one household can save! Karen's web site is www.creativecouponing.com, and you can also find her on Facebook.

Our second guest speaker was Stephanie Severson; she talked about the technology the kids at DaVinci Academy are using. We even got a chance to explore the iPads, and Stephanie explained what some of the teachers have used them for and the hopes for the future. Technology is the way of our future, so it's great that our school is keeping up with it!

We also talked about the updated numbers for the Read-a-Thon and discussed the upcoming silent auction. We brainstormed some ideas of items to be purchased with funds raised for DaVinci Academy through the PTO. After the inspiring talk by Mrs. Severson, we love the idea of purchasing more iPads and software for the StarBoards. There is also a need for outdoor recess items, such as balls, hula hoops, and jump ropes, as well as scholarship money to be used for spring intersession.

Please plan on attending the next PTO meeting in March to help make these decisions. Your input is vital to a strong PTO. After all, it's your money!



Davinci Academy Basketball Team - see story on page 3.