



# DaVinci Connection

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

### **School Building Closed**

April 4 - April 9

### **School Resumes**

Tuesday, April 10

### **Silent Auction/Spaghetti Dinner**

Thursday, April 12  
6:00 pm

### **Facilities Committee**

Monday, April 16  
4:30 pm  
Room 302

### **Policies and Procedures Committee**

Monday, April 16  
6:00 pm  
Room 305

### **Technology Committee**

Monday, April 16  
6:00 pm  
Room 302

### **Communications Committee**

Tuesday, April 17  
6:00 pm  
Room 302

### **Art Fair**

Thursday, May 3  
4:30 pm

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](http://www.davincicharterschool.org)

## **REVISED HOURS FOR 2012 - 2013 SCHOOL YEAR**

*(By Cory Klabunde, School Director)*

At its March 26 meeting, the DaVinci Academy School Board approved a change in the school day hours for the 2012 – 2013 school year. Beginning next August, our school day will begin and end an hour earlier, running from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. rather than the current 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. A number of factors impacted our decision to make this change.

In August, we will begin our fifth year of operations, including expansion to our first year of high school. In recent years, we have expanded our after-school offerings, and a large number of our students are participating in them. That trend will continue. We have also increased the academic rigor of our curriculum, particularly in our middle school grades. That will also carry over into our high school. This translates to an increased workload for students outside the classroom, i.e. homework.

Starting the school day one hour earlier will provide our students and families with greater flexibility for participation in after school activities, be they at the school or in various programs offered in our community. It also allows for completion of homework in a timeframe that should still provide ample family time.

We appreciate that this change may impact individual family schedules, and that was taken into consideration. However, we believe this change, which is supported by our school board, the administration and the

overwhelming majority of our teachers and staff, will be very beneficial to our students. Of course, our bus schedules will be adjusted accordingly and you may want to consider that option if you are not already using it.

You will be receiving our 2012 Annual Family Survey tomorrow, April 3. It will include a question regarding the revised school day hours, with an opportunity to note your comments, concerns or suggestions. I encourage all of you to complete the entire survey, since your responses are carefully considered by the DaVinci Academy board and administration in charting the future of our school.

## **ART CORNER**

*(by Holly Fischer, Instructional Coordinator)*

During the middle school elective period Ms. Larson has been offering an Art Cards class. Artist Trading Cards are miniature works of art that are created by incorporating painting, tissue paper, string, stencils, fabric and many other elements. Students swapped cards after they were created and now have collections of friends' work as well as their own. Many of the more distinct cards were scanned and will be made into beautiful greeting cards. You can look for them in the silent auction at the PTO sponsored spaghetti dinner.



Casey F. and Nathan P.



## IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN

*(By Doug Dinndorf,  
Communications Committee Chair)*

Tomorrow, April 3, all DaVinci Academy families will receive our 2012 Annual Family Survey. Please look for this year's survey and be sure to complete it by the April 24 deadline. Your completion of this survey is important to your school board and our administration because it provides valuable input from you on what you believe is working well at our school as well as issues that warrant additional consideration or attention. Your school board, administration, teachers and staff are working very hard at making DaVinci Academy a superior school, both in curriculum and the overall learning experience for our students. We are making every effort to be true to our mission and vision statements, and we need your feedback on the job we are doing.

## DAVINCI ACADEMY FILLS TWO OPEN BOARD POSITIONS

*(By Terri Sheehan, Board Chair)*

At its March 26 meeting the DaVinci Academy School Board appointed two new members to fill the open teacher and at-large positions on the board.

The teacher position was filled by a familiar face, Mr. David Cauley, one of our fourth grade teachers and a previous member on the board. David has been with DaVinci Academy since its opening four years ago and served on the school board until his term expired last February. David has stepped up, once again, to serve on our board, and we welcome both his experience and his commitment to serving our school. You can read more about David in the Board of Directors section of our website.

The at-large position on the board was filled, after much discussion, by Mr. Lynn Bakken. I say "much discussion" because we had **five** DaVinci parents apply for the position, all of whom came with great qualifications. The selection process was difficult, but Mr. Bakken was our choice. My sincere thanks go to everyone who applied for this position, and I

am optimistic we will see these people participate in the various board committees that are so essential to the success of our school.

Mr. Lynn Bakken is a DaVinci Academy parent, with a son in our Kindergarten. Lynn comes to the board with over 27 years of leadership and management experience. He has an extensive background in sales management, operations management, production and cost analysis, budgeting and forecasting and strategic planning. Lynn will be serving on our Finance Committee. In the next few days, look for more information on Lynn on the Board of Directors section of our website.

Please join me in congratulating and welcoming both David and Lynn to our board.

## THE DAVINCI ACADEMY COMPENSATION COMMITTEE—WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES

*(By Dale Lieb, Compensation Committee Chair)*

I think all of us appreciate that the success of any school is highly dependent on the quality of its people – administrators, teachers and staff. At DaVinci Academy, we are fortunate to have a very talented, dedicated group of people who are constantly focused on delivering a quality learning experience for our children. Attracting and retaining these education professionals is a challenge we take very seriously, and that is where the work of our Compensation Committee is so important.

Most of you have probably not heard of our committee. It's that way because the majority of our work is done behind the scenes, where salary ranges, bonus programs and employee benefits are closely scrutinized. A lot of effort has gone into comparing our overall compensation program with those of other charter schools. It is critical that we are able to offer an attractive, competitive compensation package in order to attract and retain quality educators.

**Cont. on page 3**





### **Cont. from page 2**

Over the past school year, we have been focusing on employee benefits, improving staff bonus programs and paid time-off policies. We added long term disability options for the entire staff, which provides coverage in the event of any disability extending beyond thirty days.

We also developed better methods to communicate to each staff member their personal total annual potential and earned compensation, including all earnings and employee benefit values, i.e. health, dental and life insurance, pension benefits, sick leave, paid time off, vacation, etc. received from the school. The Finance Committee assisted in our effort to assure that each staff member fully understands their personal potential and earned compensation value.

One of our final projects for the balance of the school year involves making compensation improvement recommendations to the Finance Committee for the 2012 - 13 school year. It is important that we have budgeted funds available next year to accomplish the recommendations.

Currently, we are also designing and considering implementation of the state-funded Q Comp bonus program for our school. Q Comp is an incentive program that provides additional funding to bring together teacher career advancement, professional development and added compensation linked to academic achievement. It promotes teaching-staff interaction focused on the goal of increasing student achievement. Bottom line, Q Comp provides additional funding to meet academic goals we establish, through enhanced teaching, resulting in improved student learning.

All of these efforts are aimed at enhancing staff job satisfaction and staff morale while achieving our key goal of attracting and retaining our great DaVinci Academy educators, our most treasured asset, after our students.

### **VOLUNTEER CORNER**

**(by Lee Swearingen, Volunteer Coordinator)**

Volunteer Appreciation Week is coming up! In recognition of all of our 230+ volunteers, we will have several gift drawings during the week of April 16 to April 20. Make sure you are signing in and out each time you volunteer at school so we know all the great things being done.

**Never doubt** that a small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

--Margaret Mead

### **UPCOMING MUSIC CONCERTS**

Please mark your calendars for the upcoming performances.

Tuesday, May 8: Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade at 6:00 pm.

Thursday, May 10: 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade at 6:30 pm.

Tuesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>: Orchestra, Bands and Choirs at 6:30 pm.

We are in need of pianists to accompany. Please contact [Mrs. Hunter](#).





# PTO PLACE

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

April 12 – Spaghetti Dinner/Silent Auction 6:00 p.m.

April 24 – PTO Meeting 6:30 p.m.

April 1-30 – BoxTop Collection Contest

## **SILENT AUCTION / SPAGHETTI DINNER** **APRIL 12<sup>TH</sup>**

Tickets are currently on sale and will continue until the date of the dinner. Pre-Dinner Purchase Cost: Adults \$6, Students/Children \$3. (Max \$25 per family) Tickets may also be purchased at the door for an additional \$1 per ticket. You may send in money for your tickets to Marcia Bouwman at the front office if you would like to purchase tickets prior to the date of the event. Payment must be received before you will be issued tickets.

## **GUEST SPEAKER RECAP**

This month's guest speaker, Laura McDaniel, shared how to treat symptoms of chemical brain imbalances, for instance: ADHD, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, autism, anxiety, eating disorders, chemical dependencies, depression, oppositional defiant behavior and violence as well as memory issues and Alzheimer's (ages 2-100) with behavior modification and a regimen of good quality vitamins. Not all vitamins we give our kids are good for them! According to Wyndgate Health giving them no vitamins is better than giving them the gummy vites and chewables we see at most stores because they are packed full of things our body doesn't need or want. The key is finding QUALITY vitamins and foods to put into your body to make it perform properly!

## **BOXTOPS CONTEST**

PTO is holding a Spring BoxTops contest! There will be 3 top over-all winners and 1 winning class. Make sure your student's name and teacher's name are on the BoxTops forms. You can get more forms in the BoxTops bin near the front desk or download them here. So, collect those tops and ask the grandparents and neighbors, put out a collection box at work and send in your BoxTops! It's so easy to clip and send! Contest ends April 30!

## **WE NEED YOU!**

Help is needed for childcare at PTO meetings. Our childcare volunteers are so appreciated, they make it possible for many families to attend that otherwise would not. Please consider helping us out in this manner. Contact Dina if you're available.