



# DaVinci Connection

## DATES TO REMEMBER

High School "Town Meeting"  
Wednesday, November 16  
6:00 pm

December Lunch Menus  
Due Friday, November 18

No School  
Monday, November 21-  
Friday, November 25  
(School Office also closed)

School Resumes  
Monday, November 28

School Board Meeting  
Monday, November 28  
6:00 pm

Facility/Technology  
Committee Meeting  
Tuesday, November 29  
6:00 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](http://davincicharterschool.org/Calendar.aspx)

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

## JUST A LITTLE ADDS UP TO A LOT...

### How a Small Sacrifice Makes a BIG Difference

(by Shelly Hildrum)

Patricia Nelson is not a rich philanthropist. In fact, the last thing she would call herself is rich. But Nelson is making a big difference at DaVinci Academy. She is sacrificing a little and making a very generous donation to her grandchild's school. This thoughtful grandmother has decided to stop eating out for lunch twice a week. She figures that the money she saves by packing her lunch twice a week will eventually add up to \$2,000. Then she says that her employer, Wells Fargo, will match her donation dollar for dollar and she will donate \$4,000 to DaVinci Academy. A pretty significant donation coming from such a small sacrifice. "It's very simple," says Nelson. "Everyone should be aware of just how easy this is." This is something that Nelson has done before and plans to continue through the *Wells Fargo Community Support Campaign* and *United Way*. Why? She explains that her granddaughter, Zoe, loves the school. "DaVinci Academy provides such a wonderful learning environment for my granddaughter," states Nelson.

At DaVinci Academy, we know that our families want to give. Whether it is giving volunteer time, making frequent small donations, or a one-time large donation. That is why we have created a fundraising committee to start reaching out to the DaVinci Academy community. We are creating new and different ways for parents, grandparents, and local businesses to support our school. We are even planning our 1<sup>st</sup> annual DaVinci Academy Golf Tournament for next fall. DaVinci Academy is a registered non-profit 501(c)(3), and your donation is tax-deductible. Also, friends and family members can give in your child's name.

As a public charter school, we do not charge tuition. We are funded in a similar manner as all public schools with a per-pupil disbursement from the state; however, that funding does not cover all of our education costs. We are fiscally responsible and operate within our revenues, but in order to grow our school and maintain our academic goals, DaVinci Academy relies upon the support of individuals, foundations, and businesses to make up the shortfall.

Your donations are used to help us continue our arts and science focus and all of the things that make DaVinci Academy such a great place to learn. Please remember that every little bit can really add up. Many companies offer matching gift programs encouraging employees to contribute to charitable organizations. If your employer matches your donations, or if you'd like to find out if they do, please let us know. We are compiling this information to make it easier than ever to make a difference in your child's success at DaVinci Academy.

This holiday season, challenge yourself to make one small sacrifice and see what kind of difference you can make. At DaVinci Academy we appreciate all of your gifts and your time.

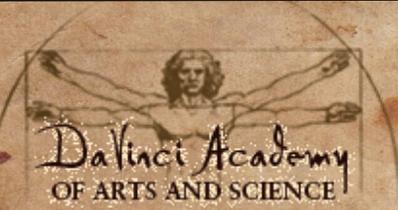
Contact School Director Cory Klabunde at [cklabunde@davincicharterschool.org](mailto:cklabunde@davincicharterschool.org) with information or questions regarding your employer's gift-matching program, if you would like to make a donation, or have any questions about donating to DaVinci Academy.

## GIVE TO THE MAX DAY - NOVEMBER 16



On Wednesday, November 16, DaVinci Academy will participate in **GiveMN's "Give to the Max Day,"** a statewide, all-day event that promotes donating to the non-profit organizations you love through a single web site. If you've ever considered a donation to your child's school, "Give to the Max Day" is an easy and effective way of doing so, and whether it is \$10, \$100 or \$1,000, your gift will make a difference. To make a donation to DaVinci Academy, go to <http://givemn.raz-oo.com/story/Davinci-Academy-Of-Arts-And-Science>.

The DaVinci Academy office  
will be closed  
Monday, November 21 -  
Friday, November 25



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## TEACHER TURNOVER AT DAVINCI ACADEMY

*(by Terry Moffatt, Academic Director)*

DaVinci Academy's greatest asset is our teachers, and we are fortunate to have a talented and caring group of educators. However, part of being a young school with a sizeable group of fairly new teachers is our susceptibility to turnover.

During the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of this school year, four of our teachers have left DaVinci Academy for varying reasons. This represents 9% of our teaching staff. To give you some perspective, last year we experienced 20% teacher turnover; and 28% the year before. Unfortunately, schools, like any other business, are subject to people leaving. The key challenge is to replace those teachers with quality educators, and we have always succeeded in doing so.

We currently have two open positions. We are looking to replace one of our Special Education teachers and our Spanish teacher. We are interviewing candidates for the Special Education position and expect to hire someone by November 30. We continue aggressive efforts to fill the Spanish teacher position.

DaVinci Academy is fortunate to have committed teachers who are flexible, dedicated to our students, and willing to step up and fill in when we experience a teacher leaving. I appreciate their commitment and thank them for all their hard work. Thanks also to our parents for their patience and understanding as we work through these changes.

## STUDENTS PRACTICE MATH SKILLS WITH IXL

*(by Terry Moffatt, Academic Director)*

IXL is an online math practice site. The skills are aligned with the Minnesota State Math Standards, and students must master each skill before progressing to the next. All of the students in grades 3-8 have an individual account and can access this account to practice at home. Right now, our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders have been using this site the most and have accumulated over 130 hours of practice. Pictured are the students with the highest number of hours accumulated and the highest number of skills mastered ( Andrew B., Ashley G., Rishi R., and Rahul B.). All of these students are in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. IXL is a great way for students to practice their math skills, and we highly recommend that parents encourage their children to use this site at home.



## HIGH SCHOOL COORDINATOR'S CORNER

*(by Patrick Hobot, High School Coordinator)*

Here's a brief update on the DaVinci Academy High School planning and progress. Rest assured that we will be moving forward with 9<sup>th</sup> grade next year as the core classes have all been aligned with the state standards and the curriculum maps are well into development. The course catalog for the entire high school experience is also in development and should be available by the end of the month. As we move forward, the discussions about the rigor of the curriculum and the programming to develop the whole-child continue at the administrative level and with the board of directors. It is clear to me that we are striving to honor the mission and vision of DaVinci Academy to provide an excellent foundation for success in higher learning while accentuating art and science. I also look forward to the ongoing input from the families and stakeholders of DaVinci Academy.

Speaking of stakeholder input, the next 'Town Meeting' is scheduled for Wednesday, November 16, at 6:00 pm in Room 302 at the school. Parents will be able to look at the overall schedule of courses and sequence planned for the high school experience and, if interested, the curriculum maps for 9<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts and 9<sup>th</sup> grade Geometry. Stakeholders who wish to peruse the working web site dedicated to the planning of DaVinci High School should send me an email, and I will send you a special link for access.

There is much work yet to be done, and it is important to us as a school to be receptive to the input of our families, so feel free to contact me at [phobot@davincicharterschool.org](mailto:phobot@davincicharterschool.org) to share your ideas, questions, and suggestions.

## VOLUNTEER SPOT

- Supervise lunch or recess on a regular basis
- Help lower locker shelves
- Read with kids

For information on signing up for these activities and more, check out the Volunteer Opportunities web page at <http://www.davincicharterschool.org/volunteer>.

Anytime you help during school hours, participate in committees, or attend PTO or board meetings, please remember to sign in via the kiosk at the front desk.

## THANKS VOLUNTEERS

In the past two weeks, 66 DaVinci Academy stakeholders have put in over 240 hours of volunteer time... and those are just the hours they actually recorded! A big thank you from the staff to everyone who helps make this a great place for our kids!



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## IPAD NEWS ~ IT'S NOT JUST FOR ANGRY BIRDS

*(by Stephanie Severson, Librarian & Technology Instructor)*

DaVinci Academy currently has nine iPads and uses all of them daily. It is easy to be amazed by the iPads and the entertainment apps that are more widely known; of course, there is "Angry Birds" and a new app called "Sprinkle." I could tell you that students are practicing their fine motor skills and angles -- but really, they are just having fun!

Learning apps are also used on a daily basis. First graders use [Splash Math](#), especially chosen for how well it correlates to Singapore Math concepts. Each student is able to sign in, and the app keeps track of his/her progress and then emails weekly reports to the registered email.

Third graders used the [World Fact Book](#) to learn about countries and complete their Geography projects. The World Fact Book provided all the needed information, as well as images of the flags and countries.

Kindergartners are counting, finding animals, and practicing their letters with the iPads. [Count the Animals](#) offers not only cute pictures, but also the ability to switch the language to either Spanish or French. Students have also enjoyed [Pocket Zoo](#), where they can navigate a map and choose animals to learn about. The really cool thing about this app is the link to live Web cams...even a dolphin Web cam from the Minnesota Zoo is featured!

The iPads are also used by the upper grades, and I will discuss some of those favorite apps in a future article. Did you know that you can gift your favorite app to DaVinci Academy? Simply select "gift" from the drop-down menu in the iTunes store. Send the gift app or iTunes gift card to [ipad@davincicharterschool.org](mailto:ipad@davincicharterschool.org).

## GIRL SCOUTS NEED CRAFT DONATIONS

*(by Emma Kneeland)*

DaVinci Academy's Girl Scout Troop 14473 will have a craft booth at Marketplace on Saturday, December 10. We will sell crafts that the girls have made, and the girls will use the money they earn to purchase Christmas dinner baskets for families in need at DaVinci Academy. We have received some donations but would love it if you have any "extras" that you can donate. We will offer Christmas-themed and non-Christmas gift items. We will also have some paper crafting, painting, etc. We will take anything that you are willing to donate...send items to the office. And please remember to visit us on December 10 at the Marketplace!

## 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE FAIR

*(by Julie Hartinger, Middle School Science Teacher)*

Happy Science Fair Season! The 2011 DaVinci Academy Middle School (6-8) Science Fair will be held on Wednesday, December 7. Students have already begun working on their projects, and we can't wait to see what they come up with! Projects will be set up by students during their first hour classes, and judging will take place throughout the school day. All students and parents are welcome to view the science fair projects in the gym after 4:00 pm.

This year, I would like to ask the education department at Bethel University to lend us some of their students to volunteer for judging. Not only will this allow for an unbiased judging process, it will also help us establish a connection with a very well known university. Do you have a contact with Bethel University that might be willing to help? Please let me know.

Also, if your HelpCounter volunteer profile indicates you want to help with the science fair, you will receive an email in the next two weeks regarding this opportunity. Need more information on HelpCounter? Check out the Volunteer Opportunities page on the school web site <http://www.davincicharterschool.org/volunteer>.

Students in grades 6-8 can also CHOOSE to compete in the Central Regional Science Fair in St. Cloud on Saturday, February 25, 2012. Those students in grades 7 and 8 who place in regionals can then go on to the MN State Science and Engineering Fair on Sunday, March 18-Tuesday, March 20, 2012 in Bloomington, MN. Please discuss with your child if this is something he/she would be interested in.

## CUB SCOUTS COLLECTING TOYS FOR DAVINCI KIDS

This year, Cub Scout Pack 180 is collecting toys and games for families in need at DaVinci Academy. As the economy has yet to rebound, many families need your help. Please bring new, unwrapped toys and educational games to school...there is a box near the office for collection. Remember, our families have mostly school-age kids, and as always, things are needed for older children as well. Some ideas for older kids are: electronics, gift cards, scented lotions, hair products, sports equipment, and books. Questions? Email [pack3180@hotmail.com](mailto:pack3180@hotmail.com). Please help us make this holiday season a little bit brighter for everyone!



# PTO Place

## UPCOMING EVENTS

November 15 – PTO Meeting, 6:30 pm

Now through December 1 – Giving Tree

December 10 – Marketplace

## VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

**Gail Hiatt** – Gail and her mother, Donna, help out every week in various classrooms doing whatever the teachers ask, as well as helping with extra office needs, such as entering all the students' names into the Grade Book program. In addition, Gail serves on the Fundraising Committee. Thank you, Gail and Donna, for doing so much. We really appreciate you making DaVinci Academy a better community for all of us!

## WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE DISCIPLINE POLICY?

DaVinci Academy has implemented a new discipline policy that includes a huge focus on positive rewards for good behavior and a map for consequences for negative behavior, with a procedure for informing parents. Do you have questions or comments about this policy? Come to our next PTO Meeting on November 15. It is our privilege to have Gregg Eldred, Student Development Coordinator, as our guest speaker. He will share how well this program is working and give some helpful tips on how we can implement some ideas at home. This is a great opportunity to learn about how the DaVinci Academy administration is working to improve the learning environment at school, as well as encouraging our students.

## HOLIDAY SPENDING MONEY

Does your student need to earn some money for holiday gift giving? Do you want your student to learn the value of a "hard earned dollar?" Then sign him/her up to be a vendor at the 4<sup>th</sup> annual DaVinci Academy Marketplace! Your student can learn how to make a product, bring it to market, and make some extra money for his/her piggy bank. Send in the attached registration form today. Questions? Contact Dawnshelle Wold (763) 767-0451 or [twold@mac.com](mailto:twold@mac.com).

## SOUP LABELS & MANY MORE

It's getting colder outside which, in my household, means more soup inside! Before you recycle that can, be sure to cut off the Labels for Education and save it for DaVinci Academy. Find the labels on lots of products, like... Spaghettios, Pop Secret popcorn, V8 Splash, and many more! Check them all out at <http://www.labelsforeducation.com/My-School>.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

To help with the Giving Tree, contact Dina at [JCbondslave@yahoo.com](mailto:JCbondslave@yahoo.com).

*“Some people give time,  
some money,  
some their skills  
and connections,  
some literally give  
their life's blood.  
But everyone  
has something to give.”*

- Barbara Bush