

September 2008



Scoop!



In this issue:

- Back to School Fun
- Visual Arts on Tour
- Changes in Special Education

And more!



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Family Fun Day ROCKED!

When Ron Cacas, Marketing and Public Relations Manager of Hartnell College's *Western Stage Theatre*, approached MBayKids several months ago with the idea of jointly hosting a "Family Fun Day" for the local community, neither of our organizations could have predicted the success of such an event. On Sunday, August 17, families from all over the Central Coast – from Monterey & Carmel to Salinas & King City -- joined us for an afternoon of great entertainment and family fun. In addition to being able to enjoy Western Stage's heart-warming production of *The Sound of Music*, over 130 parents and children enjoyed a post-production party where they were able to meet and mingle with our **Scoop!** contributors and the actors from the show.



The MBayKids Family Fun Day crew: Judy Hunzie, Kim Georgalos, Jennifer McDonnal



It goes without saying that we are so grateful to **Western Stage Theatre** for giving us the opportunity to share this time with our MBayKids families. We would also like to extend a very special thanks to the **Monterey Bay Aquarium, Black Bear Diner and Monterey Lanes & Valley Center Bowl (Salinas)** for their generous donations to the party "goody bags" that each child received.

MBayKids' mission with both its website and with **Scoop!** has always been to be a trusted resource that supports parents' efforts to enrich the lives of their children and families right here on the Central Coast. From the encouraging e-mails and phone calls we receive from parents and from local organizations, it seems that we are doing just that! As MBayKids continues on its quest to better serve community families, we are careful to not take our readers, our contributors or our advertisers for granted. So we extend a special thanks to every single one of you for supporting our efforts. We couldn't do it without you!

Lori McDonnal
 Lori McDonnal
 Editor

In this Scoop!

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For information on advertising opportunities, contact Kim Georgalos (831) 595-6943.

MBayKids would like to thank each of the following contributors for sharing their **Scoop!** with us this month:

Jill Airola, M.D., FAAP - House Calls

Dr. Airola is a pediatrician with the Monterey Peninsula Pediatric Group, located at 2 Upper Ragsdale Drive in Ryan Ranch. Jill is married and is the mother of two boys, ages 14 and 7.



Laurie Bend - Sweet Stuff

Laurie is a mom, community volunteer, Girl Scout leader and small business owner. As a mother of three, she loves to test out recipes on her kids so she can pass them on to **Scoop!** readers.



Michelle Chisum - MamaPreneur

MamaPreneur Michelle is the owner/operator of Red Rooster Company LLC under which she manages The Stork Ladies, A Perfect Present and Celebrate Mama!™ Monterey. Her most important role in life, however, is being mama for two young sons.



Susan Oros, M.A. - Special Needs

Susan is cofounder and vice president of Special Kids Crusade and mother of three, with a 12 yr. old son with Down Syndrome, a 9 yr. old daughter with autism and a 7 yr. old son who is typically developing.



Sherry Pasquariello - Homeschooling

Sherry is a former apparel buyer for The Pebble Beach Company who left her job in 2000 to be a full-time mom. She has been homeschooling her daughter since 2005.



Carol Richmond - Happenings

Carol is owner of the Carmel Academy of Performing Arts and founder of Dance Kids of Monterey County, a not-for-profit youth dance and theatre performing arts organization.



Cover Photography by Todd C. Hutchings, Todd Hutchings Photography

On our cover: September is scouting recruitment month! Spreckels Girl Scout **Julia Lyons** demonstrates her sales skills during this year's Girl Scout Cookie sales event. Scout troops and packs are forming now throughout the Central Coast. Adult volunteers are needed, too!

Girl Scout recruitment events will be taking place this month in Monterey, Pacific Grove and Salinas. For more information, contact **Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast** at (831) 633-4877 or visit www.girlscoutscoc.org.

Boy Scout "Fall Round Up" events will be taking place in schools and churches throughout Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito counties from now through early October. For more information, contact the **Boy Scouts of America, Monterey Bay Area Council** at (831) 422-5338 or visit www.boyscoutsmontereybayarea.org.

Celebrate this MamaPreneur!

by Michelle Chisum

Midge Aldrich
GCuteKids

www.GCuteKids.com



The little ones can head "back to preschool" in style with new clothes from a local MamaPreneur owned and operated website, **GCuteKids.com**. Midge Aldrich, mama to Dylan, age 27, Jessa, age 14, and Ethan, age 3, combined her love of fashion and her business experience to fulfill a dream of creating a small family owned home-based business. **GCuteKids** came to light with the birth of her youngest son and her quest to find quality clothing with style at affordable prices. "Being a home-based business, we have low overhead. Therefore, we can offer our customers the absolute lowest prices possible," says Midge.

With the recent launch of the website, **GCuteKids.com**, Midge is up to "the challenge of developing an online presence and excited about their first online sales." Before the launch, you may have seen her out at the local farmers' markets or you may have bid on one of her donated auction items at a local fundraiser.

GCuteKids is truly a family affair. Midge holds a bachelor's degree in design so traveling to Los Angeles to attend 'The Mart' is hardly work to her. She enjoys getting a sneak peek at the newest fashions and placing orders to fill inventory. With a bachelor's degree in graphic design, eldest son, Dylan, is the mastermind behind the equally fashionable website. Jessa assists with the setup and sales at local events such as the farmers' market, *Celebrate Mama!* and MY Museum's "Mom's Night Out." The most important job, however, is held by 3 year-old Ethan, the head of public relations for GCuteKids. "Showing off all of the latest fashions at preschool," Ethan looks awfully cute sporting *Joe's Jeans* and *JB Original's* vintage t-shirts. Midge's husband, Chris, has also provided a great deal of support through the process.


Midge's advice to other mamas wanting to start a home-based business is to "first take the time to do research on the field you are interested in and then dive right in. It is amazing what you will learn along the way."

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The Changing Landscape of Special Education in Monterey County

by Susan Oros, M.A.



Special Education in Monterey County is changing. The increasing rate of autism, rising costs and a quarter-century-old system that was never intended to accommodate such growth has necessitated the need for change. Whether you are a parent with years of experience working within the system or you are a parent with a newly diagnosed child who is just now learning how to maneuver through the system, it is important to pay attention to the changes underway. We can either collectively build an innovative system or watch as special education in Monterey County is torn down.

The current system needs to be updated. Monterey County is home to 24 school districts. Over the last 25+ years, these districts have been contracting with the *Monterey County Office of Education*

(MCOE) to provide special education services to its children with moderate to severe disabilities. These children are often bussed from their home district to a location within the county (as far as 30 to 40 miles away) to take part in an appropriate and qualified MCOE-led program. As more and more children – even those with mild to moderate disabilities – have been referred, the costs associated with transporting children and instructing larger groups of students have continued to rise. Due to the number of students and the size of many of these districts, it can be difficult to serve such a wide range of disabilities and age groups in a home district. Consequently, even though districts were dissatisfied with the increasing costs, they continued to refer special education students to MCOE.

Financial “fixes” and an overhaul are underway. Last fall, district and county financial concerns led Monterey County Superintendent, Dr. Nancy Kotowski, to commission a study of the special education system in Monterey County. The study was conducted by the *Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team* (FCMAT) which serves to assist local educational agencies in complying with fiscal accountability standards throughout California. FCMAT’s recommended cost-saving measures are now being implemented and include such things as an examination of the county’s student transportation system, an evaluation of the number of Instructional Assistants (IA’s) in each classroom, and a reorganization of the MCOE *Special Education Local Planning Area* (SELPA), the agency chartered to ensure compliance with regulations and to oversee the special education services in the county. Caseloads of speech and occupational therapists may also be increased as another cost saving measure.

Districts are also considering “reclaiming” their mild-to-moderate students from MCOE as early as next year to save money. Two districts, King City and the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District (MPUSD) have already “reclaimed” a small portion of their special education students for the 2008-2009 school year.

Continued on page 14



Display your children's masterpieces on your refrigerator with an artsy flair! These eye-catching magnetic clips are easy to make and fun to personalize.



You'll need:

- Oversized wooden (unfinished) clothespin-style clips
- Tempera or acrylic paints
- Paint brushes
- Hot melt glue
- Magnetic strips
- Decorative wooden pieces, buttons, ribbons, etc.

DIRECTIONS:

Step One: Cover work surface with newspaper. Paint clips with tempera or acrylic paint. Set aside to dry several hours or overnight. If planning to use unfinished wood decorations for embellishments, paint these at the same time and set aside to dry.

Step Two: After painted clips are fully dry, adhere magnetic strip down one side of each clip. Note: We used magnetic strips with a self-adhesive backing but found they didn't adhere well to



the painted clip over time. Hot melt was needed to create a sufficient bond.



Step Three: With a hot glue gun (and parent supervision!), affix decorations to the other (non-magnetic) side of the wooden clip. Allow glue to dry and presto...you've got a refrigerator magnet that's worthy of holding even the most precious masterpieces this school year!

We found all of our supplies at Michael's (see photo, at right): 6" x 1.5" unfinished clothespins by Don Mechanic Ent., Ltd., \$1.99 each; Fresco® Tempera Paint (16 Oz.) for \$1.99; ProMAG® magnetic strips (six 4" x 1/2" strips) for \$1.49; decorative wooden embellishments, Lara's Crafts \$2.49 to \$4.99 per package; Provo Craft Sunflower (unfinished) for \$1.29.



Back to School Fun

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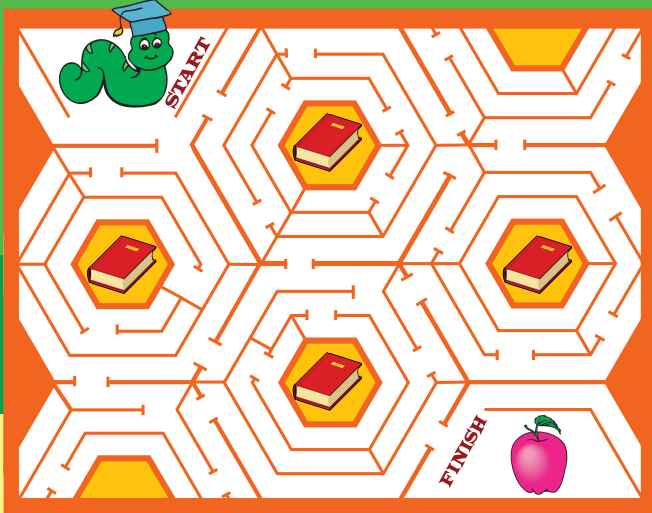
School Fun Word Search

APPLE	MAP
BACKPACK	PAPER
BELL	PENCIL
BOOK	PRINCIPAL
BUS	RECESS
CALCULATOR	RULER
CHALK	SNACK
DESK	STUDENT
ERASER	TEACHER
FRIENDS	



Spot the Differences

There are 11 differences between these two pictures. What are they?



A-Mazing Bookworm

Help our little bookworm find his way to the delicious apple.



1. Did you hear about the cross eyed-teacher?
2. How can you make seven even?

3. Why did the boy bring a ladder to school?



Puzzle solutions on page 15.

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Visual Arts

by Sherry Pasquariello

Last month, I discussed the benefits of children's involvement in the performing arts. Creative exploration of the visual arts provides a number of the same benefits such as heightening self-esteem, and it allows for self-expression, creativity, and imagination.

Art is subjective, allowing children to express themselves in a non-judgmental way. Expanding the imagination provides valuable experiences that carry over into reading and writing skills, as well as helping children make new connections and think "outside the box." Working with different mediums and tools helps to develop muscle coordination and fine motor skills. Art experiences enhance observation, listening, questioning, and describing skills, all important for language development and writing. Observation and expression in visual art also helps children build bridges to reading and writing by encouraging them to think and express ideas symbolically. Art is a way to communicate non-verbally with others. Even at a very early age, children come to learn that visual symbols communicate meaning. Math and science are also made more meaningful by hands-on art experiences. Elements such as cause and effect, light and dark, and shadows and angles provide connection to these subjects. A wonderful example can be found in Picasso's art, which integrates basic math foundations through geometric shapes. Geography and history can be learned through art by studying where particular artists lived and worked and the time period in which they lived. Visual arts aid in the development of empathy, feelings and emotions, as well.

Art is a language that cuts through individual differences in culture, educational background, and ability and can be an avenue to express feelings and thoughts based on real world experiences. And, the self-satisfaction that comes from creating something truly unique is just another bonus!



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MBayKids is on the "Haunt" for local Halloween Happenings!



Contact us today to have your family-friendly event included on MBayKids.com and in our special October Scoop!

E-mail your information to Scoop@MBayKids.com or call (831) 751-1678.



Publication deadline is September 15.



Visual Arts on Tour

by Carol Richmond

With hundreds of art galleries on the Monterey Peninsula, introducing youngsters to styles and eras of art can be daunting. A perfect opportunity for family art exploration takes place this month on the weekend of September 27 and 28, during the **19th Annual Monterey County Artists Studio Tour**.

Free to all, the studio tour is a self-guided, self-paced tour of artists' own studios. With tour map in hand, families can choose from nearly 70 working studios to visit between the hours of 10 am and 5 pm each day of the event. Tour maps, which will be available



just prior to the event in local newspapers and at www.montereystudio.org, will display images of each artist's work. Parents will know, ahead of time, which studios will be of most interest to them and their families. There are painters, jewelry artists, sculptors and photographers like Texas-born, Carmel resident Mary Hill. "I consider the Monterey Peninsula the most beautiful place in the world," says Mary. "My photography expresses a search for silence and serenity. I continually seek out quiet places and I am fascinated by the stillness I find when focusing on details....especially in nature."

Mary loves the idea of using the tour to get children excited about art. "The studio tour is a perfect venue for young children to meet artists in their working environment and casual atmospheres," she says. So, pack the kids up in the car on September 27 and 28 and let the exploration begin!

Otter Days

September 20 and 21

Sea otters and their freshwater relatives take center stage during a weekend of live programs, arts and crafts projects and special prize drawings. You might win a behind-the-scenes look at a sea otter feeding!

MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM
www.montereybayaquarium.org

With kids back in school and autumn on its way, baked apples are a great way to enjoy the season. These baked apples not only taste great, they fill your home with a wonderful aroma! The recipe is quite simple to make. Kids can do most of the prep work and assembly but the coring and cutting should be left to an adult. Eat these apples as a dessert with a scoop of vanilla ice cream or as a topping on your breakfast oatmeal...enjoy!

Baked Apples

by Laurie Bend



Prep time: 15 minutes
Baking time: 35 minutes
Yields: 5 servings

INGREDIENTS:

- 5 small baking apples
- ½ cup golden raisins
(enough to fill cored apples)
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ cup water
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

DIRECTIONS:



1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Slice ¼ inch off the bottom of each apple so they stay level during baking.
3. Core apples and peel off a strip around the top of each. This helps prevent the apples from splitting while baking.
4. Place apples in a 9" x 9" baking dish and fill each cored apple with raisins.

5. In a small saucepan, combine the remaining ingredients and bring to a boil.
6. Pour hot sugar mixture over the tops of the apples and bake in a 350°F oven, uncovered, for 35 minutes or until apples are tender, basting every 10 minutes with sugar mixture in baking dish.
7. Remove from oven, let cool about 10 minutes and serve warm.

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Diagnosis: Conjunctivitis

The Dreaded "Pink Eye"

by Jill Airola, M.D.



The school year has started and with it comes many new surprises... new classes, homework, friendships, new teachers, and oh yes, the phone call from the school nurse telling you your child has "pink eye" and can't come back to school until seen by a physician.

What is "pink eye"? The medical community will call your child's condition **conjunctivitis**. The conjunctiva is a

paper-thin layer of invisible tissue that covers the inside part of the eyelid and white part (sclera) of the eye. You can't normally see this layer of tissue unless it is irritated and the blood vessels in it become visible.

There are many causes of conjunctivitis. Infection is usually the culprit, although chemicals and allergens can also cause the condition. Virus infections (like the "common cold") can access the eye from the nasal passages and cause irritation. When bacteria are to blame it is usually the same bacteria that cause ear infections (*Haemophilus influenzae*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*). Allergy season many times brings with it the symptoms of "pink eye" and new soaps or chemicals splashed in the eye can cause the same symptoms.

Continued on page 15

MONTEREY PENINSULA

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Jill J. Airola, MD, FAAP



Special Needs - continued from page 6

Let us not forget the needs of our vulnerable children. As a parent, I want my children to attend school in close proximity to home but I also want them to receive services from experienced teachers and administrators. The intent of the local plan developed 27 years ago was for MCOE to serve the moderate to severe students. I believe that neither the districts nor MCOE ever intended for our special education system to be the complex and confusing

maze it has become. Today's financial concerns, however, are driving rapid changes that are making some parents of special needs children very nervous. Because of history, many of the districts who are considering "reclaiming" their special needs children from MCOE simply do not have the experience to adequately serve these children without planning. I have spoken with some MCOE teachers and administrators who feel that changes are being pushed much too rapidly. It took many years for the current situation to have boomed into what it is today but it will take time and planning to develop a de-centralized, high quality special education system.

Let's find a "win-win" for everyone. Changes can be opportunities for innovation. I understand the fiscal limitations that districts are facing. I hope, though, that changes will be thoughtfully planned and implemented and that cuts will not be detrimental to the progress that many of our children have struggled to make. If parents, superintendents, administrators, and teachers all work as one, model regionalized special education programs are definitely possible!

Please lend your voices and earnest efforts towards this endeavor.

Next month: SELPA and the new governance structure of special education in Monterey County.

Special Kids Crusade has been very involved with the changes and would like to hear your comments and experiences -- both positive and negative.

*Please visit our blog at www.specialkidscrusade.org or e-mail us at mail@specialkidscrusade.org or write to us at **Special Kids Crusade, 1172 S. Main St. #111, Salinas, CA 93901.** We cannot resolve individual problems at this time but can maintain compiled comments to address issues as a whole.*



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Black Bear Diner

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Manuel "Jay" Lopez-Cho
Our **Beary Good Kid** of the month

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House Calls - continued from page 13

Some common symptoms of conjunctivitis are:

- ✧ Itchy, irritated eyes
- ✧ Stringy, yellow discharge (allergic or viral)
- ✧ Green, thick discharge (bacterial)
- ✧ Runny nose or sneezing (allergic or viral)
- ✧ Matting of the eyelids in the morning or after naps
- ✧ Redness or pink color of eye
- ✧ Swelling of the eyelids
- ✧ Pain or burning sensation of the eye
- ✧ Discomfort when looking at bright light



Your pediatrician will listen as you explain your child's symptoms, will examine your child and then will decide on treatment options. Almost all treatments include antibiotic eye drops. If your child's condition is more serious than the average case of "pink eye," your child will be sent to an ophthalmologist for further evaluation.

Daycare facilities and schools are very concerned about conjunctivitis because it is so easily spread from child to child through the eye secretions. For example, your child's eye is itchy. Your child rubs her eye and then continues to play with the toy that Johnny now wants to play with. He touches the toy and then rubs *his* eye....yes, the infection is now spreading!

Proper hand washing is the key to not spreading the illness. Drainage from the eye can be contagious for 24 to 48 hours after beginning the eye drops. Most day care facilities and schools will not let your child return until 24 hours after treatment is started. The bottom line: Conjunctivitis is usually not a serious illness, but it is one that deserves evaluation and treatment when your child starts to show symptoms.

Have a great start to this school year and remember: Wash hands, wash hands, wash hands!

Do you have a question for our pediatricians?
E-mail us at Scoop@MbayKids.com with your question
and we'll pass it along to our doctors to answer in a future article.

Puzzle Solutions (from pages 8 & 9)

Blackboard Riddles: 1. He couldn't control his pupils. 2. Remove the "S". 3. He thought it was a high school!

The picture on the left is different from the picture on the right in the following ways: (1) fish is flipped, (2) leaf is gold, (3) ornament on tree, (4) star on tree, (5) no antlers on moose, (6) bicyclist in South America, (7) tree in Africa, (8) yellow push pin, (9) fish has a grey stripe, (10) Antarctica is missing, (11) Eiffel Tower in France

