



Great Teaching.
Great Values.
Great Kids.



roots & wings

Fall/Winter 2013

NEWSLETTER



environment, in order to nurture literacy, critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Each year, the school looks to expand its use of technology in ways that enhance and facilitate teaching and student learning.

“
We equip our students with a wide range of technology tools and provide them with experiences that give them the confidence and the skills to apply them in a variety of different situations and take their learning even further.
”

The selection of Echo Horizon School as an Apple Distinguished School highlights our success as an innovative and compelling learning environment that engages students and provides tangible evidence of academic accomplishment. “We have created a technologically enriched environment, incorporating laptops, iPads, iPods, video and digital cameras, and SMARTBoards to create a dynamic and engaging learning experience,” said Director of Technology & Director of Curriculum Elaine Wrenn. “We equip our students with a wide range of technology tools and provide them with experiences that give them the confidence and the skills to apply them in a variety of different situations and take their learning even further.”

Echo Horizon School is Distinguished Once Again

Echo Horizon School is pleased to announce that it has once again been recognized as an Apple Distinguished School for 2013 to 2015 for its exemplary program that leverages cutting-edge technologies and teaching practices in order to prepare students for 21st century success.

Echo Horizon was previously recognized as an Apple Distinguished School from 2010-2013.

The Apple Distinguished School designation is reserved for programs that meet criteria for innovation, leadership, and educational excellence, and demonstrate a clear vision of exemplary learning environments. Echo Horizon School has long been on the forefront of integrating cutting-edge technology into the classroom learning



Distinguished School

Recognized by Apple as a distinguished school for innovation, leadership, and educational excellence.



To learn more about the use of technology at Echo Horizon School, download our “Echo Horizon School” Multi-Touch book from the iBookstore.



Photo Credit:
Philicia
Endelman



A message from MARTHA

During some of the speaking opportunities I have had this fall, you have heard me refer to our curriculum as being “traditional in design, developmental in delivery.” I would like to take this opportunity to further explain what I mean by this phrase.

What is a traditionally designed curriculum? It is a curriculum that includes core subjects like math, science, history, and language arts, and here at Echo Horizon School, it also includes social sciences. We further expand on the curriculum with courses such as visual art, music, performing arts, creative movement and PE. All of these subjects also include effective and innovative use of latest technologies. Our curriculum is purposefully designed in a spiraling progressive manner, with each level being slightly more challenging than

the last. This makes certain that students build skills and use their prior knowledge as they work their way through the curriculum.

What is a developmental delivery? It means that we look at each individual child's readiness to identify where he/she needs to be within the Echo Horizon School's expectations for academic and social emotional development. Furthermore, we don't race children through their learning in order to merely achieve the next goal, but instead we support each child's learning growth. We help each child develop the areas that need further development and reach higher in the areas in which they excel. Because of our 8:1 student/teacher ratio we are able to personally know each of our students and that includes understanding how to motivate each child to extend his/her learning.

We know that development unfolds at different times and at different ages depending on the child. For example, children learn to read at different ages just as children learn to be toilet trained at different ages. We understand that one child will have better hand-eye coordination than another, but we know that all children will need to develop this skill to the best of their abilities. We also know that two children of the same age can differ in their interactions with others, maybe one is more social and outgoing while the other is more shy and reserved. In order to be able to offer our traditionally designed curriculum with development delivery, our teachers must have deep understanding of child development and be highly skilled at observing children in their daily lives. We call this developmental delivery “differentiation.”

What might you see in any one of our classrooms as evidence of this differentiation?

- You might see multiple assignments within each unit that have been tailored for students of different levels of achievement. This might involve use of technology which allows the teacher to differentiate even more subtly.
- You might see students who have been given the opportunity to work with the teacher to choose how to demonstrate what they have learned.
- You might see learning centers with activities geared to different learning styles, readiness and levels of interest.
- You might see students who have been given opportunities to explore topics in which they have strong interest and find personal meaning.
- You will see a teacher who has high expectations for all his/her students.

Martha Schuur,
Head of School

news from ECHO CENTER

Faculty News

Jessica Aguillon, MS.Ed. and Shea Denham, LSLS Cert. AV Ed presented a 3-hour short course at this year's AGB 2013 Listening and Spoken Language Symposium, held in Los Angeles this past July. “Click on This: Promoting Language and Aural Development with Technology” discussed the use of the technologies we have incorporated in our school/program and how they can be applied to language, speech, and listening development.

Jessica and Shea had originally submitted a proposal as a concurrent session, which is a 1-½ -hour course. However, their content was so well received by the reviewing board that they were offered a three-hour short course slot, for which attendees must pay an additional fee.

Continued on next page

"We didn't know who was specifically attending our course, so it was a complete surprise to have a few big names in the field of deaf and hard-of-hearing pay to hear us speak," said Jessica Aquillon. One of these noteworthy people was a researcher, professor and published author Dr. Carol Flexer. During their presentation, they had an interactive component using iPads, and at the end, Dr. Flexer was the first to come up and commend them on their presentation. It was exciting for them to be able to present on a topic such as brain development, technology and speech and language.

Jessica and Shea spent over 40 hours researching and preparing the information for this short course. Both felt honored and grateful to have had the chance to share in this forum.



Alumni Updates

Leila Moinpour (Class of 2003) recently graduated from Stanford University in June 2013, with a BA in Science, Technology, and Society and a Minor in Human Biology. Currently, Leila has an internship in Berlin, Germany for 3 months with Deutsche Telekom doing product design (designing apps for products to make them more user friendly) and is applying for a masters program in product design at Stanford.

Jack Morello (Class of 2007) who went on to Notre Dame for high school, began at Gonzaga University this Fall as a psychology major. He was offered an athletic/baseball scholarship at end of his junior year at Notre Dame, and will be playing on a NCAA Division 1 baseball team as pitcher. Because baseball is a spring sport, in the fall the team expectation is for the athletes to participate in volunteering/community service. So Jack is busy supporting the local community along with a heavy load of classes.

Why Singapore Math?

We feel it's best to set the tone for thinking about math early on, beginning in pre-kindergarten. This helps the students develop a strong foundation in number sense. They build such fluency with numbers, that they cultivate an intuitive sense and are eventually able to take a situation and represent it mathematically.

The Singapore Math approach may seem different, but the underlying math is the same. Consistent with our strong emphasis on the importance of process in learning, the way math is taught here can be seen as a progression. We begin by focusing on new content and looking at how we can actually manipulate the mathematical idea in a concrete manner. Then we move to math being represented in pictures and finally students are able to see math as an abstract concept. The initial hands-on experience builds a foundation for the development of mental math strategies. Students are then able to apply these strategies across a variety of situations.

Children build these strategies through the course of their learning and then approach math problems based on what makes sense to them. Giving them opportunities to talk and share about what's going on in their heads provides an invaluable learning opportunity for their peers. Math Teacher

Kyla Alexander says, "we are allowing students the space to feel very comfortable in how they work with numbers. By enabling them to be experts and have ownership of their own learning, they feel connected to it." As educators we want our students to leave here feeling comfortable and capable, and hopefully, also with an enjoyment of math.

Modeling is a concept used in the Singapore Math curriculum that provides a jumping off point for solving word problems, giving students a place to start where they may not have one. It's another way for kids to represent the information and solve it without knowing the exact equation needed. It also pushes them to be out of their comfort zone just a bit, and forces an internal dialogue about "how do I take this problem and try to solve it?" This gives them the freedom of thinking they have options to solving math questions.

Ms. Alexander explains, "at Echo Horizon School, we are creating a variety of opportunities for students to play with mathematical concepts so that they are able to see that there are multiple ways to approach a problem. The result of that are students who are flexible in their thinking and not afraid of taking on complex problems."



Scan this QR code to watch videos of Math Teacher Kyla Alexander answering the question, "Why Singapore Math?"

Fifth Graders Showcase Their SWING!

Echo Horizon School Arts Showcases are a springtime season of performances at every grade level. Each performance is low key, informal and emphasizes our philosophy that the arts are a process-oriented medium, ever fluid and evolving, and most of all, participatory. All Arts Showcases use classroom curriculum as the springboard to bring facts, ideas and concepts alive through the arts.



Deepening their understanding of US History and tracing the timeline of authentic American arts forms, last spring our fifth graders created and performed an Arts Showcase steeped in American culture. When preparing for SWING!, the children discovered the common threads of joyous and celebratory dances such as swing and stepping, and used the roots of those genres as springboards to create original choreography. As a Big Band orchestra on Orff instruments, they played music composed in the E blues scale. To demonstrate the roots of swing and jazz, they formed an African inspired drum circle and played an original, student composed drumming piece. Working with melodramatic characters and plot, the students used iPads to create silent films. The films were accompanied by live piano just like those shown in turn-of-the-century cinema houses. Inspired by 19th century folk art of the African slave culture, the students made face vessel pottery. They also followed the process of abstract expressionism from gesture drawing to abstraction to expressionism to create Jackson Pollack-inspired paintings. Putting all the pieces together to present a spirited showcase for parents and friends, the fifth graders showed that they know how to rock the house! A fifth grade parent said, "The showcase was an extraordinary performance – our gifted teachers found hidden talents in each student and gave them an opportunity to shine. I did not know my own child would enjoy performing so much and it was a joy to see the students supporting one another and their uniqueness in such a genuine way."



Scan this QR code to watch a video of the SWING! Arts Showcase

Alumni Spotlight

Alum Developed Her Roots and is Now Spreading Her Wings

Sophie Strauss (Class of 2006) graduated from Echo Horizon School, went on to Windward School and is currently studying music and creative writing (with a Spanish minor) at NYU's Gallatin. While at Echo Horizon School she was involved in musical theater and chorus. At Windward, she was in the choral program all six years, the last three of which were with the a capella group. She also performed in nearly every one of the Windward "Coffee House" talent shows, and almost always with other Echo Horizon School alums Devin Jameson (Class of 2006) and Oliver Strouse (Class of 2006). During her senior year at Windward, Sophie began writing and performing her own music. When she moved to NYC for college, she began singing at open mics and also continued her singing when she was back home in LA.

Sophie played a full set this summer at Ghengis Cohen in LA and recorded the album "I'm Sleeping If You Call" at Endless Noise Studios (with the recording help of Josh Deane, Grant Cornish, and Jeff Elmassian). She describes the songs on this album as "stripped back and pretty confessional, but hopefully something people can identify with and respond to." This Echo Horizon School alum is multi-talented – when not engrossed in her music and school in NYC, back in LA she works as a butcher and is part-owner of a small LA-based pie company.



Sophie Strauss album cover



Scan this QR code to visit Sophie's website and hear her new album.

We have Two Gifts to Give our Children...

One is Roots, the Other, Wings.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Echo Horizon School and its Echo Center is to educate children in a collaborative environment that is academically challenging and developmentally appropriate. We actively promote mutual respect, individual responsibility and ethical action. The Echo Horizon graduate is an inquisitive and critical thinker who brings creativity, kindness and self-reliance to the lifelong journey of learning.

3430 McManus Avenue
Culver City, CA 90232
(310) 838-2442
echohorizon.org