

Mandala News

February 3, 2013



On Being Happy

Bill McKibben in *Eaarth* suggested that as our climate changes and we struggle to counteract our assault on it, our activities will shift to more local interests. We may forego some air travel, foods shipped long distances, and products requiring scarce resources. We may grow more of our own food, join a CSA, visit neighbors again, and take long walks.

This prompted me to ask the Mandala students when they were happy. I did not preface this request in any way; I wanted them to write what they thought without any bias introduced by me.

You will see that almost all the moments of happiness are based on simple pleasures: friends, nature, and freedom. Not for these children is Wordsworth's lament:

*The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!*

They know intuitively the joy of special moments, the comfort of friends, and Nature's power to restore and strengthen us.

We are Happy when...

Going ice skating during a crisp, cold night.

I am outside.

Eating incredible food :)

Lydia and I woke up and went on her roof and it was so warm and beautiful and the wind was blowing our hair around.

Finishing something I worked hard on.

Hanging out with my friends.

Long car rides with all the windows open.

Writing.

The lights of a city on the horizon.

Sledding.

Playing video games.

I am about to fall asleep.

I gave my sister a fish for her birthday because usually I don't get people really good presents but his time I did.

When I can do anything I want.

Driving off-road.

The moments after an amazing movie ended and you don't want to move it was so good.

Sitting in my tree.

Playing with cousins.

Fog rising from a lake early in the morning.

Being on the roof.

Getting skis.

Reading something funny.

I climb a tree.

Knowing you've helped someone.

Going to school.

Giving someone a present.

I had been so tired and it was a super long day and I finally laid down in my bed to go to sleep and I was so happy.

Playing in the snow.

A bonfire in the middle of summer with all the stars visible.

Helping Grandpa.

Kayaking in the middle of nowhere.

I am fishing and swimming.

I'm with my best friend.

Recent Activities

- Everybody was given a metaphor from the *I Have a Dream* speech of Martin Luther King, Jr. They had to figure out the meaning of the metaphor, draw a picture to show it, and then present it to the class. Afterwards, we watched a video of MLK giving the speech, 50 years ago this coming August.
- Melissa Lewis has been arriving every Friday for an hour and a half of drama work. She has students working on gestures, voice, movement, and emotion. They are loving it!
- Ms. Jeannet has been guiding students through figure drawings and 3-D constructions related to Greek art. The Parthenon rises again!
- Our last poetry night was a rousing success with 15 poets attending our *Dead Pheasant Society*. We are in our third year of this special out-growth of Mandala's philosophy. The poetry nights were started by then-juniors and is an opportunity to share our own poetry.
- We are proud to tell you that Josie's poem *Janus* won first place in the Aurora Women's Club writing contest and will go on to regional competition.

Janus

Left or right,
Good or bad,
One door holds certain death
The other shows the path.
Go through that door,
You'll never be found,
This one is safe and sound,
Or maybe it's the opposite,
Daring you to follow it.
Whichever way you choose,
Be careful and be wise,
Because one way
Will fill you with wisdom,
The other will fill you with lies.

Josie Morrissey

World Game

We watched a video, *World Peace Game*, a simulation invented by a teacher. This inspired us to create our own game.

A lively debate ensued about how to structure the game. Should there be teams? wars? game board? Should leaders be elected then choose their teams?

At one point someone asked when they could play the game, and Dr. John responded: *You've been playing the game for half an hour!*

The pantheon (Barb, Ben, John) chose teams and assigned them a region. The blue team has a coastal environment, the green team a temperate forest, and the red team an arid region. The gods decreed that within a week they needed adequate shelter and a sustainable food supply.

With varying degrees of success, teams have decided on their leadership structure, ways to utilize their natural resources, how to build their shelters, and how to ward off potential problems of weather, tsunamis, starvation, marauders, and lack of resources.

This game is one of the most exciting educational activities we have ever seen. The potential for invention, negotiation, and cultural development is vast. What a great way to learn about geography, government, societal needs, history, and more. We will have artifacts to share with you late in the month.

Visit to Aurora Academe

On Friday we were invited to a presentation on climate change. Dr. Libby Weberg and her students presented an excellent range of information about CO₂, sources of problems, and some solutions. The teeming bowl of fog from the frozen carbon dioxide was a big hit!

Aurora Academe provides an excellent alternative to other high schools.
