

MANDALA SCHOOL

USING THE COMMUNITY AS CAMPUS



State of Education

All students on the same page at the same time is no longer a viable philosophy. Industrial education of the masses lingers on because it is propped up by tradition, government funding, and taxes.

Now it is important that citizens of all ages are dynamic thinkers able to cooperate with many people through a variety of formats. We need to be good problem posers and solution seekers. Our access to knowledge is vast and we need to know how to evaluate it and use it. Above all, we need to know how to make peace with one another, accept diversity, and unite to improve our communities.



Join us for Authentic Learning

Mandala students spend one week in Allegany State Park and another week on a trip of their choosing. These comprise Finger Lakes (2011), Washington, D.C. (2012), Boston (2013), and the Adirondacks (2014).

Local field trips have included Buffalo architecture, Albright Knox, Sinking Ponds, Great Lakes Student Summit, Eternal Flame, Penn Dixie, Kadimah School, and Hunter's Creek.

These trips broaden the minds of students, promote curiosity, and foster friendships. The interactions with new people and places strengthens us all.





Discussions

Meetings, no matter where they take place nor how many are present, are a fundamental part of Mandala learning.

This is when questions and problems are explored from diverse viewpoints and with differing amounts of background knowledge.

The most important aspect of these gatherings is the opportunity to participate in a simple democracy. Practice with civil discourse, differing opinions, and alternative answers helps us craft a way forward.

Our meetings have debated foreign policy, how to shrink our use of petroleum, why folks don't put their dishes in the dishwasher, where to travel next, what to have for a community lunch, and our policy on electronics.

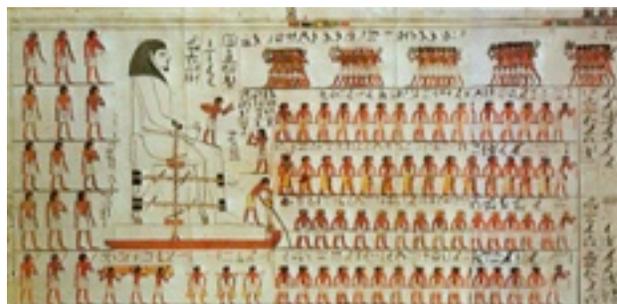
We are not preparing for life; we are living life. We solve problems as they arise. We are honing the skills we need now knowing that the best skill is the ability to adapt to changing conditions.



Community Service for Rec Department

Mandala is Expanding

For next year we have students in grades 2-8, ages 8-14. The new students are all curious, energetic, and knowledgeable. We also are offering internships for teen homeschoolers who want to share their skills.



Integrated Learning

Rich problems require many skills involving problem solving and communicating. There may be analysis, synthesis, hypothesizing, measuring, computation, drawing, speaking, research, and writing.

This spring Mandala students were presented with an ancient Egyptian painting depicting a statue being moved by many people. The students were challenged to figure the weight of the statue and the amount of force needed by each person tugging.

Three methods were used to estimate the weight. Two involved determining the volume of the statue based on the approximate height of the people. Another method involved immersing a Lego figure in water within a graduated cylinder to find its volume then using proportions.

The stone was assumed to be limestone so a standard weight was used of 163 pounds/ft³.

The estimated weights were 290 tons, 348 tons, and 440 tons. We discussed the concept of *successive approximation* and felt that the correct weight was probably closest to 348, our third method done with the Lego man.

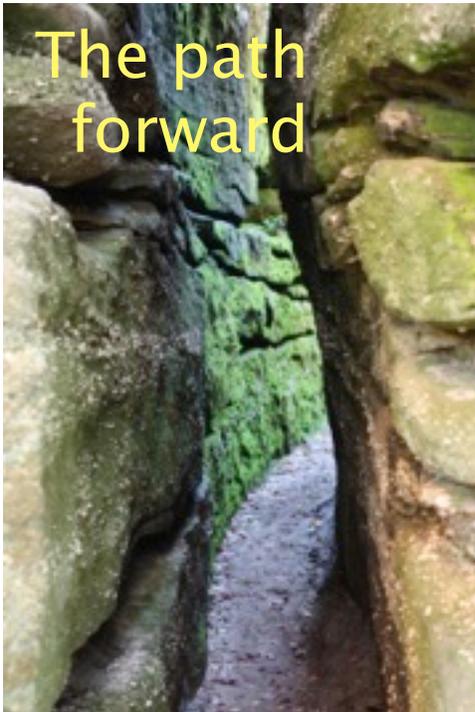
The largest statue weighs about 83 tons so we were off. The answer is less important that our thinking and learning to critique our mistakes.

Honoring Each Other

The Onondagas teach that everyone has a gift but it may take years before we know what it is. At Mandala every year we honor those unique gifts with speeches, trophies, proclamations, and treats. Honorees are chosen randomly often making the development of the honor a challenge.

On our last day this year we heard humorous, heart-felt, eloquent, and sincere speeches. The expressions of caring and acknowledgement are so meaningful. They are one more way that we encourage each other to be healthy, kind, and curious.





The path forward

Looking to Mandala's 7th year

April is joining us as a full-time teacher!! She has completed her Master's and will be with us every day.

High school algebra and Earth Science will be offered in the fall. This will be a field-based lab course starting with stream dynamics and glacial topography.

If we find the right person, we want to add a music teacher who will encourage playing, composing, and enjoying great varieties of music. *Know anyone?*

We had a student teacher two years ago and will approach the colleges about letting us influence some other beginning teachers. Let them study teaching and learning the Mandala way!



Make displays like this light box with old window looking to an old photo



More woodworking & other hands-on projects

Use the community more for learning & fundraising



Lots of field trips, guest speakers, and special projects

Mandala School is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) educational corporation. Mandala School does not discriminate in its staff hiring or student selection based on any racial, religious, ethnic, or income category. In fact, it encourages diversity in its staff, student body, and the experiences provided to them.