

# kaleidoscope

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE CENTER FOR INTEGRAL EDUCATION

## It Takes a Village...

by Carla Gerstein

Those words could not be more true than they are today. Even more than ever before, **we must work together to make this world a better place!** And it is beautiful to see it in action at the Center for Integral Education. From grand to small, we are working together to make it happen. We have supporters from around the world who are inspired by our quest to change the way we educate children. They see what we have accomplished, what we are doing, and what we want to achieve, and we are honored that they are willing to invest in this vision. We could not have, and cannot do it alone! Your support means everything. Equally, our staff, our families, and the local community hold the vision dear as well, and they go above and beyond to help when called to. Again, we could not have, and cannot do it without you!

**We have so many stories on how your support makes a difference!** We can't tell you how many parents have told us that their child was just not happy at other schools, but that they quickly found joy at our schools, to the point that, for example, one child literally became upset at her parents when they told her she could not go to school on Saturday and Sunday! Other parents have told us that at prior schools they were told their child had learning and/or developmental issues, but upon getting the individualized learning and appropriate instruction at our schools, their child quickly caught up to their age appropriate levels. Some parents felt that no other school took the time to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of their child, but at our school their child's uniqueness was honored and cultivated, and used as a springboard for greater learning.

This past year **we have been continuing to improve and expand upon our elementary school curriculum.** We are in the process of solidifying our scholastic program by documenting our curriculum in a way that allows it to be replicable, so that other inspired communities can use it to start new Integral schools.

We have also seen growth in our music and drama programs, as we continued to explore the percussion instruments in the Orff music program; and **Ms. Wendy** added a springtime theater production to our drama program. Last spring we performed a play called "*A Pirate's Life for Me!*" (and have an amazing pirate ship built by one of our dads, **Kevin Whitelock**, in our drama room as a result of that!). **This year we are performing a play based on the Lion King story, called "Hakuna Matata."**



In the traditional educational system, children are often over worked, under supported, not pushed creatively, and in the end, many have learned how to follow directions well, but have they learned how to think for themselves? **Have they learned what is important and meaningful to them, and how they can contribute to their world, and thereby find satisfaction in their lives?**

This is what CIE is about – bringing back meaningfulness and the joy of learning for children, in a way that allows them to be true to themselves. And yes, **we need your help to continue to grow and make a difference in the lives of these children.** You are a part of our village, our community, and together we WILL make the world a better place!

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*A New Education for a New Consciousness*

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Prapanna Smith

Another year has gone by since our last annual Kaleidoscope, and I am delighted to say that the children are happily in childhood bliss, unaware of the difficulties many adults are facing everywhere. When I watch them on the playgrounds and in the classrooms I am reminded of the fact that I am beholding the culmination of a couple million years of evolution, and that within each one of these beings resides a beautiful soul that will one day burst forth in full glory as the leader in their life.

What a wonderful promise we have been given through our understanding of the evolution of consciousness that we are all participating in.

I have been asked to share in this year's message a little about my dissertation research, of which I am now in the final phase of completion. I have been working for three years on this process and will defend my dissertation on December 16. The dissertation, entitled, **Psychosocial Learning Environments and the Mediating Effect of Personal Meaning upon Satisfaction with Education**, documents a mixed-methods study of the learning environments at two schools: Future Foundation School, and the Sri Aurobindo International Centre for Education (SAICE). Nearly 300 students in these schools took an on-line survey that measured their perceptions of their learning environment, their sense of meaning and purpose, and their satisfaction with their education in their respective schools. In the dissertation I report significant findings arising from the survey that supports my theory that the relationships between learning

environments and student satisfaction are mediated by the students' sense of personal meaning and life purpose. I also interviewed teachers and administrators at both schools and found that both foster meaning and purpose among their students by providing them with a great deal of freedom to explore themselves and the world around them, and by cultivating deep student-teacher relationships that exceed what is normally found in schools. These relationships are embedded in a strong community context that is supported by the shared vision of the evolution of consciousness. In fact, a major finding of the study was that the focus of these schools on helping students to "become conscious" serves a critical role in helping students seek for, discover, and create meaning and life purpose in their lives. These findings are important for education, for as I showed in the literature review of the dissertation, there is an abundant amount of evidence in the fields of Positive Psychology, Youth Development Research, and in Humanistic, Developmental and Existential Psychology, that adults and youth who have a strong sense of meaning and purpose are more likely to successfully navigate the challenges that life presents, through dedication, perseverance, and resiliency.

In the months and years ahead, I will be working with the teams at our schools to explore how we can implement some of the components of the educational programs I found at the Future Foundation School and at SAICE. However, in order to do so we need, and appreciate, your continued support. In these challenging financial times, we need it more than ever before.

In gratitude and love, Prapanna

## Rainbow Kids and Integral Elementary Are Going Green!

by Nancy Walsh

One aspect of Integral Education is the combination of two perspectives on education – **the current perspective that education should present opportunities to acquire knowledge about the world and the ancient perspective that education begins with acquiring self-knowledge.**

As part of our curriculum at both schools, we have always shared with the children that honoring the earth by taking care of it is important. This year, both schools are going one step further; we are no longer just talking about how to honor Mother Earth, we are acting.

The Children are learning about recycling paper, plastic and food scraps. Bins for recycling paper and plastic have been placed in the classrooms. As part of this recycling program, the schools are looking into how to reduce the use of plastic utensils and paper products for snacks and lunches. Therefore we are asking parents to provide spoons and forks for the children in their lunches.

Soon, we will begin a composting program. With parent support, worm-composting farms will be purchased. Donations have been received not only for the purchase of the worm-composting farms but also for the buckets to hold the scraps that have been saved. The children will be learning about what can be composted and what cannot be, how worms use the food scraps to create compost, and how the compost can be used to enhance our gardens.

The Center for Integral Education believes that not only will these programs provide wonderful learning experiences for the children; they also support and enhance learning that has started at home where many families are already working on being "Green". Thank you to all our families who are supporting these programs at the schools.



# KID'S CORNER

*Our Children are the light of the world and share their love and happiness with us everyday. Here's a fun song about being Happy:*

*Reprinted from Living Values Activities for Children Ages 3-7 by Diane Tillman and Diana Hsu.*



## The Rainbow Song

A smile is like a Rainbow  
And thoughts like butterflies  
And kind words are like flowers  
When I am golden and light!  
So let's slide up the rainbow  
And let us butterfly  
And shower all with flowers  
Let's be golden and light!

Golden and light  
Golden and light  
If you sing this song  
You'll be like me  
Nice to be so happy and free  
Sing this song and be like me  
Golden and light!

## THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY *by Lon Bloomfield*

The mission of the Integral Schools is: *"To create beautiful and engaging educational environments where children can become aware of themselves and grow into conscious, creative and responsible individuals, participants in society, and contributors to the community of the future."* One piece in meeting these aims is creating a **Community of Learners made up of students, educators, and parents**. This starts in the home. Parents are the first and best teachers. Most of us realize the power of shared vision and responsibility. Being part of a community creates a sense of togetherness and strength, but also requires commitment, energy and sometimes sacrifice of personal time and comfort.

We want to acknowledge, honor and thank all of those who have made and continue to make an invaluable contribution to our School Community:

- Our **DEDICATED TEACHERS** who work so hard (oftentimes beyond school hours) to bring our rich Curriculum alive in the classrooms.
- Our **ADMINISTRATION and BOARD** who hold, develop and apply the Integral Vision, some of whom do so on a full-time volunteer basis.
- **FAMILIES** that are always there to volunteer their time, energy and skills when needed.
- Our **DONORS** and supporters who provide financial, in-kind, and/ or energetic assistance.

In order to fully realize the mission of our schools, we continue to need a strong Community for support and growth. You can help through your involvement with our **Fundraisers**, our **School Activities** (Field Trips, Events, IPTA, etc), **Volunteering**, or **Donations and Gifts**.

Also, in today's world **SOCIAL MARKETING** is essential for the spread of our name throughout the larger community. Become a fan of Integral Elementary School

and Rainbow Kids Integral Preschool on **FACEBOOK**. Our Facebook pages are an easy way to stay up to date on what is happening at the schools, as we post photos regularly, and share updates and events with everyone. You can also become a regular visitor and contributor on our **BLOG: [www.integralelementary.com/blog/](http://www.integralelementary.com/blog/)**

Change happens when ALL of us get involved! Please be a part of our CIE Community.



## INSIGHTS FROM THE MOTHER

*"It is the effort which gives joy; a human being who does not know how to make an effort will never find joy. Those who are essentially lazy will never find joy - they do not have the strength to be joyful! It is effort which gives joy. Effort makes the being vibrate at a certain degree of tension which makes it possible for you to feel the joy..."*

# The Upgrade of our Playgrounds

While we have not yet raised the large amount of funds needed for a new playground structure at the elementary school, we have made a number of improvements to our playground facilities, at both schools.

At the preschool, we **re-grassed** the middle-area of the playground. We had sodded that area when we opened the preschool, but over time the wear and tear of little feet running all over it, combined with the lower grade of grass we had purchased, caused it to all but disappear. So this summer we laid new, more durable sod down again. What a beautiful difference a lovely patch of green makes!

Additionally, with the help of Motorola volunteer day, we **re-painted a trike-trail, and fun pictures and games on the preschool concrete play area.** **Erik Almaas**, dad and artist, also painted a beautiful rainbow mural on the wall, which adds a wonderful whimsical air to the playground!

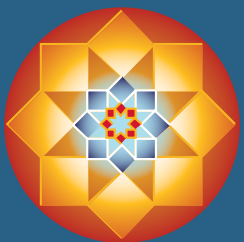


At the elementary school we have been painting away as well. There, Erik painted a fun Dr. Seuss scene on one of the backboards on the playground. We cut holes in this to create a fun tossing game for the kids to hone their throwing accuracy.

We've also painted lots of new games on the playground, including a kickball court, new 4-square courts, hopscotch, and Brain-Gym activities. Dad **Kevin Whitelock** helped considerably in the playground painting project, along with helping creating a new **sand pit** play area for the kids, last spring. The children love digging and building in the sand. And occasionally the "Jewel Fairy" visits and hides little gems in the sand, which the children delight in finding as they play.

All in all, the children seem quite happy with the many changes we've made - what do you think?

*Dad & Artist, Erik Almaas*



Center for Integral Education

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