

THE LOTUS LAMP

September 24, 1998

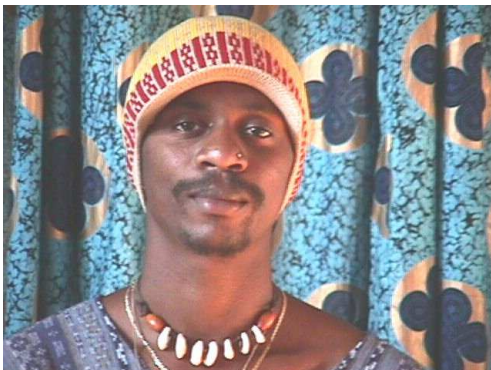
Volume 2, Issue 1

REMINDERS!!!

Sat., Oct. 3 - 4:30 -7:00 p.m. - 1st Skating Party of the school year, at the Elmwood Skating Rink; for the young and athletic young at heart.

Sat. Oct. 17 - 7:30 p.m. - Lotus Jazz Concert at Temple University's Rock Hall, with flutist Bobbie Humphrey, and the C.A.P.A. Jazz

New Lotus Staff Members



The Lotus Academy is truly blessed this year to have another set of fine teachers to add to its teaching staff. Pictured in the upper left-hand corner is Badara Ndaw (and moving clockwise with the other staff members), our Shana I-II teacher. Mothura Badara was born and raised in Senegal, and has traveled extensively throughout Africa, Europe, and North America. Badara, who has earned his Master's Degree, is involved with Temple University and the African American Studies Program.

Mothura Ebony is actually a Lotus "veteran", having worked at the school last year on a part-time basis. She is presently a teacher assistant in Shana III who is expanding her horizons both educationally and culturally.

Mothura Terri was born and raised in Manchester, England. She is teaching all of our Lotus students the fine points of "Lotus Way", that part of our curriculum which exposes our children to African and African-American History, as well as Lotus customs and manners.

SEE "New Staff Cont".

“New Staff” (Cont’)

Terri was instrumental in developing classes in African Studies while she was still teaching in England. In fact, it was the first such program ever in Britain where students were taught about early African history, the rise of Kemet, and the African Holocaust. Mothura Terri is presently pursuing her Master’s degree in this country, and hopes to develop a program for teacher training in African history and methodology.

Mothuri Kamau is our new teacher for Shavi II. He also is no stranger to Lotus, as he did his student teaching with us last year. He received his Bachelor’s degree this past year, and continues to expand his horizons.

Kamau is very fluent with the computer, and has organized and taught young people computer literacy and applications. He is also an excellent chess player, and has also taught the game to children.

Mothuri Akono is an instructor for the boys and girls in the area of physical education. More important, Lotus attempts to use these classes both to give our children an opportunity to get some exercise, and also to develop discipline and respect for their bodies. Akono attended Temple University, and has worked with young people in a number of settings.

Mothura Tracey is a teacher assistant in Shana I-II. As with many others, she begins with a familiarity with Lotus, having been a Lotus parent in the recent past. She has attended Temple University, and has previously worked at a pre-school as both an assistant instructor and as an administrator.

All of the new teaching staff have already made it clear that they have much to offer Lotus and our children. We hope that you get a chance to meet and get to know them. Each of them brings something positive and unique to our already very diverse environment.

Silver Anniversary Celebration

This is a very important year for Lotus, because the Lotus Academy will be twenty-five years old as of the spring of 1999. In celebrating our “silver anniversary”, we have a number of activities planned. The “Silver Anniversary Celebration” will feature a variety of special events, social gatherings, and fund-raising efforts. The theme will be to utilize the first twenty-five years of the Lotus Academy as a “springboard” for an even better educational program for the next twenty-five years and beyond. We will use this time to commemorate, but also to solidify, an institution that must grow even stronger, and must adapt to the changing educational landscape and the evolving culture of Africans in America.

This 25th year celebration will feature concerts, trips, outings, publications, our very own Web Site, a fashion show, our first African-Centered Education Conference, and a spectacular year-end Educational Achievement Awards Banquet at the Pennsylvania Convention Center on May 27, 1999. We will keep you posted as to the details for these various events, and we sincerely hope that you will be able to participate in and enjoy them with us. We realize that this is as much your celebration as it is ours, because the role that our parents play over the next twenty-five years will determine, in large part, whether we can duplicate our success.

New Parent Seminars

On Wednesday, September 30th and October 7th, all of our (Early Learning Center, Lower School, and Upper School) parents will be expected to attend the New Parent Seminars. Attendance at these informal, and hopefully informative, sessions are an important part of parents’ awareness and involvement in their child’s education at the Lotus Academy.

It is at these seminars that the philosophy behind the educational program at Lotus is thoroughly explained, and where questions about our perspective and methodology are encouraged. You should understand that the Lotus Academy curriculum and teaching methods are based upon a very specific set of beliefs and practices. We think that it is essential that you take the time to become very clear as to our understanding and interpretation of history, psychology, and education. More important, there is no other occasion when these subjects will be the focal point of discussion or conversation.

We begin at 7:00 p.m., and start to wrap up each of the two sessions at 8:15 p.m. There are some written materials that are distributed at the end of each seminar. We do provide light refreshments prior to the start of the seminar. If you do not have anyone to watch your children, do not let that stop you from coming. We will have some parent volunteers to watch those children who are there, and to find some constructive activities for them. In short, we will attempt to do everything that we can to make it easy for you to get this vital information. If you have any questions, please call the office.

All Lotus parents should have completed and returned to the main office both their Parent Registration Agreements and their Emergency Contact Forms in order to avoid having their child(ren) being kept out of class.

News from the Lotus Age Groups

Our Lotus Academy teaching staff is already very busy, and would like to let everyone know what they are doing as they begin the 1998-99 school year:

Mothura Lizz of Shaish IB says that she and her class plan to visit the elders at the Germantown Settlement Center on a monthly basis. She warns us to not be surprised if we hear melodic tones emanating from Room 10, Shaish IB, because she expects a very harmonious year.

Mothura Alva of Shaish IA is looking forward to an exciting, challenging, and motivating year. She says that her class is planning to develop partnerships with several agencies in our community. She and her class look forward to traveling to sites throughout the city as they learn about the history of African people.

Mothura Kim of Shaish II reports that her students have been studying about the contributions of Benjamin Banneker. They have emulated his creativity by making toys out of various household goods. The children also plan to make their own clocks, and design them so that they keep accurate time. They certainly are "going for self, African style" each and every day.

Mothura Pamela of Shavi I has a lot of things planned for the 1998-99 school year. They will be traveling to the Crayola Factory on October 30. "As far as learning goes," Mothura Pam says, "we are striving to do and be our best in everything that is put before us: From multiplication-division, from spelling to writing our own stories, Shavi I is ready to take on the task. GIVE IT TO US! "We can do it."

Mothura Maureen says that she anticipates an enlightening year as she learns from Shava, they learn from her, and they all learn from the varied and rich resources around them. They have already begun to

"investigate" a new math program that will prepare the students for the new millenium.

In addition, the Shava students will be demonstrating the principles of the Nguzo Saba as they explore an interdisciplinary curriculum, including geography and its terminology, poetry, art, music, science, and lots of critical thinking. The students of Shava have been well-prepared for the rigors of this course of study, and Mothura Maureen expects that they will continue the Lotus tradition of academic excellence.

The Early Learning Center students have settled in the building, and most of the younger students have made the adjustment. Though their space is warm and comfortable, they all look forward to the Early Learning Center moving to its very own space at 6110 Wissahickon Ave.

As things presently stand, the plan is to make renovations to the building during December of this year, and to move all of the staff and students there in January of 1999. The building is presently used as a "pre-school", and there will be extensive renovations to tailor it to our three, four, and five-year olds. Also, the work will be geared to make the building very attractive, and to give it the African-Centered look that is the hallmark of Lotus.

Once the move is completed, there will be an Open House where everyone can get a look at the "House of Shana". Already, plans for transportation, coordination, and special events for the Early Learning Center are being formulated. In the meantime, the Lower and Upper Schools are honored to host our youngest Lotus students, and to share the building and facilities with them.

Surf The World Wide 'Web' With Lotus

The Lotus Academy has had its own "website" on the Internet for a number of months. The website address (or "U.R.L." for those comfortable with "computer speak") to access the website is www.lotusacademy.org and it can be reached with America Online, Netscape Navigator, Internet Explorer, or any of the other "browsers".

The present website is temporary in the sense that a fairly large, extensive, and sophisticated one is presently being designed and put together. It will feature rich graphics, music, audio, (some) video, and plenty of "links" to other websites that should be of interest to those who are attracted to the Lotus web pages.

In addition, this website will feature fiction and non-fiction writing (by Lotus staff, parents, and children, of course), photos and biographies (again, of Lotus people, of course), and news about African-Centered Education in general and Lotus Academy in particular. Even the Lotus Lamp will be electronically "published" and made a part of the website each month.

The new website will be up for all to access and see during the last week of December, 1998. Anyone who has any suggestions to offer, or would like to participate in this effort should direct a note to the Executive Director (or better still, "e-mail" him all of your thoughts to hclark97@ix.netcom.com if you have access to a computer).

In the meanwhile, a visit to the present website will give you a glimpse of some of the ideas and objectives that make up the Lotus Academy program. It also contains a "link" to our umbrella organization, Council of Independent Black Institutions (C.I.B.I.).

The technology of the 21st century must be utilized if our children are to grow and prosper, and the Internet is at the core of that technology. Lotus plans to use it so as to make our presence and program a world wide phenomenon.

A Pleasant Presence In The Lotus Office

All of you by now have probably met our new receptionist, Sabura Matunde. Sabura is a graduate of Antioch University, and has worked with and for many cultural and community groups. She brings a wealth of



energy, and experience to the Lotus Academy. We are all hopeful that she will become a permanent part of our staff and extended family.

African-Centered Education Is Alive And Well At The Lotus

Lotus is proud of the changes and innovations in the curriculum this year for the Early Learning Center, Lower School, and the Upper School. They are all designed to keep Lotus in the forefront of academic excellence.

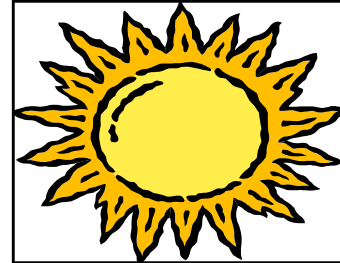
Some of the most important additions have taken place as a reflection of our commitment to education that is both accelerated and African-Centered. For example, all of the children in grades 1-4 take Kiswahili lessons twice a week.

The teachers, Ahmed Shariff and Alwiya Omar, are actually college-level teachers who teach at Lincoln University and the University of Pennsylvania. In fact, Mothura Alwiya is the chairperson of the entire African Languages Department of the University of Pennsylvania (well, I am impressed).

The 5th-8th graders are taught French (spoken extensively on the African continent) up to three classes per week by Mohamed Camara, a native of Senegal who is pursuing his bachelor's degree in political science at Rowan University.

Monthly Reminders

Early Learning Center (Grades Pre-K to K)



- Wed., Sep. 30 - New Parent Seminar (7:00 p.m.)**
- Sat., Oct. 3 - Skating Party**
- Wed., Oct. 7 - New Parent Seminar (7:00 p.m.)**
- Mon., Oct. 12 - Early Learning Center CLOSED**

Lower & Upper Schools (Grades 1 to 8)



- Wed., Sep. 30 - New Parent Seminar (7:00 p.m.)**
- Sat., Oct. 3 - Skating Party**
- Tue., Oct. 6 - Staff Meeting NOON DISMISSAL**
- Wed., Oct. 7 - New Parent Seminar (7:00 p.m.)**
- Mon., Oct. 19 - Staff Seminar SCHOOL CLOSED**

DO NOT FORGET OUR FIRST SILVER ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AS THE LOTUS ACADEMY PRESENTS JAZZ FLUTIST BOBBI HUMPHREY AT TEMPLE UNIVERSITY'S ROCK HALL AT 7:30 p.m. ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17th.