

THE LOTUS LAMP

December 29, 1999

Volume 3, Issue 5

Celebrating In Lotus Style

The Sotas Seasonal Celebration was held at Lotus on the last day of school for the year 1999. As usual, it was a fitting end to the first trimester, and Lotus' tribute to the spirit of Kwanzaa. The staff, students, and parents were awash in the splendor of fine African-centered fashion and design.

The entertainment was outstanding, and we owe a big "thank you" to one of our Early Learning Center parents, "Doc" Gibbs, a renowned musician who led the dancers with a medley of rhythms and beats. In addition to the professional musicians, dancers, story teller, and stilt walker, the students from the Early Learning Center performed mightily, as can be seen in the photo to the right.

The event was capped off by a feast in every classroom. The parents who were able to attend did add a real family touch. See you next year!



Lotus' Computer Lab Is

After months of planning, purchasing, and installing, the Lotus Computer Lab is ready to go. It boasts all brand new state-of-the-art equipment which consists of twenty-four separate computers that are "networked" together by the use of a very sophisticated "server" (master computer). All of the computers are connected to

the Internet through a very fast "DSL" connection. The computer lab has been painted, re-wired, and outfitted with new furniture to ensure that our students will be second to none in their computer and Internet education. There will be an Open House and demonstration of the equipment on Wednesday, January 5, 7:30 p.m.



"The guy who takes a chance, who walks the line between the known and the unknown, who is unafraid of failure, will succeed."
GORDON PARKS

Student Re-Admission: 2000-2001 School Year

One of the topics that will be covered at the General Parents' Meeting on January 5th will be the re-admission process for students returning to Lotus for the next school year. As everyone is aware, it is necessary for all parents to re-apply on behalf of their children each year. The re-admission forms and new tuition rates will be distributed at the General Parents' Meeting. Of course, any and all questions will be answered at that time.

The re-admission forms for all parents who intend for their children to return are due no later than January 28th. We realize that this deadline is somewhat earlier than in the past, but it is important that we begin and complete the process of re-admission and new admission by mid-spring. As will be apparent, Lotus is planning another big student recruitment drive for the coming school year, and we want to be certain that we have accounted for all of our present students.

Once the re-admission forms are returned, notices will be sent out as to acceptances on or before February 8th. In those situations where acceptance may be conditional, a conference will be set up with the parents to develop a plan to resolve any outstanding problems. Information about the Summer Tutorial Program for the summer of 2000 will also be available at the General Parents' Meeting. It is scheduled to run from July 5th to August 11th during the hours from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Applications for the program will be available after the beginning of the third trimester in April.

The Initial Payment may be paid in one installment on or before February 18th, or it can be paid in four equal installments on the 18th of February, March, April, and May. As in previous years, the Initial Payment is the equivalent of one month's tuition. If you have questions about this process that are not answered at the General Parents' Meeting, please call the office.

Black Books: Lotus Review *Gifted Hands* by Dr. Benjamin Carson

Dr. Benjamin Carson. Sound familiar? You may have seen him on "20/20" during one of his many television interviews or read about him in newspaper or magazine articles. He is the author of two books entitled *Gifted Hands* and *Think Big*. Dr. Carson is a world famous African American neurosurgeon. During the first trimester, the Vishna Age Group had the pleasure of reading Dr. Carson's autobiography, *Gifted Hands*, co-authored by Cecil Murphy. Descriptive nouns and vivid verbs made the class very enthusiastic about reading and completing *Gifted Hands*. We want to share what we learned from this book and tell you why we recommend this book for your reading pleasure.

Dr. Carson is one of the most highly decorated neurosurgeons in the world. His success was achieved in an extraordinary way. The book begins with a descriptive look into the early childhood of Dr. Carson. He grew up in the dangerous streets of Detroit, Michigan. His father left the family when Benjamin was eight years old. The departure of his father devastated him, and he often longed for his father's return. However, he soon grew accustomed to being raised in a single-parent family and developed a great appreciation for his mother's love and her reverence for education. During his early school days, Benjamin was considered the least intelligent person in his class. His mother suggested that he have an eye examination, and it revealed that he needed glasses to correct his vision. It mother's insight did

proved to be of great value to him because after he began wearing glasses, his grades improved so much that he became the brightest student in his class.

During his teen-age years, Benjamin fell victim to peer pressure. He was also cursed with a bad temper, which almost caused him to strike his mother during a fit of rage. The turning point in Benjamin's life came when he almost killed his best friend during an argument. It was at that time that he realized that he had to make a change. Through prayer and faith he was able to turn his life around, gain control of his temper and embark on a path of life long success. He attended Yale University and Johns Hopkins Medical School where he performed many successful surgeries. His most famous operation was the 22-hour Binder Twin surgery during which Dr. Carson successfully separated the twins who were joined at the head.

The Vishna Age Group felt that *Gifted Hands* was an excellent book. We are inspired to do better in life after reading a book like this. We realize that any obstacle can be overcome if you have faith in yourself and God. We recommend this book to teenagers, parents, or anyone who needs to understand that just because a person comes from a disadvantaged family, it does not mean that they cannot achieve great success. Dr. Carson continues to be a role model and a beacon of hope for all who have the self confidence, discipline, and the desire to be great.

Parents who have not fulfilled their Parent Partnership requirements for the first trimester have until January 28th to complete them to avoid charges on their tuition accounts. Please check with Cynthia Way if you have any

Lotus Age Group Happenings

Shana III-B is working very hard to get ready for the seasonal celebration. In our little village we are learning the Nguzo Saba. We have exercised our Kuumba (creativity) by making *Bountiful Blessing Baskets*. Our Nia (Purpose) in Shana III-B is to demonstrate that as small children we play a very important part in our nation. We will continue using our Kujichagulia (Self-determination) to learn that we must strengthen our families and communities.

As we grow we will find ways to define ourselves, speak for ourselves, instead of being defined, named, and spoken for by others. For we know as long as we practice Umoja (Unity) and Imani (Faith), we will not fail nor fall!

[By **Mothura Michelle & Mothura Eashia**]

Shavi II has been producing in many ways. We gave honor to our ancestors by researching our families and our general ancestors. We went from running with the famous Olympian Jim Thorpe to dancing with Pearl & Bill Bailey to singing with Billie Holiday, to struggling for our people with Malcolm X. We have a wealth of history within the Lotus Academy.

Shavi II also traveled to Fresh Fields Supermarket. We were delighted to be included with the Upper School in our trip to the OctoberFest Art Show at Temple and dining at the Spaghetti Warehouse, (yum, yum). Finally, one of our parents has recently taught us the exquisite intricacies of diorama construction. It was a fabulous experience. Shavi II, without doubt, is truly
"ON THE MOVE!"

[By **Mothura Evelyn**]

Voices Of Vishna

Fable: Need Rain

There once was a farmer who needed rain and sun so that his crops could grow. One day four men came knocking at his door. They were faith, rain, prayer, and sun. They told him that only one could come in and give him what he needed for his crops to grow. The man chose rain but his wife told him to choose prayer, so he did. When he chose prayer the others came as well. When he asked why the other three came they told him that with prayer comes faith, and if he has faith, when he prays for rain and sun he will get them both.

MORAL: With faith, anything is possible.

(submitted by **Taliah Frazier**)

C.L.A.S. Feedback On Pre-Kwanzaa

Our 5th annual Pre-Kwanzaa celebration was held at Lotus Academy on Saturday, December 4. There were children's activities, vendors, food and entertainment.

The celebration was opened with libation. It was exciting to see the children gathered in the corner participating in face painting. They also made candles and Kwanzaa cards. Mrs. Tjwanna Reed, a Lotus parent, organized the children's activities and did a terrific job.

Vendors provided a variety of items that children and parents purchased as early Kwanzaa gifts. Lotus Academy children entertained us with dancing, which was very enjoyable and Oni Lasana, a storyteller performed 'Lias Mother', a poem written by Paul Lawrence Dunbar.

The day ended with parents, students, friends and teachers communicating and sharing peace and love with each other. Many thanks to all who took time from their busy schedules to make this 5th annual Pre-Kwanzaa celebration a success.

Lotus Jazz Youth Program To Begin

On Saturday, January 22, 2000, the Lotus Academy Jazz Youth Program will begin. The program will include instrument instruction, music theory, a jazz band, and jazz appreciation videos and recordings. It is open to all children from the ages of eight to thirteen. Lotus students will be given first preference, but the program will also be open to any interested children. There will be a limit on the number of children that can be accommodated, so parents are being asked to promptly submit applications.

The program will be operated by a number of jazz musicians and educators from the Philadelphia area. Its director will be Rayburn Wright, an accomplished jazz saxophonist and flutist, and a lifelong jazz educator. Mr. Wright was the musical director at the Lee Cultural Center for a number of years, and was the director of the Hawthorne Recreation Center before he retired this year. He is now conducting master workshops at the new Philadelphia Clef Club of Jazz and Performing Arts.

Please call the office if you have questions about the program or the enclosed flyer.

Screenplay Course For Vishna Class

The Vishna class will be writing an original screenplay as a part of its Language Arts instruction for the second and third trimesters. The course will meet every Wednesday afternoon, starting January 12th, alternating between writing assignments and review of the students' work.

The course instructor will be Peter Andrews, who is a graduate of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and the Yale University Drama School. Mr. Andrews has extensive experience in television and movies. He was a vice president of programming at ABC-TV, a producer at M.G.M., and has worked as an independent film producer for the last fifteen years. He is a consultant to the National Museum of Jazz in Harlem and is busy writing his own screenplays. Stay tuned.

The Lotus Academy Parent Of The Month

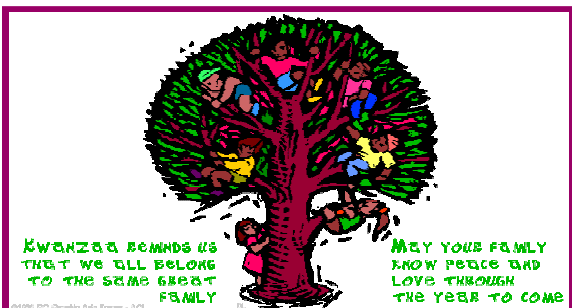
Mary Leftwich, John Leftwich's mom from Shavi I, is our Parent of the Month. Mary has been a part of the Lotus family for four years, and is a conscientious member of C.L.A.S. Mary headed the recent Pre-Kwanzaa Program, and added to its success. She thinks it is very important to be involved in her son's education,



and has attended class trips and volunteered in the classroom, as part of her Parent Partnership commitment. Mary points out, "John started at Lotus in the kindergarten, which was a great foundation for him, especially in the loving, nurturing environment that the school provides." Mary concludes that she has observed John's maturity while he has been at Lotus, and feels that Lotus has been a big part of that overall process.

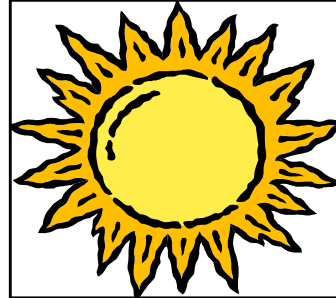
What's Cooking At The Early Learning Center?

Muswele's mother, Ama Cerol, taught the E.L.C. children how to make apricot candy. They used dried apricots, coconut, wheat germ, maple syrup, and a few other ingredients. After mixing, dipping, and pouring, the "project" was refrigerated. The end result was a delicious, healthy afternoon snack. Everyone enjoyed the food and the lesson, and extended an "Asante Sana" to Mothura Ama.



Monthly Reminders

Early Learning Center



- Wed, Jan. 5 – GENERAL PARENTS' MEETING (7 pm)**
- Wed, Jan. 5 – Computer Lab Dedication/Open House**
- Thu, Jan. 6 – Ghana 2000 Trip Meeting (7:00 pm)**
- Thu, Jan. 13 – Rites of Passage Ceremony (7:00 pm)**
- Mon, Jan. 17 – SCHOOL CLOSED (M.L.K. Birthday)**

Lower & Upper Schools (Grades K to 8)



- Wed, Jan. 5 – GENERAL PARENTS' MEETING (7 pm)**
- Wed, Jan. 5 – Computer Lab Dedication/Open House**
- Thu, Jan. 6 – Ghana 2000 Trip Meeting (7:00 pm)**
- Thu, Jan. 13 – Rites of Passage Ceremony (7:00 pm)**
- Mon, Jan. 17 – SCHOOL CLOSED (M.L.K. Birthday)**
- Thu, Jan 20 – Jazz Youth Program Meeting (7:00 pm)**
- Sat, Jan 22 – The Jazz Youth Program (11 am – 2 pm)**

"What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?"

LANGSTON HUGHES