

THE LOTUS LAMP

October 27, 2000

Volume 4, Issue 1

Vishna Men Hard At Work

The 8th grade Marunis pictured to the right (Devon Johnson, Ambata Poe, Norman McCall, Jerome Hill, and Timothy Johnson) are putting the principles of Ujima (collective work and responsibility) to work. They are assisting each other in revising and proofreading the final drafts of their student essays. The published copies will then be sent to Central High School, their number one choice, as a part of their admissions packet. These Marunis have met all of the other criteria for admission—excellent behavior, near perfect attendance, impressive scores on the SAT-9 test, and outstanding academic progress during 7th grade.



The purpose of having the students write an essay is to determine how well potential Central students are able to articulate their thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Also, the proficiency of their writing skills will be evaluated by the admissions staff.

If accepted, their teacher, Mothura Marcia, feels that both the Vishna Marunis and Central High will be very pleased with their respective choices. If luck is the meeting of preparation and opportunity, then these students will be very fortunate.

Full-Time Computer Science Teacher

The Lotus Academy is pleased to have reached a milestone in its quest to elevate its computer science program to one of the best in the city. After having launched the computer science laboratory in January of this year, with state-of-the-art Dell computers and high speed DSL Internet access, Lotus will now have its first full-time computer instructor.

Toi Ford, an experienced teacher with her Master's Degree in Elementary Education, will be leaving the School District to head up the Computer Science program at Lotus as of November 1st. This will mean more computer science classes for all of the grades, and much more advanced training for the Upper School students. We welcome her to Lotus, and anticipate much success.

“I am African not because I was born in Africa, but because Africa was born in me.” ANONYMOUS

Lotus Academy Parent Partnership Program

The Parent Partnership Program is in full swing at Lotus, and it is very important that all parents understand the role that this program plays in the success of the Lotus Academy. The academic, social, and cultural program at the Lotus Academy is based upon the notion that education of our young people can not work unless it is a true partnership of parents and staff. Our school works because, despite our challenges in securing all of the resources that we might like, we have always been able to count on the support, spirit, and enthusiasm of our loyal and energetic parent body.

We think that it is critical that our young people not just hear this philosophy, but that they also have the opportunity to see their parents and supporters work side by side with Lotus teachers and administrators to get the job done. Even more important than lightening the load somewhat for Lotus staff is the fact that it teaches the children something that can not come out of a textbook: that cooperation and collaboration is the secret to achieving and succeeding.

The Program is headed up this year by two of our parents, Ras Al and Kaya Turner. They have assumed the responsibility for communicating with all of the other parents as to their requirement of eight hours "volunteer" duty each trimester. A number of tasks and projects have begun this trimester: beautifying the Lotus grounds, establishing a first-class library, and organizing some extra fund raisers. We are grateful for your efforts, and we hope to see even more parents in the office or wherever they can make their particular contribution.

www.lotusacademy.org The Official Website

It has been a long time in the making (and promised on more than one occasion), but the Lotus Academy is on the verge of launching a dynamic, world-class website. We have contracted with a local website development company, Tekhen Enterprises, Ltd., and they are completing the intricate process of designing and organizing the content for the site.

The website will serve a number of functions, and will be an important part of the overall Lotus information base. In addition to providing an overview of our history, purpose, and philosophy, it will also allow interested parents to begin the admissions process "online". This will be facilitated by making necessary documents (applications, rate sheets, forms, brochures) available for viewing or downloading.

The website will be especially useful for our present parents and students. For example, the "Lotus Lamp" (and all previous issues) will be available online, along with calendars, curriculum outlines, and other vital information.

Special events will be announced and reported on through the website. There will also be a "photo gallery" that will highlight some of the imagery from those colorful occasions that you might have missed.

An alumni section and a former staff section will be used to allow us to keep track of those who want to stay in touch with their Lotus extended family. Online directories of names, current activities, street addresses, e-mail addresses, and the like will be made available to everyone.

One whole section of the website will be created and updated by Lotus Academy students. This "kids' corner" will be worked on during computer science classes, and will contain the children's own online newspaper. In addition to creating this portion of the site, the children will also be instructed as to how to "upload" the material to the overall Lotus site on the World Wide Web. This will also be the section where our Lotus students will keep track of their "e-mail exchange students".

We will be in contact with our parent organization, C.L.A.S., to set up a section of the site for them. They will be able to maintain their portion as they see fit.

Portions of the Lotus website are already completed. However, the entire site, with all of its components and functionality, will be formally presented at the January 9th staff meeting. There will also be a special presentation and demonstration of it at the January 31st General Parents' Meeting.

Parents are invited to contribute articles to the "Lotus Lamp", or to make suggestions about subjects to be covered or the format of the newsletter itself. Let us hear from you if you have something to offer.

Parent Seminars

The Parent Seminars have been bulked up and made over, and have proven to be very informative and interesting. At the first seminar on September 27th, the parents in attendance had a number of excellent suggestions for topics for the remaining seminar dates. There is also a parent seminar committee that is working to sift through the topics, and to secure "outside" speakers for some of the subjects.

The first Parent Seminar went "back to basics", and talked about the Lotus Academy's wholistic view of education as being made up of identity and values, as well as information. The emphasis was on making certain that our young people learn in an environment that always reaffirms who they are and what their heritage represents.

The second seminar in October was hosted by a distinguished guest, Justine Rector. She is the author of *In Fear Of African American Men*. Her discussion at the seminar centered on the effect of the media in creating negative imagery about African Americans. She delivered a superb address that pinpointed much of what we parents are confronted with on a daily basis, and she offered a variety of helpful hints and solutions to the problems she raised.

The next Parent Seminar is to be held on Wednesday, November 29th, at 7:00 p.m. The topic and speaker will be announced as soon as confirmation is made. We hope to see even more of our parents come out to share their insights and their experiences with us.

Fortune Junior Investment Club

Every Thursday at 3:30 p.m., a group of Lotus Upper School students meet to talk about investing their money in the stock market. These budding entrepreneurs and speculators are studying economics, Wall Street, and corporate finance as they prepare to learn about the inner workings of American finance. In addition to making money from their investments, they also plan to use the knowledge to possibly start their own businesses one day.

It is a refreshing scene to see them discussing dividends, stock splits, and publicly held companies. They have already started to pool their money for the actual investing that will begin in January. They also elected their first set of officers at their last meeting. Next up is selecting an online broker, and learning how to use the Internet to investigate companies.

Spotlight On Young Artists

Students (even parents and staff members are welcome!) should be practicing and rehearsing for the "Spotlight On Young Artists", the Lotus Academy "talent show". It will be held at 12:00 noon on Wednesday, November 22nd, and will take place in the auditorium.

All of those who are interested should let their classroom teacher know what they would like to do. Additional information will be given out at that time.

Lotus Youth Jazz Program Resumes

One of the truly big success stories at Lotus last year was the Youth Jazz Band. They started in January with almost no musical knowledge, and ended up putting on a superb jazz concert in June in the school auditorium.

We are happy to report that the jazz program and its director, Mr. Rayburn Wright, are back. It began meeting on Wednesday, September 27th, at 3:30 p.m. In addition to their Wednesday sessions, they also meet on Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m.

The goal this year is to continue learning music fundamentals using the "recorder", but to steer each of the students to the band instrument of their choice. Arrangements will be made to get each child an instructor for their instrument, and to begin to put a band together once they have gained some degree of proficiency.

Lotus Receives Technology Grant

The Lotus Academy recently received a \$6,500.00 grant from the Link to Learn Non-Public Technology Program. This is a state funded program that was established to provide needed technological resources to private and parochial schools. The goal of the program is to plan, develop, and implement technology strategies that will meet the needs of our students in the 21st century. Lotus has used its funds to purchase more computer equipment and peripherals for our growing computer laboratory.

New Additions To The Lotus Academy Staff

Some of the “new faces” at Lotus have been here long enough now to have become seasoned and important parts of the Lotus Academy staff and family.

We wanted you to know who they are, in case you have not had the pleasure of meeting or coming into contact with them. We are glad that they are with us.



Jamilah Abdul-Raheem is currently teaching the four-year old age group at the Early Learning Center. She has 18 years of experience as founder, administrator, and teacher of a Pan African early learning center in Trenton.



Joyce Betts has been a true inspiration at Lotus. She brings 38 years of experience in elementary education to the Lotus Academy. She is an excellent teacher who is dedicated to the challenge of teaching.



Aqkhira Johnson is our Shana III-A teacher. Mothura Aqkhira is a Lotus parent and the mother of four. She brings a wealth of knowledge in African cultural practices along with her early childhood development experience.



Naima Powell is a newcomer to the teaching profession, having received her training in elementary education and liberal arts at West Chester State University. She has had experience as a student teacher and assistant teacher.

“If you expect the present day school system to give history to you, you are dreaming. This, we have to do ourselves. People don’t beg other people to restore their history; they do it themselves.
DR. JOHN HENRIK CLARKE