

THE LOTUS LAMP

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Lotus Returns Home From Ghana



A contingent of seventeen Lotus staff, parents, students, and supporters returned from Ghana, West Africa on August 8th. It was a beautiful and moving trip that was punctuated by eight talented dancers from Savannah, GA that we met in Ghana in 1999, and who became a part of our group. They added their own energy to the trip.

The weather was perfect, the people were like family, the sights were just unforgettable, and the shopping was an extra bonus for everyone. We traveled to Accra, Cape Coast, Elmina, Kumasi, and Ho, and stayed in some fabulous hotels in every city that we visited. The PanaFest celebration will be held again in 2003, and already we are eagerly planning for our return trip then.



Our Director Receives Ph.D.

We are proud to announce that the long-time Director of the Lotus Academy will be officially known to the rest of the world as **Dr. Ina Walker**. She completed all of her graduate work while tending to the many challenges presented by her responsibilities at Lotus. Her doctoral dissertation, *African-Centered Education*, was a scholarly piece that added prestige to the body of literature on a vital subject formally receive her Ph.D. degree from the Temple University Graduate School of African-American Studies on that is so important to us all. We commend Thursday, September 6, 2001, at the scheduled commencement ceremonies at Mitten her continuing service to our Lotus family.

The greatest teachers of African children, and also for African adults, are the silent teachers all around called images. JOHN HENRIK CLARKE

Welcome Back, Lotus Parents!

We trust that all of you had a very enjoyable and productive summer, and are ready to begin the 2001-2002 school "journey". There is much that is the same, in keeping with the Lotus tradition, but there are also new faces, places, and developments for this school year. We realize that you will be getting a great deal of material in the mail and from the school, but we must emphasize the need for you to read ALL of this material very carefully and very conscientiously. It is particularly important that you are aware of the information that is contained in this year's Parents' Handbook.

In the event that you have any questions that are not answered by the material that you are getting, feel free to call the office. Someone will be able to get you the answers that you need.

New Parent Orientation

The Parent Partnership Committee will host an orientation to take place on Tuesday, September 4th at 8:30 a.m. to guide new students AND their parents through a smooth transition into the Lotus family. It will include a visit to the classroom, an introduction to the Lotus staff, a tour of the building, and a review of the Parents' Handbook. Each teacher will also host an Age-Group meeting for the parents of their students on Wednesday evening at 6:00 p.m. During this time, teachers will outline their plans and policies for the new year.

Computer Science At Lotus

The Lotus Academy is pushing on with its thrust to be one of the premiere schools in this area in the realm of information technology. In addition to the computer science program that we have established for the children, and the upgrading of the computer laboratory, there are also a number of other projects and efforts that are underway.

All of the Lotus Academy teaching and administrative staff will be involved in a series of classes that will certify them at various levels of achievement and expertise in the fields of computer hardware, application software, and the Internet. All of these classes will be designed by Tekhen Enterprises, in conjunction with Lotus, and will be utilized to make our teachers even more effective by having the benefit of the added assistance of educational software and web sites.

Every office and classroom in the main building (and eventually the Early Learning Center) will be a part of our internal network, and will give each teacher or administrator access to those records or data that they need to have available. This will allow all of our grades, behavior records, attendance rolls, and student files to be centralized on a central computer system. Of course, there will be strict precautions to make certain that no one has access to any information that they should not be able to retrieve.

The teachers and administrative staff will also be able to maintain reliable communication by way of our internal e-mail system. It is hoped that this will allow for a very efficient "filing" system that does away with the need for paper.

The staff at the Lotus Academy will also be very active in the maintenance and updating of our official web site. In addition to the news about all of the developments at the school, the web site is being used to allow the teachers to post homework assignments and test schedules. The children can also use the web site to post messages and questions for the teachers, and even to communicate with other students.

The final component of this process will be a number of FREE classes for parents who want to learn about hardware, software, and the World Wide Web. There will be a basic introductory class, and a number of intermediate classes that will focus on applications such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Netscape Navigator, and others. There will also be classes for the parents on designing and programming for the Internet with an eye towards training that will allow you to create your own personal web site.

There will be a "computer science open house" scheduled for late September at the Lotus Academy. It will be a time when all of the various classes, computers, and programs that will be available to staff and parents will be on display. There will be tables and equipment set up to put on demonstrations, and people will be available to answer any questions about what products and services parents can purchase or participate in.

As you can see, this is going to be a year where a tremendous amount of activity is going to be directed at the whole school being computer literate and savvy. We look forward to working with all of you in this exciting and important effort.

Lotus Summer Session Upper School Classes After-School Programs

It is not too early to remind all of our parents that Lotus Academy will begin its promotion of "year-round" education by instituting an extensive and enhanced Summer Session in 2002. This program has already been designed, and is intended for ANY students who can benefit from our accelerated academic, artistic, and cultural program for seven weeks in July and August from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The curriculum will be built around computer science, creative writing, math, music, art, field trips, and our African Exchange Program. The classes will not be organized to cover material that was presented during the regular school year. What will be presented is all new material that can be covered more intensely because of the flexibility in the summer session schedule. Class size will also be limited to approximately twelve students, and that should make it possible to give even greater personal attention to those students who need it.

The Summer Session will not be a mandatory part of the overall Lotus program, though parents will be encouraged to take part in it to avoid the extensive "down time" that is characteristic of "summer vacation". The exact costs and schedule will be circulated by way of a descriptive brochure that will describe all the key aspects of the program.

There will be a limited number of openings for the program in its first year in 2002, and parents should plan to apply early if they are interested. There will be informational meetings scheduled during the first trimester to start the registration process, and to answer any questions or concerns that might arise.

This year, students in the Upper School (grades 5-8) will participate in "class rotation" where the students switch classes for most of their subjects. One of the benefits is that Upper School teachers will be able to specialize in one or two subject areas. We also believe that this system will better prepare our children for the high school routine that they will be confronted with all too soon.

To facilitate the scheduling of these classes, Upper School students will begin classes each day at 8:30 a.m. This means that those students should arrive for homeroom no later than 8:15 a.m. Lotus has been in communication with transportation services because the success of this system will undoubtedly rest on all students, including bus students, getting to school on time. We have been assured by transportation services that once the "kinks" are worked out of the route schedules, they will be able to get our students to our building by 8:15 a.m.

Parent Partnership

The Parent Partnership Program will be operated at Lotus this year by a committee of the same name that is one of the Board of Advisors committees. It will also have a coordinator that will centralize the job listings, bookkeeping, and records.

All of the terms of the agreement between the parents and Lotus are spelled out in the Registration Agreement. All parents will be required to sign the Agreement prior to their child's admission.

We are working to increase the number of "jobs" available, and to spell them out more clearly. Each family will be required to contribute 18 hours for the entire school year.

The After-School Program will begin on Monday, September 10th, and is free of charge for all kindergarten students. It is also available to all Lower School and Shava students for \$60.00 each month. This year's program will have more emphasis on academics and homework, though there will still be some time for board games and organized play. Parents who are interested in having their children supervised at Lotus from 3:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. each school day should sign up during the first week of school.

In addition to the general After-School Program, there will be a number of after-school clubs and activities. The Chess Club will be formed again this year and is open to all Upper School students. The Club is planning several tournaments against other clubs or schools for this year once it has set its own teams into place. It will meet on Thursday from 3:15 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Youth Jazz Band is being organized to meet every Monday and Wednesday from 3:15 to 5:15 p.m. All of the children will be assigned a band instrument in October after going through an informal audition process. Children who already play an instrument may be the first to join the band, but those who have no prior experience will be taught until they can be a part of the band.

The Fortune Juniors' Investment Club will be meeting on Tuesdays at 3:15 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. The Club will continue to instruct the members on the fundamentals of the stock market and basic economics. If last year is any indication, our Lotus students are well on their way to becoming successful investors. Please call the office if you are interested in your child being a part of this club.

Computer Science Classes



Mothura Evelyn [left] will become Lotus' first full-time computer science teacher this fall. She will be teaching all of the students from kindergarten to grade eight, and combines her wealth of experience in the classroom with a mastery of the computer and the Internet. She will also be working with Tekhen Enterprises to conduct classes for all staff and parents.

Lotus Board of Directors



The newly constituted Board of Directors of the Lotus Academy will be installed in October. This Board will have the full authority to determine the future policies and programs that will define the Lotus Academy. In addition, they will help to gather the resources that are necessary to fund an ever-expanding and successful operation.

Lotus is honored to have a distinguished Board that is committed to its goals and mission, and includes people of the caliber of State

Evans [above left], Dr. Molefi Asante, Federal Magistrate Judge Carol Wells [above right], Dr. Kariamuwelsh Asante, Ahmeenah Young, and Dr. Alwiya Omar, another long-time Lotus supporter and the chairwoman of the African Languages Department of the University of Pennsylvania. There are several other Board members, and they will be prominently featured in subsequent issues of the *Lotus Lamp*. All of us are looking forward to working with such a dynamic and dedicated group.

Monthly Reminders



Lower & Upper Schools (Grades K to 8)

- Tue, Sep 4 – First Day Of School [New Students]**
- Wed, Sep 5 – 1st Day Of School: Noon Dismissal**
- Wed, Sep 5 – Age-Group Meetings - 6:00 pm**
- Wed, Sep 12 – General Parent Mtg. - 7:00 pm**
- Fri, Sep 21 – Kwame Nkrumah's Birthday**
- Fri, Sep 21 – Seasonal Celebration (Red)- 11 am**
- Mon, Sep 24 – Staff Development (Lotus Closed)**
- Wed, Sep 26 – Parent Seminar I - 7:00 pm**
[Elements Of African-Centered Education]

Administrative Assistant

Mothura Cynthia has been most deservedly promoted to the position of Administrative Assistant at the Lotus Academy. She will concentrate her efforts in the areas of recruitment, admissions, public relations, and development.



She will be an active part of the administrative team that will be guiding Lotus through the many challenges that we face as an institution. Her job will be made more effective and

productive with the addition of a receptionist to assist her in handling the many phone calls and personal inquiries directed to the main office. We are pleased to have her here!

Without dignity there is no liberty, without justice there is no dignity, and without independence there are no free men. PATRICELUMUMBA