

Little Bridges News

November 2017



Calendar of Events

Food Drive

11/1 – 11/30

CLOSED – Veteran's Day

Friday 11/10

Preschool Conferences

11/13 – 11/22

School Age

All Day Camp

11/20 – 11/22

CLOSED – Thanksgiving

Thurs 11/23 & Fri 11/24

Harbor House Toy Store

All gifts due by Fri 12/8

Preschool

Christmas Program

Thurs 12/14 7:00 pm

Enrichment Classes

Soccer Shots (2-5 yrs)

Mondays

Tuff Tumblers (2-4 yrs)

Thursdays

Science (3 -5)

Varies

Private Music (K-5)

Guitar & Piano Lessons

Preschool Conferences

All older pre-school classes (Jaguars, Koalas and Pandas) will be holding parent/teacher conferences this month. Sign-ups will be posted in your child's classroom and/or done through your class Shutterfly. Please take the opportunity to schedule a one-on-one conversation with your child's teacher.

Fighting Hunger, Changing Lives

Little Bridges is sponsoring a food drive for the Contra Costa County Food Bank. We will be collecting food for the entire month of November. Our goal is to fill all 6 bins at least twice, which would be a donation of 1,200 pounds of food!

The most needed food items include powdered milk, peanut butter, canned meats and stews, cereal, fruit juices, tuna, pasta, rice and beans.

Love Builds A Community

Thank you to all who donated to our children's donation drive for the NorCal fire victims. David Brennen organized the event and drove a U-Haul van full to a distribution center.

Share the Joy of Christmas

Little Bridges will again be partnering with Harbor House in Oakland to help share some Christmas joy with families less fortunate than us. Look out for a Sign-Up Genius on-line form via email to participate. Donations of new and unwrapped toys are needed for children aged 0 – 18. **Last day to drop off donations is Friday, December 8th.**

Harbor House serves under-resourced families through educational, spiritual and economic programs. This year they are asking for donations of new, unwrapped toys to stock their Christmas Store. The Christmas store is open on a Saturday and provides parents a place where they can purchase gifts for their children at greatly reduced prices.

Both the food drive and the gift giving opportunities we have here this month offer priceless experiences for you to participate in with your kids. What a great way to teach and instill compassion, sharing, empathy and unselfishness in your kids who are so very blessed with an excess of food and toys.

Follow Us & Like Us

Little Bridges has a new website, a new FaceBook page and a new Instagram account. We would love to have you follow us!

Too Big For Your Britches

The other day I told my very self-centered third grader that he was “too big for his britches.”

“Too big for my what?!” he exclaimed.

“You are too big for your britches—your pants. You are acting like you think you are the parent. So, let me make this clear—I am the mom. Period. You are my child. Period. No discussion. Period. You obey me. Period.”

After our “discussion,” I realized that the “too big for your britches” phrase may have been slightly archaic, but it stated Taylor’s problem in a nutshell: He had a distorted sense of his own importance. Now Taylor is not malicious or even unruly, but he can at times be utterly lacking in humility.

In fact, from what I observe daily, too many of our kids have a distorted sense of their own importance. And, I believe that many of our children are this way because many of us parents are child-focused to a fault. We shape our days around our kids’ activities and we’re constantly on the lookout for ways to boost their self-esteem. So why are we then stunned when our children act as if the world revolves around them?

I think what many parents fail to realize is that this “kids rule” perception makes kids not merely insufferable but also insecure. It’s not healthy for small children to feel that important; they are too young and too fragile to shoulder the burden of being in charge—and they know it intuitively. Children need to feel humble. So, how do we make that happen? On the eve of Thanksgiving—a holiday with a focus on giving and being humble for what we have—I have thought of a few antidotes to this “me-first” attitude.

1. Teach your children to sincerely appreciate their good fortune. It’s crucial that children learn to express thanks to the caring adults in their lives. We put a lot of effort onto making life comfortable for our kids and, every so often, they need to hear about how much labor went into making that Star Wars birthday party happen or how much effort went in to Grandma’s handmade present - it helps children realize that these things do not just materialize out of thin air.

2. Show your own appreciation for the parts others play in making the world run smoothly—the police officer who directs traffic, the sanitation worker who picks up the garbage, and the gardener who tends the local park all deserve respect and recognition. Too often, we grown-ups treat people in the service sector as if they were invisible, rationalizing our neglect by telling ourselves, “They’re just doing their jobs.” This attitude is not only arrogant, but can also be quite shocking when it is reflected in our kids’ behavior. The other night I was mortified when a friend of mine’s child announced, “She won’t be getting a tip,” after a coffee shop waitress forgot the child’s order of chocolate milk. Make a point of always thanking bank tellers and supermarket cashiers; give a cheery hello to the toll collector on the bridge and the person who delivers your mail; and look each one in the eye when you say it. Your child will follow your lead.

3. Let your child give back to you. We all agree that kids should perform some sort of philanthropy—so start at home. As early as age two, your child can perform simple tasks around the house. Making sure that the dog’s bowl has enough water or putting napkins next to everybody’s plate helps a child feel like a contributing member of the immediate community that she’s part of.

4. Point out opportunities for good deeds. Many parents urge their kids to select some of their toys to donate to less fortunate, and that is indeed an excellent way to give. But, there are countless small, ordinary gestures that help kids develop a sense of what it means to be a good citizen. When your 7-year-old holds the door open for an elderly person, it reinforces the idea that taking care of older people is part of our social fabric. When your 4-year-old picks up a fallen box of cereal and puts it back on the grocery shelf (even though he wasn’t the one who knocked it down) or picks up litter outside the school, he’s reminded that he’s part of a larger community for which every individual bears some responsibility.

5. Acknowledge random acts of kindness. We tend to react in extremes to our children’s behavior. Half the time, we’re heaping praise, often indiscriminately. The rest of the time, we’re monitoring, correcting, nagging, all in the name of helping our kids grow. What often gets lost in the shuffle are those understated moments when children strive to be decent, when they clearly consider others’ feelings. Notice the subtle gestures, the behavior that runs counter to what you know to be your child’s impulse. For example, just as Taylor and his friend were about to dig into a pizza, I saw him mentally struggle, then let his pal select the biggest slice. Later, I casually let Taylor know that I admired the way he’d allowed his friend to go first.

Our children really can overcome their self-centered attitudes if we as parents lead the way. Kids need to feel humble. They need to understand that they are part of a much larger whole that encompasses all kinds of people and viewpoints. They need to realize that we and the other responsible adults in their life hold them securely within our community. This Thanksgiving, give your children the gift of humility by not putting them at the center of the universe, but instead, teach them to care more about the human race.