

Peace of Mind Newsletter

Issue 7
January 22, 2016

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This Week in Peace Class...

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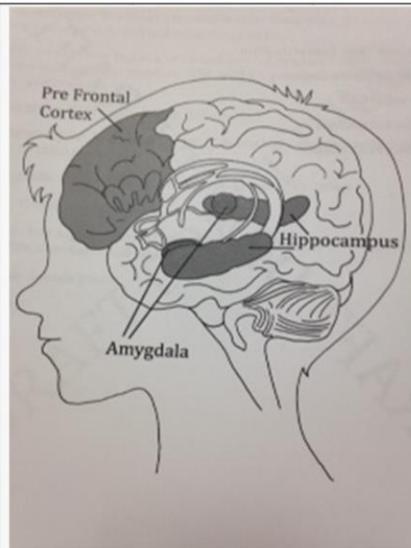
Quotes of the Week:

“Don’t center on your anxiety, Obi-won. Keep your concentration in the here and now where it belongs.”

-Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn

“Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering.”

-Yoda



Brain Matters: We are learning about how our brains work! In all of our Peace classes from PreK to 5th grade we are beginning to learn about our brains. We have learned about how our amygdalae are the “security guards” of our brains. That the amygdala is always on the lookout for danger, and is where our emotions lie. The pre-frontal cortex (PFC), is the last area of our brain to develop but is crucial to making decisions, calming down, and thinking rationally. The hippocampus is our filing system for memories. We’re not neuroscientists, but we think it’s important to teach these basic concepts in order to better understand our behavior.



Assembly on Acting Mindfully: Last week we had grade-level assemblies for 1st – 5th grades to launch our new focus on Acting Mindfully. Classes with many acts of kindness will win “SAMM the bear” for the week! We talked about all of the ways that we can show kindness to one another at school and watched a video inspired by the story “Have You Filled A Bucket Today?” by Carol McCloud.



Star Wars has been on everyone’s mind lately, including ours! Did you know there’s actually a lot of mindfulness imbedded in these movies? Read the 4th and 5th grade updates to find out more.

**At Lafayette, we
Speak, Act, and Move
Mindfully**

We're on the Web at:

www.teachpeaceofmind.com



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Ask Your Child

**“Where is your
PFC, and what
does it do?”**

**“What are the
primary jobs of
the Amygdala and
Hippocampus?”**

**“What do the
words flexible
and inflexible
mean?”**

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Third through Fifth Peace Class Updates

In third grade we have continued to focus on bullying. We are finishing up the “Weird” series. These are three books by Erin Frankel that tell a story of bullying from the point of view of the target, the bystander, and the child doing the bullying. The kids have loved these books and really enjoy seeing things from the perspective of each of the three girls. We have learned that bullying is a choice and that kids can make different, kinder choices but sometimes they need a little help. We have learned that sometimes the kids who are watching bullying and not doing anything to help are actually giving bullies more power and that we can use our own power to help kids who are being targeted. We learned that we can stand up for ourselves and others and encourage each other to be ourselves, even if who we are is a little bit different than most of the other kids.

In fourth and fifth grade, in addition to learning about our brains we’ve been talking about Star Wars! We talked about all of the themes in Star Wars that connect with Peace Class. We’ve talked about how Jedi knights use their powers of concentration to enable them to accomplish difficult tasks and we noticed how much they use and talk about mindfulness. We talked about how we choose to use our powers every day, whether it’s using our words to encourage a friend, or standing up for someone who is being teased or bullied. There is a lot of mindfulness in Star Wars. For more on this see [this fun article](#) that links The Force to mindfulness.

- Linda

Pre-K and Kindergarten Peace Class Updates

Since returning from the winter break, we have been learning about the words *Flexible* and *Inflexible*. We sorted ordinary classroom items into these two categories, and then determined that our bodies are also *flexible*. We read about our brains in the [The Fantastic Elastic Brain](#) and learned they are also *flexible*. Parents, do you see where we’re going with this? Next up we will be learning about our **behaviors**, and how they can also be *flexible* or *inflexible*. We will use a bit of Michelle Garcia Winner’s curriculum to learn about Rockbrain and Superflex characters, and how we can use our *flexible brains* to help our behaviors be more flexible too. This is one of my favorite concepts to teach because it’s fun and the kids really “get” it. Most important, it has an immediate impact on behaviors and teachers tell me they utilize the concepts for the rest of the school year. Look out for more to come on this topic, as we’ll stay on it for the next several weeks!

- Jillian