



# Mardi Gras Auction

## Let the *bon temps roule* at Shadow Rock Preschool's Annual Auction

We hope you will make plans to join us for a bead-flinging good time on Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup> as Shadow Rock Preschool hosts its annual Auction. This year Moon Valley Country Club will be transformed into the French Quarter as we enjoy an evening of dinner, drinks, dancing, tournament style blackjack and silent and live auctions, in New Orleans Mardi Gras style.

This much anticipated evening is the preschool's main fundraiser and in the past has helped to fund school needs from special projects and the scholar-

ship fund, to classroom supplies and basic operating expenses. The commitment and generosity of Shadow Rock parents has always made it a success, and we have no doubt this year will be the same.



Invites will be in cubbies shortly, so now is the time to book the babysitter. Tickets are \$40 per person or get a *krewe* together -- grandparents, friends, neighbors-- and

take advantage of a discounted table for ten. All are welcome to attend!

While we have an exciting collection of items ready to go for Auction, including a set of Ping golf clubs, Suns tickets, excellent dining opportunities and wonderfully biddable class baskets, we can always use more. If you or someone you know owns a business, has a contact, or has an item or service they would be willing to donate, please contact Debbie Barker, Auction Co-chair, at [debbiebarker1@cox.net](mailto:debbiebarker1@cox.net) or 602-206-9755.

## KDO (Kids' Day Out)

Your children love to bring a lunch and stay in the afternoon. They especially are excited by a new lunch box!

We play outside and children enjoy the freedom of meeting new friends and greeting former ones from last year. Classes eat lunch

together and then all ages play with one another.

If your child naps, we can provide a place and time for that, too. Our charges are \$6/hour until 1:30 or 3:30.

**Four-year-olds will be going to all-day classes next year and this is a great way to introduce them to**

**a longer day.**

Playing in the sand and water when it warms up is a favorite activity. We dig all the way to the other side of the world and sometimes discover gold or jewels just below the surface! Ask your child about their treasure-hunting.

## Shadow Rock Preschool

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### Special points of interest:

- ☺ Bring us your old cell phones and we will recycle them for money. We do not want chargers or cords.
- ☺ Also bring us small ink cartridges placed in a plastic bag.
- ☺ No after-school KDO on Feb. 10—teachers take First Aid.
- ☺ No school Feb. 21, 24, 25—Presidents' Day and Conferences.
- ☺ Child care for preschool children only 8:30-2:00 during conferences.

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## Strengthening Your Inner Core by Maria Zafonte Levine

One of my favorite things to do for myself is to schedule time for an exercise session with my friend, Jamie. She's a certified Pilates instructor I met through MOPS. The admonition I hear from her a dozen times during a one-hour session is some variation on: "tighten that core." She doesn't just mean "suck it in!" But instead she provides the visual and mental cue to: "Pull your belly button in toward your spine."

That shouldn't be a hard instruction to follow, and initially it isn't. However after about 30 seconds into an opening Pilates 100 exercise, I'm lying on my back with legs raised off the mat, arms out and pumping and, *Oh yeah, I am supposed to breathe through this exercise.* Multitasking mom though I am, the miniscule section of my brain devoted to coordination and physical activity goes into overload and suddenly my belly is puffing out like the mother of three that it is.

Then I hear Jamie gently remind me, "Don't forget your core." *Right, core, yeah, got it!* I'm right back — belly button to spine,

strengthening and toning those core muscles.

Tightening the core isn't an exercise in vanity, but rather in form and function. It's the center and the support for your body. A strong core improves breathing, helps to support and carry your body and keeps your back and posture in good shape.

In our mothering life, I wish we all had a Jamie to remind us to take care of our core. As moms we're torn in so many directions. Work, volunteering, household tasks, making time for a spouse and taking care of kids are just some of the tasks many moms face on a daily basis. It's a challenge to find, never mind to strengthen, our core: who we were before we became a mom and the woman God has planned for us to be.

In my first few years of motherhood, my core was MIA. Life with three boys under the age of four was overwhelming. Recently transplanted to the Southwest, I was trying to get my bearings and deal with the demands of childrearing without the supports I had grown to depend on back East. The

woman I was had gotten lost. My core wasn't gone, but it sure was in hiding, much as physically my core was buried under the extra belly fat that motherhood so generously provides.

Finding a church and being part of founding their MOPS group gave me the first glimpse of my long-lost core. It was like the first five arm pumps of a Pilates 100 exercise. Slowly, bits and pieces of the old me — the core of the woman I was — began to reemerge. And I felt stronger. The organized, capable, not to mention freshly showered, woman I was prior to having children was returning.

Years later, I now realize that a woman with a strong core is an asset to her family because of her strength, wisdom and self-knowledge. Just as I'm still going to Pilates to tone my mommy body on the outside and to strengthen my physical core, I'm still working to strengthen my inner core too. Both are a joyful work in progress.

Reprinted from the National Mops Newsletter.

## Whole Life Center ... at the Rock

Shadow Rock Church opens a new community outreach program that promotes healthy responses to life's situations with the goal of personal wholeness. The model for its organization is our preschool.

You'll discover yoga, tai chi, parenting, and journaling classes, for example. A Saturday class will deal with identifying and treating abuse of all kinds.

Support groups for handling grief, being alone, dealing with substance abuse will be scheduled. Week-end retreats will be featured.



Prices will be kept as low as possible with the hope of attracting the community.

If you are interested in either attending or presenting, you can find information at [shadowrockucc.org/wholelifecenter](http://shadowrockucc.org/wholelifecenter). You can actually register online late at night in your pajamas!

## Bathtime Safety

Don't let your independent-minded toddler step into the bath alone, reports *Parents* magazine, Nov. '09. Slips and trips—not submersions or scalds—are responsible for 80% of the 43,600 tub-related ER visits each year. Two-year-olds get hurt the most, finds a new study published in *Pediatrics*.

Take precautions with the following:

- Don't overdo it with soap, bubble bath, or shampoo—they make the tub slippery and may lead to vaginal irritation for girls.
- Use a slip-resistant mat inside



the tub, or the sticky strips if they are placed close together.

- Always keep a bath mat or other

nonskid rug right outside the tub.

- Stash bath products and toys within easy reach so the child never has to stand up to get them. Place a cushiony cover over the faucet.
- Consider installing a handhold bar on the bathtub's side for easier entry and exit.
- Never leave a young child alone in the bath.
- Rubber duckies and other squirting toys often harbor growing mold. Either restrict or treat often with bleach.

## Heard in the Halls

Aidan Rampley was in the bathroom with the stall door closed singing about "silver and gold heck-orations."

Aarav Navani said to Mrs. Marquart that he wanted to talk about his feelings, so she bent down to hear her. He said "I'm nervous." Lisa asked why and he said, "That means I'm handsome!"

A recent recipe for making a great

snack was "You take two cutie oranges and two cookies and chocolate milk and mix them all together."

A Rainbow boy was lining up to go outside, but had forgotten to throw away his trash. Mrs. Larsen asked him to please come clear his spot and he told her, "Oh, I think Mrs. Thurman's going to take care of that!" (Wrong!)

When the Dragonflies were asked to

look at one of their blotto creations to see if it resembled anything they could name, Caitlyn Badilla announced that hers "looks like poop". (Actually, it did.)

You can expect honest answers from children.

## Gender Differences

In her new book, **Delusions of Gender: How Our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference**, Cordelia Fine argues that, far from supporting the existence of vastly different male and female brains, much of the research on the topic is not only deeply flawed, but dangerously misleading. Women aren't worse at math, and girls' preference for girlish toys probably has more to do with social expectations than what's in their skulls. The website [Salon](#) recently interviewed Fine and here are a few excerpts: Why are people so intent on misrepresenting the differences between the male and female brain?

We look around in our society, and we

want to explain whatever state of sex inequality we have. It's more comfortable to attribute it to some internal difference between men and women than the idea that there must be something very unjust about our society. As long as there has been brain science, there have been misguided explanations and justification for sex and inequality — that women's skulls are the wrong shape, that their brains are too small, that their heads are too unspecialized. We're still very much at the beginning of our journey of understanding how our brain creates the mind.

Parents who try to raise children in gender-neutral environments are often horrified when, despite their best inten-

tions, their daughters are drawn to Barbies and their sons are drawn to violent toys. If there are no hard-wired differences between the sexes, why does this happen?

I spend a lot of time with parents, and you see egalitarian-minded parents try hard to rear their children in a non-gendered way. Then you see their children defy them. The fact is, babies are born into a world in which sex is the most important and obvious social division. It's constantly emphasized through segregation, through dress, and so forth. By age 2 children know there are two tribes and most know which side of the gender divide is theirs.

## Shadow Rock Preschool

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## POSSIBLE RED FLAGS FOR AUTISM

- The child does not respond to his/her name.
- The child cannot explain what he/she wants.
- The child's language skills are slow to develop or speech is delayed.
- The child doesn't follow directions.
- The child repetitively walks the outside boundary of a play area.
- The child seems to hear sometimes, but not other times.
- The child doesn't point or wave "bye-bye."
- The child used to say a few words or babble, but now he/she doesn't.
- The child throws intense or violent tantrums.
- The child has odd movement patterns.
- The child is overly active, uncooperative or resistant.
- The child doesn't know how to play with toys.
- The child doesn't smile when smiled at.
- The child has poor eye contact.
- The child gets "stuck" doing the same things over and over and can't move.
- The child seems to prefer to play alone.
- The child gets things for him/herself only.
- The child seems to tune people out.
- The child spends a lot of time lining things up or putting in certain order.

## Old-Fashioned Play

In a recent story on NPR, "Old-Fashioned Play Builds Serious Skills", Alix Spiegel talked about the adverse effects of changes in children's play...

"...For most of human history what children did when they played was roam in packs, large or small, more or less unsupervised, and engage in freewheeling imaginative play. They were pirates and princesses, aristocrats and action heroes.... They improvised their own play; they regulated their play; they made up their own rules....

"But during the second half of the 20th century... play changed radically.... Children were supplied with ever more specific toys for play and predetermined scripts. Essentially, instead of playing pirate with a tree branch, they played Star Wars with a



toy light saber...."

"A growing number of psychologists believe that these changes in what children do has also changed kids' cognitive and emotional development. It turns out that all that time spent playing make-believe actually helped children develop a critical cognitive skill called **executive function**. Executive function has a number of different elements, but a central one is the ability to self-regulate. Kids with good self-regulation are able to control their emotions and behavior, resist impulses, and exert self-control and discipline."

"We know that children's capacity for self-regulation has diminished. A recent study replicated a study of self-regulation first done in the late 1940s, in which psychological researchers asked kids ages 3, 5, and 7 to do a number of exercises. One of those exercises included standing perfectly still without moving. The 3-year-olds couldn't stand still at all, the 5-year-olds could do it for about three min-

utes, and the 7-year-olds could stand pretty much as long as the researchers asked. In 2001, researchers repeated this experiment... but the results were very different. Today's 5-year-olds were acting at the level of 3-year-olds 60 years ago, and today's 7-year-olds were barely approaching the level of a 5-year-old 60 years ago..."

"...Self-regulation is incredibly important. Poor executive function is associated with high dropout rates, drug use, and crime. In fact, good executive function is a better predictor of success in school than a child's IQ. Children who are able to manage their feelings and pay attention are better able to learn.... Self-regulation predicts effective development in virtually every domain."

"...Essentially, because children's play is so focused on lessons and leagues, and because kids' toys increasingly inhibit imaginative play, kids aren't getting a chance to practice policing themselves."