

GYMBOREE PLAY& MUSIC

Growing young minds around the world.









Play & Learn

(Ages 0-5 yrs.) Nurture confidence, curiosity and physical skills through play-based activities,



Music

(Ages 6 mos-5 yrs.) Explore music through play, activity and song.



Family

(Ages 6 mos-5 yrs.) Bring all your children to the same class to play and learn together as a family!



President's Corner

Dear Members,

Can you believe we are almost to a new year? This holiday season has flown by for me. And, a new year means our kids are getting older. It goes by so fast!

This is such a fun time of year, but also a time of reflection on the past and looking ahead.

I thank you all for your time and commitment to NCPG in 2014 and hope that you will continue to carve out the time to take advantage of all NCPG has to offer in 2015.

Most importantly, I hope you and your family have a safe, fun, and exciting holiday season and a very happy new year!



nc&pg

north central parenting group

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NCPG is a non-profit, non-denominational organization providing classes to parents of infant to kindergarten age children.

www.ncpgaz.org

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Parent Times

Members, this monthly newsletter is for your benefit, so we want to ensure our team is publishing content that is valuable, useful, informative, and fun! Please let us know if you have suggestions, comments, concerns, or any input that would help us to improve this publication. Shoot us an email at **communications@ncpgaz.org**. Thanks for your help!

Editor – Kelly Vasbinder **Designer –** Neill Fox, www.foxnoggin.com

On the Cover

illian Petermann enjoys the snow!



What should a good, developmentally appropriate classroom look like for your child's first school experience? If the program is truly designed for the early childhood learner, it will look like more play than work. It seems counterintuitive at a time when common core standards are emphasized and student success is measured by standardized testing. Yet at All Saints' and many other high achieving schools, we have found that an active learning environment builds the best and strongest foundation for future success.

At All Saints', we implemented a new methodology in teaching mathematics two years ago, the Singapore Math approach, highlighting problem solving as the focus of mathematical learning. Concepts are taught using a concrete—pictorial—abstract learning progression to anchor learning in real-world, hands-on experiences. Instead of trying to picture a problem in their heads, then writing out the equation to solve it, students in Singapore Math diagram the elements of the word problem and use model drawing to solve it.

As early as kindergarten, students develop number sense and one-to-one correspondence which builds a strong foundation for future years. Students enjoy practice and experience with hands-on materials before moving to symbol and pictorial representations. Skills that have been important in the past at the kindergarten level and will continue to be important include one-to-one correspondence, sequence, number sense, patterns,

conservation of numbers, and composing and decomposing numbers.

Teachers of students in first grade value Singapore Math for the many skills it offers including calendar skills, quick mental calculations, and telling time. Students develop a deep understanding of concepts through study of place value and extensive use of number bonds. Though new math routines and procedures can be challenging at times, the high level of confidence that comes with success makes it well worth it.

In second grade, teachers like the "I do, we do, you do" aspect of the program. Instruction has moved away from teaching single algorithms and students better understand the how and why of math. An important aspect of the Singapore approach is use of bar models to solve complex problems. It can help students visualize abstract concepts as they move toward creating pictorial representations in problem solving. Students have moved beyond performing rote calculations to being true mathematical thinkers.

Students in third and fourth grades continue to enjoy practice with manipulative materials before transitioning to the abstract. They also enjoy doing math activities on the iPad and online. Problems offered relate to real world experience making the practice relevant and fun. Students are often seen drawing out visual representations and bar models to



successfully solve the problem. They grow to appreciate the variety of strategies that can be used to solve problems, often sharing ideas and discussing algorithms that may be different from their own.

Students at all grade levels find the Singapore methodology to be a fun and enjoyable way to learn math. Parents are understandably wary of the new methodology and wonder if it isn't too much fun and games, especially in the early years. The Singapore Math method is not how most parents in the United States were taught in school, but that doesn't mean parents need to resist it. When students learn a new way, allow them to demonstrate and teach you what they know. Allowing abundant time to experience mathematics through the use of manipulative materials and real world problems is not only hands on in the elementary years, but right on.







Help NCPG with Some Smiles!

Calling all Photographers!

Do you like taking pictures?
Do you have a camera of your own?

Then, please consider volunteering as an

"NCPG Photographer!" We would love your help capturing memories at the occasional meeting, playdate, event and Moms Night Out!



Please contact: **communications@ncpgaz.org**Thank you!

NCPG is now on Amazon Smile!



This is a simple and automatic way for us to support NCPG every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at **smile.amazon.com**, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to us.

You use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same.

On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you need to select North Central Parenting Group as your charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Amazon Smile will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make will result in a donation.

Please let all your friends and family members know about it too!

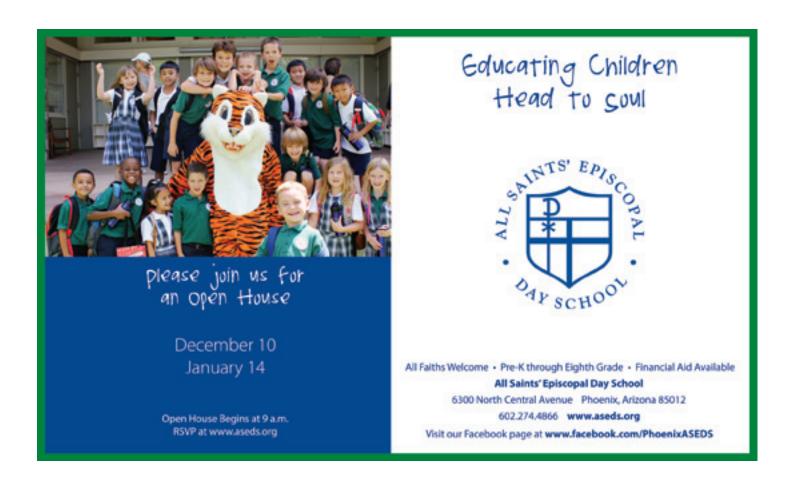
Love NCPG? Get Involved!

Our board of directors can always use more help! We are currently looking for members, with or without experience, to join the following committees:

• FUNDRAISING • PUBLIC RELATIONS • PHOTOGRAPHY

Please email director@ncpgaz.org if you are interested!







Valley Holiday Activities

Christmas at the Princess (Nov 20-Jan 4). Four-story musical tree, skating rink, train, lights, Nativity Garden light show, carousel and photos with Santa. *scottsdaleprincess.com*

CitySkate Ice Rink (through Jan 5). Frozen rink, holiday lights, music and hot chocolate for sale. *cityscapephx.com*

ZooLights (through Jan 11). 3.8 million lights, 700 unique animal light sculptures. *phoenixzoo.org*

Las Noches de las Luminarias (pictured below!)

(Nov 28-29, Dec 5-6, 12-13, 19-23 & 26-30). Thousands of hand-lit luminarias, food, live entertainment and holiday shopping. *dbg.org*

Mesa Temple Christmas Lights (through Dec 31). Hundreds of thousands of lights, nativity scene, live entertainment and visitors' center. *mesachristmaslights.com*

Nightly Snowfall (through Dec 24). Out of thin air, fluffy white flakes will float down from the sky. Westgate Entertainment District, Glendale (westgateaz.com), Desert Ridge Marketplace (shopdesertridge.com) and Tempe Marketplace, Tempe (tempemarketplace.com).

Holiday Story Time & Activities (Dec 10 & 17) Stories with some favorite characters, hot chocolate, cookies and more. **shopdeser-tridge.com**

Season of Fun (through Dec 31). PaintScaping where 3-D images and animations set to holiday music are projected onto the buildings; Holiday Family FunFest includes visits with Santa, holiday craft-making, cooking decorating, games, face painting, train ride, magic shows, holiday character appearances and live entertainment. **specials.kierlandresort.com**

Holiday Event (Sat Dec 6 & 13). Horse-drawn carriage rides, photos with Santa, ice skating, carolers, cookie decorating and more. *scottsdalepromenade.com*

A Christmas Carol: The Musical (Thurs-Sun Dec 5-21).

Musical adaptation of the classic tale by Charles Dickens. *fhtaz.org*

A Winnie-the-Pooh Christmas Tail (Dec 5-23). Holiday musical featuring Pooh, Eeyore, Tigger, Roo and the gang from the beloved children's stories. *vyt.com*

Elf the Musical (Dec 2-3). Tale of Buddy, a young orphan child who mistakenly believes he is an elf. *mesaartscenter.com*

Snow Queen (Sat-Sun Dec 6-21). The Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale performed by Center Dance Ensemble. *herbergertheater.org*

The North Pole Experience (Nov 21-Dec 27). Take the Candy Cane/Snowball Express to Santa's Workshop where you can assist the elves in toy making, tour the factory, get treats from the bakery and take photos with Santa. *northpoleexperience.com*

The Polar Express (Nov 7-Jan 3). Magical train ride based on the Chris Van Allsburg classic. *thetrain.com*

Teddy Bear Tea at the Ritz Carlton (Fri-Sun Nov 29-Dec 14).

Little ladies and gentleman will enjoy their tea along with finger sandwiches, pastries and hot chocolate with marshmallows.

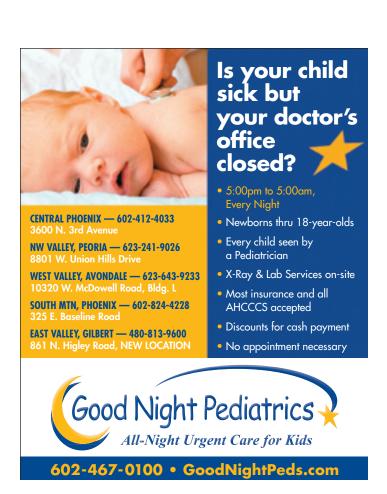
Breakfast With Santa at the Phoenician (Dec 13). Enjoy breakfast with Santa and cookie decorating with our pastry team. A photo is included for each child as they visit with Old Saint Nick.

Roaming Santa at the Phoenician (Dec 20). Meet Santa in the Main Lobby for photos and tell him what you're wishing for. A mailbox will be available to send him a special note to the North Pole.

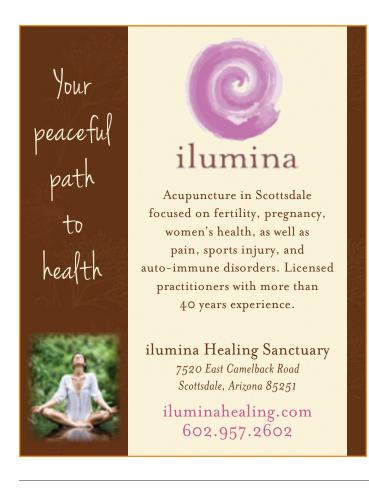
McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park Holiday Lights

(Dec 12-Jan. 3). Take a train ride through many festive holiday lights and displays turning the Railroad Park into a winter wonderland. therailroadpark.com/events















Our swim programs are internationally-recognized - Stop in and find out why!

SPLASH, PLAY & LEARN! FREE BABY SPLASH 8 wks - 5 mos LITTLE SNAPPERS 6 mos - 35 mos GROUP LESSONS 3 yrs - 12 yrs



FOR MORE THAN 115 YEARS, the Phoenix Country Club has been creating enduring family memories in the heart of the city. In this spectacular oasis from the every day, kids can have the time of their lives just being kids. They'll love spending their days playing or taking golf, tennis and swim lessons from our outstanding instructors. And while the kids are off enjoying themselves, parents can work out, have a rejuvenating spa treatment or just relax by the pool. At the Phoenix Country Club, there are no hidden fees or mandatory monthly fees beyond the dues, creating a convenient and affordable family membership. Phoenix Country Club is a private club and membership is accepted through sponsorship by current members. Please contact Colette Bunch to inquire about introductions and the membership process.

MEMBERSHIPS AVAILABLE NOW.

Colette Bunch
602.636.9823 or cbunch@phoenixcountryclub.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION: PHOENIXCOUNTRYCLUB.COM





Meredith Rhoda Christensen

Spouse: Mitch Christensen

Child: Caroline Ryan Christensen, 1 year old

Tennessee, Lived in Tucson for college (Bear Down!) and Phoenix since 2006

City & years married: Married in Downtown Nashville, 11-19-11 —> married for 3 years

Career or previous vareer: Education and Volunteer M anager at Homeward Bound, a local non-profit which provides housing and comprehensive social services to families fleeing domestic violence and homelessness

5 words to describe yourself: Southern, hardworking, happy, social, loving

Favorite vacation spot: Lake Tahoe (summer or winter) and Deer Valley

Favorite adult spot to dine in town: North Italiana and Postino in Arcadia

Favorite children's book to read: Very Hunger Caterpillar, Little Blue Truck, Good Night Moon and Ten Little Ladybugs

Favorite family hangout: LGO, Civic Center, Biltmore Fashion Park and Biltmore Resort & Spa, Chaparral Dog Park

Rules to mother by: Keep Calm(ish) and Carry On!

Most meaningful mom moment: Hard to say - too many!! The moment when Caroline first smiled and laughed - still makes me emotional.

Best mothering advice given to you: You are your babies best and most important advocate!!

Who introduced you to NCPG? My sisters-in-law, Carlie Garcia and Kyle Christensen

Best thing learned in NCPG? You are not alone motherhood is the most amazing but challenging thing your will ever do!!! AND good sleep training will last a life time (thank you Monique).

Events Calendar



Open House

Wednesday, January 21 at 9 a.m.

Invite your friends to the NCPG 2015 Open House! Guests can learn what NCPG is all about by joining us for breakfast and sitting in on a free class.

Tuition for those who join in January is discounted to \$125. Watch for fliers to share with friends at the first class in January. Send prospective invites to membership@ncpgaz.org.

Save the Date: NCPG's Spring Family Event benefitting Wigged Out Inc.

Saturday, March 21, 2015 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. All Saints Episcopal Day School

NCPG 30th Anniversary "Prom Night" Celebration and Fundraiiser

Saturday, February 21, 2015 **Phoenix Country Club**

Bust out the Aquanet... It's 80s Prom Night!

Register today to attend NCPG 30th Anniversary "80s Prom Night" Celebration and Fundraiser

Awesome food, hella good music, and the raddest silent action. Like totally!

Be sure to get dressed up with your date to celebrate 30 years of NCPG. Ya know?

NCPG members, alumni, sponsors and friends are invited to attend.

\$180 per couple or \$100 individual for food, dancing, and open bar. Buy tickets at NCPGAZ.org/prom.



Silent Auction Help!

In addition to attending the 30th Anniversary Celebration and Fundraiser, you can help us find great items for the silent auction. if you have any connections with businesses that may be interested in donating to our silent auction, please let us know! We are looking for gift certificates, gift baskets, private lessons, stay-cations, vacations and everything in between!

Please grab us at the next class or email fund- raising@ncpgaz.org with any questions and/ or ideas to help make this year's event a night to remember! We would love to hear from you!

Silent Auction Co-Chairs: Sara Snyder & Sarah Wolfswinkel Email: fundraising@ncpgaz.org







New Arrivals!







Charles "Charlie" George Ragland

August 29, 2014 Weight: 7lbs 13oz Height: 21inches Welcomed by Scott, Sarah and big brother Hank



Jayde Akiko Thimsen

September 1, 2014 Weight: 7lbs 6oz Welcomed by George, Natalie and big sister Gia



Grayson Fraser Strange

October 9, 2014 Weight: 6lb 13oz Height: 19 inches Welcomed by Jeffrey and Erica



Henry "Hank" James Keating

October 28, 2014 Weight: 9lbs 2oz Height: 21 inches Welcomed by Jim, Caroline and big brother Jack.



Owen Hadley Pratte

November 3, 2014 Weight: 7lbs 10oz Height: 20.5 inches Welcomed by Justin and Jordan Pratte



George Thomas Butterfield

November 11, 2014 Weight: 7lbs 2oz Height: 21inches Welcomed by Steven, Mary and big sister Joey

















MARGI SAUGIER

Ava Rose Designs, **Personal Stylist**

Ava Rose Designs (www.avarosedesigns.com) is an up and coming brand here in the US. The brand is

timeless, yet on-trend preppy with a splash of bohemian chic. Perfect for a busy stylish Mom!

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SARA SNYDER



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info@photosweep.com, www.photosweep.com www.facebook.com/Photosweep



BRITTANY MORAN

Mary Kay Independent **Beauty Consultant**

I specialize in creating specialized skincare solutions, customizing glamour looks and providing

application tips, and offering year-round gift services. I pride myself on my attention to detail and superior customer service.

www.marykay.com/bmoran29



LINDSAY BAUMHEFNER

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I am a 2nd generation native of the Valley. Please call me with your

residential real estate needs, whether buying or selling. I would love to help you find the perfect place to call home that fits your family's lifestyle needs.

602-370-1171, indsay.baumhefner@russlyon.com LindsayBaumhefner.com



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ericastrange@hotmail.com



AUGUST GOLOSIMO

August M. Colosimo, PLLC

As a Phoenix native and Associate Broker with HomeSmart Real Estate, I have successfully assisted buyers and sellers with their transactions all

over the Valley for more than a decade. Whether you are buying or selling, contact me and see what a positive difference I can make in your next residential real estate transaction.

august@augustforhomes.com



ANGELA ELL ISACKSEN

Savvy Styled Sessions & Events offers styling services for children's birthday parties & styled photo sessions for children

& families. Follow SSS&E on Facebook, Pinterest & Instagram!

aeisacksen22@gmail.com www.savvystyledsessionsandevents.blogspot.com



KRISTIN EDWARDS

Realtor-Russ Lyon Sotheby's

I work with Buyers & Sellers in the Arcadia, Scottsdale, & North Central Phoenix Areas.

Kristin.edwards@russlyon.com,480-678-1178



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LAURIE BALL

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www.kidtastics.com, 480-994-KIDS (5437)

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ALLISON SOMMERHALTER MIKES

HomeSmart Elite Group

I am a residential real estate Broker that works with both Buyers and

Sellers across the Valley. With over 12 years experience in the field, I have extensive knowledge in a variety of areas including new and resale properties, luxury custom home building, remodeling/renovation & land acquisition & development.

allison@allisonphx.com



DEBBIE PONTIKAS

The SRL Group

I am a residential real estate agent in Phoenix, with an MBA and over 10 years of experience in real estate marketing. I work with a team that

has over 20 years of experience in selling residential and commercial real estate here in Phoenix.

debbie@thesrlgroup.com



Holiday Avocado & Cranberry Appetizer Dip

http://thediva-dish.com/uncategorized/ cranberry-avocado-dip-salsa/

It's Red! It's Green! It's Yummy!

Ingredients:

- 2 avocados (large, use 3 if small)
- 3/4 chopped cranberries (not finely chopped)
- 2 Thoney
- 1/4 cup red onion chopped fine
- 1/2 jalapeño chopped fine
- 2 T chopped cilantro
- 1 T lime juice

Directions:

- 1. In a food processor, pulse the cranberries a few times until roughly chopped.
- 2. Remove cranberries and place in a large bowl.
- 3. In the same food processor add the cilantro, halved jalepeno, and red onion that has been cut into chunks.
- 4. Pulse for a few times until roughly chopped.
- 5. Add to the cranberries.
- 6. Then add in the diced avocado chunks.
- 7. In a small bowl whisk together lime juice and honey until combined. Pour over salsa, and liberally add salt and pepper on top.
- 8. Fold ingredients together, and serve with chips!



http://jdaniel4smom.com/2014/06/frozen-olaf-cup-craft-kids.html



Supplies:

- Styrofoam cups (two)
- Black & White felt
- Orange construction paper
- Black pipe cleaner
- Glue Stick
- Scissors

Directions:

- 1. Make the eyes & mouth using the black and white felt.
- 2. Make Olaf's nose using the orange construction paper.
- 3. Glue the eyes and nose on the top cup & the mouth on the bottom cup.
- 4. Cut the black pipe cleaner into fourths and poke a hole in the top of the cup to create Olaf's hair.

Note:

You may glue the cups together, but you can keep them separate for easy stacking, storing and traveling!



Let it Snow. Let it Snow. Let it Snow!

Here are some fun places to play in the snow:

Flagstaff and Coconino Forest www.flagstaffarizona.org

Arizona Snowbowl www.arizonasnowbowl.com

Sunrise Park Resort www.sunriseskipark.com

Crowley Pit Snow Play www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino/recreation/ peaks/winter-rec-opportunities.shtml

Wing Mountain Snow Play www.snowplayaz.com



Mt. Lemmon Ski Valley www.skithelemmon.com

Elk Ridge Ski and Outdoor Recreation www.elkridgeski.com

> Flagstaff Nordic Center www.flagstaffnordiccenter.com

Hannagan Meadow Lodge www.hannaganmeadow.com

Mormon Lake Lodge www.mormonlakelodge.com





Mom's

The Kindergarten class enjoyed a mom's night out at Forge at Union Shops.

NCPG Member Poll

I want to have ___ Kids:



One: 9%

Two: 56%

Three: 28%

Four or more: 7%

Favorite mom moments:

"The times I forget my 'to do' list and just play with my kids"

"Our son screaming, 'This is the best day ever!"

"The cards my son makes for me for my birthday."

"When my twins make each other laugh, on purpose!"

"The first hug!"

"When my son tells me I'm the ,,, 'best mudder in the whole world."

ENROLLING NOW FOR 2014-2015



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Need some YOU time?

Inner Radiance Spa and Back-Health Chiropractic, an eco-friendly organic spa and wellness center owned by NCPG mom Shaly Vassigh and her husband, is offering an Organic Spa Day Package just for NCPG Moms! For \$99, our members can get a 60 minute Massage and a 60 minute Organic Facial (\$160 value). Schedule on your own, with a friend, or as a Mom's Day Out with your class!

Complimentary refreshments and gift bags provided with a group of 6 or more. Call 602-956-8222 to schedule or visit www.innerradiancespa.com for spa menu and mention NCPG Mom's Package when booking. Located in the Biltmore/Arcadia area.