

the

SEED

newsletter

2011-2012

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Awakening Seed School Philosophy

Since its beginnings in September 1977, the Seed has been in a continual state of growth and change. In response to parental requests to know more about the school and how it works, we are changing the format of our newsletters this year. Instead of bi-weekly newsletters, this year we're going to publish a monthly edition with a focused theme regarding an aspect of life at the Seed. The September topic is the Seed philosophy.

The Seed Philosophy and Vision

Throughout history, people from all walks of life have shared a vision of an age in which all beings will live together in peace. Those who hold this vision are committed to working for the benefit of all others until each one has attained an awareness of the unity of life.

Awakening Seed is a part of this worldwide vision of peace and was founded on these basic principles:

- All life forms are interconnected. When we damage one portion of the web of life, we damage the entire system. Helping even the smallest creature contributes to the harmony of the whole planet.
- Life can be viewed as a series of cycles or patterns. By studying smaller cycles such as the breath in the human body or life cycles of insects and spiders, the universals of life are more easily understood.
- Each person is more than a physical being. Our intellect and spiritual nature need

cultivation as well, in order to become a balanced person.

- We all need love and support in our efforts to learn and grow.
- Suffering can be eliminated through loving kindness and compassion. This attitude is cultivated most effectively at an early age.
- World peace is possible.

With these principles in mind, Awakening Seed was conceived in 1977 in order to provide a school environment that furthers this vision. More specifically, the Seed was established to provide a setting where children and families of diverse backgrounds could come together to learn and grow, where cultivating artists, humanitarians and creative thinkers is equally important to learning about the basic academic subjects. Furthermore, the Seed's intention is to promote a type of education that will raise the awareness of the needs of our planet and its inhabitants, and learn how each of us can be a more mindful planetary steward.

At the Seed we strive to provide a safe environment with a nurturing, community atmosphere. We model respect and expect that children will be respectful to their peers and the adults in their lives. Educationally, we believe that children should be well-rounded, develop a disposition to love learning when they are young, and enjoy coming to school. We use an emergent curriculum model, which means the interests, passions, and daily lives of both children and teachers frequently drive

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classroom content. Academic subjects are often integrated into larger projects, which allows students to apply basic skills in meaningful ways. We make a strong effort to adhere to the Arizona Early Learning and State Standards, as well as guidelines provided by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Goals of the Seed Curriculum

- To ensure that all children attending Awakening Seed feel emotionally and physically safe at school.
- To stimulate children's curiosity and inspire life-long learning through a wide range of engaging educational experiences.
- To support children in their growth as social beings by nurturing respect for each other, the people in their lives, their community, and the planet on which we live.
- To enable children to become self-disciplined through practice in making positive choices with thoughts, words and actions.
- To support parents in their important roles as their children's first teachers through clear and frequent communications, helpful suggestions, and modeling kindness toward children.
- To foster creativity and innovative thinking by immersing students in an imaginative, expansive educational setting.
- To nurture compassionate, caring citizens through school experiences that raise local and global awareness, with an emphasis on understanding the concept of inter-connectedness.

What Makes the Seed Unique?

- Children are respected for their strengths, supported in their efforts to become well-balanced individuals, and encouraged to become intelligent, divergent thinkers. An emphasis is placed on what a child does well, building on that to develop areas of challenge.

- Students are treated with respect and are given support and guidance as they develop their social skills. Social/emotional development is considered as essential as learning to read and write.

- The Awakening Seed curriculum is designed to evolve from and with the children and staff. Children are highly motivated, self-directed learners because they are allowed to have a voice in determining their learning experiences.

- The rich multicultural learning environment allows students to appreciate both the similarities and differences we share as human beings. Many school activities include all ages and foster a spirit of cooperation, creating a sense of family and community.

- Class sizes are kept small, thus providing the maximum amount of attention for each child. Adaptations are made to meet individual needs and parents are highly involved, giving extra support to both students and staff.

- The outdoor environment plays a significant role in a child's Seed education. Gardening, tending personal outdoor spaces, spending time in the schoolyard habitat, and learning about ecological issues are built into the Seed curriculum.

- Creativity and artistic expression are a high priority at the Seed. Both process and product are honored, giving children yet another means of self-expression.

- Seed students love to come to school because they are interested in what is offered and it's a happy place in which to grow.

The Seed Philosophy In Action

In our Preschool 4s, stewardship of the planet is of foremost importance. The class's relationship to the earth is fostered through their garden and a variety of activities surrounding it. Young children document the growth of seed sprouts, take turns watering plants, measure the length of harvested carrots, and use their budding writing skills to label garden rows. At harvest time they strengthen their cutting skills by snipping basil

leaves from stems. They measure, chop, and pour ingredients into the blender to make pesto, carrot soup, and beet risotto.

When it comes to lunch time, they document food items with daily surveys. Among the information they document is how many plastic bags come to school vs. reusable containers. Their conversations about recycling include the concepts "reuse, reduce, and recycle." Even children this age know about the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a section of the ocean that is a swirling mass of discarded plastic. They are able to transfer these concepts into their daily lives. One 4-year-old was at Costco with his dad. When his dad suggested they buy Capri Suns, he threw his body between his dad and the drinks and said, "We can't buy these. They're not recyclable!" Another child and his mom were going over the supply list for his new school. His mom said the teacher requested plastic bags. He replied, "We shouldn't buy plastic bags. Don't they know they're bad for the earth?"

Children, young and older, learn through the school's philosophy that everything we think and do with our lives makes a difference.

birthdays

August

Sol Jones	Camille Stuckey
Augustus Bowers	Carter Walsh
Matthew Appleton	Emma Schultz
Zoë Blocher-Rubin	Blaine Butler
Lily Sar	

September

Matilda Romanelli	Becca Arnold
Jacob Luecker	Rowan Saunders
Sarah Beth Peyton	Madeleine Dueppen
Connor Mohnach	Jamie Mohnach
Elias Cardenas	Gigi Winzer
Ula Stratz	

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Marius Bradley, age 4, noticed a teacher introducing a new child to the ways of the playground. He commented, "It's hard to take care of a new kid, isn't it?"