

A publication of Sedona Charter School  
K-8 Tuition-free Montessori School

Writing: SCS Staff and GC members  
Photos: SCS Staff and parents  
Design & Editing: Jane Cathcart



Family Survey Results  
Back to School Night  
Ask A Teacher  
Alumni Profile

academic excellence ... personal growth ... small school environment

# Roadrunner report

## music notes >>>

### An Effective Strings Team

Just like any good athletic team, our strings team will require effort by the teacher, the students and their parents. When everyone on the strings team understands their role and works together, we can ensure the best possible learning experience.

Let's start with the teacher who is of course the head coach. She has the master plan and will pace the course of study so that students are always challenged but never overwhelmed. She will set goals that are motivating, and communicate with all players and assistant coaches.

Each child is a player. He/she must listen to and understand what the head coach is teaching, players will constantly work to achieve higher levels of musical difficulty much as an athlete would run faster or jump higher. The best thing for the child is to simply try his/her best. Learning to play a stringed instrument takes time and requires many hours of focused attention and physical practice. None of our players are going to sound like Itzhak Perlman by October.

Each parent shares the dual role of assistant coach and talent manager. While the coach works with players several times a week, it is the parent's task to ensure that effective practicing is happening every day of the week. For some students, this may mean supervised practice 90% of the time. Parents are constantly listening, encouraging and even correcting as the assistant coaches. As talent manager, each parent must know what best motivates their child and employ effective strategies to create that motivation.

When the members of the team communicate effectively, have realistic expectations and try their best, our strings team will be a huge success!

## Start Smart!

The new school year is just days away and we want to remind everyone to START SMART! Middle School (grades 7-8) will begin on Monday, August 7th, with Lower and Upper Elementary students (grades 1-6) starting school on Wednesday, August 9th. As a result, Back to School Night will be Tuesday evening, August 8th at 5:30 pm. Use this time to meet teachers and renew friendships. For kids, one of the biggest back-to-school concerns is "Will I like my new teacher?" Breaking the ice early is one of the best ways to calm everyone's fears. So be sure to attend our back-to-school night.

As parents you can "start smart" before your child ever meets his teacher. We encourage you to sit down with your child and figure out the things he'd like to achieve this year. Why? Because it puts him in charge of how he spends his time (with your help, of course). Now he's not only following his teacher's plan for the year, he's making his own as well.

Be specific and realistic. Your kid's ideas will certainly be less lofty than your own — but that's okay. Remember, little steps for little feet. If your 10-year-old wants to get better at math, set a specific goal of practicing multiplication and division tables for 15 minutes a day. Or if your 7-year-old's goal is to be a better reader, opt for the short-term objective of finishing one new book a week.

Keep your list short since it's likely to change over the year. Check-in each month

to see if the goals are still motivating your children or whether you should look for new challenges. Finally, create a "Start Smart Chart" where kids can track their progress. You'll know this is working when your fourth-grader gets bumped up into a higher math group or your first-grader starts sneaking in extra pages after lights out!

**Adjust your mindset.** Take a closer look at what success means to you. It's natural for parents to want big things for their children — but while we have the best intentions, the pressure can overwhelm the entire family. Stop stressing over "someday" success and focus on the here-and-now expectations of what your child is capable of learning this school year. Sure, a houseful of academic prodigies would be nice, but so would a bunch of happy little learners working hard and making steady progress. Once you adjust your thinking, the stress level in your family will go down noticeably.

And finally, **ease into the routine.** Switching from summer to a school schedule can be stressful for the entire family. Avoid first-day mayhem by practicing your routine a few days in advance. Set the alarm clock, go through your morning and get in the car to see if you'll make it to school by 8:15 am. Routines help children feel comfortable. Establishing a solid routine will make the first day of school go much smoother.



# Much More than Academics

With the 2016-2017 school year fading over the summer and the new school year just around the corner, August is both a month of reflection and anticipation! Last year, one of the Lower Elementary staff's continuing missions was to build a greater sense of community among the parents, students and teachers in our class. To that end we continued our tradition of L.E. potlucks, evening math presentations and other get togethers during months when there were no major schoolwide events. We plan to continue our potlucks and meetings this year and want to thank everyone who took the time to attend. Please look for these functions on our school calendar and plan to make them a family priority so that you can get to know our approach to teaching and the members of our school community a bit better.

Just as every student and family has life changing events throughout each year, so do our teachers. Last year we welcomed

Katarina's son Hayden to the world and Amy Tedrick joined our world of teaching. Such significant life-changing events have many ramifications, yet our classroom welcomed these developments and incorporated them into our daily life.

Our students continue to learn much more than academics inside and outside the classroom. Parent feedback not only recognizes this, but gives us kudos for the practical life lessons of social skills, manners and courtesies, and virtues. Since we are a school, academics are indeed a priority. Our third-year students represented themselves quite ably on the state AZMerit test and all students were promoted to the next grade, meeting the Move on When Reading standards. The students, their families and our LE staff are to be congratulated for these accomplishments!

The result of the parent and student surveys support our progress, growth and goals in



Lower Elementary. Recognition of our efforts, though not always expected, is appreciated. We want to thank our LE families for giving us one of the highest ratings we have received since the school began surveying parents. Your feedback and your partnership in educating your children is very important to us, and we are grateful for everyone who took the time to participate.

Our new school year begins in just a few days and we intend to carry on with the progress we've made on both social and academic fronts, continuing to raise our sights ever higher and building on our strong foundation. We look forward to seeing everyone at Back to School Night on Tuesday, August 8th.

## Did You Know?

Here are some interesting facts about education around the world

- The City Montessori School in Lucknow, India, is the largest school in the world with more than 32,000 students.
- The students in China receive the most homework in the world. On average, teenagers do a whopping 14 hours of homework in a week.
- In Holland, children start school on the day they turn 4, which means that there's always someone new in the classroom.
- The world's oldest school is in Canterbury, England. The King's School, as it is named, was founded in 597 AD.
- Kids in Japan are the most independent of the lot. They travel to school alone, clean their own classrooms and even carry lunch. There are no janitors in the schools.
- Kids in Finland don't start school until the age of 7.
- Iran is one country where girls and boys are educated separately until they reach college.
- In Kenya, it is not mandatory for children to go to school, but most attend anyway.
- In Brazil, having meals with family is an important part of the culture, which is why school days start at 7 a.m. and are over by noon so that kids can have lunch with their parents.

# Communication Is Key

A huge thanks to our parents for your extremely valuable feedback on our year-end surveys. UE received our highest rating since surveys began, and we will continue to build a stronger classroom community with high expectations and achievable goals for all. Since there is always room for improvement, we will work together to address all concerns. Just like last year, corresponding by email is the best way to communicate with our team. We value your feedback and want to assure you that we will schedule phone calls or meetings with parents before or after school. We appreciate your respect and reverence for our learning environment.

**Visual Arts:** We will continue our positive path towards visual arts enlightenment with our Artist in the Classroom program. Through weekly classroom lessons, nearly half of our students spent as much time receiving instruction from a qualified art teacher as they would have in a traditional school that offers art. Visual arts included clay sculpting, drawing and painting. Both students and teachers enjoyed learning from our featured artists each week!

**Dramatic Arts:** Theater and drama will continue to flourish. We know that many students are already planning their own "student directed" shows and our drama elective is already in the works. We look forward to our spring musical "The U.S. Constitution". What fun!

**History:** UE has a passion for history, and we hope to kindle that enthusiasm throughout the year. During the first two weeks of school, the 6th years will be preparing the First Great Lesson (the story of the universe) for the rest of the class. Parents will be invited to see this special story. We will wrap up World History studies during the first quarter to make way for United States history lessons focusing on Westward Expansion and Arizona. We have planned many field trips and activities to complement these lessons.

I encourage all of you to attend Back-to-School Night and meet the UE teachers. As your Principal Educator, the great rating in communication is something I will make sure to maintain. Continue to watch your inbox for our weekly email detailing upcoming events, field trips or reminders.

**Goals for this year include:**

- Excel Math tied even more to Montessori materials
- More Foreign Language focus
- Continued use of student planners
- Weekly emails
- Curriculum focused field trips

We are so fortunate to have a strong community of parents and teachers working together to ensure quality education for our students. Our classroom teachers work hard and we appreciate your confidence in us.

*Suzi Ashley, UE Principal Educator*

# Building on a Strong Foundation

Thanks to all our students and their parents/guardians for completing the end-of-year surveys. You have given us valuable insight into your views of the strengths and weaknesses of the middle school program. As the new Principal Educator, I would like to continue this dialogue by inviting each of you to come to our classroom at any time to voice your feedback, whether accolades or concerns. Please do not wait until the end of the year to do so. Our doors are always open during non-instruction times, so please feel free to come in!

Survey results demonstrated that everyone is pleased with the middle school program, and overall satisfaction was at its highest point this past year. However, your feedback revealed four areas of concern: (1) electives, (2) communication, (3) discipline, and (4) challenging, meaningful work.

**Electives:** Parents and students have requested the offering of electives that inspire creativity and imagination, such as art, drama, and music. In response to this request, our Friday afternoon schedule has been reserved for these activities. Drama, Art, and Strings will be the first electives offered. As the year progresses, we will be asking for student feedback regarding other electives they would like to pursue. In addition to the afternoon line-up, Friday's morning schedule will include field trips, guest speakers, and community service opportunities.

**Communication:** Parent communication is vital to our success. Most classes will

have a syllabus-style study guide that will show work to be completed within the grading period. This will allow students and their parents to know which lessons have been introduced, which lessons are current, and which lessons will start in the future. Weekly or bi-weekly feedback will be sent home on Fridays to inform parents of student progress.

**Discipline:** You will all see a more defined discipline policy in our classroom. This will be specifically addressed at the beginning of the school year.

**Challenging/Meaningful Work:** Both students and parents requested more challenging work in the areas of Math and Writing. The curriculum will be adjusted to reflect these changes, as these subjects are imperative to lifelong success and will be treated as such. Writing activities will include building thesis statements and creating strong five-paragraph essays, researching self-chosen topics and generating formal reports. Student will learn to add imagery to narratives to help show the reader (as opposed to simply telling them) what is unfolding in their story. Math placement tests will be given at the beginning of the year to determine where each child falls within the multifaceted spectrum of mathematics. Math will be taught according to math abilities with a strong emphasis on achieving or exceeding grade level.

The Middle School Team is excited to begin the new year and guide our students to their fullest potential.



## Letter from the President



Hello Everyone,

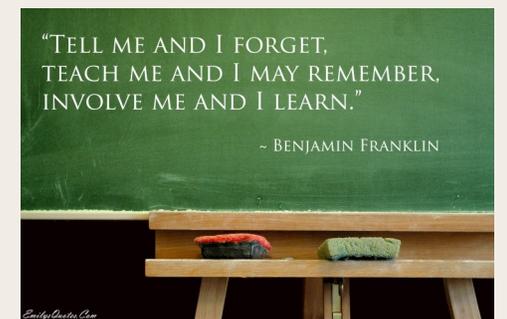
Welcome back to school! This is the 23rd year of classes at Sedona Charter School and we look forward to seeing you all at Back to School Night on August 8th. We are the oldest charter school in the state of Arizona. This is due in part to the quality of our teachers as well as our Montessori curriculum which challenges each child to achieve excellence through an individualized program.

Of course, another big reason for our success is parent involvement. We partner with each parent to educate their children and that includes parents giving back. Think about how many hours you spend looking at Facebook, or watching TV, or enjoying all that Sedona has to offer. This school year, plan to spend 50 hours volunteering your time to make our school a better place. That's less than 90 minutes each week! Just a few of the many ways parents can contribute include volunteering in your child's classroom, teaching a class in an area of your specialty, chaperoning a field trip, serving on our Parent Partnership Committee, or helping out in any of our schoolwide events (strings concerts, fall picnic, Winter Holidays Around The World, etc). Your personal involvement will improve the SCS community, help you feel more connected to our school, and help keep it the model for all other charter schools in the state.

This year our Upper Elementary and Middle School classrooms will have a new look. We are pleased that Suzi Ashley, Bethany Gray, Lauren Rondeau, and Niel Pableo are joining our teaching faculty. Do not hesitate to introduce yourselves to our new faculty during our Back To School Night and welcome them to our community. This is shaping up to be another great year at Sedona Charter School.

Respectfully yours,

Steven Paley, President  
Sedona Charter School  
Governing Council



## ask a teacher >>>

**Q:** A Montessori teacher never tells students what to do or not to do, Right?



**A:** The misconception that Montessori students are always allowed to do "whatever they want" is all too common. At SCS you'll discover that discipline is an integral part of every Montessori classroom, with the ultimate goal being to teach children to monitor themselves. It is important to understand that self-discipline is not a skill that is learned overnight. It is the result of many years of development.

In our classrooms, children are given **freedom** to choose a particular activity that interests them at certain times of the instructional day. This helps maximize the child's learning experience through individualized methods. However, the students are always choosing activities from a **carefully prepared environment (discipline)**. This is key! Without the carefully prepared environment, we cannot provide true freedom of choice for the child. Through careful observation, teachers and parents can provide the right activities for each child's development. Freedom and Discipline are two sides of the same coin. You cannot have one without the other.

Lauren Rondeau, MS Principal Educator



## staff >>>

**Lower Elementary:** Bob and Terri Wentsch, Katarina Houser, Amy Tedrick, Dolores Biermann, Ana Hansen  
**Upper Elementary:** Suzi Ashley, Maija Alanen, Harry Buedel, Bethany Gray, Jacquie Randall  
**Middle School:** Lauren Rondeau, Niel Pableo, Bethany Gray  
**Orchestral Strings:** Kristina Beachell  
**Administration:** Alice Madar, Lauren Hendler, Jannette Villalobos-Gil  
**Title I:** Joe Falsetto and Ana Hansen  
**Special Education:** Lucy Schwill, Teri Lechowski



## looking ahead >>>

### September 2017

*Classroom Happenings*  
*Special Events Calendar*  
*Ask A Teacher*  
*Alumni Profile*



contact us at 928-204-6464  
[www.sedonacharterschool.com](http://www.sedonacharterschool.com)

165 Kachina Drive  
Sedona, AZ 86336

**our mission...** *Our Montessori school challenges each child to achieve excellence through an individualized program, which includes a schoolwide musical strings program. We inspire a passion for learning, instill a sense of personal responsibility, and cultivate a respect for the environment and involvement in the community.*

## alumni news >>>

# Learning Has No Limits

Debra Glasberg Gail attended Sedona Charter School in its very early years. Her mother was one of the founding members and Debra was in the first class. Though she only had the opportunity to stay for three years before her family moved to Los Angeles, those years were incredibly formative.

Debra recalls that “the sense of freedom of learning that SCS provided inspired my curiosity and will forever remain with me.” One of her favorite activities was a map game where students would have a limited amount of time to find a place in the world (a country or a city) on a map. “I loved studying the map and competing against other students to challenge myself and see how quickly I could locate each place,” she exclaimed. Now as a teacher, Debra tries to think of similarly unconventional learning exercises that will excite her students.

One of her favorite teachers at Sedona Charter School was Michelle Price. Michelle helped hone and develop Debra’s language skills at an early age, laying the foundation for her continued academic success.

After graduating from Yeshiva University High School of Los Angeles, Debra attended Columbia College in New York City. There she majored in history and fell so in love with the discipline that she decided to continue her studies and pursue an even higher academic path.

We are so pleased to report that Debra is our first alumna to earn a doctoral degree. She completed her PhD in History at Columbia University in 2016. Last year she had a post-doctoral fellowship at New York University and next academic year she will be a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Pennsylvania. Debra feels very fortunate to have received various academic fellowships and awards that funded her PhD studies and allowed her to travel to archives and libraries in Italy, Jerusalem and Paris.

“My time at Sedona Charter School really set the foundation for my desire to constantly explore and challenge my learning. From a very young age, the open classroom spaces, the unconventional subjects we studied, and

the Montessori methods we used instilled in me the notion that learning has no limits. One

should constantly question, probe, and challenge,” she advises. “I hope to continue to impart these lessons to my students.”

Debra and her family currently live in New York City. “I’ve been here now for 13 years,” she added. “When we lived in Sedona, my Mom would always tell me I was a ‘city mouse.’ She was definitely right!” Debra plans to continue her academic path and hopes to find a professorship at a university. She loves the research, writing, and teaching and feels a tenure track position at a university would be ideal. In the meantime, she is very happy to continue doing what she loves in a postdoctoral capacity.

Debra is mother to a one-year-old boy and her time with him is her greatest joy.



**Debra Glasberg Gail**



**Sedona Charter School**

**AUGUST 2017**

**back to school**  
Keeping parents informed



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>LOWER ELEMENTARY ASSESSMENTS</b>			
	7 1st Day of School MS (Grades 7-8) Welcome Back! 	8 5:30 pm Back to School Night 	9 1st Day of School LE & UE (Grades 1-6) 1st Day of School 	10 	11 Ropes Course MS Field Trip 	12 
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
		3:30 pm—After School Sports Information Meeting 	6 pm LE Parent Ed Mtg. 7:30 am Beginning Orchestra 			
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	<b>HOT LUNCH STARTS</b> 3:30 pm Advanced Orchestra 		Beginning Orchestra 		<b>Vision Screenings</b>	
27	28	29	30	31		
	3:30 pm Advanced Orchestra 		7:30 am Beginning Orchestra 	Maria Montessori's Birthday		
<b>Looking Ahead:</b> September 4—No School—Labor Day September 6—Early Release Day September 13—LE Parent Meeting September 22—UE Trip to MIM						