

## Games and Movement 2016

1<sup>st</sup> Grade: We have worked on our forms – elbow circle, shoulder circle, fingertip circle, which help us flow into the space necessary for any activity; we have practiced doing this within a rhythmic count of 5 (eight beats to a count). I use the egg shaker, drum, or clapping to accomplish this, so that their body gets used to rhythmic movement into a form. We have also stamped and stomped during Chinese jump rope challenges, during the song Jump, Jim Joe! and also when forming circles. We have played many archetypal circles games, such as Circle Round the Zero, Have you Seen My Sheep?, Needle and Thread, Mousetrap, Farmer in the Dell, Rig-a-Jig-Jig among others. We have played People to People and other body geography games; and we have introduced simple, fun tag games to encourage the will forces, through safe ways and means. Lastly, string figures have awakened their imaginations to the possibilities a simple string can create. Through stories and images, the students' fingers weave magic, cross midlines and create dendrites connecting both brain hemispheres. I've looked at hand, foot, eye, ear and brain dominance, as well as temperaments of the children.

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade: In addition to the above, I have taught a few pair games to allow for independent play, such as Carry If You Can; we have explored the polarities, such as happy and sad, cold and hot, fast and slow in the game Two Worlds; We have at times now, realigned the circle into two lines and have played chasing games like Crows and Cranes and Smile Gauntlet. Free flow tag games allow safe expressions of the will but also cultivate responsibility towards others, such as in the game Turtle Lagoon, where turtles scared out of their shell are taken by caring turtles to the House of Shells. We stomp and jump during the Bear Hunt, and during I'm a Fisherman. Songs are vessels to express beauty, rhythm and movement gestures, (such as in Waddlyatcha).

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: We have met during Main Lesson to learn Bal-A-Vis-X, which is a series of beanbag and racquetball exercises, organized as solo, pair and group-based activities. The students started with me last year 1 on 1 and now we have progressed to whole class ball work with some challenging self and partner exercises. The focus is on auditory synchronicity, visual focus on bouncing balls, bringing a rhythmic balance to their bodies and crossing the midline. Our very first accomplishment of the year was the Bell Tower Roundelay, a group exercise demanding focus, concentration, awareness of others and a strong sense of rhythm. Games classes together have seen progress in not just physical ability but in social problem solving. Positive behaviors arising out of our playfulness together are shared and celebrated. The students are discovering how they, as budding individuals, fit into the whole. We play 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classics like What's Your Trade, Grandma's Slipper, and wrestling games such as Antelope In The Net, Toe Fencing and Finger Jousting. We've also jumped and stomped during Jump Jim Joe and I'm a Fisherman, and will soon work with the rhythm sticks and learn two ball games, Wall Ball and Four Square. We've been learning what it means to put people first, before the goal of the game, whenever they may come into conflict, especially, in regards to ball play.

4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Fourth grade loves to play! The students are able to work well with one another, and forgive when necessary. Skyball has been a hit with the class, a game where a 4" super bouncy ball is bounced high into the other side of the court and the players visually track and catch it – not always easy. This game combines spatial awareness of the front space with the above and below spaces, and fits 4<sup>th</sup> grade developmentally. We've enjoyed Sticky Gumball, based on the Israeli game Gaga; 4-Corner Bowling in which they have a moment to work for the "team" before rejoining them; Doe Doe Doe and Lions and Zebras where they work their breathing, the archetypal quality of 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Free flow running, tagging and chasing games in the Autumn, such as Food Tag, Heads and Tails Tag and Twitchy Tentacles also work with the breath quality in exploring spatial awareness of one another. Just this week students strapped into painter's stilts and left the ground, experiencing a moment of levity. We are playing with the idea of teams. More acrobatic work will continue in the Spring, as well as favorites like Colored Eggs, Fireball and Kickball.

5<sup>th</sup>: Class 5, with 6, 7 and 8, have been running once or twice a week since school started, in our quest to cross the United States. From Shell Beach to New York City, we are closing in on our 3,000 mile run. Students self-report how far they've run and since January we've also been tracking extracurricular activity and converting that into laps (such as swimming, bike riding, etc.) Marathon Kickball, Mercury Ball, and Hopping Hedgehog have given us better ball dynamic awareness. I've also introduced the archetypal game Spaceball. We've played class favorites such as 4-corner Bowling and Crystal Castle. We spent a few classes working on Juggling, both beanbags, but also other hand arts like juggle stix, diabolo, plate spinning, poi, and rings and blocks. We planted the seeds of Javelin and Discus in the fall and have watered them through winter, letting the images germinate. In the spring they will grow forth and we will nurture the form through repetition and further imagery in preparation for the Pentathlon. I look forward to the spring, when we will learn to Greek wrestle. This day is one I have looked forward to for many years, as I have the opportunity to witness the strength that has grown within each child first-hand. In February we'll measure our fitness through physical exercises. Afterward, we'll train to long jump and study the Olympics. The children are moving beautifully.

6<sup>th</sup>: Class 6, with 5,7 and 8, have been running once or twice a week since school started, in our quest to cross the United States. From Shell Beach to New York City, we are closing in on our 3,000 mile run. Students self-report how far they've run and since January we've also been tracking extracurricular activity that gets your heart moving and converting that into laps (such as swimming, bike riding, etc.) As their Centurion, I commanded our Roman soldiers to learn how to handle the wooden rod through numerous exercises, up to and including rod fencing. At the beginning of the year, this brought unity and cohesion as well as backspace awareness, and awareness of the other. Also, gravity became the teacher. We've built skill with ball handling volleyballs and basketballs through games like Clean Your Room and Prisonball, and recently finished a block on Prellball, a German sort of human ping-pong/upside-down volleyball-type game with a 6" rubber playground ball. 6<sup>th</sup> just had their first team "dodgeball" type game, which garnered rave reviews. We are also learning the Morris dance **Rigs O' Marlow**, a SunRidge tradition 12 years and running, which we perform at the Mayacamas Medieval Tournament and the May Faire. This class plays Spaceball, a Waldorf-school classic, with growing prowess. We will prepare for Archery and the Hunter's Javelin in the spring, as well as Tennis and Ultimate.

7<sup>th</sup>: Class 7, with 5, 6 and 8, have been running once or twice a week since school started, in our quest to cross the United States. From Shell Beach to New York City, we are closing in on our 3,000 mile run. Students self-report how far they've run and since January we've also been tracking extracurricular activity that gets your heart moving and converting that into laps (such as swimming, bike riding, etc.) We've also looked at heart rate, and aerobic and anaerobic activity and how they affect your body. We started the year off with a block of dodgeball-type games, always a class favorite. We worked a few weeks with wooden rods in morning movement to build class cohesion and unity. Students have been exploring aspects of safe play, why we have rules in a game, and their own agreements around what constitutes fair play. We've built skill with ball handling volleyballs and basketballs, and recently finished a block on Prellball, a German sort of human ping-pong/volleyball-type game with a 6" rubber playground ball. An archetypal game, Moth to the Flame, has been taught and enjoyed immensely. This class plays Spaceball, a Waldorf-school classic, with strong interest and skill. The spring holds work with inner and outer exploration, with blind games and orienteering challenges, and also elements of initiative, risk-taking and cooperation. We'll survey some of the more common sports (soccer, Ultimate, Lacrosse, Tennis) when the weather improves in the spring, as well as participate in the Explorers' Challenge in April.

8<sup>th</sup>: Class 8, with 5, 6 and 7, have been running once or twice a week since school started, in our quest to cross the United States. From Shell Beach to New York City, we are closing in on our 3,000 mile run. Students self-report how far they've run and since January we've also been tracking extracurricular activity that gets your heart moving and converting that into laps (such as swimming, bike riding, etc.) We've also looked at heart rate, and aerobic and anaerobic activity and how they affect your body. We started the year off with a block of dodgeball-type games,

always a class favorite. After that we had a unit on Track and Field, revisiting the events and exercises of the Pentathlon (javelin, discus, running, jumping), plus shotput. This culminated in a Track Meet at Summerfield with two other schools. We've built skill with ball handling volleyballs and basketballs, and recently finished a block on Prellball, a German sort of human ping-pong/volleyball-type game with a 6" rubber playground ball. Students are currently creating their own game, by bidding for game elements through an auction. Elements include Objective(s), Form, Actions, Props, and Challenges. Some also spent their idea points (Ips) on selecting a partner of their choice. I think this unit will be great fun with this class, as it has in the past. Class 8 recently played one of the best Spaceball games I can remember witnessing, with beautiful flowing motion, great anticipation, and movements that were quick, graceful, and expanding into space.