

NEWS LETTER

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, March 7, 2020
10:00 am – 2:00 pm



“The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind.”

–Dr. Maria Montessori

Remember to

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Hand-washing is an easy way to prevent infection. Understand when to wash your hands, how to properly use hand sanitizer and how to get your children into the habit.

Frequent hand washing is one of the best ways to avoid getting sick and spreading illness.

As you touch people, surfaces and objects throughout the day, you accumulate germs on your hands. You can infect yourself with these germs by touching your eyes, nose or mouth, or spread them to others. Although it's impossible to keep your hands germ-free, washing your hands frequently can help limit the transfer of bacteria, viruses and other microbes.

Always wash your hands before:

- * Preparing food or eating
- * Treating wounds or caring for a sick person.
- * Inserting or removing contact lenses

Always wash you hands after:

- * Preparing food
- * Using the toilet, changing a diaper or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- * Touching an animal, animal feed or animal waste
- * Blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- * Treating woulds or caring for a sick person
- * Handling garbage
- * Handling pet food or pet treats

Wash your hands when they are visibly dirty.

Follow these steps:

- * Wet your hands with clean, running water – either warm or cold.
- * Apply soap and lather well.
- * Rub your hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Remember to scrub all surfaces, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.
- * Rinse well.
- * Dry your hands with a clean towel or air-dry them.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers, which don't require water, are an acceptable alternative when soap and water aren't available. If you use a hand sanitizer, make sure the product contains at least 60% alcohol. Follow these steps:

- * Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand. Check the label to find the appropriate amount.
- * Rub your hands together.
- * Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

Help children stay healthy by encouraging them to wash their hands frequently. Wash your hands with your child to show him or her how it's done. To prevent rushing, suggest washing hands for as long as it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice. If your child can't reach the sink on his or her own, keep a step stool handy.

▶ **Holidays**

There will be no school on Monday, February 10th, and Monday, February 17th, which are Lincoln's Birthday and Presidents' Day.

▶ **Public Open House**

On Saturday, March 7th, 2020 from 10 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. we will have our semi-annual Public Open House. Get a \$100 tuition credit if you recommend someone to attend who then registers and enrolls.



Have a happy and blessed New Year full of love, happiness, peace and good health for all of us! 2020 begins the year of the Rat! Whether we are born in the year of the Rat or not, I believe that the children in our class have the great traits of the rat: intelligence, charm, ambition, industriousness and positivity. They beam with smiles as they come down to our classroom. They are very patient too and have helped a lot in directing, guiding and befriending our new children. They are positive, friendly and happy to be in our class.

The best part of winter break was having my own free time - no pressure to wake early and sleeping late to any time I wished. Two weeks just went by so quickly! Coming back to school then makes me excited and thrilled! I bet all my dear parents and children had a great time too!

Before I officially close memories of last December, let me recall our class holiday celebration! It was fun, exciting, memorable and amazing, our children gave the best performance of singing Christmas songs to Santa! They sang two beautiful Christmas songs, Jingle Bells and Jingle Bell

Rock. These songs were accompanied with instruments played by the children too! Santa and all of us in the classroom were singing together with our children as cameras clicked continuously. When Santa left, the excitement continued as each child's name was called for their gift exchange. Everyone had a great gift to take home from Santa on that day. Truly our parents are generous, understanding and kind; parents bonded with one another and I do thank the Lord for these blessings in our class. We were able to produce two boxes of food for the homeless/ needy! The children understood the value and importance of sharing what they have more than enough of in their pantry with those who have very little. It was their happiness and strong desire to come to school every week with grocery bags filled to the top! They were satisfied too as they saw our boxes overflowing with food. Thank you so much children and keep up the good values in your life and heart.

We have a new pet in the classroom. His name is Dot, a leopard gecko! Mrs. Chavez's nephew, Adrian, a former Meher student gave him to

us. Dot is so charming and smart! He has adjusted quickly to our classroom. The children gave him his name after a series of nominated names listed on the board. I'd like to give thanks to Ms. Bayon for doing such wonderful research about "Leopard Geckos." She informed the children of important facts of its habitat, food, care, and life span. Oh how we love Dot so much and enjoy his company and movements in his Terrarium every day.

The children in our class are busy once again learning new lessons; they have not forgotten the lessons learned last year and have reviewed them the moment they came back to school this year. Older children are working to write numbers from one to one thousand. After this, they will do the "long chain" of 10 individually. They do not take long to set it up, skip count it and write it down on grid paper. I have one graduating child this June, Rowan Huerta, who was able to do this task in just 30 minutes! The older children are also working on phonograms, sentences 1-5, reading stories, skip counting using the short and long chains to mention a few. Younger ones are working on practical and sensorial life, simple geography, phonics and writing their numbers from 1-50. All our children are much better in their socialization and capacity to understand, express and control their emotions towards others.

All the teachers in our classroom want to thank our parents for the numerous gifts sent to us. We appreciate you all so very much for your generosity, thoughtfulness and

love! Friendly reminders: School Shirt is coming Friday, January 31st, Chinese and Korean New Year Friday, January 24th. For Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, I read a book and summarized to the children the life, accomplishments and dreams of Dr. King.

Happy Birthday to all our January born children; namely: Remi Caldera – 4 yrs. old, Rowan Huerta – 6 yrs. old, Millie Li – 4 yrs. old. Be blessed always.

Thanks to Ms. Bayon for her continued assistance in maintaining a safe and loving environment for the children in our class, most especially helping with beautiful, simple and meaningful projects for each month's special days.

Have a Happy and Blessed Chinese and Korean Lunar New Year!

Till next month! Love always – Mrs. Rivera and Ms. Bayon





Happy New Year everyone. I hope everyone enjoyed their winter break and recouped strength and energy after the holidays.

Thank you, parents, and other family members for joining us in our holiday party. It was great seeing all of you there and watching the children get excited to perform for you. We also got 100% participation for School Shirt Day, so thank you parents for remembering. This month, School Shirt Day is on January 31.

The children were excited to get back to their favorite jobs in the classroom after the 2-week break. Many of them shared stories and events that occurred over that period. Other children drew or painted pictures. This month we welcome 2 new children in our classroom: Allyson Phung who is 3.1 and Nina Ortega who is 2.10. They are both settling great in the classroom and receiving a lot of grace and courtesy and practical life lessons. Our students have been reminding them, as well, of the classroom rules and routines. This really helpful for new students adjustment.

Birthdays this month are:

Tommy Gomez on the 15th who turns 5

Orion Perez on the 18th who turns 3

Aston Pan on the 21st who turns 5

Wyatt Flores on the 23rd who turns 4

Happy Birthday to them!

This month, the children will be learning about Martin Luther King Jr. We will read books about him and do some activities based on his life and things he accomplished as well. We will also be learning about Chinese New Year and the preparations that happen leading to that event.

With that, I'd like to invite all of you to our Chinese New Year celebration on January 24 at 11:00 am.

Thank you, parents, for all your help and support. A friendly reminder that I'm available from 7:00-8:00 A.M. and 2:45-3:30 daily, if you have any questions about your child or the classroom.

Ms. Lopez
Mrs. Suh



Class News

We are celebrating two cultural highlights this month- Martin Luther King Jr. Day and the Chinese New Year, and students are researching and doing crafts about these events. This is when I also tell stories about the history of these celebrations, and introduce the moon phases lesson. There were also three birthdays to celebrate. One child turned six, one turned seven, and one eight! And, Jake (6) and Sophia (8) share a birthday of January 26. Kyle turned seven on January 23. On their birthdays we sing our special birthday song and the child can choose to share about his or her interests and favorite activities.

Curriculum News

We turn our focus to flowers now for Garden Harvest. We spent the fall covering leaves and roots, and have now moved on to closely observing the marigold flowers in the class garden. Everyone has a lesson on the function of the flower, and the 3rd graders study this in more detail including the parts of the flower and what each part does in the whole process of pollination. Then they show the younger members of the class the flower parts up close on the marigolds in the garden, and everybody has a chance to quietly reflect as they sit by the garden and draw a picture of the flowers they see.

Our new Read Aloud this month is a book by Avi called *"Who Was That Masked Man, Anyway?"* Avi is a popular author of children's books and one common thread among his books is

they are adventure stories. This is his funniest book, written in 1992 and told through dialogue. It was inspired by the Long Ranger and the main character is very much caught up in his superhero stories.

The art lessons are now utilizing many of the techniques learned in the fall, such as using shapes and lines to see the bigger picture and making artwork with repeating patterns. The focus now is on texture and pattern, always drawing on what was learned previously.

This month's poem is a long one. The title is *"A Life on the Ocean Wave"* by Epes Sargent. The first verse goes like this

*"A life on the ocean wave,
A home on the rolling deep,
Where the scattered waves rave,
And the winds their revels keep!
Like an eagle caged, I pine,
On this dull, unchanging shore:
Oh! give me the flashing brine,
The spray and the tempest's roar!"*

I love these poems for the children because they are introduced to interesting vocabulary. Children are encouraged to try and recite the poems at the end of the month. Some learn a few lines, some do the whole poem, and some do all of the poems from each month one after the other. It is their choice of how much to recite, but they are all prompted by me to at least write it all down.

As always, children also get lessons geared towards them as individuals. After coming off the holiday break, I've been reviewing lessons from the fall and introducing new lessons as necessary. It has been really fun and our students came back ready to jump back into class mode. Some lessons to review have been nouns, math facts, place value, continents/oceans, and leaves. I introduced new lessons such as on grammar, reading comprehension, word problems, dynamic addition and subtraction, and the moon.

Calendar News

We will have a big Chinese New Year lunch where parents will bring culturally-appropriate dishes and shared in the festivities with us. Thank you for providing the food in advance! It will be an exciting time with some students teaching others how to make lanterns, or how to speak Chinese, and some dressed up for the party.

THANK YOU TO JULIET DIAZ AND HER FAMILY FOR TAKING CARE OF ROSIE AND GIVING HER A STYLISH NEW CAGE!



**HAPPY CHINESE NEW YEAR!
YEAR OF THE RAT**



THE MOON PHASES LESSON



Happy 2020, Meher Families!

Welcome back everyone! Actually, I should say welcome back at least half of you! Many of us (students and staff alike) have had to remain home these first few weeks of January fighting colds and such. The shivering cold (for California anyway) probably didn't offer much relief for those battling these pernicious bugs!

The next presentation – the periodic table and atoms

Last month's student presentation on the *Coming of Life*, starting from the Cambrian explosion, was a lot of fun, even if I did spring the idea of presenting their work as a play only a week before the performance. The students' next project/presentation is on chemistry, specifically the periodic table, elements, and atomic structure; of course, the students will have a wide variety of topics to choose from. The only restraints is that they include a chemistry experiment, which they describe and explain in terms of the chemical reactions and atomic wheeling and dealing that goes on behind the scenes!

Reviewing some basics

I imagine some parents remember the long homework problem sets teachers would assign. While we are not bringing that back, I have started to make sure students spend a little time each day reviewing their math basics and practicing reading comprehension; I see this practice as something similar in manner to

the way musicians run through their scales daily.

A couple of new classes

After a period of waiting, our drama and business classes will start this month! I have been looking forward to these new offerings. Ezio's mother, Ms. Espinoza, will be leading the business class and Ms. Carvajal, Francesca Alvarado's mother, will be leading the drama class.

Until next time

Finally, I hope all the students (and parents!) managed to have a relaxing and rejuvenating break and feel ready to get back to work!



Rat

**HAPPY LUNAR NEW YEAR!
JANUARY 25, 2020**

Happy New Year to everyone. May the New Year bring you happiness, peace, and prosperity. Wishing you a joyous 2020!

Our return from winter break started off slow due to illness by several of our students and some of our staff. We seem to be returning back to our normal daily enrollment so the classrooms are buzzing at normal speed again. We were happy to have new students join us after the break. New students are a wonderful addition to Meher and their new classmates are so helpful in helping them adjust quickly to their new environment.

The January First Friday Coffee was canceled due to the arrival of my second grandson the day before. February's is scheduled for Friday, February 7 and I hope to see many of you there. It is wonderful to see parents having great conversations and also getting to meet other parents that they don't usually get a chance to see.

January 23rd is National Handwriting Day. Handwriting is alive and well at Meher and we feel very strongly about the hand/brain connection and the importance of learning through movement and the senses that Dr. Montessori observed. Please take a moment and read about handwriting on our website mehermontessori.org.

I want to remind parents and stress the importance of your child arriving at school on time. The message they receive about school and the respect for their teachers and fellow students is immeasurable. Also, getting the full three hour uninterrupted work period in the morning is crucial to the success of a Montessori student and the harmony of a Montessori classroom. Please partner with us to do everything we can to give your child the best possible experience at Meher and that starts with being here on time. This is such a busy and full work period of the school year and the children are full speed ahead into their work and lessons.

Peace and love,
Adela Muñoz

The human hand allows the mind to reveal itself.

—Dr. Maria Montessori

What the hand does the mind remembers.

—Dr. Maria Montessori

Happy New Year!

Farewell 2019

Once again, the firefighters did not disappoint. This year's walking field trip to the fire station was another big success. Captain Steve thought the kiddos would enjoy seeing Mrs. Wildhaber don the protective gear and then "run" to the nearest pole. The run was more of a toddle, as I was not equipped to run with 60 additional pounds of gear on. But I gave it my best effort. After delivering all the toys, the kiddos got an in-depth look at the fire truck itself. Many were even lucky enough to hold the fire hose and spray the tree in the parking lot next to the fire station! It was a good time for all. Thank you again to everyone who helped make the event a success, either by donating toys for the toy drive, or volunteering to chaperone. We could not have done it without you.

Speaking of success, the kiddos really impressed at this year's winter program. With so many little ones, the month long daily practices ranged from great to...not so great. I was proud of them all for truly bringing their best when it came time to show off for all their families. I hope everyone enjoyed themselves at the refreshment party that followed. It was very heartwarming to see that every child had somebody there to celebrate with them.

Miss McCray, Miss Tinajero, Miss Sykes, and I would all like to thank the parents for your generosity. We

were so humbled by the thought and effort that went into the group gift, the kind words, and the individual gifts. We are so appreciative to have such a wonderful community that support us and our love for your children.

Before closing out the decade, I would also like to thank all the Meher families that came out to the 99th Annual Altadena Tree Lighting Ceremony. In addition to drop ins from current students Leona, Clayton and sister Lulu, Lou, and Isabel (thanks again for that hot chocolate!), I was visited by Meher alums, that ranged in age from 3rd grade to college! They were Hunter and Harrison Harper, Julia Mackinlay, Sophie Chertkow, and Brenna-Marie Henley. While I did not get to walk around and see the sights, I did not need to. Seeing current and former Meher students is always the highlight of the evening for me. Thanks to all those who dropped by!

Hello 2020!

Albert Zhu (3), joined Meher when we returned from winter break. He is now our youngest student, and he is doing great!

After two weeks off, I was worried that the kiddos would have a hard time adjusting. I worried for nothing. The kiddos dove right back into the lessons, working with the materials with such enthusiasm, it was clear they were missed.

This month we are learning about Martin Luther King Jr. in class. Some of the older and returning students



not have been possible. Through his determination in believing in equality, today is possible because of him. Also, I try not to overuse the labels black and white. I choose to describe skin color as sweet things. Vanilla, toffee, cocoa, peach, cream, chocolate, coffee, etc, are some names for skin color I came across in a book once, and thought it sounded like such a wonderful way to recognize differences and still see the beauty in all of us.

School Shirt Day

Yay! December got us back on track with 100% participation for School Shirt Day. The children will bake those long awaited

remember this from previous years. For others, it is brand new. Focusing on the positive, we have been repeating key phrases associated with MLK Jr. They are: *"You are just as good as anyone," "Everyone can be great," "Hate cannot drive out hate. Only love can do that," and "Love is the key to problems of the world."*

I also read part of his I Have A Dream speech. It said, *"I have a dream that one day in Alabama little black boys and black girls will join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers."* We all then stood up and held hands together while looking at all the different colors of our skin. I talked about how during Martin's childhood, this would

apple muffins later in the month. This month's School Shirt Day is Friday, January 31st. Please help your child to remember to wear their shirt on this day so that the class may earn another baking activity for February.

Coming in February

We cover Black History Month, Valentine's Day, and President's Day in February. Any volunteers who would like to come in and share more about Black History Month would be greatly appreciated

We will have a small refreshment party for the class only on Valentines Day. A sign up for that will go out on the coat rack February 1st. Children are welcome to bring valentines to

pass out to their classmates. Please leave the "to" section blank. Help your child fill out their name in the "from" section only. **Also, as we have food allergies, please DO NOT include food or candy with the valentines.**



February will also bring a Parent Night late in the month. More information on that will go out in early February.

Until Next Month,
Mrs. Wildhaber
Miss Tinajero
Miss McCray & Miss Sykes



OUR FIELD TRIP TO THE FIRE STATION!



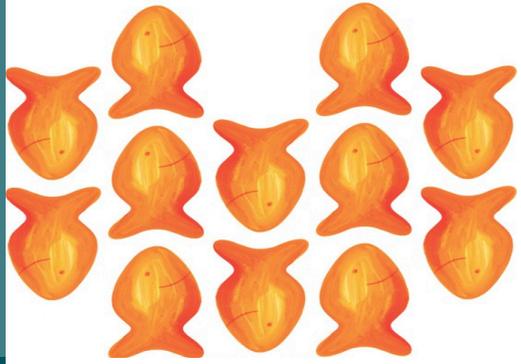


Stop Trying to Raise Successful Kids

And start raising kind ones..

As anyone who has been called out for hypocrisy by a small child knows, kids are exquisitely attuned to gaps between what grown-ups say and what grown-ups do. If you survey American parents about what they want for their kids, more than 90 percent say one of their top priorities is that their children be caring. This makes sense: Kindness and concern for others are held as moral virtues in nearly every society and every major religion. But when you ask *children* what their parents want for them, 81 percent say their parents value achievement and happiness over caring.

Kids learn what's important to adults not by listening to what we say, but by noticing what gets our attention. And in many developed societies, parents now pay more attention to individual achievement and happiness than anything else. However much we praise kindness and caring, we're



not actually showing our kids that we value these traits.

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised, then, that kindness appears to be in decline. A rigorous analysis of annual surveys of American college students showed a substantial drop from 1979 to 2009 in empathy and in imagining the perspectives of others. Over this period, students grew less likely to feel concern for people less fortunate than themselves—and less bothered by seeing others treated unfairly.

It's not just that people care less; they seem to be helping less, too. In one experiment, a sociologist scattered thousands of what appeared to be lost letters in dozens of American cities in 2001, and again in 2011. From the first round to the second one, the proportion of letters that was picked up by helpful passersby and put in a mailbox declined by 10 percent. (When the same experiment was conducted in Canada, helpfulness didn't diminish.) Psychologists find that kids born after 1995 are just as likely as their predecessors to believe that other people experiencing difficulty should be helped—but they feel less personal responsibility to take action themselves. For example, they are less likely to donate to charity, or even to express an interest in doing so.

"If society is fractured today, if we truly care less about one another, some of the blame lies with the values parents have elevated. In our own lives, we've observed many fellow parents becoming so focused on achievement that they fail to nurture kindness. They seem to regard their children's accolades as a personal badge

of honor—and their children’s failures as a negative reflection on their own parenting.

Other parents subtly discourage kindness, seeing it as a source of weakness in a fiercely competitive world. In some parenting circles, for example, there’s a movement against intervening when preschoolers are selfish in their play. These parents worry that stepping in might prevent kids from learning to stick up for themselves, and say that they’re less worried about the prospect of raising an adult who doesn’t share than one who struggles to say no. But there’s no reason parents can’t teach their kids to care about others *and* themselves—to be both generous and self-respecting. If you encourage children to consider the needs and feelings of others, sometimes they will and sometimes they won’t. But they’ll soon learn the norm of reciprocity: If you don’t treat others considerately, they may not be considerate toward you. And those *around* you will be less likely to be considerate of one another, too.

Parents’ emphasis on toughness is partly an unintended consequence of the admirable desire to treat boys and girls more equally. Historically, families and schools encouraged girls to be kind and caring, and boys to be strong and ambitious. Today, parents and teachers are rightly investing more time and energy in nurturing confidence and leadership in girls. Unfortunately, there isn’t the same momentum around developing generosity and helpfulness in boys. The result is less attention to caring across the board.

Kids, with their sensitive antennae, pick up on all this. They see their peers being celebrated primarily for the grades they get and the goals they score, not for the generosity they show. They see adults marking their achievements without paying as much attention to their character. Parents are supposed to leave a legacy for the next generation, but we are at risk of failing to pass down the key virtue of kindness. How can we do better?

When our own kids started school, we

noticed that many of our questions at the end of the day were about accomplishments.

Did your team win? How did the test go?

To demonstrate that caring is a core value, we realized that we needed to give it comparable attention. We started by changing our questions. At our family dinners, we now ask our children what they did to help others. At first, “I forget” was the default reply. But after a while, they started giving more thoughtful answers. “I shared my snack with a friend who didn’t have one,” for example, or “I helped a classmate understand a question she got wrong on a quiz.” They had begun actively looking for opportunities to be helpful, and acting upon them.

As parents, we’ve also tried to share our own experiences with helping—and to make a point of including the moments when we’ve failed. Telling your kids about how you regret not standing up for a child who was bullied might motivate them to step up one day. Recalling a time when you quit a team and left your teammates in the lurch might prompt your kids to think more carefully about their responsibilities to others.

The point is not to badger kids into kindness, or dangle carrots for caring, but to show that these qualities are noticed and valued. Children are naturally helpful—even the smallest ones appear to show an innate understanding of others’ needs. By the time they are a year and a half old, many children are eager to help set the table, sweep the floor, and clean up games; by the time they turn two and a half, many will give up their own blanket for someone else who is cold.

But too many kids come to see kindness as a chore rather than a choice. We can change that. Experiments show that when kids are given the choice to share instead of being forced to, they’re roughly twice as likely to be generous later. And when kids are praised and recognized for helping, they are more likely to help again.

We can also advise our children to be mindful of the friends they make.

Psychologists distinguish between two paths to popularity: status (which derives from being dominant and commanding attention) and likability (which comes from being friendly and kind). Adolescents are often drawn to status, flocking to cool kids who seem superior, even if they're not particularly nice. (Every parent can relate to the experience of thinking, *I can't believe that kid's behavior. He's never coming over again!*) Children are similarly quick to admire peers on the basis of their accomplishments—the fastest runner on the team, say, or the winner of the talent show. We don't think parents should police friendships, but we do think it's important to nudge kids to notice classmates who are kind and compassionate. We can ask how those children treat others, and how they make others feel. That's a starting point for developing friendships with children who have compatible values—not ones who stomp all over them. We tell our own children that they shouldn't hang out with the popular kids who sneer and laugh when a classmate trips in the cafeteria. They should get to know the kids who help pick up her tray.

As we've seen, overemphasizing individual achievement may cause a deficit of caring. But we don't actually have to choose between the two. In fact, teaching children to care about others might be the best way to prepare them for a successful and fulfilling life.

Quite a bit of evidence suggests that children who help others end up achieving more than those who don't. Boys who are rated as helpful by their kindergarten teacher earn more money 30 years later. Middle-school students who help, cooperate, and share with their peers also excel—compared with unhelpful classmates, they get better grades and standardized-test scores. The eighth graders with the greatest academic achievement, moreover, are not the ones who got the best marks five years earlier; they're the ones who were rated most helpful by their third-grade classmates and teachers. And middle schoolers who believe their parents value being

helpful, respectful, and kind over excelling academically, attending a good college, and having a successful career perform better in school and are less likely to break rules.

In part, that's because concern for other people promotes supportive relationships and helps prevent depression. Students who care about others also tend to see their education as preparation for contributing to society—an outlook that inspires them to persist even when studying is dull. In adulthood, generous people earn higher incomes, better performance reviews, and more promotions than their less generous peers. This may be because the meaning they find in helping others leads to broader learning and deeper relationships, and ultimately to greater creativity and productivity.

But kindness can also make kids happy in the here and now. In one experiment, toddlers received Goldfish or graham crackers for themselves, then were invited to give some of the food to a puppet who "ate" them and said "yum." Researchers rated the children's facial expressions, and found that sharing the treats appeared to generate significantly more happiness than receiving them. And the toddlers were happiest of all when the treats they gave came from their own bowl, rather than from somewhere else.

Psychologists call this the helper's high. Economists refer to it as the warm glow of giving. Neuroscientists find that generosity activates reward centers in our brains. And evolutionary biologists observe that we're wired to help others. A tribe of people who "were always ready to aid one another," Darwin wrote, "would be victorious over most other tribes; and this would be natural selection."

Of course, we should encourage children to do their best and to take pride and joy in their accomplishments—but kindness doesn't require sacrificing those things. The real test of parenting is not what your children achieve, but who they become and how they treat others. If you teach them to be kind, you're not only setting your kids up for success. You're setting up the kids around them, too. ■