



# JBS NEWS

## FROM THE DESK OF JULIA BROWN

Most mornings as I leave the Laurel swimming pool after my swim and shower, I cross paths with a coterie of toddlers entering with their caregivers for a child-oriented activity. The educator in me cannot resist saying good morning and wishing them a fun time. I leave the pool grinning from ear to ear, uplifted not just by my own workout but even more so by my interaction with these darling representatives of the next generation.

What a wonderful way to start the day! Yet for so many people little interactions like these do not happen, or if they do, don't provide the pleasure that I describe above. While I would like to consider myself having a "half-full" personality, many individuals have the opposite; a "half-empty" look on life.

Unfortunately, those with chronic negativity not only deny themselves happiness but invariably seem to drag everyone down everyone they encounter. Fellow workers, friends and family alike. This can make interactions with people with a pessimistic look on life very extremely unpleasant.

Psychologists are now studying how challenging negativism can be. The result being a lot of study on fostering positive emotions, the theory that accumulating "micro-moments of positivity," like my daily interaction with children, can, over time, result in greater overall well-being.

The research demonstrates that the extent to which we can generate positive emotions from even everyday activities can determine who flourishes and who doesn't. More than a sudden bonanza of good fortune, repeated brief moments of positive feelings can provide a buffer against stress and depression and foster both physical and mental health, their studies show.

This is not to say that one must always be positive to be healthy and happy. Clearly, there are times and situations that naturally result in negative feelings in the most upbeat of individuals. Worry, sadness, anger and other such "downers" have their place in any normal life. But chronically viewing the glass as half-empty



## CALENDAR

### DECEMBER

Conferences continue

12/22 Winter Celebration

**12/25 & 12/26**

**JBS CLOSED - Winter Break**

12/27-12/29

Classes Closed;  
Daycare Open - Winter Break

### JANUARY

**1/1 JBS CLOSED - New Year's Day**

1/2 Classes Resume

**1/15 JBS CLOSED - MLK, Jr. Birthday**

1/2 Classes Resume

1/16 Prospective K & JR Meeting, 5 pm, SS

1/17 Prospective K & JR Meeting, 5 pm, CO

1/23 Prospective K & JR Meeting, 5 pm, OL

1/24 Prospective K & JR Meeting, 5 pm, LA

TBA Observations of K and JR classes for Prospective Parents

*(Continued from page 1)*

is detrimental both mentally and physically and inhibits one's ability to bounce back from life's inevitable stresses.

Negative feelings activate a region of the brain called the amygdala, which is involved in processing fear and anxiety and other emotions. Neuroscientists have shown that people in whom the amygdala recovers slowly from a threat are at greater risk for a variety of health problems than those in whom it recovers quickly.

They have demonstrated that the brain is "plastic," or capable of generating new cells and pathways, and it is possible to train the circuitry in the brain to promote more positive responses. That is, a person can learn to be more positive by practicing certain skills that foster positivity.

For example, researchers found that six weeks of training in a form of meditation focused on compassion and kindness resulted in an increase in positive emotions and social connectedness and improved function of one of the main nerves that helps to control heart rate. The result is a more variable heart rate that is associated with objective health benefits like better control of blood glucose, less inflammation and faster recovery from a heart attack. They showed that as little as two weeks' training in compassion and kindness meditation generated changes in brain circuitry linked to an increase in positive social behaviors like generosity.

The results suggest that taking time to learn the skills to self-generate positive emotions can help us become healthier, more social, more resilient versions of ourselves.

In other words, well-being can be considered a life skill. If you practice, you can get better at it. By learning and regularly practicing skills that promote positive emotions, you can become a happier and healthier person. Thus, there is hope for people should they choose to take steps to develop and reinforce positivity.

A recent report states that shared positivity — having two people caught up in the same emotion — may have even a greater impact on health than something positive experienced by oneself. Consider watching a funny play or movie or TV show with a friend of similar tastes, or sharing good news, a joke or amusing incidents with others.

Activities to foster positive emotions include:

- Do good things for other people. In addition to

making others happier, this enhances your own positive feelings. It can be something as simple as helping someone carry heavy packages or providing directions for a stranger.

- Appreciate the world around you. It could be a bird, a tree, a beautiful sunrise or sunset or even an article of clothing someone is wearing. I met a man recently who was reveling in the architectural details of the 19th-century houses in my neighborhood.

- Develop and bolster relationships. Building strong social connections with friends or family members enhances feelings of self-worth and, long-term studies have shown, is associated with better health and a longer life.

- Establish goals that can be accomplished. Perhaps you want to improve your tennis or read more books. But be realistic; a goal that is impractical or too challenging can create unnecessary stress.

- Learn something new. It can be a sport, a language, an instrument or a game that instills a sense of achievement, self-confidence and resilience. But here, too, be realistic about how long this may take and be sure you have the time needed.

- Choose to accept yourself, flaws and all. Rather than imperfections and failures, focus on your positive attributes and achievements. The loveliest people I know have none of the external features of loveliness but shine with the internal beauty of caring, compassion and consideration of others. Practice resilience. Rather than let loss, stress, failure or trauma overwhelm you, use them as learning experiences and steppingstones to a better future. Remember the expression: When life hands you a lemon, make lemonade.

Practice mindfulness. Ruminating on past problems or future difficulties drains mental resources and steals attention from current pleasures. Let go of things you can't control and focus on the here-and-now. Consider taking a course in insight meditation.

Perhaps it is the Holiday Season that encouraged me to write on this topic. The Holiday Season is full of many emotions. Joy, reflection, anxiety for the year ahead and perhaps even sadness due to loved ones not being with us. I hope that my words can bring some perspective and offer ideas that allow these emotions to be dealt with in the most positive light.

***On behalf of Mrs. Leonhart and  
Mrs. Komesarook, I wish everyone  
a happy Holiday Season and  
a prosperous New Year.  
-Julia Brown***

## THE JBS JUNIOR FALL PRODUCTION

In mid– November our Junior Classes presented a Fall Program for their parents. Each school chose a theme or production that was unique to their class. Our Kindergarteners also participated as the opening act. It was a fantastic event that was enjoyed by the performers as well as the audience!



**Columbia Talent Show**



**Laurel Greek Plays**



**The Olney Play**



**Silver Spring Science Fair**

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*“As soon as children find something that interests them, they lose their instability and learn to concentrate.” - Maria Montessori*

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## FROM OUR JUNIOR CLASS

JBS Columbia

It has been an exciting and busy past few weeks as we prepared for our JR Fall Event. This year we were thrilled to present our very first talent show. Each of us was able to showcase our special talents such as singing, dancing, poetry, art, and other skills to our parents, family, and friends. We even invited our PM and K classes to join us and take part in our program.

We have been introduced to a wonderful and new year-long lesson of Computer Science. We discuss and discover what computers are, their importance to our society, how they work, and the evolution of the computer, through a variety materials and research.

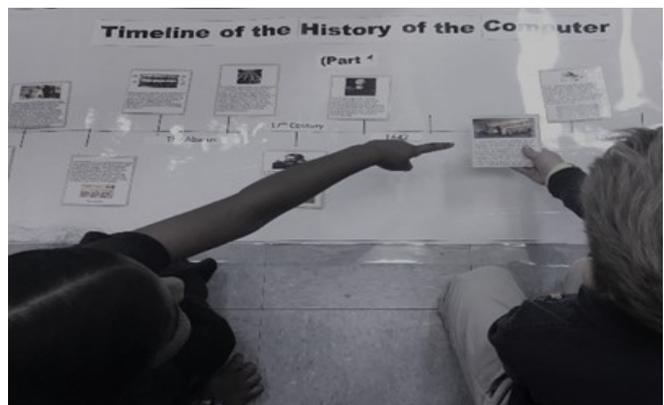
The Montessori 3-part nomenclature cards help us learn more about a topic by visual picture cards, descriptions, and definitions with labels.



***A student uses 3-part cards to learn the parts of the computer .***

So far we have learned about Charles Babbage, the “father of computer science”, the beginning stages of programming, function, input, output, the history of the computer, and how to write our own algorithms in our computer science/coding journals!

***Two students work together on a timeline of the history of the computer.***



The goals of the computer science curriculum is to enhance problem solving skills, encourage students to respect and recognize the processes of actions, and to introduce the structure of the computer code.