



NORTHERN EXPOSURE

The Newsletter of Village Academy North, Inc.

This is our favorite time of the year. We've had class parties, "Make & Take" events, Santa visits and more. The Christmas tree in the lobby is decorated by the children. This is just really fun! We celebrate

Christmas and Hanukkah here, and teach the children about the joy of both. We hope that you share the joy of love and family with your children at this time - it is just so much more important than the presents.

VILLAGE
ACADEMY NORTH

H1N1 UPDATE

HOLIDAY HOURS

GRADING
EDUCATIONAL TV

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H1N1 NEWS

So you might remember a special newsletter we put out some months ago in which we quoted the Health Department saying the H1N1 virus can live on surfaces for 6-8 hours. Here's an update to that.

According to a NY Times article, flu viruses can live for up to 48 hours, depending on factors such as the type of surface, humidity, and temperature.

The article stated: "For example, cold and flu viruses survive longer on inanimate surfaces that are nonporous, like metal, plastic and wood, and less on porous surfaces, like clothing, paper and tissue. Most flu viruses can live one to two days on non-porous surfaces, and 8 to 12 hours on porous surfaces. But a 2006 study found that avian influenza seemed particularly hardy, surviving as long as six days on some surfaces...On skin, cold and flu viruses last less than a few minutes."

The challenge here is that when you touch a

contaminated surface - like a shopping cart or a door or a toy - and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth within minutes, you can be infected.

Remember, anti-bacterial wipes and sprays are of no value against viruses. You need to use Lysol-like sprays, or a diluted bleach or ammonia spray like we do here. Bleach is effective at 1-3 tablespoons per gallon.

HOLIDAY HOURS

We are closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

We close at 4:00 pm on New Years Eve.

We are closed on New Years Day.

Please mark it on your calendar! (I hope I got it right this time!)

SCHOOL-AGE

Our After-School program runs all day for the Christmas break. We have two weeks of fun planned, including a field trip to Pump It Up. Please

check with the front desk for rates and availability.

EDUCATIONAL TV

We like to point you towards useful articles and information about your child's health. We are fans of educational TV, but even that should not be taken as always being acceptable.

A recent article in Children's Health calls into question the quality of many children's educational TV programs. "After analyzing a variety of children's programming for factors including clarity of message and how well the lesson related to real life...only one episode of every eight qualified as 'highly educational'".

The best shows? Sesame Street, Beakman's World, Between the Lions, 3-2-1 Penguins!, Cyberchase, The Suite Life of Zack & Cody, and Teen Kid News. Shows to avoid? Curious George, The Replacements, and That's So Raven.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING

This year through your generosity we collected: 256 Lids for Breast Cancer Awareness, about 400 cans for our Food Drive to St. Francis House and a significant number of Christmas toys that are being donated to the Sertoma Club. The Sertoma Club will be giving the toys out to children in the St. Augustine area. Thank you for helping!

DATES TO REMEMBER	DEC 24/25 Village <i>North</i> Closed (Christmas)	DEC 31 Village <i>North</i> Closed at 4:00	JAN 1 Village <i>North</i> Closed (New Years Day)	JAN 15, 18 St Johns County Schools Closed (Village <i>North</i> Open)
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STAFF TURNOVER

We dislike staff turnover even more than you do. It is sometimes troubling for the children, it upsets our parents, and for the business it is very expensive. It is, nonetheless, a reality in child care. We thought we'd talk about it with you for a moment.

Part of the issue is generational. There are a considerable number of studies that have documented the different work ethic found in Baby Boomers, Gen-X, and Gen-Y. It's not that younger generations don't work as hard, they just have very strong opinions about when they will work. In general, studies show they "work to live" not "live to work". One admittedly oversimplistic summation goes like this: Baby Boomers will happily work 60 hours a week for 40 hours pay. Gen-X will work 40 hours a week for 40 hours pay. Gen-Y will work 40 hours - but they will tell YOU which 40. Sometimes we can't accommodate hours that the employee demands that support *their* schedule (perhaps they go to school), but not ours.

Part of the issue is that sometimes an employee just doesn't fit in with the culture. You have all worked places where someone just doesn't seem to fit in. Here at *North*, we strive for a collegial atmosphere where employees are mutually supportive. We want people who are happy and even eager to step in and help when one of their colleagues needs it. We don't tolerate gossip at anytime. We expect teachers to be kind, gentle and patient - even in the toughest of circumstances. When someone doesn't fit in - a gossip, or a non-team player, or someone who won't complete the state-required training, etc. - then we have to let that person go. We constantly strive to build a team that delivers the best child care experience you can find - every day.

We can tell you that we pay our staff well. To the best of our knowledge, we pay better than anyone else in the county. We have a 401k program, subsidize medical insurance for our people, provide subsidy for educational expenses, and offer paid vacation. We reward staff that earn more credentials with pay increases. We truly believe this is a great place to work. The reality is, though, that it just isn't the right fit for everybody. Staff leave for different careers, to go back to school, or to find more flexible hours. Some leave because we terminate them. Employee turnover is a fact of life in the childcare business. We try to minimize it by selecting the best possible applicants, but there is turnover nonetheless. Please be assured that we are dedicated to having the best trained, most professional staff to care for and educate your children.

ADMIN NOTES

Have you brought in sufficient changes of warm clothes for your child - and marked them with their name? It's going to get cold next week, and we still go outside to play. We are not staffed to leave some children in the classroom because they aren't dressed properly...Don't forget flu shots!...Merry Christmas!