

September, 2009

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to another wonderful year at Solomon Schechter Day School of Nassau County. We know this will be a year filled with learning, discovery, and social and emotional growth for your children. We have many exciting activities planned throughout the year and to kick off the year we are ready to launch mathmania4kids.com.

Math Mania is a new website created specifically for the parents and children in SSDS. Each week there will be a Challenge of the Week Problem for the children in Kindergarten through fifth grade. These problems are designed for children and parents to work together towards figuring out the answers. Parents are encouraged to work with their children to explore the varied possibilities to figure out the correct answer. When parents and children work collaboratively on tasks to achieve a common goal, the children feel more confident and are willing to take on greater challenges in the future.

The problems that are posted on Math Mania are taken from grade level books. According to the math standards and strands of New York State these are the kinds of word problems which our students are expected to be proficient at answering. While these problems may seem difficult at first, the best way to approach them is to read the problem over a few times to get an understanding of the task at hand.

For all of the problems the children are encouraged to use manipulatives to figure out the answers.

A mathematical manipulative is an object which is designed so that a student can learn some mathematical concept by manipulating it. The use of manipulatives provides a way for children to learn concepts in developmentally appropriate, hands-on ways. Mathematical manipulatives are used in the first step of teaching mathematical concepts, that of concrete representation. The second and third steps are representational and abstract, respectively. Manipulatives are used to help children understand one-to-one correspondence as well as helping them make the abstract concrete. Simple manipulatives can be found in every household. Items such as toothpicks, popsicle sticks, pennies, buttons, dried beans, dried pasta, cereal as well as small candies such as M&Ms can all be used to enhance student learning and understanding. Use these manipulatives as often as is necessary. You will notice over time how adept your children will become at solving math word problems.

Math Mania will begin on Monday, September 14, 2009. To begin:

- Go to the website <http://www.mathmania4kids.com>
- Click on the challenge of the week for your child's grade level
- Print out the challenge and read the problem carefully. Talk to your child about the different ways to approach the problem. There will usually be more than just one way to figure out the solution.
- When you and your child figure out the answer, please be sure to have your child's first and last name as well as his/her class written clearly at the top of the page.
- Have your child bring the finished paper into school and place it in the MATH MANIA box for his/her grade that is located in the front office

All children who participate in the Math Mania Challenge will receive:



1 raffle ticket just for trying to figure out the answer



2 raffle tickets for working on the problem and getting the right answer



3 raffle tickets for demonstrating how they figured out the answer

To earn 3 raffle tickets children in grades K-2 should draw a picture to explain their solution and children in grades 3-5 should write a few sentences explaining how they got the answer.

The children will be responsible to hold onto their raffle tickets and at the end of each month they can decide how many of their raffle tickets they want to enter into the monthly drawing for a prize.

Each child who participates will get an envelope in which to keep their tickets. All raffle tickets will have the children's names written on them and will be kept in their classrooms. At the end of the month we will place the raffle tickets into a basket and randomly choose one winner from each grade. We look forward to seeing all of the entries and to heightening our children's love of numbers and math!

Mathematically yours,

Dr. Cindy Dolgin

Principal

Sandi Swerdloff

Assistant Principal

