

Our Children's Center Newsletter

Volume V, Issue 111

Notes from the Director:

February 2010

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This month I'd like to introduce you to our new newsletter format. This layout was developed by a director friend of mine. It seemed to me that it provides space for a lot of valuable information in a compact format. I hope you will find it helpful. We plan to distribute it at the beginning of each month. I will continue doing email news updates too.

The first page will include a note from me or Miss Kassie as the Head of School as well as spotlight one classroom's news. A brief table of contents gives a quick guide to what is in the issue. Page 2 will be news from each of the classrooms.

Pancakes for lunch!

Page 3 will include updates about ways we collect and respond to parent feedback, information about school transitions and updates about fundraising projects and events.

On page 4 you will find a health and/or wellness feature, information relating to state programs we participate in for licensing, accreditation, and grant writing, as well as information from the office.

Page 5 will include items of interest to parents including special events, parenting education classes, community events and school volunteer opportunities.

The final page will include a calendar with events and reminders.

I hope you will find this newsletter helpful and keep it somewhere safe. The plan is to publish this newsletter on the website so you will have access anytime.



Transition—Toddler Room 2 News

We've been so busy and as January ends we look forward to even more fun and learning! As practical life is proving to be one of the favorite areas, we are exploring many new, fun and challenging works. The children are enjoying scooping, pouring, using tongs, washing the baby and even catching bugs. Painting is a huge part of our lives, so keep an eye out for all different types and colors of paintings displayed throughout the room.

On Feb. 3, Ethan's mom will be helping us make Chinese dumplings and teaching us some Chinese words to celebrate Chinese New Year. Thanks, Mei-Jen.

While the book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* continues to be a circle time favorite, I have begun reading *Rainbow Fish* to our young friends. *Rainbow Fish* helps to introduce a complex topic—sharing. Children this young, still ego-centric and focused on themselves, don't have the capacity to understand how and why they should share.

When asked to share with others, young children feel frustrated and then often angry. A viable alternative to forced sharing is turn-taking. This concept is more easily understood and mastered at a young age. Now that we have turn-taking down pat, we are ready to introduce sharing into our vocabulary. Thanks to all of the parents for being understanding about the 11:30 pick-up location. We are trying to make this transition as easy and safe as possible for everyone. We'll be using the room next to the office with the train table and library.

Rm 1: Montessori class from Miss Kassie & Miss Elise

Last month, we welcomed a new friend, Berat Berkdemir, into our school. He is from Turkey and we are helping him to learn English. We have completed a cultural study of India, to coincide with Amithi's trip and now we are learning about China. Emily's mom, Mei-Jen, and Evie's mom, Fang, will share a taste of Chinese dumplings to celebrate Chinese New Year.



The continent of Antarctica has been the focus of the geography shelf, where the children are learning about continents, land features, penguins, snow and snowflakes. The children may spend some quiet time in the peaceful corner which is filled with hanging snowflakes and winter pictures.

The children are creating a winter village complete with paper bag houses, painted pinecone trees, fluffy snow, and paper people. The children continue to spend lots of time reading and listening to stories.

Rm 3: Montessori class from Miss Leigh & Miss Bonnie

The children have enjoyed learning about Antarctica and using our Antarctica Science Center. We've been studying about many kinds of penguins and how they live and weather here compared to Antarctica. Isn't it funny how it can be so cold on a bright sunny day in January.

We are getting ready to celebrate Chinese New Year by creating lantern decorations, learning about dragons as well as learning how to make Chinese dumplings with Emily's mom on Feb. 5th in the OCC kitchen.

Kid quotes: "If you're sad and you know it...take a bath!" BC

"Boy, it's cold outside—I think it is minus 500 degrees." RB

"This must be what the Penguins feel like —" ML



JM exploring the science center

Kindergarten & Pre-K news from Miss Kassie & Miss Leigh

Have you read a Jan Brett story lately? We have been reading many with the afternoon class. The students take great delight in discovering the story within the story by reading the pictures on the sides of the pages. "Those trolls are so funny!" KP

"Look at how big the flower is! Can we measure it? It is as tall as the 6th red and blue rod." EB As we all watched the Amaryllis grow, and grow taller, and bloom, the children and adults were amazed by magnificence of each gorgeous bloom as it appeared.



CR paints a picture of the amaryllis after Miss Kassie gave all of the students a lesson in still life painting. Please check out the amazing work of the afternoon students as all of the amaryllis paintings are displayed in the entryway.

February begins our quilt study which includes elements of design, types of quilts, family connections to quilts and many stories involving the making of special quilts.



Let Your Voices Be Heard:

Hearing from staff and families is an important part of making our program a success. In the past the school has gathered much of our information informally through face to face interactions. Last month I asked families to complete a survey as a means to obtain more formal feedback about our program.

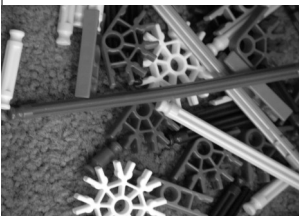
The results of this survey were generally positive with an average overall score of 4.25 out of 5. With a 65% return rate, I was pleased with the parent participation as well as the care taken to respond to the opened ended areas of the survey. Many families are pleased with the academic growth and development their children are experiencing as well as citing increased independence, confidence, increased skill in social situations, and showing a love of learning.



What we found out is that many families really want more regular communication about how their child is progressing as well as more information about what is happening in each classroom. The staff has met and several new communication tools have been developed to address your needs. Please help us to help you find the ways that are most effective. We will be adjusting and tweaking the tools as we go, so please let us know any suggestions you may have to improve our communications with you.

Transitions:

Transitions can be a challenge for parents and children alike. In January a few students will be moving from the Transition Room to a 3-6 year old Montessori classroom. Kindergarten students will once again be rotating into the other morning 3-6 classroom. During this transitional time please take the time to talk to the teachers about your child's needs. The teaching



teams will work together to foster a positive and smooth transition whether it happens now or in the future.

Keep your eyes peeled for more information about OCC special meetings for parents of rising Kindergarten students who will attend OCC or public or private Kindergarten as well as meetings about OCC Kindergarten student transition to first grade!

Fund-raising Frenzy:

- **The Harrison's Soup Fund-raiser** had a fantastic response. We had \$710 in soup orders delivered to OCC. 20% of the sales goes to OCC. We hope to have another day soon, maybe in March. What do you think?
- **Wise Crackers Comedy Club—OCC fundraiser is Friday, Feb. 26 at 7 p.m.** Doors open at 6 p.m. The tickets are \$15 (\$7.00 per ticket goes to OCC). We have 90 (minimum) to 200 tickets to sell to friends, family members, co-workers and anyone who loves live comedy. Child care will be available at OCC if folks are interested. Watch for more info. This is a non-smoking show. Snacks are available, cash bar. This promises to be a fun evening for us and an awesome way to raise money for the school's playground.
- **OCC's annual Silent Auction is on Friday, May 7.** We auction off wonderful donated items from local businesses, our current parents, alumni parents, teachers, staff, and friends of the school. This is a wonderful event and a great way to get to know other families, sample delicious treats, buy unique items and benefit our school.

Our Children's Center

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School and Daycare Rules and Regulations

This month we are gearing up for our **Department of Public Welfare (DPW) inspection** which will verify that we are in compliance with state child care regulations. Last month we completed necessary paperwork for our **STAR 2 re-designation**. As a part of this designation we requested grant money from the state to improve our playground and bring a laptop into the classroom. The computer will improve child observation note-taking and reporting of student learning to parents as well as the Dept. of Education. Please note that I may contact some of you directly for input and support as we continue to raise additional funds for our school.

Billing Bonanza

Please remember that tuition payments are due on the 1st of every month. It is very important to make sure that you are staying current with your outstanding balances. Late fees are added after the 10th of the month.

Reminder: OCC Tax ID number is 25-815148 and it can be found on your monthly statement near the top.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 814-237-1585 or e-mail me at jennymac81@gmail.com.

Miss Jen M.

Health & Wellness:



Children's Vision 1-3-5...

...reminds parents when their young children need to have an eye examination

from their optometrist:

BEFORE AGE 1

at **AGE 3**

at **AGE 5**

North Central Sight Service, Inc. of Williamsport, Pa will be conducting a vision screening for OCC students on **Friday, Feb. 12**. Information and permission slips should be in you mailbox soon. Or learn more by scheduling an appointment with your optometrist or visiting the Pennsylvania Optometric Association at

www.poaeyes.org.

Parent Bulletin Board

Trainings

- **Tuning in to Kids: Raising Emotionally Intelligent Children** Are you looking for ways to prevent your child from having meltdowns? Free program, practice emotionally-responsive parenting skills, and help children manage feelings. Child care may be available. See flyer on Parent Bulletin Board for more info.
- Daytime Brown Bag Program—March and April Wednesdays—Noon—1:30 p.m. Register: 231-1070
- Evening Program Mondays 5:30 –7:30 pm Jan. 25, Feb. 1,8,15,22, March 1 Register: 231-1062

Community Activities

- **Countdown to Kindergarten** —Saturday February 6 from 10-2 at the Nittany Mall (JC Penney Court.) Learn more about the school districts and private kindergartens in the area and enjoy a variety of kid-friendly activities including visits from storybook characters, crafts and story times, magic shows and raffle drawings. Our Children Center will have a table and information for families interested in our Kindergarten program.

Resources

We welcome submissions for this page. If you know of a training, community activity, resource, or other helpful bit of information that you'd like to share with other families, please email Jen M. at jennymac81@gmail.com or call her at school. Thanks!

Student Progress Reports:

Progress reports were completed on all students and delivered to school mailboxes last week. Please contact your child's teacher with questions or to request a conference. We hope this report will be helpful in giving you some insight into your child's growth and development. Watch for more progress updates soon.

Volunteer Opportunities

Vision Screening—help escort children to and from the classrooms on Friday morning, Feb. 12.

Spaghetti Night—sign up to help with prep, set up or clean up, contact Beth Bailey if you would like to help out. Date: Tues. Feb. 23

Silent Auction Team—Join a wonderful group of people who organize this very special school fund-raiser. Look for a sign-up sheet in the foyer.

Playground Team—We will be looking at ways to improve and enrich our play yard this spring.

Bring-a-Parent Night

Tuesday, Feb. 2

- **View your child's classroom from her/his perspective.**
- **Let your child teach you some favorite works.**
- **Talk to the teachers about the materials, concepts and skills presented in the environment.**
- **Build, paint, count, read and have fun!**



February, 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Bring a Parent Night 6:30-8 pm	3	4	5	6 Countdown to Kindergarten Nittany Mall
7	8	9	10	11	12 Vision Screening 9 am	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 occ Open House 9 am—Noon
21	22	23 Family Fun Spaghetti Night 5:30—7:00 pm	24	25	26	27
28						

Upcoming events	Beach Week— March 1-4 - learn- ing all about our oceans	Beach Day is Thursday, March 4. We dress in our beach clothes.	Spring Break March 5—14	Welcome Spring after- noon Tea party - March 25	DATE change Silent Auc- tion is May 7
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WEATHER NOTES:

With the cold wind chilling us, we can expect that the weather will soon effect our school schedule. Keeping this in mind, we want to remind you of our Snow Day Policy.

For Snow Days ONLY, we follow the State College Area School District schedule.

- If SCASD has a **2 hour delay**, we are open but Kindergarten buses are delayed by two hours. Parent may drive Kindergarten children into school on delays.
- If SCASD has a **cancellation due to weather**, we are closed. Snow make-up days are added on to the end of the school year calendar. We've had two snow days so far and our last day of school is now
- We go out to play if the wind chill is above 20 degrees, please be sure your child has a hat, gloves, boots, and warm pants along with a heavy winter coat.