

Kenilworth Community Preschool News

December 2010

From the President's Desk

Happy holidays to all our families this year. I hope that everyone had a great Thanksgiving and that you will all have a great holiday this December as well. It is so great to see us building into a community, parents working together, playdates, etc. We have several events coming up for everyone to come to outside of school. Burgerville is this Tuesday night and I hope we have an attendance similar to last months. It was an awesome turnout and a really easy way to make some much needed money for the school. Lastly we have our 1st holiday party on Saturday the 18th at the Laurelwood Brewery on 51st and Sandy Blvd. We have the upstairs reserved for our party. If you haven't yet please let me know how many are in your group and don't forget about our 50/50 raffle and children (and siblings) from Kenilworth eat for FREE. I hope to see you all there.

On the business side... Our last parent meeting had a very poor attendance. I understand that things happen, schedules conflict, ill-

ness, or ... but we really need families to make an effort to have someone there or at least communicate to us that you will not be able to come. Please reference your handbook if you have questions about what's expected of families or contact me.

Now that I have that out of the way I want to let everyone know that Gretchen spends a lot of time thinking through the protocol on events we never want to think about. We put her emergency plan to the test on the 30th of November when my daughter Lauren decided to put one of her hair berets in her mouth which of course found its way into her throat where it got stuck. Gretchen and the parent helpers that day acted quickly and calmly. Lauren got to see the inside of the ambulance on her way up to OHSU. All is well thanks to Gretchen's quick action.

I hope to see you all at this December at our various events. Happy Holidays!

Nick Button (Lauren's Dad) Board President

Important Dates Coming Up

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| December 18 | 11 am til 3 pm
Kenilworth Community Preschool Holiday Party
Laurelwood Brewery |
| December 20 | School Break |
| January 3 | School Back In Session |
| January 17 | Holiday School Closed |
| January 22 | 10 am Parent Meeting |

**Next Parent
Meeting:**

January 22nd

10 am

Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow

Are you wondering what happens to preschool if we have severe weather?

Now that the nice weather seems to have gone away for the next few months, I thought it would be a good idea to go over the winter storm and school closure protocol.

If we are having what seems like severe weather for Portland, and you are not certain if preschool will be open for the day, here are a few tips for finding out:

1. Tune into local TV or radio stations for school closures. If Portland Public Schools are closed, we are closed. If PPS is on a two-hour late "snow opening" we will be closed.
2. If you are aware that schools have closed while we are in session, come pick up your child.
3. My preschool email address is connected to an emergency system called *Flash Alert*. If PPS is cancelled the night *before* classes, I will be contacted. I will then make sure each family is contacted by a phone call and a follow up email.
4. If PPS has not made a decision to close, but inclement weather is predicted (and they are say-

ing it might cause closures in the evening or early in the morning), I will contact Jack and Diane Hodges before preschool opens. We will then make the decision to close based on the predicted conditions. We want everyone to be safe! (In the event that Jack and/or Diane are not available, the Teacher and Preschool President will make the decision.)

5. If we decide to close, our next step will be to contact the Preschool President and let him/her know the school is closing.
6. After contacting the President, we will then contact each family, first by use of a "phone tree" where we divide up the preschool phone list and call every family on our contact list. After each family is contacted, we will then send a follow up email message.

Most schools closures are announced by TV and Radio so just keep in mind that if Portland Public is closed, so are we!

It will be interesting to see what transpires weather-wise for us over the weeks of winter!

-Teacher Gretchen

Burgerville Fundraiser News

Burgerville Night

Please remember to mark your calendars for the next Burgerville night – **Tuesday December 7th from 5pm to 8pm**. The preschool receives 10% of all sales during that time, so encourage your neighbors, friends and relatives to join us for a meal out. It is an excellent social event for the kids and the parents, and it is an important fundraiser for Kenilworth Preschool. Burgerville is located on the corner of Powell Blvd and SE 26th Ave, across from Cleveland High School. See you there!

Scott Furrow (Karina's dad)

Kenilworth Preschool Fundraising Co-Chair

News From PCPO

Less is More

“Our world is characterized by too much stuff. We are building our daily lives, and our families, on the four pillars of too much: too much stuff, too many choices, too much information, and too much speed. With this level of busyness, distractions, time pressure, and clutter (mental and physical), children are robbed of the time and ease they need to explore their worlds and their emerging selves.”

—Kim John Payne

I volunteered to be Kenilworth’s PCPO representative without knowing that it would involve free parenting classes! Every month I attend a meeting with a special guest speaker and my task is to share their wisdom with the other parents in my child’s preschool.

The first talk was on *Simplicity Parenting: Using the Extraordinary Power of Less to Raise Calmer, Happier and More Secure Kids*, a book by Kim John Payne. It sparked lively conversation at the meeting and inspired me to rush out and buy the book! I’d love to share some of the ideas with you. I’ll start by asking you a question: how do you feel when you walk into your child’s room? My own answer was basically a shudder! The sheer number and variety of toys, books and clothes was simply overwhelming. Payne argues that the amount of ‘stuff’ surrounding our children can actually cause ‘overload’ and stress through forcing them to make too many choices. It is overly stimulating, can lead to a sense of entitlement, and prevent them from fully engaging with their toys and developing their imagination. He believes it is important for children to ‘form a relationship’ with their toys, and it is hard to love anything which is part of a huge pile!

I took on his challenge to reduce the number of toys - by half, and half again - and the results were immediate and obvious, not only in the calm atmosphere of the room my sons share, but in their play and their behavior. Both my sons stopped rushing from one thing to another and started to spend longer and longer playing with one toy and in more imaginative ways. They played more gently with their toys and, best of all, they both suddenly got a whole lot better at cooperating and taking turns! Indeed, as Payne writes, “As you decrease the quantity of your child’s toys and clutter, you increase their attention and their capacity for deep play.”

De-cluttering is only one of the four areas Kim John Payne urges parents to simplify. The others are rhythm, scheduling and unplugging. Increasing predictability helps children feel more secure and allows us to plan moments for connection and calm, while reducing the impact of media, consumerism and even adult conversation protects our children from concerns they are not yet able to cope with. For my family, this has meant a reduction in screen media (we didn’t watch TV anyway but hadn’t previously considered the message we send our children if they have to share our attention with computers and cell phones), reduced electric lighting, more family playtime, even breakfast by candlelight. If you think this last idea sounds crazy, just try it some time and you may be amazed at how this usually rushed and frantic meal is transformed into a precious moment of calm. Just don’t leave the room with the candle still burning!

My family has been greatly influenced by this calm and mindful approach and I strongly recommend this book to anyone who has ever wondered how all this ‘stuff’ impacts our little ones.

Emma McConnell (Jack’s Mom)
PCPO Representative

From Teacher Gretchen

“One of life’s greatest joys is the comfortable give and take of a good friendship. It is a wonderful feeling not only to have a good friend but to know how to be a good friend yourself”. - FRED ROGERS

For me, these words by Fred Rogers incorporate a multitude of meanings and are a powerful message.

Here is sample of how I interpret those meanings: Friendship means being with some one that makes you happy. It’s a fun, yet frustrating, time. It’s learning to take turns, compassion for others, acceptance of differences--not only in age, but also with language skill or physical ability. It’s the realization and ownership of one’s feelings and emotions. It’s empathy, and eventually understanding, culminating in friendship.

As an early childhood educator I believe one of my most important roles is to provide an environment where the children have opportunities to develop relationships with each other. One ultimate hope and goal in my curriculum and lesson planning is that I create an arena that gives the potential for the children to become good friends.

In the beginning of the preschool year this is a challenge that always stretches my practice. I strive to find strategies that promote clear communication with children as we are working on the shared language we will use together during our preschool year. In planning, and in practice, I try to follow the example of the now famous early childhood educator and author Vivian Gussin Paley, who wrote one of my favorite books *You Can’t Say You Can’t Play*.

While in class I strive to assist the children to talk things through-- with me and with one another. If needed, I strive to offer help with words for expressing feelings for a mutual lan-

guage. If children are struggling with working or playing together, I offer questions to the children to extend their thinking and again we talk it through to reach a mutual place of acceptance for moving on with our day. Preschool is a perfect atmosphere for learning about being friends and getting along with others. The early childhood years of three, four, and five are truly the time when a child realizes that she/he is ready, wants to play with peers and wants to feel accepted by those peers for who they are.

To teach children about being compatible and being friends is not always an easy task. I spend a good portion of time planning and consulting with other educators. I use my knowledge of the teachings of those who have gone before me in the field of early childhood education. I relay my conversations with parents. I use my observations and notes to reflect and work through my sometimes “moral” questioning of the dilemmas I find myself in on occasion as I develop strategy!

I strive to create an atmosphere that is fair. It often means that I need to work harder to involve more of myself with the children as they play. I will need to listen more carefully or be more present in the moment. It also might mean that I need to be confident and comfortable with asking the children to listen more carefully to my words and follow my teaching directions.

I strive to provide a clear opportunity for this to happen. I want to offer suggestions and examples

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From Teacher Gretchen (con't)

of compromise to the children to help create a healthy classroom with lasting friendships.

The beauty of being a “cooperative” preschool is that you parents are important role models for this very thing, as you rotate through as helpers on a daily basis offering your support to the children. They see you talking and learning about each other and opening up the possibilities of creating new friendships among yourselves!

The process of learning to be friends and to play in school together is yearlong. The look and sound of it will change as the children work it out and grow together.

I believe that the experiences we provide here in preschool will be important for your children. It will set them up for the possibility of

friendships for the rest of their years in school.

As I observe the children playing during their day at preschool I always think of the words to a song we sing during morning meeting. I simply refer to it as the “Friends Song”. *The first part of the song simply goes...*

“Friends, Friends, One, Two, Three, All My Friends are here with me!”

Who knows... the friendships your children make now could potentially follow your children into adulthood!

Best to you all,

Teacher Gretchen

A Few Easy Steps to Spread the Word

As the PR/Web board member for KCP, I've been thinking of ways to spread the word about our fundraising activities. In order reach our goals, we need to reach out to the generosity of all of our friends and families. One of the easiest ways to do this is to utilize social networking web sites that many of us already spend way too much time on...or at least I do.

FACEBOOK. Many of our events require the participation of individuals outside the KCP community in order to be successful. Facebook helps us get the word out to our peeps by making it easy to create an event and invite our friends/family. Events such as Burgerville Nites, the Holiday party at Laurelwood Brewery, our spring rummage sale, etc. are KCP activities we all should be spreading the word about. One way to do this is to “Like” the NEW KCP Facebook page. Do a search on FB for “Kenilworth Com-

munity Preschool” and hit “Like”. You can also invite friends and family to the event by visiting the KCP FB page, go to the event listing and click on “Share”, and invite your FB friends. Or feel free to create your own event page to send to only your FB family/friends.

BLOG LINKS. I've also been creating blog posts for our events that are easy to link to from your Facebook event pages or your own personal blogs. Link to the blog event page by visiting kenilworthcooppreschool.blogspot.com and click on the individual event page. That will reveal the individual event web address for you to copy and paste into your Facebook event page. To see whenever a new blog entry is added, subscribe to the blog. To subscribe to the KCP blog from a

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A Few Easy Steps to Spread the Word (con't)

blog reader such as Google, visit the blog at kenilworthcooppreschool.blogspot.com click on "Subscribe" and choose your reader. You can also just add the above web site manually to your blog list in your reader.

ALL GREEK TO YOU. If all this social networking talk sounds like Greek gibberish to you, spread the word about KCP events the old fashioned way. Pick up your phone, talk to your friend in passing, or drop an e-mail. I'm happy to send you event flyers that you can print at home or attach to your e-mails. Just let me know.

Thank you KCP families for helping me spread the word! And if you have other ideas about how I can help facilitate even more PR activities for critical KCP efforts, just drop me an e-mail (redh26@msn.com).

*Hope Red (Chayse's Mom)
Kenilworth Preschool PR/Web Chair*

What's Happening in the Classroom?

It was a Wednesday morning during snack time and the room was filled with the various conversations that preschool children seem to thrive on. As I was sitting next to a child enjoying the company at the table, he very calmly asked me an apparently attention-grabbing question.

"Teacher Gretchen, do you think anybody in our school is allergic to bees?"

Suddenly the conversation became very serious and the children began taking turns letting each other know about their allergies: "I'm allergic to wheat." "Well, I'm allergic to sugar." "Well, I'm allergic to insects." "Well, I'm allergic to salt." "And I'm allergic to dust."

And then here it came... the real attention grabber....."Okay everyone", the child said, "I'm going to tell you what I'm allergic to. And I really mean it." By now *everyone* was listening she then said, "I'm allergic to alligators and crocodiles. I'm serious, I'm...really."

Okay.... Two seconds of complete silence, I was amazed. Then the conversation and noise level went back to a normal pace and everyone was talking at once. There you go! The wonders of a preschooler never cease!

-Teacher Gretchen

Classifieds

Would you like to invite our community to an event? Do you have a service you'd like folks to know about? Want to sell a table? Give away kittens? Why not submit an item to the KCP Classifieds? Just email your item (around 40 words or less) to kglahn@gmail.com. Submissions due by the 20th of each month.

Kate Glahn (Addie's Mom) Newsletter Editor