

The Calvin Hilltop



Calvin Hill Day Care and Kitty Lustman-Findling Kindergarten

Fall 2009

This year at Calvin Hill has begun with wonderful energy and spirit. We have an energetic and engaged group of children in each classroom. We are pleased to have 28 returning families and to welcome 25 new

and eating connected directly to experiences with food the children are enjoying as part of the curriculum, as our Food Newsletter detailed.

The Kindergarten and Preschool have special Reading Buddies from Foote School's fourth grade who come twice a month with lovely and varied children's books that they read with their Calvin Hill buddies.

This is a terrific way to make literacy fun as well as to provide some mentors

for the younger children. The Threes will also have buddies after winter break, as they did last year. This collaboration is a great success.

Great turnout at the all-parent meeting on October 6th!



families as well. The school is already humming both inside and out with meaningful curriculum, new and improved menus, and an amazing response to our requests for parent volunteers for the many projects and activities planned this year. As always, the Calvin Hill Community is coming together!!!

You will see that on all the floors children are cooking up a storm, with most of the cooking



NEW FEATURE!

Carla's Corner

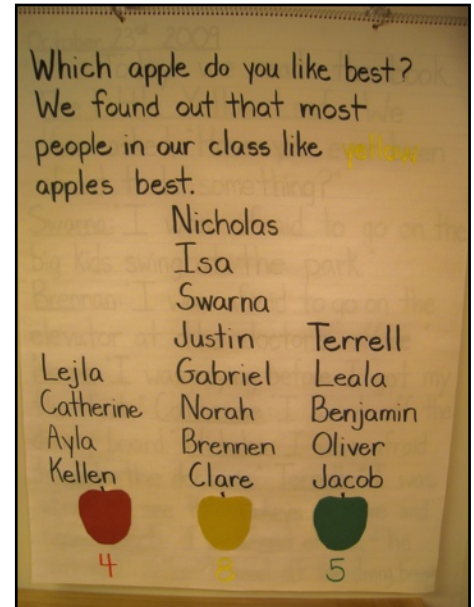
NEW FEATURE!

Have you ever wanted to ask a question about Calvin Hill, but haven't had the opportunity? Do you have questions about your child's education, the Calvin Hill curriculum, parenting or child development? In each edition of the Hilltop, we'll feature a Q&A with Carla Horwitz, Director of the Calvin Hill Day Care Center and Kitty Lustman-Findling Kindergarten. Send your questions to Kate Ott at Kathryn.Ott@gmail.com.

THREES ROOM UPDATE

Emergency, Emergency, let's have some fun.

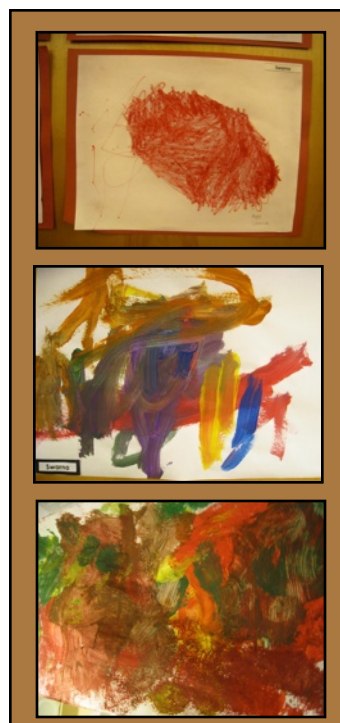
The Three's room is bringing back the spirit of Calvin Hill as an old fire station. Though the pole was removed from Calvin Hill years ago, a big red painted Fire Truck box is parked in the Three's room. After two fire drills, they are ready to handle all firefighting needs from re-enacting safety drills to eating and sleeping like firefighters in dramatic play. It seems the firefighters' seasonal food choice is apples. After a taste test, the Three's charted their favorites, then cooked up delicious apple muffins and blended applesauce. In between waiting for the next fire house call, the apples provide new subject matter for drawing and shapes for sponge art apple prints.



Some are hoping the next call to the station will be another new baby! Three's teacher Nancy had her baby Matthew, and a student - Brennen Sullivan - just had a baby sister. The patient waiting continues for another student, Swarna Navaratnam-Tomayko's baby to arrive. The baby did arrive, named Gitanjali Elizabeth.

Walking the grounds in a single line might seem like a fire drill, but the noisy acorn shakers give away the true intentions. It is a parade. After collecting acorns, sorting and counting them, the children marched around the neighborhood.

Were they celebrating a new birth or stretching their legs



PRESCHOOL UPDATE

From bugs to mugs, the preschool has become an observation station.



In the first few weeks, the classroom membership grew by adding a few caterpillars. The new members took center stage teaching science from munching on leaves to forming a chrysalis (or cocoon) and finally having one turn into a moth. Adding members became a daily task, when the children began harvesting earthworms, grubs, and ants wearing their goggles and using magnifying glasses. This tiring log work didn't stump the Preschoolers, they continued to observe down other branches finding leaves, sticks, acorns, and seeds. Observation turned into classification with counting, sorting, and forming nature patterns. All this hard work bore fruit (and vegetables). Gourds and apples were sorted, graphed, turned into art and, of course, eaten.



Lest the caterpillars, ants and grubs feel the object of all attention, the preschoolers didn't just look at the bugs. They observed their own mugs! The mirrors came out and the scientists turned their gaze on themselves. Self-portraits decorate the classroom and now paper bag puppets are taking shape. As are reenactments of familiar stories like *Are you my Mother?* and *Mr. Gumpy's Outing*.



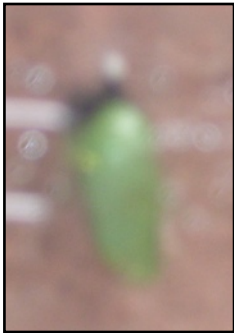
Self awareness isn't always through a mirror, sometimes it comes through a story, a painting, or acting. The future business owners and sweet-tooths in the class have been running an ice cream shop complete with signs and menus. Some have delved into cause and effect, as they read picture books and try to figure out what's happening. The outstanding observation continues as the preschoolers describe what they see in a famous painting. The Preschool is certainly proving that observation is more a life skill than a simple step of the scientific method. Perspective is something we use and learn about our entire lives.



KINDERGARTEN UPDATE

Transformation of color, palette and tune!

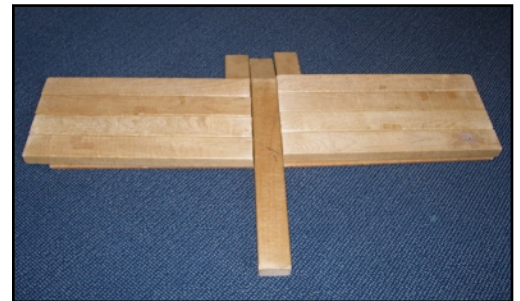
The Kindergartners are transforming their room, their food, and their music. They have an amazing power to conceptualize the world around them, to internalize their experiences and to synthesize amazing ideas, relationships, and beauty. Of course, the gracious and talented teachers are actively cultivating the kinder-garden. Many weeks ago now, as the air was just beginning to turn cooler, Kindergarten teacher, Winnie made a surprising discovery. A chrysalis, attached to the outside wall near the back stairs. If you were thrown off by what seems like a difficult vocab word for most adults, chances are your four or five year-old can help you out. But here is the official definition:



Chrysalis. n. 1. A pupa, especially of a moth or butterfly, enclosed in a firm case or cocoon. 2. A protected stage of development.

As the days have stretched into weeks, the children keep an optimistic eye on the chrysalis, waiting for that butterfly to emerge. The beauty is that there seems to be little energy wasted on fearing the worst. Instead,

that hope, that potential for a butterfly, has fueled pictures of butterflies, butterflies made of blocks, stories of butterflies. Even if no butterfly emerges from the chrysalis on the wall, the kindergartners have made many butterflies come to life.



Beauty isn't just found in watching nature. Particularly for those of us living in urban areas, it takes a lot of effort to keep a connectedness between the growing of our food and what we put on the table. This makes it all the more wonderful to see the kindergartners making fresh dishes for lunch from the late summer bounty of the garden here at Calvin Hill. Fresh salsa, anyone?

When it comes to wrapping things up, the air carries music. Many of the children have a favorite song from the room, "Jamaica Farewell". If you haven't been able to follow along, it may be because you don't

have the lyrics to the latest verse, added by a kindergartener last year, Jaddus Sinclair. Here it is:

But don't be sad, I'm coming back
I'm coming back, I'm coming back
So don't be sad, I'm coming back
I'm coming back everybody

The transformations keep on rolling with the latest craze of building tracks out of blocks for marbles. Rounds of experiments have led to a book of plans, complete with diagrams and labels. Studying changes has become an art form for the Kindergarteners!



Parent Pocket

Work Day Update

“Hola, Calvin Hill Repair Shop. You break it, we fix it!”

Handy Manny didn't make an appearance, but we had 100% parent participation from those assigned, making the October 10th workday a huge success. Everyone came and worked with camaraderie and generous spirit. There were several new bookshelves built and painting and fixing and general sprucing up and cleaning happened. Thanks to all who so graciously donated their time. Next work day is Sunday, February 7.



Reminders

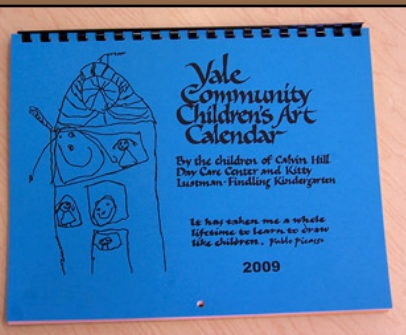
Peter Crumlish, Parent Committee chair reported that the first Parent Committee meeting had a great turn-out with good representation from each of the floors and many new faces. Those gathered reviewed the events planned for the year and parent participation. The next meeting will be held in January.

We know you have all been waiting. Whether it's the international fare or the decadent desserts, there are only a few more days to go! Calvin Hill Community Pot Luck will be on Sunday, November 15, 4:30-6:30. The entertainment for children will be the Yale Children's Theatre group – always a favorite.



Want the newest fall fashions? Calvin Hill T-shirts, sweatshirts, tote bags, or baseball caps are all the rage! And if you want to

send a fashionable statement from a distance, use a Calvin Hill notecard available in five charming, different card packs. Created by former Calvin Hill students. For costs see posting on backdoor landing of the PreSchool floor.



The Calvin Hill Yale Community Children's Art Calendar is in production and will be available after Thanksgiving. We know it will delight you.

Snip . . . snip . . .

Remember to keep your box tops coming, every little bit helps. Calvin Hill participates in the Boxtops for Education program. For every boxtop we collect we receive ten cents. May not seem like a lot, but they do add up. Put your carefully trimmed boxtop in the green collection canisters located in each Calvin Hill classroom.



The Newsletter team includes Calvin Hill teachers, staff and parents from each floor who generously collect stories and pictures from the teachers and students. They are Kate Ott, Brian Hill, Megan King, and Ashley Griffin. Layout and design by Dan Cogan-Drew.

