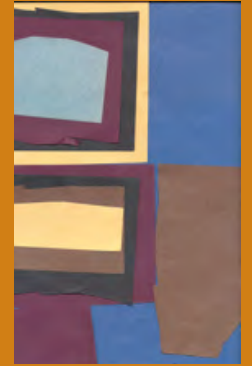




The Calvin Hilltop



FALL 2015



Masthead art by kindergarteners Amber and Kaylah

CARLA'S CORNER

Fall seems to have put on a glorious show this year, and we have all been rejoicing in the brilliant colors and sunny days. Calvin Hill, its children, and teachers are celebrating the start of another wonderful year. This year, things are a little different, though. Calvin Hill is in the middle of an exciting transition! Susan Taddei, who has been a part of the life and fabric of Calvin Hill for many years, professionally as a teacher and administrator, and also as a parent, has assumed the role of Director.

Susan and I have been collaborating beautifully as she steps into her new position. Many of you have seen me in the classrooms and the playground, as well as in the office, and you will continue to see me until December, when this transition period ends. (Though I do expect to be around some next semester as I teach the Yale undergraduates who do their practicum placements at Calvin Hill).

Susan has consistently been showing me that the confidence the Succession Committee and I have in her is well placed. Conscientious, thoughtful, cheerful, highly responsible, able to set limits but also be

flexible, and supremely competent as a teacher and leader, Susan is uniquely qualified to continue the work I have so enjoyed doing with the teachers, parents and the board over many years. She might even be able to leap tall buildings in a single bound – something I never got very good at!



Preschooler MacKenzie on the monkey bars

This is my last Carla's Corner. I will miss much about no

longer being Director of such a vibrant and magical community of learners and collaborators. But you are in good hands with Susan, and I know she will both continue our shared vision and also create magic of her own with all of your help.

SUSAN'S SPACE

Teaching is a profession best learned through apprenticeship. College education programs require students to spend hours observing in schools, working with mentors, and eventually taking over a class in a supervised setting. I have been most fortunate to have had a similar experience taking on the job of the new Director of Calvin Hill.

I have been in an administrative role at Calvin Hill for the past seven years, most recently as the Assistant Director. During that time, I earned my Connecticut Director's Credential by taking additional college level coursework. Those courses also introduced me to a large and supportive network of early childhood program leaders across the state.

But, of course, I have learned the most from Carla's ongoing mentoring. Over the years she has generously shared her wisdom and experience. She has offered me more and more responsibilities while providing just enough support. This fall, she is extending her mentorship as I fully assume the Director position. Some might say this transition is an unusual model. But in actual fact, it is a very natural extension of the tried and true process of becoming a teacher.

It is an honor to lead a school that I hold in such high regard. As you'll see in the following pages, wonderful things are happening in each classroom. The curriculum is meaningful and engaging.



*Liam and Sofia
make puppets in
the Preschool*



The teachers are doing what they do best—creating harmonious classroom communities that nurture the children's emotional, social, and intellectual development. It is a beautiful place to work and I am thrilled to have been given this opportunity.

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Threes Room Update

The new school year is off to a great start! The children in the Threes Room have welcomed fall with food (apples, pomegranates, and pumpkins), songs, and nature walks. As is usual this time of year, our playground is filled with acorns that we joyfully collect, sort, count and plant. The surrounding trees provide us with an endless supply of beautiful leaves. We have brought most of our natural treasures indoors for a closer look in the science corner, and some of these treasures have become part of a lovely classroom mural.



Benjamin and Clara experiment with shadows

Inspired by the book "Guess Whose Shadow" by Stephen Swinburne, the children went on a shadow walk in small groups. We observed shadows everywhere! We discovered that each of us has a shadow, too! Our shadows follow us everywhere. Follow up activities have included making shadows—and shadow puppets!—inside using our overhead projector and creating our own shadow book for the classroom.



Simon, Joshua, Cyrus, and Alara research bridges...

The children have also been busy as engineers, designing and building their own bridges. The idea started outdoors with a question: Can we build a bridge from the garden to the planter? (The answer is yes and we did!) We then moved on to building bridges indoors using a variety of building materials and inspired by books about bridges. The classroom is now full of our creations!

...and get to work building their own!



Preschool Update

The Preschool is a happy, *busy* place this fall! The children have settled beautifully into relationships with their teachers and each other, and it's wonderful to see how much pride they take in their community. They are delighted to welcome each other in the morning, involved in each other's activities and achievements throughout the day, and eager to report back to their families each afternoon. Over the past few weeks, we've been making puppets and performing puppet shows in small groups—the children do such a good job of enjoying their friends' creativity!



Jasper's sunflowers

We've made the most of the gorgeous fall weather, spending time outside whenever possible. Ben found a caterpillar that we put in a terrarium with some leaves and twigs. The next day, the caterpillar turned into a chrysalis! Now he lives on top of the bike shed, and we think he will turn into a butterfly in the spring. Jasper and his dad brought in enormous sunflowers from their garden, and the children used unit blocks to measure them. We've done lots of cooking with apples, reading about apples, art with apples, and we found an apple bigger than a mini-pumpkin!

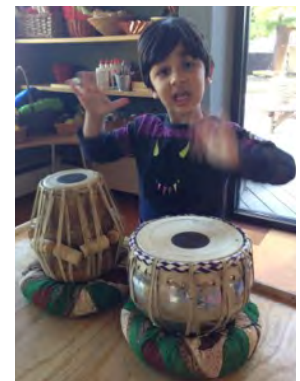


Music with Dorota

We all look forward to our monthly visits with Dorota Xeller from Neighborhood Music School. You've probably heard your child singing some of Dorota's songs at home—and maybe doing the motions, too! Drumming has also been a favorite activity. Rayan brought in a drum from Bangladesh to share, and Colleen has been taking small groups of children for drumming sessions during activity time.



Natalia's puppet



Rayan drumming

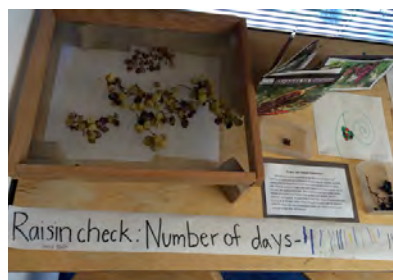
Kindergarden Update

With the turning of the leaves and the arrival of a cool autumn breeze, a palpable energy of enthusiasm and discovery is flowing through our Kindergarden classroom! We have really begun to come together as a community—we are learning about each other and from each other, exploring our world together and using our ideas collaboratively. The seeds, corn, and colorful leaves that teachers and friends have brought into the classroom have encouraged us to appreciate and learn more about our environment. During story time, we've read books written and illustrated by each other, giving us the opportunity to present our own creations and to appreciate the work of others.



Eli, Tovah, Amber, and Eva perform with puppets

After creating puppets, friends have performed puppet shows in small groups, jointly developing a plotline and setting up stage scenery. Friends working in the block area have created intricate castles, log factories, farms, and cities by combining and implementing each others' ideas. Our classroom is a place of playing, learning, and growing as a collective!



One morning, while taking a look at some grapes from our grape vine, some of us asked about what

would happen if we left the grapes out in the sun. We predicted that the grapes might dry out and change shape; they could become raisins. We decided to set up an experiment. We set our grapes out on a tray by the sunny window in the studio. Everyone made a prediction for the amount of time they thought it might take for all the grapes to become raisins, and we set up a chart to keep track of how many days have gone by since we first collected the grapes—23 so far!



Our recent field trip to the Albers Art Exhibit at Yale's Edgewood Gallery was exciting for all of us. We had the privilege of meeting with and learning from Nicholas Fox Weber, the director of the Albers Foundation, who actually worked with the innovative 20th century artist, Josef Albers. The beautiful paintings, sketches and drawings, and the theories about color that we uncovered on our trip continue to be woven into our classroom work, whether we are working at the writing table, doing watercolors, or stacking our cups after lunch!

Parent Pocket: News and Announcements

Life After Calvin Hill

Calvin Hill alums go on to many schools in the area, and the parents listed below are happy to share their experiences with you. If you have a child who will be leaving Calvin Hill for a new school next fall, please feel free to contact them!

Bethany Public Schools

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(Life After Calvin Hill, cont.)

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Family Work Day

Our October 17 Work Day was a great success! The school was cleaned from top to bottom, inside and out; gardens were prepared for winter; windows were scrubbed; and a few walls even got fresh coats of paint. Many thanks to our cheerful and hardworking crew!

Save the Date: Fall Pot Luck

The Fall Pot Luck Supper for all families and staff will be on Sunday, Nov. 15, from 4:30-6:30 pm. We'll have entertainment from Roxi Fox Puppets! Look for sign-up sheets in each classroom!

Diaper Drive

The Pot Luck will also mark the launch of our annual Diaper Drive. We collect diapers, wipes, lotion, etc. for the Diaper Bank through the beginning of December. Last year we collected 1576 diapers! Let's set a new goal of 1600.

Open House

On Saturday, November 7, from 9-11 a.m., Calvin Hill will host an Open House for parents and children interested in enrollment for next year. Current families do not need to come, but you are our best ambassadors! Please encourage interested families you know to attend. We are accepting applications now, and there will be openings in each classroom for September.

Amazon Smile/Box Tops for Education

Calvin Hill now participates in Amazon Smile. If you are making any Amazon purchases please go to www.smile.amazon.com and indicate that Calvin Hill Day Care Center is your charity. 0.5% of your purchase will be matched and given to our school. We also participate in the Box Tops for Education program. For every box top we collect from participating General Mills products, Calvin Hill receives ten cents. It may not seem like a lot, but it adds up! Please trim your box tops and place them inside the green collection canisters found in each classroom in Calvin Hill.

The newsletter is produced by Susan, Carla, and our wonderful teachers, with assistance from Marc Levenson, Cathy Nicholson, Keisha Hylton-Rodic, and Becca Alleman.