

The Calvin Hilltop

CALVIN HILL DAY CARE AND
KITTY LUSTMAN-FINDLING KINDERGARTEN



Carla's Corner

We are in the home stretch now. Spring has finally come to Calvin Hill, and we have been so very busy! It seems that everything awakens in April, and that month was packed with Calvin Hill events -- the wonderful Pot Luck Supper, The Book Drive, the Accreditation Family Survey, the finalizing of enrollment, and all of the community events in which you as parents have been intimately involved. And the children, too, seem to have blossomed. This is the time all teachers love -- when all the hard work is rewarded by the children's joyful growth and development. We are so very proud of all they have accomplished this year.

Now we are on to May. As we appreciate the return of beautiful weather and longer days, we also still have many events to look forward to. Parent Conferences, Final Day Party June 8, the Parent Work Day May 14 that this year will include the building of new raised garden beds so the children and teachers in the Preschool and Kindergarten will have a real opportunity to plant and harvest, plan and learn about vegetables and flowers first hand. The Threes also are engaged in planting in boxes already on their playground.

This spring we are very fortunate to have the assistance of a master gardener and alumna parent and board member, Elisabeth Kennedy (her daughter Emma was in the preschool and kindergarten) who will support us as we embark on this new venture. Soon you should see evidence of teachers and children engaged in this process. Elisabeth has already spearheaded the Ridge Hill School Discovery Community Garden in Hamden.

She is now bringing her skills and energy back to Calvin Hill and we're very excited to have her share her expertise and talent. Anyone else who has a gardening bent is most welcome to help. Please just let me know if you're interested in participating on May 14 or at another time -- I know there is also considerable gardening knowledge and dedication in our current Calvin Hill parent community as well.

The spring also marks the beginning of our thinking about transitions -- from one classroom to another within the Center, or onward to another school. As ever, the Calvin Hill teachers are carefully planning to support your children as they prepare to make these important changes. You will be hearing from the teachers and me about ways we hope to make this process meaningful, manageable and fun.

Finally, we are celebrating Linda Barrett's 20 years at Calvin Hill. We've organized a collection of money to go toward several creative gifts that recognize Linda's many years of dedicated contribution to the Calvin Hill community. Watch for more information and an invitation coming soon.

Just a word of thanks for the superb effort on the part of the Newsletter editors, Brian Hill and Kate Ott, newsletter layout expert extraordinaire, Kaho Terry, as well as the individual parent reporters from each floor -- Alison Illick, Threes; Nancy Bianchi, Preschool; Kate Ott, Kindergarten; and Rebecca Puhl, Food Section.

As ever, I am supremely grateful for the many ways all parents have contributed to making this a productive and enjoyable learning and growing year! Many thanks.

THREES ROOM UPDATE

Spring is here and the Threes classroom has been buzzing with activity. Science happens in all shapes and sizes from the sea to the earth, inside and outside. As part of the on-going interest in sea creatures in the classroom, the children created scenery, crafted their own costumes, and acted out the classroom favorite - A House for Hermit Crab by Eric Carle. Everyone enjoyed a part of his or her own choosing in this for kids/by kids productions and had a lot of fun. The Threes have also been paying attention to the very welcomed changes outdoors. Bulbs were planted in the fall and are now blooming in the playground. The children have started to place handmade nesting boxes in the trees around the playground to assist the neighborhood birds in nest building.



The children have been interested in all the digging going on at the Foote field and they were delighted to unpack boxes of the new construction toys the teachers purchased. The trucks were kept inside for a while where they got heavy use before being moved outside to the playground. The building continued inside as well as the Threes experimented with boxes. The class designed and created a space shuttle out of large boxes and recycled materials. On a smaller scale, the children worked on individual box sculptures. Dwyer Illick proudly claimed that his sculpture is "A rocket, and not the space shuttle".

There's a new message center in the classroom, and the Threes have been "mailing" and receiving "mail". The children are using envelopes and sticker stamps, and some of the messages they create contain drawings, alphabet letter stamps, and hand printed letters. Soon the children will mail themselves letters in the neighborhood mailbox. The Threes appear to be thriving in this very vibrant time of year. The classroom is positively filled with energy and joy. Maybe you'll get a letter about it soon!



PRESCHOOL UPDATE

The preschool students have been busy building, acting, studying, writing, weaving, and observing. The construction taking place next door at Foote has provided the impetus for many daily observations and discussions. The class has made a diorama that mirrors the construction site, and they have also created maps of the site. For their own building, the class has been constructing ramps for balls and marbles, as well as bridges with blocks and wood scraps. The students have had the opportunity to work with hammers and screwdrivers in their building endeavors.

Building, studying, and observing have also been important components of learning more about themselves and their classmates. This 'building' involves acting, puppet making, and a message center. The preschoolers have made paper bag puppets of themselves, and then held puppet shows to highlight their talents



and creativity. They created individual dollhouses out of cardboard boxes, and they have built the contents of the houses as well as the dollhouse people in a variety of media. The acting continues with class stories and assigned roles for the budding actors. The personalities of the students are shared in their writing, as well. They have enjoyed writing messages to each other in the classroom message center. The students eagerly check their mailboxes at the end of the day, and can often determine who has written to them by the artwork or letter formation on the envelopes.

Spring has finally sprung, and the preschoolers are in the spirit of the season. The students have watched the bird feeder to note the types of birds who come to eat, and they have taken

bird watch walks. There is a bird observation chart in the classroom, and the students have sorted bird models, and discussed the pertinent similarities and differences. The preschool students have also studied bird nests, and they have used natural objects that they have found and collected to make bird nests of their own.



Spring is sprouting in other ways as well. The class has sprouted seeds, and made predictions about how long the sprouting will take.



They have also made drawings, paintings, and collages of forsythia and pussy willows, and their beautiful interpretations make us all grateful for the end of the snow!

The latest event for most children was a trip to the Trumbull College dining hall for lunch, hosted by Jasmina Beserevic-Regan, Lejla's mom and Trumbull dean, and a visit to the Branford College courtyard where Sophie Kwall's mother, Hilary, is dean. The class went on the Yale shuttle. It was a wonderful, monumental trip. Lots of learning took place, and everyone came back fulfilled but tired, grow-ups and children alike!

KINDERGARTEN UPDATE

Looking for an architect or maybe a new piece of art work to brighten the house this spring? Stop by the Kindergarten, it is remarkably like an Art and Architecture



school. Mapping, model making, dyeing, and color matching are a few of the in process projects.

Like the other rooms, the Foote school construction has led to a curriculum of its own. The Kindergarteners are drawing maps that lay out the land. This has led them to the mapping of Calvin Hill – especially their route outdoors, down the back steps to the freedom of spring weather. While Foote puts up a new building, the Kindergarteners are constructing fairy houses for their other neighbors. All natural

materials are being used. The interest in architecture took the class to the Yale Art and Architecture Building to see the Kevin Roche exhibit curated by Miia's mom, Eeva Liisa Pelkonen

That wasn't their only stop in their design education. After experimenting with a variety of natural dyes – charting what worked and what didn't – the Kindergarteners visited the Yale University Art Gallery to investigate some works exploring color theory. They observed the Albers and Rothko exhibits. With the yarn they have dyed, the children are creating woven scarves and blankets.

Reading, writing and arithmetic are always part of the Kindergarten day. But, as one Kindergartner reported, the most momentous occasion this spring is not



reading new words, or inventive spelling, or adding multiple digits, it was the day in April when Winnie



announced, "You don't have to wear jackets outside today!"



Food Section

The Three's Room has been trying many new recipes this spring. In addition to baking Irish soda bread, Hamentashen, and matzah, the classroom recently made their own vegetable soup. Children brought in a vegetable of their choice (including garlic, onion, carrots, tomatoes, green beans, corn and even a parsnip) and the classroom created a Three's class recipe. They ate the soup for lunch. It was delicious! All this cooking heated up their imaginations. Over the last several weeks the dramatic play area has been transformed into a restaurant, complete with homemade menus, cooking utensils, chef hats and spoons.



The Preschool children have been involved with the new fruits and vegetables that have been coming to Calvin Hill from the Whitneyville Market. Emma Incarnato's Grandma, Patrice, owns the store and the children have been very interested in how the produce is ordered. So, Emma, Lilli, Asher, Kellen, and Norah went on a small trip to the store with John and Susan to see where our food has been coming from. The children made a list of the fruits and vegetables that they like the best and new ones that they want to try.



The Preschool also made their own vegetable dye to dye eggs. They used purple cabbage which turned the eggs different shades of blue.



The Kindergarteners made a special surprise for Mother's Day. The oatmeal, chocolate chip cookies turned out just right - flour, butter, oatmeal, eggs, and a good dose of love. The Kindergarteners also made stone soup, creating a vegetable delight similar to the Three's class.



Announcement

The parents of Calvin Hill have as usual been very busy, offering their time, talents and resources for the center and its projects. Here are some of the highlights of the spring semester:

The Spring Potluck on April 17th was again a big success, with a wonderful turn out and lots of delicious food. The puppet show was spectacular.



The Annual Book Drive, led by Jasmina Besirevic-Regan, resulted in a total of eight large boxes of books donated by Calvin Hill families. The books were given to the Clifford Beers Clinic for the benefit of the children whose families are served by the clinic.

Rebecca Butman reports that the plant sale was a tremendous success. We raised close to \$1,200.00.

The Parent Committee chair passes the baton. Many thanks to Peter Crumlish for his diligent and dedicated work, not to mention the great chocolate chip cookies at Parent Committee meetings! Shel Swanson, mother of Isa in the preschool, has graciously agreed to serve as the next Parent Committee chair. Please join us in welcoming her!

Read all about it . . .

Thanks to the entire newsletter team: Allison Illick, Nancy Bianchi, Kate Ott, Brian Hill, Rebecca Puhl and all the teachers who contribute content. Special thanks to this year's new designer, Kaho Terry.

Thanks and welcome to the new Newsletter editors, Gillian and Joel Baden-Eversaman, parents of Zara for graciously accepting the editorship of the Calvin Hill Newsletter next year! We are sure they will continue to produce a beautiful and high quality newsletter three times a year as Kate and Brian have.

Take Calvin Hill with You for the Summer!

Calvin Hill calendars, 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 packs of eight with four different designs for \$10). Place your orders with Randi today!

Calendars: \$10
Children's T-shirts: \$8
Adult T-shirt: \$10
Children's Hat: \$10
Adult Hat: \$10
Canvas Tote Bag: \$10

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, Nancy Bianchi, Brian Hill, Alison Illick, and Rebecca Puhl. Layout and design by Kaho Terry.