

# The Calvin Hilltop



CALVIN HILL DAY CARE AND  
KITTY LUSTMAN-FINDLING KINDERGARTEN



## Carla's Corner

We have had a wonderful beginning to this new school year, in spite of Hurricane Irene and the pre-Halloween freak snowstorm. Although Calvin Hill was miraculously unscathed, of sixteen teachers and staff, nine were severely impacted at home, as were some of our families. We are therefore even more grateful for a smooth start, as we know how stressful the lack of power and water can be.

The year is now in full swing. Children are settling in, learning new routines, connecting to new teachers, reconnecting with old friends and graciously welcoming children new to Calvin Hill into their midst. While managing separation experiences is a lifelong process, we are proud of how well the children are doing with the help of their teachers and with your own support as well.

We've already had wonderful participation from parents in the Calvin Hill community. Our first All-Parent meeting saw almost perfect attendance! We had a lovely evening, highlighted by the images of children at work and play in each classroom. I have used those very special Power Point presentations to show my Yale undergraduate classes what integrated, play-based, intellectual and meaningful emergent curriculum looks like. Nothing like photographs to bring that home!

We actually have thirty-three Yale students and one from Albertus Magnus working or doing a practicum placement here. They add a very important element and energy to the Center.

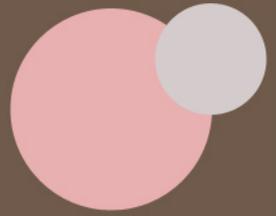
Just about everyone returned their Parent Volunteer forms (best return ever) and the Parent Committee has been busy planning events, which you will hear about very soon. They involve outreach to the broader New Haven community as well as fun times for our own internal community. There is also a group continuing to work on the traffic issues on Highland Street.

Even though it is just the start of this year, we are already beginning to plan for the next. We had a great Open House for prospective families on November 5. We are beginning individual tours for applicant parents very soon. You may remember being in this position. We know that you, our wonderful parents, provide our best public relations, and we appreciate your spreading the word to anyone who would like to apply.

As you can see, we have already had a busy, productive two months of school. The sense of cooperation and community is strong and ever-growing. We thank you for being part of Calvin Hill and for helping to make this happen!

*Best, Carla*

# THREES ROOM UPDATE



The arrival of fall brings with it not only the beginning of the school year—and a big beginning it is for the children in the Threes room—but also the joys of nature, and the Threes are taking full advantage of the season. The weather has been accommodating, and so the class has gone on nature scavenger hunts to explore their environment. They have discovered and collected acorns, rocks, leaves and more. These young scientists enjoy examining all to be found right outside their door.

With the arrival of cooler weather outside, inside the Threes room the class pet, Oreo the rabbit, has started to shed his old fur as he grows a new coat for winter. Oreo is an important member



Jacob, Braden, David, Agnes, and Willow observing Oreo with Helen

of the classroom, as he gives the children numerous opportunities for observation and interaction. The children help to clean his cage, feed him—his favorite treat of carrot tops has been generously supplied by an alumni family—and sometimes Oreo even comes out of his cage to play, much to everyone’s delight.

Of course, nothing says fall like apples, and the Threes have put their apples to work. The children have been observing the different kinds and colors of apples, and, naturally, conducting regular taste tests—the Red Delicious is the current favorite, though it depends on the day! The class has made applesauce and apple bread. They



Derin, Braden, Hudson, Alma, and Agnes making challah with Reyna

have experimented with apple-shaped sponges to make apple print paintings. Apple counting games, apple-themed songs, apple stories—the Threes are happily engaged in all.

In addition to those activities inspired by the season, the children in the Threes room are busy with everything from dramatic play—with a particular interest in babies and doctors—to investigations of insects and snake skins. They are making use of sensory bottles, playdough, and geoboards, and they are creating beautiful torn paper collages and group murals. Cooking is of great interest to all, and the children especially enjoy rolling dough.

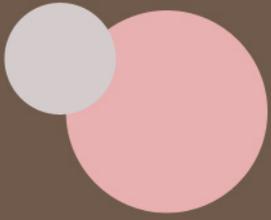
As they explore the world around them, the Threes’ first year at Calvin Hill is off to a wonderful start.



Oscar, Zoe, Cade, Bryan, Penelope, and Alma dipping apples



Apple Chart



# PRESCHOOL UPDATE

The Preschool class has had a successful adjustment to their new classroom, new teachers, and new friends. The returning students from the Threes room have welcomed those who are new to Calvin Hill, and all are working hard to get to know each other. They are also always mindful of two key rules: be kind and play safe. The children have offered many suggestions as to how these rules might be implemented in different situations, from dramatic play to cooking activities to playing outside. In particular, the children have shown understanding of these rules when building cooperatively with unit blocks. Working in small groups, they



Cameron, Zara, Diego, and Dwyer in block corner

have planned and constructed many intricate structures that required a high level of teamwork and cooperation.

As always, nature

provides abundant opportunity for exploration and learning. The children have been very busy collecting acorns, pine cones, and fallen leaves, and they have sorted these treasures and made nature patterns. Some items, such as branches and rocks, have been used to turn the sand table into a habitat for forest animals.

On other days, taking their cue from something else they have observed outside—namely, the construction at the Foote School—they have transformed the sand table into a construction site with trucks.

Artistic skills are being developed: the children in the Preschool have practiced cutting with scissors, and they enjoy sorting the cut-out shapes by color and gluing them into collages. Clay, playdough, drawing, and painting are staples of their daily routine. Creativity is fully on display also in dramatic play—a very popular activity—where the most popular themes include sushi restaurant, food truck, birthday party, and taking care of the baby dolls. The dolls get bathed in the water table, which is also regularly used for measuring and pouring, using funnels and different sized bottles.



Silas practicing his scissors



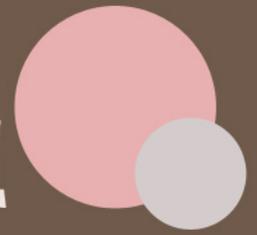
Saidan, Will, Leah, Diego, Miriam, and Farrin making collages with a Yale student



Alexis and Jason making nature patterns

A notable feature of the Preschool classroom is the abundant love of all things musical. Drums and rhythm sticks are often used inside, while outside, the children have used buckets and pots to make drums. The children sing enthusiastically every day, and dancing with scarves is a new favorite activity. Music—and all-around creativity—is everywhere in the Preschool.

# KINDERGARTEN UPDATE



The Kindergarten at Calvin Hill has three encompassing rules: don't hurt anyone's body or feelings; take care of the materials; and you can be busy—but not noisy—in the classroom. And the children have certainly been busy!

The change in the seasons has brought with it curiosity about nature: in particular, the children wondered what would happen if they planted some seeds in their garden box in the fall. They have carefully tended to their seeds and watched for signs of green poking through the soil. They also planted some seeds in the classroom and have compared the progress of the seeds planted inside to those planted outside. While waiting for their seeds to grow, they have spent time studying some of the plants left by last year's Kindergarten class.



Kellen, Swarna, Emma, and Danielle at the end of their puppet show

One of the children's favorite activities thus far has been puppetry. The children have put their artistic talents to work designing and making their own puppets. In groups of four (and with a teacher's help), they have worked together to write the words



The Rainbow Jar

of their shows. They made their own props and scenery, and then had the opportunity to present their shows to the rest of the class. The children have enjoyed both performing their own shows and watching the shows created by their classmates.



Emma, Franka, Nicholas, and Oliver (not pictured) answering questions about the puppet show

The most prominent theme in the early part of the Kindergarten year has been rainbows, which have everyone fascinated. Scientific observations abound: the children have a rainbow experiment running in the studio, where they have been observing how rainbows appear out of a jar filled with water. They have devised their own theories about the different shapes rainbows might be, and what the order of the colors is. Early math skills are also developing, as the class has been counting how many rainbows they've seen together and keeping track of them on a long strip of paper—at press time, the total was 109 and counting. And, of course, curiosity leads to reading, so many books about rainbows have made their way into the daily routine.



Nicholas, Franka, Emma, and Oliver performing a puppet show

From science to art and beyond, the children in the Kindergarten are growing and learning every day.

# Food Section

**Threes:** The Threes room has been exploring the delicious world of the pomegranate. The children have been integrating art, math, and science: drawing pomegranates, looking at them through a magnifying glass, estimating how many seeds there are in a pomegranate, counting the seeds, and finally planting the dried seeds. They have also generously left a few pomegranates outside in the playground for the neighborhood squirrels.

**Preschool:** The Preschool class has been studying different kinds of apples. They have observed different apples, tasted them, discussed their similarities and differences, and used apples for art projects. The children also baked apple pumpkin bread, and

have even made their own homemade apple juice and blender apple sauce.



Above: Jason, Annabelle, Levi, and Ella with lettuce and Linda



Left: Magdalena painting apples



Bryan, Agnes, David, Jacob, and Maeve estimating seeds with Helen



Penelope, Bryan, Zoe, Agnes, and Madelyn planting more seeds

**Kindergarten:** After some tomatoes were tossed onto the ground by the little house in the playground, it was a great joy to find that new tomato plants were growing from the seeds! These wild tomatoes were brought back inside, observed, discussed, and promptly eaten. The Kindergarten has also been doing a bit of gardening, in addition to studying lettuce growing from seeds planted last year.



Oliver, Leala, and Isa studying lettuce



Will, Leala, Isa, and Oliver planting seeds



Luca and Danielle picking tomatoes

## Work Day

The October 15th Work Day was a great success. The crew was dedicated and energetic. Alumni parent John Bianchi, the chair of the crew, worked hard to plan out the morning's work. New sheds are being constructed offsite by Noah Ventola, Threes parent and excellent carpenter, and several of the old sheds have already been deconstructed and removed. Our hope is that there will be six new sheds built this year. Calvin Hill is beautifully clean and the playgrounds have been swept and raked, gardens trimmed and weeded, and gates repaired and painted.

The sugar maple in front of school fortunately received some emergency remedial care—tree limbs were cut back by Alex Felson, Preschool parent and professor of Forestry and Environmental Studies, and the trunk was released from smothering mulch and soil. We hope to be able to save the tree.

Everyone who worked so hard all morning deserves accolades. Calvin Hill relies on parents for these extra maintenance jobs and we are never disappointed. Thanks to all.

The next Work Day is Sunday, February 5th, and the last is Saturday, May 12th.

## Is There Life after Calvin Hill?

The Calvin Hill experience is such a wonderful one, it is sometimes hard for parents to believe that it will eventually come to an end. You may find yourself wondering, "Is there life after Calvin Hill?" Of course there is. Because the transition can be a challenging one, however, we thought it would be helpful to provide a list of current and alumni parents who have made the leap to another school after Calvin Hill. These parents have generously made themselves available to answer any questions you might have about the following schools, and about the transition from Calvin Hill to elementary school:

**Edgewood:** Dan Cogan-Drew ([dan.cogandrew@gmail.com](mailto:dan.cogandrew@gmail.com)) and Thea Cogan-Drew ([theacogandrew@gmail.com](mailto:theacogandrew@gmail.com))

**Hooker:** Judit Balassa ([Judit\\_balassa@yahoo.com](mailto:Judit_balassa@yahoo.com)), Stephanie and Dan Jacoby ([jacoby@gmail.com](mailto:jacoby@gmail.com)), Candace Skorupa ([candace.skorupa@gmail.com](mailto:candace.skorupa@gmail.com))

**Foote:** Alison Illick ([ara16@aol.com](mailto:ara16@aol.com)), Annie Wareck ([anniepie@yorkfamily.net](mailto:anniepie@yorkfamily.net)), Amy Marx ([amarx@nhlegal.org](mailto:amarx@nhlegal.org)), Caitlin Simon ([caitlinjsimon@gmail.com](mailto:caitlinjsimon@gmail.com)), Greg Huber ([gregory.huber@yale.edu](mailto:gregory.huber@yale.edu)), Becky Paugh ([becky0325@comcast.net](mailto:becky0325@comcast.net))

**Cold Spring:** Shel Swanson ([shel.swanson@me.com](mailto:shel.swanson@me.com)), Peter Crumlish ([pgcrumlish@gmail.com](mailto:pgcrumlish@gmail.com))

**Hamden Hall:** Wendy Simmons ([wewsimmons@aim.com](mailto:wewsimmons@aim.com))

**St. Thomas:** Melissa Goodall ([melissa.goodall@yale.edu](mailto:melissa.goodall@yale.edu)) and Duncan Goodall ([duncan.goodall@gmail.com](mailto:duncan.goodall@gmail.com))

**Cheshire Public Schools:**  
Rebecca Puhl ([rebecca.puhl@yale.edu](mailto:rebecca.puhl@yale.edu))

**North Haven Public Schools:** Megan King ([megan.king@yale.edu](mailto:megan.king@yale.edu)), Patrick Lusk ([patrick.lusk@yale.edu](mailto:patrick.lusk@yale.edu)), Nancy Bianchi ([nancy.bianchi@comcast.net](mailto:nancy.bianchi@comcast.net))

**Branford Public Schools:**  
Nancy Berdon ([nancyberdon@comcast.net](mailto:nancyberdon@comcast.net))

**Woodbridge Public Schools:**  
Richard Breier and Lisa Freed ([LAFandRAB@aol.com](mailto:LAFandRAB@aol.com)), Susan Taddei ([susantaddei.calvinhill@gmail.com](mailto:susantaddei.calvinhill@gmail.com))

**Bethany Public Schools:**  
Susan Taddei ([susantaddei.calvinhill@gmail.com](mailto:susantaddei.calvinhill@gmail.com))

**Guilford Public Schools:** Kate Ott ([kathryn.ott@gmail.com](mailto:kathryn.ott@gmail.com)), Brian Hill ([hill-brian@comcast.net](mailto:hill-brian@comcast.net))

**Madison Public Schools:**  
Julia Irwin and Albie Harris ([julal@comcast.net](mailto:julal@comcast.net))

### **November Pot Luck**

The Fall Pot Luck Supper for all families and staff will be on Sunday, November 13th, from 4:30-6:30 pm—and there will be a storyteller! Look for the sign-up sheets in each classroom and note what dish you will be bringing to share. We look forward to seeing you there!

### **Diaper Drive**

Every year, the Parent Committee organizes a diaper drive to benefit The Diaper Bank in New Haven. This is your chance to clean out your drawers and closets of all old diapers you no longer need, as diapers in any amount and in any size are accepted. The diaper drive will kick off at the November Pot Luck and run through Thanksgiving. Keep an eye out for boxes in each of the classrooms where you can leave your diapers. Many thanks to Preschool parent Camille Koff and Threes parent Asia Goubourn for organizing the diaper drive.

### **Food Drive**

Along with the diaper drive, the food drive to benefit the Connecticut Food Bank is another way for the Calvin Hill community to contribute to the larger community. The food drive will run concurrently with the diaper drive, and boxes will be available in all classrooms for your contributions of healthy, non-perishable food for those in need. Again, thanks goes to Preschool parent Camille Koff and Threes parent Asia Goubourn for organizing this drive.

### **Bring Calvin Hill Home!**

Calvin Hill t-shirts, baseball caps, and note cards are a great way to show your support of the Center. Place your orders with Randi today!

Children's t-shirt: \$8  
Adult t-shirt: \$10  
Children's hat: \$10  
Adult hat: \$10  
Note cards: \$10

### **Newsletter Team**

The newsletter could not be produced without the assistance of the Calvin Hill teachers and staff, who generously collect stories and pictures. Thanks to Rebecca Puhl for the Food Section. The newsletter is edited by Gillian Eversman and Joel Baden. Layout and design are by Kaho Terry.

### **Calendars**

The 32nd annual Yale Community Children's Art Calendar is coming soon! The beautiful and creative artwork you will find inside—all created by our children—will be treasured for years to come.

Calendars are available for \$10 each, and the proceeds go directly toward supporting Calvin Hill's sliding tuition sale. The calendar is our largest fundraising event of the year, and to make it a success once more, we need your help. Every family at Calvin Hill is asked to sell five calendars, though you are always welcome to sell more. Family members—grandparents, especially—always appreciate and enjoy the calendar, and we ask you to please share it with anyone who might like a copy. Thank you for your support, and we hope you are delighted with this year's calendar!

### **Sing-a-longs**

On Friday, December 16th, we hope you will join us at 12:30pm for a family and staff sing-a-long and dessert. This is your chance to finally learn all of the words to the songs you hear your children singing so often. You will also be able to enjoy tasty treats provided by the children and staff. Put the date in your calendar now!

### **Traffic Tip**

After parking in front of Calvin Hill, be sure to look behind you before you open the driver's door. Cars can appear almost out of nowhere on Highland Street, so always double check.

The Parent Committee is continuing to work with the city on traffic calming to keep our children safe as they travel to and from school. Please don't hesitate to be in touch with your suggestions and ideas. The more parents involved with this important issue, the better.

### **Box Tops for Education**

Calvin Hill participates 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.