

The Calvin Hilltop

CALVIN HILL DAY CARE AND
KITTY LUSTMAN-FINDLING KINDERGARTEN



Carla's Corner

Although it's still February, usually the low point of the winter, the weather and the lighter afternoons have made all of us feel the stirrings of spring. All the signs are there—the sap running in the maple trees, the daffodil leaves poking through the soil in our garden (which really hasn't had a permanent freeze this year), and the end to the months of visits from prospective families eager to participate in the wonderful Calvin Hill community next year.

This year we had an unprecedented number of applicants, and have put together what we hope will be lively, diverse classes on all three floors. Eleven siblings will be coming to the Threes program next year and six new children. The Preschool will have fifteen of our own moving up from the Threes and eight new children. Kindergarten enrollment, always more fluid and open at this time of year, will likely have around eleven of our own and nine new children. As you know, we have been holding open houses and visits since November. The children have been gracious and the teachers patient as prospective families have come through, and parents have been supportive and helpful both at school and in the broader community. You are, after all, our best advocates; many visiting parents have been impressed with your devotion to and knowledge about the program. Many thanks.

Other work of the Center has been proceeding as well. This newsletter describes the many varied, in-depth projects and activities that have made the curriculum rich and meaningful in each classroom. In addition, the Parent Committee has some lively events planned, including the Plant Sale;

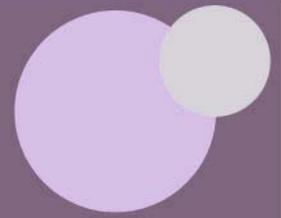
interesting applications for the 2012–13 Harris Fellows are beginning to arrive; the Calvin Hill Board of Directors has just completed the intense work involved in setting next year's sliding tuition scale and budget; and there is important good news about tuition that will accompany the receipt of returning families' contracts before the end of February.

While looking toward next year has been a focus of the last few months, we are glad we have so much more time ahead with your children, our fellows, and you. We now are really beginning to see the amazing gains the children have made in their growing confidence, their budding friendships, their language, attention, and understanding. They have a new ability to come together and play increasingly cooperatively; they are developing increasingly complex scenarios in dramatic play; their representational skills with markers, paint, pencils, and collage are evident throughout every classroom and spill over into the hallways; their constructions with blocks and with other three-dimensional materials are more sophisticated, planned, and balanced; and some children have even learned how to read!

All of these developments have been made possible by the energy, engagement, and interest your children bring to us; by the knowledge and hard work of the teachers who plan and orchestrate these learning experiences each day; and by the support and cooperation of you, our parents. I'm looking forward to a wonderful, busy, productive spring!!

Best, Carla

THREES ROOM UPDATE



With winter in the Threes Room comes one of the greatest joys of the year: the start of the reading buddy program with John Climies's fourth-grade class from the Foote School. Although a little shy at first, these goodwill ambassadors quickly won over our class and eagerly read many lap stories to the children. We look forward to their return each week.

In the area of art, we have been using all types of boxes in interesting ways. First, we crafted small boxes into custom-made vehicles, and even designed our own road for them to travel on (which involved plenty of problem solving!). We then used a variety of boxes to create wonderful box sculptures. The next step will be painting these sculptures and displaying them in our classroom for all to see.



Maeve, Derin, Gerry, and Alma with their paper bag puppets



Braden and Alma playing with their box cars

We have been very lucky to have parent volunteers helping out in the Threes Room: Peg Oliveira has been leading the children in yoga classes and mentoring the teachers in yoga instruction, and Mary Smith has been reading stories to the class. As is so often the case, reading leads to dramatic play, and after reading lots of stories about puppets, we decided we needed to make our own. Our first puppets were made from paper bags; we used them to present original puppet shows. Next up: stick puppets!



Mary Smith reading to the class

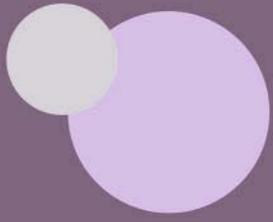
The classroom has been filled with many interesting scientific observations. We looked at a pineapple up close and watched as it ripened— at which point we finally cut it open and enjoyed it for snack. We are in the process of observing our amaryllis bulb as it changes, ever so slowly, each day. We have also been experimenting with magnets and are beginning to document our findings.

We have combined art, music, and science by focusing on drums and the different types of sounds they can make. We plan to make our own drums from beautiful "junk" in the upcoming weeks.



David doing yoga

We are finding out all kinds of things about ourselves, including the many things we can do for ourselves. We enjoy celebrating all we can do.



PRESCHOOL UPDATE



Saidan cracking rocks

The calendar may say winter, but the weather has certainly stayed warm enough for the Preschool class to spend some quality time outdoors. We went on a rock hunting walk in the neighborhood and brought back a collection of rocks for the class to study. We put the rocks in the water table and scrubbed them with toothbrushes to see the difference between dry and wet rocks; we sorted rocks by color, shape and size; we observed and drew pictures of the rocks; and we wore goggles and used hammers to crack open the rocks to see what they looked like inside.

It's been a season of scientific exploration and experimentation. In addition to rocks, we have also been studying sand. Linda and Colleen

brought samples of sand from the beaches at Stony Creek and Lighthouse Point Park, while Saidan and Diego brought a sample from City Point Beach, and Annabelle from the beach in West Haven. We have sifted the different sands to see what is in them and to compare them, and used magnifiers to get a closer look. We sorted out some of the tiny rocks and shells that we found in the sand, then put the sand and shells on the overhead projector to see them in a different way, and finally drew what we saw.

We have been having a great time playing different instruments. Many children have been bringing in their instruments from home, including guitars, keyboards, harmonicas, flutes, and, of course, drums. Colleen has brought her djembe, a large drum, that the children have really enjoyed playing and dancing to. We have even

made our own drums. We were especially lucky to have Sadie's grandpa Carlos come in to play his guitar and teach us some Spanish songs.



Dwyer looking through the magnifier at the sand

The children have been enjoying the new message center in the room: letters and drawings have been "mailed" from one child to another. We have explored other new ways to communicate by making puppets and performing puppet theater.

From science to music and beyond, we are learning more about the world around us every day.



Miriam, Lexie, and Ella sorting rocks



Lev drawing rocks



Zara, Matias, Magdalena, and Cameron sifting sand

KINDERGARTEN UPDATE



Luca, Isabel, and Danielle in the rock room at the Peabody

This winter has been all about rocks in the Kindergarten. We've been busy studying, drawing, reading about, and collecting rocks and minerals. We have been carefully observing rocks, as inspired by our study of volcanoes, and we're seeing all sorts of different shapes, sizes, colors, and grains. We even conducted a rock-floating experiment and, to our surprise, one rock (pumice) floated!

We took a trip to the Peabody Museum to get an up-close look at some rock specimens from the private collection. We got to touch many different crystals and minerals. We had a lot of questions about how rocks are formed and we're still exploring every day.



Kindergarteners getting to touch a real dinosaur footprint embedded in rock

Oliver's dad, David, came in to help us get our rock tumbler started. We counted and put in 67 rocks. We started February 1st and the rocks will be in the tumbler for five weeks. At the end of that time, we'll take them out and have a close look to see how they have changed. Until then, the rock tumbler is out in our studio, humming away.



Oliver's dad, David, getting our rock tumbler started

guitar. We have made our own guitars out of boxes and rubber bands and have even begun making our own drums and other rhythm instruments. There's much more to explore with these and other instruments, from sound and rhythm to art and song. We look forward to it all.

Music is an important part of our day. The children love learning and singing Calvin Hill songs, and the sound of singing can be heard everywhere, amid block buildings and tricycles. We have begun to explore rhythm and patterns in music and even made our own shakers. When a former teacher, Meg, came in to play her cello, the children were extremely interested; Ted's playing of the guitar led to many questions about the guitar itself.

We decided to take a closer look at the guitar and made mixed media images of our school's



Franka using a drum she made



Meg playing the cello for the class

Food Section

Threes: In the Threes Room, we have been busy making delicious soup for lunch during these cold winter days. Our most recent creation was Vegetable Alphabet Soup, which included carrots, peas, tomatoes, celery, and, of course, alphabet noodles. We carefully cut the vegetables, combined the ingredients, and finally enjoyed the soup at lunch.



Willow and Oscar cutting veggies



Maeve, Braden, Gerry, Jacob, David, and Leah eating soup with Susan



Sadie, Will, Thomas, and Zara making pizza with Stefanie

Preschool: The Preschool conducted a classroom survey about what kinds of toppings the children like on their pizza. Based on the survey results, we decided to make several pizza options with cheese, pepperoni, and mushrooms. We created a chart to illustrate which type of pizza we would each like to eat. Stefanie used whole wheat dough and made the pizza with Thomas, Leah, Zara, Sadie, and Will. The pizza was a huge hit!

Kindergarten: After eating and enjoying pickles at lunch, the Kindergarten decided to make their own. Brennen, Sophie, and Emma



Sophie, Emma, and Brennen with the pickles

began by stirring salt and sugar into apple cider vinegar. They layered onions and cucumbers in a tall jar, along with dill, then poured the vinegar mixture into the jar, and finally stored the jar in the refrigerator. The next day at Meeting time, the jar was

shared, but the children thought it needed one more day in the fridge. On the second day, the pickles had become much smaller and floppy. Brennen suggested that the class should do a taste test, so the pickles were served along with store-bought pickles. The Kindergarten pickles received mixed reviews—some of us really

enjoyed them, but others thought they were too sweet and preferred the store-bought pickles. It was a fun experience for everyone and we followed up with a second round of pickles. We made them without sugar, and this time, we found

them too sour. We'll continue adjusting our recipe!



Thomas, Zara, Sadie, Leah, Will, and Stefanie with their pizza

Work Day

Many thanks to our energetic and cheerful crew of parents (and one grandparent) who joined us for the work day on February 5th. Lots of deep cleaning happened, copy machines were installed, minor carpentry fixing was accomplished, and we were lucky to have a reasonably balmy day so that folks could work outside, sweeping and raking, as well as fixing. A delicious breakfast and lots of coffee were once again provided by Koffee, thanks to Duncan Goodall. John Bianchi, the Work Day captain, had everything beautifully organized and ready to go, and we accomplished everything we wanted to do—including the annual cleaning of the pipes, with tall ladders and stalwart parents who climbed them. The next Parent Work Day is Saturday, May 12th. Don't worry—there will be lots more to do!

Summer Program

It's that time of year again, when we start planning for our Summer Program. The program runs for seven weeks, from June 11th through July 27th, and is an extension of our school year program, but with a more flexible, camp-like feel: outside time in bathing suits, water and sand activities, walks, gardening, and other summer nature activities. Plus, of course, the usual art, music, cooking, and science that the children have loved during the year. Much more about the summer program can be found on the information sheet everyone should have received in their parent pockets; please feel free to contact Susan if you have any further questions. The deadline for enrollment is Monday, March 19th.

Parent Survey

For accreditation purposes, we survey all of our parents every year. You will have the opportunity to share your thoughts about Calvin Hill on February 28th, February 29th, and March 1st. As is the case every year, each family's participation is absolutely essential. We value your feedback enormously, and we want to keep up our continuous streak of having a 100% parent return on the survey.

Plant Sale

The plant sale, the second of our two major fundraisers, is coming up just in time for Mother's Day. Thanks to Becca Butman for organizing the plant sale again this year. Order forms will be available beginning the week of April 16th—happy gardening!

Spring Pot Luck

The Spring Pot Luck Supper for all families and staff will be on Sunday, April 15th, from 4:30-6:30 pm. 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!

Book Drive

Calvin Hill's annual book drive will coincide with the April pot luck. Keep an eye out for boxes in each of the classrooms where you can leave your new and gently used books. All books will be donated to the Clifford W. Beers Guidance Clinic to benefit the children whose families are served by the clinic.

Diaper and Food Drives

We are so pleased and proud of our Calvin Hill community for the outpouring of generosity during our diaper and food drives this fall. We collected over 800 diapers and over 150 pounds of food. We will hold additional diaper and food drives this spring to benefit the Diaper Bank in New Haven and the Connecticut Food Bank. Many thanks to Preschool parent Camille Koff for organizing these drives.

Calendars

Thanks to the entire Calvin Hill community for making the 32nd annual Yale Community Children's Art Calendar a great fundraising success. We raised \$6,700 in support of Calvin Hill's sliding tuition scale—a wonderful achievement.

Holiday Gifts

Thank you to all of our very generous parents for the holiday gifts for the classrooms. Over \$2,900 was donated. Each classroom got about \$650 to spend and each teacher received a gift certificate for a meal at a nice restaurant.

Board of Directors

The Calvin Hill Board of Directors is pleased to announce that six new parents have joined the Board: Peg Oliviera, Gillian Eversman, Megan King, Greg Huber, Preethi Joseph, and John Witt.

Traffic Tip and Update

Whenever possible, please park on the south (Calvin Hill) side of the street. If you must park on the north side of the street, **do not expect cars to stop for you so you may cross.** A pedestrian has the right of way only at a marked crosswalk, such as those at Prospect Street and at Loomis Place.

Some good news: the traffic committee has met with the city again, and the city has changed the timing of the light at the corner of Prospect and Highland, and will be adding pedestrian walk lights in the spring or summer. Please don't hesitate to be in touch with your suggestions and ideas regarding traffic calming measures. The more parents involved with this important issue, the better.

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

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.

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.