

The Calvin Hilltop



Calvin Hill Day Care and Kitty Lustman-Findling Kindergarten

Late Spring 2009

Wow, I didn't know books could drive?

At least, they don't drive too fast on Highland Street coming over the hill! In fact, recently a number of books made a short stop at Calvin Hill before taking off again for Clifford Beers Guidance Clinic. The annual book drive brought in 200 new and gently used books.



Plants for Sale, Plants for Sale, 50¢ a Plant

The plants were of course more than 50¢, and the success of the plant sale yielded exponentially more. The fundraiser brought in \$1157. From the beautiful selection of plants to order forms and delivery day, Jacqui Fritzingler was an outstanding organizer. A heartfelt thanks goes to Susan Taddei, Kadija Gurna, Jennifer Friedman, Eeva Pelkonin, Sarah Boone and all the parents who helped make the fundraiser a success by purchasing plants!

Traffic Update

New Haven Traffic and Parking is still working out a scheme to relieve the congestion and speeding on Highland Street. Channel 3 has interviewed Carla and the issue is being addressed. We'll keep you posted.



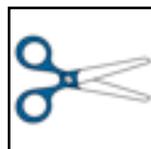
Reminders



Last day of school is Wednesday June 10! Parents, siblings, grandparents . . . come one, come all, and join us for the end of year celebration from 4-5pm.

Snip . . . snip . . .

Remember to keep your box tops coming, every little bit helps.



The Newsletter team includes parents from each floor who generously collect stories and pictures from the teachers and students. They are Laura Eakin Erlacher, Merav Givoni-Hrushovski, Cathy Pamelard, Kate Ott, and Brian Hill. Layout and design by Dan Cogan-Drew.



Spring Cleaning Inside and Out at Calvin Hill



The work day was a wonderful collaborative effort. The three climber got sanded (took all morning). Dave Griffin, Jephtha Curtis and Warren Johnsen, all very competent and engaged did a wonderful job. Javier Garcia and Damien Paglia swept the sand in the driveway so that the outdoors looks completely spruced up. Peter Crumlish was the garden chair and did an amazing job. Zac Walton came Sunday to mulch all the gardens. The outdoor tables are being repainted by Dave Griffin.



Warren Johnsen supplied replacement stones -- something we always need to replenish as they become part of our curriculum and are always being moved around. If anyone has a collection at home in their washing machine, please return them to us.



The inside was thoroughly cleaned -- crews on all three floors. The Hansens, Dawn Topper and Amaris, Tracy Nista, Eve Alexandra and Greta, Rebecca Puhl, Rema Umashanker, Alicia Lee, Merav Hrushovsky were a superb cleaning crew. And Iain York, who has been our trusty Work Day captain for several years did a wonderful job, as always, organizing everything before during and after the work day. Many thanks to everyone. For those of you who couldn't make it, there are plenty of jobs left over that need to be done before the end of the school year that Carla will assign.



Threes Room Update



Growing, growing, growing and not just in inches . . . The Threes kids are getting taller (check the bathroom wall chart). But they also have enough new plants to start a small garden. Their message boxes are growing so full they might need a full-time postmaster. And, their delicate palates have grown to include fruit smoothies and homemade pizza!

A good gardener often starts a crop off indoors to avoid the frost. Avocado pits and sprouted beans make more green garden. The beans grew so fast in their Ziploc bags, they had to be re-potted and brought home. Outside the Zinnia seeds will hopefully bloom by the end of the school year. Scientific observation involves a lot of patience, and sometimes field notes come in handy.



Good thing the Threes class has practice in taking and making notes. Their message center is in full swing. When notes grow beyond the message center capacity, they are delivered to cubbies! The Threes took a field trip to deliver another special package – Mother’s Day cards. They prepared cards to send home to moms, addressed envelopes, and walked together to the mail box to mail their special letters. Talk about growth!

All that planting and writing can really work up an appetite. The Three’s know just the cure for that. Fruit smoothies might be one choice. Or stop by the pizza restaurant in dramatic play, complete with artistic versions of pizza, paddles, menus, and brick ovens! In the coming weeks, the kids will make their own homemade pizzas. The pizza restaurant has been built on the location of a former campsite – once used by Threes room wilderness explorers needing a resting place.



Three’s children aren’t just growing in inches, appetites, and communication skills, but in curiosity and adventure. They have made a number of visits to the Preschool room as they transition to next year. Helen, Nancy, Amy, and Julia have guided their growth all year and have much to be proud of as they send the sprouting Threes off to Preschool.

PreSchool Update



Earth day, earth day, is every day in the Preschool or so it might seem to an outside observer. Planting, observing, collecting, and mapping, the Preschoolers are paying close attention to how the natural world changes, recycles, and re-creates itself. They have also looked more closely at how one animal in particular changes – Hermit crabs. By observing real crabs, reading, acting out, and creating their own props, we are happy to report that they indeed found “A House for Hermit Crab”!

As spring flowers have come into bloom, the students have done drawing and painting of forsythia, pansies, weeping cherry, pussy willows, lilacs, bleeding hearts, and more. After the blooms are dried and crushed, they make great collages. Why just watch flowers grow, when you can grow your own plants? Grass seed, peas, sweet potatoes, and stringless beans are all starting to take root inside and out of the Preschool room.



Gardens and growing require some help from friends. Worm friends that is – great examples of turning dirt into gardening gold! The children have made a worm farm they are carefully observing. Earth day discussions gave way to actions and included composting, collecting trash, and recycling. We’re not just talking about sorting your plastic from your glass, the Preschoolers made their own recycled paper.

Paper comes in handy when you are making maps and learning about your environment. On neighborhood walks, Preschoolers practiced mapmaking. If you stroll the sidewalks and play areas, you’ll notice many small landmarks seem to be missing. The Preschool class is also collecting rocks. They have gone on hunting trips, sorted, washed, and drawn what they have collected. Not far off the path, they meandered upstairs to visit the kindergarten rock museum! Questions were generated about rocks and some of the Kindergarten rock experts came to a Preschool meeting to give some answers – a really nice curriculum collaboration between classrooms.

The Preschoolers not only know more about their relationship with the earth, they know more about themselves. After detailed study, they created self portraits, and became especially involved in the discussion of differences as they mixed paint to create their very own skin tones. They also made puppets, and even small wooden block versions of themselves. They are learning as they move themselves, observe themselves, and be themselves through their play.



Their journey will soon end and the preschoolers will graduate to kindergartens near (and far). Thanks to the inspiration and care of the Preschool teachers – Linda, John, Heather, Colleen, Stefanie - the children are ready for what the future holds – including all those new green jobs!

Kindergarten Update



Have you seen the Calvin Hill Kindergarteners lately? These are the children with the decidedly scholarly look about them whether they are reading practice books or stories, writing about personal experiences in their journals or learning math concepts and number sense through games and exercises. All those months of patient attention have paid off in spades for these soon-to-be elementary school children and, more importantly, as they will tell you, it was really fun too.

Of course, Kindergarten is a time for much more than the three Rs, as these young dramatists, artists and scientists can attest. Recently the class took a trip to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, culminating their unit on seeds, bulbs and plants. There, each child planted a sunflower seed which, in time, will sprout and grow, as the class amaryllis did just a few weeks ago. What's more, an in-depth study of rocks and crystals, led kindergarten children to spontaneously create a rock museum on the playground, which migrated upstairs to the Kindergarten. Rocks have been named, labeled, organized and represented in myriad ways. No museum is complete without a brochure and map and so these were created to guide the museum's lucky visitors. This is an exhibition that is not to be missed.



The uses of plants and rocks are a natural extension to the above-mentioned studies and provided one transition to the class's in-depth study of weaving. Onion, chalk and strawberries were used by our resourceful Kindergarteners to produce natural dyes. Students then used these dyes to color their own yarn and, finally, each child wove the colored yarn on handlooms into cloth. As a follow-up many children are using their cloth to create

scarves and blankets by sewing pieces together. The beauty and complexity of these hand-made creations is truly remarkable; you have to see it to believe it.



The Kindergarten's year-long study of architecture has taken a personal turn. Architect and kindergarten grandfather, Ray Skorupa, has returned twice these past weeks to guide children in planning the perfect bedroom. After much thought, each child created a small plan or blueprint for his or her room. These plans were put to immediate use as children constructed their rooms from wood, furnished them to their tastes and used soft materials, like cloth, string, ribbon and much, much more to decorate them.

Readers, writers, botanists, dramatists, architects, artists, thinkers and scientists: how much our children have grown this year! Our final newsletter would not be complete without an expression of deep gratitude and respect for the indescribable work the Kindergarten teachers have done this year. Our children will carry the life-lessons and love of learning engendered in this year with them always. Thank you Winnie, Liz, Blair and Natasha.