

Dear Students, Families, and Friends of Calvin Hill,

We are Maria Sbaraglini and Dario Balcazar and we have two children: a 7-year-old daughter and a 3-year-old son. Originally from Argentina, we arrived in Connecticut at the end of 2022 to begin our scientific research positions at Yale, and, to our surprise, it was much colder than what we were used to back home. During those first months, adjusting to life in the United States was not easy, as the system and the culture were completely different for us.

For our daughter, the transition was even harder. She found herself in a completely new place, without understanding the language and without her old school comfort. Watching her navigate those early days—full of uncertainty and shyness—was not easy for us as parents. But little by little, she began adapting, and the real change happened when she started kindergarten at Calvin Hill. There she found a space where she could truly be herself: her teachers welcomed her with patience, warmth and love, and soon she began forming friendships that lit up her days.

It was incredibly moving to see, through the daily photos, how she was growing, learning, playing, and communicating in a new language. Every smile, every drawing, every small achievement showed us that she was finding her place. Calvin Hill provided her with a warm and trusting environment where she could blossom and receive exactly the support she needed. We hold beautiful memories from that time at the end-of-year celebration when her whole class made homemade party poppers based on an idea she had suggested, filling her with pride; or the excitement with which she came home after learning the recipe for apple pumpkin bread—a recipe that quickly became a beloved family ritual for many weekends.

Today, our son is in the preschool class, after having previously been in the 3-year-old classroom. He, too, had to face the challenge of being away from us while we went to work, but every morning there was a teacher waiting for him with a smile, ready to comfort and hug him. He is also growing every day, gaining confidence and discovering the world in his own way. There is nothing more reassuring than picking him up and seeing him so joyful—playing, singing, dancing, and listening to stories—knowing he is in a place where he feels safe and cared for.

Plus, I think it's important to highlight that it's not only a comforting space for the kids, but also for the parents. Through different social activities (such as the Calvin Hill family potluck in the picture to the right), we had the chance to meet new people, connect with other parents who may be going through similar situations (or not!), and build amazing new friendships.

Calvin Hill has been a special place for children and families for over 55 years, as documented in the impressive impact study led by Dr. Carla Horwitz, Director Emerita and her team of Calvin Hill board members, Yale students, and members of the Yale Class of '71. Like us, many parents said that it gave them great peace of mind to know that their children were well-cared for and happily engaged at school while they were at work. They shared that they felt welcomed into the Calvin Hill community and were able to build lasting relationships with other parents.

We are truly grateful for everything the teachers and staff do for our children in all levels, day after day and with so much love and professionalism. In that same spirit, we invite you to join us in supporting the Annual Fund of the Calvin Hill Day Care Center. We deeply believe in this community and in the impact it has on our children's lives. Together, we can help ensure that Calvin Hill remains that special place for every child and every family—a place where memories continue to be made.

Thank you for being part of this wonderful community.

María Sbaraglini and Dario Balcazar
Calvin Hill Parents, 2023-present

