



Important Dates

January 29th @7pm @ School – Conflict Resolution Forum

We will be hosting a forum on Conflict Resolution, Discipline, and Behavior Management to discuss different approaches to the topic and specifically what the Patchwork approach is. We hope you can join us!

February 10th @7pm @ School – First Meeting of Patchwork/Homeschooling Support Group

You are invited to help us form a Patchwork School Homeschooling Support Group. This first meeting will be for any parents that are considering part-time Patchwork, part-time homeschooling or those who already do this! Let's talk about how we can help each other – babysitting swaps for siblings, trading resources, etc. This meeting might also help families decide what they want to do for next fall!



February 13th – Registration Paperwork Due for Fall 2009

February 13th – Third Trimester Payment Due

February 16th & 17th – No School (President's Day & Professional Development Day)

February 19th @7pm @School – Patchwork Vision Community Forum

Please join us to hear more about the vision for The Patchwork School. We will talk about what makes up the Patchwork approach, where the school is headed in the next few years, and answer your questions about the school's vision!

Announcements

Valentines – Since Valentine's Day is coming up, we wanted to let everyone know our plans for that week. We would like to request that families not bring in any store-bought valentines or any sweet treats. We won't be handing out any class lists, and we do not expect children to bring in something for everyone (that is practically impossible with our flexible schedules, anyway). Instead, we will have valentine making supplies on hand all that week here at school, and will encourage and help children make them for one another and for family members. If you want to bring in additional supplies (paper, stickers, lace, ribbon, etc.) that would be great! Or, if you create something home-made that you want to share with everyone that is also wonderful!

Water Bottles – We have been noticing that water bottles are often hanging around the school for long periods of time. If we could have everyone try to remember to take them home to be washed at the end of each week, that would be much appreciated!

Book Club – We had a great turnout to discuss the book *Making It Up As We Go Along*, but there are still a number of parents who have read (or were planning to read) the book and couldn't make it. Please let us know if you are still interested, because we would like to schedule another discussion of this book in March. We'll also be sending out some suggestions for the next book soon, and hope to meet to discuss it in May – let us know if you have book ideas or topic requests!

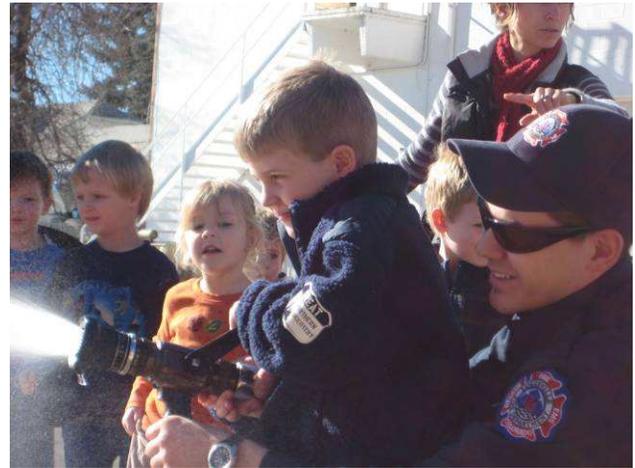
Sign In & Out – Just a reminder to try to sign your child in and out each day. This is required for licensing and also helps us to ensure that all children are accounted for!

Thread Update

Deep Threads – Our fire and electricity threads have already gone in so many interesting directions, including volcanoes, clouds, lightning, circuit boards, weather, and more!

Fire Station Research (by Haley) – on the Computer with Zane, Rose, Alana, Maggie and Sam on 1/12/09. Because of our upcoming field trips, during morning meeting we planned to do research about the Louisville Fire Station on the computer. We set up some ground rules and then proceeded to Google the fire department to find their website. Ultimately, the LFS website was not that informational or enticing, but our research evolved into looking at and talking about fire in fireplaces and lightning. They also thoroughly enjoyed listening to sirens, fire and thunder. But the most notable thing about this offering is that the kids were extremely interesting in the actual computer, for example they were interested in what the buttons on the keyboard were for and what they did. So I typed and spelled out each of their names. I showed them how if I press the "h" button on the keyboard, the "h" will show up on the screen, in the box where we had clicked. The introduction of the computer as a tool was definitely a positive experience, especially when it helped the students understand even more about fire in different contexts.

onto a large screen. There have also been fire dances, songs, drawings, puzzles, and books encompassing this thread. Thank you to all the parents who came out to volunteer – we appreciate your help!



Jonas takes a turn shooting the fire hose!



More computer research on 1/13/09 with another group – this time on fire trucks.

Fire Station Field Trip (by Lindsay) – On January 15th and 16th, we took our first Patchwork field trip of the 08-09 school year! We traveled a few blocks south to the Louisville Fire Station. We learned about fire safety, pumper trucks, and firefighter uniforms. Children were able to check out the inside of the fire truck cab and try on firefighters' jackets, pants and helmets. We learned that the Louisville station on Main St is run primarily through a volunteer base and is only open on weekends. We were also informed that there are no beds or Dalmatians at the Main St. station. For weeks prior children had been playing in the "fire station" at Patchwork with hoses and dress up uniforms. We have also been working on a fire collage with tissue paper on poster board inspired by transparency of fire projected

Circuit Boards (by Elizabeth) – After reading books on lightning and finding out about the negative and positive charges located inside a cloud...we took the next step towards finding out more about electricity. Using snap-together circuits we were able to light up a bulb, shoot a propeller into the air and make music start playing by clapping our hands. We plan to continue our exploration, working on increasingly more complex projects as our understanding of circuits deepens.



The children watch intently as the propeller gets ready to take off!

Exploration of Volcanoes (by Susan) – As part of our investigation and exploration of fire, the children have been studying volcanoes. We have read stories of volcanoes that erupt and how it affects the environment, watched footage of Mount Saint Helen's erupting during our afternoon gathering time, and built our own volcanoes in the Patchwork backyard. Who knew that

baking soda, vinegar, soap bubbles and a little red dye could teach us so much about how volcanoes erupt in nature.



Children create their own volcanoes out back.

Other Happenings

Parent's Night Out (by Amanda) – Thanks to Sarah McCurdy for organizing The Patchwork School's first Parent's Night Out. It was a big success! After settling into the idea of school at night, it was all fun and games! We had twelve children, two teachers and a parent volunteer. Our evening included free play, dinner, story time, and a campfire experience. We had the drama play area open, where there was a lot of talking on the phones. This is also where we were reading lots of books that included *Animalia*, *Curious George*, *Winnie the Pooh* and more! I also had the pleasure of getting served lots of imaginary food, at a restaurant run by several wonderful chefs! Thanks to our Frank Arrasmith (Collette's Dad), we also had a campfire (made with pattern blocks) and "marshmallows". Lindsay got all excited and even made us a tent! She also read books by flashlight! We had a wonderful time being at school in our jammies at night. I hope the parents had just as much fun on their night out, and I look forward to more of these!

You Asked...

Many parents have been asking about potty training issues lately, so we thought we'd offer a few suggestions.

First, parents have asked about various different issues that are occurring at home and wondering if these are normal. The answer is almost always yes! So here are some examples and some possible explanations:

- **Novelty Wears Off** – Many parents have mentioned that they have noticed a regression of one type or another (ex. peeing in pants after having been great on the potty for months). This is very common and usually totally normal. Frequently, children will regress because the novelty of going potty wears off and diapers are more convenient. If this seems to be the case, you can make the diapers less convenient by offering pull-ups that the child still has to manage on their own or by requiring that they help change out of their soiled clothing.
- **Struggling with Milestones** – Sometimes a child will be struggling with a developmental milestone such as the idea of becoming a "big kid," which can also cause regression. In this case the child may have become very interested in babies, they may have a younger sibling on the way, or they may just be feeling the pressure of growing up. If you think this is the case, you can help by downplaying the "big kid" concept and making sure that your child still knows that they are your "baby." You can also let them know that they can get special time with you either on the potty or when diapering.
- **Peeing versus Pooping** – Many children will perfect one or the other but then will be resistant to fully completing the process. This is especially common with children being resistant to pooping in the toilet. This can be because children aren't yet ready to send their poop off to a mysterious place that they don't understand, or for one of the reasons above. Either way, time and gentle encouragement is the best way for this to be resolved. Offering a pull-up to wear on the potty, or trying a kid-friendly potty in their own room or a safe space can also help.
- **Accidents at School** – This is also very common because the children are so busy at school that they often forget to go, or they don't make it in time. Being "potty trained" away from home (or away from Mom or Dad) often takes a little extra time.

We also like to recommend T. Berry Brazelton's book, *Toilet Training: The Brazelton Way*. It is very short and we do have one copy that you can borrow!

Parent Connections

Committee Column

Coordinator: Sarah McCurdy (Gray's Mom) & Nicki Heathwood (Henry & Charlie's Mom)

Happy 2009! Here is an update on our current projects. Nicki will be handling the Parent to School Connections (such as the Scholastic Book Orders and Volunteer sign-up sheets), and I am handling the Parent to Parent Connections (PALS, nights out, etc.) I (Sarah) am actually leaving town again from Jan 23rd to March 2nd, so if you have any questions or thoughts that you'd like handled in person while I am gone, please feel free to contact Nicki (nheathwood@comcast.net.) I will also be available via email.

Here is a list of items which we need action on:

SUMMER SURVEY: we need to compile a survey (preferably online) about what activities/child care parents used for their kids last year. As we discussed in past meetings, we would like this to include questions about ideas and referrals of activities that were positive for your kids. We are especially looking for ideas for the younger kids, as it seems harder to come up with things for them in the summer. We have already had parents inquiring about ideas for childcare for their kids for the summer. I am planning on creating a "list" on our Google Site where interested parents can list days/times that they would like to swap with others this summer.

COFFEE MORNING: our last coffee morning at Curious Cup was a success. We would like to offer another morning. This time, we'd like to do a Wednesday morning, still at Curious Cup (it seemed like a good fit, as it has a little play area for parents who would like to bring a younger child). 9:45 am. Coordinator gets to pick the date. Coordination just involves sending an email to the Patchwork Community list, placing a sign-up sheet in the cubby room, and attending the event.

PARENTS' NIGHT OUT: I think our first parents' night out was a big success! I have sent an email to the parents who participated and the teachers asking how it worked out. I will also coordinate with the teachers for a February date. We will do a movie night this time. I am happy to plan this event. If anyone has any thoughts or comments, please let me know!

PARENT FEEDBACK/ CONCERNS SURVEY: We'd like to create another survey, online, for parents to communicate any thoughts, concerns, likes, ideas, etc. to the school, now that school has been in session for almost 2 trimesters. Anyone interested in creating this? The committee can help with ideas for the survey.

Let me know if you are able to help with any of these projects and if you have any additional thoughts or ideas for our committee at this time!

Meet the Staff



Amanda Easton - Teacher (Mon/Fri)

I have lived in Colorado most of my life. I went to Mesa State and Metro State College and earned a BA in Behavioral Psychology; during this time I had my first son. I worked as a nanny for several families during college and after. I was also a mentor through the Colorado Youth at Risk program at East High School. I married my husband in 1999 and went back to school, working toward a teaching certificate. We were blessed with three more boys during the next four years. I mostly stayed home with them, working part time from home. I enjoyed volunteering countless hours in my oldest sons' classrooms. I also taught Sunday school for K-5th graders. In 2007 we added two more children to our family through adoption, a boy and a girl from Liberia, West Africa. I am currently homeschooling the five youngest children, and we are all enjoying our time at The Patchwork School. I have always loved babies and children. It doesn't surprise most anyone I know that I have six children. I believe that children are a huge blessing. Being around them makes me feel so much younger than I am. I am currently feeling like Ultra Soccer Mom, but I try to keep our household pace at a slow jog most of the time. We love being outside, gardening, rock hunting, playing at parks, going on hikes and picnics, and visiting the library. I love to be with good friends, scrapbook (this is like a twice a year indulgence), bake, read, and listen to music. I love doing outreach activities in our local community and for African countries. I am currently doing a Youth Group outreach weekly at our church. I have many close friends doing projects for different African Countries and I enjoy helping them work toward making a difference with banquets, fundraising, and collaborating on ideas. I am really excited to be a teacher at The Patchwork School. I feel right "at home" here, and I love being with all of the children, they are truly amazing. Teaching and mothering are two of the most exhausting and fulfilling jobs ever!! So I feel it is a privilege to be so fulfilled.