



Important Dates

March 23rd-27th – Spring Break – No School

**April 7th, 7pm-8pm – Would your children say that you REALLY know them?
Free Parent Workshop by Lisa Dion, MA, LPC, RPT/S
Hosted by The Patchwork School**

Join us for a free talk that will give you insight into developing a deeper understanding of your child's world and will explore what it takes to help your child feel known and loved. Lisa Dion is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Registered Play Therapy Supervisor, Certified Gestalt Therapist, Parent Educator and Trained Facilitator of the Demartini Method. She is the founder of Rocky Mountain Community Counseling and the co-founder of the Family Wellness Center in Summit County. She is currently in private practice specializing in family therapy with an emphasis on play therapy. For more information on her workshops and talks, check out: QuantumLoving.com



What amazing weather we have had! The children have really been enjoying the early spring!

Announcements

Toys at School – We have had a number of children bringing multiple toys to school lately (cars, books, phones, etc.). We would like to ask that you try to limit the number and frequency of these items. It is very difficult to keep track of all of these personal items (especially the matchbox cars). Also, if children do bring something to school, please make sure that they understand the sharing rule; if they don't want to share the item with everyone then it needs to remain in their cubby for the day.

Missed Day – Please continue to let us know as soon as possible if you know that your child will not be coming to school. This will help us to not worry and wonder about them, but may also allow another family to drop in.

Meeting DVD's – We do have three copies of the Conflict Resolution Forum on DVD for families to borrow, so please let us know if you'd like to check one out. Unfortunately we do not have the Vision Meeting available, because the camera turned itself off, so we

didn't get it all recorded. However, the slides from this meeting are on the website (click on the Events page), and we are happy to answer any additional questions.

Thread Update

The Patchwork Gazette by Lindsay



This is a new publication at school. It is a newspaper written by the children, for the children. Our first edition was released in February and we hope this will be a

monthly newspaper, if the interest remains. Not every child is necessarily included in the gazette; it is dependent on their interest. However, we are encouraging children to think of the many ways that their work and participation can be part of the Patchwork Gazette. In our upcoming March edition we hope to include more art work submissions, interviews, and photos by the children. This ongoing project gives students a chance to reflect on their days at Patchwork addressing questions such as: "What is the news at Patchwork?" "What do we do at Patchwork?" and "Who are the people that share this school?" It also allows them learn more about each other's interests and form connections as a community. We also hope that the Gazette informs parents and can be a conversation piece with your children to bring our school community into your homes.

Deep Thread Evolution – The deep threads on fire and electricity have evolved. Lately, the children have been enjoying exploring weather and colors. Karli recently did an offering that involved putting white flowers into cups of water with food coloring. This was a great way to talk about what plants need to grow, and more generally what an experiment is all about. We will enjoy watching the flowers to see how they change colors. This is also a nice transition into discussing the recent changes in the weather. We are planning to do some more offerings about planting and weather in the upcoming month!



Other Happenings

Environment Changes

Many of you have noticed some of the changes that were made during the teacher workday. We are excited to announce that the library has a new organizational system which makes it easier to find books related to various topics, as well as an improved cozy corner. The science lab was also revamped to include new provocations and a new rug! In addition, the literacy corner (near the piano) has been completely rearranged

and now includes a new math center also. Finally, the studio and dramatic play space were reorganized with different materials set out. These changes were made partly as a result of our observations as to what types of challenges the children are seeking and what their interests currently are. In addition, we rearranged certain areas to maximize accessibility of the materials and minimize conflicts. These big changes are noticeable, but minor changes in the environment (rotation of materials, shifting of furniture, etc.) happen every day. Focusing on the environment is an important aspect of the Reggio Emilia approach, as it is considered to be the third teacher (after the parents and teachers). This is also an extremely important part of our philosophy, because in order for the children to learn through exploration, there must be lots to explore!



Offer it up!

By Katie Myers (Finn's Mom)

Milk. Food coloring. Dish soap. Toothpicks. On their own in the world of adults, these simple materials seem mundane. Put them in front of a group of eager three and four year olds and a world of intrigue and delight is unleashed! Last Friday I had the pleasure of bringing an Offering to Patchwork. Using simple guidelines from the



book, "Science Fun at Home," I facilitated an experiment that resulted in the kids creating canvases in milk of colors bursting, dancing, mixing, and meshing. I marveled at how each student took my initial guidelines, filtered them through their own personality and energy, and made the experiment their own. Iddi punched the

milk continuously with his soap covered toothpick, causing color to erupt from the bottom of the bowl. Anna carefully touched the middle of each blob of color, sending concentric circles gracefully flying outward. Maggie immediately mixed the colors together, determined to blend them into the perfect shade of pink. And, throughout it all, I simultaneously got a sense for the incredible patience and dedication of the PW teachers and the wonderful energy that flows continuously through the school. I was also able to witness Finn with his peers, inventing, interacting, learning, and growing. The model of Offerings is unique and offers our children exciting and intimate avenues to explore their world and themselves. Offerings also invite us, as parents, to partake in their world, if even for an hour, and to see our children in a new light. I wholeheartedly encourage every parent (and extended family, neighbors, friends, etc.!) to consider bringing an Offering to the Patchwork community.



It's as easy as following these 3 steps:

- 1) Choose an activity!** Make it one that is interesting to you; your passion will shine through to the children. Use the Threads as an inspiration; it's always great to connect our Offerings to the current interests of the students. If you want to do an Offering, but can't think of one, talk to the teachers or to me. We can get you started!
- 2) Set it up!** Contact me at katie@philanthropiece.org to schedule your Offering. Once it is scheduled, I'll send you a "What's up with Offerings?!" sheet that will give you some pointers and fill you in on the logistics.
- 3) Offer it up!** Come to the school at about 10AM on the day of your offering and get set up. The kids will roll in after snack, excited to see what you have in store for them! You can be finished as soon as 11, but are welcome to stay for lunch!

Feel free to call or email me if you'd like more information or are ready to bring an Offering to Patchwork! - Katie Doyle Myers, 303-919-4486, katie@philanthropiece.org.



There are many ways to get involved! Here, Cedar's parents check out the circuits at the Learning Dialogue Open House.

Parent Connections **Committee Column**

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

Hello parents!

This is Nicki, one of the parents on the parent connections committee. I hope you're having a great winter. We've really had some nice weather.

As you may know, there are many ways to get involved with patchwork. Many of you have already volunteered in various ways - whether it's with snack, playing with the children, or reading to the children. Thanks so much!

It seems that having all the different volunteer sheets might be a bit overwhelming. So our new system of volunteering will now involve only two signup sheets.

Snack Sign-Up

- Bringing in a snack for the children, either for morning or afternoon snack
- You could even stay for snack. - the children always love that (this is certainly not required, though)

Helper Sign-Up

- If you sign up to be a "helper," the teachers will ask you to help in various ways, depending on the day. :) Possible ways you may help include the following:
 - a) reading to the children in the library
 - b) doing administrative tasks in the office

- c) doing prep work for a project that day
- d) playing with the children
- e) organizing books for the library
- f) etc. - the ways you can help are endless :)

Please let me or a teacher know if you have any questions about volunteering. Your help and presence at patchwork makes for a special and unique experience for our children. Thank you so much!

Warm regards,
 Nicki Heathwood (mom of Henry and Charlie)
parentcommittee@thepatchworkschool.com

Meet the Staff



Michele Beach – Teacher/Director

I am a Colorado native, having lived in Aurora, Englewood, and Greenwood Village, and I graduated from Cherry Creek High School. I attended college at Stanford University and graduated in 2000 with a degree in Computer Science. Afterwards, I returned to Colorado and worked at Level 3

Communications in Broomfield as a Software Developer for four years. I met my husband, Dave, at work and we were married in 2002. Then in 2004 our son, Cameron was born, at which time I quit working to stay home with him. After being a stay-at-home mom for two years I became interested in possibly doing home daycare. I had always loved working with children, doing lots of nannying and babysitting throughout high school and even into college. However, after looking into the regulations for a home daycare I decided that I wanted to offer more than just a safe place to play – I wanted to provide an environment that would promote learning. That is when I found Boulder Journey School and immediately fell in love with the philosophy. In August of 2006, Cameron started attending the school part-time (Elizabeth was his teacher) and I began working there with three- and four-year-olds. In August of 2007 I completed their teacher preparation program, earning a Master’s Degree in Educational Psychology from CU Denver as well as a Teaching License in Early Childhood Education. My experiences as a director and teacher at The Patchwork School these past two years has further intensified my belief in the power of democratic education and my desire to continue to learn more. I feel so fortunate to be working with such a wonderful group of parents and children!

You Asked...

Parents recently asked at the Conflict Resolution Forum if we could describe some of the language that we tend to use at school in order to allow for more home-school consistency, so here are a few examples:

- **Stop!** – This is probably one of the most important ones that we use. We encourage children to say “Stop!” and even put their hand out in order to stop another child from doing something that they don’t like. This helps to empower the child to make changes and stand up for themselves rather than feeling afraid of other children or immediately looking to adults.
- **I need space!** – We also encourage children to let someone know when they feel that their space is being invaded, by helping them to say “I need space!”
- **Do you want to walk away?** – This is a phrase that we as teachers use when a child seems to be involved in a conflict that they really aren’t invested in, or when another child is bothering them. We want them to know that walking away is another safe way of removing oneself from a situation.
- **What do you think?** – This is another phrase that teachers use all the time. It is simple, but yet powerful in that it lets the child know that we care about their opinion and are open to hearing their thoughts and ideas.
- **Can we think of any solutions?** – This phrase is helpful to encourage children to realize that they can be a part of the problem solving, either in a conflict with others, or just when they are getting stuck with a problem.
- **Are we all in agreement?** – This can be used with family discussions, or after talking about a conflict. It acknowledges that all parties (young and old, “victim” and “perpetrator”) are taking responsibility for being a part of a solution.



A fun picture of Katie utilizing some of the new math manipulatives.