



Important Dates

February 9th, 7-8:30pm – Preserving “Inner Wildness” Discussion Group

We would love to have families, staff, and community members join us for a discussion on preserving children’s “Inner Wildness.” This term was coined by Chris Mercogliano, and he defines it as “the luminescent spark that animates the young,” but this has been written and talked about in many different ways, including the “soul of the child” or the “inner child.” Why is this spark so important and what can we as teachers and parents do to help keep it alive? Here are some suggested readings that touch on this topic, but there is no requirement to read to attend (there are a few copies of each available to check out from our resource library)

- ***In Defense of Childhood: Protecting Kids’ Inner Wildness*** by Chris Mercogliano
- ***The Happy Child: Changing the Heart of Education*** by Steven Harrison
- ***Pluralistic Learning*** by Yaacov Hecht



Valentine by Layton.

February 10th – Teacher In-Service (No School)

February 13th – Payment Contracts and Registration Fees For Next Fall Due

February 15th – President’s Day (No School) & Third Trimester Payments Due

February 25th – Last Day of Second Trimester

February 26th, 9am-12pm – Learning Dialogue Open House (No School)

This will be an opportunity for you to come with your children to school to talk with teachers and let your children show you what they have been up to lately. There will soon be sign-ups in the cubby room for you to choose a half-hour time block.

March 9th – Elementary School Info Session

For those of you that missed the last one, we will be having another session about the Elementary School in March. We’d love to see you there or have you help spread the word!

March 22nd – March 26th – Spring Break (No School)

Announcements

Online Blog – We just want to remind everyone about the online blog, as there have been some wonderful posts lately – about space, ramps, dry ice, and more! Check it out at: <http://sites.google.com/site/thepatchworkschool/observation-blog-09-10>

And if you want to receive an email when a new post is added, follow these simple instructions: click on “More actions” at the top right and then choose “Subscribe to page changes.”

Valentines – Since Valentines’ Day is coming up, we wanted to let everyone know our plans. We would like to request that families not bring in any store-bought valentines or any sweet treats. Instead, we will have valentine making supplies on hand here at school, and will encourage and help children make them for one another and for family members. In addition, we are making some for the Stratford residents. 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!

Drop-off Times – We just wanted to remind everyone that the morning drop-off window is 8:50-9:20. We've had a few families starting to drop off closer to 9:30, which just makes it a little tricky for the children to transition into the school environment before meeting gets started. Thanks!

Thread Update

Mission to the Moon By Brooke

The children at school were all invited to go on a mission to the moon one warm January morning. The idea of going on a mission was ignited by conversations with teachers and children regarding the reasons astronauts go into space. The concept of a "mission" was novel to many children, so it seemed most appropriate to go on our own adventure to the moon. We put on our "space gear" (a.k.a. winter outerwear) and gathered under the pine tree in the front yard. We had an official count down, we blasted off, looked out at earth and landed on the moon. Each child explored the front yard for their moon rock. I am happy to report we all returned to earth safely and quickly painted our moon rocks. Having the opportunity to be an astronaut, explore unknown territory, and keep a found treasure, were all highlights of the mission. We will further discuss the concept of "mission" as we continue delving deeper into our study of space.



Brooke counts down as the shuttle takes off.

Museum Trip By Kerry

Joining in on our investigation of space, many families took a field trip to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science on Saturday, January 30th. Together we watched a short movie in the planetarium called, "The Little Star That Could." After the movie, families wandered around the space exhibit where the kids got to play with Martian-like sand to understand how water created its landscape and check out NASA pictures of planets. They also had the chance to dock a remote control space shuttle to the space station, and spend

some time in the Astrotot Training Center where they could dress-up as astronauts, work at the control center, and pick up some moon rocks. Thanks to all the families for making this field trip a success!



Patchwork children play in the "Astrotot" area!

Other Happenings

Elementary School Update

For those of you that couldn't make it to one of the information sessions, we just wanted to give you a quick update on the Elementary School plans. We have secured a location – it will be right next door to the current school at 1436 Main Street! We are also excited to announce the wonderful teaching team that we have hired – the Main Teacher will be Amanda Easton, who has been a teacher here with us for two years now. There will also be an Assistant Teacher, Michelle Craig, who has been subbing and volunteering this year. In addition, Brooke Bell, who has also been with us for two years, will be the Emergent Curriculum Coordinator, teaching on Tuesday mornings. And finally, Elizabeth will be the on-site director on Monday and Wednesday mornings and Michele on Thursday mornings. We are also now offering various options for enrollment, including three to five, half or full days. Please let us know if you need more information or a registration

packet! And if you have the opportunity to let your friends in the area know about the new school, we'd greatly appreciate it!

Roses Are Red... By Wonshè

Violets are blue. Patchworks kids love creating solar systems *and* making Valentines too! While the excitement about rocket launching and planet painting has yet to wane the children have also been quite engaged in creating some pretty unique Valentine cards. The first batch will be for the residents of the Stratford Assisted Living Facility. Making these special cards with individual residents in mind is one way the children learn about reaching out to our larger community. Check out the Valentine blog on our community site to see these amazing creations. I just know the folks at Stratford will be delighted to receive these little love notes from our precious children. In addition, they've also made a large Valentine box to house the cards they'll be making for each other here at school. The yellow group has also planned a "party" where children can pull a surprise Valentine out of the decorated box!



Great Conversation

We often hear the most amazing conversations, as children process the world with one another. Here is a wonderful example from February 4th:

Layton: When I'm gonna be a daddy, I'm gonna be a teacher.

Matan: Not me. When I'm a daddy, I'm gonna be a doctor. But then I'm gonna need a girl. Cuz only girls have babies in their bellies....Some girls will like me, right, Luca?

Luca: Yeah, Matan, some girls will like you.

Matan: Yeah, like Alana and Maggie... yeah, some girls.

Sam: There are hundreds of eggs in your body when you're born. But not if you're a boy. Only girls. It's not

one or two. It's more like hundreds. I don't know how many, but more than one or two.

Luca: Why can only girls have babies?

Sam: I don't know.

Luca: I wish I could have babies.

Matan: Me, too.

Artwork Spotlight

We have had some truly amazing artwork appear out of this space thread:



Sabrina draws the Solar System.



Julie Adkins did an amazing sand art offering.

Healthy Habits

Ch-Ch-Ch Chia Seed: The Super Food By Laura Ostrowski

Almost all of us have heard of "chia" because of the catchy infomercial of the beloved growing *Chia Pet*. But did you know that the chia seed is a power food packed with lavish amounts of heart-healthy omega-3 and omega-6 fats, (great for lowering blood pressure and reducing inflammation among other things). It also has twice the amount of protein than any other seed or

grain (having all 9 essential amino acids), has 5 times the amount of calcium than milk, and is chock full of fiber (making it excellent for weight loss, diabetics, and improving digestion). It also has more antioxidants and nutrients than the flax seed does and has a neutral taste. The abundant amount of soluble fiber forms a gel which slows down digestion, helping decrease the blood sugar levels (great for diabetics). The best way to eat chia seeds is to first hydrate them into a gel. Otherwise, they can be quite dehydrating (as they can soak up to 9 times its volume in water.) Mix 1 part dried (organic) chia seeds with 3 parts liquid (water or milk of choice) and let sit for a half an hour and you have a gel you can store in the refrigerator. Water-based gel can last up to 3 weeks

Uses for chia seeds:

1. **Food Gel:** Make foods gel, creamy, and thicker. Add hydrated gel to fruit spreads and jelly, smoothies, soups, pudding, yogurt, sauces, nut & seed milks and more.
2. **Crunchy Topping:** Sprinkle the seeds on salads, main dishes, in nut and seed butters, and more
3. **Baking:** Mix chia seeds in muffin, cookie, cake, bread batter or pancakes. You can use the egg replacer technique (below) or grind up chia seeds in a coffee grinder and replace a quarter of the flour with the ground chia seeds.
4. **Egg Replacer:** 1/4 cup of chia gel (1 part chia to 3 parts water) will substitute for eggs in baking (sorry, won't work for omelets!)

Chia Fruit Spread

Serves 2

- 4 T. fruit spread, jam (strawberry, blueberry, etc.)
- 2 T. water
- 1 T. chia seeds

Mix together and let stand for 30 minutes. Spread on toast or bread. If you are using strawberry jam, the chia seeds actually look like strawberry seeds! A great way to disguise this super-food to your kids. And remember the high fiber content will slow the absorption of the sugar!

Chia Pudding

This is a sweet, comforting and healthy snack, breakfast or dessert that couldn't be easier!

- 1 c. chia seeds
- 3 c. milk of choice
- 3 - 5 T. agave nectar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/4 tsp. cinnamon (optional)
- pinch of salt

Mix ingredients in a glass bowl and stir well, removing any clumps. Let sit for 20 to 30 minutes or cover and refrigerate. This pudding will keep well in the refrigerator for days. For Chocolate, omit the cinnamon and add 1 tablespoon raw cacao powder to the recipe. (From "Living Raw Food" by Sarma Melngailis)

Calling All Dads...



We are starting a new little section of the newsletter with ideas for how more of our Patchwork Dads can get involved, because it is so wonderful for children to have both male and female role models and relationships at school. So, besides doing an offering, here are a couple of ideas for this month:

- We have some branches out front that need to be chopped up and taken away or fit into the compost bins. This can be done during school hours with the children's help or on a weekend.
- The children love to be lifted up high in the new space room to add glow-in-the-dark stars to the ceiling, so stop in and help them out if you have a chance!
- Finally, we have a landscape timber near the sidewalk out front that needs to be better secured – anyone have an idea?



Morgan's parents, Terri & Nick brought a great dry ice offering. Here, Jack and Mirelle watch as the dry ice creates dish soap bubbles.