



Important Dates

**Friday, September 10th, 2010 6-9pm &
Saturday, September 11th from 11am-6pm
ART IN THE SCHOOLHOUSE IS BACK!**

Once again, you are invited to our annual celebration of community, education and artists. The event "Art in the Schoolhouse" will take place at The Patchwork School and the NEW Patchwork Elementary School.



This 3rd annual art fundraiser, is both an open house **with food, drinks, a silent auction, music and art**, and it is also the GRAND OPENING CELEBRATION of the Patchwork Elementary School. This year's showcased artists include: Jennifer Rudkin, Emily Miller, Marissa Perry Saints, Peter Steele, Trish Bryan, Laura Ostrowski, Kerri Ertman, Mark Purdy, Joseph Sikora, Emily Smiley, Kat Gibbons, Julie Hietala, Sarah Purdy and Dwell & OneUnit. The talented local musicians playing live at this event include: The Big Spoon, L'town strummers, Rebecca Abraxas, students from the DaVinci School and Chris Ramey. This event is a celebration of the Patchwork School's budding community as well as a way for families and the community to support the school's continued growth. All of the proceeds from purchases at "Art in the Schoolhouse" will benefit both the artists and The Patchwork School. Please keep in mind that **admission into the event is FREE**, so please bring the whole family!

This year's celebration is over the course of two days. The first portion of the event will be held on Friday, September 10th from 6pm to 9pm, an adults evening of food, libations, music and art. The second portion of the event will be held on Saturday, September 11th from 11am to 6pm. Both days are open to the public! The events on Saturday are as follows: 11am-5pm Silent Auction, music, children's activities and art throughout the day and 12 noon ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the Patchwork Elementary School.

Please contact Kat Van Matre (katvanmatre@yahoo.com) or Sarah Purdy (sfpurdy@aol.com), event co-chairs with questions or information on volunteering or donating!

Thursday, September 16th 7:00-8:30pm – Back to School Night Learning Dialogue
Come and see what it is like to be a Patchwork student! Be prepared to meet new people, share something about yourself, and explore fun provocations!

This will be the first of our new series of Learning Dialogues for the 2010-2011 school year. Based on feedback from our surveys last spring, our new format will allow you to connect with all of the teachers more regularly, and to discuss relevant parenting and education-related issues as a community. We hope you will join us one evening each month from 7-8:30, usually during the second week of the month. We will normally spend the first hour discussing a topic in groups and then the last half-hour will be for one-on-one conversations with teachers and other parents. This year Back to School Night, and all Learning Dialogues, will be adult-only events (infants are, of course, a welcome exception).

Announcements

School Pictures – Nicki Heathwood (Henry & Charlie's mom) will be taking casual individual and group pictures for us again this year. This will be happening between September 7th and 24th. You don't need to do anything special, as the pictures will be posted online for you to view and/or purchase.

Administrative Questions – Please direct all scheduling and billing questions to

info@thepatchworkschool.com, but please do continue to send other questions to your child's teacher advisor.

Online Pictures – Each month we will be uploading pictures to our online website, and even though August was very short, we know you are probably excited to see pictures from the first week. So be sure to check them out at <http://picasaweb.google.com/thepatchworkschool> Looking at them with your child is also a great way to get them to talk to you about their experiences here!

Parent Cubbies – Please feel free to utilize the parent cubbies if you have invitations, announcements, etc... We know that schools frequently have policies requiring that all families or children be invited to all events, but we believe that we can be an understanding community and know that isn't always possible. We just ask that you please be respectful about opening notes and invitations at home rather than at school.

Vacations & Illness – Thank you to those of you who have already been contacting us about upcoming vacations and calling when your child will be out due to illness. We greatly appreciate this for scheduling purposes, but also so that we aren't wondering if something is wrong.

Schedule Change Policy – We just want to make sure that everyone is aware that our official policy for schedule changes is that there are no credits or refunds for changes made after the trimester begins. Schedule shuffling is quite costly from an admin standpoint, and is also hard on the children. So, please try to make any changes prior to the start of the next trimester. However, you may still add a day (or before/after care) mid-trimester if there is space (which will be prorated).

Target Cards – We've discovered a terrific way to raise funds for our school. It's super-easy, and all you have to do is use your Target® Visa® or Target® Card. We will receive a percentage of the amount of each purchase in the form of a cash donation from Target through the Take Charge of Education® program. Just visit target.com/tcoe, or call 1-800-316-6142 to designate our school. So if you're going to Target anyway, please consider signing up for a Target® Card! Thanks so much, and remember that Grandparents, neighbors and friends can take part, too. Our school ID is: 151871

Community Connections

By Haley Sladek

Because of the several projects that the school has been working on, the Patchwork School has started a process of documenting the community's assets. We have started by having each staff member write an exhaustive list of what specific skills they have, topics they have experience with, things they are passionate about, languages they speak, places they have travelled, places they have lived, past jobs, schools they have attended, people they know (ex firefighter, nurse), organizations they are connected with and things they have been interested in learning. From this community mapping, the school hopes to continue to deepen its knowledge of the community and to intentionally implement community projects outside the walls of the school. Later on, we hope to expand this community mapping to include the Board of Directors and parents.

First School Updates

Teacher Creatures

By Kerry Cerelli

A couple of creatures you may notice at Patchwork are our beloved rabbit, Poppy Seed, and our visiting dog, Oki. These creatures offer us an opportunity to teach the children how to be gentle with non-human friends, how animals communicate, what foods they eat, and how to care for them. We have held "Poppy and Oki" trainings where a few children at a time visit with our animals while we guide them. We also support any children who are uneasy around animals to feel more comfortable. We have amazing animals here - Poppy seems born to be a preschool bunny and Oki is a trained service dog! Come say hello to them when you stop in.



Being so gentle with Poppy Seed.

African Dwarf Frogs!

By Michele Craig

In addition to Oki the dog and Poppy the rabbit, we had our first amphibian visit and it was a wild success!! We spent the day making observations, reading books, and having conversations about our three African Dwarf Frog visitors. When we took them outside they really went wild with excitement and the children did as well! We look forward to having other critter visitors throughout the year!



Alban, Jonah & Zidane observe the frogs!

Garden Walks

By Kerry Cerelli

As an opportunity to explore plants and to deepen our children's understanding of where our food comes from, we have walked through Patchwork's garden. The children were able to identify many plants and decide on which vegetables were ripe enough for picking. Some of the carrots and greens we picked made for a perfect snack for Poppy Seed. We also noticed ripening tomatoes, bunches of kale, and a few growing pumpkins. The children even found a giant zucchini!



Conflict & Creativity

by Natrisha Bayer

One afternoon Avery, Jack and Layton were playing together at the swing. While Layton was swinging, the other two became quite antsy waiting. This is obviously a pretty typical scenario. One of them started crying, saying "I really want to swing too!" I said to the group,

"It can be really hard waiting. Whose turn is it next?" The current swinger, Layton, said that he didn't want to stop swinging because he didn't feel that one turn was enough. After asking the three kids what they could do, I suggested that maybe they should each get two swings per turn. Layton immediately protested and said, "I really want to swing *five* times." I commented that if everyone took five swings, that would mean quite a long time waiting in line between turns. I didn't have to wait long to see that my observation wasn't warmly welcomed. Suddenly, Avery proposed excitedly, "I know I only want to swing two times, and Layton really wants to swing five times, so why don't we both do that." Then she turned to Jack and asked, "How many turns do you want?" I assumed that he would pick at least five times, but he said, "three!" I asked them, "Does that feel good to everyone?" to which they answered with a unanimous, "Yeah!" I was amazed that each of the children recognized and respected that their own desired number of swings was meaningful and important to them, individually. So although my "adult" sense of justice was to automatically advocate for an equitable solution, I was amazed to see that the children's sense of justice maintained that the most fair solution was based on each child's individual needs and not an equal yet arbitrary number. It was a simple and powerful reminder of the wisdom and sensitivity of children. Instead of imposing and enforcing rigid rules, one of the things I am most looking forward to this year is to continuing to support creative and collaborative problem solving, just like this, within our learning community.



Oscar enjoys his turn on the rope swing.

Elementary School Updates

New Kinds Of Meetings

By Amanda Easton

We are off to a wonderful start! The children are amazing and are already working on figuring out how these new Elementary School meetings work, as you can see in the following snippets from a "kid's meeting" last week:

"We're having a kid meeting; no teachers, but if you're a mommy you can go into kids meeting."

"You can tip your chair over in the meeting."

"Adults can't tip over: only kids."

"We have rules."

"I have to go potty"

"That's OK, meeting's over"

The children came up with the idea of having their own meeting. I tried to get out of going to this meeting, but they said I had to attend! So I did.....It was the best meeting EVER! They actually had several small meetings within this larger meeting: an ocean meeting, a jungle meeting and a bug meeting. I said about two words the whole time. They had rules, took turns, shared facts, and named their favorite creature in each category.

Another type of meeting that is occurring weekly at Patchwork Elementary School is a "Democratic Meeting." This is a meeting in which the teachers and children work together to make important decisions. The last one was about the destination for the field trip, which the children all took very seriously. This meeting runs very much like a board meeting, with a chairperson (adult or child), a process for making a "proposal", and even a decision notebook to keep track of the decisions. Supporting the children in learning how to listen to each other's suggestions, come up with creative solutions to problems, and work together provides them opportunities to build essential life-long communication skills.



Gavin, William & Amanda at meeting.

Apples!

By Stacey Goldman

I keep thinking about apples. It is incredible to watch as each child explores the back yard of our school. It is fascinating to view the approach that each child takes as they come across a sweet juicy apple from the apple trees. The students have loved discovering our earth and the love it has to provide. The elementary students have really enjoyed learning about scientific experiments and establishing hypotheses on what will happen to the apples when left out. In addition, thanks to a recipe from Brooke, the children worked together to create an delicious apple crisp using the backyard apples that was gluten-free, nut-free, dairy-free, and "baked" in the microwave!



Experimenting with the apples!

Investigations

By Christy Lochary

At Patchwork Elementary we have begun working on personal investigations. William brought in a rock identifying book and some rocks from home. We spent some time one morning trying to identify as many rocks as we could using the descriptions and pictures in the book. Once we felt we had found a match, William would write down the "specimen" name and display the rock with the label. This activity has inspired other people to bring in rocks they have found at home!



Jackson and William work on investigations!

Learning Dialogues:

Back To School (Sept. 16th, 7-8:30pm)

We are so excited about this new format of meeting with parents **every month**, rather than just a couple of times each year! It seems that we may all truly feel like we are in constant "dialogue" about parenting, education, and most importantly, the children! So, in support of these monthly events, we are creating this new newsletter column that will contain quotes, thoughts, and questions for you to ponder. This month, given that the topic of the Learning Dialogue is "Back To School", it seems pertinent to ask ourselves, *What is school?* Here are a few possibilities:

School is not preparation for life, but is life.

– John Dewey

A place where every one of its coparticipants can discover and explore the full range of their own unique forms of specialness.

– Chris Mercogliano, The Albany Free School

A bond of interdependence that can give each subject the meaning of his or her presence and of the presence of others.

– Filippini, Reggio Emilia

But what do **you** think of when you hear the word school? As we parents begin the journey of making

choices about our children's education, it can be helpful to reflect on our own experiences:

- What do you remember most about the schools that you attended?
- What specific things do you remember learning, both academically and socially?
- Why do you think those particular items stand out? What makes them meaningful?
- What do you believe is the purpose of school?
- What constitutes success in your mind?
- If you were to erase all of your own preconceived ideas about what a "school" should look like, what kind of learning environment would have been best for you?
- What kind of learning environment do you think would be best for your child?
- Is there any reason that your dreams for your child cannot become reality? How can we as a community work together to make that happen?

Parent Connections

Ways to Help Fundraise – We have added a number of new ways that you can help support the school. If you check out the "Donations" page on our website (www.thepatchworkschool.com) you will see options ranging from how to donate via Paypal, to how to use GoodSearch.com to earn the school money without even spending any!

Volunteer for Art In The SchoolHouse – We will need a number of volunteers to help cashier, bartend, set out food, work with children, bring tables and chairs, help artists setup, etc. You will find sign-up sheets in the cubby room or for questions, you can contact christy@thepatchworkschool.com.

Start Thinking About Offerings – One of the best ways to truly experience Patchwork is to host an Offering. We ask that you give the children a few weeks to settle in and get used to being at school without you, but starting in October we love to have parents participate! An Offering can be something that you are an expert in, something that is a hobby, something related to one of our threads, or just a favorite book. Just let us know if you are interested and we'll help you plan it!

Summer Gardening & Playdates – We want to thank everyone who participated in the Patchwork Summer Play Dates. The garden certainly flourished, and it seemed like everyone had lots of fun and made great connections. We would love to hear any feedback (just email info@thepatchworkschool.com) regarding your summer experience, so we can make next summer even better! Thanks again!