



Important Dates

Tuesday, November 9th 7:00-8:30pm – “Toys & Materials” Learning Dialogue

We hope you will join us again for this third evening of Learning Dialogues. We will be discussing toys and materials – how we choose them for school and things to think about for home. Also don't forget that the last half-hour will be reserved for individual conversations with teachers or other parents – last month this was a wonderful opportunity for us to get to speak with parents in person about their child's recent school experiences and answer specific questions.

November 22nd-25th – Thanksgiving break (No School)

Please note that we do have school on the 10th & 11th (these were marked as learning dialogue days on a previous version of the calendar.

Wednesday, December 8th 5:30pm – Holiday Party

We are once again looking for a family to host our annual holiday party – If you would be willing to have the party at your house please let us know! This was so much fun last year—so please mark your calendars! We usually have food, music, and warm drinks! We will announce details and location soon.

December 20th – December 31st – Winter Break (No School)

School will be closed for two weeks. We hope you all have a wonderful and safe break and we'll see you all back here on January 3rd!

Tuesday, January 11th 7:00-8:30pm – “Patchwork Elementary” Learning Dialogue

Please save this date for the next learning dialogue. We will be having an information & discussion session for currently enrolled families regarding the Elementary School.

Announcements

Holiday Traditions – We would love to have everyone share their holiday traditions with us this month, so please let us know if you have a book, a snack, a song or even just pictures to share!

Cold Weather – Assuming we do eventually get some snow, this is just a friendly reminder to bring coats, hats, mittens, and snow pants to school on snowy days. You are also welcome to bring slippers for children to change into when they remove their boots. And, as always, please help us by labeling everything!

First School Updates

Dispositions

By Natrisha Bayer

When thinking about learning, it is easy to create two simple categories: knowledge and skills. I really



Kai peeks out of a tire tower.

appreciate that in addition to having goals in each of these areas, Patchwork also focuses on helping students develop positive dispositions. In the book "Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach," authors Katz and Chard describe dispositions as ways of responding when learning new information or when working with others. Creativity, independence, helpfulness, curiosity, initiative, responsibility and resourcefulness are just a few examples of the dispositions we seek to nurture at school. At lunch we encourage children to ask other students for help opening their plastic bags and containers. This is a natural way to promote helpfulness within our community. We also support children "wondering" by carrying out research to answer their questions. The other day a child found an apple with a tiny hole in it. Curiously, she asked, "What do you think made this hole?" So after making predictions, we cut the apple open to find out. After this hands-on experience, we referenced books about insects and what they eat. Additionally, when children are faced with a problem,

like sharing supplies or moving a heavy object, we help them to think about different ways they can accomplish their goals. This process fosters creativity as well as resourcefulness.



Curious Aedan.



Friendly Asher & Logan.



Resourceful Zidane.

Family Offerings

By Kerry Cerelli

It's a treat for both teachers and children when family members visit Patchwork to do an offering. Lucy's aunt and grandma came in just before Halloween to help the children make hanging spiders. They wrapped up newspaper with tape, painted the bodies black, attached twisty ties for legs, and glued on googly eyes. Once this multistage process was complete, Lucy's aunt read stories about spiders and sang some spider songs. The children had a great time! We've also had a blast singing Spanish songs with Stefanie (Brynn's mom), doing face painting with Karen (Kaitlyn and Lilly's mom), making books with Doris (Grace R.'s mom) and creating wind sock ghosts with Kat (Jack and Annabelle's mom). The children were excited about all these offerings, and we love including more and more family members as the

year goes on. Just let us know what you'd like to offer and we'll support you to make it happen.



Painting the spiders.



Spiders and other spooky decorations.



Making wind-sock ghosts.



Karen paints faces with many onlookers.



Grace enjoyed showing off her face-painting!

Halloween Parade

By Michele Craig

I absolutely love the Halloween Parade, where The Patchwork School and The Stratford come together to celebrate this wonderful holiday...Halloween!!! While the treats and costumes were all AMAZING, I think my favorite part was seeing the smiles on the faces of the older adults that lined up to visit with the children. I believe that creating a relationship with seniors in our community is so important. Young and old have so much to gain from one another. Thank you to everyone who supported this event!! I hope everyone had as much fun as I did!



Great Halloween Costumes!



Quite the resemblance!



Everyone enjoys Trick-or-Treating.



Happy Halloween!

Elementary School Updates Nuestra Escuela

By Christy Lochary

On October 27th we had some exciting visitors from a school in Puerto Rico called Nuestra Escuela. Our guests were here to visit our school and to find out more about our educational philosophy. Before they arrived, we discussed ways that we could welcome them to the Elementary School. I suggested that we make a welcome banner, and Henry thought that making tea would be a good idea. Afi's dad is from Puerto Rico and he visits there frequently, so Afi thought it would be a good idea to print pictures from the Internet that reminded him of Puerto Rico and glue them onto the banner. We also printed a Puerto Rican flag, a map of the island, an American flag and other ocean scenes.

Henry observed that the Puerto Rican flag has a different number of stars and stripes that the American flag, but the colors are the same. Our guests from Nuestra Escuela were delighted by the welcome they received! They were able to spend some time at each school, reading, drawing and talking with the children.

They were interested in the observations the students had about their country. We look forward to February when a few members of the Patchwork Staff will be traveling to Puerto Rico to see Nuestra Escuela in action!



"We like visiting different places!" - Afi



Afi puts the finishing touches on the poster.



Cutting the axels.



The finished product!

Squash Cars

By Brooke Bell

The elementary children joined in on one of my family Halloween traditions of building squash cars and racing them down the backyard's sloped sidewalk. Children decorated their squash cars with pipe cleaners, googly eyes and paint. We discovered the difficulty in placing the axels just right so that all wheels touched the ground evenly. Overall, we learned that in order to build squash cars, one needs measurement skills and lots of patience!



Using some power tools!

Ball Fun In The Gym

By Amanda Easton

The elementary school gym is well under way (paint and flooring done) and we had Gavin's dad, Drew, visit and do a "Ball Fun" offering. We played several games including kickball, Bocce ball, number wall ball and soccer. Everyone was excited and interested in playing, including teachers and other parents. This was a great way to spend the rainy morning using our large motor skills, teamwork and energy! Thanks to Drew for bringing all the fun to break in our new gym space!



Gavin gets in a good throw!



Drew becomes a target!

Community Connections

By Haley Sladek

When we as parents, teachers, children and community members get to know each other better we find out about all of the amazing things that we, as a group, can do. To take this idea further, at the in-service day on October 19th, school staff came together to have a conversation around "assets." Each teacher created a list of things that they know, love, or have experience with that could be helpful for our community. Having this conversation helped us realize that we would like to start mapping the wider community at Patchwork. So we would like to invite you to engage in the conversation with our new interactive bulletin board on the back porch at the First School (it will also move to hang in the Elementary School part of the time). Each month or so we will be putting a new topic up on the board. This month the topic is "languages we speak." Already, we are seeing that people in the Patchwork Community can speak Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Hebrew and Korean! Please feel free to reflect on what others have written and to share yourself!

Learning Dialogues

Toys & Materials

Tuesday, November 9th 7:00-8:30pm

We had some great discussion last month about conflict resolution at home and at school, so we look forward to continuing the series this month with our focus being "Toys & Materials." With holidays coming up, we parents find ourselves wondering what toys are appropriate for our children and how we should go about deciding. This month we will have a short presentation and then again break into smaller groups, and finally we will end with one-on-one conversations in the last half-hour. Here are a few quotes to help us think about the topic:

From "10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Racism and Sexism": *Both in school and out of school, young children are exposed to racist and sexist attitudes. These attitudes – expressed repeatedly in*

books and other media – gradually distort children's perceptions until stereotypes and myths about minorities and women are accepted as reality....Look for active doers...Do the illustrations depict minorities in subservient and passive roles or in leadership and action roles? Are males the active doers and females the inactive observers?

From "Should We Burn Babar?" by Herbert Kohl: *I believe Babar would best be relegated to the role of collector's item, an item in a museum of stereotypes. My wife disagrees. She has much more confidence than I do in children's ability to develop critical sensitivity unaided... Babar has some appealing aspects. De Brunhoff's drawings and the story of his elephant in a green suit who has all the money and resources to do anything he cares to do can be looked at as a parable of freedom...But...I'd use Babar only if the children had been surrounded by a wealth of books and stories and tales, and had the opportunity to talk about the relationships of stories to people's dreams.*

From "Caring Spaces, Learning Places" by Jim Greenman: *Objects lay claim to our feelings because of associations and qualities of the objects. Wood, leather, and some stone, adobe, and brick objects beckon to be touched. Objects made of these materials tend to wear with grace. The smoothings and cracks and weathering and nicks often add character....Peeling paint, chipped Formica or concrete block, torn polyester, and broken metal are all evidence of wear that repel us.*

Again, here are some questions that might help you think about your own ideas regarding choosing toys and materials:

- What toys and materials does your child gravitate towards and why?
- How much do you control your child's exposure to various materials?
- How do you feel about various types of media exposure such as TV and video games?
- How do you include your child in decisions about what items to play with or purchase?
- How can we help ensure that the guidance we give our children in choosing materials ultimately helps them self-regulate their own choices?
- Who or what, besides you, influences your child's opinions about what toys they are interested in?
- How do you respond to these outside influences?
- How can we become aware of any biased views we may be unintentionally promoting?
- How can we work together as a community to encourage the production and usage of meaningful toys and materials for children?