



Important Dates

Monday, February 21st – President’s Day (No School)

Wednesday, March 9th – Teacher In-service (School Closed)

Wednesday, March 9th 2:30-4:00pm – Learning Dialogue Open House

This event will be in the afternoon in order to offer a different time to make sure everyone has had an opportunity to attend a Learning Dialogue. This will be an open house format where we will be focusing on speaking to parents and families about the current threads and interests. Please be ready to participate in various activities that will help us to expand these threads! Children are welcome to come, so please help us be conscientious about including children in our conversations so that we are not talking about the children in front of them.

March 21st – 25th – Spring Break (No School)

Wednesday, March 30th 7:00-8:30pm – Information Session

If you'd like to get more information about the Elementary School, or know a family that would like to enroll in the First or Elementary School, please attend this information session. This is an adults-only event with a short presentation and Q&A with the directors.

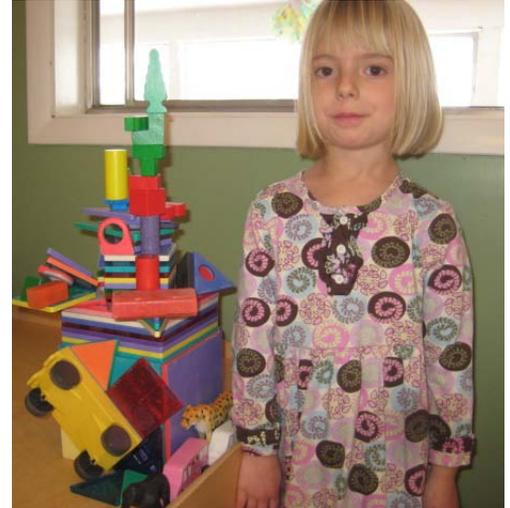
Week of April 11th-15th 7:00-8:30pm – Learning Dialogue

The next Learning Dialogue will be the week of April 11th, with the exact evening to be determined shortly. We would also love to hear your suggestions for potential topics. We had a great discussion about the Free-Range Kids book, and some parents would like to continue this topic. We've also had a request for a discussion about Talking about Strangers, Privacy, and other tricky topics. Please let us know if you have other ideas!

Announcements

Registration Paperwork – Thanks so much to everyone who was able to get their contracts and payments to us on time. We apologize again that the packets got to you late – we will be utilizing a different copy company in the future. For the remainder of the paperwork, it will all be due by April 15th, along with the First Trimester's payment, except for the Health forms, which need to be in by August 15th.

Parent & Community Association – We just want to give you a brief update to let you know that Kat VanMatre (Jack and Annabelle's mom) will be the chair of this new association, and she is full of fabulous ideas! The first meeting will likely be in the first two weeks of March, and we'll want to start talking about Art in the



Emerson shows off her creation!

Schoolhouse, Yard Sales, and more! Please let her know if you are interested in participating! Her email address is: katvanmatre@yahoo.com

Staff Updates

New Teacher

By Sarah Goldberg

Hi all! My name is Sarah Goldberg and I am the new teacher for the yellow group on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I'm very excited to join the vibrant, passionate and creative community at Patchwork! I'm a senior at CU Boulder, studying Spanish and Portuguese because I am very passionate about bilingualism and cross-cultural education. I am also a participant in the INVST community leadership program that combines

activism and academics for a more just and sustainable world. I have a background as both a participant and facilitator in alternative educational models including youth-driven, democratic, service learning, arts, cross-cultural and nature-based curriculums. I am very passionate about the transformative power of education in fostering a holistic learning environment that celebrates and nurtures individuals and communities. I profoundly enjoy working with kids and am constantly amazed and inspired by their unique personalities, gifts, talents and journeys through life. As a teacher, I bring joy, creativity, energy, guidance and enthusiasm. I look forward to meeting all of you!



Sarah offers play-doh at the kitchen table!



Creating clay bones.



Putting the bones back together!

First School Updates

Funny Bones!

(title inspired by Henry's shirt)

By Michele Craig

We have had some wonderful experiences with investigating bones! This has been an ongoing theme throughout the year and we have had some great offerings



spring up from this thread. We are still doing research to identify the animal of a skull brought in by Emerson, looking at other animal bones brought in by Sherri (Alexander's mom) for us to explore, and creating our own bones from clay. We have also been thinking a lot about the bones in our own body by examining the human skeleton and X-Rays. The new "Patchwork Health Center" in the yellow room has sparked interest in how to bandage or "fix" broken bones. We are all looking forward to future projects in this thread!

Museum Transformation

By Michele Craig & Haley Sladek

We hope everyone who joined us at The Denver Museum of Nature and Science had a wonderful time! It was so great to have that time to connect some of the threads we have been working with at school back to the amazing displays they have at the museum. We are now thinking we could bring the museum to the school in order to deepen these threads of bones, body etc! You might have noticed that we have already started working on a corner in the yellow room. We hope to create a reflection of the exhibit "Expedition Health" that was visited at the museum. In this area we have added bandages, droppers, towels, swabs, etc. We are interested in any other items you might have to expand our Patchwork Health Center.

We have also been in contact with Natrisha about borrowing some bone kits through the museum and will be transforming the rest of the Yellow room into the "Patchwork Museum." We have discussed this idea with

Elementary School Updates

Overhead Projector Exploration

By Brooke Bell

We dusted off the old overhead projector and brought it out to explore in the basement of the school. We took out transparent plastic pieces and compared them to non-transparent objects. We asked, "Why does the color show up on the wall with the transparent items, but the other items look black?" The children discovered that when they rolled a marble on the glass of the projector, that the image appeared on the wall. The children created a game of "Catch the Marble," where they took turns rolling the marble and trying to "catch" its projected image on the wall. We video-taped the game and when we watched it, the children realized that the marble image went down their backs when they were trying to catch it. We would like to extend this exploration of light, shadow, and projection by applying these elements to our current thread of magic. How can one use these elements to create a sense of mystery and surprise?



Henry & William inspect the shadow.

Spontaneous Math?

By Christy Lochary

On Thursday Henry asked me to help him build a "constructs" robot, a set that Afi's family kindly let us barrow to further our robot investigations at the elementary school. I am always happy to help a child complete a project as long as I feel they are helping to the best of their ability. At one point Henry left me at the table, with all of the robot pieces strewn in front of me, to go talk with Jackson and Gavin in the meeting room. I thought he was going to come right back and I was excited about completing the robot, too, so I worked on it by myself for a bit. After a few minutes I realized that Henry was not coming back and was instead engaged in a conversation. A bit annoyed, I stopped work on the robot to go ask him if he was interested in moving to a different activity. But, before I walked into the room I stopped and listened to what the four children were talking about so intensely:

Jackson: "Henry, what's 6×5 ?"

Gavin: "Oh I know, but I'm not telling."

Henry: "It's 30."

Jackson: "Oh that's right. What is 8×4 ?"

Henry: "32"

Jackson: "Ok, then what is 12×4 ?"

Henry: "I would have to write that one down to figure it out. That's a hard one, I can't do it in my head."

Jackson: "Yeah, because 8×4 is easy right?"

Henry: "Yes it's so easy."

They continued this conversation for a few more minutes before Henry decided, on his own, to rejoin me at the table and complete the robot.



Henry works on the robot!



Some spontaneous measuring.



Sorting and counting.



Taking home some sprouts.

Farm Field Trip

By Amanda Easton

The elementary school visited the Altan Alma Organic Farm right here in Louisville. We went in the cold frame and saw many varieties of vegetables and herbs. We also met the chickens who are fed only microgreens and coconuts. Farmer Karim explained how he is a farmer and a scientist who is experimenting with potato growing using tubs and varying the location to see which area in the cold frame will produce the most potatoes. We had one brave tester in our group; Gavin tried whatever the farmer offered up to taste, including a flower!



Meeting Farmer Karim.



Checking out the chickens.



Gavin tastes a flower!

Crystals and Crystal Light Show

By Sean Allen

On Monday, February 7th, I brought in a set of crystals, along with a rainbow colored light stand to place the crystals on. I had a particular student in mind with this who had shown interest in crystals in the past, and thought I would see if his interest caught on with other students. Another teacher had the idea of putting a blanket over all of our heads and sitting around the light stand, campfire style, so that we could see how each crystal responded to the light. All of the students got involved, and we experimented with placing different crystals over the light source to see what happened. We found that some reflected the light better than others, that rocks did not reflect the light at all, and that some crystals reflected changing light patterns on our faces. The size, color, shape, and transparency of each crystal played a role in the interplay of light, shadow, and color, as some of the crystals I had were cut and polished in certain shapes, and some were "raw" (meaning they can have the shape of a smooth rock).

I took the opportunity to talk about crystals, where they came from, how they grow, and the many practical applications for them. We started talking about sizes of

crystals and I mentioned that the largest crystals in the world were found in a cave in Mexico in 2007, the largest of which is over 50 feet in length and 11 feet in height! We found pictures on the internet that showed them.

After we had thoroughly examined each crystal on the light stand, all of the children took it further and wanted to draw crystals. They started with depictions of the images we had seen of people looking dwarfed next to the house-sized crystals in Mexico. Then we put a large crystal in the middle of the table and all drew it from different angles. One of the children then drew a crystal palace out of his original crystal drawing. I had not anticipated that the original activity would lead to practicing form in drawing!

I was encouraged because all of the children showed interest in the crystals. Crystals are great tools for learning about light, shape, and color in the natural world. In other words, we were starting to get into Biology and Geology. In the future, I am going to bring in some samples of different kinds of rocks and see if there is a carryover in interest.

Christy had the idea of getting the crystal growing kit going, which is a great way for the children to get an idea of what crystals are and how they grow. Some further themes that could develop out of this are discussing whether or not crystals are alive, because they grow, and looking at themes of determining what is alive and what is not.

The idea of taking a field trip has also been discussed; there is a wonderful rock and gift shop up in Nederland that has many different kinds of crystals, rocks, and science paraphernalia for kids and welcomes field trips.

If this does occur, we are probably looking at March. Let us know if you have other ideas!



William checks out what is inside.

Learning Dialogues

Open House

Wednesday, March 9th 2:30-4:00pm

Thanks to those of you who came to talk about "Free-Range Kids" last time! We had some great discussion and would love to continue it sometime. For the March Learning Dialogue, we wanted to make sure we offered another time so that hopefully everyone will have a chance to make it at least once. This time we will have an open-house format similar to last year, where children are welcome to join us! They always enjoy having an opportunity to show Mom or Dad some of their favorite things to do and places to play. We'd also love to hear your ideas for expanding our threads! So, please come prepared to participate!



Christy hammers open a rock.



Oscar puts finishing touches on the snowman!