



## Important Dates

### **Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup> – Second Trimester Payment Due**

You will be receiving an invoice in your cubby around October 1st for the second trimester payment. Please let us know if it does not appear to be accurate, or if you will be needing to make any changes to your child's schedule. Keep in mind that changes must be made prior to the second trimester start date (November 14<sup>th</sup>).

### **Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> NO SCHOOL – Teacher Inservice Day**

### **Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> 2:00pm-5:00pm – Teacher Trick-or-Treat Learning Dialogue**

We are so excited about this new format for our October Learning Dialogues! Getting to see the children's home environment is so helpful for the teachers and is such a "treat" for children, so we are inviting you to invite us into your homes to "trick-or-treat"! There will be a sign-up so that you can choose a one-hour window of time in which two teachers will come, in costume, for a short 10-15 minute visit!

### **Friday, October 28<sup>th</sup> 10:15am-11:30am – Halloween Parade Field Trip**

This will be our third year visiting a nearby assisted living home to bring Halloween cheer to the residents, and to allow the children a safe and enjoyable opportunity to "Trick or Treat!" We will be handing out a field trip form soon for details on treats, transportation, and more! We will also need your help in collecting non-food "treats" for the residents to hand out, so starting in October, we'll have a collection box out for those.

## Announcements

**Google Groups Email Lists** – We just want to make sure you are receiving all of the information we send out, so please be aware that you do have to accept the Google Group invitation by clicking on the accept link – they are no longer allowing us to just add people automatically.

**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](mailto:info@thepatchworkschool.com)) regarding your summer experience, so we can make next summer even better! Thanks again!

**Paperwork** – If you have not completed any of the registration paperwork for this year, please get that to us as soon as possible – you should have received an email from Haley if we are missing something from you!



**Legalizing Chickens** – Alison Sharley (Winston's mom) is still working with a team of people to try to get chickens legalized in Louisville, which would be great for the school and for Louisville residents! If you are interested in helping, please let her know: [sharleyanne@gmail.com](mailto:sharleyanne@gmail.com).

**Parent Volunteers Needed** – We have a few tasks that we could use some parent volunteer help with, including taking class pictures, creating a "Staff Support" plan, signing up to take Poppy home, taking care of the frog (Mr. Brown), and more. Please let us know, or sign up on the volunteer clipboards if you are interested in helping out!

**Friday Afternoons** – We just want to let people know that we are now closed from 3-4 on Fridays, since we had very little interest in that timeframe. We are now having weekly staff meetings at that time, which help us all to stay even more up to date and connected about what is going on with each of your children!

**Administrative Questions** – Please direct all scheduling and billing questions to [info@thepatchworkschool.com](mailto:info@thepatchworkschool.com), but please do continue to send other questions to your child's teacher advisor.

**Parent Cubbies** – Please don't forget to check your parent cubbies now that they have a new home! Also, feel free to utilize them 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. We greatly appreciate this for scheduling purposes, but also so that we aren't wondering if something is wrong. We do also always appreciate a heads up if you aren't sure your child is feeling well or if they are currently working through something we should know about (parental separation, move, etc.).

**Drop off times** – This is just a quick reminder that the morning drop-off window is from 8:50-9:20. We understand that sometimes you will be a bit early or a bit late, but it does really help us with the flow of the day when you can arrive within that window.

**Art In The School House – Thank you!**  
Thank you to everyone who participated in our Art In The Schoolhouse even this year, either by volunteering, donating, or just attending! It was a great success and lots of fun, especially watching all of the children enjoy Jeff Kagan's wacky performance!

## **School Happenings**

### **New Friendships**

By Laura Daniels, Toddlers  
As the air begins to turn crisp and cold, and the leaves begin to change to glorious shades of gold, people big and small are starting to discover themselves within their learning communities. For the smallest people of our community, this is a very new experience indeed. For most, the step into the Patchwork School toddler community is the first that they have taken out of the warm comforts of home and infancy. For some children, this may even be their first experience with other children their own size. And certainly with so many at one time! Even within our small student-teacher ratio, school is still a new social experiment for each of our toddlers. Wonderfully, each child has found their groove at their own pace and time in these last weeks.

Watching the transformation from new and afraid, to comfortable and curious has been a celebratory experience.

It seems that one of the biggest challenges and also greatest joys in the life of a two year old is communication. As a community, we are learning about communicating our thoughts and feelings in a peaceful way so that everyone gets what they need to thrive. And also to help identify feelings in general, out of respect to ourselves. For example, it is okay to feel sad that Mom/Dad left, or because you wanted to use a toy someone else has. It is hard to be away from home, and it is hard to share. These feelings are not always easy for adults, so imagine being small and perhaps having a limited vocabulary. We have been working through this by talking a lot about saying our feelings out loud. We have also been practicing some sign language and some Spanish as additional forms of communication. And we have been acclimating to our space and to each other like a new family in a new home. As we get to know each other better, friendships abound.

During Ashleigh's first week at school she was having a hard time saying goodbye to Mom and was crying a bit. On Ashleigh's 3<sup>rd</sup> day, things changed. That was the day that her friend Aine happened to be talking to her dad, Rick, on the way to school about her friend who was sad about school. Aine was loving school and wanted Ashleigh to enjoy it with her. Rick discussed some ways Aine could play with her friend and once at school, Aine wanted to try it out: "Ashleigh, come on, want to play?" "Ashleigh, sit by me." Ashleigh stopped crying, and a friendship was born!



**Ashleigh and Aine!**

### **The New Flow**

By Michele Beach, Preschool  
As many of you already know from Parent Orientation, or Back to School Night, our meetings this year have started out a bit differently than in previous years. Each year as we observe the children, we learn what seems to work well and what could be even better. We noticed there were always a few children that rebelled against

the idea of going to meeting, so that particular transition could at times turn into a battle. We wanted to find a way to smooth out that transition so that everyone could feel **invited to meeting, rather than required at meeting**. So this year we have been offering snack before meeting rather than after, and we've been meeting all as one group. Around 10am we usually start to notice that the children are wrapping up whatever activity they choose when they first arrived, and they are starting to get hungry. This makes for a very natural break time, at which point we set out snack and begin gradually letting children know that snack and meeting are starting. A teacher also starts reading a story or Liza starts playing her guitar. Slowly the children make their way to our gathering spot by the tables and benches, go in to wash their hands, get a bowl, serve themselves snack, and then join the group. Those children that are excited about meeting can get started right away, and those that are more reluctant get a chance to see it happening, and then are usually drawn in by the laughter, the songs, or sometimes just the food. Once we have a large majority of the children present we usually get out the white board and have wonderful discussions ranging from hot air balloons to camouflage to squirrel traps! In addition, we then talk about what we want to do after meeting. Then after we all work together to clean up we get to proceed directly to our plans, which helps with follow through! We do expect that as the weather begins to change and we shift to being inside more often, we will more often split into smaller groups. These smaller meetings will at times be based on topics (for example, a robot meeting and a storytelling meeting) or on activities (such as yoga versus singing). Thus far the children have responded extremely well to these changes, allowing for much smoother transitions!



**The children listen intently as they eat snack and listen to Liza read a book to kick off meeting!**

In addition to the meeting change, you are hopefully now getting more accustomed to some of the environment changes, such as the new cubby, shoe and

coat locations. Again, we are seeing that the children are adapting beautifully and love the increased access to the outdoors. The new arrangement also helps reduce drop-off and pick-up congestion, reduces the amount of time children spend hanging out in the cubby space, and generally gives the school a more spacious feel. Let us know what **you** like about the new arrangement, and what we could do to improve it even further. We have been monitoring the flow and planning for winter, and as always, **your feedback is appreciated – just send us an email or chat with a teacher!**

We also want to make sure **you are officially invited to enjoy the Parent & Community Room in front, where you will find coffee, tea & chocolates!** This is a space for parents to sit and relax after drop-off or before pick-up, for you to arrange a meeting or gathering, or for you to check out our extensive resource library!

## Books & Stories

By Liza Sparks, Preschool

These days, the only time I come across grocery carts are at the local supermarket. But there was a time, when I owned my very own orange grocery cart. Instead of filling up this cart with things to fuel my body or fill my pantry, I was loading up on books. I would cart my collection from my bedroom, to my living room, line them up, and play library. I was fascinated with books as a young child and eager to fuel my curiosity and fill my imagination. It is no surprise to me that one of my favorite activities at The Patchwork School is to read books and tell stories. Over the first initial weeks we have journeyed with Frog and Toad as they learn about the seasons, we have discovered the endless imaginative possibilities of cardboard boxes, we have ventured with Sal and little bear picking blue berries, and have been swept away with William in his bath tub. The children have discovered favorite characters and are animated and eager to turn each page to find out if Emily Elizabeth will find Clifford or if the poison dart tree frog will find a home for her tadpole. We've been telling our own stories and over snack one afternoon, the children helped me tell the story of a Jelly-Bean-Eating-Dragon who blew different colored flames. Our dragon also ate blueberries, strawberries, peas, green grapes, and the clock at The Patchwork School (all suggestions were offered by the children). At least once a week, we have written group songs in morning meeting; we have sung about museums, toothbrushes, pancakes, and butterflies. They have been excited to engage in the creative process of brainstorming lyrics, which is another kind of storytelling. The children have begun to make their own books with construction paper, crayons, staples, and glue. Many have begun to tell their own stories about flowers, volcanoes, and their families. At

The Patchwork School, every story offers the beginning to another, and there's no such thing as THE END.



**Haley and a number of children co-construct the dragon story!**

## **Venus Fly Trap, Springs, Tension**

By Sean Allen, Red Group

Another addition to the red group room has been the venus flytrap. The children get to feed the fly trap with cricket parts from the dead crickets of Mr. Brown's cricket supply. It was an interesting opportunity to talk about what venus flytraps do, and how a few plants are carnivorous. I also noticed that the children figured out how the trap can close, and how the tendrils at the end of each trap are suggestive of the mechanism of closing once the trap is aware that it has caught something.

This led us into a discussion of springs in physics, because the mechanism of the flytrap closing was so quick it seemed to act like a spring that released with tension. In the afternoon, I brought in some springs that I bought and we talked about some different uses for them in everyday objects, as well as how you might use them to design things, including crossbows.



**George, Sean, Maya and Sophie watch the Venus Fly Trap spring for a cricket leg!**

## **Mr. Brown**

By Sean Allen, Red Group

For those of you not in red group, feel free to visit the red group frog in the morning at drop-off, he now has a name! Students in red group all came up with names during meeting and then did a survey to determine which name was the most popular. The choices included Cricket, Stinky Socks, Mr. Brown, Skateboard, Palm Tree, Tiger, Rainy, Tree Bee, Rogpo, Yoshi, Goopy, Bert, and Cat in the Hat. In the end, Mr. Brown won, with 11 votes, and Bert came in second with 9 votes.

The children came up with a graph to mark the number of votes. Personally, I am glad that Mr. Brown won, as that was what I voted for. If you decide to visit the frog with your child, please feel free to squirt him with some water from the spray bottle next to his tank, it is taped with green paper. He is from the rainforest, and likes for conditions to be as similar to that as possible.

## **Bones, Skeletons and Crystals**

By Sean Allen, Red Group

Halloween is still a little ways off, but I went ahead and introduced red group to Jack the skeleton, who is a partial plastic skeleton that stands upright. The children had the opportunity to color Jack with dry erase markers and see what different bones looked like, as we discussed the names of the major bones, as well as what bones and joints do. I wonder if any of them remembers how many bones are in the human body?

We also have a great bone book that shows analogous bone structures in different animals and provides insight into bone structure and function. At one point, Jack was renamed Sarah by some of the students in the group as they colored him pink, blue and red. I think the most interesting thing for me was just watching how they processed what skeletons really look like, although I am curious to know if anyone remembers bone names or other technical details. I think this thread does play a little bit off of the crystal and rock thread from a little earlier in the month, when we were exploring, color, structure, and density and really getting hands on with materials from the natural world.

## **Boats/Cars, Skateboards/Ramps**

By Sean Allen, Red Group & Preschool

Several students in red group are particularly interested in learning about how cars, skateboards, boats, and planes work, and have been doing art projects around this. In the beginning of the year, we started with boats and skateboards, and progressed to ramps. The children began to experiment with how to build pieces of the ramp, and then how to put them together and angle them to affect speed and trajectory of cars or boats. On a larger scale, we worked with race cars and ramps later and involved the whole school this past Tuesday. I

really enjoyed watching as they started to understand how the physics worked.



**More physics in action!**

## **Water!**

By Haley Sladek, Preschool

As a way to transition from the summer into the school year while also being aware of the continuing heat, we started off this year with the thread of "water." As you may have noticed we brought different materials into the outside space and did offerings outside so that the children could explore and deepen their understanding of water. Within this water thread we were able to talk about things like floating, sinking, rain, sponges, seashells, bubbles, baths, pouring, hoses, hurricanes, flooding, streams etc. This thread not only helped everyone learn about water, but it also provided a great framework for the community to get back into the flow of the day and the culture of Patchwork. During one of our morning meetings, we talked about creatures that live in shells, which ended up being a lively experience of snails, clams, singing the beloved "slippery fish" song and the children co-creating offering ideas for that day!



**Josie, Parker & Atom work intently on pouring carefully with glass jars.**

## **Getting to Know The Toddlers**

By Michele Craig, Toddlers

It has been such a delight these first weeks watching these young students explore and navigate their new relationships with teachers and peers! It's exciting everyday to see how much each one of them has blossomed!! I have also loved seeing the joyful returning children



from last year. They seem so big now!! I have really treasured seeing how supportive and loving the older children have been with the toddlers. Many of the children from the South building have come to visit our new toddler area offering help and protection. Gwyneth assisted Aiden and Amelia in dress up and putting on a very entertaining show in front of the projector while Hank brought over a caterpillar and worm offering.

## **Getting Acclimated**

By Isaac Graves, Preschool & Red Group

The first month of school has flown by faster than I ever could have expected. On day one I started smiling as I watched and engaged with them and I have a sneaking suspicion it won't ever leave. Watching them explore the world around them, navigate boundaries between their friends and environment, and discover their passions has been an experience I feel honored to witness. I've spent much of my first month getting to know your young people, observing and documenting, facilitating conflicts, listening to their stories and telling my own, singing, exploring nature, witnessing some of the most intriguing dramatic play, and of course, reading dozens of books. I look forward to the year ahead and can't wait to see what unfolds.

## **Community Updates**

### **IDEC 2012**

By Elizabeth Baker

Many of you know that Patchwork is hosting the 21st IDEC (International Democratic Education Conference) in July 2013. Isaac Graves and I are co-organizing the conference and have been busy taking the preliminary steps towards finding potential conference partners and sponsors, as well as potential sites for lodging the 500 or so people coming from out of town (or out of the country). There is one IDEC *before* ours, and that one is in Puerto Rico, hosted by our sister school, Nuestra

Escuela. We would love to have as many families join us at the IDEC 2012 as possible, and yes, children are welcome too! The dates for the IDEC 2012 are March 24-28, 2012 and you can learn more at [www.IDEC2012.org](http://www.IDEC2012.org). To sign up and receive info on upcoming IDECs, go to: <http://bit.ly/o7t6UQ> or Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/theIDEC>.

## Volunteers!

By Michele Beach

We have had some amazing volunteers already this year, including a four piece band, The Bee Eaters! Elizabeth met them at Valley of the Moon Scottish Fiddling Camp and convinced them to come and give us our very own performance! In addition, Gregory Locker, has been visiting every Wednesday. He does rock climbing with children in Boulder, and would love to see some Patchwork children visit him sometime! You can find out more about what he does at <http://abckid.net>



The Bee Eaters!

## Learning Dialogues

Thanks to everyone that attended Back to School Night! It's wonderful to get to have a chance to connect with all of you outside of drop-off and pick-up times. This year we are once again updating our Learning Dialogues based on your feedback! We'll be continuing to have topical workshops in November and then again January through March, but we are also adding in the October home visits and one conference for each family with a Teacher and/or Director sometime during January through March. This should allow for a great combination of individual feedback, group discussions, and fun community events! Here is a rough schedule of the plan for this year:

<b>August</b>	Parent Orientation
<b>September</b>	Back to School Night
<b>October</b>	Teachers "Trick-or-Treat" to Children's Homes
<b>November</b>	Conflict Resolution Workshop

<b>December</b>	Holiday Party
<b>January</b>	Director/Parent Conference s & LD at Teacher's Houses
<b>February</b>	Director/Parent Conferences & LD at Teacher's Houses
<b>March</b>	Director/Parent Conferences & LD at Teacher's Houses
<b>April</b>	Written Letter to Parents
<b>May</b>	Garden Party

In support of these events, we will also be continuing this newsletter column that will contain quotes, thoughts, and questions for you to ponder. This month, given that we will be visiting your child at your house, we thought it was pertinent to ask ourselves **What is the role of a teacher?** Here are a few excerpts from *The Role of the Teacher* from Reggio's *Hundred Languages of Children*:

- Put the action of "listening" at the heart of the teacher's role. The teacher must not merely think about children as strong and competent, but must act in such a way as to persuade children that they deeply share this image.
- The role of the adult is above all one of listening, observing, and understanding the strategy that children use.
- The teacher needs to enter into a kind of intellectual dialogue with the group of children and join in their excitement and curiosity.
- The teacher seeks to extend the children's stamina and attention span, increase their range of techniques and strategies, enhance their concentration and effort, and still allow them to fully experience pleasure and joy...

But what do **you** think of when you hear the word "teacher"? As we parents navigate the experience of assisting our children in their education, it can be helpful to reflect on our own experiences:

- What teachers do you remember the most?
- What specific things do you remember learning from those teachers?
- Why do you think those particular people stand out? What makes them important to you?
- What do you believe is the role of the teacher?
- If you were to erase all of your own preconceived ideas about what a "teacher" should be, what kind of teacher would you want to be?
- How can we, as teachers, help your child have joyful memories of school?

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