



Important Dates

Monday, December 12th 5:30pm – Annual Holiday Party @ The Patchwork School

We are excited once again for caroling, good food, and some holiday cheer! Please mark your calendars and plan to bring a sweet or savory treat or beverage. All grandparents, friends, and family are welcome to attend!

December 19th – December 30th – 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 2nd!



Fun with Dry Ice, thanks to Teri Cady!

Wednesday, January 18th 7:00-8:30pm – Learning Dialogue on Parent Support @ Michele Beach's House: 801 La Farge Ave, Louisville

Please save this date for the next learning dialogue where we'd like to hear YOUR thoughts on how we as parents can support one another. Would we like to create a Parent Support Group or Network of some sort? Would parents be interested in a Parent Advisory Board whose thoughts, ideas and feedback would be relayed to the board of directors? Who is interested in a Hand-in-Hand Parenting Study Group? We need **your** input to help create the support structures that **you** want!

Monday, January 23rd 7-8:30pm – Information Session

If you know anyone that is interested in getting on the waitlist, let them know they should come to an information session!

Announcements

North Building Driveway – We have received some feedback that parking in the driveway of the North building (Toddlers & Red Group) can make accessing the front ramp difficult, and could create an unsafe situation for toddlers and other parents or children. You are welcome to park on the street in front of the driveway, but we'd like to ask that people not park directly in the driveway itself.

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!

Scholastic – We would like to apologize for the lengthy delay in getting the book orders back to you. Julie Adkins, who had been handling the orders has had some tough family situations as of late and will not be able to

continue with the orders. Fortunately, Till's mom, Mary Jane has volunteered to take over, but there may not be another round of orders until January. Thanks for your patience!

School Happenings Play Planning & Consensus

By Haley Sladek, Preschool

Over the last couple of weeks we have been having almost a daily meeting around "shows." And the topics that we have talked about within this thread range from what we need to have for a show all the way to drawing up a storyboard for the play. One of the most exciting moments for this thread was the all-preschool meeting where we had started talking about what the title of the play should be called. I first asked everyone to list out their ideas for play titles. There were only three ideas (surprisingly) masks, moats or dragons. I then started to explain how we could vote and see which one had the

most votes, but before I could even explain the idea, a student suggested "Why don't we use all of them!" And I said, "Oh, like Masks, Moats & Dragons"? And then the entire group shouted "YES!" I then asked for everyone to stick up their thumbs if they agree with the title, and the ENTIRE group reached a consensus.



Painting scenery for the stage!



Grace tries out the new scenery!

Story Notebook

By Liza Sparks, Preschool

As we delve deeper into our story telling thread, the children have been eager to dictate their stories. I often write them in the *Story Notebook*. This is one way for the children to see their stories in words, hear their stories read to them, and even read their stories. I would like to take this opportunity to share a few of the stories that have emerged out of the *Story Notebook*:

Winter: It has white snow. Winter is cold. I like to make snowmen, mice, and have snowball fights.

Swim: I swim in the pool. Water is blue. I wear a swimsuit, do you?

This one was dictated to me as the children acted out the story: *Alex, Parker, Sam, Justin, and Elijah fought the dragon. Then the bad guys came. The bad guys left and made a trap at their house to trap the good guys. But the good guys were smart and saw the trap when the bad guys were sleeping. The good guys broke the trap. The bad guys heard all the noise. They woke up and trapped the good guys. Alex, Elijah, and Sam escaped. Parker and Justin had cactus on their feet and were trapped! Elijah, Alex, and Sam saved Parker and Justin.* After writing the script, I read it back to the children who rehearsed the show several times. Here are a few more excerpts from the *Story Notebook*:

It was Halloween night. Ghosts came out. Louisa the pumpkin felt scared and scary. She decided to scare the ghosts away. Louisa lit up her candle and the light flashed in the ghosts' eyes. The ghosts were scared and ran away.

One day another friend walked by. The butterfly said, "Can I play with you guys?" Bellow and Pumpkin said, "Yes you can."

Charlie looked and thought maybe a tree was a castle.

Once upon a time there was a road, a truck, a train, and a trap.

Thomas was falling, but he landed and made it there.

It's been exciting to hear the children tell stories as a group. In a group they can share their ideas and listen to the ideas of others. This kind of collaboration has led to more complex and detailed stories. They often include themselves in the stories and will sometimes illustrate the action while I am writing, either in action or in drawings. I am anxious to hear what stories they imagine next!



A storyboard created at one of the morning "show" meetings.

Exploring with Paint!

By Sean Allen, Red Group

Over the past three weeks, we have been doing an interactive art project in the art studio of Red Group. We covered the entire studio in paper, and did different projects that allowed the children to expand their sense of painting and art. Everything that could be reached was available to be painted, and we would either start the kids off with specific projects, or just have them go in with paint and see what they did. As an example for projects was when we put golf balls, bouncy balls, and marbles and dipped them into paint, and rolled them around the room to explore the types of tracks they made, depending on the angle of where the paper was (we put paper in the corners, creating a circular and angled ramp. This grew out of the ramp project that has been ongoing (do not worry, I will bring this back soon!). One of the last projects we did was to put paint in the art room and then have the children take turns blowing it with a hairdryer, this was an outgrowth of exploring tornadoes and doing another project earlier where we built paper towns and blew them down. In that project we were looking at how catastrophic natural and physical forces affect manmade structures, giving an idea of how strong they can be, and what it takes to prepare for them. In the painting project, the children got to explore paint and wind, seeing how the wind could actually mix the paint and blow it around. Overall, the art studio project served as a way to deepen several threads we have been exploring, as well as just being plain fun.



Mariah & Sophie paint with hands and feet!

The Theater!

By Michele Beach, Preschool

As I am sure you must have noticed, we have transformed the downstairs space into a theater, complete with stage, lights, back-stage dress-up, and even chairs! We would like to say a huge THANK YOU

to the Repsher family (Lila's) for covering the stage with carpet over the Thanksgiving break. It has truly taken the productions to a new level. Just that one step up really helps them to feel the difference between the performers and the audience, and we have already seen more coordinated and in-depth shows and stories. We have also had numerous impromptu performances during meeting time, as well, where children have stood up in front of the group to perform a song that they know. This is such an empowering experience for them, as they have an opportunity to be vulnerable in front of a crowd. As we continue to offer them new ways to expand this work, they will continue to amaze us with their new ideas!



Writing a note to Mom and Dad, asking for help with the stage.

Intern Introduction

By Sam LaPres, Preschool

Currently, I am a junior at the University of Colorado in Boulder and am double majoring in psychology and sociology. In addition, I am part of the INVST Community Leadership Program. Over the course of two years, the students in this program take classes that study environmental and social justice, participate in their communities, and complete month long service trips over the summer. I have lived in Boulder my whole life. In high school, I volunteered at the Parenting Place, which is an organization that gives classes on parenting. While, the parents took the classes I took care of the children. This is where I discovered my passion for children and their education. Now, I am

thrilled to have the privilege to learn and grow at Patchwork!



Sam helps wrap up some big drawings at the end of meeting.

Art of Art

By Michele "Mitch" Craig, Toddlers

With the weather getting colder we have been spending much more time inside the school all warm and cozy. In the absence of tons of outside play we have been trying to bring the outside in through art and exploration of natural materials. We also have had parents, even grandparents, come in to help with art offerings that were enjoyed by all. In our Original Works paintings we got to see some of their first spurts of expression and creativity. While the artwork that begins to appear in your parent cubbyholes may seem like just scribbles and chicken scratch marks the truth is that they represent much more. Not only are they improving their fine motor skills they are demonstrating the initial stages of writing and experimenting with representational drawing. It won't be long before they are carefully making elaborate and accurate drawings and letters, but in the meantime we can all enjoy the chaos of color and the meaningful mess that is coming from the art studio.



Ellie gets messy with paint!

Jesse the Pilot!

By Sally Anderson

Red group had the pleasure of having a very important guest this month. Jesse Leonard, Mitch's husband, came to talk to us about his career as a pilot. He explained his favorite aspects of the job, taking off and landing, and the excitement of flying a plane. Jesse

helped us make paper airplanes and showed us how a storm avoidance system works. This was really fascinating since we have been talking a lot about tornadoes and other major storms. This system guides pilots through a safe path by either going over the storm or around it. The students really enjoyed hearing about his experiences and loved flying their paper airplanes!

Diving Deep With Weather

By Isaac Graves

One of the aspects of emergent curriculum I love is diving as deep as possible on the topics the children are interested in, while also identifying all of the different ways you can learn about and approach the topic. One recent example of this is the theme of extreme weather that's been emerging. Sean has been leading the charge on this, by utilizing his expertise in science and math in order to delve into tornados and volcanoes. In addition, Sally and I decided to further explore weather using maps. We drew a map of the world, wrote the names of countries, located the world's largest volcanoes, learned about them (leading towards graphing their differences), and then plotted their locations on the map. By continuing to focus on their interests, we were able to touch on science, math and even geography within a context that is meaningful to the children, making the learning easier, more memorable, and more fun!



Making volcanoes!

Food For Thought

By Laura Daniels, Toddlers

The fall brings harvest, school, and holidays. Food, food, and more food. Thus it seems a good time to talk about the good, the bad, and the ugly of packing lunches. Parents have been asking many questions regarding packing a good, healthy, child (and especially Toddler) friendly lunch. It is a challenging task to pack your child's lunch each day, and the job is made more difficult by the marketing for lunch aids that we must face, fielding the products marketed to them at a very young age which are largely processed and loaded with sugar

and sodium. Yet, we all know that food makes a big difference for our kids' health; mind, body, and spirit. So, here are a few simple suggestions for packing your child's lunch. Simplicity! Keep in mind that your child's stomach is about the size of his fist, but stretchy. Children are pretty much constantly active, so most kids like to eat every couple hours or so. Here at Patchwork, we offer them a lot of snack which is comprised of a fruit or veggie and a carb/grain of some sort. Your job is to give them a modest portion of food for lunch that is packed with protein, vitamins, primary fruits/veggies, and good fats. A Japanese bento box or some variation thereof is a great portion estimator for young kids. And they also provide a guide for parents. One box for protein/entree, one box for fruit, one veggie, or some mix thereof, etc. As for likes and dislikes, while it is true that children have very sensitive



palettes, this means that they are sensitive to flavor in general, which means that a little sugar and a little salt will go a long way. With little ones, we want to try to limit the sugar but not necessarily the spice, or how unusual it might



be. Think about the children the world over who eat all different cultural foods! So, chances are, your child will actually enjoy Thai, Indian, Mexican, and fancy foods if they see that you do. Spices of all kinds are an acquired taste, so remember to give your child time and offer things again or increase spice in the future. You never know! Don't be afraid to try new things like buckwheat, quinoa, molasses, etc. Try to cheerfully expose your child to as many vegetables and types of food as possible in their early years. Some veggies that kids typically enjoy are broccoli, cauliflower, sweet potatoes, spinach, kale, avocado, peas, bell peppers, corn, and carrots. Not to mention those wacky tomatoes. The more veggies you expose your little one to ASAP, the more likely they will eat them for the rest of their life. And finally, here are some suggestions for actual lunches, random recipes..... in no particular order. And thank you to the parents who recognize their lunch staples listed here!

Bento #1: Diced tofu mixed with rice, kale, and avocado with light tamari. (this lunch practically stands alone, but you could pair it with a fruit, dairy, or dairy alternative).
 Bento #2: Sunflower butter and preserves roll up on tortilla, rolled and sliced. Fruit. veggie.
 Bento #3: Meat or meat alternative and cheese or cheese alternative tortilla roll up. This one goes a long way... The variations include veggie burger, black bean

burger, turkey, chicken (we know of local sources), fish, ham etc paired with cheese, cream cheese, tofutti, or daiya cheese for dairy alternatives. Again, roll and slice and for bento. Pair with a veggie and a fruit.

Bento #4: The old staple. Turkey/Ham/or meat substitute paired with potato/rice/cheese/pretzels, and fruits and veggies.

Bento #5: Box 1: French toast. Box 2: Fruit. Box 3: veggie Optional: Add dairy or dairy alternative (like yogurt or soy yogurt).

Bento #6: BAGEL: Bagel and cream cheese or Bagel and Tofutti "better than cream cheese". Add meat/locks etc. OR Bagel and butter or earth's balance with preserves/apple butter/sunbutter etc. Add banana. Pair with fruit and/or veggie. This is also great with zucchini bread or banana bread.

Bento #7: High protein crackers/grain like Pita bread, Dr. Flatbread or Mary's gone crackers paired with cheese or cheese alternative, Hummus, fruit and veggie.

Bento #8: Sandwich bread, hummus, turkey, cranberry. Paired with fruit and yogurt or yogurt alternative.

Bento #9: The All American: 1/2 Sandwich on whole grain bread with protein, lettuce, tomato, etc. Cut into quarters. Paired with mango and broccoli.

Bento #10: Leftovers!!!! Making spaghetti, lasagna, enchiladas, soup, or casserole for dinner? Make a little extra and make your lunch life easier. A thermos is a great lunch accessory for throwing your leftovers into the night before. Pair with a fresh fruit and avocado or variation and you have a yummy-licious lunch!



Toddler lunch time!

Community Updates

Partnering with the Library

By Elizabeth Baker

I recently had the opportunity to meet with the Director of the Louisville Public Library, as well as the Director of the Children's Center in the Library, in order to set up a collaboration between us! A few exciting things to come out of our meeting:

- The Red Group now has a monthly trip planned to the library, complete with their own "catered" research assistant Denise, director of the Children's Center who will get ideas ready for them based on their existing thread interests.
- The new library exhibit, Discover Earth, was installed by Space Science Institute, and has already been explored by the Red Group. Their recent interest in extreme weather coincided well with the interactive exhibit features.
- We are talking about potential events for the future, to be co-sponsored by the library and Patchwork--such as a parenting book discussion. And we are hopeful that the Patchwork Photo Project (which some of you visited when it was shown at Bittersweet Coffee Shop over the summer) will end up on the walls of the library.

We are excited to build new and better ways to work together as a true community, both inside and outside of Patchwork!



Red Group checking out Wild Weather at the Louisville Library!

Learning Dialogues

Small Group Discussion #1

Topic: Parent Support

Wednesday, January 18th 7:00-8:30pm

@ Michele Beach's House:

801 La Farge Ave, Louisville

Thanks to everyone who was able to come to the Conflict Resolution workshop – we had some wonderful discussions about Non-Violent Communication, Hand-in-Hand Parenting, Listening, and various other strategies. For those of you that weren't able to make it, we did record the first portion of the session, which we will be posting online in the near future. For these next three Learning Dialogues (January, February, and March) we will be hosting small group discussions at some of the teachers' houses. The first topic we'd like to do is regarding parent support. We have had various discussions with parents about what types of support they need in their lives. Brenda (Andra & Atom's mom) sent out a Rescue 911 video to the community group that was quite thought provoking, and she will be spearheading a Hand-in-Hand study group. There has also been discussion of a Parent Advisory Group that would report feedback, ideas, and needs to the school's board of directors. In addition, I am sure there are many other ideas out there that people would like to share, so we hope you can make it. RSVP's would be appreciated to make sure we have space.

Parent/Teacher One-on-One

January, February, March

If you haven't already had an individual meeting, we want to encourage you get in touch with your child's teacher advisor and set up a time to chat sometime during the next three months. We have noticed that by this time of the year we have really gotten to know the children well, and often have great observations and stories to share. In addition, we find that this seems to be the time of year parents have the most questions. However, not all parents need a conversation at the same moment, so we are not hosting these meetings on a particular day, but instead are leaving this open so that you and the teacher can set something up that works well for both of you. This could be an email exchange, a phone chat, or a face-to-face meeting. In addition, you are always welcome to email info@thepatchworkschool.com with questions or to speak with a director.

Don't forget about the Holiday Party, and try to use GoodSearch.com for your holiday shopping to donate back to the school without spending anything extra! Have a wonderful holiday!