

# Carnegie Mellon University Children's School

January 2013 Family Newsletter



## Happy New Year, Everyone!

We hope you had a restorative winter break and that your family is energized for learning in 2013. Though we are just beginning our January studies of Animals in Winter in the Preschool and Graphic Arts in the Kindergarten, it is time to prepare for the 2013/14 school year.

### 2013/2014 School Year Information

#### **Preschool Enrollment and Re-Enrollment:**

Acceptance packets for incoming 3's and Re-Enrollment packets for the 4's Program will be sent on **January 7<sup>th</sup>**. You will be asked to submit a \$500, non-refundable deposit to reserve your child's space for 2013/14. After February 15, 2013, spaces will be offered to new 4's applicants.

**Extended Programs:** Spaces in our Extended Day Programs are limited to 30 children in the morning and 6 in the afternoon, with preference for children already in the program. Potentially, there are 12 returning Extended Morning friends and 3 returning Extended Evening friends. In addition, 24 of our incoming 3's applicants have indicated interest. These spaces fill very quickly, so return your forms and \$200 deposit promptly if you are interested!

*Please make sure you have an application on file in the office for each of your infants and toddlers!*

#### **Open Houses: Wednesday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am and Thursday, January 10<sup>th</sup> at 12:45pm.**

These Open House sessions for prospective preschool parents involve presentations by Dr. Carver and observations in the classrooms. Current parents are also welcome to attend.

**Kindergarten Re-Enrollment:** We coordinate our Re-Enrollment for kindergarten with the private school timeline, so packets will not be sent via backpacks until **February 1<sup>st</sup>**. Our kindergarten class is limited to 24 children. We expect to have space for all of the interested Preschool 4's children; but please submit your forms and \$700 deposit as soon as possible. After February 15, 2013, spaces will be offered to new applicants on our waiting list. **The Kindergarten Orientation and Observation Session on Friday morning February 8<sup>th</sup> is intended for all parents.**

Please RSVP to Ms. Drash at [adrash@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:adrash@andrew.cmu.edu) for either the Preschool or Kindergarten Open House.

#### **January Dates:**

January 7<sup>th</sup> – Re-enrollment Packets Sent to Current 3's Families / Acceptances to New 3's

January 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> – Speech & Hearing Screening Days

January 9<sup>th</sup> – Prospective Parent Open House (AM)

January 10<sup>th</sup> – Prospective Parent Open House (PM)

February 1<sup>st</sup> – Staff / Parent Discussion re: WATER 9:30-11:00 (child care provided)

Re-enrollment Packets Sent to Current 4's Families

February 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> – Vision Screening Days

February 8<sup>th</sup> – Kindergarten Orientation and Observation for All Interested Parents

## Barnes & Noble Book Fair

The Barnes & Noble Book Fair was a great success! On December 1<sup>st</sup> from Noon until 3 pm, children enjoyed making colorful collage snowmen and polar bears, parents and teachers chatted, families read books together, and many people shopped. We made \$794 profit from the event. At 1 o'clock, Benjamin Kogan and his parents, Elinor Nathanson and Peter Kogan, provided a lively rendition of That Rabbit Belongs to Emily Brown by Cressida Cowell and then Mrs. Jean Bird and her brother, Ken Thompson, provided rousing songs and dances for over an hour! Many thanks to the volunteers who helped with the occasion including Ann Kelton, Elinor Nathanson, Jennifer Huffman, Amy Kim, Amy McFarland, Jessica Simcox, Beth Lott, Chris and Tobi Grill, Maria Sanchez, Mayumi Mutoh, Susan Ward, and Mayumi Kawabi.



## Speech & Hearing and Vision Screening Dates

There is still time to register your child for speech & hearing screening or vision screening. Enclosed with this newsletter are registration forms. The speech and hearing screening costs \$20 and will be conducted by Easter Seals on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup>. The Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh conducts the FREE vision screenings that will be held on February 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Please contact Maggie Rosenblum at [rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu) if you have any questions.

## Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

The Carnegie Mellon University community celebrates Martin Luther King, Jr. Day with a "day on" rather than a "day off", so there are regular classes in the morning and then a broad range of commemorative programs in the afternoon and evening. Check the CMU Events web site for details:

<http://my.cmu.edu/portal/site/events>

Once again this year, the Children's School, with the assistance of student members of Carnegie Mellon University's Mortar Board Society, will be sponsoring a sing-along and art activities at the University Center from 1:30 until 3 pm on January 21<sup>st</sup>. Our afternoon preschool classes and kindergarten will be attending and any other children are welcome if accompanied by an adult. A small snack will also be provided.



## School Photographs

iSimon will be taking photographs of our students on February 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. Each family will have an opportunity to view photo proofs before ordering copies of the pictures. There will be two ways for families to order pictures of their children and the class photos. – either on-line or through a paper form. Further details will be provided with February's Family Newsletter.

## Continue to Save Your Box Tops Submit to the Children's School Office by February 22, 2013

Help us to reach our Box Tops goal of \$1,000 for 2012-13! To date, we have raised \$106.22!

Box Tops for Education has helped America's schools earn over \$400 million since 1996. You can earn cash for the Children's School by clipping Box Tops coupons from hundreds of participating products. Please see the enclosed list of products. Box Tops also offers easy ways to earn even more cash online at <http://www.boxtops4education.com/Default.aspx>.



## More Good News Regarding EITC !!!

In November, the Children's School Pre-K Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC) received a generous donation of \$10,000 from PNC Bank, which brings our Pre-K EITC total to \$53,000 for the 2012-13 school year! We appreciate all of the support we have received from the businesses that have donated to us this year!!

## Opportunity Scholarship Organization for K

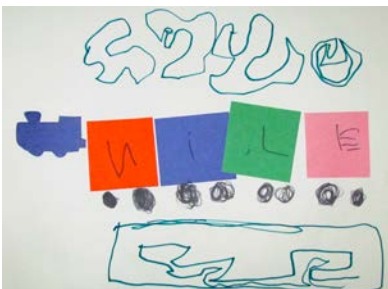
The Children's School Kindergarten has been accepted as an Opportunity Scholarship Organization. The Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (OSTCP) provides tax credits to eligible businesses contributing to an Opportunity Scholarship Organization. Business contributions are then used by Opportunity Scholarship Organizations to provide tuition assistance in the form of scholarships to eligible students residing within the boundaries of a low-achieving school. A low-achieving school is defined as a public school ranking in the bottom 15 percent of their designation as an elementary or secondary school based upon combined math and reading PSSA scores (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment). To determine if you live within the boundaries of a low achieving school, visit [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/school\\_services\\_office/9153/p/1202312](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/school_services_office/9153/p/1202312).

Many of the Pittsburgh Public Schools qualify, as do most of the Wilksburg and Woodland Hills elementary schools. Contact Miss Hancock at [lh37@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:lh37@andrew.cmu.edu) if you have business contacts who might be interested in becoming OSTCP donors.



## Family Spotlight: Urban University Living & Learning

**Rubab and Thomas O'Connor**, the parents of **Shahrzad** (Kindergarten) and **Nile** (AM 4's), met 8 years ago at Carnegie Mellon's Heinz School where they were each pursuing a Masters of Public Management degree. Shortly after graduation, Rubab and Thomas married and settled in the burgeoning downtown neighborhood of Pittsburgh where they currently reside. Shahrzad, born on the most beautiful spring day of 2007, quickly revealed an observant curiosity and passion for books (in fact, her first word was book). She typically begins each school-bound morning with "I wonder what we are going to learn today?" and ends each day by recounting her newfound knowledge. Over the past two years, the wonderful teachers and staff of the Children's School have helped nurture that nature by revealing and encouraging the joyful side of learning. For that, the family is most grateful. Nile was born just 17 months after his sister and, partially owing to their closeness in age, has a deep fondness and admiration for her. His primary love is sports, but his affection for trains follows as a close second. His favorite



sports figures are Andrew McCutchen, Ben Roethlisberger, and Marc-Andre Fleury. And, even more than these, he loves his teachers! Outside of school, the O'Connor family enjoys participating in the many fairs, parades, and festivals in and around downtown. They enjoy attending museums, parks, and libraries, as well as learning tennis. Perhaps most of all, they enjoy quiet evenings at home playing Ludo and Candyland.

## January Web Artists

**3's Friends:** Sasha C., Elena E., Andres F., Rhiannon G. and Greta R.

**4's Friends:** Nera A., Alexander L., Boden M., Elisabeth M., and Nile O.

**Kindergarten Friends:** Sasha K., Will N., and Gabrielle W.



## Stay Safe in Your Winter Wonderland!



For children, winter is not the end of outdoor fun. When properly prepared, children can enjoy safe and fun outdoor activities. "The inviting snow draws children to ice-covered lakes and ski slopes each winter, regardless of the frigid temperatures and the risks," says Heather Paul, Ph.D., executive director of the National SAFE KIDS Campaign. "Parents should watch their children closely, limit their outdoor playtime and make sure that they are dressed appropriately for the weather." Here are a few other winter tips to keep in mind:

- Parents and caregivers should inspect equipment and the environment for possible hazards before children engage in winter activities such as sledding, ice skating and skiing.
- Be aware that the increased use of hot tubs and whirlpools, as well as the danger of hidden bodies of water or weak ice, makes winter drowning a risk.
- If a child complains of numbness or pain in the fingers, toes, nose, cheeks or ears while playing in the snow, or if the skin is blistered, hard to the touch or glossy, be alert to the possibility of frostbite. Tell the child to wiggle the affected body part(s) to increase blood supply to that area. Warm the frozen part(s) against the body. Immerse frozen part(s) in warm, not hot, water. Frozen tissue is fragile and can be damaged easily. Avoid warming with high heat from radiators, fireplaces or stoves, and avoid rubbing or breaking blisters.
- Slippery driveways and sidewalks can be particularly hazardous in the winter. Keep them well shoveled, and apply materials such as rock salt or sand to improve traction.
- Make sure children wear appropriate boots and brightly colored (not white) clothing while walking and playing in snowy conditions. Use reflective stickers on clothing for maximum protection, especially at dawn and dusk.

## A Winter Reminder

On days when snow or ice may affect driving conditions, please listen to the radio or the television. If the Children's School should close due to the weather, we announce our school closing on both WTAE and KDKA. WTAE will also announce school closings on their web page:

[www.thepittsburghchannel.com/index.html](http://www.thepittsburghchannel.com/index.html). Because Children's School staff and families live in diverse areas in and around the city, we cannot factor travel conditions from every location into our decision about whether to delay or close school. Between 5:30 and 6:00 AM, we listen to the news, determine what other schools in the city are doing, and make our best judgment on whether to have a delay or close school that day. In all cases when school is in session, we encourage parents to use their best judgment about whether the roads in your area are safe to bring your child to school.



Depending on the road conditions, we will choose from three options:

- **One Hour Delay**: During a one-hour delay, we will greet the Morning Preschool and Kindergarten Classes at 9:30 AM. This option enables us to conduct the morning preschool classes, while giving our staff and families time for the road conditions to improve. Dismissal will be at the normal times and the Extended and Afternoon Programs will be on normal schedule.
- **Two Hour Delay/No Morning Preschool**: During a two-hour delay, we will greet the Kindergarten Class at 10:30 AM and dismiss at the normal time. The Morning Preschool and Extended Morning Programs will be canceled but the Afternoon Programs will be on normal schedules.
- **School Closure for all Programs**

## Wonderful Ways with Water

In preparation for our Whole School Unit exploring **WATER**, we are planning a Staff / Parent Discussion on Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup> from 9:30 to 11:00am. Preschool 4's and Kindergarten children will be in school, and child care will be provided in the Red Room for 3's and younger siblings. Because school will be in session, please park in the East Campus garage or at one of the metered spots near the school.

According to the iSustainableEarth web site (<http://www.isustainableearth.com/water-conservation>), learning about water conservation can help your family save money now, while also building habits for a lifetime of responsible resource use among the next generation. For example, reducing the bath water level by just one inch saves about 4.5 gallons of water! Come join our discussion of ways to foster young children's learning in all developmental domains by exploring WATER.



## Snow Day Ideas for Water Play

A little planning ahead will go a long way to helping you and your family have positive and constructive snow days this winter. Here are a few ideas for creatively using snow days to reinforce important lessons about Water.

- **Be creative while learning about properties of absorption and states of matter.** Do traditional water color painting, but try different types of painting surface (e.g., printer paper, construction paper, paper towels, cardboard, etc.). Then try ice painting ([www.ehow.com/how\\_4537132\\_make-ice-cube-paintings.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_4537132_make-ice-cube-paintings.html)) to promote creativity and observe the melting process.



- **Experiment with states of matter** by collecting snow and trying different ways to melt it outside (or keep it from melting inside). See [www.ehow.com/list\\_6497888\\_experiments-salt-melting-ice.html](http://www.ehow.com/list_6497888_experiments-salt-melting-ice.html).

- **Exercise growing bodies** by shoveling, rolling, packing and otherwise playing with snow outside. Then relax with a warm bath followed by a cup of hot tea or cocoa inside. Remember to highlight the fact that the snow, the bath water, and the steam from the boiling tea/cocoa are all the same substance – WATER!

- **Explore the prevalence and diversity of water** by going on an indoor scavenger hunt for all the ways your family uses water and/or for older children for pictures and words for water in books, magazines, etc.



- **Observe the properties of water and its effects on various food items** by cooking together. Consider making a salad (after washing the vegetables), a pot of soup, jello, or other foods that involve water in various ways, especially those that change state with heating or cooling.

## Early Childhood Practicum Students



From January 19<sup>th</sup> through February 3<sup>rd</sup>, we will host four early childhood practicum students from Duksung Women's University (Seoul, South Korea) for an International Practicum Program. The Campus School at Carlow University, the Falk School at the University of Pittsburgh, and the University Child Development Center will each also host four practicum students. Dr. Byungho (Tony) Lee, a professor in Duksung's Early Childhood Education Department, will lead the delegation and spend time at each of the four partner programs. Dr. Lee was the translator for Dr. Carver, Mrs. Bird, and Mrs. Perovich in October 2011 when they visited Duksung and gave seminars there, as well as the translator for the delegation from Carlow and Falk that went in November 2012. We look forward to learning more about the initiatives our South Korean colleagues are leading in early childhood and in reflecting with them about the cross-cultural similarities and differences in our values and approaches related to educating young children.



**Seung-Ji Han**  
Junior  
Preschool 3's  
(Tomer)



**Jiwon Jeon**  
Junior  
Preschool 4's  
(Opferman / Mangan)



**Hyun-Kyung Lee**  
Senior  
Kindergarten  
(Scholes)



**Yoo Kyung Lee**  
Senior  
Preschool 3's  
(Stevens/Salinetro)

Thanks to the Balog and Park families for offering housing to these visiting students (Juniors and Seniors, respectively). There are still opportunities to help by preparing welcome bags for the students, offering to provide lunch for them at the school one day, providing transportation to cultural attractions, etc. If you are interested in helping, please contact Dr. Carver at [sc0e@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:sc0e@andrew.cmu.edu) to discuss options.

## Still Time! Giant Eagle Apples for the Students

### Use your Giant Eagle Advantage Card through March 17, 2013

- Register at [www.gianteagle.com/about/apples-for-students](http://www.gianteagle.com/about/apples-for-students) or by calling 1-800-474-4777.
- Provide our School ID# 151.
- Each time your Giant Eagle Advantage Card is scanned through March 17, 2013, your purchases automatically earn our school FREE educational materials.



**Apples**  
for the  
**Students**

## Undergraduate Spotlight

**Airiss** (pronounced like the word "heiress") **Finley** has always had a natural love for kids. She states, "Between the honest comments and the curious questions, it has been a wonderful experience working at the Children's School." Airiss is currently a sophomore studying psychology with a concentration in the social and personality areas. She has worked as a counselor with children between the ages of four and five



for the past three years and done community service with children via the Pediatric Therapy Network. Airiss is originally from Los Angeles, and she says that being so far away from home has really caused her to appreciate the community that is the Children's School. "It is a home away from home." Airiss worked in the fall with the Green Room and Extended Day friends, but is pictured here with the Kindergarten friends in December. Her favorite part of the day is sitting for lunch with friends and having conversations with them. Airiss plans on working at the Children's School for the rest of her undergraduate career and then continuing her education in psychology by going to graduate school in clinical psychology.

## Perhaps you wondered ...

... what ever happens to the undergraduates who work at the Children's School.

**Helen (Hyun Jeong) Kim** earned a Bachelor of Humanities and Arts in Psychology and Music at Carnegie Mellon with honors in May of 2010. During Helen's tenure at CMU, she took all three of Dr. Carver's courses (Principles of Child Development, Practicum in Child Development, and the graduate-level Educational Goals, Instruction, and Assessment). She did her practicum in the 3's program, and also worked as a research assistant in Dr. Anna Fisher's lab here using the eye tracking equipment. Helen also did an independent study project here observing how teachers support children who are learning English as their second (or third) language. In the two years since graduation, Helen moved to New York City, earned a Master of Arts in Early Childhood General Education and Early Childhood Special Education at the Columbia University Teachers College (May 2012) and is currently working at both the Manhattan Korean School as an Assistant Teacher and at All About Kids as a Special Education Itinerant Teacher. Helen is in the process of applying for top quality doctoral programs so she can fulfill her research interests, including "issues of multiculturalism in special education; immigrant families' perception and assessment of early childhood inclusive special education; early childhood learning and development in special education (especially of language and culture minority children); learning of children with disabilities in home contexts; and family dynamics and parenting of children with disabilities."





## Research Spotlight

### The Faces Game

Ashna Shome, a high school student at The Ellis School, is interested in understanding whether children aged 3-10 show any evidence of same-race preferences. The intent is not to study or observe racism, but to observe children as they play two brief games, in order to understand whether children innately prefer faces of their own race. In the first task, the participating children will be shown two faces [as shown below]. The faces will vary in race, but be neutral in terms of gender, age, emotion, etc. After a few seconds, the faces will disappear and be replaced by a dot that corresponds to the position of one of the previously shown faces. Depending







on which face the dot's position corresponds, the child will be asked to press a specific key. The software used will measure reaction time. From this timing data, it is possible to determine where the child was looking because it will take longer to react when the dot appears in the location of the face where the child was not focusing. In the second game, a chatroom-style interface will appear. The faces shown will all be children's faces, and varied in race. The researcher will ask the participating child to choose a talking partner from the children shown on the screen. This study will last for only 10-15 minutes per child and there will be no direct references to race at any point in the study.



### The Moving Eyes Game

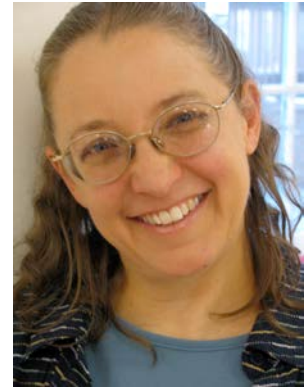
The world around us is complex and maintaining focused attention can sometimes be challenging even for adults. The goal of this project in Dr. Erik Thiessen's lab is to investigate the developmental course of deliberate selective attention and to examine factors that play a role in attentional selectivity at different points in development. In this project, researchers ask children to play a game in which they see several objects moving on a Tobii T60 eye tracker (which looks like a typical computer screen) landing on one of the nine screen locations, each a different color. Children are instructed to

watch a particular object while ignoring the rest of the objects. When the objects stop moving and disappear from the screen, children are asked to name the color of the grid in which the object disappeared. Children play the Moving Eyes Game several times, tracking either many objects or just a few objects at a time. Additionally, if there are technical issues with the eye-tracking hardware, a session may be begun on one day and finished on a later day. Children's performance in the Moving Eyes Game will help researchers to map the developmental course of deliberate selective attention and improve scientists' understanding of this basic cognitive ability required for successful performance in many everyday tasks.

## Director's Corner: Curriculum

NAEYC's standard for **Curriculum** provides a broad overview listing the essential components of a quality early childhood program. The standard does NOT require centers to adopt a packaged curriculum or prescribe one particular educational approach, so centers are free to design their programs based on diverse philosophies, as long as their purposeful design fits the NAEYC criteria. This balance of a structured curriculum framework with the flexibility for intellectual freedom fits well with Carnegie Mellon's unifying motto of "My heart is in the work" and sets the stage for a laboratory school community in which all learners can engage in and contribute to meaningful learning.



- Our curriculum framework is based on **six sets of learning objectives** that cover the full range of development and are based on early childhood development theories. You can download these objectives for Self-Esteem & Independence, Interaction & Cooperation, Communication, Discovery & Exploration, Physical Capabilities, Health & Safety, and Artistic Expression & Appreciation from our web site in the "Program" section under "Six Basic Learning Goals".
- **Every aspect of our program** is intentionally designed to foster children's development relative to our specified objectives, including our classroom arrangement, choice of materials, schedules and routines, teaching strategies, etc. In addition, our choice of **interdisciplinary thematic curriculum** allows us to facilitate broad skill building across all domains while also promoting deep exploration of relevant, real-world topics, such as our upcoming whole school study of *Water* or other recent whole school units on *Healthy Mind & Body*, *Building*, or *Theatre Arts*. We choose topics to both deepen conceptual development (e.g., studying Desert Habitats after the Water Unit in the Preschool) and to broaden children's exposure (e.g., exploring Russian Culture in the Kindergarten where several children have Russian heritage but all can benefit from comparing and contrasting cultures).
- Using the framework of developmental objectives in the context of thematic studies makes our curriculum **adaptable** to a range of children's ability levels and **responsive** to diverse child and family experiences, interests and values. Choosing the themes for the year in advance allows educators to locate quality resources and **proactively plan** to incorporate the wealth of campus and community assets into the unit, while leaving significant openness in the unit design to **integrate children's ideas and emerging interests** as the unit progresses. When planning the specific activities within a unit, we balance both the **grouping of children** – including individual, small group and large group activities – and the **style of guidance** – including child-guided play, inquiry, and creative expression, as well as teacher-guided lessons and activities.
- In all of these ways, we are laying **essential cognitive foundations** for the literacy, math, science, social studies, and arts that will be more formally taught in elementary school and beyond. We directly teach and then repeatedly practice the use of **essential tools for learning**, beginning with basic gross and fine motor skills and cognitive methods for problem solving and inquiry and then gradually introducing physical tools and technologies (e.g., simple machines, cooking utensils, woodworking tools, computers, and other digital media), all with proactive attention to appropriate health and safety issues. Being affiliated with Carnegie Mellon and active in the Pittsburgh early education community provides our educators with a **rich network of experts** willing to support our children's learning by contributing their time and resources to our thematic studies, all with the goal of designing the most authentic experiences possible for young children in innovative ways that we can share with other educators as part of our laboratory school outreach.

