Singing for Peace

The preschool and kindergarten friends honored the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. by holding a Peace & Friendship Sing-Along led by Mrs. Bird at the CMU Cohon University Center on Friday morning, January 27th. Thanks to all the families who voiced dreams for peace with us!

One of the songs we sang was “This Little Light of Mine”, which resonates with one of King’s quotes that, “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” We also sang, “Love Grows”, “We’re Building a Better World”, and “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?” We invite you all to join us each day in singing with our children for peace.

February Dates:

- Wednesday, February 1st – Kindergarten Re-enrollment Forms Sent Home in Backpacks to Current 4’s Families
- Friday, February 3rd - Staff / Parent Disc re: THEATRE ARTS 9:30-11:00 (child care provided)
- Monday & Tuesday, February 6th (Preschool) & 7th (Kindergarten) - School Photos
- Wednesday, February 15th – Box Tops for Education DUE
- Thursday, February 16th – 8:30 am & 12:30 pm, Q&A with Educators (Infants & Toddlers Attend with Parents)
- Friday, February 17th - Forms & Deposits DUE for 2016-2017 Kindergarten
- Monday, February 20th - Presidents’ Day Holiday (NO SCHOOL)
- Wednesday, February 22nd – Attack Theatre Classes for Children During School
- Friday, March 3rd – Attack Theatre Event (Children & Families) – 10:30am Skibo Dance Studio
- Thursday, March 9th, 4:30-6:30 pm, Family THEATRE ARTS Festival
- Friday, March 10th, Professional Development Day for Educators (NO SCHOOL)
February is Children’s Dental Health Month

The American Dental Association (ADA) sponsors National Children’s Dental Health Month to raise awareness about the importance of oral health. Developing good habits at an early age and scheduling regular dental visits helps children start a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums. The ADA states that the most important concepts for preschool children to know are (1) our teeth are important, (2) we need to take good care of them, and (3) the dentist is a friendly doctor who helps you take good care of your teeth. Teeth are meant to last a lifetime. A balanced diet, limited snacks, brushing and flossing each day, and a regular check-up are the keys to healthy teeth and gums.

For programs where children are older than one year and receive two or more meals, NAEYC (5.A.16) promotes good dental hygiene by requiring the staff to provide an opportunity for tooth brushing and gum cleaning to remove food and plaque. At the Children’s School, since our children are not here for two or more meals, we talk about brushing our teeth and good dental hygiene. We also encourage children to rinse their mouths with water after eating. However, just as you encourage hand washing when your children come home from school, you should also encourage them to brush their teeth.

Please note that, in compliance with Caring for Our Children 8.015, we require contact information for your family dentist on your child’s re-enrollment information update.

Valentine’s Day

February is also the month when some families celebrate Valentine’s Day. Because the holiday falls on a school day this year, each class may plan a simple celebration, perhaps preparing a special snack, reading a related story, etc. Please watch the daily emails for specific information from your child’s teachers. As always, children will have access to card making materials in the writing centers for use if they are interested in sending greetings to family and friends. Please do not send candy or any other food items for distribution to your child’s classmates.

Box Tops for Education

Help us to reach our Box Tops goal of $1,000 for 2016-17! To date, we have raised $78.50!

Box Tops for Education has helped America’s schools earn over $600 million since 1996. You can earn cash for the CMU Children’s School by clipping Box Tops coupons from hundreds of participating products. Box Tops also offers easy ways to earn even more cash online at [http://www.boxtops4education.com/](http://www.boxtops4education.com/)
February Gallery Features

3’s Friends: Roni R., Wilder R., and Tigerlily W.

4’s Friends: John E., Maren G., Adler M., and Lillian V.

Kindergarten Friends: Jordan H., Robin M., and Max T.

School Picture Days

On February 6th & 7th, Jessica and Brett of VanDyke Photography will be taking school pictures of our children. They will photograph the preschool children on the 6th and the kindergarteners on the 7th. Preschool “make up” photos will be done on the 7th as well. We would suggest sending your children in “picture clothes” on the appropriate day, but please feel free to send “school clothes” in your child’s backpack so the teachers can change their outfits after they have been photographed. Parents will be able to view hard copy proofs before placing orders for pictures.

Vision Screening / Speech & Hearing Results

The results of our January Hearing, Speech, and Language screening demonstrate the importance of checking for potential problems. The screening process flagged seven children for additional speech and hearing examinations, as well as seven children for re-checking in 12 months. Additionally, the Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh will be screening our children for vision issues this week.

Car Seat Safety

Pennsylvania law requires that all children under the age of 8 years must be restrained in an appropriate car seat or booster seat in the back seat of the vehicle. Attached to this newsletter are 2 documents detailing Car Seat Safety. In the winter, special consideration must be given to the use of winter coats as they can impact the effectiveness of a harness-style car seat. As a result, Children’s School educators will remove a child’s coat prior to buckling the child into a harness-style car seat at dismissal time. During greeting, teachers will also help children to put on coats after removing them from their car seats. As always, Children’s School educators are not permitted to violate the laws set forth by the state. Therefore, they cannot place a child in the front seat of a car or into a car without a car seat or booster seat. For more information on child passenger safety, please visit the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation website: http://www.penndot.gov/TravelInPA/Safety/TrafficSafetyAndDriverTopics/Pages/Child-Passenger-Safety.aspx

Special note to families who are greeted at the Rotunda: Please be sure that your child can easily exit and enter the vehicle on the passenger side of the car directly onto the sidewalk. It is a safety hazard to the adults and children to be in the street especially during winter months when the roads can be icy. Children who have car seats on the driver’s side of the car will need to be buckled by the vehicle’s driver and not the educator.
Water Testing at Carnegie Mellon University
From Madelyn Miller, CMU’s Director of Environmental Health & Safety

Pittsburgh Water Sewer Authority (PWSA) distributed notices last summer stating that elevated levels of lead in drinking water were found in some homes. PWSA found elevated lead levels in 17 of 100 randomly selected residential properties in Pittsburgh. Lead is a serious health problem for young children and pregnant women.

The lead is not coming from the water treatment plant but is a result of a recent change in their chemical treatment. The new anticorrosion chemical is causing lead from individual homes with older service lines, lines with lead soldered joints, or plumbing fixtures that were manufactured with lead to become suspended in the water.

Carnegie Mellon University is taking precautionary steps following the recent PWSA tests. Lead pipes and solder were widely used in plumbing fixtures before they were prohibited, so our Environmental Health and Safety Department has proactively tested sinks and drinking fountains for elevated levels of lead in all campus buildings built before 1986.

Water samples have been collected from 363 individual fountains in academic and administrative buildings and sent to an accredited laboratory for testing. The Cyert Center for Early Education in Morewood Gardens and the Children’s School in Margaret Morrison Carnegie Hall were tested first, and no lead was found in those samples. Only three of the other tests came back with lead quantities above the Environmental Protection Agency’s action level. All three of those taps were shut off for replacement and repair.

If you have health concerns, you can get your home’s water tested free of charge. For more information on this service, you can email PWSA at servicelines@pgh2o.com or call 412.782.7554. More information on testing alternatives can be found on PWSA’s website http://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/pwsa/PWSA_Lead_Brochure.pdf. For further information on the university’s testing program, please contact Madelyn Miller at mmiller@andrew.cmu.edu or call 412.268.1377.

EITC and OSTC Scholarship Funding

The Children’s School participates in the state’s Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program as well as the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) program. In addition to the funds reported in the January 2017 newsletter, we also have received contributions from Comcast, CS McKee, Diehl Automotive of Robinson, Inc., NexTier Bank, and UHS of Pa, Inc.

Through EITC, eligible Pennsylvania businesses can earn tax credits while providing financial assistance for children to attend preschool, as well as grades K-12. Through OSTC, eligible Pennsylvania businesses can earn tax credits for contributing funds to provide tuition assistance in the form of scholarships for eligible K-12th grade students residing within the boundaries of a low-achieving school to attend another public school outside of their district or nonpublic school. In 2016-17, The Children’s School OSTC Program is funding 32 students, Kindergarten – 12th grade, in 13 different schools throughout Allegheny and Westmoreland counties. If you would like more information or can help us to build a list of prospective businesses, please contact the Main Office.
Family Spotlight: Education for the Entire Family

We have been members of the CMU Children’s School family since the fall of 2016, and it has been an absolute joy since the first day. Chudi fell in love with the school from the moment he walked in; we just knew that it was the right place for him. Our early education experience caused us to focus on math and reading skills at home, and we were eager for an environment that introduced Chudi to other skills that didn’t come naturally to us, such as arts, science, music, and technology in a way that is fun and accessible to a preschooler. The Children’s School program has been perfect for improving Chudi’s weaknesses, while challenging him to continuously grow in his strength areas. We reached out to a lot of families who had attended the Children’s School prior to our enrolling. Our main concern was that the limited hours of the school was going to be very strenuous on our work schedules. The consensus was the same from all the parents we consulted. “The schedule is very hectic, but the education and experience the child receives is more than worth it.” We listened to their advice, took the plunge, and are so glad that we did.

While we knew that Chudi was going to receive a great education, we didn’t anticipate how much we were going to learn as parents, or how warm and amazing the educators were going to be. Dr. Carver and the entire team devote an incredible amount of time to providing parents with materials and opportunities to learn about child development. We now have a place to go with all the questions we have about raising our child, and we are confident that they will point us to the right resources to meet our needs. Every staff member that we have encountered has responded to all our needs and has made specific accommodations for our family’s unique context. All the teachers have been so warm, happy and inviting; they treat Chudi like he is special in his own way. We couldn’t be happier that we chose the Children’s School for Chudi.

Uchenna & Judith Uchidiuno

Book Fair Update

Once the online sales for our December 2016 Book Fair were included, our total rose to $6,000.00, which means our library will be getting almost $900.00 in books. This event is by far the most successful book fair to date. Thanks to everyone who helped organize the event, as well as to everyone who shopped for books!

Lost and Found

We have accumulated quite a collection of jackets, barrettes and other items of unlabeled children’s clothing. If your child is missing anything, please look in our lost and found area in the hallway or send a note to your child’s teacher with a description and we will see if we have it!
Family Social Organization Fun

On January 16th, friends of the Children’s School joined together on the ice at Schenley Skating Rink in Schenley Park. Children worked hard skating laps around the rink with their families, but they made sure to take a break for good company and conversation over hot chocolate with their Children’s School friends!

Great fun was had by families who attended the Children’s School Gymsport event on Saturday, January 21st. Families enjoyed demonstrations by staff and participating in a series of fun activities, including parent and child races, zip-lining, and a game called Popcorn!

We hope you’ll join the fun in February!
Family Social Organization for February

Join us for a family-friendly cooking class at Gaynor’s School of Cooking on Saturday, February 18th from 2-4pm. Children will create a series of menu items including homemade pasta and fruit kebobs! The cost is $35 per child. Gaynor’s is located in Pittsburgh’s Southside at 309 East Carson Street 15219. Please RSVP by February 13th to Sarah Hummel (Cecilia, 3’s) at shummel1010@gmail.com.

Come dance with us at the Alloy School on Saturday, February 11th! Instructors will engage children and families in West African Dance! No shoes are necessary. The Alloy School, part of the Kelly Strayhorn Theater, is located at 5941 Penn Avenue in East Liberty, a block from the intersection of Penn and Negley Avenues (http://kelly-strayhorn.org). The time for this exclusive Children’s School dance session will be announced soon! Please RSVP to Jonathan Fortier (Lucy, 3’s and Elijah, 4’s) at jonofortier@gmail.com.

Explore these city events during the month of February!

• Saturday, February 4th: Chatham Baroque’s Peanut Butter and Jam Session. “Meet the One-Keyed Wonder” will introduce you and your child to the gentle baroque flute made of wood, with guest Stephen Schultz. Bring your preschooler to enjoy live music, dancing, and games at McClintic Hall in Calvary Episcopal Church, 315 Shady Avenue, 15206. Register for the 10:00 am or 11:30am session (http://www.chathambaroque.org/events/pbj-meet-one-keyed-wonder).

• Saturday, February 4th, 1-4pm: 28th Annual African American Read-In takes place at the Carnegie Library of Homewood. Participants can read or just listen to passages from African American, Caribbean, and African authors. This event, hosted by the Pittsburgh Black Media Federation, is part of a nationwide initiative to promote diversity in literature during Black History Month. More than 1 million people across the nation will be participating in the read-ins. To register, follow this link: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/28th-annual-african-american-read-in-registration-31308308995?aff=aff0eventful.

• Sunday, February 12th at 11:00am: Chinese Lunar New Year Parade! Squirrel Hill. The parade begins at the intersection of Phillips and Murray Avenues, on Murray and continues to Forbes. Watch more than 30 groups march in celebration of the Year of the Rooster! http://shuc.org/2017/01/17/lunar-new-year-squirrel-hill/

• Citizen Bank Children’s Theater Series presents Galumpha this February, with stunning acrobatics, visual effects, physical comedy, and inventive choreography you won’t want to miss! Watch as a world of imagination, beauty, and merriment are brought to life. Performances for all ages run Tuesday, February 14th through Sunday February 19th at various locations around the city, including the Byham Theater on Sunday, February 19th at 2:00pm. Children under two receive free admission but require a lap pass ticket for entry. https://www.trustarts.org/production/49787/list_performances

If you would like to help plan events please contact Jay Miller at jaymiller01@gmail.com and Sara Torretti storretti@hotmail.com (Isaac’s parents, Kindergarten).
Keeping Healthy During Flu Season

We have all heard advice concerning flu prevention. Below is a description of flu symptoms from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website:

Influenza (also known as the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The flu is different from a cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly. People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- Sore throat
- Muscle or body aches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Cough
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headaches
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults)

* It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

With this in mind, we encourage everyone to continue to follow the Children’s School Family Handbook Guidelines for exclusion due to illness. If your child does not feel well enough to comfortably participate in usual program activities, including playground and gym class, please keep your child home from school.

In addition, we ask that everyone who comes into the Children’s School, including family members, wash their hands using the procedures recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for at least 10 seconds. Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry, and back of hands and continue for 10 additional seconds, for a total lather time of 20 seconds. The children are being taught a more detailed version using the following hand washing song (to the tune of Row, Row, Row Your Boat).

Slide, slide, slide your hands. Make a bridge like this. Don’t forget both bracelets. Then you have to twist!

Also, here are some tips from University Health Services for preventing the spread of the flu.

- Stay home, especially if you have a fever.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing by using tissues or the crook of your elbow.
- Avoid touching your mouth and face after touching public surfaces like doorknobs and keyboards.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Do not share keyboards or other mobile devices; wipe them with a cleaning agent before use.

Thank you for your continued attention to the health and wellness of our Children's School Family!
7th International Practicum Experience

From January 21st to February 4th, we are hosting two early childhood education students, Na Hyun Lee and Leah Ju from Duksung Women’s University in Seoul, South Korea. Five other students are engaged in practicum experiences at the Carlow University Campus School, the Falk School, or the University Child Development Center. In addition to planning with our educators and teaching in our classrooms, the students are visiting other early childhood centers, attending an Early Childhood class at Pitt, participating in professional development, as well as touring Pitt’s Nationality Rooms and Phipps Conservatory, skating at Schenley Park, etc. They are bravely practicing their English and boldly facing the challenge of our variable weather. They are also enjoying the comfort and companionship of their hosts – the Mingo-MacDonald family (Atticus, K). Thanks to everyone who is helping make their Pittsburgh experience so positive, productive, and memorable!

We also appreciate the ways that the Duksung students’ involvement with our educators and children is enriching our learning experiences. During the first week in the Preschool 4’s group, Miss Lee played a freeze dance game and showed the friends how to trace their names in Korean characters in colorful sand. With the kindergartners, Miss Ju has taught some basic taekwondo, helped the children to write their Korean names with glue and glitter, and helped them decorate Korean screens. Thanks for helping broaden our views of the world!
Undergraduate Spotlight

• **Lilah Buchanan** (Extended AM) is a Senior Psychology Major with a concentration in Developmental. She is also minoring in Hispanic Studies.

  During my time at CMU, I have often been struck by the multitude of different kinds of learning going on at any given time in the academic buildings that dot Carnegie Mellon’s campus. I remember thinking just this when I mistakenly wandered into an upper level mechanical engineering class on my first day of college. As a future psychology major, it was a shock. Students in one classroom are becoming experts in robotics while, in a classroom right next door, students are learning the fine points of rhetoric, or Chinese history. I spent my first three years at CMU enraptured by the diversity of all this classroom learning. Racing across campus to my own classes, I was unaware of another learning process that was happening on the ground floor of Margaret Morrison.

At the Children’s School, students have been busy too. As you know, these students, or “friends” as I would come to know them, have been deeply engaged in becoming kind and compassionate critical thinkers. These friends and their teachers at the Children’s School warmly invited me into this learning last fall. They taught me lessons distinct from those imparted in classrooms elsewhere on campus. They taught me complete engagement in the present moment and true wonder in the face of new experience and discovery. I learned about the unbridled self-confidence that accompanies a phrase like, “I am so good at blinking; I can blink with both eyes at the same time”, and I have seen this same self-confidence make tackling new challenges a source of joy. I learned lessons on equality taught by young children who pronounced, “Just because one boy is bigger than another doesn’t make him better.” The teachers, always ready to guide me, have shown me what masterful and intentional teaching looks like and have helped me to be thoughtful and purposeful in my interactions with young children.

At the Children’s School, I have seen excellence in early childhood education. As I look (with trepidation) at the post-graduation “real world” and seek to find a useful role in social work with families, I will take with me this experience in excellence in early childhood. This experience has given shape and purpose to my desire to work with families to create meaningful experiences for young children back at home.
Research Spotlight

Research Methods Class – The Bear & Tiger Game

Students in Dr. Anna Fisher’s Developmental Research Methods class will start the semester with a lab entitled The Bear & Tiger Game. They will work in pairs and small groups to conduct a study of young children’s response inhibition. Response Inhibition is the ability to suppress actions that are inappropriate in a given context. This important ability develops rapidly between 2 and 5 years of age. For example, a 2-year-old child usually has a much harder time than an older child refraining from grabbing a toy s(he) likes without asking for it first. A number of different tasks have been developed to assess response inhibition in children, but it is not always clear why children struggle with response inhibition under different task demands. One common method of assessing response inhibition is a version of the popular “Simon Says” game. In this game, a verbal command (such as “touch your nose”) should be performed only if the game leader precedes the command by saying, “Simon Says …”; if the game leader does not say “Simon Says” before saying the command, the command should not be followed. Young children find this game very challenging. Use the following link to learn the game if it is new to you so you can try it at home and see for yourself!


One issue that remains unclear is what role demonstration plays in children’s difficulty with the game. Specifically, if a game leader not only gives a command verbally but also demonstrates the action, children’s tendency to imitate may encourage them to respond without attending to whether the leader said, “Simon Says”. In this study, students in the Research Methods course will involve children in playing a version of the Simon Says game – the Bear & Tiger Game. In this game, children will be instructed to always follow simple commands given by a ‘nice’ Bear but to never follow commands of a ‘naughty’ Tiger. For some of the children, the experimenter will only say the command verbally but, for other children, the experimenter will demonstrate the action in addition to giving each verbal command. The evidence gathered in this study will help us better understand the mechanisms of response inhibition and task conditions that can facilitate performance on response inhibition tasks. Discovering that demonstrating the action affects children’s performance in a response inhibition task may help teachers and parents by giving them tools to make games like Simon Says more challenging for older children and less challenging for younger children so that they can provide an optimal level of task difficulty to children of different ages. Stay tuned for what these budding researchers learn!
Director’s Corner: Parents-as-Directors

Last Father’s Day, Dave Sanders, from Parentmap.com, wrote, “Parenting, for me, is one of the few things I can think of that can be placed in the front half of an analogy, and you can fill in the blank with just about anything.

_Being a parent is like ___________._


For the next few months, I will use diverse roles from the Theatre Arts to “fill in the blank” in Sanders’ analogy. In our preparation for the whole school unit, we have begun investigating the roles of many different professionals involved in dramatic productions, from the director, to the playwright, to the set, costume, and lighting designers, to the stage manager, etc. As in the theatre, collaboration is the key to parenting, and we value the contributions of our partners, extended families, educators, medical professionals, etc. At the same time, it behooves each parent to consider adopting a variety of roles to best fit the unique situations, developmental stages, and temperaments of his or her children.

Let’s consider first the role of “Director”, one with which – at least in the school context – I am very familiar. _How is being a parent like being a director?_ According to the American Association of Community Theatre (https://www.aact.org/director), “it is the director who sets the vision for the production for everyone involved”. The director’s vision impacts choices of script interpretation, casting, sets, costumes, lighting, props, music, and so on, and the synergy between all these elements is key to creating a production that is a unified whole. Similarly, the complex interplay of family life and child-rearing works best if common goals and priorities help frame the decisions to be made about the day to day details of life at home, at school, and in the community. There are so many options for activities, media, purchases, etc., that one important parenting role is to wisely choose based on both quality and quantity. My sense is that the best Parents-as-Directors know when to say “enough” so that everyone in the family has both time and space for quality engagement and constructive interactions in pursuit of the family goals.

Directors also have the responsibility of helping each of the production team members to both be and contribute his or her best to the overall creative process. So it is with parenting, regardless of the number of parents and children in the family. Effective directors and parents start with understanding themselves and how to nurture their own growth while they are looking for ways to build on the strengths of everyone involved to help them stretch to their full potential. In concrete terms, Parents-as-Directors listen to each family member and observe what engages, energizes, and enlivens them so as to maximize those conditions and minimize less effective ones. Parents may be surprised at how interested and innovative children can be when offered important roles as helpers in the family and as participants in problem solving and planning. At the same time, all directors have the ultimate responsibility for the success of any production, and there are clearly some decisions that are the director’s alone. That said, in my role as director, I value the input of my administrative team and other lab school directors when it feels pretty lonely at the top, so I encourage parents to seek others with common parenting goals for support throughout the production process. I’d be honored to consult with you if you would ever find that helpful.