50th Anniversary Launch Party

Thank you to everyone who attended the 50th Anniversary Kick-off Celebration at Hidden Harbor on January 22nd. Special thank you to Pete Kurzweg and his staff at Hidden Harbor for hosting the event. It was a wonderful evening of food, friends, and fun!

We hope you and your family will plan to attend other upcoming 50th Anniversary events including a “Happy Birthday Party” for the Children’s School for children and families later this spring and an adult gala next fall. Alumni are welcome too, so if you are able to spread the word to our graduated friends, please do!! If you are interested in helping to plan anniversary events, please contact Linda Hancock (lh37@andrew.cmu.edu) or Maggie Rosenblum (rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu).

February Dates:

February 2nd 9:30-11:00 am – Educator / Parent Discussion re: ANIMALS IN THE WILD
February 2nd – Re-enrollment Packets Sent to Current 4’s Families

Monday & Tuesday, February 5th (Preschool) & 6th (Kindergarten) - School Photos
Wednesday, February 14th – Box Tops for Education DUE

Monday, February 19th - Presidents’ Day Holiday (NO SCHOOL)

Wednesday, February 28th – 8:30 am Q&A with Educators (Infants & Toddlers Attend with Parents)
Thursday, March 1st – 12:30 pm Q&A with Educators (Infants & Toddlers Attend with Parents)

Friday, March 2nd - Forms & Deposits DUE for 2018-2019 Kindergarten

Thursday, March 8th, 4:30-6:30 pm, ANIMALS IN THE WILD Family Festival
Friday, March 9th, Professional Development Day for Educators (NO SCHOOL)
Welcome Sweet Baby Ray!

Just in time for the newsletter, Raymond Paul Wendolowski III was born very early in the morning on Tuesday, January 30th at 6 lbs. 13 oz. and 19 ¼ inches. Both mom, Jillian, and baby are doing well. The Preschool 4’s created a Jackson Pollock style painting for Baby Ray’s room and both the 4’s and Kindergarten children prepared books of advice for Mrs. Wendolowski as she begins caring for her son. Here are some samples. “If the baby screams, take a deep breath, and count back from 5,4,3,2,1 and sing baby a song” (Ellen). “You can count her little piggy toes. Get ready for eat, sleep, poop repeat!!” (Ruthie). “Don’t forget, babies like cute things like slinkys. Every baby should have her own soft blankie” (Isaac). “And don’t worry, Mrs. Wendolowski will be a good mom because she is a teacher” (Tigerlily).

School Picture Days

On February 5th & 6th, Jessica and Brett of VanDyke Photography will be taking school pictures of our children. They will photograph the preschool children on the 5th and the kindergarteners on the 6th. Preschool “make up” photos will be done on the 6th 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 screenings demonstrate the importance of checking for potential problems. The screening process flagged five children for additional speech and hearing examinations, as well as six 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.

February Gallery Features


4’s Friends: Isaac D., Emiah J., and Roni R.

Kindergarten Friends: Conor H., Lillian V., and Siobhan W.
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 by February 14th!

Submit to the Children’s School office by February 14, 2018!!

Help us to reach our Box Tops goal of $1,000 for 2017-18! To date, we have raised $46.80! Box Tops for Education has helped America’s schools earn over $600 million since 1996. You can earn cash for 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/.
Family Spotlight: Hidden Treasure

Hi Everyone! We are the Figueroa family. Our son Ryder is in Mr. Salinetro’s Preschool 3’s class in the afternoon. Chris and I met while we were on vacation in South Carolina, about a month before his first deployment. After his deployment, we purchased a house in Munhall, and he relocated here. Two years later, we were blessed with Ryder. When looking for a school, I knew it was going to be a hard decision. I looked high and low for a program that worked for our schedule and was the best fit for Ryder. Chris was deployed throughout this search, but we spent many Skype sessions discussing what I found. When I toured the Children’s School, I knew I had found a hidden treasure. I would say that Chris agrees now that he is here and can experience it for himself as well. Since Ryder hadn’t had any experience in childcare or with a large number of children, the small afternoon class was a perfect fit. Another reason the Children’s School stood out to me, as a parent, was the staff. They are kind and helpful. They work hard and are devoted to the children.

Since Ryder started school, he loves to come home and tell us stories of his day. One thing that I love is that we have the opportunity to join in the conversation based on the daily e-mails that are sent. It’s amazing as a parent to see your child make friends and learn SO many new things. Their theme in class right now is Outer Space, and Ryder hasn’t stopped talking about it since it began. He knows all the planet names and can tell you ALL about a rocket ship and astronauts. We are excited to see him grow and learn in the Preschool 4’s next year and then, we hope, in the Kindergarten as well.

I want to say thank you to everyone who works at the Children’s School for making the first years of Ryder’s education so amazing. From the time we started completing enrollment paperwork, to seeing the educators daily at greeting and dismissal, we couldn’t be more grateful for a school that goes above and beyond every day.

Share our Hidden Treasure

Please help us ensure that the treasure of the Children’s School doesn’t stay hidden from families whose children would benefit from our programs. Spread the word! Share our web site! Invite prospective parents to tour the school!

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!
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!
Family Social Organization Opportunities

We have an FSO-Packed February, so RSVP for Events Today! Between February 10th and March 3rd, the FSO is hosting four separate events to keep children and families active though a snow-filled winter. Join us for all four or just one. We hope to see you at some point!

• Dance Away the Winter Blues
Join us for a children's hip hop dance class at Millennium Dance Complex in Pittsburgh's Southside on Saturday, February 10th from 10:30-11:15am. Children will learn a variety of moves to age-appropriate music with one of Millennium's professional instructors and then master a short routine. Cost is $15 per child. Please RSVP to Jocelyn Mayr at jocelynster@gmail.com. Payment can be sent in your child's backpack with a note to send home with Lucy Jo Mayr (pm 3's). Please put your child's name and class on the envelope.

• Keep Busy on President's Day with Children's School Bowling
There's no school on February 19th, but your child doesn't have to be trapped in the house all day! Join us at Arsenal Lanes in Lawrenceville from noon until 2pm for bowling with the children and parents of the Children's School at CMU. Cost is $6.50 per participant (child or adult). Please bring children dressed in athletic shoes to avoid the need for bowling shoes! Please RSVP to Jeni Hergenreder at jhergenreder@gmail.com to secure your spot in the lane and for payment options.

• The Annual Children's School Gymkhana Event is Set
One of our most popular annual events, students at the Children's School are invited to join us for a day of motor skills, running, jumping, tumbling and the popular Gymkhana zip line on Sunday, February 25th at 10am at the East End Gymkhana location on Penn Avenue. The cost is $12 per child for a one-hour class event in the big gym. Please RSVP to Jocelyn Mayr at jocelynster@gmail.com. Payment can be sent in your child's backpack with a note to send home with Lucy Jo Mayr (pm 3's). Please put your child's name and class on the envelope.

• Cooking Class for Kids is Back
Please join us for a family-friendly cooking class at Gaynor's School of Cooking on Saturday, March 3rd from 2pm until 4pm. Gaynor's is located in Pittsburgh's Southside at 309 East Carson Street 15219. The cost is $35 per child and the menu will include fruit salsa with cinnamon chips, parmesan breaded chicken fingers with honey butter, and heart shaped stained glass cookies. Please RSVP by the end of the day on February 27th to Kara VanHoudnos (Lillian, K) at karavanh@gmail.com. Please send money to school in an envelope marked to Kara VanHoudnos. Please put your child's name and class on the envelope. Checks can be made out to Kara, and she will confirm by email that she received your payment.

Also, please consider joining the next meeting of the FSO Book Club on Thursday, February 8th at 8:45am. We'll be reading Chapter 8 of The Blessing of a Skinned Knee (The Blessing of Self-Control), by Wendy Mogel, Ph.D. (http://a.co/ftkLtxl) - but feel free to come and chat, even if you haven’t read the book! If you're interested in joining us, please RSVP to Sarah Deutsch at sarah.deutsch@gmail.com. Hope to see you there!

Location: Carnegie Mellon Cafe (Meet outside the school office at 8:35 and walk with us!)
Discussion theme: Parent-control vs. kid-control - where do we draw the line?
January Fun for the FSO

On Sunday, January 21st, the Children’s School friends gathered for mindfulness and movement at Amazing Yoga Oakmont. The children and parents practiced yoga breath, stretches for the body, and even stretches for our eyes! We finished the class with a flow and a yoga pose freeze dance. Finally, we laid still and listened to our breath. The children’s favorite part was the yoga pose freeze dance. They were eager to show off their favorite poses, including crab, down dog, and tree. Stay posted for another yoga event in the spring!

On Sunday, January 28th, about 40 Children’s School friends and their families gathered at the Cohon University Center gym for a lively game of kickball. We had two games going at the same time since so many friends came to play. The children and parents kicked the ball, ran the bases, and laughed together! They enjoyed snacks and talking between kicks. After the kickball fun was over, friends used their Children’s School beach balls to play and burn what energy they had left. It was a great day!!!!
Brittany Sines Joins Our 4’s Team

In preparation for Mrs. Wendolowski’s maternity leave, we welcomed Miss Brittany Sines to our Preschool 4’s Team as a full-time Associate Teacher on January 29th. Miss Sines earned a dual PA teaching certification in PreK to 4th Grade and Special Education at Point Park University in 2017. Prior to joining our team, Miss Sines was an Assistant Preschool Educator at The Children’s Center of Pittsburgh since 2014. During the 2013-14 school year, she worked in The Ellis School after care and summer camp programs. Miss Sines recommenders describe her as articulate, intelligent, gentle, compassionate, creative, energetic, funny, mature, organized, conscientious, and dedicated to the field of early childhood education. During her interview and subsequent visits to our classroom, we have observed Miss Sines engage deeply and respectfully with both young children and adults. Please join us in welcoming Brittany Sines to the Children’s School family.

8th International Practicum Experience

Do Yeon Chae and Hyun Tae Kim are early childhood education students from Duksung Women’s University in Seoul, South Korea. Together with 5 of their peers, Miss Chae and Mr. Kim are spending two weeks in Pittsburgh for a teaching practicum and a host family experience. Dr. Carver took the full group of students for a tour of Pittsburgh on Friday, January 26th, and Mr. Salinetro and Mrs. Loomis toured the Cathedral of Learning with them on Saturday. On Sunday afternoon the 28th, the administrators from all the partner schools oriented the students to the schedule and we discussed some of the cultural differences between the United States and South Korea that affect school practices and home life. Then the Richardson family (Wilder, AM 4’s) and the Fortier family (Lucy, AM 4’s, and Eli, Kindergarten) joined us for a delicious tea before taking the students to their homes to begin the host family experience. Please join us in welcoming these future educators to our learning community.
$50,000 for 50 Years Campaign

As part of our 50th Anniversary year, we set a goal to raise $50,000 for Facility Enhancements to strengthen our program, including updating the bike path and adding more shade elements to our playground so that we can more frequently utilize our outdoor space during the warm months. A formal announcement of the 50 for 50 Campaign’s launch will be coming later this month. Watch your email for more details!

NAEYC Accreditation Site Visit

Also during our 50th year, we are striving to renew our accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for another 5 years. As mentioned in the last newsletter, we continually strive to improve our performance relative to NAEYC’s high standards for our leadership & management, teaching staff, relationships with children & adults, partnership with families, teaching approaches, curriculum, assessment, nutrition & health, physical environment, and partnerships within the community. We recently learned that the candidacy materials that we submitted in September of 2017 have been accepted and that the NAEYC Assessor assigned to our program will visit sometime in February or March for two days of classroom observations, portfolio reviews, facilities checks, and other analysis of the observable features of our program quality. We will alert you to the specific timing of the site visit once that information becomes available, and we appreciate your support as we strive to once again demonstrate our professionalism and developmentally appropriate practice.
Undergraduate Spotlight:

Elizabeth La (Kindergarten) is a first year student at CMU’s Dietrich College, hoping to major in Cognitive Science with a concentration in Psychology and an additional major in Statistics.

“Elizabeth, look at my invisible unicorn! I told her not to follow me to school, but she wouldn’t listen…”

Every time I step into the Children’s School, I am struck by the level of creativity of my small friends. From the imaginary animals they create, to the masterpieces they build out of Legos, to the picture books they make, the children are all so imaginative and willing to think outside of the box. My favorite part of working at the Children’s School is conversing with the friends and asking them questions about their creations, encouraging them to add details to the worlds they have created. Often times, they have no trouble answering questions on the spot, and sometimes even go on little rants about all the different aspects of their world. This is fascinating to me because back in the real world of college-level classes, my peers and I have often struggled to use creativity in simple tasks such as deciding on group names. In fact, just last week in the student-taught ASL class that I’m taking, a group came up with the name “TBD” during a class activity. “To be determined”. Basically meaning, “I have no imagination and am too lazy to think of a name right now, so I’ll put it off until later”. Then again, my group name was “Left”, indicating the side of the room where we were seated, so I guess I should not critique another group’s name. If this task was called for here, at the Children’s School, I can imagine all the friends raising their hands, faces filled with excitement, eager to share their suggestion for a group name. This contrast is truly remarkable, if not disappointing on the college students’ part, for we generally assume that college students perform better than kindergarten students because we have a more developed brain. I believe that by surrounding myself with my kindergarten friends, I not only get to spend time relaxing and interacting with children, just like when I was home in California, but I also use my brain in new ways compared to what college courses require.

New Interns: In addition to our student employees, undergraduate interns taking Dr. Carver’s Practicum in Child Development course support our children and teachers in the classroom six hours per week, while also engaging in a seminar with Dr. Carver every Wednesday morning. This semester, we have Yusuf Mehkri (left) in the AM 3’s, Lynnette Ramsay in the AM 4’s, and Lily Marty and Christine Phang (right) in the Kindergarten.
Research Spotlight

Attention & Storybook Reading

Dr. Byungho Lee, a visiting scholar from Duksung Women’s University, will begin conducting research at the Children’s School during the second semester. His first study will examine children’s visual attention level during a story reading activity. He plans to record children’s eye movements as they watch two story reading videos, one with a teacher reading a traditional paper-based “big book” and one with a teacher reading a screen-based eBook, to compare the direction and duration of their focus. In addition, he will ask comprehension questions to compare their understanding of the stories’ content after the reading. The goal of the research is to determine the ways in which digital media supports and/or detracts from teachers’ efforts to engage children’s attention in storybook reading sessions. The prevalence of digital media in children’s lives is growing so understanding the impact is key.

Research in Practice

This month, there are two opportunities for parents to learn about research-based practices to support young children’s learning and development.

Animals: The Wonders of the Wild for Families

Educator / Parent Discussion
Friday, February 2, 2018
9:30 – 11:00 AM, Cohon University Center, Peter - Wright Room (2nd Floor)
Preschool 4’s and Kindergarten Children will be in school. Child Care will be provided for children 3 and under in the Red Room.

As we prepare for our Whole School Unit on ANIMALS IN THE WILD, let’s consider how we can foster children’s development of observation skills and natural empathy with animals so that they may begin to develop a lifelong friendship with nature. We will explore Dr. Deborah Kelemen’s research on the ways that children’s naturally developing intuitions about animals actually make some scientific concepts, such as adaptation by natural selection, challenging to learn, and review a book her research team has written to introduce scientifically accurate information at a young age.

Q&A with Educators

Wednesday, February 28, 2018 at 8:30am in Danforth Lounge
Thursday, March 1, 2018 at 12:30pm at the Children’s School
Infants and toddlers attend with their parents.

Perhaps you want to know what recent research says about building character, choosing media, teaching reading, responding to children’s questions about sensitive topics, etc. Anything is fair game, but we do suggest that you submit your questions in advance so we can prepare! Of course, your questions are always welcome in person or via email to Dr. Carver at sc0e@andrew.cmu.edu.
Director’s Corner:
Importance of Interdependence

As we consider life lessons from nature during our exploration of animals in the wild, a central concept is the **interdependence among organisms** within a habitat. The benefits of biodiversity and advantages of adaptation have their best effects within a community context of interdependence, particularly with careful communication. For the animal kingdom, in addition to depending on the non-living environment for some basic needs, such as water, air, etc., many organisms need other organisms to survive. For example, organisms that cannot make their own food must eat other organisms to get the energy they need to live. Within nature, food webs are one way of viewing the interdependence necessary for survival of the species, but scarcity of resources forces competition such that only some individuals benefit. In human society, we can aim to imitate the closely connected symbiotic relationships in which both species benefit and survival is strengthened for diverse individuals. For example, oxpecker birds eat the ticks that bother zebra and even eat some of the blood from the tick wounds; but, in addition to ridding the zebra of ticks, they are easily startled and so provide an early warning system for impending danger.

As parents and educators, we often prioritize support for children’s independence, particularly in American culture that emphasizes individuality. For example, at the Children’s School, “self-esteem and independence” is the goal we list first in our set of developmental objectives. Notice, however, that it is closely followed by our goal of fostering “interaction and cooperation”. As Mahatma Gandhi said, *“Interdependence is and ought to be as much the ideal of man as self-sufficiency. Man is a social being.”* Developmental psychologist Erik Erikson seconds the notion; *“Life doesn’t make any sense without interdependence. We need each other, and the sooner we learn that, the better for us all.”* Civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. highlights the impact of interdependence on each individual. *“Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality.”*

One of the keys to our success at the Children’s School is that we consistently seek “win-win” approaches wherein the children, families, students, researchers and other learners in our community can all do their best learning in ways that are mutually beneficial so that each individual can not only survive but actually thrive. In policy and practice, we aim to support our educators in being their best selves both professionally and personally. The same idea applies to family life, particularly as each new child joins the family. Naturally, our initial focus is on providing the best possible nurture for the new child, whose very survival depends on that consistent and loving care. At the same time, family members do well to consider a cooperative approach to building an interdependent nuclear family and extended circle of friends and family so that the needs of each member can simultaneously be met by the efforts of the group. Taking the apprenticeship approach that I discussed last month is very helpful in this regard because children build skills that are valuable to the group and they are motivated to contribute meaningfully when they experience the creative and constructive ways that the group can adjust to changing conditions and welcome new members. The importance of this healthy interdependence has been particularly evident in the past month as we have welcomed new children, undergraduates, and even a new teacher to the school and witnessed the seamless transitions. Thanks to the whole community for continually striving for such symbiotic connections.