Whole School Celebration!

Please join us on Friday, May 16th from 11am to 1pm on the Children's School playground for our whole school celebration of the 2013-14 school year. Pizza, salad, watermelon, and a variety of desserts will be provided, along with plenty of drinks. This event is scheduled immediately after the Kindergarten Graduation, which will be held in Margaret Morrison’s Breed Hall 103 at 10am.

Summer 2014 Camp Pointers: Exploring the Senses

There is still space in our summer program, so please contact Mrs. Rosenblum at rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu if you are interested in enrolling your child for one or more weeks. The Camp staff includes Mrs. Armbruster, Mrs. Bird, Mrs. Blizman, Ms. Mangan, Ms. McMichael, Mrs. Solomon, and Ms. Stevens. We have also hired former student employee, Lindsay McGregor, who recently finished her masters degree in Education at Duquesne, as well as CMU student Emily Lawless. If your child is registered for camp, please make your final payment by Friday, May 16th. We will be greeting the children at the front of Margaret Morrison and taking them directly to the playground after a stop in the bathroom for toileting and hand-washing. Also, please recall that the morning greeting time for camp is 8:45am, rather than the earlier time during the regular year. All children need to bring a lunch, sunscreen labeled with their full name, and their bathing suits and towels. We also suggest hats because there is only a little shade on the playground. Remember a jacket for the cool morning hours!

May Dates

Friday, May 2nd – Teacher Appreciation Luncheon Sponsored by Children’s School Parents
Tuesday, May 6th – 2014 Pittsburgh GIVES Day of Giving
Thursday, May 15th - Last Regular Day for ALL Programs
Friday, May 16th - Kindergarten Graduation at 10:00 AM in Margaret Morrison Room 103
Whole School Picnic at 11:00 AM on the Playground
Monday, May 19th through Friday, May 30th – Professional Development for Staff
Family Social Organization (FSO)

We have arrived at our final FSO newsletter of the year. It feels like time has just flown by! Thanks to all the CMU families for your enthusiastic support of the FSO this year. You have made the events successful and tons of fun! Here are the highlights from this month’s events:

• We kicked off the month of April with a wonderful trip to the Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium. Children got up close with zoo wildlife and learned about their habitats at the *Wonders of Wildlife* assembly. We then took a trip around the zoo and enjoyed a leisurely lunch with our friends. Thank you to Alexis Tuckfelt and Alice Abbati for organizing our zoo trip!

• On April 11th, we enjoyed our second *Morning at the Movies* with a special opening day screening of *Rio 2*. Thank you again to the Gancy family for arranging this private screening for the Children’s School!

• We had our final book club meeting of the year on Wed, April 9th. A special thanks to our friend, Michelle Landau, for leading a wonderful book club during the year.

• Finally, CMU moms had a night out to themselves on April 24th. It was a fun evening with delicious food, drink, and great conversation at UP Modern Kitchen. Thanks to Alissa Meade for organizing this fun event!

We would also like to take a moment to give a heartfelt thanks to this year’s FSO committee: Jen Ammirati, Michelle Landau, Alexis Tuckfelt, Shamica Harper, Leslie Aronson, Jessica Simcox, Alissa Meade, Brandon Nicholson, Bethany Criswell, Bridget Sampson, Jessica Morowitz, Maria DeLima and Alice Abbati. Thank you for all your help in organizing this year’s events!

We wish you fun-filled summer and hope to see you next year.

Amee Chaudry & Julie Paris, FSO Co-Chairs

**FIRST SUMMER PLAYGROUND PLAY DATE** - Stay connected with Children’s School friends after the school year ends and join us for a special May playground play date!

**When:** Wednesday, May 21 / 9:30-12
**Where:** Highland Park Super Playground  [https://goo.gl/maps/mjHZi](https://goo.gl/maps/mjHZi)

**RSVP** to Leslie Aronson (Ruby, morning 4’s) at lesliedara@gmail.com or 412-335-0334  

We look forward to seeing you!
Family Input for School Enhancement

Please take time in the next two weeks to complete the Survey Monkey Family Input Questionnaire so that we can use your input for our upcoming professional development planning time. You’ll get an email this week with a clickable link to the survey. We appreciate your support for our quality improvement efforts!

April & May Web Artists


We apologize for omitting the list of April Web Artists in the last newsletter. Both groups of children’s artwork will be featured on the web site during May and throughout the summer.

Lost and Found

We have quite a collection of unlabeled clothing. Please visit the school to check the lost and found or send a note with a description of a lost article before May 16th. Unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity after that date.

Classroom Year in Pictures

Children’s School educators have collected classroom photos into a Year in Pictures slide show as a gift for families. The photos are designed only for the personal use of families in private media contexts, so the slide shows will be distributed only to parents willing to sign an agreement that they will not post photographs of other people’s children on the web or social media venues. The agreement form is included with this newsletter, so please review, complete with both parents’ / guardians’ signatures, if applicable, and return it to the school office if you would like to receive the Year in Pictures DVD(s) for your child(ren)’s class(es).
Family Spotlight: It’s a Family Affair

The Criswells: Roland and I (Bethany) met in 2000 while attending the same church. Little did we know, within three years, we’d be walking down the aisle together, watch both our boys being blessed at the altar and now, capture videos of our two boys singing in the choir.

After completing my Master’s Degree at Temple University, I was led to Pittsburgh for my first job at Carnegie Mellon University. I had never been to ‘the burgh’ and only associated The Steelers with Pittsburgh. While working in the University Advancement Department as the Sports Information Director, I would often see children walking with the handheld ropes across the street and into the gym. I never imagined that my children would be attending the Children’s School, which was just steps away from my building office in Skibo Gym.

My husband, Roland, and I brought home our first bundle of joy, Roland Andrew, in December 2006. It wasn’t long before I was searching for the best Pre-K program to enroll my very bright three-year-old. I was led to the Children’s School by the Pettiford Family who had their son in the program but were moving to York, PA. This created an opening for Roland in 2009 and we have been so grateful ever since.

Roland’s love for building, tinkering and play were all nourished at the Children’s School. I remember so vividly his first day as he yelled from the sandbox, “Mom and Dad, you can go now, I’m okay!” It was a bittersweet moment because I knew he would be just fine, yet I would miss him being with me all day. Roland enjoyed the Green Room with Mrs. Solomon’s PM 4’s, Mrs. Bird’s Green Room Annex AM 4’s with Extended AM, and finally the Kindergarten with Mrs. Perovich and Ms. Scholes. He has since matriculated and is doing phenomenally as a 1st grader at Shady Side Academy.

Then, there’s our Baby Brandon - aka Mrs. Rosenblum’s “boyfriend”! We brought him home in March 2010. This pleasant, mild-mannered child was truly different from his brother, yet in many ways the same. After three years of bringing Roland to school, Brandon was more than ready to go to “Roland’s Old School”, as he called it, so he quickly acclimated to the Children’s School’s program. It brought back special memories as I heard Brandon sing the “Weather Song” and “Down by the Bay.” He absolutely loves being a part of the Morning 3’s class with Mrs. Tomer and Mr. Salinetro.

Now that both boys are in school, I am back to work with my husband at the East Liberty Branch of our family business - Coston Funeral Homes, Inc. I can’t believe how much the boys have grown. The Children’s School has allowed our family to connect with other great families who have also matriculated to SSA and has made learning a lifelong adventure for our boys. We are so grateful for the sincere love and special care the teaching staff and administrative staff has shown to our children and our family. Although this is our last year, we will continue to stay connected to Carnegie Mellon as Roland has started the C-MITES program.
PA Private Academic School Licensing

Because NAEYC Accreditation is no longer accepted by the State of Pennsylvania in lieu of licensure, we have spent the past 9 months preparing our application for a PA Private Academic School License. Fortunately, we were able to repurpose much of the documentation we prepared last year for re-accreditation for the licensing application to address the questions regarding our school philosophy, educational program, support for children with special needs, parent services, professional development, etc. In addition, Carnegie Mellon had to prove ownership of the building, provide certificates of occupancy and insurance, and register our name officially with the state as the Carnegie Mellon University Children’s School. Because PA has different administrative requirements than NAEYC, Dr. Carver has been named the school’s “Owner” and Miss Hancock as the “Education Director”. Because PA has different teacher certification requirements than NAEYC, 9 of our educators had to apply for PA Private Academic Teacher Certification at the “Nursery / Kindergarten” level. This spring, a representative of the Allegheny County Health Department inspected our school to ensure that we meet the county requirements for school health and safety, and a representative of the State Board of Private Academic Schools conducted a site visit to confirm that we have enough space and materials for the number of children we serve and that all of our educators have the appropriate health, clearance, and FBI fingerprinting documents on file here. The fees for the licensing application and related steps in the process totaled approximately $2,000, though the certifications and fingerprinting are one time costs.

On Friday, April 25th, Dr. Carver and Miss Hancock appeared before the PA Board of Private Academic Schools in Harrisburg to answer questions about our application for licensing. Fortunately, we were alphabetically first on the list of 17 schools to be reviewed. The Board Chair began our session by commending us for an "exemplary application", as well as for the strength of the information and services we provide to the parents of our children and for the amount and quality of the in-service training and staff development that we provide for our educators. Other Board Members commended us on the longevity of our educators and said they were "almost envious" of our program. The questions related to the undergraduate roles in our program and related child protections, the depth of our math curriculum, the frequency of our parent communication and conferences, and the way that we support children with special needs without having special education teachers on our staff. The Board did not require us to submit any of our answers in writing, so they unanimously voted to approve our license. Hooray! The annual license renewal process is apparently straightforward paperwork and fee payment, and most of the state requirements beyond the initial license align well with the work we are already doing.
Birds & Flight

Though our Whole School Birds Unit is technically finished, our children’s interests have taken flight. Families have shared their children’s exclamations when they can identify the birds they see in their yards and in the sky (e.g., “Look, a red-tailed hawk!”). We encourage you to support these emerging hobbies by engaging in bird-watching as a family, helping the children record their observations, and even attracting birds to your own yard by providing food, nesting materials, etc. for the birds.

In school, the kindergarten friends are expanding their study of birds by doing an in-depth study of eggs and chicks, as well as exploring other OVIPAROUS (egg-laying) animals. They have been caring for fertilized chicken eggs for 14 days and expect the hatching to begin on May 5th. All of the children will have opportunities to observe the hatching process and the development of the chicks. Feel free to visit the kindergarten next week to see for yourself!

PittsburghGives.org Day of Giving

PittsburghGives Day of Giving provides an opportunity for you to maximize your charitable contribution to the CMU Children’s School! The donated funds will be used to support our Library Enhancement Project, which involves having custom-made library cabinets built for us. The Day of Giving for 2014 will run from 6:00 AM until 12:00 Midnight on Tuesday, May 6, 2014. This 13-hour event is part of Give Local America, the national day for community foundations across the country. This event will replace the day traditionally held in October.

To ensure that your donation reaches the Children’s School, log on to PittsburghGives.org. Select Carnegie Mellon University from the List of Eligible Organizations and make your donation. Please notify Miss Hancock at lh37@andrew.cmu.edu that you have made a contribution via the Day of Giving and that you want it to be designated to The Children’s School. She will send a list of the Children’s School donors to the University Advancement Office who will then allocate the donation and matching funds to The Children’s School.

Organizations will receive a pro-rated portrait of the match pool. The match will be capped at $1,000 per donor transaction per organization. For example, if an individual donor makes a gift of $5,000 to one organization, only $1,000 of that gift will count towards the match calculation.

Donations will not be accepted by third parties. The donor must make the online contribution and he/she will be receipted directly for that donation by the Pittsburgh Foundation. Donations are MasterCard/Visa credit card gifts only on May 6, 2014 in the given time period at www.pittsburghgives.org - checks, stocks, or cash will not be accepted.
Margaret Morrison Reflection Garden Nears Completion

You may have noticed that the outdoor space between Margaret Morrison Carnegie Hall and the tennis courts has been under construction for the past few years. From 1988-2011, this space housed the Children’s School playground. In 2011, our playground was moved to its current home in order to permit façade restoration to the exterior of our building. The space has now been repurposed as a Reflection Garden for the Carnegie Mellon community. We will have direct access to the space through the preschool so that we can utilize it during school hours. Feel free to come explore this beautiful new area with your family.

Life after CMU

During the International Association of Laboratory Schools conference in New York City, Children’s School educators met Sara Mouhktar, one of our 2013 graduates. Sara writes, “Running into the Children’s School educators at Columbia reminded me of how much I miss the Children's School at CMU. I hope all is well with you and everything there! All is wonderful here! The classes are so much fun; I can't believe we're nearing the end of our first year! I'm also interning at SESAME WORKSHOP in the Educational Outreach and Community Engagement Dept. I also volunteer at an elementary school in East Harlem, and I think it's such a rewarding experience to be in the classroom and to give back. Again, I can't thank you enough for everything!”
Sharing Our Experience with Educators

• From April 2\textsuperscript{nd} to 4th, Mrs. Bird, Mrs. Loomis, Mrs. Perovich, and Ms. Stevens traveled to the campus of Columbia University Teachers College in New York City for the \textbf{International Association of Laboratory Schools (IALS)} Conference. Laboratory school educators from the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico attended the annual conference to share the work that is occurring in their early childhood, elementary, and secondary school laboratories. Mrs. Bird and Mrs. Perovich presented a session on “Building Foundations for Friendship and Collaboration in Early Childhood”, and Mrs. Loomis and Ms. Stevens led a roundtable discussion on “Strategies for Supporting Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood”. The educators also had an opportunity to observe at three different schools, laboratory schools at Bank Street College and Columbia, as well as the New York campus of Avenues: The World School. During the conference, the Children’s School sponsored the opening reception, which included delicious food and entertainment by a professional storyteller and a musician.

• During the second week of April, Dr. Carver attended the \textbf{National Coalition for Campus Children’s Centers (NCCCC)} board meeting and conference in Portland, Oregon. The conference is primarily attended by directors of early childhood programs on college and university campuses, so she presented a session on “The Art of Possibility: Transforming Practices for Educators, Children, and Parents”, which incorporated the lessons we have learned from this year’s exploration of the twelve Art of Possibility practices (see Director’s Corner for the last installment of the series). The session fit well with Debra Sullivan’s keynote address on “Learning to Walk: Changing Yourself, Your Perspectives, and Your Assumptions”. During the week, Dr. Carver also had the opportunity to visit the Helen Gordon Child Development Center at Portland State University, which is similar in many ways to Carnegie Mellon’s Cyert Center.

• Next week, we are broadening our horizons by sending Mrs. Rosenblum and Mr. Salinetro to the \textbf{World Forum on Early Care and Education} in San Juan, Puerto Rico. They will have opportunities to learn about the lives of children, families, and early childhood providers from all ethnic, cultural, political, and religious backgrounds by interacting with approximately 800 early childhood professionals for over 80 nations. We are hoping that they will connect with educators who might be interested in developing international collaborations in the coming years.
Undergraduate Spotlight:
Farewell Seniors!

Sam French is a directing major who has worked for us since he was a freshman. “After graduating, I will be moving to New York City. This summer, I will be directing a new musical produced by the National Theater for Student Artists based on the life of Jimmy Carter. Afterwards, I will continue to pursue a career as a director and writer.”

Emily Gibson has also worked for the Children’s School for 4 years. “I will spend one last summer in Pittsburgh working at the Children’s School camp and the Conflict Kitchen. In August, I plan to move to a new city and get involved in cultural community outreach programs. I am also applying for a Fulbright Scholarship to return to my study abroad home at the University of Oxford, where I will pursue a Master of Studies in Victorian Literature.”

Sandra Kalanyan has only been with us for one semester but we have been glad to have her working with us. “My most immediate plans are to stay in Pittsburgh to finish constructing a long-term design/build project. That could take up to two months past graduation. After that, I will most likely move back to the Philadelphia area to search for architecture jobs in Public Interest Design, and/or spend time volunteering community development organizations or building for Habitat for Humanity.

Matthew Mastricova has taken three courses with Dr. Carver and has worked with us in the classrooms since Fall 2012. “I plan on taking classes in ASL and bookbinding and spending too much money in Brooklyn. Outside of that, all bets are off, although I do plan on pursuing graduate studies in special education and fiction writing at some point. I hope to one day develop creative writing curricula that integrates multiple modalities of expression for high school students with developmental disabilities.”

Angela Mitchell worked as an intern this past semester with the Morning Four’s. “I plan on moving to Dallas, Texas to pursue a career in architecture. I hope to focus on architecture education for children or on designing educational spaces.”

Corinne Rockoff joined us a work study after taking Dr. Carver’s Child Development Practicum in the spring of 2013. “I’ll be starting at George Washington Law School in August!”

Ramya Sivakumar worked as an intern with the Morning 3’s for Dr. Carver’s Child Development Practicum. “After graduating with a Bachelor’s degree in Civil Engineering, I will be moving to the greater Harrisburg area. I will join the Highway Division at Gannett Fleming, Inc. as a Transportation Engineer.”
Research Spotlight

The Fruit & Vegetable Game

Professor Anna Fisher and graduate student Karrie Godwin are investigating the relationship between learning and other general cognitive processes such as attention, memory, processing speed, executive function, and general reasoning ability. In the Fruit & Vegetable Game, they are examining how children allocate their attention in different learning environments. In particular, they are interested in examining whether children's ability to effectively distribute their attention has consequences for learning new science content. In this computer game, children are presented with a series of pictures of fruits and vegetables. Children are told the name for each picture. At the end of the game, a memory assessment is administered to see which items the children learned. For example, after learning the names of different types of fruits and vegetables, children may be presented with a picture of a fruit and asked to recall the fruit's name (e.g., “What was the name of this fruit?”).

The Butterfly Game

Fisher and Godwin’s Butterfly Game is a similar computer game in which children are presented with a series of pictures of butterflies. Children are told the name for each picture. At the end of the game, a memory assessment is administered to see which items the children learned. For example, after learning the names of different types of butterfly children may be asked to identify the morpho (e.g., “Point to the morpho”).

The Remember That Game

In a series of games like the Fruit & Vegetables Game, the Butterfly Game, the Flower Game, and the Fish Game, children learn about novel science content by reviewing a series of pictures of animals or plants and practicing the name for each picture. In the Remember That Game, experimenters examine whether children’s ability to engage in sustained attention during those initial games affects their long-term retention of the science material. In the Remember That Game, children are asked questions about the animals and plants they learned about over the semester. For example, children are presented with a series of pictures and asked to recall the name of the objects (e.g., “What was the name of this Butterfly?”). Children are also asked about educational displays that were present in the classroom to see if children remember the classroom visual environment. For example, children may be presented with pairs of objects and asked to identify which object he or she saw in the classroom previously.
Research Spotlight, continued …

The Shape Sorting Game

Shira Bauman, Isabella Daher, Michael Tyler, and Travis Andring, students in Professor Iliah Nourbakhsh and Professor Reid Simmons’ Human-Robot Interaction class, are conducting an experiment examining the trust Kindergarten children place in a robot. The children are given 20 blocks of assorted color, size, and shape, and then they are asked to sort the shapes in any way they choose. The children experience one of three conditions: in one of the conditions the child is in the room on their own, and in the other two conditions a pretend “robot” will be in the room with them. The fake cardboard robot has a person inside, and the children are told that the researchers are designing a real robot and need their help so they pretend that the cardboard robot is real. The two robot conditions differ in that the children are either exposed to a silent robot or a robot that encourages the child to change the sorting method.

The purpose of the experiment is to see if the children trust the robot's advice to change their sorting method from their initial inclination. By doing this study, the researchers hope to learn more about how children might interact with robots in a classroom setting. For example, a robot might be used in a teaching position, giving examples and helping children work on math problems, for example. If a child is working on a problem but begins to have trouble, the robot might explain the problem in a different way than the student was originally attempting to solve it, or provide explanations that approach the problem from a different angle. This advice could be confusing for a young child. In designing such education systems, it is necessary to understand how the child would react when presented with different options for completing a task. Will the student continue to try to solve the problem the original way? Or would they stop what they are doing and try to solve the problem in the manner being presented by the robot? The researchers hope to begin to answer this question through their experiment.

Scientific American Reporter

On Wednesday, April 9th, Barbara Kantrowitz, a professor Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and a reporter for Scientific American, toured the Children’s School to better understand the role of laboratory schools in supporting scientific research in education. Ms. Kantrowitz was commissioned to do a story about using evidence-based curricula, particularly related to the practice guide on Teaching Math to Young Children (for which Dr. Carver was a panelist), but she got interested in the many roles that laboratory schools play in the field of learning sciences. During Ms. Kantrowitz’s visit, she toured the school, watched Dr. Carver’s child development students record data for an upcoming paper, observed students in the research methods class collecting data, joined Dr. Carver’s practicum students for a discussion of autism led by Mrs. Rosenblum, and watched graduate student Karrie Godwin conduct several research sessions. We will share her article with you when it is published.
The final practice advocated by Zander and Zander in *The Art of Possibility* is “**Telling the WE Story**”. Instead of focusing on Us vs. Them, we envision a transformative possibility of connection and communication. “By telling the WE story, an individual becomes a conduit for the new inclusive entity, wearing its eyes and ears, feeling its heart, thinking its thoughts, inquiring into what is best for US” (p. 183). Notice that this story is not about compromise between opposing desires, but rather about being open to integrating a broader set of desires such that together we can “wish inclusively.”

Even in well-functioning marriages, families, laboratory schools, and universities, our differences in values and perspectives yield many opportunities for conflict that can lead to negative interactions that then spiral relationships downward. Parents vs. children, educators vs. administrators, faculty vs. staff vs. students, educators vs. researchers, men vs. women, veterans vs. newcomers, and so it goes. At the Children’s School, we begin to tell the WE story by the language that we use. We call the children “friends” to avoid the divisive labeling by gender than pervades most schools (e.g., “Listen, boys and girls …”). While we do have a hierarchical staff structure to clarify the chain of responsibility, we most frequently function as “teams” (e.g., the 3’s team, the administrative team, etc.). In all of our interactions, we seek to find a way for everyone to contribute to our collaborative endeavor positively and productively. In Zander and Zander’s words, the goal is to invent stories “that will take us from an entrenched posture of hostility to one of enthusiasm and deep regard” (p. 182).

One story that clearly demonstrates both the potential for and value of taking the opportunity to contribute to a more harmonious community is “**The Ant and the Elephant**” by Bill Peet. Each character, beginning with a tiny ant, encounters problems in the course of the day, but none are willing to help each other until the friendly elephant enters the scene. There’s no reward for the elephant beyond a simple thank you from the ant, and there is much badgering and ungratefulness along the way. Nonetheless, the elephant chooses to pleasantly help each animal. His problem comes when he begins to brag that he is always the helper and will never need others to help him. The WE story begins to emerge when the elephant needs rescuing and the grateful ant recruits an entire community of ants to strive beyond what any of them thought possible. The book’s publicity material summarizes the story as, “many creatures are helped when two animals refuse to conform to the rules of the jungle.”

As graduation approaches at CMU and at the Children’s School, many people in our community are planning transitions to new schools, jobs, etc. For them, the need to build innovative connections and collaborations is obvious and potentially energizing. For the Children’s School staff and the returning children, families, undergraduates, and researchers, the path forward is less clear. We have met and/or exceeded the NAEYC accreditation standards, we have achieved our Pennsylvania Private Academic School licensing, our budget is balanced, etc. As I see it, the challenge we face is to proactively engage our passions to consider new possibilities so that we continue to advance in ways that will create a more desirable learning context for everyone involved. “What do WE want to happen? What’s best for US? What’s OUR next step? (p. 184)”. We hope you will engage in the dialogue, share your spark, and be a contribution as together we envision new possibilities.