Wonderful Fall Open House Events!

We had fun celebrating our smooth transition into the school year by sharing our favorite routines and activities with our families! Thanks for taking the time to engage in the experience with both children and teachers. You’ll see more photos in the class newsletters coming home soon.

November Dates

Extended PM Open House – 5-6pm Wednesday, November 4th
Scholarship Fund Shopping Night at Ten Thousand Villages – 6-8pm Thursday, November 5th
NO SCHOOL – Friday, November 6th – Conference Preparation Day
Scholastic Book Fair – Wednesday, November 18th – Friday, November 20th
Parent Teacher Conferences – Monday, November 23rd & Tuesday, November 24th
No School for Children – November 23rd through 27th – Happy Thanksgiving!!
Parent Spotlight: Jewart’s Gymnastics

Lainy and Scott Carslaw (Koda's parents) have been working hard to expand their family business, as Lainy describes below.

My name is Lainy Carslaw - Koda's mom. If you see him constantly bouncing and flipping around, that's because he spends much of his time with us, his parents, at work. We work at a gymnastics school in the North Hills of Pittsburgh, right outside of North Park. My family has owned Jewart's Gymnastics for 40 years!! Last year, we put on a huge addition to make room for more programs and more fun! We started our fall programs last month, including preschool, recreational, rhythmic, and competitive gymnastics. Scott coaches all levels of boys and I coach competitive girls. Last year, I got to attend the level 10 (the highest level in gymnastics) National Championships in Seattle with three of my gymnasts! It was fantastic!

We also have judo, dance, zumba, trampoline and tumbling and cheerleading programs. We currently have about 800 students. I believe (especially at the preschool level) gymnastics provides the fundamentals to be great at any and all sports - balance, coordination, strength, flexibility, speed, discipline, and agility. Children also learn to follow directions, be creative, and work with other children. Plus it's fun! We have birthday parties, sleepovers, Dad and Me fun days, and a wonderful Halloween party each year. Come see us sometime or visit our website, www.jewarts.com.

November Web Artists:

3’s Friends: Charlie G., Ben P., Zoe S., Dan B., and Annabel O.
4’s Friends: Jong Chan N., Georgie R., Ryder S., Danny D., and Ryan H.
Kindergarten Friends: Sam H., Miyu Y., Charly B., Jax H.
Help Build Our Scholarship Fund!

Each year, the Children’s School sets a fundraising goal to enhance an area of our program. The discovery area, kitchen, and playground have all been renovated as a result of these financial efforts. Due to the flood, the remaining physical spaces of the school have received an appearance update. This unexpected blessing affords us an opportunity to focus our development efforts for this year on our Scholarship Fund. Here are some ways that YOU can help to provide a quality early childhood experience for other deserving children!

Ten Thousand Villages Shopping Night
On Thursday, November 5 from 6-8 PM, a percentage of the store’s net sales will be donated to the Children’s School. Get a start on holiday shopping and help the Children’s School!! Visit [http://www.tenthousandvillages.com/home.php](http://www.tenthousandvillages.com/home.php) to learn more about this multicultural fair trade store located on Forbes Avenue in Squirrel Hill.

KidStuff Coupon Books
Kidstuff coupon books can be purchased for $25 with a 50% profit per book for our Scholarship Fund! Some examples of coupons in the book are IKEA, Kmart, Sears, Dick’s Sporting Goods, Office Depot, Fuddrucker’s, and Cold Stone Creamery. Please visit the office to peruse the book. You can also reserve one by calling Miss Drash at 412-268-2199 or emailing [ed-admin@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:ed-admin@andrew.cmu.edu). Coupon books will be available until November 30.

Make a Contribution
Did you know that employers often match gifts to independent schools? Contact your company to see if they will match your contribution.

Use GoodSearch.com & GoodShop.com
The Children’s School can earn a donation every time you search the Internet AND a percentage of every purchase you make online! GoodSearch.com is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up! GoodShop.com is a new online shopping mall that donates up to 30 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Amazon, Target, Gap, Best Buy, eBay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop so that every time you place an order, you can support the Children's School. If you download the GoodSearch – Carnegie Mellon Children's School toolbar, our school will earn money every time you shop and search online - even if you forget to go to GoodShop or GoodSearch first! Add the Carnegie Mellon Children's School toolbar at [http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar](http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar). We appreciate your support!

If you have ideas of other ways to enhance our Scholarship Fund development or would like to volunteer time toward this effort, please contact the Educational Administrator Team at 412-268-2198 or [ed-admin@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:ed-admin@andrew.cmu.edu).
Family Committee News

Our school committees are off and running!

**Sewing Committee** – Special thanks to Megan Cohen for making the beautiful set of radiator covers for our entrance hallway!

**School Photos** - Jennifer Balog and the picture committee made sure that we were all photo ready this week!

**Library Committee** – We had our first meeting and are getting organized. We have new cabinets with space for expansion. We can always use more volunteers!

**Repair and Construction** – Thanks to Scott Carslaw for helping with the playground and for putting together our library cabinet!

**Giant Eagle Shopping** – Hyo Jin Kim and Eunjung Kim have been making sure that we don’t go hungry at snack time. Thank you very much for your weekly shopping trips!

**Scholastic Books** – Grace Tan is doing a wonderful job organizing our monthly book orders and the Book Fair!

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**Scholastic Book Fairs**

The Scholastic Book Fair will be held in our hallway by the kindergarten room on November 18th, 19th, and 20th. So that everyone will have a chance to come to the Fair, we will be kicking off the event on Wednesday from 1 to 7 pm. Breakfast will be provided on Thursday from 8-9 am for those who would like to take advantage of the sale at that time, and the sale will run until 4pm. On Friday, the Fair will be open from 9 am until 2 pm. At 12 on Friday, there will be a Story Time in the Red Room for the children for about 45 minutes, so that family members will have a chance to browse for holiday gifts without their children! Look for a preview brochure that will be sent home in the children’s backpacks. Families can pre-order the books listed in that brochure. Also, we will be looking for volunteers to help with the sale. *Think Books!*

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**Giant Eagle’s Apples for Students**

The Giant Eagle Apples for Students program makes it easy to support your favorite schools. School supporters like you can donate their spending electronically through the Giant Eagle Advantage Card®. Each time your card is scanned between now and Wednesday, March 17, 2009, your purchase will count toward FREE equipment for our school. The Children’s School has been able to purchase at least 2 items for each age group for as long as we have been part of the Apples for Students program!

It’s easy to register! Here’s how:

1. Register at 1-800-474-4777 or www.gianteagle.com
2. Enter our School ID # 0151
3. Shop with your Giant Eagle Advantage Card®.

If you have children at more than one school, you no longer have to choose only one to support. When you register, you will be given the option to enter up to five school ID’s and your purchases will be divided among the schools you choose.
Professional Development for Staff

For teachers and administrators alike, opportunities for continued learning are the key to our ability to continually strengthen our early childhood laboratory school program. Here is a sampling of the diverse professional development experiences we have had since the beginning of the year.

Before the school year began, we had a theatre arts workshop with Holly Thuma, a former Children's School parent, actress, and instructor in Pitt’s Theatre program, to prepare us for our theatre artists in residence, Christine Sealy and Zane Leydig. We also toured the Children's Institute to learn about their services for children with developmental challenges, and we met with Carnegie Mellon’s fire safety instructor, Bob Anderegg, to review safety procedures and to practice using fire extinguishers correctly to put out a small fire.

In recent weeks, we have had research presentations and discussions with Dr. Anna Fisher and Dr. Dan Hufnagle, both of which challenged our thinking about the complex processing that children need to do in order to selectively attend to important lessons in our busy environment and to distinguish between similar sounds in order to comprehend language. Last Friday, we had our annual Pediatric First Aid and CPR course with a new instructor, Josh Gelman. During the week before Thanksgiving, Dr. Carver and Miss Furman will travel to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) annual conference in Washington, D.C.

We also strive to contribute to our professional community by providing growth opportunities for other educators. In early October, we hosted an event for nearly 40 early childhood educators to explore ways to facilitate stress-reduction, both for ourselves and our children. Through the generosity of many donors, we shared delicious “comfort foods”, practiced yoga with Bridgett Javid (Jordan’s mom) and her colleagues, played games, sang karaoke, shared humorous stories, listened to soothing music, and even offered chair massages to a few lucky participants. In mid-November, we will host tours & discussions for four teachers from Marshall County, WV, a child development class from North Allegheny School district and a group of high school family studies instructors. Mrs. McGillen recently published one of her ideas for helping the children to experience the splatter painting technique of Jackson Pollock (see enclosed article) in the journal Teaching Young Children. Congratulations on the national exposure!

Thanks for your support of our professional development with the gift of time and resources so that we can all strive for quality!
Theatre Opportunities for the Family

Peanut Butter and Jam Sessions
Chatham Baroque’s wildly popular Peanut Butter & Jam Sessions are designed especially for preschool children and their accompanying adults. These interactive and informal programs present musical experiences in a fun and family friendly way.

2009-2010 Jam Sessions
Saturday, November 21: A Round is a Circle
Saturday, December 12: The Adventure of Vi and Lin
Saturday, January 30: Delicious Double Stops
Saturday, February 20: Open Wide: Discover Your Voice
Saturday, March 13: May I have this Dance?
Saturday, April 10: Hello Cello
• 10:00am and 11:30am shows are presented for each Saturday date
• Shows are presented in McClintic Hall of the Calvary Episcopal Church, 315 Shady Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15206 for $5 per child and $8 per adult. For more information or to buy tickets, please call 412-394-3353 or visit our website at www.chathambaroque.org.

The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust is presenting … The Adventures of Harold and the Purple Crayon
November 8-14 (presented at various locations)
In this magical, musical adaptation of the well-known book series by Crockett Johnson, Harold journeys through the world that he creates with nothing but his big purple crayon and his imagination. Don’t miss this inventive production by The Enchantment Theatre Company. Children’s Theater events take place at locations throughout the region. Please visit www.pgharts.org to find locations and times. Tickets are $9.50 when purchased in advance and $11 at the door.

Carnegie Mellon’s 16th Annual Food Drive

Along with the campus community, the Children’s School will collect non-perishable items for the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank from November 2 – November 13. Last year the university community collected 6,227 pounds of food and $1,456.50 in donations! Let’s aim for even more this year!

The Food Bank is a non-profit organization that collects, stores, and distributes food and household products to more than 350 charitable agencies in the region (www.pittsburghfoodbank.org/).

All donations should be non-perishable items. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
• Foods - Canned fruits & vegetables, soup mixes, cereal, oatmeal, crackers, noodles, spaghetti sauce, dry beans, pancake mix, canned meats, canned soups, condiments, rice, pasta, etc.
• Baby items - baby food, infant formula, diapers
• Toiletry items - toothpaste, toothbrushes (especially child-sized), soap, shampoo
• Paper products - tissues, toilet paper, paper towels, napkins, paper plates
• Other - laundry supplies, cleaning supplies
• Gift certificates for grocery stores

On Wednesday, November 11th, our classes will participate in “Cans Across the Cut” where teams try to make the longest line of donated items, so please send your donations on or before that day!
Fall Parent / Teacher Conferences

The fall conferences are great opportunities for the teacher and parents to discuss their views of each child’s development. This year, parent conferences are being conducted primarily on Monday and Tuesday, November 23 & 24. Specific schedules are included with this newsletter. Please remember to call Ms. Drash to arrange your specific conference time.

At the Children’s School, our conferences are structured by the developmental objectives that are the focus of our program design. For the fall conference, teachers of three year olds will emphasize the first three domains of development and teachers of four year olds will emphasize four, while kindergarten teachers will cover all six domains. The primary reason for this difference in emphasis is that the preschoolers are in school for less than half as much time as the kindergartners and typically require a longer period of adjustment to the school environment and routine.

- Self-Esteem and Independence
- Interaction and Cooperation
- Communication
- Physical Capabilities
- Discovery and Exploration
- Artistic Expression and Appreciation

We encourage parents to prepare for their child(ren)’s conferences by considering the progress they have noted. One strategy is to identify one adjective to describe your child in each of the areas that will be discussed. Another is to recall one prototypical anecdote for each category. A third is to consider the school activities and events related to each area that your child has discussed with you. Finally, you might specify one goal related to each domain that you would like to see your child achieve during the next six months. Sharing these thoughts with your child(ren)’s teacher(s) facilitates productive dialogue about the ways that your child is progressing in both home and school environments. It’s always interesting to see the parallels that exist between the two contexts, as well as the distinct differences that are often evident.

This year, we are also interested in your response to the teachers’ daily email updates about class events; we hope that they are enriching your family discussions about what happens during the children’s time at school.

The conference dialogue will help parents to choose the next school for their child so that its program will best match the child and family. We have brochures and flyers for many local schools in the office. We have also posted Open House information for other schools on a bulletin board outside the office. For families applying to private schools that require recommendations, in January the teachers review their conference reports, make any modifications to reflect progress and then submit them to Miss Hancock for mailing to relevant schools. Parents must sign a release form before conference data can be released to schools as part of the application and placement process.

In addition to the conference opportunity, Dr. Carver is available to discuss any questions or concerns you have about your child’s development or about our program. We are privileged that you have entrusted your children to us and look forward to continued partnership in their education.
Research Spotlight

Karrie Godwin, a new graduate student in the Psychology Department, working with Dr. Anna Fisher, and in the Program for Interdisciplinary Education Research (PIER), is beginning a longitudinal study designed to better understand the role of synonyms and other co-occurring information in children’s reasoning, particularly when they make inferences about new objects. In order to control the number of exposures to paired information, Karrie plans to teach children novel facts over 6 training sessions. For example, she might teach children that hot cocoa and fire have something in common, namely - they can keep us warm. At the end of the training sessions, she will present children with reasoning tasks in which they can utilize the knowledge they acquired during the training. She is interested in the degree to which children utilize their new knowledge in various reasoning tasks.

If your child participates in this study, you will actually see many different study descriptions. The six training sessions will involve playing the Match Game three times and the Story Game three times. Having the children learn the new information in the context of two different games helps them prepare to generalize that information.

In the Match Game, children are presented with pictures of object pairs and taught a property of the depicted objects. Then, the children are asked to find another object that shares the same relationship. For example, a child might be told that crabs and turtles live in the ocean and then asked to find another object that also lives in the ocean. The Match Game is played on a computer, with cards, or with a picture book. The Match Game utilizes pictures similar to the ones presented below.

In the Story Game, children listen to short stories and then answer questions about what happened in the stories (e.g. who won the singing contest?). A sample story is, “One summer night, the forest animals decided to have a singing contest. Bird and cricket were the two best singers in the entire forest. All the animals came to hear them perform. The judges all agreed that bird and cricket both sang well. So the judges gave them both a trophy.” Each story is accompanied by a color drawing.

After the six training sessions, Karrie will have the children participate in four of Dr. Fisher’s regular studies to see if their training makes a difference. These games include the Similarity Game, the Guessing Game, the Synonyms Game, and the Picture Finding Game. We look forward to following the progress of this longitudinal study and to hearing about the results next semester!
The Writing Game

Rachel Harkawik, and several other research assistants, are working with Dr. Cynthia Puranik from the University of Pittsburgh, to investigate how preschool children develop writing skills. The first half includes showing children pictures and asking them questions about their knowledge of print. For example, they will be shown the pictures below and asked, “Which one says Oreo?”

The second half of the assessment includes asking children to do some writing, such as writing their names, writing their friends’ names or describing a picture. Of course, the younger children might not be able to write conventionally. Just as children do not begin to talk by speaking in complex utterances, or decode by reading a novel, children do not begin writing in complete sentences. Similar to how children learn to speak or read, writing skill progresses in stages. Before writing conventionally, children scribble to convey meaning through print; however, these scribbles or early writings are not random. These scribbles contain certain features that reflect children’s understanding of written language. The researchers are interested in studying these features in young children’s writing. This study will help identify the importance of these early writing skills and may lead to the development of strategies that parents and teachers could use both to identify children who may be exhibiting signs of risk for later educational problems and to identify areas and strategies to promote the development of important early literacy skills.

Because these researchers are from outside Carnegie Mellon, parents must sign an additional permission slip in order for the children to participate. Also, the researchers are collecting information from interested parents about their children’s literacy experiences. The questionnaires ask for information about the child’s use of picture-books, developmental history, and characteristics of your family, such as number of children, reading habits, and amount of education completed, your child’s preference for different day-to-day activities, and general characteristics about your child, like his or her activity level, temperament, etc. Gathering this background information will help researchers compare children’s emerging writing skills with their personal characteristics and experience.
Undergraduate Research

Dr. Erik Thiessen’s Developmental Research Methods students are preparing their final projects for the semester. Though the research procedures are still being finalized, the topics are listed below. Families whose children participate will receive fuller parent descriptions via the child’s backpack. Everyone can read the study descriptions on the Research Bulletin Board outside the Children’s School Office. Notice the interesting range of important topics in early childhood development!

**The Effects of Color on Visual Working Memory** – testing morning 3’s and kindergartners to determine whether they are quicker to find matches when the pictures are color vs. black and white (The Matching Game)

**The Impact of Counter Attractiveness on Basic Math** – studying whether kindergartners do better on simple math problems when counting with plain blocks vs. blocks that are attractively decorated with stickers (The Blocks Game)

**Color vs. Shape Priming in a Sorting Task** – testing afternoon 4’s and kindergartners to determine whether playing with tan blocks promotes later sorting by shape, while coloring with crayons promotes sorting by color, when objects to be sorted vary both by color and shape (The Sorting Game)

**The Influence of Positive and Negative Incentives on Memory** – testing whether morning 4’s learn the names of new creatures better when offered positive incentives for remembering, i.e., gaining stickers, than negative consequences for forgetting, i.e., losing stickers (The Space Animals Game)

**Visual Support for Story Comprehension** – testing morning 4’s ability to recall facts about stories read aloud, with and without the support of pictures during the reading (The Story Game)

**Developmental Progression of Counting Skills** – testing afternoon 4’s and kindergartners’ abilities to count small, medium, and large numbers of plastic bears (The Bear Game)

Undergraduate Spotlight: Getting to Know You

Our 3s undergraduate team gained a new member this month!

Meghan Mills is new to the Children’s School and will be spending two mornings a week with the 3 year olds. Meghan is a sophomore this year and is majoring in Art. Starting in the middle of the semester was no problem for Meghan, she jumped right in and got her feet wet! Meghan enjoys canoeing and rock climbing and has coordinated and led trips along those lines.
Director’s Corner: Scholarship, Leadership and Service

During this fall semester, I have had the privilege of becoming the faculty advisor to the Mortar Board Society at Carnegie Mellon. Established in 1918, this national senior honor society recognizes “scholars … chosen for leadership … united to serve”. As I have begun getting to know these talented students, I’ve reflected on how educators and families can begin raising the next generation of scholars, leaders, and public servants, even while they’re still in preschool and kindergarten.

In general, we teach best by our example because young children already have strong skills for imitating what we model for them. We supplement our example with direct instruction via explaining our actions and reading books with messages that we value. Finally, we provide a wide variety of opportunities for children to practice important skills in a safe and supportive context so that they can experience the satisfaction of success. With respect to scholarship, all of the adults at the Children’s School model lifelong learning. Our children see undergraduates learning about child development by observing them and interns practicing to be teachers by helping in their classrooms. We talk with them about the visitors who come to teach us—about airplanes, about Diwali, about cows, etc., and we show them how we find information from books and on the web when we have questions. Most importantly, we provide many ways for them to practice learning deeply about their lives, about the themes we study, and about whatever interests them.

Becoming a leader begins with learning to make good choices, to value the differences among us, and to take responsibility for important roles in the classroom community. Though the children begin to understand that “Dr. Carver is the boss of the school” (in the words of one child), they also see me helping both children and adults in a variety of ways while other staff members or parents take the lead role. The children then get to practice being the daily helper, doing weekly classroom jobs, leading a sharing bag discussion, or taking the weekly kindergarten survey, etc. In other words, they learn that the school benefits when everyone offers leadership in different but complementary ways.

Foundations for a life of public service are laid in much the same way, beginning with learning to “be a kind friend” by watching the adults around them treating each other with care and respect, especially when problems arise. We talk and read about helpful interactions, and we comment purposefully on the examples that happen naturally in the classroom. We involve children in writing thank you notes, messages for special occasions, etc. Our kindergartners will soon be creating journals for young patients with an undergraduate group of Children’s Hospital volunteers. We also provide children and families with occasions to discuss and practice community service in concrete ways. With this newsletter, you are receiving a box from the campus UNICEF coordinator inviting you to “Trick or Treat” for UNICEF. That and the upcoming campus food drive might prompt discussion about the people in our community and world who need our help to have enough food, clean water, and other necessities of life.

I invite you to join us in fostering the qualities of scholarship, leadership, and service among our children so that they might develop to their fullest potential and help others to do the same.