

## Family Spotlight: Four 4 Four

My husband John and I were first introduced to the Children's School in 2005 when our oldest son, Jack, entered the Morning 3's Program. Because Jack was our first child, we choose not to enroll him in the extended day program, fearing that it might be too much for him. We learned very quickly that it was mom and dad (actually, mom) that had the biggest separation issues and quickly rectified our mistake the following year when Jack enrolled in the Extended 4's Program. Jack loved making new friends and exploring new territories, and John and I fell in love with how the School's intellectually challenging environment is wrapped in warm and nurturing arms.

No surprise that our next son, Luke, couldn't wait to enter the Extended 3's and, subsequently, the Extended 4's Programs. Jack continued on to "big-boy" Kindergarten. Next came Mark, who joined the Extended 4's Program in 2010 and finally our fourth son, Clark, joined the Extended 3's Program just this year while Mark is thoroughly enjoying himself in Kindergarten.

The thing that amazes me the most about having four boys is how different they all are. Jack is our quiet thinker. He enjoys reading, chess, golf and playing the cello. Luke is our energetic artist. Luke loves to draw with oil pastels, play the violin and lacrosse and to run! Mark is an inquisitive and joyful soul. Everyday is "awesome" and anything that has to do with nature and science is right up his alley. He was even nicknamed "Nature Mark" by his Children's School friends last year. Lastly, Clark is our fourth blessing who is interested in whatever his three older brothers are doing!

Henne Jewelers in Shadyside is where you will find John six days a week. A former CPA, John is the fourth generation of Henne to carry on the family business. John especially enjoys his commute to work from our Fox Chapel home during the school year when he starts his day by taking the boys to school.



Lastly, I worked for a number of years as an attorney for Reed Smith LP before taking a "mommy sabbatical." Little did I know how challenging my days would become. Even on the most difficult days, I would make the same decision over and over. All it takes is a big smile and sloppy kiss to remind me.

We are so thrilled to be a part of the Children's School family. Walking through the School's doors brings a feeling of homecoming for me that I'm sure will last long after Clark graduates from Kindergarten in 2014. See you in the car line!

Dara Henne

## Family Spotlight: Alumni Fathers

**Mark Sutton**, father of Kiana (AM 4's), writes: Although much time has passed, I have many warm memories of my preschool and kindergarten years at the Children's School. Some of these memories are more vivid than others. Then, as now, the Children's School was a great learning environment. I remember starting each school day with anticipation, wondering what new experiences the day would bring. I remember, in particular, the time we spent outdoors. In those days, the CMU campus was filled with tall trees. I enjoyed playing around the trees and staying cool in the shade beneath their broad leafy branches. Because we lived quite close, my parents would sometimes walk me to and from school. I remember when my Chinese grandmother, who was visiting from Hong Kong, walked to school to pick me up at the end of the



day. It was a hot summer day. As usual, my grandmother was dressed quite formally and was carrying an umbrella. A couple of my classmates asked me why my grandmother was carrying an umbrella on such a beautiful and cloudless day. I remember being a bit stumped and thinking that it was a really good question... Our daughter, Kiana, is currently in the 4s program. Kiana enjoys spending time every day with her teachers and classmates. Our son, Tyler, is 1 and is looking forward to joining the 3s program in the near future. I am very happy that the Children's School continues to be such a wonderful place for our children to learn and grow.



**Mark Bussler**, father of Alice and Emmet (PM 3's), writes: I was enrolled in the Children's School program for the morning session late in 1978 when I was three years old, Jimmy Carter was president, and Star Wars was still in theaters (the first time). I attended preschool through 1980 and then Kindergarten on the Carnegie Mellon campus. What I remember most about preschool is the water table and two-way mirror in the red room. I vaguely remember the feeling of discovering something secret when I put my head on the glass and peered through at the row of chairs on the other side. Sadly I never saw any people in the hidden room, which would have been truly exciting. It wasn't until later that I realized parents and students would spy on us. I've always enjoyed water and have fond memories of splashing in the water table and pushing plastic boats around. It was magical to me that water could be supported on a table at a convenient play-level, and I'm glad to see the school still has one. Our children speak fondly of it. I also remember wearing new shoes to school and singing a new shoe song. It was a great song but I can't remember the words. I also have vivid memories of riding metal tricycles with heavier wheels than the all-plastic "big wheels" I was accustomed to. In another memory, my class is sitting in a circle verbally passing around a story to prove that people always change stories when they tell each other in their own way. I don't recall the story; but after being passed through a circle of 3 or 4 year olds, it changed a lot. When my wife and I investigated preschool options for our twins, the Children's School at CMU was the first place we looked, and we quickly agreed that it was the right program. I remember enjoying school and making friends, trying new things like an olive and spitting it out (I still detest olives) and learning to read and draw in a fun-filled environment. We hope that the twins enjoy their preschool experience as much as I did and that they form their own fond memories.



## Family Spotlight: New in Town

Hello everyone, we are really excited to have this opportunity to write to all of you.

**A little about us:** We are the Andini family of four. Two little members in our family are Kayla, age 4, and Laras, nearly 1 and a half. We moved to Pittsburgh last June because my husband got accepted to the Tepper School of Business at CMU, and this was our first time to be in the U.S.



**The journey from Indonesia:** A mix of flying from halfway across the world, 30 hours of flight, 3 transits, and two toddlers to take care of surely tested our parental skill to the limit. However, the excitement of coming to the U.S. for the first time gave us the energy to stay awake. At first, we were quite nervous whether we could fit with the American lifestyle. The language, culture, and even the side of the road on which we used to drive are different. Surprisingly, we found that Pittsburgh is very enjoyable with all those parks, hills, bridges and warm friendly people. And don't forget all the enthusiasm for Steelers!

**Children's School:** Having the opportunity to live in Pittsburgh for 2 years, we knew that our daughter, Kayla, would have the opportunity to experience better education. We realize that having the ability to learn English in the early years is fundamental for her future. We first learned about Children's School from the website, and we were lucky enough to get Kayla accepted after previously being put on the waitlist. After a few months, we are surprised with Kayla's ability to speak English with even better pronunciation than her parents. Seeing Kayla's enthusiasm for learning new letters, singing and dancing, we know that we chose the right school for her.

**What's the difference?** In Indonesia, I used to be a working mom, so we had a nanny and a maid to take care the children and the house. Having paid help is very common there because the salaries are cheaper than day care, most families have both parents working. I used to be gone at the office from 6.30 am until 6 pm, but my husband usually got home at 8 pm, so we had so little time with the girls. We only spent family time together on the weekend because after work we were just too tired to play or the children were already asleep. Living here gives us more quality family time. Even though my husband is very busy with his study, we still manage to have time to spend with the girls. I also learn about being a full time mom with so many tasks such as taking care of two children without the help of the nanny, my mother & my mother-in-law, cleaning the apartment, doing the laundry (usually the maid did it), and of course cooking (we had a catering service). Turns out that I have a hidden talent for cooking. If we didn't move to Pittsburgh, I think my cooking talent wouldn't be discovered.



Speaking about Indonesia, it is a beautiful tropical country located exactly on the equator. Moving to Pittsburgh where there are 4 seasons is very exciting for all of us. When we first got here, it was summer, so the weather was pretty much the same as our drought season; but when it comes to fall, we are surprised with all the different colors of leaves, and we enjoy the cool breeze. Now we are very anxious to experience the winter; we just can't wait to play in the snow.

Nindya and Dimas Andini



## Family Spotlight: Rooted in "Da Burgh"

Bob Slammon and Amy Williams (Liam, AM 4's) moved to Pittsburgh almost seven years ago. Before "Da Burgh," we lived in many different places: Chicago, Buffalo, Bennington, New York City, Boston. We love Pittsburgh, with its vibrant cultural institutions, first-rate schools, and just enough grit to keep things real. In many ways, it reminds us of our hometown of Buffalo, New York, so when we moved here, we immediately felt at home.



We both feel more "rooted" in Pittsburgh than we did in the other places we have lived. Perhaps this is a consequence of starting a family in Pittsburgh. But it may also have to do with the ease with which we have found a sense of community here. We live in a close-knit neighborhood, appropriately called Friendship, and we have met so many wonderful people since we moved here. As we've heard many other Children's School parents say, Pittsburgh is a great place to raise a family. It has so many great resources for children, from its wonderful parks to its outstanding cultural institutions. One of those great resources is, of course, the Children's School.

Liam started the Children's School this fall in Ms. Mangan's group. It has been a very positive experience for him. Liam came to the Children's School with a rather mixed attitude about pre-school. We were relieved when, after his first week, he declared, "I love it!" And he has loved it ever since. It is great to see Liam thrive at his new school. Recently, he has started lobbying to be put in the extended morning program.

We love seeing Liam and his sister, Maeve, grow and develop into distinct personalities. From a very young age, Liam has loved music. He didn't care so much for nursery rhymes or even his mom's style of music but for jazz and blues. At age two and a half, he would say, "Thelonius Monk," when people asked him who his favorite musician was. Now he listens to everything and loves to play instruments (saxophone and drums, mostly). Liam also loves to build, play pretend, paint, read mystery stories, and play games. Lately, he has been fascinated by the human body and how it works. He loves science and says he'd like to be a paleontologist when he grows up so he can work at the Carnegie Museum. On other days, he'd like to be a fireman, like his grandfather.



His sister, Maeve, started walking just before her 1<sup>st</sup> birthday in December. She is expanding her vocabulary on a daily basis—she is proudest of "apple", "choo-choo" and, of course "dada" and "mama." She wants to do whatever her big brother does. It is so pleasing to see Liam and Maeve's relationship develop. The two of them are already a team.

Amy teaches music composition at Pitt and also regularly performs with the Bugallo-Williams Piano Duo, which focuses on contemporary classical music. Bob recently finished his Ph.D. in sociology, and his research focuses on the use of information technologies in the medical field.

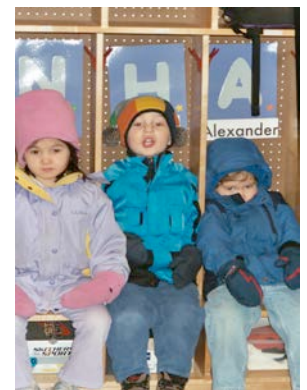
We are looking forward to the new semester!

## Dual Family Spotlight: 7 Down, 1 To Go



Five cousins from the Grodin Clan have graduated from The Children's School. **Sam, Harrison, Spencer, Garrett,** and **Sage** have wonderful memories of the teachers, friends, activities, and fun. Sam kicked off the tradition in the Red Room in 2003. The unit about community helpers, including the policeman coming to the school in the police car was his favorite. The following year Harrison began in the

Blue Room. Some of Harrison's fondest memories were from the discovery area, including the cool light table with the Legos. The fun continued for Sam in the Green Room where he laughs as he remembers cramming way too many friends into the cardboard rocket ship. Noting that his love for "making things" began at an early age, Harrison's favorites include doing woodworking with Mrs. Bird. Sam wonderful experience with kindergarten where he vividly remembers the Italy unit's scavenger hunt, bread with olive oil, and painting on the "ceiling" like Michelangelo. Both our families felt very fortunate that cousins Sam and Harrison could be at the same school.



Spencer and Garrett easily transitioned to the Red Room in 2005. They were accustomed to riding along with their big brothers to school and they were happy to be in the same class. Spencer could often be found creating beautiful pieces of artwork. Garrett fondly remembers building with lots of blocks with Mr. Salinetto. Snack time was also a highlight for Garrett! These cousins stayed together in the Green Room where they worked on their letter journals, played on the playground, and loved the 100-day project. They finished their time at The Children's School in Kindergarten. Spencer loved cooking cornbread and potato latkes, and especially participating in the bike-a-thon. Garrett loved learning about elephants and Australia. A highlight for both was watching the chicks hatch! This time at school together helped strengthen their bond as both cousins and friends.

Meanwhile, Sage made her way through the Blue and Green Rooms. Her favorite memories are the famous Children's School playdough, painting during her Blue Room days, and circle time with Mrs. Bird's guitar in the Green Room. She loved listening to and singing all of the fun songs. Learning about "Mr. M with a Munching Mouth" was another memorable moment in the Green Room.

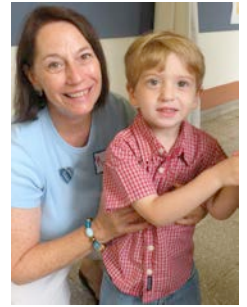


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## Dual Family Spotlight, continued ...



The tradition continues as two more cousins, **Brady** (Blue Room) and **Alexander** (Red Room), have begun their school experience this year at The Children's School. They are both enjoying singing songs, building towers, playing in the sandbox, and making new friends. It eased the transition into school for both families knowing the cousins would have each other. The legacy will continue when **Jillian** joins the Grodin Clan tradition at The Children's School.



We have been lucky to find a wonderful, nurturing school that has given our children a fabulous start in their formal education. The big kids look forward to returning to the school for family nights and open houses. All of them have eagerly come to read a book or play an instrument for the younger children. They are happy to see their teachers (almost all of them are still here!) and feel at home in the school. It's a treat to bump into old school friends around town. It was an easy choice to come here and it's been an easy choice to stay." – Submitted by Leslie Grodin Lieberman & Allison Grodin

## Physical Education Highlights

This month in gym, we started to teach BALL PLAY. Ball activities develop the skills children need to participate in most traditional team sports, such as soccer, kickball, basketball, and tee-ball. It also develops children's skills when using the parachute and scooters. The equipment is a rubber playground ball for each child. Our focus is accurate rolling, visual tracking, and fielding. Working in pairs on these activities also strengthens teamwork. For **partner rolling**, children sit facing each other about four giant steps apart with their legs in a V-position. They roll the ball back and forth to each other. The receiving partner makes a target with his or her hands so the other child tries to roll the ball straight into the partner's hands. Sometimes we try making the ball roll faster and then try making the ball travel slower. Another variation is standing and rolling to the partner's toes. We then introduce bouncing on one bounce, then two bounces, and then three bounces. The educators and children gain control and accuracy each time we practice these activities, so it would be wonderful to continue practicing them at home with other family members. Below are some other skill-building activities to try with balls:

- **Wall Roll** is done standing about four giant steps from a wall. Roll the ball with your favorite hand, and then field it with two hands. Roll the ball with the other hand, and field it.
- **Two-Handed Toss and Catch** is tossing to yourself and catch it using two hands. We encourage friends to keep their eyes on the ball and let it drop into cupped hands, with fingers relaxed, and **then** to pull the ball in towards the chest. Variations include – catching the ball above and below the waist, and walking increasingly fast while tossing and catching the ball.
- **Two-Handed Underhand Throw and Overhand Throw Techniques** teach accurate tossing, visual tracking, and lots of cooperation.

My plan as we move into February is to teach passing and catching games and then lead into a game children love at this age - One-On-One Kickball. Be sure to dress for playing ball!

Submitted by Ms. McMichael



## Family Spotlight: City Boy, Country Boy



Although Noah Hritz (PM 4's) was a "newbee" this year, he wasn't a stranger. Noah's dad Ricky was a Pittsburgh Public School SOS student at The Children's School when Noah was born, and the proud papa delighted in showing off his son to the staff. Ricky is now a machinist. Mom Ashley Weaver is a student and nursing assistant who will begin training to become a registered nurse in the fall.

Noah has a large family, with six grand and great-grandparents, eight aunts and uncles, and cousins by the dozens (literally). He is half "country boy" and half "city boy" as he splits time between Ashley's family in the Belle Vernon area and Ricky's family in the City of Pittsburgh. Grandma Kathy "TaTa" Weaver and Grandparents Ann Kelton and Jeff Hritz consider themselves truly fortunate to be involved with Noah on a day-to-day basis. Last but not least, Noah loves his dogs Moose and Reco, as well as TaTa's six cats.



In the last year, Noah has learned to ice skate, ride a bike without training wheels, swim and ride horseback. He enjoys books (current favorites: "Not Last Night But The Night Before" and "Which Would You Rather Be?"), "Uno" and "Memory" card games, and playing or watching any kind of sport. He just began learning to play hockey and dreams of becoming as good as his hero, Sidney Crosby. Noah comes by this naturally, as he was born several hours after his parents attended a Pens game!



Noah loves going to The Children's School. He has soaked up knowledge like a little sponge, but more importantly, he has become much more outgoing and receptive to new experiences. He has developed a positive attitude towards learning that we think will be a great benefit to him in later life. And, though it's been tough, his family has finally gotten over their "separation anxiety." Kindergarten, here we come!



## March Web Artists

**3's Friends:** Maya D.W., Felix G., Shaylee G., Leila P., and Rohan P.

**4's Friends:** Mintaek C., Roland C., Perry D., Neve G., and Younghoon K.

**Kindergarten Friends:** Caroline B., Delia B., and Julia G.



## Family Spotlight: Full Circle

When my family (Katie, Vince and Harrison Salvi) moved from New York City to Pittsburgh in 2008, we happily took the opportunity to call this city home for the 2nd time. Vince was born and raised here, and I (Katie) received my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Carnegie Mellon.

As an undergrad, occasionally I would notice the students from the Children's School playing with their friends outside or enjoying a walk through campus with their teachers. They always looked so engaged and full of spirit, even if it was cold and rainy. This vibrancy lifted me as I walked to and from my classes, and I dared to dream that one day my child would attend this school. Fate or not, fast-forward 13 years later, and we found ourselves enrolling Harrison in the 3-year-old program. Harrison is now in Kindergarten and the almost 3 years spent at the Children's School have been nothing short of wonderful. The friendships we've built as a family will be life-long, and we are so grateful to the teachers and staff for their devotion, guidance, sense of humor, and heart. It's made coming back to Pittsburgh to raise Harrison really feel like the best decision for us.



In the past year, we moved from a loft in the Strip District to Wexford, and Harrison is delighted to have an actual door on his room! After living in apartments the whole of our adult lives, Vince and I love having a house and yard. In addition to adoring school, his friends, and anything with 4 wheels, Harrison enjoys playing ice hockey, swimming, learning to golf, and acting. He ventures enthusiastically into the woods behind our house to see what he might discover, and he has quite a vivid imagination.

Vince is a Vice President at BNY Mellon, and in his free time is an amateur photographer. A native of Churchill, his mom, step-dad, brother and his family live here in the city. A year or so after we moved to Pittsburgh, my parents also decided to leave NY; they now live a mile down the road from us. We are fortunate in that Harrison has so many family members to have a

hand in his early years. From art and music to math, science and sports, they each have their own unique talents or areas of expertise that they happily share with him.

After years of working in the New York art world - at Sotheby's, Christie's, and for the Curator of the Estee Lauder Companies, Inc., I am a freelance writer, marketing consultant, and a painter at heart. As a family, we love going to any art auction we can find, and even Harrison is honing his bidding skills! In September, Harrison will be heading to the Falk School to embark on a new chapter in his education. We will always cherish the invaluable experience at the Children's School, and it will be bittersweet to say goodbye. It really has been much more than a school to my family-- it was where we began our journey together. We are so glad to have returned to come full circle.

