Family Spotlight: Making Pittsburgh Home

It has been a little over a year since our family made the decision to leave our home in Graham, North Carolina, to take on a new city – Pittsburgh. It was a tough decision, as our son, Elias, was getting ready to start preschool. So the first week we were in Pennsylvania, we decided to check some of the schools that we began researching a month before. When we visited the Children’s School, we knew that we were in the right place. Plus, Elias told us that “this is going to be my new school, yay!” And, the rest is history. The three-year-old program was fantastic! After a couple of weeks, Elias would run around the house dropping everything, just to explain to us how gravity worked! We are now in our second year at the Children’s School, and it is still the best choice for us.

It seems as if it took us no time to adjust to our new state. We quickly became regular attendees of the Pittsburgh Zoo, the Carnegie Science Center, and the Museum of Natural History. However, the biggest thrill for our entire family has been major league baseball. Elias has become such a Pirates enthusiast that he has even named one of his stuffed animals Elias Andrew McCutchen Garrett Jones. Elias loves that he and Garrett have the same last name.

The greatest challenge of moving has been adjusting to the weather. We were here to witness the worst winter on record, with massive amounts of snow. However, once we were able to dig out our car, it was pretty cool! We still miss our friends and family down South, but the most rewarding part of this journey is seeing our son grow into an independent little boy who continues to thrive in a new community and make “best buddies” at the Children’s School.

Marlon, Keava & Elias Jones

Winter Health Pointers

**WINTER WEAR:** As the chilly winter weather approaches, please replenish your child’s extra clothes bag with apparel appropriate for the season, as well as clothes to accommodate their physical growth.

Layering your child’s clothing for school days is helpful. While the temperature in our building is fairly constant and comfortable, some children may feel too warm or too cold on any given day. Wearing a t-shirt under a sweater allows the child to adjust to a personal level of comfort.

Even in the winter, we go outside daily except in very extreme weather conditions. Please send labeled hats and mittens to school **every day**. On snowy days, please also send labeled snow pants and boots. Feel free to provide a set of outdoor clothes to be kept in your child’s locker.

**PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHOOL DAY:** Our school day is filled with active and interesting projects that are planned in advance to ensure appropriate adult supervision. To that end, we ask that children come to school only if they can fully participate in the day’s activities, including outdoor play and gym. If your child is not well enough to fully take part in the day, please keep the child at home because we do not have staff members available to supervise children indoors while the rest of the class is outdoors or at gym.
Family Social Organization (FSO) Play Date

The Family Social Organization organized some activities for the days off of school this semester. While the teachers were prepping for conferences in October, we had a chilly but fun visit to Reilly's Farm. About 20 families braved the cold to have a hayride, pick pumpkins, wander through a corn maze, and feed some farm animals. We also took advantage of gorgeous weather and a day off of school for teacher conferences in November to have a second playdate at Bartlett Park.

We are taking a break from activities for the rest of 2010, while everyone is busy with holiday activities. We have some fun things planned for the doldrums of winter, including an afternoon of music, a pajama party, and an indoor playdate.

Please contact Beth Lott at elisabeth.lott@gmail.com or 412-243-2626 with any questions.
A Veteran’s Day Visitor from the Army

Todd Schultz (father of kindergartner Ashley and preschooler Hunter) talked with the kindergarten friends on Veteran’s Day about his experience in the Army. He said, “I really had a great time visiting with the Kindergarten class on Veteran's Day! I am currently active duty Army, attending graduate school at CMU. Once I graduate in May, my family and I will leave Pittsburgh for West Point, NY, where I will teach Economics. I was so happy to get the opportunity to speak to the Kindergarten class. What a lively bunch they are! I was surprised to see how much they knew about a helicopter and how it worked. In addition to the helicopter, I was unsure of what else to talk about. Ashley gave me the clue to bring other props that her friends would enjoy seeing or using. It was fun to see the excitement when it came time to try the gear, such as the poncho, the goggles, and, of course, the glow sticks. All the friends were eager to share their stories about the toys they had at their houses, and it turned into a lively discussion to say the least. Lastly, I thank the kindergarten team for hosting me and the children for the thank you notes. They will be a keepsake for years to come.”

Building Basics

“At one time used to transport prisoners from the Allegheny County Courthouse to the Jail, the Bridge of Sighs mimics the original in Venice, Italy. The distinctive Bridge of Sighs is just one of many architectural highlights of the building which Henry Hobson Richardson considers his best work, the Allegheny County Courthouse & Jail in downtown Pittsburgh. The Bridge of Sighs is one of 720 bridges within Pittsburgh city limits, and one of more than 1,700 bridges criss-crossing Allegheny County. Pittsburgh has more bridges than any city in the world except for Venice, Italy.” In preparation for our Building Unit, take a family tour of Pittsburgh bridges, noticing their materials, the shapes & patterns in their structures, etc. (Excerpt quoted from http://pittsburgh.about.com/od/pictures/ig/architecture/bridge_of_sighs.htm.)