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.