Family Spotlight: Everything Our Kids Need to Know, They Learned at the Children’s School

The Paris Family! Rob and I (Julie), both native Pittsburghers, met at a local bar after both living in different places in the US and around the world. Rob is a Systems Engineering Manager for Cisco Systems, and I’m a stay-at-home mom to our two boys. After getting married in 2006, we welcomed our bright and sociable son Ari into the world in 2008. His curious and imaginative brother Judah came soon after in 2010, and our lives in Squirrel Hill were filled with trips to parks, museums, libraries, and everything that Pittsburgh has to offer. I knew from the time I was pregnant that I wanted to send my children to the Children’s School, after hearing the most wonderful things about it from friends who went 30 years ago and current parents. Ari spent his first year in the 4’s with Mrs. Solomon, and was in the Kindergarten with Mrs. Armbruster, Mrs. Perovich, and Mrs. Blizman. Judah had Ms. Stevens in the Blue Room, and has spent this year in Mrs. Bird’s group.

Every single day, we’ve been blown away by what our children learn at school. The thematic learning, the hands-on approach to education, the wonderful and nurturing teachers, the attentive administration, and the innovative approach to teaching are just a few of the reasons we love the Children’s School. Ari graduated with a deep love of math, an encyclopedic knowledge of birds, a strong understanding of Ancient Greece and Native Americans, and many great friends. Judah has developed a passion for building, woodworking, reading, dancing, and using his imagination. He has absolutely loved learning about water, our home city, maps, and so much more. While my kids are complete opposites when it comes to their personalities, they have both been developing their passions and interests with the help of their supportive and loving teachers. I am grateful to be part of a school that is continuously trying to improve its teaching techniques, creative innovative educational opportunities, and sharing everything our children are learning with us every single day. Most importantly, our boys have been so happy going to school, and we feel good about our decision to send them to a truly unique school. At every elementary school we visited, the Admissions Directors told us the same thing: "We LOVE Children's School kids!" Ari started elementary school with a strong foundation for learning and a love of school, and I credit the Children's School for instilling this in him. Judah shares the same love and passion for learning and is constantly teaching me new things that’s he's learned thanks to his preschool experience.

I was asked to co-chair the FSO in Fall 2013 and have had a wonderful 2 years with Amee Chaudry planning events for families to extend our connections beyond the school. This role has allowed me to get to know many of the wonderful families and given my children a chance to have play dates at fun places. I’ve loved the programs, especially Reilly's Farm, Morning at the Movies, a worm class at Phipps, The Heinz History Center (where children who participated knew almost as much about Pittsburgh as the curator!), the First Tee Golf practice, and so much more. Special thanks to Amee, Mrs. Rosenblum, Miss Hancock, Dr. Carver, and Ms. Drash for making this volunteer opportunity so fulfilling and enjoyable. We are going to miss the Children's School as both our kids start at the Environmental Charter School (ECS) in the Fall, but we know that the friends we've made and relationships we’ve developed will continue to grow.
Family Spotlight: Nomads with ‘Burgh Roots

The Chaudrys - Adil, Amee, Kabir, and Sahil - think of ourselves as "the nomads who found our roots in the 'burgh". Adil is a native Pittsburgher, and Amee grew up in the suburbs of Boston without ever thinking she would leave Bean Town! After getting married in 2004, we moved all over the country from Boston to Rochester to New York City to Los Angeles before finally settling in Pittsburgh. Adil is a radiologist in private practice with his dad at the Mon-Valley hospital, and Amee is a biomedical engineer who worked in technology commercialization until about 5 years ago.

When we moved to Pittsburgh in 2009, our son Kabir was almost 3 years old. At the time, we did not know anything about preschools. The Children’s School is very well known in the Pittsburgh area, and most parents have put their children on its waitlist as newborns. We did not know any of this, so we used the following criteria when we enrolled Kabir: 1) The Children's School is part of CMU, 2) it meets our logistical needs because the school timing matches Amee’s class times at Pitt, and 3) Kabir would qualify for the 3’s program because they have a December 31st cutoff.

Boy, were we in for a pleasant surprise! From day one, the nurturing and intellectually stimulating environment that the Children’s School fosters blew us away. As the year progressed, we saw our curious and sweet “baby”, Kabir, blossom into an assertive, strong boy. In 2010, we welcomed Sahil into our lives and had no question where one day he would attend school.

Kabir and Sahil could not be more different from one another in terms of their personalities. Yet, we have seen how the Children’s School educators have enhanced their best traits and taught them how to manage conflicts in a mature, calm manner. As all parents, we try to instill values of "do the right thing", “use your words”, and “be a kind friend". It is a blessing to know that they are getting the same affirmation throughout the day at the Children’s School.

We grew up watching Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood. I (Amee) always wished that I had Mr. Rogers as my teacher in “real life”, and I wished that I could do all the cool activities that the characters did in the “land of make believe”. My children actually have teachers like Mr. Rogers and actually do all those cool activities everyday at the Children’s School. To me, that is a dream come true.

When asked to co-chair the FSO with Julie two years ago, I was excited and honored to take a more active role in the Children’s School. FSO has allowed me to get to know many wonderful families, develop lasting friendships, and participate in many fun activities.

Saying goodbye to the Children’s School is bittersweet. We are truly going to miss this special place and the wonderful people that make it special. Every teacher and administrator at the Children’s School has touched our hearts, and we are truly thankful to the entire team.