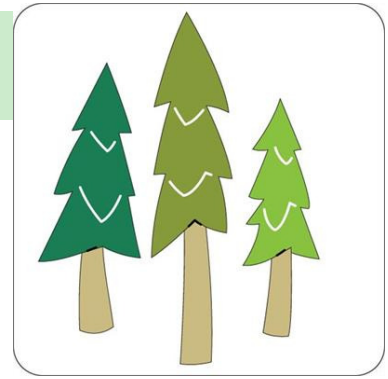


Year-End-Review Newsletter

December 09/January 2010

Welcome to our first annual year-end newsletter, where we look back on the past year at ChildRoots. While there have been more changes and achievements than can reasonably fit here, we'd like to highlight some of our favorite things about 2009.



1. Enhancing the Arts & Sciences

In order to enhance our commitment to the arts and sciences, we have created two new positions: *Science Specialist* and *Music and Movement Coordinator*. This summer, teacher Beth Thompson was appointed to serve in this dual role, providing in-depth exploration of science, music and movement to all rooms. From infants to preschoolers, Beth's self-proclaimed mission is to "support our community's inquisitive and expressive development."

In practice, this means that Beth spends time in each preschool classroom introducing an experiment or concept by asking questions, exploring ideas, and discussing results. As often as possible, experiments are designed to parallel current group interests and learning topics. Beth often adapts or changes her learning plan in order to harness the discoveries and shifting interests unearthed in each three-day session.

In the Infant and Toddler rooms, Beth's key role is to support the sensory process. She does this by delivering sensory bins each week, modeling sensory play, introducing new materials, and regularly checking in with teachers to ensure that sensory exploration is consistently being offered.

Additionally, Beth visits each room once or twice a week to encourage a combination of big movement, breathing and yoga. As a certified Alexander Technique instructor, Beth is versed in the art of training people to develop and harness their physical awareness. Her goal at ChildRoots is to help children build their "physical vocabulary," ultimately stringing movements together as another venue for storytelling. In the infant rooms, she provides teachers with training in infant message.

2. New Website

Our new Website is easy to navigate, beautifully designed, and includes additional resources such as easily downloadable forms and a link to our blog.

3. 26 Graduates

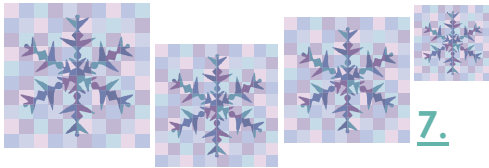
On August 28th, we ceremoniously said goodbye to 26 five year olds who left us for kindergarten. This was a beautiful and busy event with a record number of graduates participating.

4. Fresh Menu

Our Chef Joseph has been working diligently to create healthy menus for our children while partnering with local farmers. His use of fresh, local and organic fruits and vegetables has introduced us all to: kohlrabi, delicate squash, sweet meat squash and pink pearl apples, just to name a few. Additionally, Joseph's blog readers have learned how to make tofu, mung beans, and cut pineapple "so your kids will eat them!"

5. New Director

Believe it or not, Cory has not always been here at Child-Roots. In fact, December 1st marks her 1 year anniversary as our Director!



6. Community Events

Each year our community grows, and with it our events. We've just finished vacuuming up the glitter from last week's WinterFare—a magical event that is sure to become an annual tradition. 2009 brought some new twists to favorite events: Lantern Walk featured fire dancers and the Drum March coincided with a dance rehearsal! Many of us were distracted by the dancing umbrellas!

7. No Snow Days

We'd like to take this opportunity to pat ourselves on the back in recognition of the fact that we did not close for a single "inclement weather day" last year. As you may remember, Portland was blessed with at least 4 days of show stopping snow. But we had a handful of brave teachers who made it safely to work each day, allowing us to be open. Our general inclement weather policy is to remain open as long as our teachers can get to and from work safely. Since the majority of our teachers live within safe walking or bussing distance, we almost always can accommodate anyone who plans to come in. If you are worried about space on a particularly slippery or snowy day, just call our general line. 503-235-1151 The voicemail is updated regularly.

9. P.C.C.

The Parent Collaboration Committee was founded at the beginning of the year. The committee was formed to allow for regular, more personal feedback from each classroom on a monthly basis.

Because this school is too big to be small and too small to be corporate, the PCC allows parent representatives to provide the administration with feedback, express concerns, ask questions regarding developmental stages, etc. The PCC meets on the first Monday of each month to discuss the previous month's agenda and set the agenda for the following month. Between meetings, PCC Reps submit meeting notes to their fellow room parents for additional feedback and questions. Do you know who your class Rep. is?



8. Three new specialists

Last Winter, ChildRoots introduced a new management position: *Specialist*. There is a *Specialist* for each age group. While teachers Brooke, Katie, and Mary paved the way in this position, our current Specialists are Beverly (preschool specialist), Robert (toddler specialist) and Karen (infant specialist). These individuals not only provide teachers with their daily breaks, but also provide overall support to the CR community. They meet with teachers and sometimes parents to problem-solve classroom challenges. They enhance learning opportunities, adjust room environments and daily rhythms—their hats are many! This position has truly enhanced the quality and quantity of communication and support networks within our center.

10. Resource Librarian

Isaac, our resource librarian, provides every classroom with new books and old favorites, weekly. He discusses current room interests with teachers and provides them with appropriate books—fiction and non-fiction, developmental resources and books of experiments. Isaac's position is a great resource for our teachers—it has freed up a great deal of their time, allowing for more in depth exploration of learning topics. Because they already have the books, they are able to spend their own planning time to document and scaffolding learning.

Tell me about your day...

We know that the cohesiveness of the ChildRoots community relies heavily on our system of communication. Here is a brief refresher on the principal ways that your teachers communicate with you. These various systems of communication are intended to provide you with a better understanding of your child's time at school on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

Dossier- This is the “daily log” form, which you will find in every infant and toddler classroom. Teachers use these forms to record diaper changes, what children are eating, and sleeping habits. These forms are intended for parents to take home at the end of each day so that you are aware of changing patterns, likes and dislikes, etc. The top, grey portion of the dossier is where parents are able to provide information to teachers regarding the child's time at home—last meal, sleep habits, etc.

Preschool Incident Reports— This form, currently making its debut in the preschool rooms, is used to document accidents, injuries, and other pertinent information regarding your child's day. This form is completed by teachers, and left for parents at pick up, on a case by case basis. Teachers use this form to communicate any significant event that may need more detailed explanation than the brief exchange that pickup time generally affords. Similar to the infant/toddler dossiers, there is a grey area on the form which parents can also use to share information regarding your child's time at home: concerns, observations, etc. Your teacher can then respond using the form you've started.

Observations- These are personal notes specifically about your child. They are sometimes focused on developmental steps, sometimes recordings of conversations, and sometimes just a descriptive “snapshot” of a moment in your child's day.

The Black Book— This shares stories about the overall happenings in the classrooms. Rooms may use this forum to document books that the class is reading, topics of interest, songs the classroom enjoys, and other fun, anecdotal tidbits.

Room Newsletters- Each classroom sends out a monthly newsletter. These usually contain a more in depth or cohesive glimpse of the room's current climate—similar to the black book entries. There are also often reminders and requests, or more information on changes in the room—example: “this is how we brush our teeth...”

The Classroom Board- Each classroom has a cork board which they use to display notices and documents. This is where you'll always find a copy of the weekly menu, information on health alerts, and other pertinent information.

CR Newsletter– You're reading it now! It comes to you via email the first week of each month. The newsletter highlights center-wide news.

Joseph's Blog

A really great way to hear more about that great food Joseph has made us. Get recipes, cutting tips for fruits, and tips for veggie preparation. Joseph shares with us details about the farmers he has met and other valuable information.

The CR Blog

The ChildRoots Blog is full of updates, stories of classroom stuff, upcoming community events and reminders. Parents are also encouraged to submit stories that can be posted to the blog.

And of course there's always EMAIL...

We always strive to keep you abreast of staffing changes or changes in policy as they happen. This is why you periodically receive those group emails regarding changes in your room. These emails are always intended as a bouncing-off point—the best way to get new information to the most people in the shortest time possible.

We are always happy to follow up with group or private meetings regarding any questions or concerns.

*Please make sure that the emails you have listed in your child's file, are the emails you check most often...adding ChildRootsnews@gmail.com to your contact list, helps to keep our emails from being blocked by span guards!

More Spanish!

Parent/Child Spanish Language in Play for children 2-5 yrs old. 6:00 PM Wednesdays, 5:15-6:00 PM, Jan 13-Feb 17, \$88.00. If you are interested in signing up for this next Spanish series please contact Kara at Portland Early Learning Project www.portlandandearlylearning.com 503-284-0610

Preschool and Sleep

We have started something new for our preschool nap times. Instead of sleeping in their home room, we have divided children into napping groups. Those who always sleep—sleep in east. Those who will sleep but need more help or comforting to do so—rest in West. And those who just don't want to sleep—are allowed to wiggle and mumble and rest quietly in South while listening to a story. This new division has created a much more supportive sleep/rest environment for everyone. Ask your child about their new sleeping arrangements, and talk to your teacher about how rest times are working here.



"Prefect Children"
Recycled stuffed animals
From Mark Willwerth, a
vendor at WinterFare

Plans for the new year

Building an outdoor classroom

We are looking into ways to expand our space by creating an outdoor classroom. Our current favorite solutions are a yurt or a teepee, either of which would provide us with a covered outdoor space for a teacher to work with a small group of children. Our goal is to use this extra space for on-going science experiments, extended sensory explorations, and other small group activities that would benefit from a designated space. As we continue to explore various fixtures for this outdoor classroom idea, we are excited to hear your thoughts or experiences with similar structures.



"Jigsaw Graphics"
Letter press and graphic design by Suzanne Hallerman, a vendor at WinterFare

Preschool Homerooms

In addition to adjusting our nap routines, bringing on additional movement and science support, we are currently looking forward to enhancing our preschool program even further with the addition of more focused, in-depth, afternoon centers. Still in the concept phase, the administration is looking for new ways to give our teachers more consistent planning time, provide students with a more structured afternoon, and still having primary care providers available for parent interactions at the most common drop off and pick up times.

Currently, one of our favorite ideas is the introduction of "ateliers" or more structured centers hosted by each classroom: baking in south, science in east, art studio, etc. Children would then select the afternoon *class* or *center* of their choice, integrating with children from the other preschool rooms. At the end of each day, children would return to their home room for an end of the day circle to share their unique experience.



Garden Boxes

We spent a long hot weekend in June putting in our garden boxes. We really enjoyed our first round of planting and even harvested lots of good stuff throughout the summer. We look forward to year round gardening for next year. Please share your summer, winter, fall, and spring ideas with us!

Community partnerships

The search for more movement space continues! Since the final sale of the neighboring parking lot has been confirmed, we will continue to look for additional out door and indoor spaces. We are actively proposing partnerships with community spaces in the neighborhoods, hoping to have a new place where friends to move big year round!

Don't forget to read the attached letter regarding 2010 tuition rates!