



The Keystone Voice

September/October 2010 — Volume Number 4, Issue Number 5



Keystone Montessori School

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Welcome to the 2010-2011 School Year at Keystone!

The first week of school got us off to a great start! As usual there were certain kinks that needed to be worked out but overall it was a satisfying beginning. The first day of school is always exciting for me—even after 30 years of “first days”: so many new families, and the pleasure of seeing all of Keystone’s teachers pulling it together to make everyone’s “first day” a happy, joyous, tear-free learning experience.

It was wonderful to see so many of you at the 3rd Annual Keystone Pool Party at the EC Commu-

nity Center on August 22. It was so amazing to walk into the EC pool area and know everyone in the pool. Our families were enjoying the water and eating hamburgers barbecued by our very own Keystone dad as well as many delectable contributed to the potluck by all of the good cooks out there. Thanks to Kelly & Michael Scribner (Avery’s parents) for organizing the whole affair!

We will be having our annual **BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHTS & PIZZA SOCIALS** in October. Please save the date so you won’t miss out. (See calendar below for dates). At the BTSN

there will be an hour to get acquainted with the other families in your child’s class and eat pizza followed by a class meeting where your child’s Head Teacher will outline the curriculum and procedures for the year. The children will have an ice cream party at this time. If you have any questions please call us or send us an email. We are looking forward to a rewarding school year. Thanks for sharing your children with us! -Linda



BABY SITTERS

This summer we had 3 high school volunteers who worked in both the Sandpiper and Blue Herons classrooms. One of them Naomi attended Keystone when she was 5! All 3 of them showed a great deal of responsibility and maturity.

If you need a babysitter you can call: 1) Naomi Wang

510-965-2896

2) Amy Hintz

510-527-6302

3) Giulia Pessano

510-593-9433

CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2010

September 6: Labor Day Holiday

September 22: Chinese Moon Festival

September 28: Earthquake Drill, 11:15

September 29: El Cerrito Fire Department 10:00

October 13: Back To School Night: Snowy Egrets, 5:00-7:00

October 20: Back To School Night: Blue Herons & Fledglings, 5:00-7:00

October 27: Back To School Night: Sandpipers, 5:00-6:30

October 29: Halloween Celebration beginning at 9:00—**Minimum Day, 7:30-12:00—Close at Noon**

November 4: Insect Discovery Museum (Snowy Egrets 9:00, Blue Herons/Fledglings 9:30)

November 5: Diwali Celebration 2:00-3:00

November 11: Parent-Teacher Conferences—School Closed (childcare during conference); (Veteran's Day)

PARENTS' CORNER

HOME FRONT FESTIVAL BY THE BAY– YMCA 10K and 5K fun run/walk Saturday October 2, 2010 9AM (Marina Bay Richmond-Bay Trail)

Get into ship-shape! Sign up for the YMCA fun run! Then walk, sail, and explore Richmond's fascinating history at the Home front Festival! Visit www.homefrontfestival.com for details.

Event Highlights:

- *All proceeds go to Hilltop YMCA youth fitness programs.
- *Beautiful Richmond Marina Bay along the scenic Bay Trail– flat course perfect for new runners and walkers. For experienced runners the course is ideal for attaining a new personal best.
- *Mountain Hardwear t-shirt, refreshments, award ceremony (gifts and medals to overall and age group winners), and post race raffle (must be present to win)
- *Home Front Festival- Stay and enjoy the festival– music, food, rides, and booths (starts at 11am).

Venue: Marina Bay-Bay Trail
Ford Assembly Plant
1414 Harbour Way South
Richmond, CA 94804



Register Now!

<http://www.onyourmarkevents.com>

Or at the Hilltop YMCA 4300 Lakeside Drive
Richmond, CA 94804

Entry: Adult \$25; 18 years and under \$20; families of 4 \$72 (18 each additional family member)
Day of Registration is \$30 per person

For additional information about the home-front run please log on to:
www.Homefrontrun.com (**the festival is free**)

Also if you would like more information about joining the YMCA and in becoming a member you may contact our very own Joy Rothberg's (Sandpiper class), father,

Jeff Rothberg is the Membership Director of the YMCA and you may reach him at 510-685-7649 or 510-222-9622.



LETTER FROM DAWN NASH HEAD TEACHER– SANDPIPERS

Welcome back! Well summer flew right by. September is here already and the Sandpipers have been really busy. The children were very excited to see each other again. Lots of smiles and hugs. We will miss the children who have moved up to Blue Herons– Shaun, Lane. The next group moved to the transitions class– Maor, Joy, Isabella and Shriman who will be missed. The good news is we are welcoming a new group– Luca Parisi, Joshua Kaminski, a very nice addition to the classroom. This month we will be studying reptiles, snakes, lizards, and geckos. And if you look in the classroom you might see children slithering through the classroom. October– leaves– fall–Halloween. -Dawn

Congratulations and Happy Birthday to . . .

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Snowy Egrets: Alice L., Avery, Madison, Ruby
Blue Herons/Fledglings: Andrew, Shriman
Sandpipers: Joshua
Staff: Linda, Sofia
Creator of "the Montessori Method of Education": Maria Montessori

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Snowy Egrets: Allie, Jeremy T., Julia, Lily
Blue Herons/Fledglings: Alex T., Daniel, Ethan Y., Nicolas
Nicolas, Robert
Sandpipers: Ezra
Staff: Dawn



LETTER FROM JACQUIE JONES—HEAD TEACHER—SNOWY EGRETS CLASS

SNOWY EGRETS – SEPTEMBER, 2010

During the first two weeks of September in the Snowy Egrets' class, we follow an "Orientation Schedule." This serves the purpose of a review for the returning students and a way for all of us to learn the rules and daily routines. It also helps the children get to know each other better as they practice the social strategies we model. One routine you can practice with your child is getting into the habit of checking her/his file folder when you come at the end of the day. You'll find your child's paper work there for you to take home.

One routine we use frequently is our handwashing procedure. It involves wetting the hands, turning off the water, and then washing with soap (one squirt) while singing the song "Mary (or a different name here) Had a Little Lamb." Hands are then dried with one paper towel. This is actually a 12-step sequence which is a pre-reading skill and helps reinforce the child's "cycle of activity." It is set up to be fun while learning how to keep healthy and conserve water and paper towels. The children are

already reminding each other how to do this if someone forgets. At home, ask your child to demonstrate how we wash hands at school.

One social skill we learn is how to follow directions given by adults who aren't the children's parents. The children learn this by observing their peers following directions as well as by visual and verbal prompts from the teachers. During circle time, "group behaviors" are learned and practiced. The ability to sit and pay attention in a group is probably the NUMBER ONE skill that any kindergarten teacher would like to see, and this skill will serve them well in all other facets of their lives as they grow and mature.

In order to facilitate this practice and make it fun, we have four new picture cards which correspond to our group behavior expectations. They depict how we (1) sit with legs criss-cross applesauce, (2) hands in lap, (3) listening ears, and (4) voice off. I'll be introducing a song to go along with this, and I'll be letting you know about other social lessons we learn as the year goes on.

We celebrated Maria Montessori's

birthday on August 31 with a birthday cake and song. The children were fascinated with the story of her life, and they were excited to recognize the book pictures of the materials she invented (red rods, pink tower, knobbed cylinders, etc.) as the very same materials we use in our class!

The children are also learning the names of all the areas of the classroom, new songs and fingerplays, the characteristics of a snowy egret bird, as well as new work in the geography, science, sensorial, and art areas. At home, you might want to help your child identify things that are living and non-living and find geometric shapes in nature or on signs (i.e., octagon stop sign, rectangle exit sign). The children are also working in small groups and individually with me for lessons using the reading and math materials, but you'll hear more about that later. I'm looking forward to seeing you at our Back to School Night on October 13.

-Jacquie Jones

LETTER FROM CARMELITA LLAMAS - CULTURAL STUDIES & BIRTHDAYS COORDINATOR

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to school! As the autumn months quickly pass us by we have a few holidays approaching. I would like to invite and recruit more participants for the upcoming holiday season. It is a chance for your child to share a little part of their world and emphasize how important cultural awareness is to the relationships around them. It is essential to bring our Keystone community together by sharing a part of our cultural traditions to bring greater understanding of one another. "Back to School Night" is coming up and I will have a sign up sheet if you would like to participate in a presentation during the school year. For example in September

the Moon festival is celebrated in China as is Independence day in Mexico. We would love to have a presentation for Dia De Los Muertos which ties in nicely with Halloween. In addition, the festival of lights Diwali is one of the celebrations we have experienced here at Keystone in October.

It would really be wonderful to coordinate and schedule more cultural holidays this season. Please let me know if you are interested. We greatly appreciate your efforts. Thank You!

No Difference

Small as a Peanut,
Big as a giant,

We're all the same size,
When we turn off the lights.

Rich as a sultan,
Poor as a mite,
We're all worth the same
When we turn out the light.

Red, black or orange,
Yellow or white,
We all look the Same
When we turn out the light.

So maybe the way
To make everything right
Is for someone to reach out
And turn off the light!

-Shel Silverstein

Announcements

"Nap Zone" 11:45-3:00: There is a very large bright orange cone inside the front door during nap time to remind parents to close the door quietly so children do not wake up.

Evening Pickup: Please leave the building once you have collected your child so staff can go home. Conversations with other parents can continue outside.

Snowy Egret Class Pickup: If children are inside the classroom, please wait at the class door for a teacher to help collect your child. If children are outside, walk through the classroom to the yard.

THANK YOU!!!

Snowy Egrets-Laundry: The Lockett's, the Mires'

Flowers: The Pena's, the Go's, the Smith's, the Lim's, the Traders, the Ta's

Food Prep: The Wong's, the Go's, the Crebbs, the Peterson's, the Smith's, the Lockett's, the Trader's, the Harrison Stubb's

Blue Herons-Laundry: The Sun's

Flowers: The Parks, the Viloria's, the Shiozaki's, the Epstein's, the Epps, the Mires'

Food Prep: the Epstein's, the Sun's, the Harrison-Stubb's, the Viloria's, the Schmitt's, the the Staib's,

The Parent's Corner: Kelly Scribner and the Scribner's- **helping out with the swimming party**

Thank you to all the parents who walked with the children to the Library and Swimming pool over the summer!!!

Ann Erickson, Cindy Chien, Emily Corwin, Evelyn Smith, Georgina Go, Jon Mires, Ken Lim, Lili Abee, Linda Peterson, Maureen Urban, Mike Scribner, Jeff Rosenfeild, Nick Peterson Sonja Castillo, Steve Hastings, Tim Moppin, Will Lockett

Thank you for writing reviews for Keystone on the following webpages:

Yelp, Google, Berkeley Parents Network

LETTER FROM JOE WEAVER-HEAD TEACHER- BLUE HERONS

Hello parents in the Blue Herons class community. Now with school well underway we can sit back and take notice of the progress the students are making. Separating has become easier and crying times have become shorter. As the children get to know the teachers and each other their anxiety lessens and they become more interested in the class.

We are seeing the beginning of changes with the children when they are making new friends that are playing the games they like. There are more bumps, bruises and falls because they are running around together more. In the classroom they are picking up the ground rules such as not running properly pushing in their chairs and basic classroom skills like cutting, gluing, rolling mats,

counting and naming objects. This age is very exciting for young children because of the many things they are learning. I would like to thank the parents who have signed up for the class by helping tasks such as bringing flowers. If you can do so please sign up on the volunteer lists by the sign in sheets in the entryway for flowers, laundry or food prep the children need for their activities.

I would like to remind everyone again that the more things that have your child's name on them, will result in fewer of their things becoming misplaced.

We are studying the solar system and the children are learning the planets' names and which would be the best to live on.

Thank you from the Blue Herons. -Joe



Communication

Keystone wants to promote and "open door" policy with families and keep open lines of communication. There are several ways we do this:

1. **Blue Books:** to write to teachers, pull out your blue child's blue book and write your note then place in the basket. We'll respond back and place the book in your mailbox. When the exchange is done please place the book back into the black box.

2. Office Hours for:

Linda, Director, 9:00-4:00 (M-Th)

Windy, Operations Manager, 3:30-4:30

Ginger, Secretary, 8:30-5:00

Jacquie, SE Head Teacher, 11:30-12:00

Joe, BH Head Teacher, 2:15-3:15

Dawn, SP Head Teacher, 1:00-2:00

3. Email Us:

info@keystonemontessori.org

KEYSTONE SNACK LIST

As of September 2010

FRUITS

GIOVANNI'S: All Organic: Apples, Oranges, Pears, Cantaloupe, Watermelon, Strawberries (seasonal)

RANCHO DEL PARAISO: Organic Asian Pears (when in season)

COSTCO: Craisins

CRACKERS

TRADER JOE'S: Organic Multigrain Crackers, Savory Thin Rice Crackers

EC Natural Grocery: Cheddar Bunnies, Whole Wheat Bunnies, Buttery Bunnies, Bunny Grahams, Organic Stoneground Wheat Crackers

COOKIES

TRADER JOE'S: Cats Ginger Cookies

DRINKS

GIOVANNI'S: Organic 2% Milk

TRADER JOE'S: Organic Apple Juice (diluted with 50% water)

VEGIES

KEYSTONE GARDEN: Tomatoes, squash, argula, cucumbers

FOOD PREP ACTIVITIES

Cheese cubes, cream cheese spread on crackers, apple slices, oranges slices and fresh squeezed orange juice, banana slices, cucumbers boats with cream cheese

RECENT FOOD PROJECTS

Something with tomatoes... and pumpkins... coming soon!



Hello's & Goodbye's

Hello to:

Our New Sandpipers:

Luca Parisi

Joshua Kaminsky

Malcolm Urban

Our New Fledglings:

Ajith Ariaza-Singh

Gavin Piersol

Juliana Ruiz

Katelyn Chan

Komal Aujla

Robert Peterson



Our New Blue Herons:

N/A

Our New Snowy Egrets:

Jeremy Tuan



Goodbye to:

Max Go who went to Madera Elementary school in El Cerrito.

Monthly Cultural & Science Themes

Sandpipers:

September: African Animals

October: Mammals

Blue Herons & Fledglings:

September: The Solar System

October: Plants, Pumpkins, Halloween

Snowy Egrets:

September: Living/NonLiving, Plants/Animals, Vertebrates/Invertebrates, The Universe, Elements, Sandpaper/Continent Globes, Continent Map, Land Forms, Peace Flower, Outdoor Environment

October: Mollusks, Insects/Spiders, More Land Forms, North America, Halloween

KEYSTONE STAFFING FOR 2010-2011

ADMINISTRATION:

Administrative Assistant: Ginger Koo
(Ginger will be answering all of your phone calls, emails, and questions regarding your tuition statements)

Operations Manager: Windy Lui
(Windy is in charge of staff scheduling and making sure Keystone children are well-supervised at all times)

Snowy Egrets Classroom:

Head Teacher: Jacquie Jones

Cultural Studies & Birthday Coordinator: Carmelita Llamas

Head Teaching Assistant: Windy Lui

Teaching Assistants:

Norma Gutierrez

Sofia Vargas

Li Chun Wong (p.m. only)

Blue Herons Classroom:

Head Teacher: Joe Weaver

Teaching Assistants:

Maria Phillipson (a.m.)

Li Chun Wong (p.m.)

Ana Prindle

Aide: Rosi Tabuanitiviti

Fledglings Classroom:

Head Teacher: Edna Herrin

Aide: Ernestina Montano

Sandpipers Classroom:

Head Teachers: Dawn Nash

Teaching Assistants:

Juana DeCupul

Eugenia Go

Aide: Ernestina Montano

Auxiliary Classes: (additional fee)

Music Teacher: Jonathan Green,

Wednesdays 9:00-11:00 am

Theater: Wednesdays 11:00-11:30

Spanish Teacher: Laura Cornell,

Thursdays 10:15-10:45 am

Mandarin Teacher: Lucy Liu,

Fridays 9:30-10:30

Yoga Teacher: Laura Cornell,

Thursdays 11:00-11:30



How to Talk with Your Child About Their Day in Keystone's Snowy Egret Class

(adapted by Jacquie from another Montessori teacher's blog)

It can be difficult to get much information from your preschooler about their day. There are a variety of reasons for this. For one, they are often so fluidly moving from activity to activity that it could literally be hard for them to recall specific things they did. Another factor is that they may be questioned about their preschool day several hours after preschool and that can also affect their memory of the specifics (how well those of us who are "older" can understand this one!!). And, of course, another factor may be that the words adults use to ask them about their day may be different from the words we use to describe things at school. So the child becomes confused by the question and is unable to offer much information.

First, at school we refer to the materials and activities mostly as "work." This is just kind of a Montessori thing. Many or

most of the materials wouldn't necessarily be called "toys", nor would the children necessarily think that they "played with" things. So if you ask them questions like, "What did you play with?" or "What toys did you play with?", you are unlikely to get much of a response. However, if you say, "What did you work with?" or "What work did you do?" or "What did you take off the shelf?", you may yield better answers.

Second, if you aren't getting a lot of specifics about the "work" your child is doing, don't give up on trying to have a conversation with them about their day. It may be that their "work time" is not standing out in their mind as the most salient or "important" part of their day. That doesn't mean they aren't learning or busy during work time. Rather, there just may be other parts of our preschool day that are more preferred by your child. If this is the case, you could ask them things like, "What songs did you sing on the line today?"

If your child loves being outdoors, you could ask them about what they did outside or who they played with. For many children, this is a highlight of their preschool day. Addition-

ally, most children will at least tell you about what they had for snack.

Also keep in mind that all children (like all of us adults) are different. Some will voluntarily share with you many details about their preschool experience and some are not as inclined to share a lot about their day. If your child falls into the latter category, don't despair. As far as I know, there is no correlation between amount of learning and amount of talking about their learning. Remember: so much of the learning that is going on within your child is just that.....within.

And for a final thought: try to think about what your own adult response would be if, at the end of a full work day, you were intensely questioned about all the details of what you did for the duration of the time you were away from the questioner. Sometimes, you'd just prefer to not talk about it. Not because it was bad, just because. You know what I mean? And, it's okay! -Jacquie Jones