



The Keystone Voice

September/October 2011 — Volume Number 5, Issue 4

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Welcome to the 2011-2012 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 4th Annual Keystone Pool Party at the EC Community Center on August 21. 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 many delectable foods contributed to the potluck by all the good cooks out there. Thanks to Karen and David (Kaylie’s Parents) for organizing the whole affair!

We will be having our annual **BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHTS & PIZZA SOCIALS** in October and November. Please save the date so you won’t miss out. (See the 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



Keystone Montessori School

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David is enjoying the delicious food from the potluck



Lane and Robert are having a good time at the party!

CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2011

September 5: Labor Day Holiday

September 12: Chinese Moon Festival

September 29: Earthquake Drill, 9:15

October 7: El Cerrito Fire Department visit @ 10:00



October 12: Back To School Night: Snowy Egrets, 5:00-7:00

October 19: Back To School Night: Blue Herons & Fledglings, 5:00-7:00

November 2: Back To School Night: Sandpipers, 5:00-6:30

October 28: Halloween Celebration beginning at 9:00- 12:00—**Minimum Day, Close at Noon**

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

November 14: Parent-Teacher Conferences—School Closed (childcare during conference); (Veteran's Day observed)



PARENTS' CORNER—by Cindy Chien

When my kids were toddlers, it wasn't hard to find classes that I could do with them, like Gymbo-ree, Music Together, or swim classes. But as they turned 4, I found that a lot of places required children to take the classes on their own.

While this can work for many kids, some kids are hesitant to participate on their own, and the activity becomes stressful, instead of enjoyable. We're mindful not to participate in anything that our children aren't ready for. But then I found out about a few classes that incorporated parent participation, and it

turned out to be a great experience for us and our children. UC Berkeley's University Village Recreation Department (in Albany) offers:

- a "Cub Soccer" class for children ages 4 to 6
- a "Biddy Baseball" class for children ages 3-5
- Gymnastics classes for children ages 9 months to 4 years old.

The coaches/teachers have been excellent, and the activities are age-appropriate and fun. The website is:

<http://services.housing.berkeley.edu/VillageRecreation>.

Hopefully, these options will work for you too.



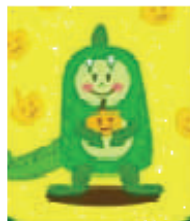
The Chien Family (Mark, Cindy, Kyle, Max) hanging out in the pool together

LETTER FROM DAWN NASH IN THE SANDPIPER ROOM

Welcome, it is always very exciting starting off the new year! We have a new class of children in the Sandpiper Room who are **very** cute. We are all getting to know each other through play. There have been a lot of phone calls from our play phone, and the children have been calling to check in with their Mommies and Daddies.

This month we are studying dinosaurs. We have looked at the Triceratops, Tyrannosaurs Rex, and Dilophosaurus. We incorporated it in our curriculum through art projects and have been doing matching work.

For October we will be getting ready for Halloween, and we will be doing lots of art projects!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Snowy Egrets: N/A

Blue Herons/Fledglings: Joshua (20th), Gianna (21st)

Sandpipers: Tara (19th), Lily S. (30th)

Staff: Linda (16th), Sofia (18th), Sheri (12th)

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Snowy Egrets: Robert (14th), Lily H. (25th), Daniel (6th), Jeremy T (1st).

Blue Herons/Fledglings: Ezra (15th), Elai (19th), Nicolas (27th)

Sandpipers: N/A



"When dealing with children there is greater need for observing than of probing" - Maria Montessori

LETTER FROM JACQUIE JONES– HEAD TEACHER– SNOWY EGRETS

SNOWY EGRETS – SEPTEMBER, 2011

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 hand washing 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 finger plays, 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 for lessons using the reading and math materials, but you'll hear more about that later.

-Jacquie Jones

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 FOR VOLUNTEERING!

Blue Herons/ Fledglings

Laundry: Kaminsky's and Parisi's

Flowers: Lopez's, Chien's, Little's, Scarcella's.

Food Prep: Chien's, Li's, Helman's/Sommavilla's

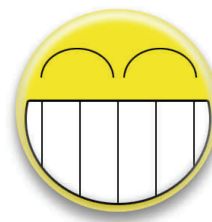
Parents' Corner: Cindy Chien

Snowy Egrets

Laundry: Vilorias's

Flowers: Chan's, Lucia's, Piersol's

Food Prep: Heinzelman's



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 class-

room 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. We have been learning the planet's names and what each one would be like to visit. The projects are: cutting out asteroid pictures, making planets for our display boards, coloring the planets names and paper maché plants. Everyone loves the planet model and the planet puzzles. I reassured the class Pluto is still there even though it isn't a planet.

Thank you from the Blue Herons.

-Joe Weaver



Communication

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

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.

Office Hours for:

Linda, Director, 9:00-4:00 (Mon-Thu)

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

Sheri, Administrative Assistant 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

Monthly Cultural & Science Themes

Sandpipers-

September: Dinosaurs

October: Halloween, Pumpkins

Blue Herons & Fledglings-

September: Getting to Know the Classroom, The Solar System

October: Plants, Pumpkins, Halloween

Snowy Egrets-

September: Living/Non-Living, Plants/Animals/Vertebrates, The Universe, Elements: Earth, Air, Water, Fire, Sandpaper & Continent Globes, Continent Map, Land Forms: Islands/Lakes, Pease Flower, Outdoor Environment: Gardens, Mexican Independence Day.

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

Keystone Snack List

As of September 2011

Fruits

Giovanni's: (organic) apples, pears, oranges, bananas (cantaloupe, watermelon, strawberries when available)

Costco: raisins

Rancho del Paraiso: Keystone's Apple Tree

Keystone's Organic Garden: peas, lettuce

Crackers

Trader Joe's: Organic Assorted Multigrain Crackers

EC Natural Grocery: Organic Annie's Bunny Crackers (cheddar, whole wheat, buttery, and honey graham), organic wheat crackers

Drinks

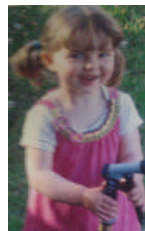
Giovanni's: organic 2% milk

Trader Joe's: organic filtered apple juice

Hello's & Goodbye's

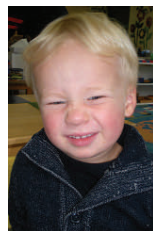
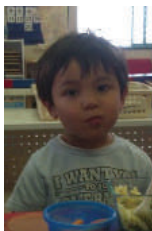
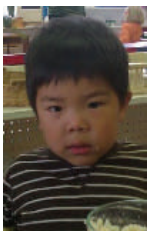
Welcome to the Keystone Family!

Sandpipers:



NAMES REMOVED FOR PARENTS DISCRETION

Blue Herons:



NAMES REMOVED FOR PARENTS DISCRETION


Fledglings:

Goodbye to:

Sandpipers: Cameron Shehabi

Snowy Egrets: Alma Hasley, Carter Kim, Christopher Sun, Cole Mires, Julia Luckett, Sofia Abee, William Hudacko

...you will be missed! Come back and visit soon!



ADMINISTRATION

Administrative Assistant: Sheri Hsu (Sheri 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

Co-Teacher: Claudia "Gaby" Chirinos

Head Teaching Assistant: Windy Lui

Teaching Assistants: Norma Gutierrez

Sofia Vargas

Li Chun Wong (p.m.)

*As most of you know Jacquie has been on medical leave due to surgery that took place the last week of August. Although she is not strong enough yet to be with the children, she is coming to organize plans for the class and has been making detailed lesson plans each week.

Fortunately we had already hired a new fully trained Montessori teacher to work with Jacquie in the classroom. Claudia "Gaby" Chirinos is certified by the American Montessori Society and has been working in the Montessori schools since 2005. "Gaby" will be the acting Head Teacher while Jacquie is on medical leave. Jacquie will come in as much as she can to orient Gaby in classroom procedures and our Operations Manager Windy Lui, who has been working with Jacquie for the past three years, will also be directing Gaby in the classroom.

Blue Herons Classroom:

Head Teacher: Joe Weaver

Teaching Assistants: Li Chun Wong (a.m.)
Ana Prindle

Aides: Rosi Tabuanitiviti

Alma Landeros

Fledglings Classroom:

Head Teacher: Edna Herrin

Aide: Ernestina Montano

Sandpipers Classroom:

Head Teachers: Dawn Nash

Teaching Assistants: Juana DeCupul

Aide: Ernestina Montano

Auxiliary Classes:(additional fee)



Music Teacher : Jonathan Green,

Wednesdays 9:00-11:00 am



Theater : Jonathan Green,

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,



Thank you for your help!

A BIG thank you to our Library Walk Volunteers: **Steve Schmitt (Javin's Dad), Karen Lin (Kaylie's Mom), Lily Abee (Sofia's Mom), and Marcy Piersol (Gavin's Mom).**

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. Additionally, 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