

Summer
2006

TCS Times

*The Children's School/ 208-343-6840
Nicole Shadduck--editor*

From the Director

By Cindy Finch

I think I may have found something pretty simple that we all have in common. I'll bet we all have a copy of the classic children's book Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown on our bookshelves. I was thinking of this book recently when I read through a Bank Street College newsletter and learned that the author attended school there in the 1930s (and if I had ever known this fact about one of my favorite children's authors, I had long forgotten it). The article inspired me to see if our family copy was around, and within minutes I had found a well-worn copy given to us by friends in February 1986—seven months before our oldest son was born as a “congratulations you're going to be parents” gift. And there it sits as one of the three dozen or so books left from our children's early childhood years, a reminder of the endearing old lady whispering hush, little fingers finding the mouse, and observations that phones don't really look like that anymore!

Shared experiences are on my mind during this time of transition at TCS. We have said goodbye to families for the summer or as they leave for the next school. We have transitioned our classrooms to be either packed up spaces to be cleaned and maintained for the next school year or into spaces to house our small but perfectly wonderful summer programs. Throughout the year we talk often about the two types of communities we foster at TCS—full school community (through the picnic, campout, the carnival, and the school newsletter to name a few) and small group community (through potlucks, root beer parties, parent education classes, and classroom specific communications, again, just to name a few). We try to put attention into both because they each contribute to the quality of the experience you have here. Later, I hope you will find that you are still in touch with some of the community you develop here—as we have experienced as a TCS alumni family—as children move through later school years and into adulthood. (Look for some alumni notes as you read this newsletter).

I have been touched by families saying goodbye recently. During our traditional root beer float parties at the end of the school year, I take the role of server. I love this sticky job because I get to talk individually, often for just a few seconds, with almost every child and every parent there. I also get to watch and listen as families say goodbye, make promises of park playdates or family dinners together over summer, and reflect on the year together.

Several of our classes developed particularly strong, school-based communities, and it was moving to see the tears flow among parents in those groups—not just because some families are leaving the school, but also because the next few months will be without the community found over the past year or because the bonds formed through their children’s shared experiences this year will be stretched among several classrooms next year as children move through the school.

In my observation of our small classroom communities within the larger school community, their strength comes from a dual focus: one looking down at children, noticing and appreciating the experiences they are having in school and one looking side to side, developing warm and caring relationships with other families. I think our community is strongest when we all keep focused on children and on adult relationships at the school. I know I will be considering these important areas of focus for community building when we welcome everyone back in the fall.

The upcoming school year (and part of the following one) is time of re-accreditation for us with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and this process will give us an opportunity to build whole school community in one other way. One of the terms used often as a guideline for preparing a school for the accreditation process is “shared understandings.” Throughout the school, among the faculty as well as families, we will be coming to a shared understanding of the newly structured standards involved in accreditation. I look forward to the challenges and the growth we will experience together as we go through this process. This upcoming year, more than ever, we will be enriched in our community by focusing on children’s experiences, relationships among families, and the development of shared understandings of high quality early childhood education principles.

Enjoy summer, dig out those Margaret Wise Brown books to enjoy again (and there are many), and we’ll be opening our doors to the community of continuing, returning, and new students—and families—soon!

Refining Our Practice

As part of our continuing growth as a school, we want to let you know of several areas of change in our practice with children and families as the new school year begins.

1) If you are a parent of a child who eats lunch at school on a regular or occasional basis, you will want to think about and prepare for our new guidelines regarding the use of peanut butter and peanut products at school. The guidelines, which will begin on August 28, 2006, address home prepared snacks for classes as well as lunches, so their impact will be felt school wide. Complete guidelines are posted in the front hall of the school and will be published in the August TCS Times.

Thank You!

To P-TCS officers, committee chairs, and volunteers who pulled off an incredible—and fun—year of fundraising activities!

To Sarah and Henry Woodley who have donated \$500 toward improved coffee service at the school. Coffee drinkers thank you!

To May workday volunteers who refilled the sandbox, organized the garage, cleaned out flower beds, and hung the shade structure.

2) Beginning August 28th, we will be asking that children wash their hands on arrival at school. Our hope is that, by adding consistent arrival handwashing, we'll take another step toward a healthier school community. We ask that parents be involved with teachers in assuring that handwashing happens on arrival.

Enrollment Notes

If you have signed a contract and paid an enrollment fee for the 2006-2007 school year, you have paid half of your September (or for toddlers, October) tuition. You'll see this fee, which we use to secure your contract, credited on your first month's tuition billing.

Each year some families prefer to pay the full year's tuition in one payment. If you make a full year tuition payment by September 10, 2006, you will receive a 3% discount. Let Andrea or Cindy know if you want to pay your full contract in September.

In our commitment to provide enrollment options for all current families, we created a one year pilot program for the 2006-2007 school year which allows kindergarten age children whose families need a full-day program to split their day between the All Day class and the 4-5-6s. We assess our program offerings annually, with the strong desire to accommodate families in classes they identify as "first choice" for their children. When that is not possible, we will always strive to accommodate children in comparable program offerings, and, when necessary, are committed to assessing class make-up with the hope of accommodating current family continued enrollment.

We have 113 of a possible maximum enrollment of 116 contracts signed for the 2006-2007 school year. Our openings are for 4 year olds in a part-day program. If you have a four year old child or know of someone with a four year old child who may be interested in the type of school experience TCS provides, please send them our way!

Family Surveys

We are pleased with the 70% return rate of the 2005-2006 family surveys! Thank you for taking the time to complete one. Responses and comments have been tallied for individual classes and as a full school. We have already considered your comments in reflecting on the past year, and we look forward to considering your comments as we plan for the future.

In general, families are pleased with these aspects of classroom experience: teacher qualifications and interactions with children and the emphasis on positive social relationships and conflict resolution. Comments about the school emphasized: school philosophy about how children learn and the warmth of the small school community.

Attention all plant lovers:

Nancy Cole, a TCS parent whom tirelessly works on our planter boxes and barrels is looking for a few good parents to assist with watering during these hot summer months.

If you can help regularly or on a one-time basis, please contact her at: 426-0384 or email nancol@earthlink.net

Thanks!

The structure of the survey this year around the goals for the school gave us more information than ever on how you see the school, think about our mission and practice, and feel about your participation here. There is much for us to consider from your responses, and we thank you for taking time to put your thoughts on paper.

*Quotes from
Preschoolers!*

*"I did it, and with a
worm in my pocket!"—
overheard when a 4
year old child went
down the firepole for the
first time.*

*"The Children's
School—it's where you
learn things that are
good."*

Full school response and comment tallies are posted on the bulletin board in the front hall.

Teaching Plan 2006-2007

Parent-Toddler

Julie Gill
Mary Griffin
Sherri Lauer (discussion facilitator)

2-3s

Julie Gill
Tonya Palsulich

3-4s

Mary Griffin
Sherri Lauer

3-4-5s

Taira Lee
Megan Jones
Lisa Wirtanen
(Megan and Lisa will
share a teaching
position.)

4-5s

Patty Head
Betsy Robinson

All Day

Lynn Hanson
Tonya Palsulich
Nicole Shaddock
(Ruthee Newland, tentative)

4-5-6s

Taira Lee
Mark Zimmermann

Extended Day Primes

Rebecca Crosswhite, morning and lunch
Mark Zimmermann, afternoon

Primes

Susan Gardner
Mary Helen May
(Rebecca Crosswhite,
student teacher)

We wish the very best to Deanna Smith as she leaves TCS to follow a stronger professional passion, to Karen Lung, as she leaves TCS to take some time away from teaching to prepare for teaching older children, and to Sarah Jenks, as she seeks a full-time job with another program. We appreciate the contributions you've each made to TCS during your time here!

Upcoming Parent Discussion Group

Carla Jensen, our consulting school counselor, has offered to facilitate a monthly Friday morning parent discussion group on “Creative Parenting Strategies.” During this one hour discussion time, she’d like to have parents share ideas and needs and explore parenting young children as an ongoing, evolving, and processing group. Carla is a valuable resource to TCS, and I hope you will take some time to get to know what she has to offer—and get to know other parents and hear their ideas at the same time! Look for more information and a start-up date in the fall of 2006.

Letter to *TCS Times*

We get lots of verbal feedback about TCS Times—but one parent took some time to write down her reaction to a recent article. I’ve reprinted Mary’s note with her permission.

Cindy, Your article in “From the Director” touched me. I am one of those parents who kept my child in a multi-age class room for two years. I could not be more pleased. James started 4-5-6s after extensive illness, isolation and hospitalization. He was physically fragile, unimmunized, undergoing speech therapy and adjusting to hearing aides. James’s physicians had prepped us to expect learning and social problems in multiple areas as is commonly exhibited in children who undergo the sort of treatment James did. Jeff and I were fearful but happy. We just wanted James with us and alive no matter what problems he had. We were concerned that he would be the youngest in his class, but frankly were very impressed and reassured by Mark who spent extensive time with us during our home visit. This year he finishes his second year of 4-5-6s as one of the oldest. During this year James had thyroid fluctuations that made him moody, short tempered and either agitated or tired. This was handled by his teachers with kindness and grace and is now resolved. He exhibits no learning or social problems. He has friendships, confidence and physical stamina. He is immunized and adjusted to wearing his hearing aides. He is reading, adding, subtracting and multiplying (in some strange way that I do not understand). But most of all, he is pleased with himself and connected to his classmates, teachers and school. Jeff and I take him to Riverstone next year with mixed emotions. James, however, is confident and excited . . . a gift from The Children’s School. I am forever grateful to his teachers and The Children’s School for their patience, kindness, understanding and skill.

Thanks, Mary, for sharing your thoughts and experience from the past two years at TCS.

We need your help!

During our end of the school year inventory taking, it has come to our attention that several books are missing from the TCS Library.

Please return any you find hiding around your home. You can drop them off in the front office or in the library! Any help you can give is much appreciated!

Alumni News

I ran into Michael Miller, TCS alum, and his mom, Cathy Silak, recently at the Flipside Café enjoying an end of school year lunch together. Michael, Bishop Kelly's 2006 valedictorian, attended the All Day class and Primes at TCS a few years ago. He is headed to Stanford this fall. He was fondly remembering the All Day nap room the day I saw him! Congratulations, Michael, and good luck at Stanford.

Mary Smith sent an email with this note: "I learned from Laura Minskoff (TCS alum) that of the selected 100 top graduating seniors from all of the high schools—6 of them were at The Children's School together!" Congratulations Laura and friends!

We were honored to hear from Catie Young, TCS alum, about her graduation from Boise High this spring. Last time I saw her with her mom in line at Albertson's she was deciding between University of Washington and Brown, I think. Congratulations, Catie.

If you have contact with TCS alumni, we are always looking for news from or about our former students. Send it our way!

Generous Giving

As the school year ends, we want to say a big thanks to those alumni, current, and future families, as well as current Board members, who contributed to the TCS Annual Fund this year. Annual Fund giving was designated as assistance to families or school programs, increased marketing, and the building fund.

We don't want to forget the generosity of the two families who gave money to purchase and install the new side-yard climber. A plaque will be posted to acknowledge their donation. This list does not include those who gave generously at the auction.

Dave and Desh Anderson
 Jim and Judith Balis
 Craig and Carolyn Beaver
 Sue Billington-Wade
 Carrick and Jacquie Brewster
 Steve Brown and Jeralyn Jones
 Maria Chavez and Allen Ireland
 Richard and Dawn Christensen
 Kirsten Coughlin
 Ann Dehner
 Peggy Doucette and Jim Henken
 Lee Dubert
 Sherry Dyer
 Brad and Teresa England
 Lisa Fernandez

*We appreciate your
 generosity! Thank you
 for all that you do,
 individually and
 collectively.*

Dick and Susan Gardner
Craig and Heather Getzloff
Dundee and Cindy Haroian
Harry and Karen Hurt
Marilyn Locander
Jock and Julie MacGregor
Mark Manweiler
Bonnie Noonan
Alain and Holly Paquette
Susan Park
Bill and Dot Rericha
Richard and Kim Rene
John and Brooke Seidl
Richard and Carole Skinner
Ken Smith and Cindy Finch
Susan Smith
Stein Distributing
Margie Stoy
Clint and Alison Tate
Dan and Catherine Todd
Dave Towner and Nancy Cole
Bruce Wixson and Judy French
Rich and Lori Wolfe
Henry and Sarah Woodley
John and Jennie Worsley
Gray and Anne Young
Karena Youtz

Please continue to let us know what you, our most recent alumni are doing! We look forward to reports and updates!

The Children's School

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We're on the Web!
See us at:
www.tcsboise.org

Continuing and New to TCS Families:

We are trying something new this year! Let us know what you think. Please fill out the attached forms. You can mail them to the office, attn: Andrea Laird or give them to your classroom teacher at your child's home visit. The school also needs a current copy of your child's immunization record. There will be a potluck schedule for our first of the school year events available in August! Please contact the school if you need additional information. We are looking forward to another great year with all of you!