

November 2007

# *TCS Times*

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

## **From the Director**

By Cindy Finch

*The following article is excerpted from the State of the School report Cindy Finch made to the Board of Directors October 8, 2007.*

The past year has been a strong one for the school and it shows in every aspect of our operation: expertise and stability of our teachers; the energy and commitment of our volunteers; our strong fiscal standing as a non-profit business; our relationship with the community; and, most importantly, in the quality of children's experiences in our classrooms.

I feel fortunate for my long relationship with TCS as parent, teacher, and now as director. I'm pretty sure I have the best job in town, and I'm feeling thankful for that tonight. I want to structure my annual remarks by expressing appreciation for all the parts that come together to make TCS a strong community.

I want to start by thanking volunteers. Those of us who earn money for our work on behalf of the school's goals have a reason for showing up each morning. But what really amazes me is the extraordinary efforts of people who care so much about the well-being of the school as an institution, the continuity of the philosophy, and the opportunities that are available to children in our classrooms that they take on huge projects, work at 2 a.m., and show up at an overwhelming number of meetings. It shows a tremendous amount of caring and commitment, and the efforts of parents and community volunteers—Parents for TCS and the Board of Directors, specifically—are deeply appreciated. I think it is understood that the results of all the work you do will not necessarily directly impact you or your children or will happen so slowly that you will not get the satisfaction of getting to see projects through to completion. But it speaks to the strength of our community that so many people are willing to work so hard on wide-ranging and diverse projects to make great things happen.

I want to thank Andrea for all she does for the school. We are all under increasing pressure to learn new technologies and do things in new ways—and this past year has been intense for all of us with accreditation. We all face pressure to work differently around technology, communication, knowing and responding to professional guidelines—and much of this has fallen to

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Thanks to...

*\*All of the Fall Work  
Day volunteers!  
We all benefit from  
your hard work.*

*\*The recycling help  
and expertise--  
Stephanie W., Phil  
A., Ted M., Valerie  
R., and Karen F.!*  
*You may have  
noticed the new  
green dumpster in  
the alley and blue  
bins in the school  
building, We are  
working on  
developing  
processes to  
include children in  
this 'world-wise'  
effort.*

Andrea. While Andrea manages the details and records of a busy school office with accuracy and humor, adjusting to constantly evolving demands can make anyone question whether they are doing anything right. The truth is, for Andrea, a strong yes. Andrea's welcoming presence to the school—the first phone call, the first visit, the memory of past conversations, the instant identification and understanding of all everyone who walks through our doors—combines well with her ability and willingness to take on the new challenges that face us as a school. I want to make sure that she is recognized for ALL the valuable work she does for the school.

I also want to thank Marilyn Locander for her work on the board for the past four years. She brought a new skill set and an understanding of the development world that many of us did not have previously. I think that the school will be well served in future years by Marilyn's time on the board, and I want to make sure that she knows that as her time of service ends tonight.

I am thankful every minute of every day for our teachers. Many other programs in Boise and around the country struggle with teacher qualifications and turnover and the consequences for children when these issues of program continuity and quality are not in place. We have an educated, mature, and experienced faculty who are committed to teaching young children. A few stats on our 17 teachers help tell the story:

\*All but two teachers returned to classrooms this fall. The two who left did so to accept full-time positions when we had only part-time to offer at their decision point with other schools.

\*Two teachers returned to the school after a few years away to facilitate and teach in the parent-toddler program.

\*Three teachers attended the NAEYC conference in Atlanta in November of 2006.

\*Five teachers attended classes at BSU as part of their continuing professional development.

\*Two-thirds of our teachers work full time and receive full benefits. Our benefits include a new dental insurance plan in combination with our medical plan, as well as options such as health reimbursement accounts and voluntary insurance programs.

Teachers have shown tremendous commitment over the past year as we've prepared for accreditation renewal under a system that has quadrupled the number of criteria and increased the specificity and complexity of meeting standards for programs all over the country. We have revamped and redefined our processes for and our understanding of assessment, mentoring, special needs, supervision, confidentiality, emergency preparations, documentation, and knowing and understanding families. We've taken a close look at curriculum, our parent handbook, our teacher handbook—pretty much every part of our practice and the ways we document our work has had scrutiny over the past year. At this time we await our on-site visit to culminate our work with the knowledge that our efforts will make us stronger.

I am thankful for our ability to provide tuition assistance for families who need

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help in affording tuition payments. Over the past year we have been able to award \$19000 for seven children to enroll in classes. This commitment to tuition assistance remains an important aspect of who we are as a school community.

I am thankful for the creativity of parents in communicating with me about what they want for their children within the realities of our program philosophy, availability of teachers, and facility. I am thinking specifically of our summer program where we were able to offer more part-time options; the lunch program for preschoolers; and, our new recycling program. Each of these situations has been approached and problem solved in a reasonable and thoughtful way.

I am thankful for the continuing lifespan of the Children and Conflict video and written materials. After proposing two workshops at national conferences, having them accepted, receiving an order for 100 to be sold through the NAEYC (bringing the total sold to NAEYC for marketing to about 550-600!), and offering a popular parent education series at the school over the past year—these ideas are absolutely alive and well! Not bad for an almost 8 year old grant funded set of materials!

Finally, I am thankful for the experiences children have at TCS. From my perspective of knowing children and families who have moved on and what the experiences and relationships still mean for them, I know this foundation makes an important difference in the lives of children and their families. Most importantly, though, from my perspective today of supporting teachers as they work alongside children to create meaningful curriculum experiences, our classrooms are full of young children trying, including, discussing, solving, making, thinking, perceiving, relying—I know the opportunities for growth and development are abundant. And that's a lot to be thankful for during this or any season of the year.

## 3-4-5s News

By Lisa Wirtanen

We are busy and have settled in to our routines and play. Everyone is making new friendships and discoveries. The other day K., N. and R. discovered ICE in the sandbox! All of the children came over to look. We looked at it, felt it and collected it. Next, we predicted what would happen if we brought it inside. This is what the 345's said about our ICE discovery.

*How did you feel inside yourself when you discovered the ice?*

K. felt excited. R. felt awesome. N. felt like it was 'swweet'. S. felt like it was perfect.

*Tell me about what we did once you discovered the ice.* R. said "we looked at the ice". L. said "the ice was frozen, then we brought it inside and it turned into mud". K. said "the ice had a little sand on it". F. said, "we all had a piece of ice and we felt the ice". N. said "we put the ice in a bucket". O.

Photo removed to protect children's privacy.

"Excited, awesome, sweet and perfect."  
—3-4-5s. Talking about ice.

said, “the ice was dripping and it turned into mud”. S. said, “the ice felt cold”. N. said, “the ice was freezing”! R. said “it felt like snow and winter if you had a short sleeve on”. K. said “me and my dad were on ice one time and we fell into the water and it was SUPER COLD”!

Photo removed to protect children’s privacy.

Lucas—Describing melting ice.

Science is all around us! As children make “their own” discoveries, science is more meaningful to them. Children are supported in their thinking and learning as we consider questions about their real life experiences and the wonderment of the world. The ice was discovered...we looked, felt, tasted in some cases, we listened to it break, we watched as it melted and observed one way that mud can be made. In many play situations, children are able to make discoveries and put ideas together themselves, and with guidance from an adult. Play is the natural way that children learn, and this is one basic reason we value play over direct instruction at TCS. As you play with your children, observe their discoveries and continue to support them in their thinking and learning.

## Thanksgiving: The TCS Way

By Andrea Laird

The Holiday Season has arrived! TCS celebrates Thanksgiving with a series of feasts. The day before Thanksgiving we have our traditional “Feast”. We serve roasted turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, corn, pumpkin pie with whipped cream, etc. The 2-3s celebrate in their own way in their classroom. The 3-4-5s and All Days have their Feast in the All Day room with the 3-4s attending for dessert and singing. The 4-5s, 4-5-6s and Primes gather in the Primes room for their Feast. We have traditional songs that we sing (you’ve probably heard some of them at home). Cindy goes to each class in the days before the Feast and sings these special songs with the children. Each class prepares part of the meal to share with the other classes. A fresh turkey is bought on Monday so that children can see it before we cook it: potatoes are peeled, pies baked and stuffing made by children. This is one of the few times that staff and children gather as a group. It often remains as one of the best memories of TCS for children. Ask your child to sing, “I heard Mr. Turkey Say”. It’s a classic (at least at TCS)!

## TCS Board of Directors Biographies

### Susan Smith—President

Susan’s present affiliations include the Idaho Women’s Charitable Foundation, Boise Y Swim Meet Director and West Family YMCA Advisory Committee. Her past board affiliations include the Beaux Arts Society, Junior League of Boise and Boise High Brave Parent Board. Susan is the mother of four children, two of who attended The Children’s School.

**Susan Park—Vice President**

Susan is pleased to be a member of the Board of Directors of TCS after spending seven years as a parent of two happy TCS students. Susan grew up in Boise, graduating from Boise High School in 1980. She earned a BA in English from the University of Colorado and a J.D. from the University of Idaho College of Law. Currently she teaches Legal Studies courses at Boise State University. Susan spends most of her time having fun with her boys. She loves her family and friends, movies and books, travel and skiing, food and wine, and Boise and Payette Lake.

**Clint Tate—Treasurer**

Clint is a lifelong resident of Boise. He has been Vice President of Tates Rents, Inc. He received his B.A. from University of Puget Sound and his M.B.A. from Babson College. Clint also sits on the Boise City Arts Commission and serves as their treasurer. He has previous experience as a board member for a number of other local non-profit entities. Clint and his wife Alison have two children, a boy and a girl.

**Dawn Christensen—Secretary**

Dawn has lived in Boise for 13 years with her husband and 2 children, both TCS alumni. Interestingly she learned about The Children's School while still living in Seattle. She visited the school upon arrival to Boise and knew it was the right place for her family. Professionally she works at St Alphonsus Medical Center as a Physical Therapist. She enjoys the great outdoors and reading.

**Bonnie Noonan—Board Member**

Bonnie has been involved with The Children's School in a variety of ways during the 18 years she has lived in Boise. Most importantly her daughter was in the All Days for two years and the Primes for two years. "TCS was our second home during that time," said Bonnie. She enjoys looks serving on the Board and contributing to the school in as many ways as she can.

**Janet Parsons—Board Member**

Janet Parsons is an alumni parent of The Children School. Janet received her BS in Computer Engineering from Michigan State University and MBA courses at Xavier University in Cincinnati. She worked for Fortune 500 companies including Ford, GM, and Proctor & Gamble as a computer consultant in her home state of Michigan and then in Ohio. After arriving in Boise in 1997, Janet stayed home mothering her 2 active boys. During that time she was a committed volunteer with the Boise Mom's Club and TCS Parent Board. Janet spent two years as the Business Manager for Foothills School of Arts & Sciences and is currently a real estate consultant with Windermere, Capital Group. Janet and her husband Mark have 2 sons. She enjoys cooking, entertaining and skiing with her family, and can frequently be found in the middle of a remodel.

**Dave Taylor—Board Member**

Dave brings to the Children's School Board over 23 years of experience in the

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*Thank you for asking about the purpose and content of our upcoming accreditation site-visit.*

*Classroom observations and paperwork review will cover NAEYC's 10 Standards of Quality: Relationships, Curriculum, Teaching, Health, Assessment, Teachers, Physical Environment, Leadership and Management, Families, and Community Relationships.*

*We look forward to this important part of the process of maintaining our accreditation status.*

*Thanks, TCS Families, for all you've done to help us be prepared for this visit.*

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*The Children's School of Boise, Inc. is a private, non-profit corporation with a Board of Directors. The Board establishes and reviews basic policy for the educational philosophy, enrollment procedures, physical plant, financial health and future growth of the school. The twelve to fifteen board members are selected from the community by a nominating committee with most being alumni parents. One voting member is a representative from Parents for The Children's School. The Board is balanced by skills in education, law, finance, psychology, and community service. A slate of officers is elected annually by the Board. Board members of this working board have committee responsibility and serve a three-year term.*

accounting profession; with 11 of those years as Fiscal Officer for an Idaho not-for-profit. He most recently was the Vice President of Finance and International Operations for AIM International, Inc. Dave is a Certified Public Accountant. He graduated from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo in 1983 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business/Accounting. His professional associations include the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the Idaho Society of Certified Public Accountants. Dave resides in Boise with his wife, Judy, and their daughter, a Children's School Alum!

### **Bruce Wixson—Board Member**

Bruce is serving his second term on TCS Board of Directors. He is a therapist in private practice, working with both children and adults. His grown children attended TCS in the school's early days. In fact, Bruce and his wife, Judy French, have been involved in TCS from the very beginning and are consistently supportive of the work of the school. Bruce received MA degrees in Child Development (University of Northern Colorado) and Counseling (College of Idaho). He worked for Head Start for 10 years in a variety of capacities, from home visitor to state trainer.

*Look for more board of director biographies in an upcoming issue of the TCS Times.*

Pictured: TCS Board of Directors, 2007



## Some Words from the Movement Teacher

By Jodeen Revere

Happy Solstice to you all! Here we are slipping into the winter months and all of the holiday doings. It is especially this time of year that I am so grateful to have yoga in my life. A way to help me slow down breathe, focus and relish the immediacy of the moment. Kids are so already in the moment all of the time, and it is one of my favorite things about sharing my love of yoga with them. They are playful, utterly unselfconscious, don't hold grudges and are up for anything.

I am less interested in teaching them "how to do poses." What I am most interested in is playing, and in giving them the tools to help them be comfortable in their own skins, feeling in control of their bodies, and being comfortable sitting with their emotions, whatever they may be.

My biggest challenge is helping them learn to be still and quiet at the end of class, also known as shavasana. Believe me, to get young children to lie still for even 60 seconds is a challenge! We talk about laying in the safety of a bubble, where nothing can get you, but you can still hear and feel and be aware of what is happening around you. I give them "pictures" or visualizations while they are resting. Floating on clouds, being super tiny and wind surfing on leaves above the playground, breathing different colors in and out of your body and how those colors make you feel. It is remarkable what their observations are! " I feel like I am going home. " " I see all of the colors in the rainbow" " I feel so peaceful and safe" " It feels like I am part of everything". By the end of the school year, they can blissfully float for as many as 3 minutes. Being able to be aware and yet not get overly hooked into what is going on around you is a lifetime skill. Being able to take quiet time, learn to soothe oneself and watch your breathe move in and out of your body is amazing in and of itself.

Please take time to be quiet with your children and yourself, all the time, but especially during the holidays. Enjoy the moment. Lay under your Christmas trees with only the tree lights on. Take a walk outside in the cold air. Snuggle on the couch and listen to music. Listen to each other breathe and give thanks.

## Talking with Children about the Food Drive

By Andrea Laird and Cindy Finch

We will be collecting food in our front hall for the Idaho Foodbank from November 28-December 12. This is a full school community event—teachers, parents and children will work together to bring non-perishable foods to TCS

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*Openings:*

*We still have two openings in our pre-K/K class, the 4-5-6s.*

*Although we are several months into the school year we will still accept new students in this class.*

*Please help us—send families our way who might want to know about opportunities to enroll children at TCS.*

that will be used to refill the cupboards at the Foodbank.

While there may be some classroom discussions about the food drive, we recognize that many of the discussions will be among families. You will be working with your children to remember to bring foods to place in collecting boxes, shopping for foods to share, or, perhaps, having to talk with your young child about your family values around caring for others. What will children know and understand about the purpose of the food drive? How will they understand hunger and the purpose of the Foodbank? How do you talk with children about sensitive issues and family values?

To put a little developmental perspective on children's responses to sensitive issues, we've turned to Jim Greenman, author of [What Happened to the World?](#), a book we have in our parent library. He writes about preschoolers: ***"They know more than you think, and much of it is incomplete or misconceived."*** And about primary and school aged children, he says: ***"They know much more than you think and want to know more."***

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**TCS Annual Food  
Drive**

**November 28<sup>th</sup>-  
December 12<sup>th</sup>**

With that in mind, here are some thoughts about talking with children about the food drive—or other sensitive issues:

- \*Consider what you know about your child—his/her age, knowledge, and experience.
- \*Consider your child's perspective before responding--correct misperceptions or confirm understandings without adding lots of new information.
- \*Keep explanations short.
- \*Use phrases like "Our family . . ." or "In our family . . ." that describe what you believe about giving and what you hope for your child to value
- \*Be prepared for your older children to ask "why" questions.
- \*Resist using stereotyping, generalized language to avoid an "us/them" division.
- \*Talk with your children when they show an interest in the topic of "giving" even if it is difficult to fully explain why some people have and some people do not.

Overall here is our hope: despite the fact that children may not fully understand the complex social concepts that necessitate a food drive, they do begin to recognize the value of sharing with others and experience a sense of community in giving as a family and as a school. Thanks for participating in the 2007 Annual Food Drive.

**Do you have ideas or anecdotes to share about talking with children about giving and/or the Food Drive? We invite you to place your comments on the communication board for our school community to read and learn from.**

Also, look for suggestions from The Idaho Food Bank on what is needed. These are only suggestions.

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## Director's Corner

By Cindy Finch

### Program Improvement Plans, 2007-2008

One of the basic concepts in quality early childhood programs is that of continuous improvement. Based on your comments in family surveys last year we made the following improvements over the past few months in our school resources, processes, and communications. You'll find the following revisions in the 2007 Parent Handbook:

- 1) a process for resolving disagreements between teachers and parents using the school's process of problem solving and conflict resolution; and,
- 2) an improved confidentiality policy that addresses processes for protecting the privacy of children, families, faculty, and staff.

In addition, a new resource joins books available to families in the coffee room Parent Library. It is the school-created TCS Family Resource Book. Inside are some of the papers that previously were displayed on the coffee room bulletin board. You will find resources for education, including information about transitioning to other schools after TCS, to highlight one of the sections included. We hope you find it useful.

Please know that your comments and feedback make a difference. Program improvement plans are one way that we continue to grow as a school community. Thanks for your participation.

### Farewells and a Warm Welcome to...

Goodbye: P. (Primes class) has moved to Anser School. We wish P. and his family the very best during this transition time—and are glad that we are not saying goodbye to the entire family, since C. (All Day class) is still here!

Goodbye to E. (3-4-5s class) who moved to Salt Lake City at the end of October. Kristin, her mom, writes, "We are still unpacking boxes-and I didn't think we had much stuff. E. is hanging in there so far but she is really missing school . . . Thank you again for everything-we are so deeply grateful for what the TCS experience has done for E.. She has been fortunate to have some truly incredible teachers-they have certainly set the bar high for those that will follow. We will be sure to keep in touch!

Welcome to: B. and her parents, Cynthia and Mark, who join the Primes class. Please take some time to help the family feel welcomed to the TCS community!

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### ***Enrollment Preview***

*Some of you are beginning to talk about next year's enrollment.*

*We will enroll current students into new classes in February. (After currently enrolled students, we will go to siblings, alumni families, and then the waiting list for filling classes). If you are wondering about classes for next year, start taking a look at what we have to offer.*

*To schedule a classroom observation, see Andrea.*

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## The Children's School

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We're on the Web!  
See us at:  
[www.tcsboise.org](http://www.tcsboise.org)

## In Play, Children Learn

October 29, 2007, Taken from Child Care Information Exchange  
Betty Jones, complete article can be found at:  
<http://mail.ccie.com/go/eed/1998>

- \*To make appropriate choices among many possibilities.
- \*To use their imagination, to improvise, to think flexibly, and explore new options.
- \*To be aware of their own real interests, without being distracted by other possibilities: to say "yes" and to say "no."
- \*To solve problems, both with materials and with people.
- \*To cooperate with other children in the creation of mutually satisfying projects.
- \*To work through their feelings in creative, non-destructive ways.
- \*To pay attention to a project until it's done.
- \*To use something - a dramatic action, a word, a toy, a set of blocks, a collection of marks on paper - to represent something else - a real experience, a powerful feeling. Practice in these sorts of representation is essential in the process of becoming literate, which is another form of representation.
- \*To see themselves as competent and interesting people, with useful skills and good ideas.

## Important Dates

- \*Wednesday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, TCS Feast, **Children and Staff**, 2-3s class meets 9:30-11:30, 3-4s class meets 9:00-10:00, 3-4-5s class meets 8:45-10:00, 4-5s and 4-5-6s classes meet 10:30-12:00. Early Release for All Days and Primes at 12:00. **SCHOOL CLOSED AT NOON**
- \*Thursday-Friday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>, Thanksgiving Holidays, **SCHOOL CLOSED**
- \*Wednesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, Annual School Food Drive begins, Benefiting The Idaho Foodbank, Donations taken until noon on December 12<sup>th</sup>
- \*Tuesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, P-TCS meeting 1:15-3:00
- \*Tuesday-Wednesday, December 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>, 3-4-5s/4-5s lunch program ends.
- \*Wednesday-Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, Bake Sale
- \*Thursday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2-3s Class Holiday Party, Families Invited
- \*Friday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, Class Holiday Parties, Families Invited. Please see individual classrooms for more information. **EARLY RELEASE AT NOON, SCHOOL CLOSED. PLEASE SEE WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup> SCHEDULE FOR CLASS TIMES**
- \***MONDAY-FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup>-28<sup>TH</sup>, WINTER HOLIDAY, SCHOOL CLOSED**
- \***MONDAY, DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup>, WINTER HOLIDAY, SCHOOL CLOSED**
- \***TUESDAY, JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup>, NEW YEAR'S DAY, SCHOOL CLOSED**
- \***Wednesday-Friday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, WINTER HOLIDAY, Only All Days and Prearranged Child Care Open**
- \*Monday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, All Classes Resume