

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

From the Director

By Cindy Finch

Enrollment time at The Children's School sets our minds to considering next year, and that is a worthy thing to consider. We spend a lot of our time from now until Spring Break talking with families about options, availabilities, school philosophy, child development, school success, hopes and dreams for children, and even location, convenience, and cost . . . all those things that go into making the next decision for children's educational experience.

If the decision about next year's enrollment is an easy one for you—wonderful. If you find yourself putting a lot of energy into considering options—know you are not alone. We are ready for the variety of ways families experience this time of year, and we look forward to celebrating your decision or pondering your options with you.

I do not approach enrollment conversations with families casually. Every family's story is important and different, and I am always honored when a family trusts me to listen and consider with them these very personal and individual issues.

I'd be lying, however, if I said that I am unbiased in talking with families. I do not think that programs that offer large groups sizes or high teacher turn-over are best for children. I do not think that programs that overly-emphasize isolated skill instruction over trying, understanding, and applying; listening over talking, sharing, and creating; or, sitting still over exploring, experimenting, and choosing are doing the best they can do for children. And, I do not think that schools that insist on compliance rather than teaching conflict resolution are considering the real needs of young children. So, now you know.

One of the shaping influences of my professional development is that I did not major in any aspect of education as an undergraduate. My coursework heavily emphasized human development (and a few education classes), but I went back to school a few years later to complete a more serious study of education. These foundational experiences are the filter I look through as I observe the classes we offer at TCS, oversee curriculum opportunities available to children, and supervise the teacher/child interactions that happen throughout our school, everyday.

Here are three different ways that I share enthusiasm with families about what is happening at TCS: what I know anecdotally, what I know from reading research about the impact of early childhood education, and what I observe in the children and families we serve.

I moved to Boise the year TCS opened (1980), so I've crossed paths with many alumni students and families through the years. I am well aware of—and often write about in these pages—the number of TCS alum who are honored for academic achievements, creative expressions, and the leadership they show in peer groups—and even those who grow up to take on interesting and challenging careers (see Alumni News, page 6). Some of my favorite anecdotes, however, are close to my heart. I have had the privilege of watching my own children go through the classes at TCS, and seeing how that experience influenced who they became as students—and as people. I remember wondering what they would be like, what they'd be interested in doing with their lives, what choices they'd make in their relationships with peers, and whether they'd be successful in what they tried to do—are those questions the same you have about your young children? I loved what The Children's School provided as a foundation for my children. (I live with a thirteen year old TCS alum who has rarely expressed boredom and who will create a project out of any material available—which is currently snow being shaped over several weeks into an "igloo" in our backyard). We still say, "That's The Children's School," when we watch him in that interesting combination of meaningful and constructive work/play that was fostered in TCS classrooms.

*From the Fall 2007
Bank Street College
Street Scenes a quote
from a Bank Street
School administrator: ".
. . . I learned that while
the content always has
to be
there, teaching is more
about knowing children
than it is about knowing
content.
Great if you know both,
but if I had to choose,
it's always going to be
knowing the
children first."*

On a regular basis I have access to education research. Most recently I received a summary of research showing which early childhood classroom practices fostered language and cognitive growth. Classroom experiences that positively contributed to later successes included: giving children time to choose activities; providing physical and expressive activities; and minimizing whole group activities (ExchangeEveryDay, 1-30-08). In a time when many—from educators to politicians—are talking about early childhood education and getting young children ready for school, research results are confirming to educators, supportive to families making decisions, and provide important guidance to policymakers.

As a school concerned with the whole child, there are many choices teachers make during the day in curriculum, in guidance, in materials, and in interactions. Here are a few things I've observed lately: children and teachers working together in the classroom; social and emotional well-being being considered alongside growth in knowledge and thinking; the confidence and competence of children who are completing their 2nd or 3rd year in a multi-aged classroom, or, at least, with a common peer group; time for playing, talking, listening, and trying; and, high levels of respect—respect for abilities, individual contributions, ideas, and feelings.

There are far too few times in life when a person's whole being is considered . . . in school, in work, or in other settings. Early childhood should be one of those times, and, in this, The Children's School leads the way.

Auction News: TCS is Off to the Races!

By Katie Walther

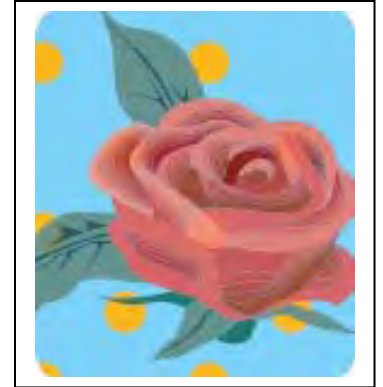
Many of you have probably heard the TCS Annual Spring Fundraiser is not to be missed! It is a great opportunity to have a night out with friends that helps a great cause. Come and get into the spirit of bidding on your child's piece of artwork or a great basket of goodies. A night to bond with parents from your class and meeting some new faces for the first time. This event raises money to benefit the tuition assistance fund here at TCS.

We started the tradition of "having a theme party" a few years back. This has added a fun twist. This year we will be embracing the South. We give a nod to the infamous Kentucky Derby. Guest are welcome to wear a hat, as many do on race day, or just come dressed for a night out.

Our event will be held at the Les Bois Turf Club adjacent to the racetrack at the Fairgrounds in Garden City. The night begins at 6pm with cocktails (provided by Stein Distributing & Hayden Beverage- our thanks) and a silent auction. Guests are encouraged to walk around and view the wide array of items available from birthday party packages to spa treatments. We will follow up with a "down-home" buffet dinner and a live auction. The live auction will have such wonderful items as dinner parties, guided fishing trips or a ride in a private plane. Then, we will turn on the TV's and open up the betting windows! Feeling lucky? Get ready for simulcast horseracing, bet on your favorite horse then watch them race on the big screen- don't forget to bring cash. Please consider taking a cab to this event or car pooling & cabbng home. It is very important we get everyone home safe!

Given this level of excitement you may be wondering how you can help? First and foremost, mark your calendar and reserve your babysitter. Then, join the efforts and put your heads together to come up with creative items to donate. Do you have a special skill or talent? Do you know a business you could ask to donate an item? Grab a donation form in the hall. Please keep your eyes open for sign-ups in the hallway for set-up, check-in, etc we need help the night of the event!

Can't wait to see you on Saturday March 8th, 6pm at the Les Bois Turf Club for The Children's School Annual Spring Fundraiser!



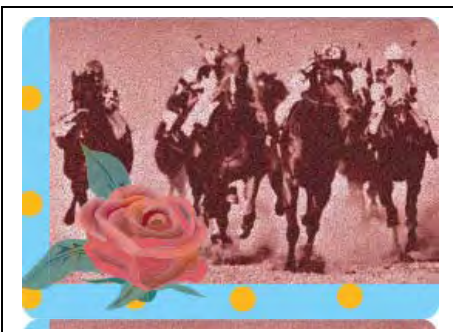
TCS Auction

Saturday, March 8th

6:00 PM

Les Boise Turf Club

We'll see you there!



Contact Katie W. for more information, questions or to lend a hand!

Holiday Classroom News

4-5-6s News: Martin Luther King Day

By Taira Lee

***A Model of
Progressive
Education to the
Greater Community:***

Thanks to G. for reading with children in the All Day class once a week in the late afternoon hours during the fall semester of school. G., now a 6th grader, attended TCS in her preschool years and, sometimes, comes to work with her mom.

We welcome Lindsay K. from BSU's Child Care and Development Program to the 3-4-5s class this Spring semester for a practicum. We are always happy to contribute to the education of the next generation of teachers.

As a student in school, I remember teachers who merely sent me home with a worksheet of Martin Luther King Jr. to color. I remember the textbooks that reserved a brief paragraph or two to "educate" us about the man who led this nation's charge for civil rights--for human rights. I remember the dash to squeeze a lesson or two on Dr. King into Black History Month, as though his teachings were neither important nor applicable the other 11 months of the year. As I look back on my childhood school experiences, these are the memories that constructed my understanding of tolerance, yet they barely touch the surface of why we celebrate this holiday in our culture.

Recalling my own early memories clarifies the impact on young children's perceptions and attitudes about differences. It matters now more than any other time during childhood. It is these early years that we can have the greatest impression. Tolerance and community begin in the classroom. For most children, being a member of a classroom community is their first experience in an on-going social structure outside of their family. These social opportunities influence a child's ideas and expectations about equity, cooperation and citizenship for a lifetime.

In the 4-5-6s class, we recognize the power of such social interactions and we actively work towards merging Dr. King's message of respecting humanity into the daily curriculum of our classroom. With the practice of our conflict resolution approach, children are experiencing Dr. King's legacy of nonviolence through problem-solving and talking about feelings in a safe and nurturing environment. In the 4-5-6s, we honor Dr. King's work everyday. After the holiday, we addressed Dr. King's contributions specifically through stories including Martin's Big Words by Doreen Rappaport, The Day Martin Luther King Jr. Died by Veronica Enix, A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr. by David A. Adler, and The Black Snowman by Phil Mendez. By reading these books at meeting times, it opened up for rich discussions as children work to make sense of the social world around them. Finally, in journal time, children were asked to draw and write about a time when someone did something to them that they didn't like. We are very honored to be able to incorporate Dr. King's powerful message into our practice at our school and we are thankful for his contributions on a global level.

Look for an article from our Primary Class about friendships and Valentine's Day experiences in the next issue of TCS Times!—Nicole

Director's Corner

By Cindy Finch

The Benefits of a Second (or third) Year in a Multi-Age Program

There have been some questions regarding a child's second year in a multi-year program.

"If a child is the oldest or stays in a multi-age classroom for both the younger and older year, won't they will be under-challenged?"

As a school faculty we see things differently. We value a child's second year in a multi-age class as an opportunity for that child to consolidate understandings, contribute to group life in a more mature way, and feel strong and capable. We are concerned about children who move from one multi-age class to another multi-age class, always in the role of the youngest—that they may struggle (often in private) to understand complicated social relationships, to contribute to group discussions at class meetings, and to feel competent and connected to the social and academic expectations of the class.

Please talk with a member of TCS's faculty and staff if you have questions or want to discuss your child's next year class options.

Graffiti Update

You may remember that The Children's School was a victim of graffiti about a year ago. Here's an interesting ending to that experience. We received monetary restitution equal to the purchase price of a gallon of paint and three signed letters of apology. Here's an excerpt from one: "I am writing you this letter to apologize for spray painting your lovely school. What I did was rude, stupid, and extremely immature. I only wish I had realized that before I got myself in this mess. I can't even imagine how all of you must have felt when you saw what had happened to your school. I don't just want to apologize to the faculty, I want to apologize to all of the students and whoever was burdened with the task of cleaning it all up . . . I was punished by the court with probation for 6 months and a fine of around \$800. My parents grounded me for a long time and had me go out with my friends and paint over 104 tags in the course of two weekends. . . . I hope you can accept my most sincere apology."

Why is outside time so important at TCS? Here's one reason . . .

Adult recommended levels of fitness are not enough for children's well-being over a lifetime, says Dr. Mike Knapton of The British Heart Foundation. "Children get less active as they get older so it's vital that youngsters get regular physical activity to lay the foundations for good health as they grow up. . . . We recommend that parents encourage their toddlers and young children to eat a healthy diet and have lots of active play time—at least an hour a day . . . as a vital investment for long-term heart health."

From Exchange Every Day, 11-29-07

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See us at:
www.tcsboise.org

Connections from an Alum:

While listening to Barack Obama speak in Boise on February 2nd about the importance of negotiating and talking with people, even the ones you don't agree with, a TCS alum, now a Jr. at Boise High School, said to her mom, "That's just like The Children's School!"

More Alumni News

During the recent Annual Fund Campaign, we received the following note from Gail Hoge who lives in Athens GA. Gail's son Chris was at TCS in the early '80s. She wrote: "As for Chris, he has done so well. He graduated from Montana State in mechanical engineering and got a very good job--in NY state. After qualifying he will be a nuclear engineer! He and his wife, Amy, have two beautiful daughters whom we dote on, of course!" The Hoge's moved away from Boise in 1984, so it was a huge treat to hear from them.

If you have news about any TCS Alumni, we want to hear from you. Please drop a note in Cindy's, Andrea's, or Nicole's mailbox.

***Current families—if you did not receive an re-enrollment packet in the mail, please see Andrea in the office.**

Important Dates

- *Tuesdays or Thursdays, February 12th-March 20th, Six week Parent Education Series, "How to Talk so Kids will Listen..." (*Thursday, February 14th's class has been changed to Wednesday, February 13th)
- *Tuesday, February 12th, P-TCS meeting 1:15-3:00
- *Thursday, February 14th, 3-4s Class lunch program begins
- *Friday, February 15th, 3-4-5s Class lunch program begins
- *Monday, February 18th, President's Day, **SCHOOL CLOSED**
- *Friday, February 22nd, **Intention Forms Due in Office by 1:00 PM. Contracts prepared and mailed. Tuition assistance decisions will be finalized prior to enrollment.**
- *Saturday, March 8th, Annual Spring Fundraiser
- *Tuesday, March 11th, P-TCS meeting 1:15-3:00
- *Friday, March 14th, **Contracts for 2008-2009 school year due in office by 2:00 PM with first half of deposit**
- *Monday-Friday, March 24th-28th, **Spring Break, Only All Days and Prearranged Primary Child Care Open, All other classes closed**