

April 2008

TCS Times

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

From the Director

By Cindy Finch

What does a successful childhood look like? At TCS, a school that values all areas of development during childhood, success may look very unique—different, perhaps, than at other schools.

It's that emphasis on the whole child and on a respect for human development that sets us apart. It's an appreciation of all the steps that come into play in learning—not just the final step of being a competent person but all the things that go into becoming a competent person. As a school we are excited—truly excited—when a child covers the entire easel paper with paint, or verbalizes an understanding of another child's success with the blocks, or adds more details to a drawing, or goes to a teacher on the playground for support, or claps a song's rhythm, or pulls herself into the tree for the first time, or stops that initial impulse to respond physically to a social frustration, or reads the message board with confidence for the first time. It's not the entire distance that a child will develop, but each of these successes defines a progression for individual children. Each attempt is meaningful to us.

We have great parents in this school—parents who have chosen this school because we are aligned with what their family values and hopes for children. I see parents every day handling situations with their children that are tough and possibly frustrating—but you are responding not only to the moment but are doing this: TCS parents are almost always considering who their child is individually and what they want their child to learn from their parenting interactions. That's the best possible world of parenting, and I hope you feel successful and strong in this important role.

It takes some work to parent in this way, and time to think and reflect on parenting young children can be hard to come by. Throughout my years of parenting—and I never predicted this would be necessary—I've had to step outside the immediacy of parenting and consider the situations I was facing with my developing children. I called it “getting ahead” of my children rather than just being in a responsive place with them. These times—full of thinking about my children and what they were communicating to me, reflecting on myself and what I was bringing to our interactions, and reading about

children, or development, or parenting—made and make such a positive difference in our dynamic relationship as a family.

It's important to have resources during these times of reflective parenting, and my hope is that TCS is a resource to you as your family grows and changes. Recently Nicole Shadduck led a six-week parent education and discussion group with some of our families. I was able to sit in on one session with teachers on a staff meeting night—to share in considering the topic being discussed and to be a part of your groups as you talked. I learn so much from you. I respect the thought and attention you put into parenting. On behalf of our faculty and for myself, I want to say thanks for letting us join you on this recent evening. I was reminded from talking with you, as I am reminded in my many discussions with teachers, of this: the broad principles of parenting, education, and human development give us guidance on the many, many decisions that we still make about the details of interacting or planning activities together. Guidance is a good thing. However, there will always be many details that only we can decide because we know the children, ourselves, and the overriding philosophy of the system we belong to, whether it is a school or a family.

Our school is a strong place because of the central focus we all have on children and childhood. The Children's School provides an opportunity for parents and teachers to create a place and time for childhood to occur. And that's a recipe for success—for children, for families, and for schools.

Music at The Children's School

By Will Martin

We live in a world that surrounds us with music—all kinds of music: Radio, TV, movies, the supermarket, the mall, iPods in so many pockets, those giant rolling amplifiers going down the street... We either choose, or are subjected to, a variety of music throughout the day.

For many of us, music is not as often an element of our lives in which we participate actively. In fact, many adults are inhibited to a greater or lesser degree about expressing themselves musically. I often hear parents tell me, "I can't carry a tune," or, "my music teacher told me to just mouth the words...", or just, "I'm not musical at all."

Well, I am convinced, and research shows, that all people are musical, and that, nurtured with care, everyone can enjoy a rich world of musical self-expression. This is not to say that everyone is a Mozart, or an Elvis, or someone who will win "American Idol." But we can all enjoy singing in the car, around the fire, with family and friends at the holidays, or musically banging on pots and pans, with sticks, or other "found" or store-bought instruments. And just about everybody loves to dance, and gleefully move around the room to the rhythm of a favorite song!

Our hearts go out to Tawny and Bill F., parents of B. who died of brain cancer on March 25th. B., a 4th grader attended TCS in the parent-toddler program and the All Day class from 2000-2002.

Our thoughts are with Ruthee Fuentes, All Day teacher, who is away from TCS for three weeks while she recovers from surgery related to kidney failure.

At the Children's School, we try to involve children, from the earliest age, in fun, participatory musical activities on a regular basis. Our goal is to help each child to develop basic music competence. Basic music competence means simply the ability to sing in tune, and keep a steady beat. Most children can do this by around the age of five or six, although often sooner, sometimes later. If children are provided with a rich, varied musical environment, and regular opportunities to listen, sing, and move to music they will almost surely achieve this ability. As they grow older, these basic skills will enable them to enjoy the rich world of music as both listener and participant.

We work on primary music development in a number of ways. All the teachers at the Children's School regularly play music for their classes, just as most of you do at home. The children sing along to their favorite songs, and often surprise me when I come to their rooms by singing new songs they have learned. On Music days, I always try to involve the children in a variety of activities. Singing is basic; I play and sing songs, both familiar and new, for the class to hear and sing together. We always include movement, from simply rocking to the beat, patting or clapping, to jumping around the room to "Going to Kentucky" or "Jim Along Josie." Sometimes we add instruments to our songs.

There are regular, important rituals--"Hello and Goodbye" and name songs. We do echoing, make up rhymes to "Down By the Bay," sing familiar songs like "Twinkle" and "ABC" repeatedly. We maintain a small repertoire of songs we all know. Repetition is very important to developing basic musical competence, so we repeat songs often.

Children learn with different styles and at different rates, and participation varies over time. Sometimes it seems a child might not be paying attention, he or she may not be totally focused on the activity of the moment, or may be shy or hesitant about, or choose not to, participate in a particular activity; but musical learning is still taking place.

Music contributes in so many ways to our health, vitality, intelligence, and happiness; it is so important for our sense of the joyousness of life. I encourage you to sing with your children, tap along or dance to the beat of favorite recordings, expose your children to a variety of musical styles. Live concerts are a special treat!

When we hear music of our choosing, we are, via recordings, treated to the very best, polished, professional versions of the songs we choose. No wonder we are sometimes hesitant to sing or play! If you should feel that way yourself, give it a go anyway! Your child responds best and most freely to the presence and voice she or he knows best—yours!

No child is born "unmusical"! With a few basic skills developed in early childhood, children can enjoy and benefit from a rich and varied life as a participant in the wonderful phenomenon of Music!

Parent Education News

The six week Parent Education Series, "How to Talk..." was a huge success.

The dedication and commitment of both parent groups and facilitator, Nicole Shadduck, continues to stay strong. An informal discussion/support group for class participants will be held on most Tuesday nights throughout the end of the school year.

Summer program enrollment continues for both preschool and primary programs. If you don't have a flyer, let Andrea know. Sign up in the office for summer fun and learning—TCS-style.

3-4-5s News

Taira Lee

*Idaho Association for
the Education of Young
Children (IAEYC)
Awards:*

*We are excited to learn
that Nicole Shadduck
has been nominated as
Early Childhood
Teacher of the Year and
that Mary Clagett Smith
(TCS's founding
director) will be honored
with a "Lifetime
Achievement Award" on
April 17th, from 6:30-
9:00. This is a proud
moment for TCS, and a
great recognition for the
high quality of work that
happens every day—
and has for 28 years!*

*(Note: We have
learned that Nicole's
nomination, although
recognized by IAEYC,
will not be
acknowledged at the
awards ceremony
because it was received
after the deadline.)*

Music can be a pleasurable experience for young children. In addition, music is a meaningful avenue for a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development. On March 18th, the 3-4-5s class went on an outing to see the musical *A Year With Frog and Toad* at the Morrison Center. This musical is based on the books written and illustrated by Arnold Lobel and follows the adventures of two amphibious friends over the course of a year as they share a variety of experiences. The play combines an assortment of chapters from the Frog and Toad book series, beginning as they wake up in spring from hibernation until the following winter at Christmastime. Before the outing, our class read all of the Frog and Toad chapter books aloud during meeting times, which were often followed by brief discussions of the characters and their witty adventures. Upon attending the musical, the children knew the literacy context and content of the stories. It was exciting to be there with the children and hear them talk about what stories they recognized, how the play was different from the book, and respond to the entire experience by appropriately dancing to the music of the play.

This outing provided a rich and meaningful learning experience for the children on many levels. The children were able to make a literacy connection between the musical and the books that they had read. Many children pointed out differences and similarities, were able to identify titles of chapters with which they were familiar, and they were able to interact with both the oral and written aspect of the stories. Culturally, the children were able to visit a theatre, attend a neighborhood event, and have a social experience to support our local arts community. Several parent joined us, which brings an important school-family-home connection to the outing. Furthermore, music positively impacted all areas of the children's development. Exposure to musical experiences stimulates a child's creative abilities as they hear words put to a beat or watch characters express themselves through dance to the sounds of music. Children develop descriptive vocabulary and increased language development as they describe what the music sounds like, how the characters sing, and how the actors personify the characters from the stories. Finally, children gain an appreciation for the arts, for literacy, and for community building opportunities with their classmates. As you can see, all of these experiences around culture, literacy, and music, promote positive growth and development in social, emotional, and cognitive areas.

Where Do Your Donation Dollars Go?

By Kim Rene`

Each year, the P-TCS officers, event chairs, class reps and a TCS volunteers fundraise thousands of dollars on behalf of our school. These fundraisers include the Fall Carnival in October, the Holiday Bake Sale and the Spring Auction. While some of us close to these events are intimately aware of where and how our fundraising dollars are utilized, we realized that many of you (old and new) may not be as aware of how your generous donations are used each year or even why it's necessary to fundraise at a private school like TCS so, we wanted to share with you some information on why we fundraise and where your dollars go.

The truth of the matter is, education on any scale is an expensive undertaking and TCS is no exception. As a non-profit school, your tuition dollars are used 100% for the basic operating expenses of the school including teacher and administrative salaries; special education salaries (music, Spanish, art, and movement); basic building maintenance; mortgage and supplies. Unfortunately, this does not provide enough resource to cover other areas which are important to the on-going success and diversity of our school community including tuition assistance for current and future TCS families, on-going teacher education, the growth and development of our Endowment Fund or any special needs the school has had over the year. Examples of the latter include the Gazebo, the brick path in the garden yard, the play structure in the side yard, awnings for the All days class, new windows in the 3-4-5/4-5-6 room and many other items of this nature.

During the 2007-08 school year, TCS raised \$46,400.00 (\$5,190 from Carnival, \$439 from Learning Express, \$1,451 from the Bake sale and \$39,319 from the spring event)! Traditionally, proceeds from the Carnival go to Teacher Education, Learning Express and Bake Sale have gone to P-TCS for use toward auction expenses, 10% of the Spring Fundraiser funds stay with P-TCS for purchase of special school items that are needed/wanted (such as those listed above) and to fund Parent Education programs and 90% of the Spring Fundraiser funds go The Children's School board to be allocated as needed *by them* with the majority of those funds going towards tuition assistance.

Here's how the dollars were spent this year:

1. \$5,000 was given to Teacher's Education which funded three who attended a state conference; three who attended local workshops; two who attended a national conference; and, three who enrolled in University courses.
2. \$2,710.00 was spent on Parent Education including *Toilet Learning, Ages and Stages*, Six (6) week parent ed event *How to Talk so Kids will Listen and Listen so Kids will Talk*.

P-TCS is in the process of nominating officers, committee chairs, and class representatives for the upcoming school year. If you have an interest in being a leader or an active participant in this dynamic group that does so much for our school community—let Kim R., any current P-TCS officer, or Cindy Finch know. It's a great way to broaden your network of TCS relationships!

*TCS Work Day
Saturday, April 19th
10:00-2:00*

If you love to get your hands dirty, socialize with other parents, and work for a good cause, here's an opportunity you won't want to miss. Our twice-a-year work parties are one of the ways you can get to know other TCS families while you are working on projects around the school.

Here's a few identified tasks for this day:

**Hang the shade structure on the main yard*

**Move the gazebo on the garden yard*

**Weed and trim*

**Re-seed or lay sod*

**The ever-popular block washing (the 2-3s is a priority this spring*

**Top-off sandboxes*

**Turn on the water fountain*

**Clean and dust the coffee room furniture*

**Touch up TCS sign paint*

And more...

We hope you will join us!

3. \$95.00 was used to supplement the expense of the Empty Bowls project for The Idaho Food Bank and an additional \$150.00 cash donation was made to them as part of our Community service initiative.
4. The proceeds were given to the TCS Board of Directors and these dollars will be allocated at the April board meeting. Last year, \$20,000 was allocated to Tuition Assistance and \$2,800 was invested in an endowment.
5. Misc. expenses included \$145.00 for the parent/community communication wall, \$125.00 in childcare for various functions and meetings, \$935.00 on a P-TCS computer and printer so that all future documentation remains in one location, \$50.00 on the TCS Open House and \$200.00 on the TCS Wine and Cheese event at the beginning of the year.
6. Currently, we have \$9,563 in the P-TCS bank, \$2,000 has been earmarked for Parent Education for 2008 program *Siblings Without Rivalry workshop* and the rest will be budgeted for 2008-09 expenses or other school needs.

If you would like any more detail on how your funds are spent or have any other questions or comments, please feel free to contact me kim@reneglobal.com or speak to Cindy.

We are lucky to be a part of such an energetic, creative and generous school community and on behalf of the P-TCS board, the Board of Directors, and the faculty and staff of The Children's School, we THANK YOU for all you do and all you give! It's through your generosity that The Children's School will continue to be the standard of excellence in Early Childhood Education in Boise.

So Many Reasons to Say Thanks

By Cindy Finch

Our thanks goes to Parents for The Children's School (P-TCS) and all members of the TCS community who participated in the "Off to the Races" evening March 8th. This fun, fun event raised \$39,000 for the school! What a success! A huge and special thanks goes to Katie W. and her auction committee for all the work that took place behind the scenes to make this evening so successful for our school.

The Children's School

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

We are in the process of receiving donations from HP—have you noticed the beautiful new copier/scanner/printer in the office? Thanks goes, first and foremost, to Kristen B. for her work in communicating with families at TCS who work at HP about this opportunity to give, gathering a list of needs from TCS faculty and staff, and organizing the match from HP. Thanks, also, go to the families, in addition to Kristen's, who participated in individual giving that provided a basis for the corporate match: Stephanie W.; Alain P.; Jeff S.; and, Kim S.. Finally, our thanks go to Bob D. who set up the copier in the front office.

Thanks to Christine J., alumni parent, who continues to bring us great classroom and office supplies. We really appreciate your continued giving.

Next month, we'll be acknowledging the hard work of 2007-2008 P-TCS officers, committee chairs, and classroom reps.

Important Dates and Last Day of Classes Calendar

- *Friday, April 18th, Earth Day-Spring Sing, Children & Staff
- *Saturday, April 19th, Spring Work Day
- *Friday, April 25th, 3-4-5s lunch program ends
- *Tuesday-Wednesday, April 29th-30th, 4-5s lunch program ends
- *Thursday, May 15th, P-TCS meeting 1:30 – 3:00
- *Friday, May 16th, All School Picnic, Sunset Park, All families invited.
- *Monday, May 19th, Toddler Program ends
- *Wednesday, May 21st, 2-3s Class ends.
- *Thursday, May 22nd, 3-4s Class ends.
- *Friday, May 23rd, 3-4-5s Class ends.
- *Friday, May 23rd, 4-5s Class ends.
- ***Monday, May 26th, Memorial Day. SCHOOL CLOSED**
- *Thursday, May 29th, 4-5-6s Class ends.
- ***Friday, May 30th, Primary Class ends.**
- ***Friday, May 30th, EARLY RELEASE - SCHOOL CLOSED AT NOON**
Building Maintenance and Summer Program Preparation
- *Saturday, May 31st, All School Campout at Grayback Gulch