

August/September  
2009

# TCS Times

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

## From the Director

By Cindy Finch

Myths are simplified statements used to explain complex ideas, appealing to some out of convenience, and not based on fact. It is always fascinating to take a good look at institutional myths, in our case, as we begin our 30<sup>th</sup> school year at The Children's School—a cause for analysis, reflection, and celebration.

*Myth #3:*

*TCS families are all North-Enders.*

*Myth #4:*

*TCS families are all wealthy.*

I'm starting the school year by ending an article series. Last school year I wrote two articles addressing "myths" about The Children's School. I started with the statement in January "The Children's School doesn't teach academics" and continued later in the spring months with the statement "Children at The Children's School can say and do anything they want and there are no consequences."

This month I am writing about . . . YOU: families who have chosen The Children's School as the early childhood education program for your young children. Is there a TCS family demographic? If so, is it defined narrowly by the neighborhood where you live or your family income? Those are reasonable questions and ones that Andrea and I address often as we talk with families considering enrollment.

Try as some might, anyone who tries to put all TCS families into such a small box is going to be unsuccessful. It just doesn't work. When I was a Primes teacher I was working with some children on a mapping project. We discovered together that half of the class lived north of the Boise River and half lived south of the river. Remembering this project I scanned the list of current addresses and found that half of our families have zip codes other than 83702 (the area that includes the North End). And, while our tuition payments are significant, I know anecdotally that families pay for their

children to attend classes here in a variety of ways, including through working and earning a salary, through applying for tuition assistance, and through appealing to the generosity of extended family members. There are families with children enrolled here who have various relationships with money—some have enough, some have much, and some have much less.

Aside from these anecdotal observations, statements about who belongs in this community and who doesn't belong communicate some level of bias. That is a concern for me. It doesn't take long for a statement, true or untrue, to be used to define an exclusive grouping.

#### **Alumni News**

*William R. attended TCS from 1998 to 2000, when he was in kindergarten and first grade. His family moved to St. Louis. This summer they took a Western US vacation and stopped by TCS to say hello. He is 16 now! He attends Parkway Central High School where he is on the Student Council, plays Violin, and runs on the Track and Cross Country teams. It was great to see William and his family!*

Are you wondering what's so harmful about that? After all we work hard to build group identity within our classrooms because it has value to children. Why not accept the definitions of some as the group identity for The Children's School community? In my estimation, group identification is a positive thing for TCS families as long as the defining parameters of the group are inclusive rather than exclusive.

While it might seem complimentary to be called a school for the wealthy, and even may seem true for some, there are some problems with being categorized in this way. It wasn't that long ago that we were almost prevented from working on a project with other programs because our "families are so wealthy" (as defined by those in a position of power on the project). In this case, our work with children and families—as thoughtful, considered, and researched as it is—was diminished because we were seen as having an advantage because of this externally defined group identity.

If TCS families are going to have a group identity, I'd prefer that it be based on something meaningful and important to our mission as a school—and the children, families, and teachers who spend our time here. One way to define our group identity is by:

our knowledge that group size matters, that teacher preparation and continuing education make a difference in classrooms, that children's experiences with raw materials and real experiences are central to excellent education;

our commitment to a school environment that invites exploration and ownership by the adults and children who use it, to a curriculum that allows children to think and feel, listen and express, problem solve, create, and collaborate, and be deeply invested; and,

our understanding that childhood is a part of human development worthy of our attention, that there is value in families working together—building relationships with each other around projects and discussion topics.

To me, these are the deeper identifiers of The Children's School families, more descriptive, more accurate, and definitely, more respectful.

In any school year there are 80-90 families who have chosen to be a part of the TCS school community—diverse families united by core and mostly

common values about childhood and education.

We welcome you all and hope you all feel welcomed, accepted, and appreciated during your years at The Children's School.

## Director's Corner

By Cindy Finch

### **How to Pay Tuition at The Children's School**

*from the Parent Handbook, December 2008*

Tuition invoices are provided for families each month. Tuition payment options are part of our annual agreement with families. Tuition may be paid 1) in full by check, cash, or money order with a 3% discount, 2) in full by credit card, 3) monthly by bank draft, or 4) monthly by credit card. Monthly payments occur on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Paperwork for each monthly payment option must be completed in the office by the end of your child's first week of school.

Families who pay in full by check, cash, or money order must provide credit card or bank draft for occasional charges that may occur during the contract period.

### **BEING AT SCHOOL**

*from the Parent Handbook, December 2008*

We have expectations for children in the school that apply to classrooms, playyards, and common areas such as the halls, coffee room, and library. We need your help and cooperation in maintaining these expectations when you are here with your children before or after your child's school day, as well as for any special events held at the school.

Please help us by respecting and supporting our expectations. We have three basic schoolwide rules. It is from these three rules that adults make decisions throughout the day. Although they do not specifically address behaviors like running through the hall, hanging from the basketball hoop, removing branches and leaves from the landscaping, or taking books randomly from the library shelf, these rules are available to help teachers and parents make decisions about which behaviors carry potential for harm to self, others, and school materials. Our three rules are:

- \*Children may not hurt people—children or adults.
- \*Children may not hurt others' possessions or creations.
- \*Children may not hurt animals.

Additionally, children must be supervised in the school library, the playyards, the hallways, and in the coffee room.

---

*While we welcome you and support you hanging out on our playyards before, between, and after classes, if you end up in an area where there is a class using the playyard please move to another area. We consider playyard times for children to be as valuable as classroom time. Each class has an assigned time to be on the playyard—just those children and teachers—and it is our anticipation that much of the work (social relationships, problem solving, sharing play spaces, materials, and ideas) of the classroom will continue outdoors. Thank you for giving priority to classes when choosing a play area for you and your child.*

Finally, teachers are unavailable to monitor children before or after class or in common areas of the school. If occasionally you are running late please let us know; it is important to us to make arrangements that are respectful of your child, your family, and your child's teacher.

The teachers and administrative staff are available to facilitate smooth and safe transitions for children coming to or leaving school. We respect your role as parent, and we see you as "in-charge" of your child during transitions. Please let us know if you need our help and support during transitions. We want this to be a successful part of the day for you and your child.

### **BIRTHDAYS and Home Snacks**

*excerpts from the Parent Handbook, December 2008*

At school we acknowledge birthdays quietly in order to prevent undue self-consciousness, overwhelming excitement, or hurt feelings. Parents may bring a special birthday snack by prior arrangement with teachers, but party favors are always discouraged.

For home parties all arrangements must be made outside of school time. Invitations should be mailed from home rather than placed in school mailboxes unless all children in the class are invited (no exceptions, please). Presents should stay at home. Party guests should be picked up from their homes, not school. Gift exchanges should take place away from school.

When we plan school snacks we follow these nutritional guidelines and ask that you support us in our goals for feeding children when you provide home snacks:

- \*We choose foods from at least two food groups (fruits-vegetables, dairy, grain, or protein).
- \*We do not offer children younger than four years old hot dogs (whole or sliced into rounds), whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, and hard pretzels, chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.
- \*For children's nutritional and dental well-being we discourage but do not ban the occasional sweet home snack. If you do bring a sweet snack to school for sharing at a snack time, we ask that you bring food from two other food groups to offer children at the same time. For example, if you bring cookies or cake to school, we recommend that you bring a fruit and milk or cheese and 100% fruit juice.

Out of concern for children who may have a severe reaction to peanut products requiring medical attention or for whom ongoing exposure to peanut products may be harmful, The Children's School is establishing the following guidelines for teachers and parents.

\*The faculty at The Children's School will plan snacks and projects that do not include peanut products, including peanut butter.

\*We ask that families sending home snacks to a class refrain from using peanut products.

*(Please be sure to look at the Peanut Free information in the Parent Handbook.)*

***Dressing for School***  
from the Parent  
Handbook, December  
2008

*Play clothes are in order!  
Children need to feel  
relaxed, playful and  
comfortable getting wet  
or sandy. Sturdy, rubber-  
soled, shoes are best for  
outdoor running and  
climbing.*

**Late Fee Policy:**

*Families who pick up children late from classes will be assessed a fee of \$5 for the first ten minutes and \$5 for each five minutes thereafter. Late charges will be added to your next month's bill.*

**Arrival and Dismissal**

*from the Parent Handbook, December 2008*

Children must be brought into the school by families (or someone designated by the family) to help ensure a smooth and safe transition. Sign your child in on the "comings and goings" sheet in the classroom on arrival, and sign out at pick up time. To pick up your child, park and come inside. This is your child's chance to connect you to his/her school life – art projects, buildings, works in progress, animal life in the terrarium. You may get a minute to chat with the teacher informally but please save child-concerns for a private time-- a phone call or conference.

## TCS Faculty and Staff Biographies

**Cindy Finch - Director**

Cindy received her BA in English and Psychology from Austin College (Sherman, TX) and her MA in Education, Emphasis in Early Childhood from BSU in 1983. From 1982-1986 she taught in the 4-5's and Kindergarten classes and facilitated the development of the 3-4's and Parent-Toddler program. Cindy returned to TCS in 1997 as a Primary teacher. In the years between 1986 and 1997 she worked for Head Start, taught CDA classes at BSU and consulted with various early childhood programs. She was the school's Project Director for the Pathways to Competency project during which she collaborated on the creation and development of the Children and Conflict video and companion materials. Cindy was named the Director of TCS during the 2000-2001 school year. Cindy is married to Ken Smith and is the mother of two children who are TCS alumni. Cindy likes to hike, travel with her family and read.

**Andrea Laird - Administrative Assistant**

Andrea received her BA in Developmental Studies and Justice and Law from the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba and her MA in Psychology from NCOC in San Francisco. She has worked in public school nursery (pre-K) and in preschool in Canada. Andrea also worked in an infant and toddler program in California. She joined the staff of TCS in 1996. Andrea has taught in the All Days, the Primary 5-7's and Toddlers and is now the Administrative Assistant. Andrea is married and has one son. She enjoys reading and travel.

**Sherri Lauer - 3-4s Teacher, Parent/Toddler Discussion Facilitator**

Sherri is returning for her 9<sup>th</sup> year as a teacher at TCS. She has taught in the 3-4s class and the Parent/Toddler Program. She has her Masters degree in Developmental Psychology and has been working with children and parents for more than 25 years. Sherri's experience with TCS began when her own children attended here, 15 years ago. She now has two children in college and one at Boise High. Sherri has lived in Boise for 16 years with her husband and three children.

### **Mary Griffin - 3-4s Teacher, Parent/Toddler Program Teacher**

Mary completed her undergraduate degree in psychology and masters work at the University of Illinois in Urbana. While in central Illinois, she taught at the university lab school supervising student teachers, working with preschoolers and their families and teaching classes. She spent three years at Chicago Child Care Society teaching in a multi-age setting and two years teaching in TCS's parent toddler program. She has lived in Boise for thirteen years with her husband and three daughters, all TCS alumni. Mary has been an active volunteer and substitute teacher in her children's classes and looks forward to her sixth year teaching in the 3-4s.

### **Julie Gill - 2-3s Teacher**

Julie is beginning her 17th year teaching at TCS. She has taught in the Parent-Toddler class, Young 3s, 3-4s, 4-5s, All Days, and Extended Day Primary program. Before teaching at TCS, Julie was a teacher at Boise Head Start. She has two children, TCS alumni. Julie has her CDA, and has studied Elementary Education and Child Care and Development at BSU and Liberal Arts at Albertson College. She lives with her husband, Al, her two children, and her dog Cinnamon.

### **Mark Zimmermann - 4-5-6s Teacher**

Mark has an AA Degree in Child Care and Development and a BA in Applied Science with Emphasis in Child Care and Development from BSU. He has been a graduate assistant in the Masters Early Childhood Program at the BSU School of Education. Mark is beginning his 22<sup>nd</sup> year teaching at TCS. Mark is a former president of the local and state chapters of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Mark enjoys camping and travel, and walking.

### **Betsy Robinson - 4-5s Teacher**

Betsy received a BS in Child Development and Family Relationships with a specialty in Early Childhood Education from Colorado State University. She graduated with honors and also studied child development at Iowa State University. Betsy has taught for 26 years. She has taught 3-4s and 4-5s and in the Parent/Toddler program at other schools in Boise. Betsy is in her 14<sup>th</sup> year at TCS and has taught in the 3-4s, 4-5s and Afternoon Kindergarten. Betsy enjoys travel, reading, gardening, exercise and working with teenagers as well as young children. Betsy has been married to Kerry for 36 years and has two grown children.

### **Patty Head - 4-5s Teacher**

Patty received her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from the University of Idaho and Master of Arts in Education, emphasis in Early Education from the University of Alabama Birmingham and Boise State authoring a thesis on mentorship for administrators, master teachers and first year early childhood teachers. A 20 year veteran, Patty has taught first grade, Kindergarten, preschool, and for two years was the 3-4s teacher at TCS. Patty completed an internship to become a Child Life Specialist at St. Luke's Hospital and is a certified EMT. She has been married for 33 years to Alan

---

*Did you know?*

*\*All 2009-2010 faculty members are returning staff.*

*\*At The Children's School, the average length of employment for teachers is 8.5 years.*

*\* Andrea Laird, administrative assistant, is returning for her 14<sup>th</sup> year.*

*\*Cindy Finch, director, is returning for her 17<sup>th</sup> year, 9<sup>th</sup> year as Executive Director.*

and is a mother to two grown children. After a ten year "retirement", Patty is thrilled to be in her fifth year at The Children's School.

### **Nicole Shadduck - All Day Preschool Teacher**

Nicole graduated from BSU in 1997 with a BA in Elementary Education with an endorsement in Early Childhood Education. Nicole has worked with infants and toddlers in an at-risk program for teen mothers and in Kindergarten in a Boise public school. She has started developing and presenting workshops at conferences for early childhood professionals. Nicole joined the TCS staff in January 1998. She is the editor of the school newsletter. She is married and has a teenage son. Nicole enjoys reading, exploring new local restaurants and spending time with family and friends.

### **Lynn Hanson - All Day Preschool Teacher**

Lynn is in her eighth year of teaching at TCS. She has a BA in Child Care and Development and is working towards her MA in Reading. She has taught K-8 in a one room school house in Yellow Pine. She lives with her husband and has four grown children. She enjoys quilting, sewing, and art.

### **Tonya Palsulich - 2-3s Teacher, All Day Preschool Teacher**

Tonya received a BA in Human Development and Child Study from Stephens College in Missouri. She joined the staff of TCS in December 2000. She is married and has two sons. Tonya enjoys music, reading and traveling.

### **Susan Gardner - Primary Teacher**

Susan received her BA in Elementary Education, with a minor in English, from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. She has taken post graduate classes at the University of Minnesota. She has taught public school in grades K through 3 in the Idaho communities of Salmon, Leadore, and Emmett before moving to Boise and working at TCS. Susan is in her 14<sup>th</sup> year of teaching at TCS. She has a daughter (a former TCS student) and three stepsons with her husband, Dick. Susan enjoys life with her family, traveling, camping, and exploring the West!

### **Mary Helen May - Primary Teacher**

Mary Helen received her BS in Elementary Education with an Emphasis in Early Childhood from Oregon College of Education (Western Oregon University). She taught Kindergarten at Adams, Roosevelt and Garfield Elementary Schools in Boise from 1973-1978. She helped facilitate workshops for the new kindergarten program. Mary Helen taught in K-3 classrooms in Oregon public schools. She then moved to Wyoming and began her preschool teaching career. She taught toddlers, 3-4s and 4-5s. Mary Helen has continued her education, taking classes in early childhood curriculum at a variety of universities. She joined the staff of TCS in 1998 and taught in the 3-4s and 4-5s and toddlers programs. This will be her eighth year teaching Primes. Mary Helen is married and has 3 grown children.

### **Ruthee Fuentes – Extended Day Primary and All Day Preschool Teacher**

Ruthee joined the staff of TCS in May 2005 after completing an internship in the All Days class. She is currently pursuing an Associates in Early Childhood

---

### **Where is the director's office?**

*Cindy's office is located in the Smith House, located on the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> St. and Thatcher. The Smith House is used for office space, supply storage, and meeting areas.*

*To talk with Cindy, there are a variety of ways to contact her.*

*\*By phone—  
343-0262, her direct line*

*\*By mail, her school mailbox is located on the front office door.*

*\*E-mail  
[director@tcsboise.org](mailto:director@tcsboise.org)*

*She is a daily presence in the school building. Look for her in the hallways, classrooms, and playyards.*

---

Development at Penn Foster College. Ruthee graduated from Nampa High School with her career pathway also in Early Childhood Development. She has been involved in many camps and youth activities over the past several years. Ruthee taught the infant-toddler class and assisted the preschool class at New Horizon. She enjoys reading, fishing, traveling, volunteering in her community and spending time with her family in her spare time.

### **Taira Guerrero – 3-4-5s and 4-5-6s Teacher**

Taira received her BA from Boise State University in Early Childhood Studies and Early Childhood Special Education in May 2006. Some of her student teaching experiences include working in the Boise School District and with Spanish-speaking families in the Nampa area with the Idaho Health and Welfare Department. In the fall of 2005 she spent eight weeks completing her student teaching in the 3-4-5s and 4-5-6s classes at TCS. While finishing her undergraduate work at Boise State University, she was employed at the BSU Children's Center for five years and taught in the looping program for infants and toddlers as well as several preschool classes. During the summer months, she spends her time in Erendira, B.C., Mexico on a work project focused on providing an educational opportunity for children living in the poverty of Mexican labor camps. She also enjoys traveling, spending time with friends and family, reading, and exploring the outdoors.

### **Lisa Wirtanen – 3-4-5s Teacher**

Lisa has worked in the field of early childhood education for 25 years as a teacher, staff development coordinator, director, accreditation facilitator, sexuality educator, parent education facilitator, adjunct faculty member and curricula developer. She is the parent of two children, both TCS alumni. Lisa enjoys friends, music, reading, hiking, and traveling.

### **David Rodenstein – Extended Day Primary Teacher**

David began working with children in a volunteer program at Madison Elementary School. He has been involved with TCS since 2003. David has AAS in Child Care and development and is working on a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Studies at BSU. David enjoys gardening, hiking, and collecting vintage vinyl.

### **Sarah O'Dell - All Day Preschool and Parent/Toddler Program Teacher**

Sarah has been involved in the Early Childhood field for 11 years. Before teaching at TCS, she taught all day 3-4-5s and toddlers at a local NAEYC school, where she also participated in the Children and Conflict project as a community participant. At TCS, Sarah has taught Extended Day Primes, Summer Primes, and 3-4-5s. She has a CDA and is continuing to study Elementary Education at BSU. Sarah is excited to be at TCS as a teacher and as a parent.

---

### **CELL PHONES**

*from the Parent Handbook, December 2008*

*Cell phones are a fact of life today, and we understand that at TCS. We hope that under most circumstances parents are able to finish cell phone conversations prior to entering the school. If you carry a cell phone in the school please turn it off or place the ringer on vibrate. If you need your phone in the school and receive a phone call while in a classroom, please go to the coffee room or outdoors to talk. That way we are all working together to respect children's time and experience at school and using our parent/child/teacher time together to communicate and focus on school issues.*

---

## Welcome to...

We would like to welcome the following children and their families to our school this year.

Family names removed to protect children's privacy.

---

### ***New Family Orientation***

*Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>*

*7:00-8:00 PM*

*An evening with the director to talk about the school's philosophy and meet other families who are joining our community this school year.*

*Snacks provided; Cindy will also give a tour to families who haven't seen our full facility.*

*Child care is not provided for this event.*

---

The Children's  
School

1015 N. 8th St.  
Boise, ID 83702

PHONE:  
208-343-6840

FAX:  
208-429-8153

E-MAIL:  
info@tcsboise.org

---

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

## Carnival News

By Heidi B. and Amy S.

The Big Tops are going up on Saturday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, as we celebrate the Fall Carnival.

For those who have never been to the Carnival it is loads of fun for the whole family. There will be games, crafts, food & drinks, raffle prizes and more. Not only do the children have a great time, but it is an opportunity for the children (and parents) to feel a part a strong school community. It is the only school event where the whole family (including grandparents) can come together as a group and strengthen relationships outside of the classroom.

In addition to a great time, the Carnival is a fundraiser. It is one of two main annual fundraisers at the school; the Auction, which raises money for scholarships and the Carnival, which funds continuing education for our teachers. Due to the funds from the Carnival, last year thirteen teachers were able to work with Idaho State University for the Ramps and Pathways project (which many of you may have seen the benefits of in the classrooms). Two teachers were able to travel to Dallas for the National Association for the Education of Young Children conference. Four teachers were able to attend a day long conference giving them an opportunity to collaborate with public and private schools all over the area on documenting learning.

During these difficult financial times, so much more is expected from our teachers and this fundraiser lets them know how much we appreciate their amazing dedication to our children.

The success of the Carnival is reliant on the generosity of our school community. So please sign up to volunteer and/or donate items. Also if you know people or organizations, who would donate items needed for the carnival operation and/or raffle/silent auction, let us know. If you have any questions or want to know how to help, please contact us.

## Important Dates...

- \*Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, Parents for TCS Meet and Greet, 7:00-8:30 p.m., See your family's mailbox for your invitation and more information.
- \*Monday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, Parents for TCS meeting, See Friday Updates for details.
- \*Monday, October 5<sup>th</sup> - Parent - Toddler Classes start.
- \*Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, New to TCS Family Orientation, 7:00-8:00 p.m. See sidebar in this issue for more information.
- \*Saturday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, SCHOOL CARNIVAL, 3:00-6:00. See article on this page for more information.
- \*Monday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, Annual TCS Board of Directors meeting, School Community invited.