

## A Child Becomes Office

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**From:** A Child Becomes Preschool <office=achildbecomes.org@mail125.us2.mcsv.net> on behalf of A Child Becomes Preschool <office@achildbecomes.org>  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 29, 2012 11:49 PM  
**To:** Ann, Brenna and CB  
**Subject:** Newsletter, February, 2012

It's nearly February! Check inside for a note from our Director, school business updates, service projects, classroom wrap ups and our monthly parent education column.

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# A Child Becomes... PRESCHOOL

## From the Director

Happy February (almost), the month of "Joy, Love and Valentines," as well as the birthday month of two esteemed Presidents, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. These two themes create perfect opportunities for interesting dialogue with your children.

**MONEY** – talk about coins and bills and whose faces we see on them. This can help children to learn their value as well as the names of these important people. Children enjoy discovering whose face is on the coins they sometimes hold. Tell stories about these people, for example, Abe carried his mail in his tall top hat, AND he was 6 feet 7 inches tall himself. Kids make the connections between these historical figures and their faces on the one and five dollar notes. Use this month to talk about and count pennies, quarters, ones, and fives together! Count by 5's! And celebrate the significance of two very important past presidents and yes we close banks and schools in their honor!

**VALENTINES DAY** - we will have parties in each of the classes. Children are asked to bring in a valentine for each of their classmates. We ask that all cards be signed by you or your child but NOT ADDRESSED to their classmates. This is a crucial detail as handing out is much easier! More detailed information will be available via your Monday letter from your classroom teacher.

At the end of the Newsletter this month you will find my Parent Education Column with a discussion of Life Skill #4 making connections with others-our human connectedness and how these two skills help to create joy, love, and peace in our quest for a happy/ier life from childhood through adulthood. As well, it's a busy month here at the school with lots of exciting activities and adventures! Read on...

## School Business

### School Calendar

School will be closed for Winter Break, February 20-24. Please check the [school calendar](#) for other important dates and holidays.

### Staff Updates

Teacher Shelley will be in Africa from 2/14- 3/6.

The office staff will be available to answer any questions you have in my absence. Here's the crew:

CB – Mondays

Brenna – Tuesdays

Ann – Wednesdays and Thursdays afternoons

### Scholastic Book Orders

We expect January orders in next week – those will be sent home in canvas bags as soon as they arrive! Thanks for your orders, we receive free books for the school when you order for your kids! Scholastic flyers for February have been distributed this week. Orders are due by end of day on Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup>. You can log onto the scholastic website and use our code to place all orders online. Find login information [on our website](#).

### Registration 2012-13

All returning families should have received in the mail, a registration packet for fall 2012. Please remember that in order to assure placement, your application must be turned in by Friday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>. Applications can be downloaded off [our website](#). Please [contact the office](#) with any additional questions you have.

## Bad Weather Reminder

I hope everyone was able to enjoy all the snow we had and that it was easy to get information about our school's status. A school wide email was sent out, we posted the information on our website and Facebook page and alerted the WS Blog. Should we have any additional weather concerns, we'll use these same means to keep you updated.

## Service Projects



### Book Drive for South Africa

We have close to 350 books now! Thanks so much for your continued support, everyday more and more books come in. I know we can reach our goal of 1000! Ask your friends and neighbors if they'd like to clean out some books and help start a library -- reference books, encyclopedias, teacher manuals, these are all highly desired too. I can't wait to meet some of the kids who will benefit from our generosity! As many of you know, Ralph and I will be headed back to South Africa from mid February to early March. I hope to be able to travel to and meet those in our school, we're still waiting to be assigned a specific school and I'm hopeful we'll have that by the time I leave. Thanks again for helping with this special project!

93% of schools in South Africa do not have libraries! Our goal is to collect **1000 total books**. We will also **need to raise \$500** to ship the books over to South Africa. We have joined an organization, [African Library Project](#), in New Orleans that will match us up with a school and then ship the books for us – which means they'll handle the processing through customs and distribution.

We are collecting books to support a primary school in Swaziland, a small kingdom in Southern Africa. The primary school teaches children from preschool to 4th grade. The books we collect should be suitable for this age group. Please see the guidelines below for more information on desirable books. Ralph and I will be headed back to South Africa in mid February and hope to visit the school and take pictures of the library that will house the books we collect and donate!

The books are lined up in the social hall and we're learning to count by 10's, just as we did for our food drive! Our deadline for collecting books and funds is April 6th, 2012. If

we do not make this deadline, we will continue the drive in the fall - but I think we can do it! Please bring new or gently used books into school!

### **Book guidelines**

- Baby board books
- Children's picture books
- Children's fiction and non-fiction
- Early readers
- BIG books
- Teacher's resource books for school libraries
- Children's dictionaries/picture dictionaries
- Encyclopedias less than 15 years old
- Children's encyclopedias/picture encyclopedias
- Children's thesauruses
- Paperback textbooks in math, English, geography, health, and science at appropriate level (kindergarten to 6th grade)
- Books with universal themes (friendships, animals, love)
- Children's health books
- Accurate up-to-date atlases
- Books about Africa or African-Americans
- Educational children's science and literary magazines in good condition
- Brain teasers, flash cards, educational games and puzzles

Again, thanks for your help. I know I have dozens of unused books on Enya's shelves that could use a fresh reader!

## **Play Yard Work Party**

The play yard clean up day is NEXT Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup> from 9AM-3PM. A BIG THANK YOU to all who have volunteered your time and resources to help get things in ship shape! We'll be removing the gravel and installing cedar play chips, turning over the garden beds, and general clean up. There'll be snacks, lunch, warm beverages and great company! There's always room for more to help. Drop by if you can, we'd love to put you to work! Please email [Ann Limbaugh](#) or [Ellen Zoffel](#) with any questions or to let them

know if you can help out!

## Classroom Wrap Ups for January

### Caterpillars

The 2's class arrived back eager to start school again and that was exciting for Teacher Ruth and me.

We started the month off by talking about our field trip to the fire station to deliver toys and who else in our communities help us every day. Every student came up with a response and some were ones we often take for granted, like school bus drivers. From these discussions we learnt why we have fire drills and practice "give me five." We were interrupted the next week by having just one school day before the snow sent us all home. The students came back to school very excited about the snowmen they helped build so we incorporated this interest with our shape theme by learning what shapes you need to build a snowman. On the easels we supplied only yellow, blue and red paint and acted very surprised when our artists realized they now had green and purple. This month we celebrate two birthdays: Finn and Willie. Happy Birthday!!

### Butterflies

We had a great re-entry from our long holiday break! We introduced classroom jobs so be sure to ask your child, "What is your job for the week?" We have also been working on successful participation in our ongoing classroom procedures. Students have the opportunity to earn a sticker or stamp for our new classroom chart if we see them actively putting toys away or performing other desirable classroom behaviors like kindness towards others, self-control in lines, and appropriate manners during snack time. We are focusing on "doing the right thing at the right time."

This month has also been about art! We learned how to read the word A-R-T! We HEART ART! ART makes us SMART! We've talked about line, shapes, and a lot about colors. We made color wheels, we talked about primary and tertiary colors and spent time mixing colors and did art/color math! We met many fabulous artists like impressionist Claude Monet, and modernist painters, Jackson Pollock, Piet Mondrian, and Marsden Hartley. Through these artists we studied color, shapes, numbers and we talked about how to build a painting, using foreground (larger objects) and background (smaller objects.)

As we move into this second half of the school year are focusing on letter and number recognition. We will continue to practice our fine motor skills through writing the first letter of our first name on our projects. We will also work on recognizing our own name in a variety of places throughout the classroom. You can help with this at home by pointing out letters to your children.

## Sunbeams

We began our month with a discussion of winter weather and animals that hibernate. When the snow finally came in January, I think kids were over the moon! We have learned how to read a thermometer and that 42 degrees will not bring snow. We need snow clouds and 32 degrees! We learned a song to remember this. Students were also eager to talk about their winter break activities. We are also having fun talking about past and present activities, yesterday, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, etc.

On January 9<sup>th</sup> we found the North Pole and Arctic on a large earth covered with snow: we learned that this is mostly frozen sea and all about the animals and people that live there. We then tipped the earth over and also saw snow and ice, the South Pole! But this time we saw frozen land and it's much, much colder. We had 2 snow days so unfortunately did not get a chance to talk about Penguins! But Grandma Dorothy kept her penguin cookies cool in the freezer (ironic, hey?) and we had our penguin story on Thursday the following week. We are now fully in the midst of space discovery with our Planets and Stars Unit. We began with a trip to the Planetarium and saw stars, planets and several Constellations. We have discovered now that the earth moves around the sun and stars/sun do not move! We are having fun making star pictures-constellations and painting planets!

## Parent Education & Information

### Registration for Public School Kindergarten

\*\*Lafayette Elementary has canceled their Open House originally scheduled for this week. Please visit [their website](#) for more information.\*\*

Local public schools are gearing up for fall registration. Many schools have scheduled dates for an Open House, a time for you to visit the school, talk to teachers and

administrators and visit classrooms. Open enrollment for 2012-13 begins February 27 and runs through March 9, 2012. Choice forms will be available starting February 27. Visit the [Seattle Public School District website](#) for more information on enrollment.

## Parent Education Column

I saw a recent documentary on love and making connections named, *I AM*. The director, the subject of the film, had everything; money, fancy houses, a private jet, and was living the high life. A tragic bicycle accident awakened a new part of him and dramatically changed his outlook on life. His head injury led him to question everything. What makes us happy? What is wrong with the world? What is right with the world? During the course of interviewing insightful minds like the Dali Lama, Tom Hartman, Desmond Tutu and more, he discovered that there is a fundamental truth in life; that we are all connected by an innate need for love, joy and acceptance.

This is in contrast to the lifestyles in which we are bombarded by the notion that we need to accumulate things to be happy and that competition leads to success. In summary, the most fundamental happiness comes from sharing and helping, and cooperating with each other. What I have found, being a teacher in Early Childhood is that these innate characteristics come naturally to children and must be nurtured throughout their lives, and not be lost to the real world.

In a study of animals and their instincts, scientists found that all animals cooperate together within their species. And they only take what they need. For example, a study of the Red Deer when deciding on which water hole to choose from, wait for 51% to choose before all going. They do not follow one leader. It is a group decision not a solitary leader's decision. This has been discovered in almost all animal groups from ants to birds. Birds fly in flocks using a democratic method of flight. They vote a hundred times a second on the direction. It is within this type of "working together cohesively" we as humans experience joyfulness and compassion in our connections with others.

So how do I help encourage these connections from the film to our preschoolers in the classroom? 21<sup>st</sup> century thinking teaches us to work cohesively together not only as teachers, but also within the classrooms we find ways to create a democratic and cooperative environment whereby students and teachers connect. We can apply making connections in our thinking and learning, which is also at the heart of our learning.

Learning to work together is a crucial part of the development of healthy children. We, at A Child Becomes Preschool, pride ourselves in being child centered. I believe that learning to work together is one of the most important aspects that helps to create a happy and joyful environment. Ward states that joy is a mood and a state of being that is long term and of enduring significance. It is a result of connectedness (Ward, 2008). The child who succeeds at writing his name or the child that learns to ride her bike despite numerous attempts and falls, experiences the process of joy. It has been discovered that this feeling of joy and love is first seen by the middle of the first year when the child comes in contact with a significant social other and when the child is able to demonstrate mastery over particular events. The presence of affective joy (experiencing the relationships to others) and cognitive joy (the sense of accomplishment in achieving an understanding) continues through life.

So, can we conclude that making connections with others as well as experiencing a sense of accomplishments beginning at a very young age, be attributes that we can carry throughout our lives? Ward states that most of our greatest joys in life, are in our daily discoveries (Ward, 2008.) Now it is our role as teachers to support daily joyfulness and create connections in the classroom and find joy in the learning that can last a lifetime. We can do this by operating a democratic classroom, encouraging exploration and supporting child initiated inquiries and activities.

Joyfulness is experienced when children are connected with each other and the teachers. When they have time to explore, and have dialogue with others. When choices reflect their interests. When they experience respect and support from teachers and peers and finally in knowing and understanding their own uniqueness.

The film director spent a portion of his life discovering what makes us happy, what it takes to maintain joy. We can begin to answer that within the preschool classroom. Now, as a community here in the Northwest, most of us are fully equipped with the skills necessary to help our children continue to carry this throughout their lives.

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