

TriBeCa Community School Newsletter

February 5, 2010

General Notices

TWITTER

In case of emergencies, we will post messages on Twitter. Our name there: **TCS_NYC**

For example, when it comes to school closures due to snowstorms, we will post a message on Twitter. This message may be sent as a text message to your cell phone.

We will not use twitter for trivial/ everyday announcements.

To receive a text message, please sign up for a free twitter account, and enable your phone to receive texts (standard text messaging rates may apply from your carrier. twitter does not charge for that service). Once you open an account on twitter, go to: *Settings> Mobile*, and follow the instructions there.

Next week's snack:

Tricia Williams (chefanator@mac.com), a certified holistic nutritionist and chef (also a parent in our school!) plans and prepares our snack. For next week, the menu is (snack may change without notice):

Monday: Medley of Dried Fruits

Tuesday: Grape Trio: Black, Red, Green

Wednesday: Crackers

Thursday: Veggie Sticks and Bean Dip

Friday: Happy Herbert's Organic Pretzels

Mid-Winter Break:

This is a gentle reminder that school will be closed for mid- winter break Feb 15 2010 through Feb 19 2010. We will reopen as usual Mon Feb 22, 2010.

Save the date!

Last Parents Workshops of the year

Monday April 12, 2010: RM2

Wednesday April 14, 2010: RM1, RM3

Thursday April 15, 2010: RM5

Wednesday April 21, 2010: RM6

Room 1

Parent's Workshop

We'd like to thank all those who attended and participated in the Parent's Workshop this past Monday. It was wonderful to socialize with all of you whom we see both often and not.

Anyone who was not able to attend the workshop is welcome to set up a time to view the slide documentation that was presented.

There are so many things we have been working in our room. With all of these explorations comes extensive documentation, and we had prepared a great deal of this documentation to present Monday evening, and thus apologize for not being able to show everything as planned. We thank you and appreciate your interest in your child's work at our school. The link we build between home, school and community is vital to each child's growth and progress in education.

As planned, photos taken during the Parents Workshop were presented to the children the following morning during morning meeting. Each child instantly recognized his or her parent, and the activity the parent was performing in the photo. As a group, we discussed what had taken place the previous evening at school. The children listened intently and became curious to explore the music mobile and watercolor mural they had seen in the photos. In the mini atelier, the children "oohed" at the bright and colorful mural, and were shown the specific images their parents had created. During work-time, several of the children took to painting at the wall themselves- even tracing over the

beautiful outlines of their parents' images.

The musical mobile was presented during Music and Movement Time as an instrument to use while singing. The children experimented with the new object by pushing, pulling, swinging and shaking it. Unique sounds were created by an interesting combination of materials.

The greatest "hit" has been the mailbox. As mentioned before, when viewing the workshop photos taken from the night before, the children were able to see that their parents had been writing something for them. We brought out the mailbox and explained to the class that the parents had written letters and left them in the mailbox for the children to receive. Each child was able to find his or her own letter and open it. We read each aloud. Many children held onto their letters throughout the day. The letters remain inside each child's family binder where they can access it easily when needed.

The children's reactions to the traces were exciting. Thank you again for your participation!

Room 2

Thank you to all the parents who attended our 2nd Parents' Workshop of this year. We appreciate how thoughtful you were in making "Tickets to Room 1," writing messages and mixing new paint colors. It's clear that the messages you left are very important to the children, as they handle them gently, re-read them multiple times and keep them safe in

their cubbies. OW wanted to look at a note left for HH, and HH started to hand it over but stopped himself, saying "*No, you can't. It's my very special thing.*" They were also very excited to see the paints you had mixed for them. VR very enthusiastically shouted "It's blue! They made blue!" and painted a train with it. DB also seemed to place special

importance on her color, painting with deep concentration and purposefulness. We have not implemented the “Ticket to Room 1” system yet, so the children won’t see your work until next week.

Light Projection in the Building Area

To encourage more intricate and thoughtful structure building, we had been experimenting with various provocations in the block area. We added mirrors, various open-ended materials, and photos of familiar NYC structures. On Thursday, we added a brand- new overhead projector to the block area, projecting an image of the Empire State Building. The children were immediately attracted to the area and to the projector itself, and many children approached the area. To our surprise, the blocks remained largely untouched. Instead, the children extended dramatic play into that area: OP stood on a block, with the light shining on him, shouting “*The show is going to start!*” As with anything new, the children are encouraged to fully explore the new medium/ equipment. We are looking forward to welcoming their building structures, incorporating the overhead projector, and we are equally intrigued by the prospect of the children creating new games and dramatic play themes inspired by the light.

Snails in the Classroom

At morning meeting, we asked for volunteers for a special snail project. NM and NF offered to help. We said that it would now be their job to feed the snails. We wanted to know what they thought snails ate. NM responded with “Carrots and dirt.” He was asked to explain his answer and said that “*Cages have dirt, so they eat dirt.*” We are going to conduct experiments to answer this question, hypothesizing about what they might eat and then watching to see if the items left in there are eaten or passed over.

Books Read in Room 2

A few of you asked questions related to reading and books, so we have decided to provide everyone with a list of books the class is currently enjoying.

- *Little Pea, Little Hoot and Little Oink*, 3 books by Amy Krouse Rosenthal
- *Not a Box*, and *Not a Stick* by Antoinette Portis
- *The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry and The Big Hungry Bear* by Don Wood and Audrey Wood
- *I Ain’t Gonna Paint No More* by Karen Beaumont
- *Spoon*, by Amy Krouse Rosenthal

Room 3

As you know, the children have been signing themselves into class using name tags. We recently have begun to point to a child’s name on the sign in wall with out sounding it out, and at times, a Room 3 student will call out the child’s name without any

assistance from their teachers.

Lately, we have seen a tremendous growth in Room 3 with conflict resolution, to telling stories, spending more time in the building and clay area, and in the mini-atelier.

Clay

The children love working with clay. We have recently heard the children say they are making “a silly man” a “dragon” or an “alligator.” If you are looking for something to do with your child at home during the winter, working with clay would be great!! You can even use some open ended materials such as sticks, wire, beads, and leaves and see where it takes you.

Mini-Atelier

In our Mini- Atelier area, the students are spending more time on their paintings, and are filling up the small glasses with the watercolor paint of their choice. The children also like to point out to their teachers what they have painted. Be on the look out for a display of some of the children’s work in our dramatic play area. It’s a beautiful sight to see!!

Dramatic Play

Our Dramatic Play area has recently become very popular. Just the other day, a few students dressed up and said they were doctors and took care of another student. Our loft became the

doctors’ office, and they used the open-ended materials from the kitchen and said “this is medicine for him, he needs it to feel better.”

Block Area

We have some very serious builders in Room 3. We have heard everything from a “fire station” a “chimney” and a “zoo” Recently the children built a farm for the horse and the other animals. One child said “quick, quick the horse needs to get in there to be with his family.”

As you know we have been working with rhyming as part of “**Fee, Fie Phonemic Awareness**”. Some great books to read to your child would be “The Cat in the Hat” or “Green Eggs and Ham.” We read “The Cat in the Hat” this week and the students responded enthusiastically. On a fun note, we asked the children at the end of the story “who would tell their mom Thing one and Thing two messed up their home?” It was 50/50 some children said they would tell their mom, and some said “I wouldn’t tell my mommy, because she would get mad.”

Room 4: Atelier

Room 1

Room 1 children had an exciting visit from their parents on Monday for the parents’ workshop. The artworks created by the parents were large watercolor paintings set up on the wall in their atelier. The children working with the watercolors this week were very engaged with watercolors on the wall,

and also at the new table we added in their space. Since the children have been visiting in Room 2 and mixing colors at their table, we decided to add a table in RM1 atelier.

Room 2

Monday night the parents in Room 2 visited the atelier and were asked to mix

a special color their child. The students were immediately intrigued by the colors on the following day and experimented with them creating new colors. The provocation was also added to their projection by a painting of Chaim Soutine by the artist Modigliani. The image is a large portrait using colors they have yet to explore. As we move along with color mixing the introduction of more representational images will be added to inspire their concepts of portraiture.

Room 3

Room 3 students have begun painting with easels. Their entire painting experience has changed. The children appear more engaged in the act of painting. While working at the easels, the children explore mark making, specifically within the gravity of their drips. They have also been working for longer periods of time and layering colors in a more deliberate expression. A display of their work is up in their dramatic play area and we decided to

add an image done by Pat Steir because of its striking similarity to the work of the children.

Room 5

Room 5 children began working with tempera paints this week in both morning and afternoon classes. They began using two colors on the lazy Susan, so they can all practice working and sharing their materials. They will be slowly introduced to new colors every week having another color to mix with. This week they were working with red and white.

Room 6

Room 6 students continue working in their mini atelier with watercolors. Small groups are coming into the atelier for constructing clay buildings. This week we took a walk outside and examined the buildings in the neighborhood for inspiration. The afternoon children have continued working on mono prints using tempera paints.

Room 5

Mini-Atelier

This week we have started to work with tempera paints in the mini atelier. After a long exploration and re-visiting of watercolors, we made a decision to introduce a new type of paint in our classroom. We are interested to see if the children will work with this paint differently than they did with the previous medium. So far, the children have commented on the thickness of the paint and the bold color it leaves on the paper. We started our exploration with white and red paint, hoping to initiate

observations regarding the mixing of the colors. Children have identified the white color, red color and pink color made when mixing. The children have also been given the option of working on black or white paper. The paper and paint is being presented on the table in the mini-atelier, and this is the children's first experience sitting at a table, with a chair, painting. Prior to this week, all painting was done on the light table with the children positioned on the floor. We have already noticed more concentration and a greater attention to

detail. We look forward to continuing this exploration over the next few weeks, Please continue to send your children to school in clothing that will not be ruined by the paint. Thanks!

Creating a Classroom Material

This week the children learned how to make homemade play-dough for the class to use as a material. The teachers and students have been concocting the dough first thing in the mornings, and the ingredients include: salt, flour, cream of tartar, oil & water. At first we started adding a few drops of watercolor into the dough, creating certain shades of colored dough. The colored dough was presented on the mini-atelier table and the children used all of their senses to explore it. The teachers observed comments such as, "It feels like marshmallow" and "It smells funny". The children chose the colors that they wanted to work with, and so far we've used pink and green dough. The dough was recently offered to the children on the light table in small, large and circular pieces. The light table was covered with a large sheet of the children's watercolor work that possesses different areas for light to shine through them. Some of our questions for further investigation include: How will the children's interactions with the dough change as they continue their work on the light table? Will the underneath painting play a part in their exploration? What role will color play?

Mailbox

This week in Room 5, we have been exploring the mailbox and small personal letters the parents made for

the children during the Parent workshop. One of the mothers in class made a flag on top of the mailbox. We video recorded her while she explained that when the flag is up there is mail in the mailbox and when the flag is down the mailbox is empty.

We decided to introduce the mailbox during our morning meeting. We showed the box to the children and asked them what they thought it was. One of the children said: "Mail. A mailbox". Afterwards we showed the children the video recorded during the Parent workshop.

We opened the mailbox and the children picked up their own letter(s) and said: "Read". Here are some quotes of how the children responded, while we read the letters out loud:

Child 1: "It's mine...".

Child 2: "It's from my mommy".

Child 3: "I want to take it home".

Child 4: Had a big smile and looked down at the letter

The children, who received a letter/(s), put them in their family albums, so they can take them out and go back and revisit the experience whenever they feel like it.

The mailbox will stay permanently in our classroom to support exploration in the writing center – a place where connections and relationships can grow through communication and exchange. Families and friends, please feel free to continue write letters/postcards and put them in the mailbox in Room 5 or mail them to the school.

Room 6

Light and Shadow

We have been continuing our exploration of sand on the projector. In the past few days we have removed the sand and added wild rice and white rice and a variety of beans to alter the shapes and textures.

A small group of children has begun exploring their shadows created by the light from the projector. They are using their investigation of shadows to explore measurement and relative size. Their findings will be shared the larger group.

Mini Atelier

In addition to last week's addition of twigs and sticks to the watercolor table, thin pieces of wire were added. Wire was selected because it is less porous than sticks and make the transfer of color more direct. This new addition was also inspired by the splatter work that some children have been exploring.

Gross Motor

We have introduced several new running games and have been taking small groups of children to Room 7, the entrance area near Room 5, to play them. Please send your children to school wearing comfortable shoes with rubber soles or leave them at school to change into so that your child may safely participate. So far the games have included Fruit Salad and Red Light Green Light 1, 2, 3.

Story Acting

We have restructured the story acting process in order to ensure that all

members of the class have the opportunity to participate. We now have a poster-sized list with the names of everyone in Room 6 in the order in which their stories will be performed. Names will be checked off as stories are performed. We have also started turning off the overhead lights and using the small lamps and the light from the projector, as several children have suggested, to help create a dramatic and theatrical atmosphere.

Concepts About Print

With the collaboration of one of our parent volunteers, we have been introducing the concept of books in a series. This will allow the children the opportunity to follow more complex plotlines and characters over several books. J.C.H and M.C.H's mom read Zen Shorts and Zen Ties by Jon J. Muth. She pointed out to the class that Muth is also the author of a book she read a previous week, Stone Soup. Recognizing elements of an author's signature style is an important part of literacy development. Along the same lines, we have been reading the three Miss Nelson books by Harry Allard: Miss Nelson is Missing!, Miss Nelson is Back and Miss Nelson Had a Field Day. As our story acting exploration continues, we will encourage children to recognize signature characteristics of their own writing and begin to understand the elements that help define them as authors with unique voices and visions.

Reminders

We are always looking for new songs to sing in our classroom. If you have any favorite songs that you sing at home,

please print out the lyrics and send them
in with your child so that we may sing
them together.