

# TriBeCa Community School Newsletter

## March 5, 2010

### General Notices

#### Save the Date

Last Parents Workshop of this school year (all 7:00-8:30PM), where we will share the work the children are doing here at the school:

**RM1:** Wednesday, April 14, 2010

**RM2:** Monday, April 12, 2010

**RM3:** Wednesday, April 14, 2010

**RM5:** Thursday, April 15, 2010

**RM6:** Tuesday, April 20, 2010

#### Snack for next week:

**Monday:** Oatmeal Cranberry Cookies (oats, spelt, butter, honey, baking soda, sea salt)

**Tuesday:** Pineapple

**Wednesday:** Trio of Dried Fruits

**Thursday:** Crudite with Ranch Dip (dip contains dairy)

**Friday:** Dinosaur Kale Chips and Cheddar Cheese

Tricia Williams is an accomplished executive chef, nutrition educator and chef instructor.

**FOOD MATTERS NYC**

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#### TriBeCa Family Festival

Please see flyer at the end of this newsletter

### Room 1

#### Toys from home

Since the beginning of the year we have welcomed the children to bring their favorite toys from home. We believe that the personal objects that the children bring to school can be a resource for teachers and students in many ways.

The toys tell us about the interests of the children. Since every toy in the class has to be shared, the presence of individual toys forces the children to learn that even if these objects are theirs, other children are allowed to use them, and take turns. Also, transitional objects help the child to feel safe and secure during the separation from the parents.

During the last week, however, we noticed how some children seem to spend the session more focused on their personal toys than engaging in the classroom with peers. We welcome the toys when they are a tool for socialization and discovery, a medium that can help the children connect with each other, but we don't want these objects to detract from the children's interaction with their classmates. Starting from next week we will still welcome the toys in our class at the beginning of the session, but after our morning meeting, we will collect them and we will give them back at the end of the session.

In this way, the children will still be free to show their favorite toys to their friends, but it will not influence their engagement in the classroom.

Please, help us during this process: if your child wants to bring a toy, explain to him/her that he/she will have to hand it after the morning meeting, but will get it back at the end of the session.

### **Literacy**

We keep collecting the stories of the children. It is interesting to notice the differences between the first stories that we collected in December and their recent work. With time, the stories have changed: not only has the grammar and the structure matured, but now it is also possible to notice common and constant threads and more structured "Plots" (Swimming, puppies and horses are frequently present in the story folder of the day). It is fascinating to observe how the children follow attentively the writing process.

During the dictation of the story, many children participate, observe and listen to the author, and many of them are always focused on the pencil and on the traces that the teacher leaves on the paper, ready to spot a familiar word.

If you have the opportunity, write for your children! It can be a fun activity that also stimulate their interest and curiosity about the writing process: sit next to them when you write your grocery's list, or offer them to write whatever they want.

### **Class "Pets"**

Throughout the year, the children have been given more and more responsibilities as fellow caretakers of their classroom. The students have helped to care for and maintain the various potted plants around the room. Once a week, one child is asked to aid a teacher in filling a watering can at the sink and watering each plant carefully. Also, as our snail investigations continue, so does the need to tend to and maintain their habitat. Any group of students exploring the snails on a given day is asked to rid the cage of any old food, and then add fresh vegetables. Afterwards, the children take turns using a misting bottle to spray the walls and dirt floor of the snail environment. The class has learned that snails need the water for nourishment and that they also prefer a moist environment. The children are eager to volunteer for and participate in these responsibilities.

## **Room 2**

### **Music**

We are working on a new approach to music and movement time, in which we will investigate how the children explore and respond to sound. Using a variety of open-ended and recycled materials, we will be working with the children to create instruments and explore the unique sounds each makes. In order to do this, we would like to ask families to help us collect interesting items to work with, such as old pots and pans, spoons, buckets, coffee cans, boxes, chopsticks, cartons, bottles, wrapping paper tubes...any item that you

come across that could potentially make sound. As this will be an ongoing investigation, we would appreciate new materials throughout the rest of the school year.

### **Block Area**

This week, NM and AG declared that they were going to build a house in the block area. They pulled every block from the shelves and piled them up in the middle of the block area, seemingly without an attempt to stack or arrange them. The teacher asked if that was the house. NM

said that it wasn't because it's too hard. We thought a model to look at might help them plan, so the next day we projected an image of three simple houses on the wall in the block area. After seeing the image, NM opted to play in the kitchen. AG was immediately inspired to build a fire house. JO brought a small taxi to the area and added a carwash to the side of AGs structure. HH picked up a block and pretended to put the fire out, stating: "we can pretend our clothes are fire suits." The next day, EL, BC and NM carefully constructed multiple houses and then imagined that they were pouring cement around them. As it seemed, this image helped them use the blocks more carefully and constructively than we had observed before, we will continue to provide various models based on what the children communicate about their building interests.

### **Reading**

This week, we began reading and later dramatizing the story Penguin, by Polly Dunbar. The children enjoy the formulaic story, following the main character Ben

through the pursuit of enticing his new pet penguin to speak. After hearing the teachers read the story, the children were encouraged to act out each scenario along with Ben. Doing this helps the children become more actively involved in the story, promoting reading recall and comprehension.

### **Paint**

This week we changed the projection image to a painting by Don Joint- a contemporary painter. This particular painting featured overlapping lines and geometric shapes in a range of vibrant colors. We noticed that the provocation has led to some students creating more defined shaped in their paintings. After looking at the image. VR realized that Thomas the Tank is made up of a square and circles. He painted a Thomas and then took a new piece of paper to paint a large blue circle which he identified as the wheels on the train. NF also painted large circles, working diligently on the outline of the circles to give them a more symmetrical shape.

## **Room 3**

Room 3 students have been off to a wonderful week.

We recently took a trip outside, and studied the snow. Many Room 3 children expressed their ideas on the snow. They told us that the snow is "white" and "it falls from the sky" or "it makes a crunchy sound when you step on it." The children love to go outside and experience the neighborhood. We're looking forward to the warmer weather and taking more trips outside!!

### **Clay**

We have some serious sculptures in Room 3. As you know they have been working with wire at the clay table. They have been bending, twirling, and sticking the wire in the clay. We have heard the children say they are making "a tree" a "monster" or "my mommy." Next week we plan on introducing more wire and tools such as pliers.

### **Mini-Atelier**

We have been working with watercolors, and painting with smaller paintbrushes. Consequently, this makes the children spend more time on their

paintings. Additionally, we have also noticed that some children will even work together on a painting. Some children have even begun to paint portraits. Next week we plan on reintroducing tempera paint, and black paper.

### **Blocks**

The block area has continues to be very popular since the beginning of the year. This week, the children decided to build a crate for one of the students, because they were playing house and the child needed a place to sleep. Last week, a few of Room 3 boys decided to build a fire truck using the blocks and some open ended materials.

### **Dramatic Play**

Room 3 children love to dress up. At times room 3 children will bring dramatic play into the loft area, setting up a house, a doctor's office, a pirate ship, or even a police station. When in the dramatic play area, we see room 3 children working and cooking together. We have also seen room 3 students help one another while putting on a costume.

On another note, room 3 children are really enjoying the mailboxes. One child made a note for a student that was absent, and wanted them to have a note when they came back to school.

## **Room 4: Atelier**

### **Room 1**

Room 1 has continued working with watercolors both at their table and on the easel-wall. As the children started exploring with splattering their paint to make new types of marks, we introduced droppers. A student from Room 6 introduced the new material from her own experiences in the process.

### **Room 2**

Room 2's clay group has been working on creating a snail environment containing many elements of the actual snail cage including, snails, food for the snails and objects for the snails to climb on and sleep in. A new painting was added to the projection in their mini atelier focusing on color and specific shapes. The children immediately responded to the shapes and began articulating them in their paintings.

### **Room 3**

Children in Room 3 started painting figures at their easels, now there will be small groups meeting to continue their representational dialogue. Next week, the clay table will be introduced to wire tools for cutting and manipulating the wire materials. The painting area will be switched back to tempera paints so the children experience working with them while working at their easels.

### **Room 5**

This week Room 5 added another color to their painting exploration. Using yellow, white and blue, the children experienced mixing their paints on white and black paper. Children from Room 6 have worked alongside children in Room 5 in their mini atelier.

### **Room 6**

Students in room 6 have continued observing themselves in mirrors while

working on their portraits. In the morning, children have begun coming to the atelier in small groups investigating tempera paints.

In the afternoon, the students are continuing their work with tempera paints.

## Room 5

### Sensory Table

When we returned to school on Monday the teachers in Room 5 found that the mud in our sensory table had dried and become extremely hard. We decided this was a perfect provocation to further the children's investigation about the transformation of the material. Several children asked, "What happened?" and others remarked that the mud felt "dry". Together with the teachers, the children worked to break up the hard dirt. They were presented with sticks and hammers that challenged their fine motor skills, and allowed them to experience some "real work". After this was done, the children were given spray bottles to re-wet the dirt, and once again see it transform. The children have really responded to the spray bottles, working on strategies to press the button down and make the water come out. We will continue to present different provocations at this table and we are excited to see what other ideas the children come up with.

### Mini-Atelier

This week, Monique and the teachers in Room 5 have added a new color addition to the painting exploration. Previously, we worked with one color (Red, Blue or Yellow) and white, in order to provoke questions regarding shades. This week, we added

two primary colors and white to see if the children were able to recognize some of the properties of mixing. The children were able to see that when they worked with the yellow and blue paint they made green marks on their papers. We will continue to slowly introduce more colors to the children, concentrating on the process of painting with tempera paints.

This week we, faculty, were fortunate to have a professional development session with Monique focusing on painting techniques. We learned about introducing children to a variety of different paintbrushes and questioning the children about the different markings they make. We look forward to incorporating this new information into our classroom in the weeks to come.

### Reminders

Thank you to all of the families who have continued to bring recycled and found materials to the classroom. We really appreciate you thinking of us and the children. Also, thanks to those who sent postcards and letters during their vacations. Keep them coming!

If you have not yet brought in wet wipes, please do so. We use them for a variety of purposes. Thank you for all your continued contributions and cooperation.

## Room 6

### Mini Atelier

As the children continue to explore watercolor, OS brought in seashells with a pen-like point. OS suggested we use these to paint, so the children used the shells to paint thin lines, as well as to spread out

pools of paint that they would create with the droppers. In addition to the shells, the children have been experimenting with color mixing, by using the dropper to place small amounts of different color paint into a

separate jar, stirring it, and then using a brush, dropper, or shell to create their work.

### **Light and Shadow**

On the light table, several children have been molding and shaping the moon sand and creating a series of holes in their structures—allowing the light from the light table to come through. The children’s interest in molding the moon sand and creating spaces for light to shine through inspired us to make play-dough with the children the children to mold and shape, while encouraging conversation about the way shaping the play-dough differently alters the light and shadow effect.

### **Mysteries**

Prior to meeting with Room 2 about the presence of ghosts in their classroom as well as in our classroom, a few children predicted that the ghost may travel from Room 6 to Room 2 through the pipes in the ceiling. Plans were drawn by HL and RG to show the route that the ghost may travel. After meeting with Room 2, the children of Room 6 have learned a few new things about the ghost. According to Room 2, their ghost is “nice” and “friendly,” thus does not need to be hunted/eliminated. Room 6 was surprised to hear this, since several children have commented on the fact that the ghost in Room 6 often destroys classroom materials and does so at night when no one is around. Further, Room 6 explained to Room 2 that they often look for

“footprints” to track the ghost and figure out where it may be at any given time. Room 2 explained that their ghost does not leave footprints, rather, it floats or flies around the classroom.

### **Games**

Our classroom game thread is still continuing with a new interest led by MR to create original board games for children to play and to be documented in our game book. MR presented her board game “Pound” to the class and has been teaching children how to play it. This game includes a game board, an accompanying map and instructions, game pieces for three players, and dice. Several children have stated an interest in creating board games, and we are interested to find out how these children will develop these games, the rules to play them, and negotiate with others while playing them.

### **Concepts About Print**

The children in our afternoon group have become interested in book making. They have been examining the parts of a book—particularly the way it is assembled and the ways in which words often accompany photos in storybooks. Over the next few days we will have the children share their books to the class, showing that books can be original and tell personally relevant stories.



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**2010  
Tribeca Family Festival  
STREET FAIR**

**Saturday, May 1st  
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM**

On Greenwich Street north of  
Chambers Street

For more information, please visit our website at  
[www.tribecafilm.com/festival](http://www.tribecafilm.com/festival)