

# TriBeCa Community School Newsletter

## March 19, 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:** Wednesday, April 21, 2010

#### Snack for next week:

**Monday:** Bananas

**Tuesday:** Farmstead Cheddar and Whole Grain Crackers

**Wednesday:** Clementines

**Thursday:** Ophelia's Veggie Selection, Green Goddess Dip

**Friday:** Snacking Superfood Granola

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

**FOOD MATTERS NYC**

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# school photos

**Group photos and individual portraits are coming!  
(Deadline for pre-shoot order: 04/12/10)**



**Please see flyer at the end of this newsletter**

### Room 1

#### Art and colors in our mini atelier

In our mini atelier the children have been working on the mural using watercolors.

During the last month, in order to help the children understand the media and to explore more freely, we made some small changes in the setting:

We offered different kinds of brushes, different sizes of paper, and we added a table in the space so that they can experiment how the watercolor moves and changes on vertical and horizontal surfaces.

We also add, a “mobile exhibit” of the work of the children to inspire them (please, feel free to stop in the class if you want to have a look!).

Two weeks ago, Monique showed them how to use the dropper, and the children took immediately a deep interest in this new tool.

With the droppers the children can control more easily the amount of color they want to spread on the paper, and they can produce more easily and more precisely different kind of shapes. The dropper also allows them to focus on the mixture of different color helps to slow down the chromatic transformations and the children can see the chromatic changes directly on the paper.

Also, the last week we add a third possible surface that the children can use to explore the droppers: we tape on the floor a huge white sheet.

We wonder if the children will try to use the droppers modifying their movements (regular, irregular, circular, zigzag,..) the velocity of their gesture (quick, slow, with pauses), exploring different spatial position (standing up, sitting next to the sheet, moving around the sheet...).

We already noticed different children using the tools in different ways:

Part of our children is more focused in the sensorial experience.

With A.B. and A.P, E.W. put her hand on the color, she smelled it and then she tried to drop the color while jumping or shaking quickly her hand, observing then the results and the “path of drop” that appeared on the paper.

Other children are more focused on the chromatic results.

Q.P. and F.H. observe how two different colors change on the paper when they overlap: Q.P. “I’m mixing. Mixing mixing mixing” he says moving the dropper on the paper to help the colors to melt together.

Also, many children are interested to the representative potential of the media:

M.J. Makes a squared shape: “It’s my bed. I made my bed” she says. She then uses the thin end of the dropper to make small lines and circles: “And this is me”. Then she makes another squared shape and she says “It’s a swimming pool”. H.D. and F.H. gather around the work of M.J. and then they try to imitate her results: H.D. “I made a swimming pool too!” pointing to a bright spot of color on her sheet.

F.H. “I have a swimming pool. Here, here” he tell to his friends and he indicates a large spherical closed shape.

We will keep observing how the children work with the different tools. It’s really fascinating observe how they can work in the same space and with the same materials but noticing and investigating so many different aspects of the same tool!

## Room 2

E.L recently became a big sister! Congratulations to her family on the arrival of a baby boy. We asked the students what EL can teach her baby brother. Some of the suggestions were “play with trains,” “play

with Lana” and “to ride a scooter.” E.L thought trains was a good idea but laughed and shook her head “no” when she heard the other two suggestions.

### **Dramatic Play**

In the past month or so a travel theme has emerged in the classroom. It began with the students taking the party boat (the loft) to the statue of liberty and extended to other types of transportation. The students often use the reading area as a taxicab, and the block area became a rowboat when hollow blocks were arranged in a row for four to five students to sit on. The students would travel to the doctor the store and varies other destinations.

We began to notice that the students would often take dramatic play materials and dump them into their selected mode of transportation with out any purposeful use. The materials were ending up being damaged so we instructed the students to keep the materials in the kitchen area. Upon hearing this, N.M and H.H thought of a new idea. They wanted to go on the restaurant train. This would incorporate both entertainment and transportation and so “pretend food” was needed for their journey.

### **Snail Investigation**

The Small Group Snail Investigation will come to a close next Wednesday. Because the children have been studying snails since October, we felt it was important for them to share and celebrate their work with the entire class. With Monique, the children have been working on creating their own replica snail environment out of clay. They

created snails, food and climbing objects and painted them. A question was posed: *What should we have at celebration?*

*“Well, the snails. All of the snails.” -OW*

*“Balloons and toys.” VR*

*“And presents.” -OW.*

*“Who are the presents for?” - Teacher*

*“For the snails.” - VR*

*“What kind of presents should we give the snails?” -Teacher*

*“Trains.” - VR*

*“And cookies.” -OW*

*“Are the cookies for the snails or for you?” - Teacher*

*“For me! When I eat my dinner. And I need to grow up and I need to have cookies.” - OW*

*“Cake! We need a cake.” -VR*

*EL shakes her head in agreement and DB laughs.*

When they reported back to the larger group in reflection meeting, they were told that snails didn't like cookies. OP suggested we bring carrots for the snails and NM thought pasta would be appropriate. The celebration will be held next Wednesday.

### **Reminder**

Our next, and final Parents' Workshop is Monday, April 12 at 7pm. Please remember to RSVP with the number of attendees by April 5.

## **Room 3**

This first week of spring has brought new and exciting changes to our classroom environment.

In an effort to capitalize on the children's initial response to the wire cutters as scissors, we have created an area with

paper strips, scissors, and small containers. The strips are just small enough for the children to comfortably hold and practice cutting mechanics, with age-appropriate scissors. As with pencil grip, we are reinforcing the correct way for children to hold the scissors.

The scissor exploration table is in the area that the wire table previously occupied. Now, the wire table is in the mini-atelier, and the painting easels are being used in Room 4's atelier, with Monique, our atelierista. She will continue to work with small groups of children from Room 3 during the week, in more focused painting explorations.

Under the loft, we have replaced the small table (now being used for the scissor exploration) with a close-to-the-ground light table. Children have enjoyed sprawling out on cushions around the table, drawing with one another. We've noticed that this design engenders more discussion as the children work. Perhaps this is because they are positioned more casually around one another, or perhaps this is because they make room for up to six classmates to sit together. We've heard them discuss different colors and textures of markers, crayons, and pastels on the lighted surface, as well as their plans for after school, what they did over the weekend, or what they are

making.

Towards the end of last week, we introduced a class pet to the children. Our three beta fish are blue, red, and purple in color. We often find the children crowded around the fish tank during work time, admiring the fish colors, and talking about the relationships between them. On the first day the fish were introduced, we found the children in the writing area, making pictures for them. Without adult help, they found the "F", "I" and "S" letter stamps, and stamped their pictures. Very kindly, they "gave" their pictures to the fish, by placing them to the side of the tank. We give the children the responsibility of feeding the fish, and are excited to see their reaction to helping us clean the tank later this week.

As the weather continues to change, and we spend more time outside, please remember to send your children to school in comfortable clothes, in which he or she can dress most independently as we move from inside to out. Thank you!

## **Room 4: Atelier**

### **Room 1**

In Room 1's mini atelier we have made many changes to their set up. First we decided to add tempera paints to their painting table, their growing experience in Room 2's mini atelier led up to this transition. Keeping watercolors going and creating an oppositional material, we continued using watercolors in a different part of their atelier. Experiencing the material in a new form and procedure we designed an area for them to work on the floor. The children are using droppers and brushes while painting on the floor instead of the wall. They have been using their

arms and bodies to manipulate the movements of their marks.

### **Room 2**

This week the snail group in Room 2 has been getting ready for their snail celebration next week. They worked on finishing their three-dimensional pieces for their snail cage. On the last day, they worked on finishing up their final touches/details and worked on painting their cage cardboard cage.

### **Room 3**

Children in Room 3 began their wire tool work using a variety of wire cutters and pliers. Wooden rods were added to allow the students to use as a tool for reshaping the wire. They collaboratively

worked on creating spiral forms by using the rods. The students have been engaged with practicing attaching pieces together and creating shapes and letters with the wire.

### **Room 5**

Room 5 students continued working with tempera paints this week. As they continue to work, their rhythm, focus and intentionality has shifted allowing longer painting experiences and more concentrated work. Towards the end of the

week Room 1 students visited their room and both classes experienced painting with one another.

### **Room 6**

Room 6 students continued working in small groups on their self-portraits. As the groups cycle they will all have weeks of practice before they work on their final portraits for the end of the year. Morning and afternoon painting groups have began full on paint mixing experimentations. As the children hypothesize on what colors create, their collaboration and engagement with each other has heightened allowing them to work as a team in their communicative thread of painting.

## **Room 5**

### **Spring Thoughts**

It is unfortunate that throughout the world, children can't design their outdoor play environments. Research on children's preferences shows that if children had the design skills to do so, their creations would be completely different from the areas called playgrounds that most adults design for them. Outdoor spaces design by children would not only be fully naturalized with plants, water, trees, flowers, dirt, sand, mud, animals and insects, but also would be rich with a wide variety of play opportunities of every imaginable type. If children could design their outdoor spaces, they would be rich developmentally appropriate learning environments where children would want to stay all day. To read more, go to

[www.whitehutchinson.com/children/articles/outdoor.shtml](http://www.whitehutchinson.com/children/articles/outdoor.shtml)

### **Glue Exploration**

This week we have continued our glue exploration in room 5.

We set up a provocation with colored glue, white paper and paintbrushes. The children continued to discuss what media they were using. Here are some of the things the children thought:

Child 1: "Paint. It smells like cookie... It feels good".

Child 2: "Glue".

Child 3: "Play dough".

The children were only using the jars with the colored glue that were right in front of them. While painting the children expressed what they were making.

Child 1 said: "I'm making an octopus"

Child 2 said: "I'm making a dinosaur for my mommy".

Some of the children got glue on their hands and looked down at them and said: "It feels stuck". One child tried to peel off the glue. When we went back to revisit the experience the children spoke about how the glue felt on their hands.

Child 1 said: "Look stuck again".

We are looking forward to sharing more glue experiences with you in the future.

### **Mail Exploration**

Thank you again to all the families who have been sending mail to the school. Sharing this mail has now become part of our daily routine, and it is something the

children really look forward to. This week, we have been questioning the children about writing messages, and creating their own mail. We added envelopes to the writing area in order to further this investigation. In addition to this provocation, we worked with the afternoon class to write outgoing mail to a family. We hope that this process will further the children's interest in mail and bring about new questions. In the coming weeks, we hope to talk more about mail and share stories about characters writing and receiving mail. Please continue to talk to your children about this process and share any mail with them that you might receive at your own home.

## **Room 6**

### **Student Teacher**

Alison has been doing a week-long placement in our classroom. She is from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario and has been a wonderful addition to our room over this past week.

### **Frogs**

Before assigning names to our frogs, it was important for the children to be able to tell the difference between them. OS and LS have studied the frogs closely and LS said "one of them has spots on his legs" and OS said "one is round and the other is spiky." This will help us give each frog its own name.

### **Light and Shadow**

The children have been working with play dough on our light table. In addition to the play dough, the children added dinosaurs and have been studying the different tracks they create. The light helps define the prints and encourages conversation about the textures and sizes.

We have reintroduced the experience of writing with dry erase markers on our light projector. The addition of the mirror behind

the projector allows the children to get a different perspective on the projected image on the wall.

### **Mysteries**

Since the children have been interested in creating large structures in the block area for ghost traps, we have been extending this study. The children had been asked to sketch plans for their traps and explain how they would work to catch the room 6 ghost. Many traps include jails, cages, sticky things to keep the ghost in one spot, and buttons to press to start the trap. After sketching the traps, the children had the opportunity to look through the materials in the Atelier to build ghost traps based on their plans. They sorted through the recycled materials looking for items to match the shapes of their drawings and could function well enough to trap the ghosts.

### **Grocery Store**

Our grocery store group met this week to revisit our experience with squeezing oranges and seeing how the juice can fill different containers. This week, we tested our theory that the juice of 5 oranges would

fill the half gallon plastic container. We poured in the juice and found out that we needed quite a few more. Based on the amount we have, we have started making predictions about how many more it may take to fill it to the top.

### **Concepts About Print**

Our bookmaking investigation has taken off. The children create books daily, in an effort to document a meaningful story or provide information about a topic of interest. For example, MR created the Dog Breed Book

which lists various dog breeds with accompanying pictures. JCH wrote a book titled Victor Goes to the Dentist which is modeled after a favorite book. OS's book titled Racecar is a picture book that tells the story of what a purple racecar sees on his travels one day. He passes an ice cream shop, a house fire being put out, and a change in weather as it starts to rain. We have a collection of these books on the bottom shelf of our "Mystery Center" in the message writing area. Please feel free to take a look at these books!

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