

TriBeCa Community School Newsletter

May 14, 2010

General Notices

Upcoming Events: Save the Date

May 31:

Memorial Day- School is closed

June 10 (alternative rain day: June 11):

Our traditional *end of the year picnic*- for children, siblings, and parents- details will follow. Please mark your calendar: **no sessions will be conducted at the school on the day of the picnic.** Lunch will be provided.

June 7-11 and June 14-18:

Sometimes within these days we will be planting at our 'private piece' of CaVaLa Park.

June 18:

RM 6 only: GRADUATION! Please plan to attend your child's graduation. 9:30-11:30. Breakfast will be provided. All the children (including full-day children) will leave at the end of the graduation event.

Snack for next week:

Monday: Whole wheat pretzels

Tuesday: Cantalopes

Wednesday: Mixed Dried Fruits

Thursday: Vegetables and Hummus

Friday: Crackers and cheese

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

FOOD MATTERS NYC

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Room 1

This week Room 1 said goodbye to KK, a student teacher that shared our routine over the past 3 months. In order to bring closure to the experience, the children prepared a memory- book for her. They drew pictures and dictated their thoughts; they investigated with KK why she had to leave, then decided how to celebrate.

Responding to children's suggestions, we conducted a party, where we ate a cake that KK baked for us.

We also went together to pick some flowers at the flower's store for K. Reflecting on our experience, having K in our class has been a beautiful experience, she has been a great resource for us, and the children built a connection and a strong relationship with

her. We thank KK for the energy and the wonderful help she gave us, and to wish her good luck in her career and future!

Loft

Thank you to J.T.'s father for adding a new addition to our loft! For some time, the children had been interested in dropping various objects from the loft to the ground, however, due to safety concerns, we discouraged them from doing so. At the same time, in response to the children's interests, and taking into account necessary safety factors, we came up with a solution: a large vertical Plexiglas tube is now attached to the wall alongside the loft. With one opening at the top level of the loft and the other opening a few inches from the floor of the lower space, this clear 'tunnel' frees the children to safely experiment with gravity. Underneath the tube we placed a large metal bowl, while on the loft, we placed baskets of various paper pieces to throw down the tube. Consequently, the children have shown interest in exploring gravity power on the objects they put into

the tube's "mouth", as they climb to the upper level of the loft, and send materials down the tube to the bowl underneath. We decided to start by using only paper so that the children could carefully observe its soft and slow decent through the tube. Often, the materials at the top of the loft run out, and the metal bowl at the floor fills. The children have learned to take a basket from the upper loft space, carry it down to the lower level, refill it with the paper materials (by emptying the metal bowl) and carry it back up to the top loft. And the cycle continues!

Extra Clothing

Please remember to check and replenish your child's extra clothing supply as needed. Also, if your child is in the process of potty-training, and using underwear, please remember to keep several extra pairs with us here at school. We are going outside very often so please, dress your child with comfortable clothes and shoes so that he/she will be able to move and explore freely.

Room 2

In our last newsletter, we highlighted one example of the children negotiating the division of clay. While we have witnessed the children's ability to successfully work through disputes at the clay table, inevitable, they are not always able to fairly and calmly divide the clay. The teachers felt it would be helpful for the children to have a set of guidelines to refer to, so they worked with a small group of children to develop rules for sharing the clay. JO, MM, HH, and KAJ were the first to discuss the topic. When the teacher expressed concern over people being frustrated and sad when they didn't have clay, MM recalled an event 2 weeks ago when she and OW refused to give another student clay. The other student crawled under the table and sulked.

HH asked why she crawled under the table and MM replied "*Because she was sad.*" The teacher informed the group that "we are meeting to come up with rules so that everyone is happy when they come to clay table." JO said the first rule should be "*Everyone is happy.*" The group agreed. Then they were asked how we could make sure everyone is happy.

HH then said "*If I have all the clay, I won't give them any.*" When asked if this was fair, MM, KAJ and JO shook their heads 'no.'

The teacher turned to HH and said "*What if KAJ has all the clay? What would you want him to do?*"

Without hesitation, he replied, *“Share. Will you share?”*

KAJ shook his head ‘no,’ again.

“But you are nice,” HH replied.

The teacher then expresses confusion: *“So you are saying that if you have all the clay, you don’t have to share, but if KAJ has all the clay, he has to share. Is that fair?”*

They all agree that this is not fair and the group continues to discuss the issue. When asked if they could think of a rule to help them, MM says *“We should share!”* slapping the table as he says it.

The teacher asks *“What else should we say?”*

HH says *“We don’t and we do,”* referring to the previous rule about sharing.

The conversation provoked the teachers to later discuss the implications of the child’s developmental stage in this process. The children are developing a sense of empathy; they can recognize that others are sad when they don’t have clay and can suggest the sharing is the fair thing to do. But they also still struggle with the thought of being the one who has to share.

Intrigued by the juxtaposing ideas on sharing clay, the teacher will continue to work on this topic, trying to understand the theories of the children, as it related to clay, as well as other materials in the classroom.

Room 3

Wire Table

The wire table has become very popular. We have recently added new provocations such as small plastic and wooden beads. Some of the children will use all of the materials, while some will select to work with an already familiar pieces like buttons. Additionally, we added scissors and some ribbons for the children to cut and add to their creation. We plan on making a mobile with some of the children’s work, similar to the one the parents created at the last workshop.

Child 1 said, “I’m finding another square button.”

Child 2 said, “ I’m roasting a marshmallow.”

Child 3 said, “I have so many colors, I have brown.”

Paper Table

Our children were introduced to scissors and small pieces of paper about a month ago. When children use scissors they are practicing their fine motor skills. After cutting small pieces of paper, we ask them to save the pieces in a jar. This past week,

we put out the pieces of paper, and no scissors. One child went over and began attaching the papers together. The child said, “Maybe we need some glue to stick the pieces together.” Therefore, we added small amounts of glue in small jars and gave the children popsicle sticks to spread the glue. And the exploration began. Child 1 said, “I made a rescue airplane.” Child 2 said, “I made a collecting truck so all the trucks can collect together.” Child 3 said, “It’s going to eat up all the boxes of garbage.”

The Loft Area

The loft area has become an area of games. The students will work in a small group playing the game “MEMORY.” When children play this game they are using eye-hand coordination, memory, and visual discrimination- all elements that are supportive of literacy development. We have noticed that Room 3 students clap when a child finds a pair, and stay focused for an extended amount of time. This would be a great game for you and your

family to play at home.

Dramatic Play

The students are enjoying working with the open-ended materials in the dramatic play. This week they are working with yarn, buttons, colored cotton balls, wooden cubes, and seashells.

Child 1 said, "I made a birthday cake for you."

Child 2 said, "I need more flour for the cupcakes."

Child 3 said, "I made us dinner." we encourage them to use these materials for pretend play because this supports

symbolic thinking (i.e. the child use an object to represent something else).

Morning Meeting

The students are now reading out loud their peers name written on the name tags that each child has. We recently began showing the class items that rhyme i.e. cat, bat and rat. We have the children pass these items around the room and say these words out loud to the class. This activity is a "*Phonemic Awareness*" one, which is one of the necessary skills for (later) proficient reading.

Room 4: Atelier

Room 1 and Room 2

Room 1 students began working on a drawing investigation revolving around their class plants. Introducing the children to drawing pens for the first time, they experienced the fluidity of the medium. Observational skills were challenged along with shape recognition while observing the leaves and details of their mint plant. Future collaboration will be encouraged between Room 1 and Room 2 because of their similar investigatory research in drawing from natural forms. In Room 2, the tree group collected leaves from a variety of trees last week to begin their observational drawing experimentation. While bringing their attention to the variety of shapes, patterns and textures of their leaves each child expressed their leaves differently by tracing techniques, observational examining and by relational narratives. This week, the clay group began experimenting with natural materials to further their interest in constructing with the clay. They also worked on cutting and manipulating the clay with their wire cutters.

Room 3

Room 3 students have continued working at easels in the atelier. As a group they decided what colors to use for mixing to get

colors relating to the plants in the atelier. A new challenge was added in the process. Working with drawing pencils first, they were asked to draw out their plants before painting. They also worked outside on the easels and began to examine the elements of the neighborhood they can add to their paintings next week.

Room 5

The painters in both morning and afternoon classes continued painting from new flower provocations. This week, the morning class and I went to the market to select the flowers, creating more of a connection to the materials. Selecting colors in the atelier was a second step of their process and finally, the students were able to paint what they observed about the flowers. Towards the end of the week, the students began their paintings with drawing materials to focus them on what types of lines make up the flowers.

Room 6

The students in Room 6 are finishing up on their final portraits. The children have been working one on one with me in the atelier creating a rough draft for them to help with creating their final portraits of the year.

Room 5

Yoga

The children have continued to show an interest in yoga during our classroom movement time. Thank you to all the families that have made donations of mats and yoga cards. These materials have definitely furthered the excitement of the exploration and have brought a new dimension to our work. The mats help to give the children a defined space to work and allow them to focus on using their bodies to fit the space. We have also observed these surfaces have heightened the awareness of the practice, and overall have brought a more alert attitude to the group.

Book Review

The following is a review of “Art and Creativity in Reggio Emilia: Exploring the Role and Potential of Ateliers in Early Childhood Education” by [Vea Vecchi](#). This book explores the contribution of art and creativity to early education, and examines the role of the atelier (an arts workshop in a school) and atelierista (an educator with an arts background) in the pioneering pre-schools of Reggio Emilia. It does so through the unique experience of Vea Vecchi, one of the first atelieristas to be appointed in Reggio Emilia in 1970. Part memoir, part conversation, and part reflection, the book provides a unique insider perspective on the pedagogical work of this extraordinary local project, which continues to be a source of inspiration to early childhood practitioners and policy makers worldwide. Vea’s writing, full of beautiful examples, draws the reader in as she explains the history of the atelier and the evolving role of the atelierista. Key themes of the book include:

- processes of learning and knowledge construction
- the theory of the hundred languages of childhood and the role of poetic languages

- the importance of organization, ways of working and tools, in particular pedagogical documentation
 - the vital contribution of the physical environment
 - the relationship between the atelier, the atelierista, the school and its teachers
- Three illuminating dialogues, the first between the author and a group of pedagogistas, and the other ones between the author and a group of designers and pedagogistas, examine the relationship between the atelierista and others actively engaged in work with young children.

For more information regarding the book, visit:

<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415468787/>

Paper Exploration

This week the children of RM5 have continued our paper exploration with the children in RM1. Last week, when the children worked with the torn pieces of paper, they put some of the paper in one of the drawers in the kitchen. They wanted to put a sign on the drawer and asked the teachers to write:

“Signok”.

This week we revisited the experience with the children and read out loud what they had said. The children came up with different theories about what they had put in the drawer.

Child 1: “The sharks are in the drawer”

Child 2: “The sharks are sleeping”.

Child 3: “A fire truck”.

When the children opened the drawer they looked in it and said:

Child 1: “Nothing happened”.

Child 2: “The sharks are still sleeping”.

Afterwards, they began to throw the paper up in the air and used the paper as a symbolic representation of sharks moving around.

We were curious to gather more information for further investigation regarding what the children thought happened to the pieces of torn paper while it was in the drawer.

During our reflection meeting we asked the children what they thought the sharks did while they were in the drawer?

Child 1: "A shark. The shark eat food over there"

Child 2: "Shark played".

Child 3: "My shark has open eyes in there".

Child 4: "The shark is in the drawer – he is eating crackers in there".

Child 5: "The shark was sleeping in the drawer - with closed eyes".

Child 6: The shark was sleeping in the drawer".

After the teachers revisited the experience, we came up with more questions for further

investigation. We did this in order to understand the children's theories about what made them think that the shark was sleeping in the drawer.

Questions for further investigations:

1) What do you think it looks like when the sharks are in the drawer and it's closed?

2) What makes sharks want to sleep in drawers?

3) What do sharks look like when they are sleeping?

We look forward to sharing more paper experiences with you in the future.

Room 6

Student Teacher

Monday, May 17 will be our last day with Rose, our student teacher from BMCC.

The class collaboratively created a large card with individual messages inside a large heart. J.L. said, "Thank you for coming to Room 6. Meow!" C.D. said, "I like when you draw in our class." L.G. said, "You smell like a rose." M.R. said, "Thank you for helping me teach Sasha tricks." F.S. said, "Rose, I hope you have a good time wherever you go."

Sensory Table

We have added a wire rack with suspended tubes and funnels for use with the rice and beans. The children have been rearranging the tubes at different angles and heights as they study the movement of the rice through the tubes. The children have also been experimenting with placing containers to "catch" the falling rice and beans. C.D. first placed a container right below the tube, hoping to catch the rice. Noticing that the rice projected outward from the

tube, C.D. moved the container according to his observations.

Songs

We have been continuing to add songs to our repertoire. We have been continuing to sing old favorite songs including Deep and Wide, Muffin Shop, Listen to the Water, Upsie Down Town, Five Little Pumpkins, Days of the Week, Ram Sam Sam, I'm Gonna Catch You, Barbara Ann, Big Red Box, Listen to the Water, Five Green Speckled Frogs and Open Shut Them. The new songs we have recently introduced are Ms. Molly had a Dolly, Fishy Fishy in a Brook, Two Little Birds and Stop Says the Red Light.

Discussions and Reflections

As graduation approaches, we are beginning to ask the children to reflect on their experiences at school as well as what they see themselves doing in the future. We will be doing group discussions as well as individual interviews to be presented at our graduation ceremony (June 18th). We

are looking forward to sharing with you the thoughts and experiences of your children.

Concepts about Print

Story acting and book making have been going strong. Several children have been bringing in books made at home. The children have been sharing them with each other both informally and at meetings. H.L. said, "My mom knows how to make these books, too!"

Special Guest

K.A.-J.'s mom visited our classroom on Wednesday morning to share her a book about whale sharks as well as a DVD documenting her experience swimming with one in Australia. As sharks have been a particular interest of many of the children for the past few months, this was an especially exciting visit. In the DVD we were able to see her preparing with the diving instructor, putting on her wetsuit when the shark was near, jumping in the water and swimming with the whale shark and other sea creatures.