

# TriBeCa Community School Newsletter

## November 6, 2009

### General Notices

#### ALL ROOMS:

Please make sure that your child has a set of weather- appropriate changing clothes

**Friday:** Fall Harvest Crudite with White Bean-Quinoa Dip

#### Next week's snack:

**Monday:** Happy Herbert's Organic Multigrain Pretzels

**Tuesday:** Clementines

**Wednesday:** Cranberry Oatmeal Power Cookie

**Thursday:** Jennifer's Greenmarket Picks

**Nutrition Tip:** When eating beans it is important to pair them with a grain to form a complete protein. When these two nutrients are paired together they form a complete chain of amino acids that help build the brain's neurotransmitters and the same time providing the body with long term energy.

### Room 1

#### The Parents' Workshop

The children were presented documentation regarding the parents' workshop. Photographs of the work-in-progress were presented, in which they recognized their parents engaged in intentional, precise work. They also were able to correlate these images with the school setting, which helped the children to draw a complex understanding of the reality that you (the parents) were here. This also conveyed a high regard for the work they do here at school. To promote more continuity between families, children, and teachers, it was essential that they understood that you spend time and energy sharing the space that they work in. Research indicates "Students with

parents who are involved in their school tend to have fewer behavioral problems and better academic performance." \* Additionally, "Research has found that students perform better in school if their fathers as well as their mothers are involved." \*

The children have been working intensively with the traces and the provocations that you have designed for them. They closely observed the immense construction in the building area before eventually attempting to add elements and to modify it. Since the architecture of this structure was tremendously complex and deliberate, while attempting to add to this work, there were several occasions where the work was knocked down. This

circumstance was addressed by explaining to the children that there were several classmates that did not get to see this structure yet (two dayers and three dayers.) We asked that they rebuild so that these children can have the same experience as them. This teaches the children to have empathy towards others. It also creates a sense of community: looking out for their peers. The children did rebuild several times collaboratively.

The clay creations played an important role in our setting. Many children meticulously took them apart, investigating how they were built; other children added elements, or included your work in a bigger composition. These detailed segments of clay sparked much interest in our mini atelier. Several children began focusing

on how to put two pieces together. The children were also much more verbal about what they were creating (inspired by your work.)

At the light table, many children contributed to your drawings: adding more colors and shapes, trying to follow the lines that you left for them.

To celebrate the muffins that you prepared for them, we had snack in the dramatic play, and presented the children the recipe that you used.

Once again, we want to thank you for the energy and the time that you offered, and for being an active member of our community.

\*Source: Child Trends Data Bank

## Room 2

### Water Color

This week in the mini atelier we set up a projection of the tree that the tree investigation group visits.

This inspired B.C to paint a waterfall while others worked on their symbolic representations of the tree. O.W showed us that he understood the connection between the tree investigation and our art provocation by telling a classmate that they should look at the tree like MM, HH, DB & NM. We think that this was his way of coping with separating from his close friends when they leave the classroom for the investigation. This connection led them to share their experiences from their small groups with each other.

### Ghost Investigation

This week we continued to try to come to an agreement on what the ghost looks like. Some students in the group

feel that the ghost has a tail (a red tail as we have just learned) while others feel that they have legs like people. When asked if they can have both, the students seemed to stick to their convictions and stated that they can only have one and not the other.

### Tree Investigation

For the past few weeks, the tree group had been discussing the feelings of trees. This week, when they went outside to continue the investigation, they were more interested in the falling and changing leaves. We decided that at this point, we wanted to bring the outdoors into the mini- atelier and

take a closer look at the leaves. To prepare for this, the tree group went outside to collect leaves. At first, they were picking up large handfuls but we asked them to work more slowly and carefully and look at each leaf that they picked up. This caused them to see the details of each leaf. MM commented that a folded leaf looked like a book. The large collection of leaves was then brought back to the group and shared at reflection meeting. Moving forward, Monique will work with the entire class in small groups to take a closer look and express them through various art mediums. ND, BC, and HH began this process on Thursday.

### Blocks

We noticed that the students were no longer building structures in the block center. In order to renew their interest, we added more open added materials and set up a defined area for where to sit and where to build so that students felt assured that their structures would not be knocked down. This led to wonderful collaborative building. VR, BC and AG worked on building an elaborate train station for “Thomas” and “Hero” trains.

### Birthdays

Congratulations to VR and HH who are both turning 3 years old this week. Their mothers both came in and worked with the children to bake a cake for the celebration.

## Room 3

Thank you to all parents for attending Room Three’s Parent Workshop on Wednesday, November 4. We hope that the slide show and our work in the classroom helped to connect you further to your child’s experience in school. While we all enjoyed watching hallmark classroom moments on film, we’re expecting these moments to effect- and advance- our future experiences this year. The children’s efforts towards community building, painting-including their observations, dialogues, and handling and negotiating of materials in the atelier- as well as creative and collaborative play, will all contribute to an increased complexity of classroom explorations as the year continues.

The morning after Parent Workshop, children were delighted to observe so

many traces visiting parents left in the room. They were curious about post-it comments, and enthused by the work

they saw on the tables and painting shelves. As children painted Thursday morning, they held onto the pictures you left for them, and as they built, they looked at 8X10 photos of you working (which we printed for them before they arrived at school). Later in the morning, we sat in small groups, and gave the children an opportunity to talk about your traces again. We encouraged them to respond with a message, or draw something representative of their own experience in the area that they wanted to share in return. They were absolutely elated to feel connected to you on this level, and we are very grateful for your attendance.

In the atelier, students have begun to mix a new palette of painting colors. This time, they are more vocal about their mixing, nonchalantly mentioning the different hues they are observing. Our next step is to bring in a 3-dimensional provocation, from outside, the children are verbal about.

Also recently, Room 3 children have become very interested in puzzles. Puzzles help develop focus and patience in children, as well as close observation of visual details and spatial reasoning. At school, we do puzzles on a small work mat, to define our workspace. If your child suggests

working on a puzzle at home, a simple way to mirror this is to put down a towel and let him or her work. Please make sure the puzzle picture (printed on the box) is visible and accessible for children to study, and that all of the pieces are turned over and laying flat on the mat as they work.

Room 3 children enjoy singing the alphabet song. As they do, they try to identify letters on the alphabet line as we sing. If you choose to sing this with them, take time to make an alphabet line with them at home, and reinforce their sight recognition of the letters by pointing to them, as you sing.

## **Room 4: Atelier**

### **Room 1**

In room 1 watercolors were added to the light table. The children have started out with three colors and each their own water jar along with small paint brushes. The new addition of watercolors was added from their growing interest in color and reflection.

### **Room 2**

As we continued our tree investigation, the children gained interest in the leaves changing colors. We decided to move our investigation on the study of leaves as an object for observation in their mini atelier. They will begin by drawing from observation using drawing pens and paper. The tree group collected leaves from around their tree to bring back into the classroom. A projector was also added of photo images the children took of the tree.

### **Room 3**

In room 3, the children returned to painting from their own mixed colors. Towards the end of the week the

children were encouraged to keep mixing colors as they work on their paintings. After the parents workshop there were inspirational paintings left in their atelier. As the children continue on their painting progression, we will begin to incorporate new materials for them to paint from observation.

### **Room 5**

In room 5, the children continued to work with the clay material having additional open-ended materials for surface exploration. During our pm class there was collaboration among the children while working within the clay. The children have also begun to use pieces of the clay to construct upward.

### **Room 6**

This week in room 6 we continued our investigations in clay and wire. Our core clay group worked on building and attaching upward. Towards the end of the week the children examined the parents work from our parents workshop. Within our afternoon wire

group we examined the parents work and looked at how the children could create freestanding sculptures. As the children were standing their pieces upward they began observing the idea of balance.

## Room 5

### Changes in the Environment

As you may have noticed, we have made many changes to room 5 in the past week. We wanted to revisit the sand we had in the sensory table a few weeks ago, and decided to see how the children responded to the natural materials we provided. We questioned whether their work with dumping and pouring would continue. We continue to observe this area, and have been noting the many different strategies used. We also added lights as a provocation to our building area, defining the space, and hoping to engage more children to build. We have continued our clay investigation and have seen more purposeful work with the tools. The children have been asking to revisit their work with crayons, and to continue our investigation with color and to tie in the community; we provided leaves as provocation on the light table. We noticed last week the children were interested in crumbling the leaves and in order to preserve them we placed the leaves under a thin sheet of plastic, questioning whether the children would notice the texture while using the crayons. A child said "look, a leaf". We are continually altering our classroom to better suit the children's needs and questions.

### Toilet Learning

In room 5, we have observed that some

of the children have begun to pay attention to and been talking about

which children are wearing underwear. Therefore we decided to add underwear for the doll and toilet paper in the dramatic play area as a provocation for the children's toilet learning experiences. The children responded to the new materials by picking up the underwear and trying to put it on themselves and some of the children put the underwear on the doll. Here are some of the quotes of what the children said:

"Underwear. Poop in it. Throw it in the garbage".

"Underwear. X wants to put it on. Help me".

"Underwear... For the baby".

"The baby is finished. Wipe your tootsie. The baby is sleeping with panties. I sleep with my panties on. The bed is ready for the baby. The baby is tired. The baby is sleeping right here on the pillow".

During our small group time, we used the doll to reintroduce how to wipe yourself with toilet paper after using the toilet and how to put on a pair of underwear. Afterwards we noticed that a child was engaged in the dramatic play area and she picked up the doll and said:

"First wipe yourself in front and then back. You need to wipe your butt". Now

you are finished".  
We will be looking forward to sharing

more toilet learning experiences with you.

## **Room 6**

### **Parent's Workshop**

On Thursday we shared with the children the traces that parents left in our classroom along with documentation of the process of creating those traces. The children were delighted to see the results of this work. We now have a large floor puzzle that features all of the names of the children in the class. This new material is something that each child has a personal connection to and also symbolizes our class coming together as a community. We also have a new and improved window in our closet, decorated in the style of our bathroom tiles. Parents arranged materials which represent various themes of our school's philosophy. These include items that represent our community, the incorporation of natural materials, and open-ended materials that children work with. The items were bound to the surface with epoxy plaster. In our mini-atelier, several parents used the techniques and tools that the children have been using with Monique to create sculptures out of clay and wire. It is such a pleasure to work with your children and it is very exciting for us to share with you all of the hard work that they do each day.

### **Grocery Store**

We have been continuing to consider specific attributes of items in our grocery store and with the help of a number line, pricing them. As our inventory is ever evolving, we certainly welcome you to

bring in food packaging from home,

especially personally significant or unusual items.

### **Mysteries**

As you saw in our presentation, one of our newest investigations in the classroom is centered on a series of mysterious events. This investigation has evolved into having a strong literacy component as several children have been writing down clues and using written symbols to document as well as aid in the process of solving them. Working collaboratively to solve mysteries and look for clues is not very different from the type of careful attention to detail that is necessary for decoding, so this work is actually helping to develop important pre-literacy skills.

### **Wire**

We have put up a display of the children's work with wire along with corresponding documentation in the mini-atelier of our classroom. This has been inspirational for many children who have been revisiting works and experimenting with new techniques.

### **Reminders**

If you were unable to attend the parents'

workshop, we strongly encourage you to get in touch with us to arrange a time to come in and view it here at school.

Please bring us your empty food packages. New grocery items stimulate interest in the area and lead to richer interactions in this area.