



SCHOOL FOR FRIENDS

## Director's Report

"A child reminds us how wonderful life is." Thich Nhat Hanh

### Staff Development

- Both **Lela Ivankovic** & **Jackie Whiting** went to First Aid training – April 6 & 16.
- **Margaret Edwards** went to a full day of training on Saturday April 16 – at the D.C. Universal School Readiness Conference
- On April 6, **Shaundrea Brown** observed at Concord Hill School.
- As you know Friday the 22nd was our staff development day. Teachers attended the following workshops: "Hands that Work - Implementing Functional Strategies for the Development of Fine and Visual Motor Skills," presented by Judi Greenberg from CORE; a workshop on playground usage by Julia Berry, Director of St. Columba's Nursery School; "Guidance Matters: Children Who Have Serious Conflicts – Reactive Aggression" – I presented this workshop as well as one on each teacher's vision for the year.

Thanks to the parents for our catered luncheon and chair massages for all.

### Strategic Plan

Thankfully, School for Friends has a very forward-looking board, and this past fall and winter went through the long but rewarding process of creating a new strategic plan for the next three years of the school's life. For the most part, these goals are not the predictably typical ones. Here's our Vision Statement:

**School for Friends is a place where kids can be themselves and thrive. Through nurturing and play, they develop the social, emotional, physical and cognitive skills that build a foundation for social and academic success. SfF strengthens its leadership and faculty through its commitment to best practices and lifelong learning. SfF protects its strong cultural diversity by demonstrating and instilling Quaker values in students and staff. We practice what we teach. SfF has developed a plan for expansion and is supported by a strong, sustainable, financial plan and increased fundraising capacity to support the school well into the future.**



Accredited by the NAEYC  
National Academy of Early  
Childhood Program  
Accreditation

### Staff News

Two of our parttime aides are leaving:

Cyana Chamberlain is leaving after over a year to pursue fulltime work.

Thomas Russell, who is a law student at Howard, is leaving for the summer to work in Delaware – his home state.

We wish them best of luck, and perhaps Thomas will return in the fall.

### INTERNATIONAL

### DINNERS

**Thanks** to our room parents who organized delicious and joyful events that helped build community in the school. Children really look forward to these dinners and talk about them for a long time afterwards. Parents in charge were – Tania Kapoor, Gisele Grayson, Mamie Preston, & Buffy Mims .

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Here are our goals:

1. Design and implement an effective long-term fundraising strategy
2. Develop a succession plan for the core leadership team (director and teachers with seniority and longevity) for the future
3. Expand the school by two classrooms
4. Grow organizational capacity in non-program areas
5. Develop an institutional communications and marketing plan

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## ROLANDO'S RETIREMENT

**Rolando Quintanilla has been at Church of the Pilgrims managing the building ever since we arrived in 1984. He will be retiring at the end of July, 2011 and returning to his native El Salvador. Over the years he has developed a special relationship with the children in our care; often children run up to him and give him a hug. We will miss him on many levels - particularly for the loving care he has given to the school in his building. Without him, for instance, we could never have completed the playground building in 2009.**

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## Quaker House Newsletter

***“Play offers ways of trying out new ideas, new combinations, of expressing emotions, of taking different roles, and of repeating known ways of enjoyment.*** (Edna Shapiro/Anne Mitchell, Explorations with young children).

As Ellen Galinsky writes in her book “Mind in the making”, - “Adult-child interactions are key, - as the families and other adults in a *“child’s life create comfort and confidence by listening, conversing and assisting, - doing things together with children and leading a child into the challenging zone of new thoughts and vocabulary. Minds are fundamentally developed in relationship-based activities.”*

With increasing age, young children also start increasingly to look to their peers for interactions, as they continue to develop their social skills and establish meaningful friendships.

For children to be able to play successfully with others and make friends, they have to start by getting the attention of their peers, communicate their thoughts/ideas, take turns, follow the request of their friends, negotiate conflicts, have a general understanding of the play idea, - organize and sequence the events taking place in order to lead, but also to follow others - which all in all requires quiet a bit of flexibility.

The ability to feel empathy is directly related to the ability to form those close relationships. And relationships give children the feeling of security, which then allows them to feel safe and beyond their own needs.

Ellen Galinsky stresses in her book that children with strong interpersonal skills are more successful in school and later in life.

## Children's Fair

Saturday May 14  
(Raindate May 21)

### School for Friends

2201 P Street

11 am to 2pm

\$10 per family

\$5 per guest

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## Fund for Friends Update

**We're \$5K away from our goal!**

Spring greetings to all! A big Fund for Friends thank you to all families who have currently donated and/or pledged a gift to the 2010-2011 campaign. Every gift is important and truly appreciated. At present, we have raised \$28,715 in donations & pledges towards our goal of \$34,205. Participation is so important to balancing the budget and supplying our school with the resources necessary to maintain affordable tuition rates, support teacher compensation and retention, and provide financial aid to deserving students. Every gift is a vote of confidence for our school's nurturing program and our emphasis on caring, creativity, and nonviolent conflict resolution, and the positive impact of that program on your children. As a small community, we can best serve our school by giving together! Please help us reach our goal of 100% participation! Thank you for supporting the 2010-2011 Fund for Friends!

She believes that, - *“feeling empathy, - whereby one is able to understand another’s perspective and then to consider it before acting”, - is just one part of what she calls “perspective taking” and a more complex process.*

*“Perspective taking involves the intellectual skill of discovering how someone else thinks and feels; it requires assembling our accumulated knowledge of that person, analyzing the situation at hand, remembering similar situations, recalling what others have told us about such situations, putting aside our own thoughts and feelings, and trying to feel and think as another person must feel and think.”*

Unfortunately for social functioning, accurate perspective taking is not a skill with which humans are born, but is a skill that must be developed. Generally children who are 3-6 years old recognize that they have different thoughts and feelings than others, but they frequently confuse the two. They make no distinction between their point of view and the points of view of others, - undifferentiated perspective-taking.

So how can we promote perspective taking in our children? How can we help them to develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of how things look from points of view other than their own?

Ellen Galinsky believes that, - *“First, we can set an example. It’s our choice: Every day our children can watch us as we imagine someone else’s point of view-or they can watch us remain self-centered. Besides setting an example, we can also encourage perspective taking by discussing books and television shows with our kids in a way that highlights the characters’ diverse perspectives. ”*

Additionally we can:

- Encourage greetings and social initiations to demonstrate awareness of others.
- Encourage sharing of toys, games and personal treasure .
- Encourage making choices and turn taking.
- Provide child with activities that expose him/her to the world beyond the home in order to share thoughts and ideas.
- Encourage curiosity so that the child becomes an active participant: *“Wow, I wonder what that noise is all about?”* (Dr. Karen Wolffe/Dr. Sharon Sacks)

Brian MacWhinney, describes in his book *“The Emergence of Grammar from Perspective,”* the relationship between language and perspective taking as such: *“When language is rich in cues for perspective taking and perspective shifting, it awakens the imagination of the listener and leads to successful sharing of ideas, impressions, attitudes, and narratives. When the process of perspective sharing is disrupted by interruptions, monotony, excessive complexity, or lack of shared knowledge, communication can break down. ”* *“He also posits that perspective taking is “at the very core of language structure and higher level cognition, as well as serving one primary adaptive goal: Social coordination. ”*

For preschool age children, sociodramatic play is also an important context in which perspective taking, social participation, group cooperation, and intimacy skills develop. It is a skill to be fostered. Fantasy play gives children

the opportunity to develop intimacy and work out emotional issues. (Gottesman,1983).

*“Finally, we can help younger children become more sensitive to other’s emotions by gently directing their attention to someone’s tone of voice, posture, or facial expression, and by inviting them to reflect on what that person might be thinking and feeling. The very act of teaching kids to pick up on such cues can help them to develop the habit of seeing more deeply into others. It will encourage them to experience the world as another person does, and perhaps to get a feel for what it’s like to be that other person. This is a major step towards wanting to help rather than hurt- and ultimately, towards becoming a better person oneself.” (Ellen Galinsky, “Mind in the making”).*

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## Rainbow Room Newsletter



**During the month of April**, the Rainbows explored different kinds of animals. We began with the many pets the children love to imitate, moved onto ocean animals, and closed with zoo animals. Each week the children participated in cross curricular activities that ranged from language arts to concrete 3D art and building. We even adopted pets of our own, hermit crabs Alex and Tilley.

The children helped set up the tank by adding sand and coconut shreds. They also take turns spraying the crabs daily. The Rainbows were excited to learn new facts about the animals they love.

In order to take advantage of the beautiful May weather, we will be going on many trips in the neighborhood. During these trips the children will not only take in the sights of the community, but also learn the purpose of and enjoy the different shops and natural settings in Dupont Circle and the surrounding area.

Note: Tis the season for mosquito bites and sun burns. You may bring in bug spray and sunscreen for your child. Please label the bottles with your child’s name. Also, please apply it to your child upon arrival to school because we go outside at 10:00am and it takes about 20 minutes for it to activate.

\*April was full of Rainbow birthdays. After Frankie’s birthday on May 18, all of the Rainbows will be four years old!

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## Green Room Newsletter



This past month has been so much fun in the Green Room. We have been enjoying new experiences and learning so much about spring! It has been great to discover all the changes happening around us as the weather gets warmer. Last month we made butterfly footprints, planted flowers, painted bug rocks, and made paper plate kites! Also we celebrated Easter and Earth Day and learned about how we can take care of our environment and help keep the earth clean. It was hard for us to understand how we could take care of the whole earth since it is so big. We talked about how everyone around the world could help keep it clean; we realized that it is possible! We also talked about simple things we could do to help like recycling. Now we know to look for the special little triangle shape on cartons to see if it can be recycled.

Adventure Trips in the Green Room! Children love adventures - maybe eating lunch outside or walking through the community. Green Room trips are short adventures away from school and are perfect for us to experience our community. Our trips include adventures like the zoo, museums, a bagel store, a crepe store, a walk to Metro, and office visits. Parents are welcome to join the adventures with us. Our adventures will highlight learning experiences for everyone.

**Up Coming Event & Trips! May**

- 4th National Zoo Re scheduled to a later date
- 11th Make Up National Museum of National History
- 18th Office Visit • 25th Bagel Store



Parents Teacher Conferences May 23, 24, 25.

Thanks for making our international dinner a good event for everyone.

## Blue Room Newsletter

### What Happened Last Month?

We had a fantastic April! We started our "Spring" theme (which still continues). We focused on the caterpillar/butterfly cycle. We did various art (fine motor)



and gross motor activities. The children are able to demonstrate the various stages of the caterpillar/butterfly cycle. We coordinated other activities that correspond with our "Spring" theme that included; muddy art, cotton bunnies, feathered ducks, and watering plants (among others).



• We also recognized Passover and Easter by having a special snack (Matzoh and charroset for Passover) and an "Easter Egg Hunt" respectively.

- Thanks to all the families who participated in the International Dinner.

### What Happens Next?



We will have many more activities that focus on "Spring" such as; planting cilantro, parsley, and sunflowers, and cooking Pasta Primavera among others.



We hope to have our "End of Spring Trip" at the Diner (in Adams Morgan) at the end of May or the beginning of June. Liam's dad, Jesse, welcomes us to the Diner as he will prepare a special lunch for us there. Before our "End Spring Trip" we would like to have a picnic at Rose Park (sometime before the end of May). This will conclude our "Spring" theme. Our next theme will be

Transportation, which will include air, water, and land vehicles.

### Friendly Reminders/Important Dates

1. Please remember to sign up for snack (on going) if you can
2. Leo's Birthday (May 14th)
3. Spring Conferences (May 17th, 19th, and 20th)
4. Memorial Day (May 30, school is closed)

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