



SCHOOL FOR FRIENDS

NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS & FRIENDS

Director's Report

April 2009

REGGIO EMILIA STUDY TOUR

The Board of Trustees has generously approved sending me to a week-long study tour of the schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

The early childhood programs in Reggio Emilia, Italy, have captured international attention as the best preschools in the world. Tens of thousands of international educators have visited the schools because their approach inspires educators and schools and offers a compelling perspective on childhood.

Core ideas underpinning Reggio practice Those followed by * are similar to approach of SfF

- Respectful image of the child as a competent learner and active participant *
- Focus on children's relationships and interactions *
- Education of children, teachers, and parents - social co-construction of knowledge
- Parent involvement in the life of the school *
- Role of the environment as educator
- Full day schedule=leisurely pace *
- Teachers as partners with each other
- Teachers as researchers and partners in learning with children
- Thoughtful cooperation throughout the school *
- Emergent curriculum *
- Project learning
- Prominence of the artist teacher and studio in relation to children's thinking
- Observation and documentation of children's learning *

Overview of Reggio Emilia Study Tour

The program includes five full days of visits to preschools and infant-toddler centers and presentations/seminars as well as time to interact with other participants in order to dialogue and exchange experiences and reflections.

Benefits/Value to School for Friends

1. Positioning the school for the future. Parents are looking to place their children in programs that keep up with educational ideas and theories that are well accepted by the educational community. SfF is always seeking to learn new ways of educating children. We need to be looking to how to grow and develop the school for the future. Ideas proposed by the Reggio approach are leading the field forward now.
2. Teachers. Ultimately the teachers will benefit from support for expanding their teaching preparation. There is not a Reggio curriculum or template to superimpose on a program. A monthly reading/study group might be a way to work with teachers to incorporate Reggio thinking. We also plan to spend time at the staff development day in April giving teachers some background in Reggio and finding out what they would want the director to bring back.
3. Children. Incorporating more Reggio inspired philosophy into the program based upon teachers' and parents' interests would help create more space and time for joyful learning and reinforce our group problem-solving model.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- I attended a training at the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Headquarters on March 3rd on the new Developmentally Appropriate Practice. Since then, I have been training the teachers.
- On March 12, Jackie Whiting and I observed at the School Within a School at Peabody Elementary DCPS on Capital Hill. It is a Reggio Emilia inspired program.
- I went to a full day of training on March 18 at NAEYC Headquarters on maintaining our accreditation.
- Mignon Harrell & Lela Ivankovic both received their Child Development Associate credential this month. Congratulations.

THANKS

To Michael McBride for chairing the Simple Meal on Sunday March 15 and to all the other parents who helped. The food was delicious and the company great.

PARENTS ON PLAYGROUND AT PILGRIMS

We ask that parents who allow their children to play on the playground without teacher supervision follow the playground rules posted on all the bulletin boards at the school – that is the purpose of posting the rules. Specifically, the playhouse structure next to the slide is not designed for climbing. The roof of the stage in front is not a climbing structure but decorative. It is not designed to support children nor is there any railing and is therefore not safe. Thanks for your cooperation

FUND FOR FRIENDS APRIL UPDATE

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 2008-2009 campaign. Your generosity is truly appreciated as we move forward to “Bring Friends Together” on a single campus. Particular appreciation is extended to all of those leadership donors whose gifts of \$1,000 or more have such impact on the success of the campaign.

There is only one month left in the 2008-2009 Fund for Friends campaign! The campaign ends on May 1st so that we might have an opportunity to adequately acknowledge all of our generous donors with a lovely thank you including class photographs of your children. Every gift is important and truly appreciated. At present, we have raised \$22,372 towards our budgeted goal of \$32,240. Twenty-two families out of 54 families enrolled at the school, or roughly 40%, have currently given a tax-deductible contribution to the Fund. Our goal is to have full, 100% participation which is so important to balancing the budget and supplying the 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 the school’s nurturing program and its 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!

Thank you for supporting the 2008-2009 Fund for Friends!

Suzanne Burrows , Chair

Quaker House Newsletter April 2009

It's April and spring is finally here! The Quaker House children are observing nature's transformation closely and hands-on on our playground. They have happily said "goodbye" to snow pants, gloves and hats and are enjoying the warmer weather, flower buds and blossoms, as well as green leaves and grass growing in abundance. The increasingly warmer temperatures provide opportunities for experimentation and exploration. The outdoor environment is rich with learning opportunities for young children. Outdoor learning can be just as important as what goes on inside. The children can give their gross-motor skills a workout. But so many other developmental areas can also grow in the outdoors - cognitive skills, in everything from literacy to math and science, as well as social skills flourish when children learn increasingly to cooperate and solve conflicts outside the classroom. Bringing indoor materials, like art supplies and dress-up items or instruments and music outside can enrich the outdoor play of the children immensely. Using materials that are already outside like sand, and adding for example water, gives the opportunity for new experiences and extends children's play. We will take good care of "nature" on our playground, planting a garden, observing the growth of the flowers and herbs from seed to plant. We will keep you posted about our outdoor activities in the Daily Notes.

Back inside the classroom we have been working very successfully on the letters of the alphabet in the past weeks. Learning about the letter S for example, the children especially enjoyed going on a field trip to the Safeway to buy Spaghetti, Sauce, Salad, Spinach, and Strawberries to prepare a special lunch the next day. As we continue to work on the letters of the alphabet in the next weeks, we would like to incorporate the children's curiosity and excitement connected to fieldtrips and plan for more of these as part of or curriculum around early literacy.

- A big Thank You to all the families that have made our Friday circle times with a literacy focus so very enjoyable and introduced us to many new books.

- Thank you as well for the donations in order to supplement our snack. We, and especially the children, really appreciate it every day.

- Please make sure to restock your child's clothes cubbies with seasonally appropriate clothing, including rain gear.

Thank You for all your support- The QH-teachers

April 2009 Rainbow Room Newsletter



It's Springtime! The Rainbows are looking forward to great things. February was an interesting month. Safety and Community helpers as themes....Their imagination went far and wide! The Rainbows also performed many of the duties of veterinarians, maintenance, workers and grocers. Thanks again for your support with Homeward Trails. Each week the children learned about each class of animals, farm, domestic and zoo animals.

This month of April, the Rainbows are gearing up for the many outings to come. We're planning trips to the Zoo, Fire station, and the pet store.

The Rainbows would also like to thank the many families for their support during "Family of the Week". We learned about the many cultures, how to make floral arrangements, and heard many funny and interesting stories. We look forward for many more to come!

In May, we will explore the social emotional, cognitive and language development of the Rainbows within our theme "Spring." The Rainbows will enjoy the pleasures of the warmer weather to come by experiencing nature hands on. Of course, another trip to the zoo was requested. Bring on the warm weather!

Just as a reminder, continue to check art cubbies, and make certain your child has appropriate clothing for the weather. Also, make note of your "Family of the Week".

Maire, Mignon, April

Green Room Newsletter April 2009

Books and More Books

In the Green Room children have shown a great interest in reading books to their friends. Throughout the day the children could be seen reading a book on the rug, at the

table and in the quiet boxes. Reading aloud helps support language and literacy development. I recently read an article called "Reading Aloud with Children of All Ages" by Derry Koralek from the NAEYC website. The article stated

- Reading aloud presents books as sources of pleasant, valuable, and exciting experiences. Children who value books are motivated to read on their own.
- Reading aloud gives children background knowledge, which helps them make sense of what they see, hear, and read. The more adults read aloud to children, the larger their vocabularies will grow and the more they will know about the world they live in.
- Reading aloud lets parents and teachers be role models for reading. When children see adults excited about reading, they will catch the enthusiasm.
- Reading aloud can introduce books and types of literature – poetry, short stories, biographies- children might not discover on their own.
- Reading aloud introduces the language of books, which differs from language heard in daily conversations, on television, and in movies. Book language is more descriptive and uses more formal grammatical structures.
- Reading aloud let children use their imaginations to explore people, places, times, and events beyond their own experiences.
- Reading aloud gives children and adults something to talk about. Talking supports the development of reading and writing skills.
- Reading aloud supports the development of thinking skills as children and adults discuss books.
- Read aloud at a predictable, scheduled time that fits with daily routines at home and school. And read aloud spontaneously – when adults and children are in the mood for a story.
- Read aloud at home and in school and when away from home or the classroom- at the doctor's office, on the bus, while waiting in line, outdoors, on a field trip.
- Read for as long as children can pay attention. Gradually read for longer periods of time as their attention spans grow.



The most important thing to prepare children for reading is always to read aloud to children.



April Newsletter 2009 Blue Room



Thank you for all your support. We appreciate your efforts in participating during our “Color Weeks”. Also thank you for providing food for the “Bunny Brunch”.

What Happened in March?

For the first two weeks we learned about colors. The children did a great job of participating by dressing up in the “Color of the Day”. The colors that we learned about are; red, yellow, green, blue, orange, pink, grey, brown, and purple. We made collages for red, yellow, green, and blue. To get orange we mixed red and yellow. To get pink we mixed white and red. To get grey we mixed white and black. To get purple we mixed red and blue. We did an art activity using brown. Also Sophie’s aunt and grandmother came to read a book to us.

For the next couple of weeks we began our “Spring Theme. We painted flowers, colored butterflies, glued ladybugs and bunnies. This can all be seen on our “Spring Board” in the classroom.

The “Bunny Brunch” was an opportunity for the children to learn about what bunnies eat and do. Essentially we became bunnies ourselves. The families brought in carrots, apples, cheddar bunnies, raisins, and celery. Also books were brought in to read. We ate all of the foods during our “Bunny Brunch”. The carrots were cooked for a while to soften for taste. Afterwards we hopped like bunnies, danced and made bunny faces.



We also had Judy (Sophie’s grandmother) come and plant with us. First we ate some of the food, which included green beans, snap peas, lettuce or cabbage and fresh mint. There were sunflower seeds as well but we just planted those. We planted mostly sunflowers all of which can be seen in the window sill. They have been growing very fast. Also we are growing bean sprouts.



What’s happening in April?

For the first couple of weeks we will learn about zoo and farm animals. Also we will dye eggs for Easter. We will be visited by Jennifer (Sophie’s grandmother) for another “Library Story and Music” day. We will begin a “Transportation Theme”, which will focus on modes of transportation; air, water, land.

Events and Closings

April 29th-Felix’s birthday

