

Nursery School News

A Monthly Newsletter of St. Paul's Episcopal Nursery School

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September 2003

From Jane: Finding Time To Rest



As the new year begins, once parents have helped their children settle into new classes, one of the first questions that comes to mind is often about their own role here at St. Paul's. Parents frequently ask me about the opportunities available for them to become involved in some way. My answer is always that although there are no expectations beyond simply supporting your child individually, there are many opportunities for those who are interested to become involved with the school. Each family should feel free to decide the level of support they can provide, and understand that whatever they can give, great or small, is *always* appreciated.

This year we have created a new organization called Parent Partnership for the purpose of organizing and better facilitating parent involvement at St. Paul's. I am including the pamphlet with the newsletter. Please look it over, fill it out and return it to my office. As you can see we have listed the dates of the monthly meetings. EVERYONE at St. Paul's is considered a member of the Parent Partnership and is welcome to come to our meetings.

As the pamphlet explains, the organization's purpose is to support parent education activities, enhance communication, and to help out with our various fund raising activities. Our steering committee is composed of mostly parents, some staff members, and myself. I am quite excited about the organization and encourage everyone who is interested to come to our meetings and find ways that they might like to get involved.

This fall we will be looking for help with Open House in October, the wine tasting fundraiser in November, and finally our Santa Breakfast in December. We would also like to get input from parents about parent education topics and/or speakers. So as you can see there are lots of ways to get involved. Our first meeting is scheduled for **Friday, September 19th**

from 11:30 am – 12:30 pm. Mark your calendar and plan to join us, everyone is welcome and encouraged to join

Separation

On behalf of the staff and myself I urge you all to enjoy the rest of your summer—pun intended. I will try to do the same. At this point in my summer newsletter I usually take great pleasure in announcing that I will be spending the better part of August sitting on the end a dock over looking the beautiful Rideau Lake in Perth, Ontario. This August I must interrupt my time in Canada first to drive my youngest child back to North

Carolina to begin her sophomore year in college, and then finish dealing with last minute details for my oldest child's wedding that will take place on September 13th. Rest?!...Someday in the future.

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From Jane *(continued)*

Summer Program

We had a grand time enjoying our new playground for summer program. We've gotten some new plants and an outdoor easel this summer—pretty much completing phase I of our new playground!

Mindy Hudson and her staff once again did a great job of providing the children with a wonderful summer program experience. I'd like to thank Mindy and her staff that included Pat Hurd, Dottie Lust, Stephanie Woodruff, and John Mattie. I'd also like to thank our staff of college and high school students that included Caitlin Adams, Elyse Easton, Scott Hudson, Emily Hurd, and Max Jones. They all did a grand job!

Now that summer program is coming to an end I can turn my focus to September and the changes that will occur as new groups of children are formed and new friendships are made. The staff and I look forward to welcoming the new children that will be coming in September, and of course we look forward to seeing all of the children and parents who will be returning.

Preparing For Fall—New Welcome Packet

As you can see we have developed a new "Welcome Packet" for each of you. Please do take the time to look through it carefully. You will find all of the information needed in order to get things off to a good start for your child and family. Kristen Napoleon, who has a background in public relations and marketing helped me get it organized. It will be tremendously helpful to the staff and me to have the papers filled out in advance of your home visit. Also, if you do have any questions about the items in your packet, your child's teacher will be glad to address any and all issues while she is with you in your home.

Back To School

The first day of school will be Wednesday, September 3rd. This will be a visiting day for everyone in a Monday, Wednesday, Friday class or any of the 4 day classes. The Tuesday, Thursday classes will have their visiting day on Thursday, September 4th. A visiting day permits parents to stay with their child to make the separation easier.

Visiting Days:

Wednesday, September 3rd - Monday, Wednesday, Friday, or 4-day classes

Thursday, September 4th - Tuesday, Thursday classes

Mayfair

Mayfair was a grand success, Laurel Flaherty did a superb job of chairing the event with the help of Katherine Doyle as her co-chair. The weather cooperated and we were able to be outside and enjoy the day. I would like to thank everyone who worked so hard to make it a success and also thank everyone who came to the event. Special thanks to those volunteers who gave of their time and energy on the various committees preparing for it in the weeks and months in advance prior to the actual day.

I'd also like to thank each of you for all of the donations - food items and toys for the Chinese auction. Everyone was incredibly generous and it all helped to increase our profit as well as enhancing the day for the children.

Over the years Mayfair profits have helped us keep the tuition costs down without compromising the quality of our program. This year I plan to use some of the profits to purchase needed new equipment and furnishings for the rooms. You will notice our new slide on the climber as soon as you come into the Big Room - the summer program participants have already really enjoyed it!

Thanks again to everyone, your participation has made a significant difference in our school and our children's lives.

Backpacks

Don't forget to send a backpack or some type of book bag for your child to transport artwork home from school. Many children like to bring a special blanket, stuffed animal, or toy from home, especially in the beginning of the school year. This is fine and it helps many children with separation. But once again, don't forget to put these "precious" items in the backpack so they are not forgotten or worse, lost!

Home Room Parents Needed

Every year we ask each class to designate a homeroom parent (or parents). Homeroom parents play an important role in the school in terms of communication between classroom parents and teachers about events such as field trips, snow days, class parties, class coffees, and other information that the teacher may need to have communicated among the parents. It is also a great way to get to know other parents in the school and work closely with your child's teacher.

If you would be interested in being a homeroom parent please let your child's teacher know at the home visit, and if you have any questions about being a home room parent don't hesitate to call me here at the school office.

Lunch Bunch

We will continue to provide this program. Joan Easton, Dottie Lust, and John Mattie will continue to be the caregivers for Lunch Bunch.

Lunch Bunch is offered Monday - Friday. Morning session children should be picked up at 12:30 pm and afternoon children should be dropped off at 11:40 am. The sign-up sheets with complete instructions and all information for Lunch Bunch will be available in Kathi Workman's office the first day of school.

No Nuts

I would like to remind you all that we will remain diligent in carrying out our NO NUT guidelines for St. Paul's Nursery School. Many children have allergies to nuts, and some are LIFE THREATENING. It is a challenge for us all because nuts and nut products such as peanut oils are "hidden" in many foods. It's not simply about not packing a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for your child.

We have frankly been pretty "loose" about birthday and holiday treats, not only in terms of nuts, but also allowing some not very nutritious gooey sweet snacks to be served. This year we are going to ask that only whole foods be brought into school. NO BAKED ITEMS. There is no way that we can be sure that items from bakeries will not have nut oils or residue from items with nuts. This may all sound "overboard", but I can assure you that as the staff, the board, and I have worked to educate ourselves about how to provide a nut free environment for children it is not!

This is a letter that Jen and Brooks Broadhurst placed in last April's newsletter. I thought I would run it again for all of your information.

Dear Fellow St. Paul's Nursery School Parents,

*Brooks and I are writing you today to express how pleased we are that St. Paul's Episcopal Nursery School has taken on the commitment to be a "peanut free school." We are thankful that Jane Adams and the Staff at St. Paul's are working with us to ensure that all students with a **life-threatening peanut allergy** can grow and learn in a safe environment.*

Our daughter, Cora, was diagnosed with this allergy when she was 18 months old. I cannot describe the fear that was felt that day as I was instructed by my pediatrician to dial 911. Fortunately, the paramedics were there in minutes and her overnight stay in Children's Hospital helped her to a complete recovery. Others with this allergy have not been as fortunate. The past year certainly been a learning experience for our family and friends in trying to avoid a potentially fatal situation. Some have said, "it's" like walking through a landmine everyday."

We look forward to working with the school to develop a plan of action in case a child with this allergy accidentally comes in contact with any peanut related products while at St. Paul's. As research has shown airways can close within seconds; therefore, a well-developed and exactly executed plan could mean the difference between life and death for Cora or any person allergic to peanuts.

Awareness, avoidance, preparedness and education are the four keys in the management of a peanut allergy.

Awareness:

- *It only takes a trace amount to cause a severe or fatal reaction.*
- *A child allergic to peanuts does not have to ingest them to have a reaction. He or she just needs to breathe particles from it, touch it or the package or plate that held it. A child just can't leave the room and return once the contaminated food is eaten. To be safe the room needs to be cleansed before his or her return.*

Avoidance:

- *The only way to assure the peanut allergic child's safety is through avoidance. We work every minute of every day to help Cora avoid contact with peanut contaminated foods or articles, as do other parents of children with this allergy.*
- *When we as parents are not physically with our children, we must rely on others to help ensure their safety. We need your help!*
- ***Read lists of ingredients on every item you send in to school for your child's lunch or snack. Ingredients often change without warning, so always double check.***

No Nuts (continued)

- *Avoid sending any food that reads, “may contain traces of peanuts”, or “manufactured in a plant that contains peanuts.” Or “Contains tree nuts.” These warnings will be found on most candy bars and*
- *manufactured cookies, many crackers, etc. You will be surprised at the number of foods that are not safe.*
- *Most allergic reactions are due to “cross-contamination.” “Safe” foods become “unsafe” through contact with peanuts. For example, a knife used to make a peanut butter sandwich is then used to cut an apple. The apple will be contaminated with peanuts. Or, the same scoop that was used in a peanut containing ice cream could be used in a plain vanilla, thus making the plain vanilla ice cream unsafe. This may be the case in bakeries as well. Cookies could be placed on contaminated cookie sheets, etc.*

Preparedness:

- *St. Paul’s will have an emergency plan in place.*
- *Cora will always have an Epi-pen with her.*

Education

• *Access the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network at www.foodallergy.org to learn more about this allergy. While it may take a few more minutes to select items for your child’s lunch or snacks, we know through experience that reading labels becomes easier and almost automatic with time. We hope that you’ll find this is a small sacrifice that will help keep our child and others like her safe. We thank you for your time and understanding on this very sensitive issue for our family. I hope that if you have any questions on this matter you will not hesitate to call us.*

Sincerely,

*Jen and Brooks Broadhurst
412-343-0514
jenbroad@adelphia.net*

Birthday and Holiday Treat suggestions

Celery or carrots and cream cheese
Jell-O jigglers
Jell-O squares with or without fruit
Any type of fruit such as strawberries or apple slices
Fruit kabobs
Fruit roll ups
Frozen bananas
Raisin boxes
Ice cream treats
Push-Ups
Popsicles
Fudgesicles
Veggies and dip

Essentially any type of whole food that we can be sure does not contain any hidden peanuts or nut products will be fine. Fruit, vegetable and dairy products are just fine, and much more healthy for all children in general.

Please DO NOT bring in baked goods such as cookies and cakes. We will have to send these types of products home and your child will be very disappointed.

United Way Donor Option

Once again St. Paul's Nursery School will participate in the United Way Donor Option Plan. In the past we have received many generous donations from this plan as a non-profit human service agency. We use these donations to help fund our financial aid program.

At this time, many corporations are beginning their 2004 United Way Campaign. We ask that you consider choosing St. Paul's Episcopal Nursery School to receive part of your annual donation. We have been designated the code name of St. Paul's Episcopal Nursery Sc and our code number is 2774. These designations are important to be included on your pledge form to ensure that St. Paul's Episcopal Nursery School receives your contribution.

If you have any questions or would like a pledge form, please call the school. Many thanks for your continuing support.

Save Your Junk

We will put the recyclable box out once again in September. The children use these materials for projects in order to encourage hands on exploration, learning, and creativity as they choose their own materials to create many different kinds of representations. This type of child directed self-expression also promotes cooperation among the children, and ultimately promotes self-esteem. Young children immensely enjoy representing "the culture of childhood" by creating models of all sorts of things that are universally fascinating, from vehicles to dinosaurs, through the use of interesting materials that they can choose on their own.

With this in mind could you save some of the following items for the school?

Fruit and vegetable Styrofoam trays (NO MEAT)
Cardboard paper towel and toilet paper rolls
Tissue boxes
Large and small oatmeal boxes
Plastic and metal jar lids - all sizes
Plastic liter bottles
Interesting or unusual packing materials
Excelsior
Twin, cord, yarn (all grades and colors)
Blueberry and strawberry baskets
Wooden materials and such as dowel rods
Picture framing mat board
Plastic band aide boxes
Used wrapping paper and ribbons
Spools (plastic and wood)
Beads of any type including those from broken costume jewelry
Bottle corks
Buttons

Or anything you can think of that can be recycled for children's art projects - use your imagination!



Staff Changes and Additions

This year we sadly say goodbye to Joni McDonald, our art teacher. Joni leaves to pursue a full time job at the University of Pittsburgh in their music department. Joni has been our art teacher for the past 3 years for the older classes, and she has developed an excellent art enrichment program for the children.

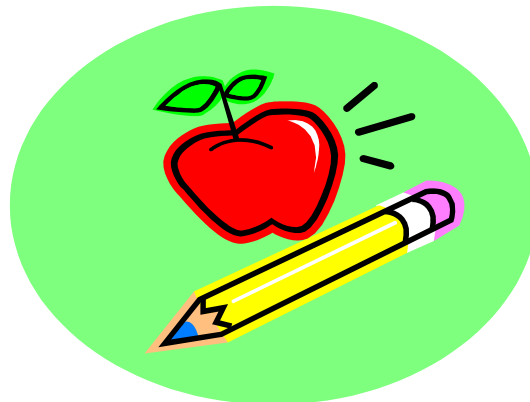
John Mattie "Mattie" will be taking the position of art teacher. He's excited about it and we look forward to expanding Mattie's role here at St Paul's. Mattie brings a diversity of knowledge and interests to our staff. With a BA in English from St. Vincent's College he is a talented writer, and has interests and extensive knowledge about art and music. We "uncovered" Mattie's artistic abilities as he worked with the young 3 year olds and were quite pleased when he agreed to continue and to build on Joni's art program.

We also welcome Christy Gallo to our staff. She will be teaching the Parent Toddler program. Christy plans to expand the program to include a parent education component.

Other new additions to our staff will be Nancy Nalitz who will be working as an assistant teacher with Paula Harvey. All of Nancy's children attended St. Paul's and she worked as a substitute last year. Nancy is a registered nurse. Becky Graff, also a registered nurse, worked as a substitute teacher and as a temporary aide last year with Joan Easton. This year she will be coming onto our staff in the permanent position as assistant teacher in the mornings with Eileen Sharbaugh.

Kathy Root will be joining Pam Countouris as her assistant on Monday and Wednesday afternoons. Kathy's children all went to St. Paul's and Kathy was on the Board of Trustees for 6 years. Kathy has a bachelor's degree in elementary education.

Another change to our staff will be Stephanie Woodruff. Stephanie worked as an assistant with Paula Harvey last year. This year Stephanie will take a lead position as a full time resource teacher for the oldest children that are with Mindy and Pam. We are also expanding our use of the space to include the old toddler room that the church has now moved upstairs along with the infant room (now our art room). Stephanie will be making use of that space with the oldest children. Stephanie has a bachelor's degree and teaching certification from Carlow College in Early Childhood Education. This is an exciting and enriching expansion of our program.



Mark Your Calendar For St. Paul's Activities & Events September 2003

| MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|----------------|---------|---|---|--------|----------|--------|
| 1 Labor Day | 2 | 3 First Day of School! Visiting Day | 4 First Day of School! Visiting Day | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |
| | | | | | | |



Have a GREAT “rest” of
the summer!

