



The Agassiz News

Agassiz Cooperative Preschool Community Newsletter, Fall 2009

1803 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02140 (617) 547-9355 www.agassizpreschool.org

Agassiz Celebrates Community, Children & Paul!



We have GREAT news! Our Paul has just gotten engaged to his love Mere (Meredith)! Paul went down on one knee on October 25th & the smart girl said "Yes." We love you Paul & wish you & Mere all the love in the world. She is one lucky girl & we can't wait to meet her.

Our Open House is Thursday, November 19th from 12:30 to 2:00pm. If you'd like to be a spokesperson for our fab little school, please let Donna (Delphi, OG) know that you'd like to help. We'll be

showing our plans for the new building – yay! Construction started November 1st.

Hope you'll all join us for the Thanksgiving Soup Party on Wednesday, Nov 25th at 11:00am. We close at 12:00 that day & will be closed on the 26th & 27th. The kids make a fantastic huge pot of vegetable soup to celebrate and to share with their families.

Get ready for the Tree sale, our big fundraiser that raises \$20k towards our scholarship fund. It starts on December 4th & will be expertly organized by the Romanyshyn & Todd/Taft families. It's a cold, fun, bonding event & lights up Mass Ave in a big way.

We'll wrap up December with a Pajama Party Breakfast on Dec 23rd before we close for the winter vacation. More details will be posted soon.

Thanks again & again for all your hard work. You are Agassiz & that's why it's such an easy, warm year.

Cheers, Tracey



DATES TO REMEMBER

- Nov 19—Early Release
Agassiz Open House
12:30-2:00
- Nov 25—Veggie Soup Day!
12:00 Dismissal
- Nov 26-27-Vacation
HAPPY THANKSGIVING
- Dec 4-21—Xmas Tree Sale
Great Community Bonding
- Dec 23—PJ Party Breakfast
- Dec 24-Jan 3—Vacation
- Jan 4—Agassiz Resumes



Extended Day—"Highway" to Extended Fun & Friends

If you glance up at the wall over the kitchen windows you will see some fabulous trees and flowers that the children in Extended day made. Ex-day runs from 2:30- 4:30 Tues, Wed, and Thur. We have outside time, meeting time, snack and fun projects. I like to do long term projects with the children. Hence the tree collages with poems written at the very end, to help the kids summarize what they learned. They know that trees are houses to animals, they have a "skin" called bark, they have a trunk, branches, twigs and parts of their bodies are used by animals (nests) and people (paper).



Our next project will be making an Agassiz Highway in the classroom. We walked to the corner of Roseland and Mass Ave to watch the traffic lights, the cars and the conditions of the roads. We went in search of pot holes and only found a few! We discussed how pot holes are made and what can happen to a car that hits a pot hole. We've made Police officer hats and will make a jail, road signs and a mini ramp for our "drivers".... Keep watching the floor under the main tables to see what we are doing next!

- Ann, YG & Extended Day Lead Teacher

Agassiz Cooperative Preschool: A Creative and Caring Community

Youngest Group At Home From First Day & Forward...



What a fabulous Youngest Group we have this year! Their transitions into the classroom were quick—each child ready to join the group. We have been having loads of fun. For the first few weeks we explored our senses. The sense of touch continues to be a popular one (Smearing paint on themselves and all over their pictures!) It is great fun watching a child concentrate while at the easel. The paint brush goes up and down and across the paper with much deliberation.

The children are learning that their words have power. Words enable them to get something they want, whether it be a toy or a teacher, or the attention of a peer.

We have been learning about the Fall season and going on lots of neighborhood walks. The children are great at following directions and staying with their group. We have found red, yellow, orange, green and brown leaves. We have found BIG leaves and small ones and ones in the middle. We have glued leaves and printed leaves and rubbed them too. We even used them as a paint brush. We dipped them in paint and then swept them across the paper - What fun!

For Halloween we carved a pumpkin, made "Apple" costumes, ate pumpkin seeds, made spiders to hang on a giant web and got ready for Halloween. Phew!

Feel free to come hang out with us anytime. Want to read a story? Bring a book! - Ann



MG & OG Explore Fall, Friendship, Stars and... Chinese Water Dragons?!?



Richard's wonderfully subtle but powerful way of teaching children the concepts of sharing, caring, and being a good friend, has established a wonderful positive energy in this year's Middle Group. Continuously changing "partners," the children are befriending one another without even realizing it. They are too busy engaged in their many art projects, playing in their pretend "kitchen", zooming cars down tracks, and building with the myriad of blocks, legos, and connecting stix—all within a "Fall Foliage" theme. And they are making great friends too.



The Oldest Group blasted off this year by studying the stars, making rockets, exploring the solar system, and even star gazing at a special OG evening popcorn pajama party. With such great momentum, Katie and the kids decided that a new OG pet was in their future so along came MAX—their very own Chinese Water Dragon. Together, they learned about Max's habitat (hot and constantly moist), food (live crickets!), as well as his fellow lizards and amphibians.



Thanks to Evren and Allison (Sasha's parents), who are dynamite OG organizers (along with Katie) setting a terrific year in motion.



Meet Max..



Where Imaginations Grow and Laughter is Contagious



Music & Movement Energize Agassiz Jeremy Lyons & Katie Dealy

Alternating Wednesdays Jeremy Lyons (left playing banjo) and Katie Dealy (below leading movement) fill Agassiz with their music and magic.

Jeremy brings his musical talent from New Orleans with jazzy songs and a flair for fun. Last week the children enjoyed dancing the hula and rocking with his diverse musical instruments.

Katie Dealy, adds to this spirit using props, music and story telling to bring the children into imaginative worlds of wonder. A professional modern dancer and educator, her extensive career focuses on teaching children creative movement (see www.greenstreetstudios.org.) Using scarves, stuffed animals, and children's imaginations, she takes them into the jungle, along a rainbow, and anywhere their hearts lead. All is done with her own love and understanding of children—constantly keeping the focus on their experience.

We are fortunate to have Katie and Jeremy as part of the Agassiz team.



Meet Our Terrific Student Teachers Becca, Katie & Dan



We are fortunate this Fall to have three fantastic student teachers complementing our awesome staff. Becca (left) of Sarasota, Florida (YG) and Dan (below) of Simsbury, CT (MG), are both Threshold Interns from Lesley College.

Katie (below left) is studying Early Childhood at Wheelock College and based in OG.

It is clear they each adore the kids and help the teachers immensely with an extra pair of hands and their big hearts.



Need a Substitute? Call Pam or Jason



Born in Katmandu, Nepal, and now residing in the mountainous regions of Somerville, MA, welcome one of our most treasured substitutes, Jason Behrens.

With extensive childcare experience and adored by the children, Jason is available if you need coverage at Agassiz or at home, Jason can be reached at:

jbehrens34@gmail.com

Who is that smiling woman often seen helping out? Pam Moy whose children, Aurara and Quinton, graduated (now in 2rd & 3rd grade at Baldwin), continues her incredible commitment to Agassiz. She helps out whenever she can - subbing for Agassiz teachers, babysitting for stressed parents, and always bringing a warm smile along the way. Contact Pam at:

pmoy@thirdsky.com



Agassiz Teachers Radiate Kindness, Competence & Community



Ann Holloway, Youngest Group Lead

Teacher, loves to recap heartwarming, often hilarious, tales about each Agassiz child. Her stories are highlighted by her boisterous laugh, as well as by stacks of photos she shows that bring the stories to life. She clearly loves her job, and her students.

Ann came to Boston at age sixteen from Scotland (her father later became Bishop of Edinburgh,) and has always had a creative spark. As a jewelry designer, photographer, and storyteller, she enjoys weaving creative expression into her teaching. With over a dozen years experience, Ann came to Agassiz four years ago because "Agassiz is a great place to teach. Tracey believes in her teachers. She makes it exciting

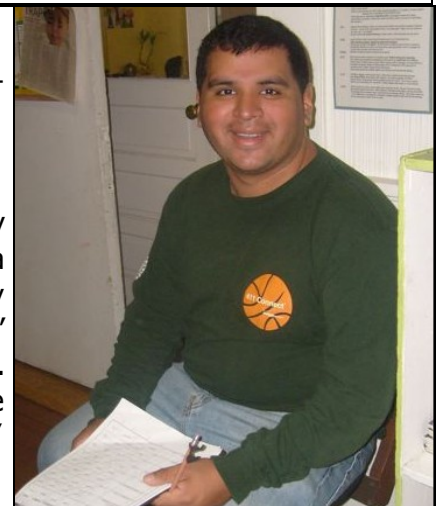
and gives us the opportunity to grow. As a result, I've definitely become a better teacher."

As Ann speaks, I see her bright blue eyes light up. "Did you see these?" she beams. Hanging behind us, glued carefully to the wall are several art and painting projects. "Aren't they precious!?" she croons. I obviously think so as my child's art is among them. What is amazing is that Ann thinks so too.

Walking into Agassiz, you can't miss **Paul Robinson, Assistant Middle Group Teacher.** Posted at the front door each morning, he welcomes every family in his warm, understated way. But don't let his low key style fool you. He pays close attention to each child and adult who enters or leaves, as if all 40 children were his own.

Paul was adopted from Colombia, SA, at age 4 to a wonderful "very community oriented" family in Wellesley. He entered Lesley University as a culinary student but things changed when he was required to take an early childhood class. "I immediately fell in love with working in Early Childhood," he recalls. He came to Agassiz eight years ago, starting as a student intern. He likes "the way the teachers work together and support each other. The same for the Agassiz community - it's a very supportive, great community."

Paul says he "loves watching the children grow up. And then having their siblings, and watching them grow up too." He smiles, "But the best is knowing that what we teach the children now is going to be with them throughout their whole lives."



Jackie Smith, Asst Youngest Group

Teacher, has been an Agassiz parent, grandparent, and teacher during her twenty-plus years at Agassiz. "It's a fun place to work," she laughs. "We play all day. What could be better?"

As a person who enjoys nature, Jackie appreciates Agassiz's outdoor emphasis. "It's great that we take the kids outside every day. The fresh air is good for them and keeps us all sane." She also enjoys "meeting so many interesting people" sharing that she's made many close friends at Agassiz. But her very favorite part? "The children, and the hugs. Yeah, I definitely love the hugs the most."

Exploring Ideas and Embracing Friendships

Richard Barton, Middle Group Lead Teacher, came to Agassiz over thirty years ago as a founding teacher. In addition to his extraordinary experience, his uncommonly gifted way of relating to the children makes him a deeply treasured teacher at Agassiz.

"I like to be straightforward, not act differently with the children," Richard explains. "I want them to develop social competence."

"I also coach high school students," Richard continues, "and they deal with the same issues as my three and four-year olds. They need to learn to deal with their feelings, stand up for themselves, interact with others. We all do. I try to help them with these skills. It is the social part that causes the biggest challenge for people. If young children can master that, they will be successful in whatever they do throughout their lives."

Richard is an avid runner with a family of his own (children ages 29, 26 and 18). When people ask why he is still teaching, Richard responds, "Yes, I have to work two jobs to make it work financially [he coordinates state wide high school volleyball and Junior Olympics.] But I'm rewarded everyday at my job. I don't hear that from most of my friends. I find great satisfaction and value in what I do."



When I first came to Agassiz as Director thirteen years ago, I thought I'd just spend a year or two and then go back to working with inner city kids. But Agassiz worked its magic on me almost instantly, and I fell in love.

I fell in love with this funny little school where parents felt as proud of being part of Agassiz as their children did. Where you didn't have to be highly pedigreed to know you were getting the best possible education for your child.

I am proud Agassiz has been part of what has made this area such a good place to live and work. I feel fortunate to be part of this community.

Tracey

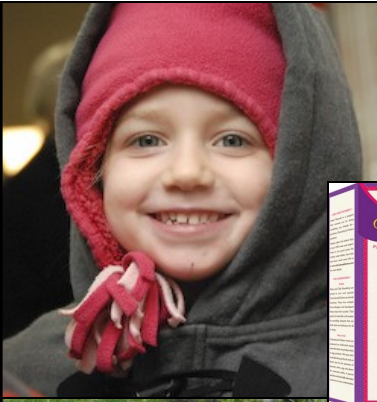
Oldest Group Lead Teacher, Katie Dalo's name ought to begin with the letter "E" as she Exudes Energy and Enthusiasm. Even her bright yellow jeep welcomes everyone to Agassiz with abounding energy. A passionate athlete (she coached three high school sports in addition to teaching), Katie inspires all three classes to love sports and work as a team.

Born in Italy, Katie moved to Maryland at age seven, where as the oldest of seven children, "becoming a teacher came naturally." After three years teaching in public schools, Katie came to Agassiz three years ago. "Agassiz is why I became a teacher," she explains. "School should be exciting for kids. Here I am given the freedom to be creative and develop an interesting curriculum. I try to connect with each child on an individual level. It takes a lot of work, but at Agassiz there is room for me to do that. I love it."

And make school exciting Katie definitely does. Her curriculum is so outstanding that many oldest group parents wish THEY could be in her class. From building the Zakim bridge to inspiring every kind of artistic expression; from learning about wind power, to cultivating live butterflies and frogs; there is never a dull moment with Katie.



The People Are What Make Agassiz Great



Birthday Fun for All !!!

Even though Agassiz policy allows gluten in birthday snacks, in typical Agassiz fashion, parents took it upon themselves to find ways that ALL children can eat the treats.



CAKE MIX: Cherrybrook Kitchen (WHITE BOX ONLY—RED HAS GLUTEN) can be found at local supermarkets.

TOO BUSY TO BAKE? You are not alone: Whole Foods bakery sells gluten free baked products.

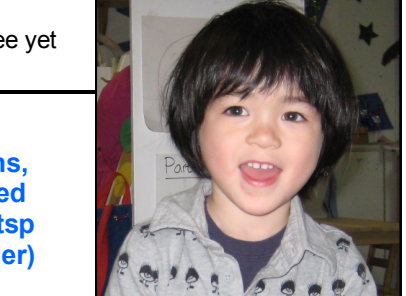
NEED A WINTER DAY BAKING PROJECT FOR THE KIDS? Try this gluten free yet tasty recipe from Jenise (Eleanor, YG):



“Blackies” Gluten Free / Dairy Free Brownies

- 1.5 cups (or 15.5 ounce can) cooked black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 eggs (NO eggs? Sub: 3/4 C applesauce + 1.5 tsp baking powder)
- 2 tbls olive oil
- 1/3 cup cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 pinch sea salt
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar + 1 tbsp molasses
- 1/2 a banana
- 1/4 cup choc chips (Optional, but recommended)

Blend everything in blender, then pour into a greased 8" x 8" pan. Bake 350F approx. 30 min. until the top is dry, center mostly set. **Optional Frosting:** after they are done, drop a few more chips on top & spread for a thin frosting.



Share Your Agassiz News

Contribute to the Agassiz Newsletter—share your own relevant articles, fun photos, child-friendly events, recipes, favorite park, or whatever you'd like. If you have an idea, but not the time, that's fine too.

Contact Maura (Adam, OG)
agassiznews@mauratom.com

Next deadline: Monday, Nov 23rd

Special thanks to Jenise Aminoff, Ann Holloway, Tracey Kaplan, Ben Mayer, Lisa Szturma, Shawn Szturma & Constantin von Wentzel for their contributions.



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