

# ACADEMY A.R.T.S. NEWS

The Academy of Movement and Music

605 Lake Street

Oak Park, Illinois

(708)848-2329

FEBRUARY 2009

VOL. 13, NO. 5

## IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

**February 7:** A.R.T.S. Sock Hop 6:00-7:30 PM

**February 8:** Academy A.R.T.S. "New Families" Open House, 1:00-3:00 PM. Registration open to the public.

**February 10 & 11:** Upstairs A.R.T.S. Valentine Exchange.

**February 11 & 12:** Downstairs A.R.T.S. Valentine Exchange.

**February 12:** Upstairs A.R.T.S. performance "Fire", 9:30 AM & 1:30 PM. Parents and visitors welcome.

**February 17:** A.R.T.S. families currently enrolled may pre-register for Summer A.R.T.S.

## *Reminder*

Sharing Days are **Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>** and **Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup>** this month.

## Upstairs Music

The children have become used to our routine of song and instrumental music. We warm up with vocal exercises to get our voices going, and then sing a variety of songs. Some songs are learned for our shows, and others are for fun, to experience the joy of singing. Many music instructors recommend singing at home in preparation for music study. Any song that is familiar is fine – you don't have to sing elaborate solos. Songs with repetition and interesting rhythms are fun for children to sing with parents.

In music class, we also prepare for future musical ensembles by learning rhythms and pitches on the Orff xylophones. There are three octaves of instruments: bass, alto and soprano. We learn both two-mallet songs for rhythmic accompaniment, and one-mallet songs to play actual melodies. The songs we are working on this month are "Star Light" and "Burn Little Candles" We are also listening to an exciting story "The Magic Flute."

Each class ends with a physical activity such as a game or a musical movement exercise. This month we will learn how to name notes by playing hopscotch on a large staff.

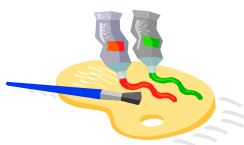
On occasion, children will bring home sheets with lyrics to songs for the shows. Please don't hesitate to ask me about songs we are learning. Our goal is to enjoy exploring the musical world, and to support life-long participation in music.

~ Mara Leonard



## Upstairs A.R.T.S.

### February



In February our "Fire" Unit will culminate with a performance on Thursday, February 12<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 AM and 1:30 PM. Remember that everyone is welcome to attend our shows.

In preparation for Valentine's Day our science class will explore the difference between the Valentine heart and our body's heart. A nurse, Georgia Donovan, Liam's mom, will come in the morning and a doctor, Fran Norlock, Luka's mom will come in the afternoon to our Friday classroom on February 6<sup>th</sup>.

You will find us in Valentine activities during the first two weeks of February. The PTO will be providing a special snack on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>. The children have designed Valentine Bags in preparation for our Valentine Exchange on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.

We will complete our painting unit. Watch for our masterpieces on the walls of the front staircase.

During our last two weeks we will begin our new unit, The Sea and Water Festivals. Going to the frozen tundra of Alaska, we'll explore the life of the Inuits (We call them Eskimos – the Indian word meaning "Eaters of Raw Meat.).

~ Donna Pries

## Upstairs A.R.T.S.

### Thank You to . . .

**Ryan Floody** for the "Who's Hiding in the Ocean?" puzzle in honor of his 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. This puzzle will make a great addition to our puzzles during our "Water" unit.

**Josephine Welin** for the Foods Felt set and Teddy the Teaching Bear to celebrate her 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.



**Madeline Falkenholm** for the Count to 100 Felt Board Set, Phonics Felt Set and the Ladybug puzzle in honor of her 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. What great learning these projects will provide.

**Daniel Phelan** for the Count and Learn Cookie Jar to celebrate his 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. This talking cookie jar will help us learn our numbers in a very fun way.

**Bella Nacke** for the Acromaths project in honor of her 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Another wonderful math activity to increase our math skills.

**Nora Hartman** for the “Peeling Fruit and Vegetables” to celebrate her 4 ½ birthday. We will have a great time exploring the inside of these soft fruit and vegetables.

**Geneva Darley** for the puzzle “Who’s Hiding in the Garden?” in honor of her 4 ½ birthday. It will be fun to hide the insects in the garden with a magnetic wand.

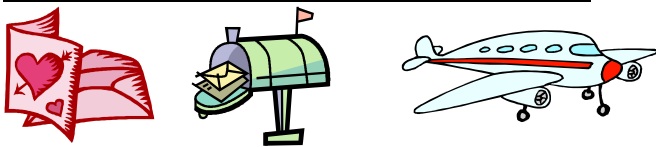
**Nicole Darley** for the Magnetic Foam Objects to celebrate her 4 ½ birthday. These magnetic objects will help us learn our phonics when we match them to magnetic letters.

*And again thanks to all the children who remembered the teachers and the school with thoughtful gifts and contributions to the A.R.T.S. PTO, MOMENTA and the Tidmarsh Arts Foundation.*

## Are you Missing?

We have a girl’s white Baby Gap sweater, size 4T, that was left behind Upstairs during school. Please contact Donna or the office if it belongs to your child.

## February in Downstairs A.R.T.S.



February begins with mail, mail, and more mail. Our “Mailbox Mania” unit continues through the first two weeks of February and finds the Downstairs A.R.T.S. children busy working on cards and letters for moms and dads, friends and relatives. Our imaginative play area has transformed into a post office loaded with all sorts of prewriting and writing as well as reading experiences for the children. The sequence of tasks begins to develop as we move along selecting, composing, addressing, and mailing a variety of cards and letters. The children will have their own private mail slots complete with their names and photos so

mail can be delivered to the intended recipient. More fine motor activities are in store as we work with scissors to cut strips of stamps or stickers to keep our post office well stocked. Our Art will focus on Valentine preparations – including invitations to the Sock Hop, decorated bags for the Valentine Exchange and plenty of activities that include hearts. The unit will conclude with our Valentine Exchange as we take turns making our final delivery and enjoy our Valentine snack.

The rest of February will find us traveling into our next unit of “Planes, Trains, Boats and Automobiles.” As you can tell February is certain to keep us busy!

~ Niki Merrick

## Downstairs Music

Don’t be surprised that music is a part of each room in the Downstairs A.R.T.S. This is the Academy of Movement and Music. Specific to the Art/Montessori/Music room, music is the primary focus of our circle time. The unit that we are involved in determines the subject matter of our music activities. Our school year begins with many songs that include everyone’s name as well as some songs that will be a constant part of our day. Our “Hand Washing Song” signals the end of circle for the Red and Blue group to line-up for some real hand washing. The Green and Yellow group learn quickly that our “Monkey Song” means that school is almost over and its time to take off our slippers. Many of the songs are simple, familiar melodies with new words as well as a few hand, face and body movements. These movements allow those children who may have difficulty singing the words or who elect not to sing at this time to still participate in our circle.

As our themes change, our music changes too providing us with the opportunity to learn words and explore a variety of concepts. In our unit “All About Me,” we focused on the many feelings we have and how we express them in a modified “If You’re Happy and You Know It.” We also included such concepts as up and down, fast and slow, right and left, into a song about what we can do with our hands and fingers. We even worked on naming parts of our body as we sang, “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes.” We used music to help us learn the colors, numbers, and other words that are part of Kwanzaa, Hanukah and Christmas in our “Celebrations of Light” unit. As the year continues, we will use the songs and finger plays we learn in our exploration of things that go, “Spring Things,” as well as shapes, and our five senses. Our music time certainly provides us another channel through which vocabulary skills can grow and concepts can be introduced and reinforced. It is also a fun time for all!

~ Niki Merrick



## Downstairs Reading Volunteers Needed

*There are open spaces available* if parents or caregivers are interested in spending a bit of time (approximately an hour) in our book corner. Just stop by the office and sign up. The children really enjoy having you come and be a part of their day.

## Downstairs A.R.T.S.

### Thank You to . . .

**Ben Richards** for the board book You Choose in celebration of his fourth birthday. What a fun book to look at and to read. Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Ben!



**Annika Chesney** for the book Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs in honor of her fourth birthday. Thank you for sharing one of your favorite stories with your school friends. Happy 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Annika!

**Zoe Warzecha's family** for donating a bag full of gently used toys. Thank you!

## Bathroom Reminder

A little reminder to parents about having their child use the bathroom before coming to school or please come in with your child at arrival time to help him/her if they need to use the bathroom right away. The floating aides are busy taking children out of the cars at arrival time and are not in the bathroom at that time to help the children.

## Important Reminder:

As many children are celebrating birthdays at school, it is important to contact the office before sending in any birthday treats. There are children in our program that have a variety of food allergies i.e. dairy, chocolate, wheat, gluten, peanut. By knowing ahead of time, we can let you know of any allergies in your child's group, suggest possible safe treats, avoid disappointing any children if they cannot eat the treat as well as avoid disappointing any children if their treat cannot be served. Also please, please, please, keep treats simple such as pretzels, goldfish crackers, fruit snacks or a cookie.

## Very Important ~ Please Read!! Drop Off/Pick-up Reminder



*Please do not arrive early* to drop off or pick up your child. The neighbors have complained to the police about our clients sitting in the driveway for excessive amounts of time blocking access to their driveways. If you arrive early for drop off, you will need to wait at the meters on North Blvd. until 8:30 am or 12:30 PM ~ staff is not ready to start accepting children until 8:35 am and 12:35 PM. At dismissal/pick-up time please do not line up in the driveway until 10:50 am or 2:50 PM, if you arrive earlier, please wait at the meters on North Blvd.

*Thank you for complying.*

## "I'm a Big Kid Now"

The Academy faculty and staff would like to help your child feel successful as he/she begins potty training. When you and your child feel that the time has come to go to school in training pants or regular underwear, the following things can help everyone work together:

1. Put a large safety pin on the back of your child's school clothes – this signals all of us that your child is training, and we will make a point of asking/inviting/reminding your child about going to the potty.
2. Send a written note telling us your child is training, or call the office. If there is a specific phrase that your child says to signal his/her need, please let us know what it is.
3. Don't be disturbed by accidents. The busy activities of the classroom can be so absorbing that the realization that it's time to go can come too late.
4. If an accident occurs, you will get a bag of rinsed out, wet clothes, and your child will wear the extra clothes you keep in your child's backpack or a set of spare clothes from the Academy. If your child comes home wearing Academy clothes, just send them back, washed, the next time you come. Check the extra set of clothes you keep in your child's backpack and consider whether they are still large enough and warm enough. Make sure to label all clothing.
5. You are, of course, welcome to come in when your child arrives to let the teachers know that training has started. However, greeting time is

a very special one-on-one time between your child and a teacher. Adult conversation needs to be brief, and it helps to send a written note so we remember to inform all the staff. It's so easy to forget a quick conversation during a busy day. Certainly, you may feel free to call us if you have special needs or concerns.

~ Thank you

### And finally, please note . . .

A.R.T.S. classes begin promptly at **8:45 am** and **12:45 PM**. However, we are beginning to notice that more and more children are arriving at school anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes late. This is disruptive to the class, as the teacher must interrupt his or her work with the other students in order to acknowledge the child. It is also often difficult for a tardy child to jump into an activity mid-stream after missing her or his own individual "settling in" time. Thirty minutes late may mean that the child is missing an entire physical fitness or creative movement class! On some mornings or afternoons, it may seem like a Herculean task to get a preschooler dressed, fed, and to school on time, but please try to make it a priority. Thanks for your cooperation!

## Registration News!

Our 2009-2010 registration for currently enrolled children and their siblings as well as Academy music and dance families is going very well. There are no morning slots available Downstairs. There are a few morning slots available Upstairs as of this writing. There are afternoon slots available for the Downstairs and the Upstairs Program.

Registration opens to the public on February 8<sup>th</sup> at our Open House for new families and we expect to fill a number of slots in both Downstairs and Upstairs A.R.T.S. for the 2009-2010 program at that time.

We have met many interested new families through "preschool shopping" visits to our classrooms. We have heard that many of these families were referred by current A.R.T.S. parents. Thanks for the great PR!



### **KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION**

*Oak Park School District 97 ~ Feb. 24, 25 & 26, 2009*

970 Madison Street ~ call 524-3000 or go to

[www.oprf.org](http://www.oprf.org) for further information & hours.

*River Forest ~ Starting Feb. 6, 2009*

Lincoln School 366-7340 /Willard School 366-6740

Child must be 5 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2009

## **Safety Reminder!**

For everyone's safety, when dropping off or picking up at the Academy we ask that:



- **All** children enter/exit on the right/passenger side of the car, even when more than one child is entering or exiting.
- We also ask that the driver remain in the car and **not** get out to help.
- If you need to help your child within the car, please put the car in "**park**" and/or secure the parking brake.
- Be sure **everyone** has cleared the area all around your car before slowly moving forward.