

ACADEMY A.R.T.S. NEWS

The Academy of Movement and Music

605 Lake Street

Oak Park, Illinois

(708)848-2329

FEBRUARY 2010

VOL. 14, NO. 5

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

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

February 7: Academy A.R.T.S. "New Families" Open House, 1:00-3:00 PM. Registration open to the public.

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

February 16: A.R.T.S. families currently enrolled may pre-register for Summer A.R.T.S.

February 18: Upstairs A.R.T.S. performance "Winter Solstice/New Years", 9:30 AM & 1:30 PM. Parents and visitors welcome.

Upstairs A.R.T.S.

February



In February, our Winter Solstice and New Year's Unit will culminate with a performance on Thursday, February 18 at 9:30 AM and 1:30 PM. Remember everyone is welcome.

In the Literature class we will have a shadow play of the Three Little Pigs and have fun making shadows with our bodies.

Much of February will find us in Valentine activities. The children will design Valentine Bags in preparation for our Valentine Exchange on Wednesday the 10th and Thursday the 11th.

After our rehearsals and show, we will begin an exploration of our new unit "Growing Things."

In Science class we'll investigate making shadows. In our study of wheels, a small teddy bear on a rolling Lego car will demonstrate the need for Safety belts. Next the children will learn how camouflage helps animals.

~ Donna Pries

Upstairs Music

Through singing games, listening activities, and movement, the children have been learning music naturally through the joy of experiencing music while using the voice as the primary instrument. All



children can sing and be successful as it is natural for children to sing as they play. On occasion, children will bring home sheets with lyrics to songs for the shows. I encourage parents to sing along with their children at home using the songs they are learning in class or any song with repetition and interesting rhythms.

In music class, we warm up with vocal exercises to get our voices going and then sing a variety of songs. We start with songs for the show and then play a singing game. Music elements are reinforced further by being presented in new contexts; reading stick notation and playing rhythms at the xylophones; using hand signs as a way of giving a physical placement for a vocal pitch. We also prepare for future musical ensembles by learning how to play together and the enjoyment of performing for an audience. Each class ends with a musical movement exercise or listening activity. We have learned dynamics and how different sounds, and musical instruments, are used to represent emotions and characters such as in a ballet.

Our goal is to enjoy exploring the musical world, and to support life-long participation in music whether as an audience member or professional musician.

~ Christine Ingaldson

Reminder

Sharing Days are **Tuesday, February 16th** and **Wednesday, February 17th** this month.

Planet Cookies

We have had our Planet Cookie Day. We have been having a contest to learn the eight planet names. A planet hopscotch was placed on the floor. When a child successfully named all the planets, they put their name on a poster. We had 20 children in the morning and 13 children in the afternoon who helped win planet cookies for everyone. All of the children hopped the planets at least 3 times.

Congratulations for completing the planet hopscotch. . . .

(Listed in order of accomplishment.)

AM – *Emmet Harmon, Elise Gimpert, Reid Maggio, Michael Burdett, Margaret Butman, Ben Richards,*



Wesley Scott, Audrey McKenna, Louise Anzaldi, Nick Owen, Luke Owen, Maya Rankin, James Bartley, Max Taub, Paige Buckley, Olivia Pruden, Katie Werthmann, Morgan Fox, Mallory Meadows, Jack Watters.

PM – *Angie Strand, William Gearhart, Abby Carlson, Jessica Park, Richard Seiler, Jelena Collins, Joe Haarvei, Roger Dunn, Ian Chmielewski, Amanda McGreal, Beck Winter, Eve Wasyluk, Chloe Manno.*

Upstairs A.R.T.S.

Thank You to . . .

Jack Watters for the Squiggly Worms Project in celebration of his 5th birthday. This is sure to become a very fun and popular activity.



Annika Chesney for the Smart Snacks Stack & Count Layer Cake to honor her 5th birthday. This project will help us develop our math skills.

Joe Haarvei for the Dress Joey doll with Magnetic Clothes in celebration of his 5th birthday. This activity will be a great addition to our three girl magnetic dolls.

Lillian and Violet Berg for the books *This Is the Way We Dress*, *This Is the Way We Help at Home*, and *This Is the Way We Go to School* in honor of their 5th birthday. These wonderful books will help us explore how children live around the world.

Ari Duboyce for the book *Friendly Fairy* in celebration of her 5th birthday. Fairies spark our imaginations and this book will be an inspiration to many.

Ian Chmielewski for the counting Money Puzzles to honor his 5th birthday. These puzzles will expand our knowledge and experience with money.

Michael Burdett's mom, Amy Schmidt, Morgan Fox's mom, Anne, and Amanda McGreal's mom, Colleen Condon for making our wonderful Planet Cookies for our Planet Cookie Day.

To all the children who remembered the teachers and the school with thoughtful gifts and contributions to the A.R.T.S. PTO, the Academy and MOMENTA.

February in Downstairs A.R.T.S.



The month of February brings the Downstairs A.R.T.S. children to a unit called "Alphabet Adventures."

This time of year traditionally finds our imaginative play area transformed into a post office and this year is

not any different. What better place than our post office to explore all 26 letters of the alphabet as we create mail, mail and more mail. We will be busy working on cards and letters for moms and dads, friends and relatives. There will be 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 work shelves and book corner will be filled with letters from A to Z and you can be certain we will sing about them as well. Our Art will focus on Valentine preparations – including invitations to the Sock Hop and decorated bags for the Valentine Exchange. The unit will conclude with our Valentine Exchange as we take turns making our final delivery and enjoying our Valentine snack.

The rest of February will find us venturing into our "Globetrotters" unit. The classrooms will take on a multicultural feel as we expose the children to a sampling of life in countries around the world such as China, Italy and Egypt and coming back a little closer to home, a visit to our neighbor Mexico. We will explore the art, music, people and stories that are a part of each country we visit. February may be our shortest month but it looks like it could be the busiest.

~ Niki Merrick

Downstairs Music

Music is part of every class the children participate in during their day in the Downstairs A.R.T.S. program. It is also the focus of our circle time in the Art/Music/Montessori room. We ring the bell for clean-up time and when the task is complete, we gather around our green circle for music. Here, a song or finger play is presented to the children and they are asked to echo the words, melody and actions. Many of the songs are simple, familiar melodies with new words as well as hand, face and/or body movements. Those children who may have difficulty singing the words or elect not to sing at this time still have the option to participate through movement.

The theme that we are involved with determines the subject matter of our music activities. In our unit "How Do You Do?" we focused on the many feelings we have and how we express them in a modified "If You're Happy and You Know It." Later in our "Harvest" unit, we worked with numbers as we added apples and then took them away in our finger play "10 Red Apples." Our Celebrations unit allowed us to learn many new words as we sang about



Hanukah, Kwanzaa and Christmas. January's Color unit allowed us time to look for the colors we learned as we sang "If You're Wearing Red."

You can see that our music time provides us with yet another channel through which vocabulary skills can be increased and concepts can be introduced and reinforced. Later in March our theme "Music, Music Everywhere" will provide many opportunities to develop skills in listening to music, making music and understanding music as well. One thing is certain, our downstairs singers have shown themselves to be eager participants at music circle and that eagerness opens the door to learning.

~ 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 . . .

James Nacke for the Basic Skills Board Puzzle and the Geometric Shapes Puzzle in honor of his third birthday. The children are already enjoying these additions to our shelf work. Happy Birthday #3, James.



Olivia Baldyga for the book The Lion and the Mouse in celebration of her third birthday. Thank you for sharing one of your favorite stories with your school friends. Have fun being three, Olivia!

Lucy Vander Griend for the book If You Take a Mouse to School in celebration of her half birthday. Mouse is very popular in our book corner and this addition is certain to be enjoyed by everyone. Have fun being 2 1/2, Lucy!

Phone List Changes

Add to phone list:

Madeline Vizzone
Downstairs A.R.T.S.
Monday/Wednesday PM (green group)
216 S. East Ave., Oak Park, IL 60302
708-660-9153
parents ~ Robin & Patrick



Caroline Krueger
Downstairs A.R.T.S.
Tuesday/Thursday PM (blue group)

847 S. Clinton Ave., Oak Park, IL 60304
708-524-1220
parents ~ Julie & Kevin

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 10:55 am or 2:55 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!

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Oak Park School District 97 ~ Feb. 24 & 25, Apr. 6 & 7, May 4 & 5, June 29, July 28 & 29, 2010
970 Madison Street ~ call 524-3000 or go to www.oprf.org for further information & hours.

River Forest ~ Starting Feb. 5, 2010

Lincoln School 366-7340 /Willard School 366-6740
Child must be 5 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2010

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.

Registration News!

Our 2010-2011 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 for Downstairs or Upstairs A.R.T.S. There are afternoon slots available for both the Downstairs and the Upstairs Program.



Registration opens to the public on February 7th 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 2010-2011 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!

Early Childhood Screening

Vision, Hearing, Language, and Pre-readiness
for Oak Park children ages three and four

Wednesday, February 24, 2010 ~ 8:15-9:45 AM
Wednesday, March 24, 2010 ~ 8:15-9:45 AM
at Whittier School
715 N. Harvey, Oak Park, IL
Call 708-524-3132 to schedule an appointment.

