



Riverdale Nursery School
and Family Center

Nursery News

June 2016

we make a remarkable difference in the lives of children. we give them roots and wings.

A Note from the Director

**"You're off to great
Places!**

Today is your day!

**Your mountain is
waiting,**

So... get on your way!"

-Dr. Seuss, *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*

It's been a busy and productive year and it has been a pleasure to share in the growth and successes of the RNSFC children.

Many thanks for the many contributions of the Parent Group chairs, committee heads and members, the Board of Trustees, class parents, and to all the parents who gave their time and expertise to the School.

As the year draws to a close we prepare to say goodbye. I hope that the families that are leaving our School will keep in touch and visit often. We look forward to seeing many families at camp and in the fall when the new school year begins. We hope to see you at our End of Year Picnic!

On behalf of the RNSFC staff, we send best wishes for a healthy and happy summer.

-Susan

Jumpstart Toddlers

It is hard to believe we are already wrapping up our Spring semester of Jumpstart Toddlers. A quick look back over the time spent together since February reveals how much these little ones have grown and changed. New friendships have formed, new skills emerged, and new experiences have been enjoyed.

As the weather warmed, we spent more time outside enjoying outdoor play. The toddlers confidently explored the climber, figuring out how to navigate their way around it and find their way down. As they swooshed down the slide, shrieks of laughter were often heard. Balls were thrown, with earnest attempts to catch them. Strollers were pushed and scooters were scooted. The concept of sharing was the focus of our time together, taking their first steps toward associative play where they understand that others are playing around them.

In the classroom, the children engaged in a variety of activities during free play and circle time. The foundations for later arithmetic and literacy skills were laid. Books were examined and read. The use of visuals to accompany books was always a big hit. Some of their favorites were The Little Mouse, The Red Ripe Strawberry and The Big Hungry Bear, The Very Hungry Caterpillar, and It Looks Like Spilt Milk. Exposure to various sensory materials piqued curiosity amongst the little ones (and sometimes among the adults, too!). The Jumpstart Toddlers loved to splash in the water at the sensory table.

Music was a time for the group to come together. The toddlers learned the songs and accompanying hand gestures. The children sure did love to get up and dance and requests were often made. Some preferred songs were "One Finger Up", "Sally the Camel" and "Rooster".

It has been such a wonderful semester with you and your toddlers. As always, we have enjoyed watching them grow and we are honored to be part of their first school experience!

-Deborah and Marjan

Transition TWOS

The Transitional Two's have continued to immerse themselves full steam ahead in the classroom. With separation in our rearview mirror, the children have fully explored the classroom, finding activities of interest and developing play, social and cognitive skills. The children have forged relationships with the teachers and continue to develop bonds with their classmates. Sharing and negotiating activities have been a focus of our time together.

The children have learned to anticipate the routine of the day. After a warm good morning hello, the children hang up their coats and totes, with some prompting and reminders, of course. They know we begin with free play and jump right into complex play scenarios, imaginative and dramatic play, sensory exploration and creative works.

Transitions can be challenging for this age group, yet they have demonstrated consistent growth in this area. They join in the singing of the transition songs, use walking feet when moving throughout the school and patiently gather as a group before moving onto the next activity. It is a wonder to see!

At lunch we slow down, recharge and interact more closely with each other. The children enjoy investigating what foods their classmates have each day. We also take this time to read books as a group, since the children have shown a preference for reading while eating.

Circle time and music allows the children to explore their varied talents. They sing, dance and play

instruments and learn hand movements to go with the music. It really is a fun time.

With Spring in the air, we have spent more time outside exploring the playground. Ice cream stores and bakeries have popped up under the climber, games with the basketballs and hoops have developed on the blacktop and engaging friends in games of chase have emerged. The children have expanded their gross motor skills on the climber, practicing climbing up the pancake steps, moving through the tunnel and sliding down the slides. The sandbox is a favorite place too, with the pouring, sifting and building of sand. The children work together to fill buckets and dump trucks.

It is pure joy spending time with your children and watching them grow and develop. We are honored to be a part of their first school experience!

-Deborah and Marjan



The TWOS' Classes

It is hard to believe the school year is almost at an end. What a pleasure it has been to watch your children grow, develop friendships, engage their curiosity, and have fun during our time together. Over the year we have truly come together as a classroom family.

The children are so comfortable in our classroom and the entire school, that they are now requesting toys, and going to other rooms to find them. We are encouraging this by having "kids pick" day. When the children enter the room in the morning, nothing has been set out on the tables, floor, or easel. The children can look for what they want in our classroom, or make a request. The children enjoy seeking out their choices in the various classrooms. The big closet in room 5 is always a huge draw. The children take such pleasure in exploring beyond the classroom and using the roller racers in the hallway has become a favorite activity. Two children at a time will race around the hallways, and then come back to give their peers a turn.

As your children have matured, so have their interests. Games have become popular and we are playing them in small groups. Bingo and Lotto are particular favorites, along with other matching games. The children are learning to wait for their turn, and enjoy helping each other make their 'match'.

Spring is taking its time arriving this year, so we took it upon ourselves to bring it into our classroom. Each child planted their

The Two's Classes (continued)

own flowers, sweet peas or petunias. The children enjoyed scooping out their soil, counting out their seeds, and watering their plants. The children now have the responsibility of caring for their plants by watering them each time they come to school. We should have a window sill of flowers in the near future.

We made strawberry jam and what a delicious time we had. Your children are quite proficient in using a knife. Every one participated in hulling and cutting up the berries. They added sugar and lemon juice to the berries and patiently waited for the jam to cook down. And everyone tasted the jam. They put it on crackers, ate it with a spoon, and even dipped apples slices into it. The children were very proud of their cooking abilities.

Congratulations to Ariana and Noah who turned three this spring. And happy birthday wishes to Preston, Ben, Avery, Whit and Ilan who will all celebrate their birthdays over the summer. Congratulations as well to Mazie who had a baby sister, Judy.

We would also like to thank the families who donated a book in honor of their child's birthday: Ariana for Cock a Doodle Who?, Maya for Fortunately, and Leah for There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Book, and Genevieve for Bee in the Sea.

Thank you all for a wonderful year and sharing your children with us! Have a wonderful summer.

-Mary-Ellen, Gina, Leslie, and Sheba

Lori's Class

We can't believe the end of the school year is approaching already. This year has just flown by! We have engaged in so many fun and exciting projects over the last few months. The children have been busy working cooperatively and celebrate accomplishing tasks and projects together.

Over the course of the year, the children developed many favorite activities and found most desired materials. Some of the most popular building materials were Duplos and Legos, Pipe Builders, Magna-tiles, and the Big Bolt Construction Set. We have many proficient builders in our class and we were constantly amazed by what they constructed. Our class also really enjoyed playing cooperative games like Jumping Bean, Who's in the Box, What's Missing, and Lotto. Buddy Bingo, with all the children's pictures on the boards, and Sound Bingo were requested quite frequently. Another common request was music to dance to on the rug. Among the children's favorites were Animal Action (Kids in Motion) and I Like to Move It (Madagascar soundtrack). Making and playing with play dough, cooking, painting at the easel, and felt board stories were also popular activities this year.

Our class really loved preparing for Earth Day. We read many books on ways to keep our planet clean and healthy. We learned about reducing, reusing, and recycling. We found out we can help our Earth every day by



turning off lights when we leave rooms and turning off water while we brush our teeth. The children worked together to create a large Earth and then "fixed" our planet by adding band-aids. Each child also made his or her own small Earth which we connected together to show how we all work together to help our planet.

The highlights of the last few weeks have been our special performances. The children have become budding actors and actresses, happily acting out different stories for the rest of school, as well as, parents, siblings, and other family members. "The performances of "Mushroom in the Rain", "Mouse Paint", and "Caps for Sale" were huge successes.

We can't believe that our amazing children will be moving on to new classes soon. We have really enjoyed spending our days together and developing close relationships with each and every child. It has been so much fun to see the children blossom, grow, and mature over the school year. We will miss everyone as they move on next year! Thank you so much to all our parents for your support, help, and generosity this year. We are looking forward to seeing some of you at camp. Have a great summer and please come visit our class next year!

-Lori, Petra, and Aniko

Amie's 3's Class

As the school year comes to a close, we look back fondly on months spent learning, exploring, and growing together. Our children have made an extraordinary classroom community in which they work and play together, build friendships, construct knowledge, and create imaginatively. They delight us every day with their enthusiasm, their curiosity, and their thoughtfulness.

Apart from busy days filled with the regular activities at the various centers in our classroom, March brought a special Color Week, with art projects, books, songs, and games geared toward learning about colors and the mixing of colors. We experimented at the art table every day. We mixed two different primary colors to see what new secondary color they would make, painted with scrubbies, sponge daubers, and with spray bottles. We did a science experiment involving food coloring in bottles of water, which captivated everyone's attention. We played the Color Ball game and Color Polyspot game outside, and the Color Cube game and Splash of Color game inside. We had blue shaving cream in the sand table. And we read Little Blue and Little Yellow, Mouse Paint, My Many Colored Days, Colors, and I Love You Blue Kangaroo, and sang "What Are You Wearing", a class favorite.

In April we began our Under the Sea unit, creating our own ocean on the walls of the dramatic play area, which was transformed into the seaside. We made a huge class collage on cardboard, painting it blue and green with rollers, sprinkling on sand and glitter, gluing on seashells we had painted pink, and adding crumpled tissue for sea plants, sea grass, sea glass, and starfish we had made with hole punches. There were huge seashells, shell books, beach towels, sunglasses, and fishing poles to pretend with. Some days we had water, sailboats, and weights for experimenting with in the sand table, and on other days we had water, sea pebbles, and sea creatures, or magnetic fish and fishing poles. There were fish puzzles, fishing games, fish songs, and books about the sea such as Commotion In the Ocean, Fidgety Fish, Rainbow Fish, Fish Out Of Water, and The Three Little Fish and the Big Bad Shark.



We made jellyfish out of recycled berry containers, and made "ocean-colored" playdough. And we did a "sink-float" experiment using a tub of water and a tray full of different objects, predicting which objects would float, testing each object, and recording whether it actually sank or floated when dropped in the tub of water. We learned about sea creatures and the ocean habitat. And we celebrated the end of our Under the Sea unit by baking starfish cookies for snack. As a special treat, we got a new class pet, our very own beta fish, which after a class vote, we named Bluefish!

Amie and the baby surprised us by visiting in April, and we were all thrilled to see her and meet the new baby. We had a special circle time for talking about the baby, and sharing what we had all been doing. Many lovely drawings have been made for Amie this spring, and we often send her "vibrations" at our circle times.

April also brought the study of recycling, conserving and taking care of the Earth. We learned about where garbage goes and how we can help to make less garbage by recycling. We looked at our school's recycling bins and our own classroom paper recycling bin, and practiced sorting paper, plastic, and metal objects into the correct bins. We talked about what we do in school to make less garbage – by using washable cups instead of disposable paper cups, and by using washable rags for cleaning instead of paper towels. And we learned about saving water energy, water, and trees, by turning out the lights when we leave the classroom, by turning off the water when we are finished washing our hands, and by taking only 1 paper towel in the bathroom. We discussed taking care of the Earth and all living things on it, reading Each Living Thing, 10 Things You Can Do To Help the World, The Earth Book, and The Earth and I. All of this coincided very nicely with our celebration of Earth Day, during which we made our own representations of planet Earth by dripping blue and green liquid watercolors onto round coffee filters, by playing the recycling game, and by singing "It Isn't Really Garbage" (til' you mix it all together) by Dan Einbender.



Amie's Class (continued)

May saw an explosion of creative and cooperative building. Children extended their skills by bringing together many kinds of materials to experiment with and to use inventively. Some children made habitats for animals by building huge structures out of Strawbuilders and adding wood slices, animals, connectors, and signs. Others experimented with building ramps in the block area, problem solving and testing their creations with vehicles and marbles. Still others thought outside the box (actually, outside the classroom) by building elaborate roads with Waffle Blocks that extended right out the classroom door and wandered all the way down the hall to other rooms.

The dramatic play area was turned into a post office, which emerged from the children's own interest in writing and playing office, so we added a big mailbox, papers and envelopes, mailing boxes, stickers, writing utensils, postal worker uniforms, computer keyboards, and phones, and watched as the dramatic play unfolded. Many pieces of mail have been created and delivered!

And most recently, we have all become gardeners with our final unit on plants. We planted zinnia, green bean, and sunflower seeds on different days in different kinds of containers. Each child spooned soil from the big bag into a small pot, then counted out seeds and dropped them onto the soil, covered the seeds with more soil, and finally watered the seeds with a spray

bottle. Every day the children run in to look at their plants, see how tall the sprouts are getting, and then water them. We will keep track of our plants' growth in the days to come, and finally take them all home. In addition to our hands-on gardening, we are reading books and learning about the parts of a plant, the growing cycle, what plants need to live, how seeds are transported, how plants help us, and different kinds of plants. We even had an apple taste test in which we voted for our favorite kind of apple, and then planted the apple seeds from the apples we ate!

Of course, warm spring days have brought much activity on the playground, and we have all enjoyed frolicking in the sunshine – dashing up and down the climber, riding on trikes and scooters, bouncing on Hippy-Hops, balancing on Highsteppers and tires, throwing and catching balls, playing in the crooked house, gliding down the ramp, drawing with chalk, jumping on the trampoline, playing Duck Duck Goose, strolling and chatting with friends – and so much more as we enjoy these last days of the school year together.

Many thanks to all our families for the special snacks you have sent in, for the beautiful gala journal ad, to Anaela's family for the gift of the book, The Day The Crayons Quit, to all of you who came in to read for birthdays, and for the most special gift of all – for giving us your children this year. We will hold all the memories of this wonderful year in our hearts, and we wish you all a lovely summer!

-Nancy, Theresa, Anna, and Kathleen

Paola's Class

Our class continues to be busy during the spring months. The children have taken an interest in birds. They are busy looking through our bird guides, looking at books and asking detailed questions. We began with our bird study with local birds; cardinal, sparrow, blue jay and robin. We charted various information that told us about each bird such as, where they live, what they eat, how big they are, how many eggs they lay and the colors they are. We discussed the birds' anatomy; head, crest, beak, eyes, body, legs, and feet. The children spend a majority of their outside time bird watching. Next, we learned about birds of prey. We discussed the characteristics that make these birds hunters; they are carnivores, they have sharp, curved claws called talons, hooked beaks and keen eyesight. The birds of prey we learned about were Red-Tailed Hawk, Owls, Turkey Vultures, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle and California Condor.

The children have been very invested in the bird study. Along with learning so many facts about each bird, they heard many stories, graphed their favorite bird, painted them at the easel, played Bird Bingo, made nests for the stuffed animal



birds and made salt dough birds.

Paola's Class (continued)

Our class also made beautiful self-portraits. Each child took the time to look into a mirror and observe their skin tone, their eye color, hair color and all other facial features. The children had lots of fun mixing colors and adding color to their background. The self-portraits were made into a 'Guess Who' game where each child gave 3 to 4 clues about themselves and the person looking at the portrait had to guess who it was.

We continue to listen to our chapter book, Lexi's Tale. This book is a continuation of Pee Wee's Tale and focuses more on the squirrel, Lexi and his exciting adventures in Central Park. We continue to review each chapter and discuss what might happen in the chapters to come.

The class continues to enjoy science experiments such as the color changing milk experiment, gak, oobleck and the vinegar and baking soda experiment.

Block building continues to be a favorite activity in the classroom. The children have learned to build very elaborate structures that are very tall. Along with the buildings, they have also built ramps. The children worked in groups of 3's to plan, discuss, and negotiate together. Working on the ramps was not an easy task because they needed to try the ramp construction many times before it actually worked. This was a great team building opportunity.

It has been an amazing school year! We have learned so much together through play, discussion and being together. Thanks to all the families that have worked closely with us to make this year so successful!

-Paola, Sara and Amanda



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"No, I don't know if the Gingerbread man was gluten-free."

School News

Dates to Remember

June

- June 6 and June 7-No Lunchkins
- June 6 -Last day of classes for MWF classes
- June 7-Last day of classes for T-Th and 5 Day classes
- June 8-End of Year picnic
- June 20-summer camp begins
- June 21- summer Toddler Jumpstart begins

END OF YEAR PICNIC

We look forward to seeing everyone at our end of year picnic and sing along. Spend time with friends and staff and say goodbye for the school year. The picnic will be held at RNSFC on

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8th

10:30 to 12:30.

Rain or shine

yearbooks

don't forget to order your yearbook...a wonderful keepsake of the 2015-2016 rnsfc school year!

RNSFC Summer Program

There is still time to register for our SUMMER PROGRAM.

A carefully designed and implemented summer camp for preschoolers. Don't miss Ocean Explorer's week, Animal Lover's week, carnival and much more!

Mix and match weeks according to your vacation schedule. We hope you will join us for a fun-filled, exciting summer.

We wish everyone a healthy, happy and joyful summer.



The Parent Group

Dear Families,

As we near the end of the school year we would like to take this time to thank all of you for a wonderful year! And thank you to everyone who attended this year's spring gala and made it such a festive event. Barcelona Bites was transformed into an enchanted forest for the Neverland Party. The gala was so much fun and it was great to see many of you there.

We would also like to thank you for your Parent Dues. With these dues, Parent Group is able to provide many things for the School throughout the school year, culminating with the annual Staff Appreciation Luncheon taking place on Friday, June 10th. The entire staff will be invited to a special end-of-year lunch where they will also receive gifts. Your Parent Dues provide this lunch as well as the gifts for the staff. Parent Dues also made it possible to have delicious food and dessert at Welcome Night at the start of the school year and to have refreshments during Peter Pan Alumni and Family Day. The dues provided refreshments during other school events like the Speaker Series and also were used to purchase all the ingredients used by our children to create their delectable treats for the annual Bake Sale! At the end of the year, after the Staff Appreciation Luncheon, Parent Group will give a gift to the School of any items it may need: in the past this gift has been new ride-on toys or benches and tables.

Thank you again for being a part of this special school community...and here's to next year!

Have a great summer,
Parent Group

Anna Laghezza, Atyia Washington, Abby Cohen, and Anya Marfin

