

The Children's Center at Caltech



April 2009

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Upcoming Activities

Earn Parent Hours

April 20: Parent Education Meeting: *Bunnies - Car Seat Safety*

April 25: Beavers Work Saturday

May 9: *Evening Under The Stars*

CCC Board of Trustees Meetings

7pm on the 3rd Monday of each month in the Moore Laboratory, room 239

From the Office

Mark your calendars now and send your reservation for the 7th Annual *Evening Under the Stars* on May 9th in Dabney Gardens. This event is not only a fundraiser but also a "fun" raiser. In addition to a wonderful meal you can socialize with other parents and teachers in a relaxed atmosphere at the Dabney gardens. Our goal this year is to



raise funds to replace furniture in the classrooms. In an effort to keep tuition down, we do not budget for anything but the essentials. Ninety percent of our budget, your dollars, goes to paying our Staff. The human resources, our gifted and well-trained teachers, have proven to be the strongest indicator of quality care. We know that the environment can play an important role too. Having beautiful spaces to play and learn in sends a message to children that they are important members of the community. We are hoping to replace all the cubbies and as many shelves and tables as we can. I know from the teachers that their rooms, including how they look, are very important to them. So you can help support the center, the teachers, and improve the quality of the CCC all while enjoying a glass of wine with friends and colleagues under the stars.

-Susan



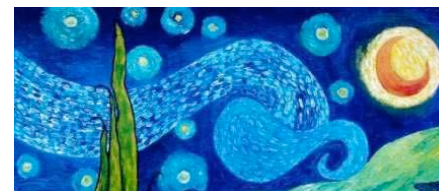
Science Lab

Please welcome Ghia Johnson on board as the new Co-Science Curriculum Coordinator. She is very proud to be here and is excited to be working with everyone at the CCC. Similarly, I am truly grateful and honored to have the opportunity to continue doing what I enjoy and

love. Please feel free to talk to us whenever you see us. We would love to get to know each and every one of you.

Thank you to all the CCC parents and staff who participated in the science lab work Saturday on the 7th of March! It was a success. We had astonishing attendance with 18 parents and staff members. The lab, and the entire yard, looks amazing!

Ghia Johnson
Kheng Ly-Hoang
lkheng@caltech.edu



Bunny Hopping

Hello to All! This past month the Bunnies will continue to explore Cause and Effect by using balls. We have been rolling balls into ramps and tubes. The children have also been experimenting with the size of balls since some of them are too big to fit



through. We have been using new vocabulary words such as: roll, push, fast, slow, up, down, round, large and small. We have taken some great pictures of the Bunnies and balls in action. This month we have a home to school connection activity: bring in a ball from home. Suggestion list is posted in the room.

We continue to have fun with our walks on campus. We've been able to spend more time around campus and enjoy the beginnings of spring. The children have wanted to stop and walk around, smell and feel the flowers, climb stairs, balance on short walls... They truly enjoy our campus outings! More good pictures posted in the room. Don't be surprised if you run into us!

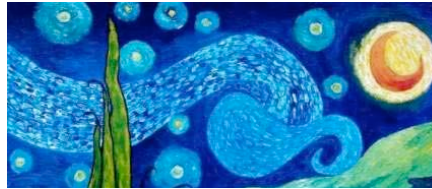
I hope you all received your invitations and marked your calendar for May 9: *Evening Under the Stars!!* It will be a fun night for parents to enjoy an evening out and help fundraise for the CCC. Hope to see you there! The Bunny classroom will be auctioning a "Beach Day" basket. All parents who participate will receive parent hours for their donations. The basket will be located inside the room with a list of possible suggestions. Thank you in advance!!

Bunny Reminders:

- Since we are spending a lot more time outdoors, please apply 8 hr. sunscreen in the mornings. You may also store sunscreen in the classroom and the teachers can re-apply when necessary.
- If you would like to enjoy Elena's delicious snacks please remember we serve snack between 9:15am-9:45am and 3:15pm-3:45pm.

- Please save the date for PTP Presentation: Car Seat Safety, April 20 from 12-1.

Jasmin Alvarez - Lead Teacher



Dolphin Splash

Last month our Parent Teacher Meeting was about Lead Poisoning. We have handouts for parents who are interested in this subject. Thank you to the parents who attended our Work Saturday - a lot was accomplished.



For the months of April and May our *Home-to-School Connection* activities are: Flowers On The Table (Dolphins are welcome to bring in fresh flowers from home to decorate our lunch tables). The Dolphins are also encouraged to bring in a book about buildings to share with our class. We are enjoying using wrecking balls inside the classroom and outside as well. We will continue to experiment with wrecking balls and different kinds of blocks, both soft and hard. We will continue to look at the force that is needed to knock over the structures that we build.

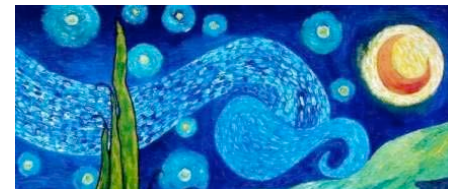
Evening Under The Stars is

coming soon. If you would like to donate tickets, gift certificates, gym memberships etc. let us know. Our theme basket for the fundraiser is **Family Games**. Parents can donate a family game for our theme, and help out with the fundraiser as needed.

The Dolphins are getting good practice at evacuating our classroom. We had two fire drills this month. One was a walk-through, and the very next day we had one in which the alarm sounded.

Thank you to all of the parents who are remembering to sign your child in on the *sign-in sheets*. We use the sign-n sheets to take attendance for our fire drills.

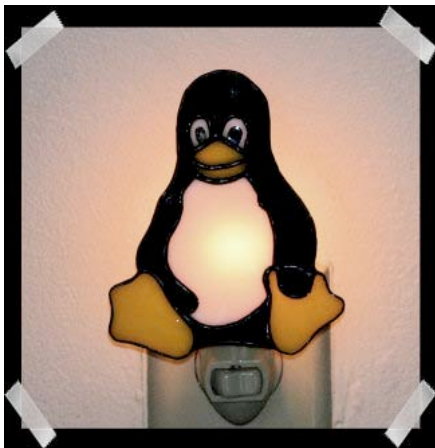
Retha Jones - Lead Teacher



Penguin Parade

In the month of March we began our exploration of simple machines by focusing on screws. The Penguins conducted a scavenger hunt inside/outside our classroom looking for screws. Penguins were excited to find screws in their car toys, fence, furniture, light switches and many other places. Paxton told his dad "Look, screws" (on the door knob) right as they were exiting the classroom that day. Molly made a connection between a screw and her pasta for lunch that day. She said, "Look Gretchen, my pasta is spiral just like a screw." Penguins also drew the form of a screw by

touching and looking at real metal screws. In addition, Penguins had many opportunities to learn about threading. Baby bottles and food containers with threading were added to the dramatic play area. Seriated threading plastic bottles were also a part of our practical life shelf. We will now be working on putting together a picture book of items that thread and we'll be asking parents to help us translate these items so that we have create a multi-lingual book. We are also looking for a parent to demonstrate how to use a hand drill.

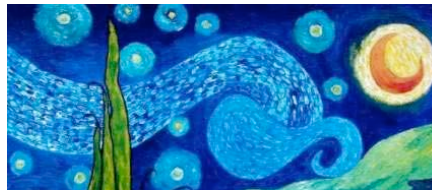


The Penguins have also been doing some gardening as part of a home to school connection. We have planted beans provided by Paloma's mom. In observance of Persian New Year (Noruz), Neeku's family provided us with wheat to grow on a tray. The Penguins have been very helpful with watering our plants and grass.

Penguin Reminders:

- Please make sure to sign in and out everyday.
- Please label all clothes (especially socks).
- Please eat your going home snacks in your car.

Dolores Gonzales – Penguin Teacher



Koala Korner

Hello Koala families,

March was a very busy month, because of parent-teacher conferences. Thanks to all the wonderful Koala families for adjusting their schedules to attend the conferences, sharing their queries and concerns about their children's development and also expressing their thoughts about the Koala team. Please feel free to share any additional thoughts any time with me about your child, if you have missed that during the conference.

Koala work Saturday was a great success. Thank you to all those families who participated to scrub, wash, paint, wipe and organize the Koala classroom, resource room, and laundry room. The classroom looked sparkling clean; we greatly appreciate it.

Classroom work Saturdays are a great opportunity to earn parent hours quickly. Please keep your eyes out for other parent hour opportunities. As I was looking over the parent hour folder (placed in the Koala classroom), I am pleased to say that most Koala families have completed their parent hours and the rest are working on them.

Thanks to Sharon (Connor's mom) for donating a generous amount of photo printer ink and paper. Jennifer (Sasha's mom) is working on compiling an instructional manual for cleaning the classroom fish tank

for other families who are looking to earn parent hours. Jennifer has nurtured the fish for this past year with professional effort -- Thanks AAA lot!



Donations for our fundraiser, *Evening Under The Stars*, is an other opportunity to earn parent hours. The theme for the Koala room basket is "Chocolate". Basket and the item Wish List will be placed in the room for generous donations. Please save purchase receipts for earning parent hours (one parent hour is earned for every \$25 spent). Invitations for *Evening Under the Stars* have already been handed to all the families. Hope to see all of you there.

We are continuing with our central concept, *Scales and Structure*. The children are excited to build a wooden house. We started the discussion about it last month, and the children expressed their vision through pre-architectural drawings. Ron and Stacey (Dante Ortiz's parents) played a vital role in this process by demonstrating and providing a huge amount of wooden bricks and foundation pieces for the house. Thanks a lot! It will take a while to complete the project. The Koalas have learned the use of the lever by trying it on different surfaces in the classroom and have expressed interesting comments about its use. They

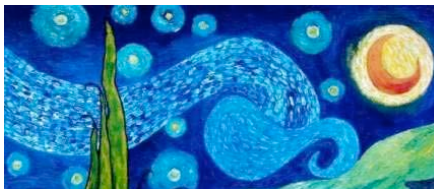
are steadily learning more and more vocabulary, some of the words which we have heard during their conversations are: plank bridges, beams, foundation, bricks, design, sturdy,...

Friendly Koala Reminders:

*For the safety of your children, please make sure children wear comfortable walking shoes on walk days.

*Please make sure to sign in and out everyday.

Filmeena Amjad- Lead Teacher



Raccoon Roundup

The Raccoons have been investigating light and dark and have expanded their knowledge into the fine details of exploring these adventures. We have worked with flashlights, mirrors, and reflections. Below are some of the descriptions children gave while exploring:

"A shadow is black, sometimes grey, but it disappears"

"Yeah, but my reflection doesn't disappear, my reflection is colorful. Shadows don't wear clothes, that's silly. A reflection can wear clothes since it's just you looking at you."

"Oh, yeah I have a reflection too, in the mirror, my shadow is outside."

We've been on many walks, and you should hear what they talk about as we walk...each walk

brings more detail out in what they have learned:

"Look my shadow is walking and I am standing on my feet."

"Hey, we turned the corner and now my shadow is behind me, over there it was more in front of me."

"The rope even makes a shadow of its own."



We have been taking pictures of shadows on our walks and we have also discovered that your shadow is longer earlier in the day and shorter around noon and then gets longer again as the sun sets.

The children were also given two pictures: 1) a close-up of the solar flares of the sun, and 2) the Aurora Borealis (Northern lights). Here are some of their comments:

"This is the sun. The fire grew. The fire is growing because the circles are helping it grow. It shines on us."

"The sun just came up. The spices of the sun is spilling over. It's cooking something hot."

"The light is coming through the sky into the trees. The lights will help the trees grow."

"It's earth. It's turning around that's why it's dark. It's time to sleep."

A big Thank You for helping us with or collection projects of ten items and the one for buttons. The children enjoyed bringing things in and sharing what they found. This type of project gives a strong connection between home and school. Children are proud of what they brought in. The buttons that were collected have been sorted, counted, identified, and categorized. We will sew them onto material. We used two books for our project, *The Button Box* by Margarette S. Reid, and *Sorting* by Henry Pluckrose. Do you know what a shank button is?

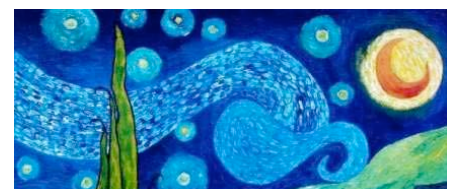
Reserve the date May 9th!

Don't forget the *Evening Under The Stars* is coming up. Our theme basket this year is **camping**. Please make sure when making your donations that you bring in your receipt and that it is recorded.

Raccoon Reminders:

- Be a rest sitter every 3rd Wednesday of the month from 1:30 – 3:00.
- You can sign up to purchase Canon ink/paper and receive 2 parent hours.
- Check parent mailboxes and children's artwork to take home.

Veronica Gama - Lead Teacher



Beaver Tales

Spring has finally arrived!

Games give a child the opportunity to strategize, practice patience, concentrate, take turns, and simply have fun. It also allows a child to increase their math, literacy, and language skills. We introduced the game shelf several months ago and since then, it has been a hit! For those of you who are curious about how to play these games, here is a breakdown of the most popular games among the Beavers.

MANCALA: The object of the game is to collect as many stones as possible before your opponent clears all the stones on his or her side of the board. Each player sits facing the long side of the board. The six cups on your side, and the larger Mancala scoring cup on your right, belong to you.

Place four stones in each non-scoring cup. Alternate turns. To take your turn, pick up all the stones from one cup on your side and place them one by one in the cups around the board, including your Mancala cup, in a clockwise direction. If the last stone is dropped into your Mancala, you can take another turn. If the last stone of your turn is dropped into an empty cup on your side, you may take all the stones from your opponent's cup directly opposite your empty cup. All the captured stones, and the stone you used to make the capture, can be placed in your Mancala.

The game ends when one player has no more stones on his or her side. The remaining player can deposit all the stones left on his

or her side into his or her Mancala. The winner is the player with the most stones in his or her Mancala.

FRUIT PIE FRACTION GAME:

The object of the game is to create two complete pies using fraction pieces. The first player rolls the die and chooses one slice of pie that represents the fraction that is rolled. If a star (*) is rolled, one fraction piece of the player's choice can be selected from the center pile or from another player's unfinished pies. The player places the fraction piece pie side up in either of the two pie tins on his/her game mat. Play continues in a clockwise order, with each player taking turns rolling the die and choosing a matching pie slice. Players may rearrange or move pie pieces between their own pie tins, but once a pie has been completed, pieces cannot be removed. The first player to fill both of their pie tins with any combination of slices wins!



SNAIL'S PACE RACE: This is a non-competitive game that's fun for all ages. Players place the colorful wooden snails at the starting line. Each player rolls two wooden dice and moves the snails that match the colors thrown. As the race gets under way, players try to guess which snail will be first to cross the finish line. Players never lose a turn or get sent back. Since it's the snails and not the children who are racing, everybody wins and no one loses!

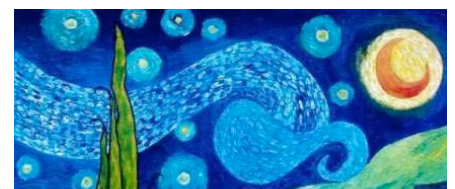
KER PLUNK!: The object of the game is to skillfully remove the sticks from the tube, dropping the fewest marbles. Each player selects a numbered compartment (1-4) to use throughout the game. On each turn, slowly rotate the tube so that the window opening is lined up with your numbered compartment. Choose any stick and carefully pull it all the way out of the tube, trying not to move the marbles and causing them to fall. Marbles that drop will automatically go into your numbered compartment. When all the marbles have dropped into the game base, each player counts the number of marbles in their compartment. The player with the least number of marbles in their compartment is the winner.

We encourage parents to come in a play with the children!

Gentle Beaver Reminders:

- For safety reasons, please make sure the gate is secure and closed with the latch on when entering or leaving the Beaver front driveway.
- Always have an extra set of clothing and a jacket kept in your child's cubby.
- Children may bring a special toy, like a comfort item, to school; however, toys need to stay in their cubbies for safekeeping, to avoid any loss or damage. **NO** weapons (toys or otherwise) are allowed (e.g., NO plastic swords, knives, guns, etc.).

Veronica Dayag- Lead Teacher



Parenting Tips

Mud and slop: Why Nature Play is Good for Kids

Did you know that by providing your child the opportunity to play outdoors increase self-reliance and cooperation with others?

It also reduces stress and acting out. Children are smarter, happier and healthier if they have time for unstructured play in the great outdoors.

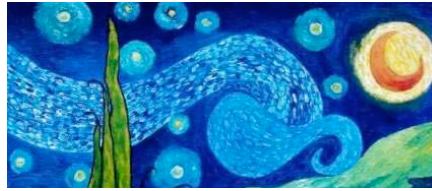
Rocks, sand, mud, twigs, water, tree stumps, are all examples that make up a great outdoor play.

Being outdoors is a simple pleasure. Outdoor play enhances child development. Children can label, classify and experiment with the elements of nature. The wonderment simply never ends. I see nature as one of a child's sixth sense.

I've been a supporter of Biophilia (which is the love of the outdoors) for years and I make efforts to provide natural play areas in my own back yard. My older son is a mud king and my younger child is the mud prince. Everyday, all year round, you can find my boys sloshing, digging and creating in their custom mud pit. Ah, the life of a child...

Adventures in nature piques enthusiasms and joy -- so let kids get down and dirty where they learn, live and play.

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Kimberley Clayton Blaine, MA, MFT



From the Editors

Do you have some advice for all your fellow CCC parents? We're always looking for contributed articles or announcements for the newsletter. You can e-mail us at colette@asimow.com.

Sun Safety Tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics

Follow these simple rules to protect your family from sunburns now and from skin cancer later in life.

Keep babies younger than 6 months out of direct sunlight. Find shade under a tree, umbrella, or the stroller canopy.

When possible, dress yourself and your kids in cool, comfortable clothing that covers the body, like lightweight cotton pants, long-sleeved shirts, and hats. Select clothes made with a tight weave - they protect better than clothes with a looser weave. If you're not sure how tight a fabric's weave is, hold it up to see how much light shines through. The less light, the better.

Wear a hat or cap with a brim that faces forward to shield the face.

Limit your sun exposure between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm, when UV rays are strongest.

Wear sunglasses with at least 99% UV protection (look for child-sized sunglasses with UV protection for your child).

Use sunscreen.

Set a good example. You can be the best teacher by practicing sun protection yourself. Teach all members of your family how to protect their skin and eyes.

How to apply sunscreen

Use enough sunscreen to cover all exposed areas, especially the face, nose, ears, feet, and hands and even the backs of the knees. Rub it in well.

Put sunscreen on 30 minutes before going outdoors. It needs time to absorb into the skin.

Use sunscreen any time you or your child might sunburn. Remember that you can get sunburn even on cloudy days. Also, UV rays can bounce back from water, sand, snow, and concrete so make sure you're protected.

Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours. Sunscreen wears off after swimming, sweating, or just from soaking into the skin.

http://www.aap.org/publiced/BR_Sunsafety.htm

