

The Bear Facts

April 2008

Director's Notes:

As many of you know, Mrs. Schreiber is retiring after twelve years with the Gesu Preschool. On behalf of the preschool faculty, I would like to thank her for her commitment to Gesu Preschool, her work with our parents and children and her many contributions to our program over the years. Margaret will be missed as a friend and a colleague and we wish her well in the next phase of her life. I know she will cherish her wonderful memories with her "kiddos". The saying goes that to teach is to touch a life forever and we thank Margaret for all the lives she has touched here at Gesu. God's speed Margaret! We also extend our deepest sympathies to Margaret and her family on the loss of her father this past weekend. I know she would appreciate your prayers.

I hope you and your family can join us as we celebrate the end of a wonderful school year on Thursday, May 29 in the Marian Chapel for our final Prayer Service of the year. We will have a reception in the back of church following the service. Look for your invitations and please RSVP so we can plan accordingly.

Those returning to the program will be receiving a mailing in late July with the school calendar and important information about the staggered opening and home visits. Our first day of school will be the day after Labor Day which will also be our parent information night

at 7PM. Please plan on having at least one parent attend even if you have been in the program before. Our home visits will be on August 25, 26, 27. I hope to get the school calendar up on our website before the end of school. Mrs. Fanning will be teaching the PreK class next year.

A parent survey will be coming home this week with your child. Please take a few moments to complete it and return it by placing it in the envelopes hanging on the bulletin boards outside the classrooms marked parent surveys. We value your input and are always looking to improve our program.

We will be inventorying our parent lending library so if you have any books out please return them by May 15th. If you have read a good parenting book that you think would be helpful to other parents, please give me the title and author so that we can add it to our collection. Thank you.

It has been a wonderful year working with you and your children. We are grateful that you chose Gesu Preschool for your child's first school experience. Thank you for your faith in Catholic Education. Your final evaluations will be coming home in late May and conferences at this time are optional unless requested by your child's teacher. As always, you are more than welcome to conference if you so choose. Have a wonderful and safe summer.

Jody

Mrs. Fanning's Classes:

We had a great time sharing each other's favorite stories this month. It is such a fun way to get to know each other better and read some great children's literature too. The next time you are in our classroom check out our favorite story's tree. The branches are covered in leaves with the titles of the stories on them.

Incorporated into our favorite stories was the introduction of some more great artists. We studied Wassily Kandinski and Vincent Van Gogh and used a few of their masterpieces to inspire our own art. Our biggest art project this month was the creation of our school bus! We had a wonderful time making the bus and using it for imaginary play. The school bus also inspired another class book entitled Don't Let Mr. Journey Ride the Bus. This is a very silly book which is a tribute to our favorite Gesu maintenance man, Mr. Journey who was a great sport and gave us the box to make our bus. I hope you had a chance to see the fruits of our labor at the Gesu Art Fair.

Our science and math center has been a very busy place this month. We planted seeds and have been caring for them. We also investigated the parts of a plant and many different kinds of seeds. Toward the end of the month we received our caterpillars and have been observing their metamorphosis. We should have butterflies the first or second week of May. No matter how many times we have done this in the preschool it still amazes me!

We finished up the month with lots of surprises for Moms and Dads as we get

ready for our Mother's and Father's Day celebrations in early May. If you haven't given me your \$5 to defray the cost of these events please do so as soon as possible. May is really busy with lots of fun and special events to finish off our school year. May is going to fly by so let me thank you one more time for sharing your beautiful children with me this year. I have so enjoyed them and learned so much from them.

Happy Spring! ~Amy Fanning

Mrs. Salata's Classes:

April was a very busy month. We began the month talking TRIBE! We had fun learning about baseball, the field, positions and players. We made hot dogs and we are ready for the seventh inning stretch singing of Take me out to the Ballgame! We talked about all the new life of spring and we were very excited about watching the flowers and forsythia bloom in our garden outside.

The next few weeks we explored life in the ocean. We began our discussion by charting what they knew and then expanded our knowledge by reading and learning more about specific animals that live in the ocean, including sharks, whales, sea horses, turtles and octopus. We culminated our study of the ocean by learning about Pirates that tied into our last chapter book, Pirates Past Noon. We had fun making pirate hats and drawing treasure maps using a map key detailing mountains, hills, lakes, rivers and the famous X marks the spot. We had a lot of fun counting, patterning and making fish, octopus and sea murals.

We celebrated Earth Day by making some very interesting sculptures using reusable junk and recyclables. I was amazed at their detail in describing their

sculptures and how they worked. The words Reduce, Reuse and Recycle were introduced and we brainstormed ways that we could be Earth detectives and find ways around our homes to help conserve energy and water and recycle more.

Our caterpillars arrived so we were excited to learn about the metamorphosis they go through to emerge as butterflies. We learned that butterflies are insects with three body parts, six legs and antennae. We also noticed that their wings are symmetrical and had fun painting butterflies with symmetrical wings. We made stick puppets depicting the life cycle of a butterfly and sequenced pictures depicting the life cycle too. We finished out the month with plants and seeds and planted grass heads. We can't wait for the grass to grow so we can give them haircuts. We enjoyed eating dirt and worms (pudding and gummy worms). We read the story Tops and Bottoms by Janet Stevens. We compared and contrasted the two characters in the book, bear and hare. We charted plants we eat and determined what part of the plant we were eating...the root, stem, seed, flower, leaf or fruit. We'll continue our study of plants and seeds into May. Our Mother's Day celebration is Wednesday, May 14th. If you are unable to be there with your child please send someone else who is special to them in your place, perhaps a grandma or aunt. The morning class will enjoy bubble bread and muffins and the afternoon class will pack their lunches and we will provide dessert and beverages. Conferences are scheduled for May 22 and are optional unless requested. You are always welcome to conference. Our family prayer service is scheduled for Thursday

May 29 at 7PM. It is a great way to celebrate the end to a wonderful year. I hope you plan to join us that evening.

It is hard to believe that the year is almost over and what a year it has been. I thank you for your patience with all my absences due to family matters and thank you for sharing your children with us. They are truly a gift, each so special in their own way. It has been a joy to watch them grow and develop over the year. On behalf of Margaret Koehler, Heather McDonnell and Debbie Lautenbach I thank you for sharing them with us. Thanks too to my room parents Jen Gehrlein and Susan Bradley and to Anne Howarth for the great job mounting all our artwork. A special thanks to my classroom colleagues that worked extra hours to keep the classroom running smoothly in my absence. They are the best! Have a wonderful summer!

Jody Salata

Mrs. Schreiber's PreK:

How exciting it is to see these kiddos grow in their development. April was a month of seeing new friendships blossom, richer discussions at meetings, excitement for numerals and letters, printing our last names, more rhyming and singing, writing and reading! Kindergarten here we come!

We started discussing spring by making a chart of what we thought we knew. We then progressed to putting our ideas together and seeing how they are connected, a very crucial step in teaching them HOW to think. Then we charted what we learned about spring over the last month. Their web is posted in the hall and you can see how they were able to make the connections. We

began to notice the increased “tweets” of birds which led to the topic of birds. What a wonderful way to talk about New Life! Dioramas from the Natural History Museum were great for observations and sketching. We are listening to bird sounds at quiet reading and can mimic several. Studying their nests became a project in itself! Easter is the Hebrew word for Passover, and without getting into age inappropriate detail, we made the connection of going from dead looking winter to the hopeful green of spring. We ate matzo with honey and learned several different graces after having the Hebrew translated by Mr. Scherson. We cleaned up part of the parking lot NOT on Earth Day to stress the commitment to the environment everyday of the year, reviewing the mantra Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. We are in the process of discovering WHAT is happening to the caterpillars, and documenting the change to make into a book. The lima bean experiment involves comparing those beans being exposed to sunlight with those in a secret dark place! We have made guesses, hypothesis, and will evaluate the data over the next few weeks. Much time was put into selecting our Art for the school art show. After choosing what they were most proud of, they titled it as real artists do. I told them about the famous artists Audubon Monet, O’Keefe and even author and illustrator Eric Carle! We practiced their techniques and appreciated their talents. Special thanks to Kristen Martin for mounting and labeling all their work, and kudos to the parents that set up such a beautiful show this year!

April was the Month of the Young Child in our professional organization, NAEYC, the National Association for

the Education of Young Children. We celebrated working with young children and their families all month. We made wishes in helium balloons in case they flew away before they got home! We invited the little sibs in to celebrate those coming to Gesu! We’ve shared with the kiddos what jobs we had before we were teachers of young children, and how happy we are to be with them. We made ice cream sundaes for snack. Finally, we will hold an Open House to share the many projects we have been working on. Of course, we’ll have desserts first! Paula, Sarah and I are very grateful to teach your children, and to be a part of your family’s commitment to Catholic Education. It was nice to have a month to celebrate that. Thank you for the privilege!

We will have our final evaluations in May, meeting with those parents who I contact via email, or those requesting one on May 22nd in the Xavier Room upstairs. I want to remind you that we will celebrate Mothers on May 8th at 12:00 with a Prayer service, songs and desserts for our mothers. Please bring a bag lunch to share with your kiddo. If you are unable to attend, please invite a woman who is dear to them to be their guest. You will need to park in Thompson Lot and come in through the Bike Rack door near the cafeteria. We will be busy with insects, flowers, Mothers, Mary Cassatt, MANNERS and much more to round out the year. I am sure it will be a busy month. Please plan to stay for a power point presentation that will last about 15 minutes on our last day, May 29th. Our final Family Prayer Service will be that evening in the Church’s Marian Chapel at 7 PM, followed by snacks. Take a breath, here comes May! Margaret Schreiber

