

1900 Cochran Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15220
mushroomfamily.org
mflcdirector@hotmail.com
412-531-1225



NOVEMBER 2015

IMPORTANT DATES & INFO

.....
Tuition Due - November 1
.....

In-Service Day, no school –
November 3 (Go vote!)
.....

**Bruegger's Bagels (Cochran Rd.)
Spirit Days** – Tuesdays in
November, all day [Show the
flier on last page]
.....

Conferences - November 12-13
(parents only – no class that day)
Details to come from each class.
.....

Cycle for Mushroom at Mecka!
Sun., Nov. 15, 12:00pm
[See last page]
.....

CPR/AED Course, Nov. 16,
6:30-8:00pm [See last page]
.....

MFLC Board Meeting – Nov. 18
.....

Thanksgiving Class Feasts –
Look for details from your class.
.....

Thanksgiving Break - Nov. 28
and 29 (School resumes Dec. 3)
.....

The school directory is out – A
copy was in each cubby. The info
is for school use, playdates,
invites, etc.; no solicitations.
.....

**Enrichment Classes and
Munchin Lunchin**
There are some spots available –
jamie_geisler@comcast.net
.....

Ways to Help MFLC
- United Way agency # is 885339.
- Giant Eagle Apples for the
Students program # is 5245.
- Save Labels for Education and
Tyson Project A+ labels.

smile.amazon.com

www.gofundme.com/mflc2015

From the Director ~ Joan Harrison

November is a time to stop and take stock of all we have to be thankful for. Our children are most precious gift, not only to you, but to all the staff of Mushroom Family Learning Center. Thank you for sharing the gift of your beautiful children with us.

November is also conference time at MFLC. Please plan to come to the conferences with questions as well as answers. Some of the things your children's teachers like to know are: What does your child talk about most at home? What are your child's specific interests? What are your goals for your child and Mushroom? Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns at this time.

And please remember to mark your calendar for your child's classroom feast. This is a very special event for all. Your children love preparing and sharing this day with you.

I would like to share a quote from Ralph Marston:

"Make it a habit to tell people thank you, to express your appreciation sincerely without the expectation of anything in return. Truly appreciate those around you. Truly appreciate life, and you will find that you have more of it."

I want to take the opportunity to thank once again all of those who made it possible for MFLC to be in its 42nd year of caring, loving and educating children.

- ❖ Thank you to our past board and president Diane Rattay, who worked tirelessly for months in the effort to secure our new home. And thank you to our new board and current president, who work to keep our new home running so smoothly.
- ❖ Thank you to each of our wonderful teachers who worked so hard packing and unpacking our school. Thank you for the love and warmth that you put into every box packed and unpacked, and for the love and dedication you bring to your classes each and every day.
- ❖ Thank you to all the parents who supported us during our move and continue to support us.

Especially this year I have an "attitude of gratitude" that Mushroom Family Learning Center still continues to be here and it is all because of YOU! Thank you.

I would like to personally wish each family a very festive and safe Thanksgiving!

*Welcome Future
Mushroomer!*

Allison Kennedy Fair
born Oct. 29.
Congrats to big sister
Audrey and parents
Katie and Ryan!

*Film Showing to Feature Former Mushroomer Pranish
Tamang and Family*

"In Search of a Nation, The Bhutanese Refugee Story"
tells of Nepali refugees, their lives in refugee camps and their journey to the U.S. Filmed in the camp where Pranish lived, he and his family will be at the showing in traditional clothing and serving Nepali food. Location: Mt. Lebanon United Lutheran Church, 975 Washington Rd., Mt. Lebanon, **Thursday, Nov. 5, 7:00pm** (Suggested donation: \$7)

Volunteering at Mushroom – Getting Clearances

MFLC welcomes and values volunteer participation. *New state laws regarding child protection require all school volunteers having direct contact with children to obtain background clearances.* Please visit the page on our web site that details each of the clearance checks volunteers need:

mushroomfamily.org/volunteer-info.html.

From the Board President ~ Erin Betler

Thanksgiving is a one of my favorite holidays. It a special time when we can focus on enjoying the company of family and friends, without feeling the extra pressures of gift buying, wrapping and decorating. I also find the Thanksgiving menu to be truly comforting and inclusive, as most Americans across the country will sit down to share nearly the exact same meal. But mostly I love that it is a day dedicated to expressing gratitude and thanks.

This year, I am especially thankful for the generosity and commitment that our families and teachers are showing to our school every day. I am SO proud to call Mushroom Family Learning Center my choice of school for my children and I hope you are too!

I am thankful for the friendly and familiar faces I see each day when I walk into Mushroom, starting with Joan at her bench! A million thanks to our amazing director, Joan, for making sure every detail of Mushroom’s daily operations run smoothly.

I am grateful to our incredible teachers for providing such a nurturing environment for our children. The smiles on your students’ faces show how much they feel your love.

I am thankful for our extraordinary Board of Directors for putting so much time and effort into running MFLC and making sure the staff and students have everything they need.

I am thankful for our astoundingly generous families. In the past few months, parents have donated items to Mushroom that they no longer need at home, come up with new fundraiser options, offer to help other parents with child supervision during conferences or with transportation to/from school during a time of need. As a community of young families, I know we all appreciate it so much! Thank you also for volunteering to help with our class parties and bringing in healthy snacks for the children to share. Thank you for coming to our Spirit Night at Chic-fil-A and keeping our school humming by making our fundraising efforts a success. Every little bit helps, and we can’t do it without you!

Thank you to the students of MFLC! It’s because of each and every one of you that we are here, and you are the reason we do what we do. I truly love hearing your squeals of delight on the playground and seeing your beautiful artwork adorn the hallways.

It is my hope that everyone shares in my gratitude toward everyone who makes MFLC what it is. As we enter into the holiday season, I hope that we can all take some time out to help someone else, and allow our children to join in this task, and talk about how it makes someone feel to do something nice for a person for no reason at all. Make sure to also count the blessings in your life and say “thank you.” I know that these themes will be incorporated into the classroom activities this coming month.

I hope this Thanksgiving season serves as a great reminder to us to act on our gratitude. May these days of plenty encourage us to do what we can to help those who are not so fortunate and take time to let others know how much we appreciate them. Thank you all for trusting your little “blessings” to our wonderful school!

Class Snacks

We appreciate the contribution our families make by providing snacks and we are all interested in providing healthy, nutritious ones. Please keep in mind when it is your snack day: foods must be in original packaging with ingredient list and expiration date, be kosher (look for the symbols below), and nut-free (plus any other particular restrictions your class may have). Fruits and vegetables are great and will be cut at school.



Early Learners – Amy, Sheila, and Marlene


We had a great time in October with your little pumpkins! Thank you for sharing them with us. We're excited to be in our routine now, and we're really getting to see each little one's unique personality. We appreciate all of the yummy, healthy snacks that you've sent in, too.

This month, we have a few new things coming up. First, we will have our conference days Thursday, November 12, and Friday, November 13. Please watch for information about how to sign up. During conferences, we will discuss your child's social and emotional, gross and fine motor, adaptive, and communicative skills. We really enjoy sharing your child's accomplishments with you. If you have any questions or concerns, we can discuss them, too.

Thanksgiving is coming, too! We will have a very small feast and maybe even do the Turkey Dance. The Tuesday/Thursday feast will be Thursday, November 19, and the Wednesday/Friday feast will be Friday, November 20. Bring your child to class then come back at 10:30 for food and fun. Your homeroom parent will contact you about an item you can bring.

Our little ones sure do love going outside! Thanks to the board of directors and everyone who helped to put together our great playground. Remember that even as the weather gets colder, we will still try to get outside every day. Please put ALL of your child's gear in his bag, even jackets, because that makes it a lot easier for us when we go to get them ready!

We wish you a very happy Thanksgiving. We are thankful for you and your children!



Dress for Success!

Now that the weather is getting colder we request that you send your children in appropriate outdoor clothing: warm coat, hat, mittens, snow pants, and boots when necessary. **Items should be labeled and placed in the child's bag.** The children go outside every day, weather permitting — no rain and a temperature of 28 degrees or higher. *Please be sure your kids also have **proper "play shoes," especially on movement day.*** Thank you!

Threes – Jamie, Debbie, and Julie

I am glad I live in an area where we can experience the changes in seasons. The fall is such a beautiful time where we witness the changing of the leaves. The air gets a little cooler and everything we eat, drink or see is related to a pumpkin in one form or another.

Change is also occurring in our Mushroom classroom. Where we once had students hanging on to their parents as they entered the room, they are now walking in with confidence and a smile. The students who were unsure of their new environment are now able to recite the routine of our classroom. And, where the students were once strangers, they can now be seen calling a friend to play or taking a classmate by the hand to be partners. The students in our

classroom will continue to change. They are amazing little creatures to observe and we are fortunate enough to have a front row seat to their wonderful transformations.

Our focus in October was fall. We started our month by attending a field trip to Simmons Farm. The students experienced a bumpy tractor ride, an exhilarating slide, mysterious mazes and a field full of pumpkins ready to be turned into a jack o lantern. Mother Nature was smiling on us that day with beautiful weather. The downpour started as soon as I left the parking lot.

During our pumpkin unit we explored the insides of a pumpkin and baked the pumpkin seeds. Our little bakers worked hard making delicious pumpkin muffins. One of the funniest moments was when we made our pumpkin barf! It is amazing how baking soda, vinegar and green food coloring can make a classroom of children scream with delight.

We then switched our theme to apples. We discovered that an apple grows on the tree and starts off as a flower. We tasted different colors of apples and identified describing words such as sour, sweet and juicy. We created apple pictures which we added to our tree, leaves and pumpkin bulletin board.

We finished our month with a week full of Halloween. We created scary spider crafts and even went on a spider hunt. We read the story "I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Bat." We ended the month with a spooky Halloween party where we dressed up, played Halloween games and danced the day away with our glow in the dark accessories.

This classroom is full of busy children who have shared their love of learning with us. We practice our colors, shapes and numbers. We continue to grow in the area of building positive social relationships. We are empathetic to our friend's feelings and we have no trouble finding a partner when we go on adventures. We are learning our classmates' names and practicing the art of communication. Each morning the students ask their neighbor in the circle the question of the day. We practice asking good questions and using complete sentences to answer the questions. We are getting very good at this skill. As the students continue to develop the skills that will make them successful students we look forward to sharing this amazing adventure with the parents at our conferences on November 12. I enjoy sitting down with the parents in my classroom and sharing the progress each child has made.

In November we will focus on being thankful and helpful. We will complete random acts of kindness for our friends, teachers, family and community. We will have our Thanksgiving Feast on November 24th at 10:30.

We have learned so much in a short amount of time. The lessons we learn in preschool are so important for every day

life. We adults can learn many things from a three-year-old. Lessons we have learned so far include:

1. Ask your friends to play with you more often.
2. Share your toys.
3. Take care of your friends when they are sad.
4. Sing and dance all of the time.
5. Dress up if you want too.
6. Know it is OK to miss your mom once in a while.

We are having a wonderful year. I can't wait to continue this journey with 18 very special three-year-olds.

School delay/cancellation

MFLC will follow Mt. Lebanon School District decisions during inclement weather: When MTLSD is delayed, MFLC will be delayed; when MTLSD is canceled, MFLC will be canceled. Delayed start time will be 10 a.m. for morning classes which will dismiss at regular time; afternoon classes will begin on schedule. Please check local TV and cable stations, email blasts and the school answering machine when in doubt.



Three/Fours – Liz and Marlene

It is a magical thing to see a group of children come together and become a community. Our little group has certainly done emerging and bonds strengthening. While we saw mostly parallel play at the beginning of October, by the end of the month, we saw cooperative play, concern for others' well-being, friendship, and whole-group camaraderie developing.

We continue to discover and appreciate the benefits of our new classroom. We have changed our daily routine to make better use of the space. Because we have a small class, we have found that the day flows more smoothly when we focus on different parts of the room at different times. We tend to focus on art and table based activities during the first portion of the day. This group loves to paint!

Having easy access to our own kitchen is one of my favorite features of the room. We tried our first two cooking projects in October. After reading "The Little Red Hen" and learning about being helpful, we all pitched in to make apple pie roll-ups. They were delicious! We also made pumpkin muffins. Cooking with preschoolers provides opportunities for learning about math and science, exploring new sensory experiences, building fine motor skills, and building confidence. We could see how empowered the children felt when they helped to prepare food for themselves and others.

After concluding our table based activities, we join together on the rug for Gathering. We sing songs, read stories, play games, share news, and review the results of the question of the day. This month, the children's favorite song was "Five

Little Pumpkins." Miss Marlene always turns off the lights exactly when the children clap and say, "Out went the lights!" We have had a lot of fun speculating about how this little bit of magic happens!

Our next activity is snack time. We have been practicing our manners as part of our snack routine. We say "Yes, please" and "No, thank you" and we wait for everyone to be served before we eat. We also enjoy practicing our conversational skills.

After snack, we open the rest of the centers for play. During October, we could have called this part of the day "block time," because most of the children make a beeline for the block area. Another aspect of the room we have come to appreciate is the spacious and well-protected block area. Our block area is large enough that every student in our small class can join in block play, as is often the case! The children are learning how to share the materials and use the space strategically. We added different materials to the block area over the course of the month – some by teacher design, some by child request, and some as teacher suggestions stemming from children's activities. Block play is important for developing mathematical thinking, social skills, abstract thought, literacy, and fine motor skills. We are thrilled to see this group embracing the blocks and immersing themselves deeply in their play. We have noticed that the children are constructing increasingly complex block structures. They have begun to share ideas in a way that advances the level of play for the whole group.

When weather permits, we finish our day with a trip to the playground. We were so excited when the big playground was ready for use! By the end of the month, we had received instruction on the safe use of the big slide. Everyone was proud to be "big slide certified."

Our thematic focus during October was the beautiful fall season. We explored apples, pumpkins, and Halloween. We enjoyed a delightful trip to Simmons Farm. Thanks to the room parents, we also had a fun Halloween party.

We will spend the month of November preparing for our class feast on November 24. Our theme will be "Feast: Family, Friends, Food, and Fun."

Fours – Liz, April, and Melissa

I love fall in western Pennsylvania. The beautiful leaves, crisp air, and delicious apples make me feel like a little kid again. In fact, when it comes to eastern fall experiences, I feel like a little kid for the first time! Growing up in southern California, I read about fall leaves in books, wore shorts in October, and ate store bought apples. Fall was an abstract concept. Although I have lived in Pennsylvania for 10 years now, I still marvel at the beauty of fall here. I still get excited for every

trip to Simmons Farm. And I still relish the hands-on, relevant learning experiences the season offers.

In October, we had fun tying children's real world experiences to their school activities. Our visit to Simmons Farm provided the basis for much of our learning. At the farm, we saw pumpkins growing on vines. At school, we sang about pumpkins on the vine, read books about the life cycle of a pumpkin, and created a vine with pumpkins and blossoms on our wall. At the farm, we saw apples growing on trees and tasted delicious cider. At school, we read about the life cycle of an apple, compared the taste of different colored apples, cooked apple pie roll-ups, created apple trees with stickers, and sorted apples by color.

There are many ways to learn developmentally appropriate skills and concepts. Whenever possible, I love being able to provide activities that relate directly to the children's daily lives. As hands-on learners just beginning to move from the concrete to the abstract, preschoolers achieve deeper understanding when they are able to draw on personal experience. This approach also teaches children to pay close attention to what is right in front of them, which fosters scientific inquiry and artistic expression. I probably colored leaf worksheets and sang songs about apple trees when I was in preschool, but what I really remember is sprouting an avocado pit in a mayonnaise jar. My grandparents grew avocados and I ate them nearly every day.

The real world is an excellent teacher, but imagination is important, too. Halloween gave us plenty of opportunities to explore fantasy and use our imaginations. We had a spooky character smackdown for our question of the day. Each day of Halloween week, the children voted for their favorite spooky character. The winner of the day went against two new characters. We spent some time thinking about which characters are real (bats, spiders, etc.) and which are imaginary (vampires, monsters, etc.). The line between fantasy and reality is thin for a four-year-old, and Halloween can be a scary time. We also read silly books about spooky characters to put the emphasis on fun. Of course, we also had a wonderful costume party. Many thanks to our parent volunteers!

In November, our theme will be "Feast: Food, Friends, Family, and Fun." Some of our topics will include preparing healthy food, being helpful, celebrating with family and friends, and using manners. We will prepare a fabulous feast for our friends and family on November 23. We also look forward to meeting with each of you during conferences on November 13. We are excited to share your children's progress with you!

NOVEMBER ENRICHMENT CLASSES

Enrichment classes are available for those 4+ on Mondays and/or Fridays each month; \$14 per class. Sign up for whichever you would like! Contact Ms. Jamie for more info at jamie_geisler@comcast.net.

Days and Themes for November...

Mondays

Nov. 2 (Patriotic holidays and Election Day/voting), 9 ("Go Dog Go" games and activities), 16 (Paint with rubber bands!), 23 (Make a turkey centerpiece), 30 (Learn our shapes in Spanish).

Fridays

Nov. 6 (Balloon science: questions and answers!), 20 ("Do You Really Want a Pet Horse/ Dog/ Rabbit/Cat?")

Pre-K – Cara, Jane, and Melanie

This month we had a wonderful time exploring apples, worms and pumpkins! As I'm reflecting on our month, I recognize a common theme has sprouted amongst our learning that really resonated with the children. Everything goes around in a circle.

We learned about the life cycle of an apple tree through the seasons as well as the life cycle of a pumpkin. We learned how important the worms are for our soil, a special part of the life cycle of our plants and also food for our animals. As we were discussing how worms tunnel through the ground to make way for the air and water for seeds and plants, they were able to then apply how this helps the pumpkin seeds. They were fascinated with the idea of a tiny seed then growing and taking root in the ground to eventually create a very large pumpkin. What a wonderful analogy for our classroom. The seeds have been planted and now their roots are beginning to get deeper as they continue to grow. It is always magical.

We love the month of October because it provides hands-on experience as well with our explorations. We were able to go to Simmons Farm, hear the farmer talk about the seasons of their apple trees and then walk to the orchard to actually pick apples from the tree. I brought in my bin of 500 worms and we had a great time with our hands on exploration of our worm friends. We looked really hard for their five hearts, but alas they are so tiny that we couldn't find them. The children also have two science experiments started from the pumpkin. The first one is taking a pumpkin seed to see if it will germinate in a plastic bag placed between two wet cotton balls. These little greenhouses are taped to the classroom window. The second one involves the pumpkin we carved. It

is now in a large plastic bin with dirt on the bottom and a few of the seeds placed in the dirt. We have made our first observation of our pumpkin and will continue to watch for changes and signs of decomposition in the following weeks.

Alas, the month of October has come to an end, and we are completing the month with our fall celebration. The children were finally able to show us the wonderful costumes we have heard about all month! As we look into November, our class will try to answer the question "Where does our food come from?" as we prepare for our annual Harvest feast at school!

Illness: When to Keep Your Child Home . . .

While fever is a good indication of sickness, it is not the only one. If your child is "not himself," has vomited or had diarrhea within the last 24 hours, has a green nasal discharge, or is tired and irritable, something more than a cold is likely to blame. In addition to potentially infecting others, children are also less resistant to other germs when ill. If you have any doubts, it's best to have the child stay home. Of course, a big way to help prevent illness is to make sure children wash their hands upon entering the classroom every day.

K-Too – Marilyn

In October the children completed their "All About Me" unit with a portfolio for their journal. The portfolio required each child to write about themselves, their families, homes, phone numbers, favorite things, etc. They also made a self-portrait involved cutting, coloring, painting, and adding three dimensional details to a life-size cut-out of each child. It is a multi-step process that culminates in something complex and impressive. The children labeled and painted their houses, moms, dads, pets, and siblings in the backgrounds of their portraits. We studied the skeletal system of the body with real x-rays in our pretend doctor's office. The children made and labeled their own class skeletons with pasta and Popsicle sticks. We also put together our class pumpkin patch, learned Halloween songs, and had fun showing off our costumes at our party.

In November we will finish our self-portraits, study the circulatory system, the senses, emotions, and talk about giving thanks. Discuss being thankful for the very basics of life with your child: food, clothing, shelter, and a loving family. We will talk about those less fortunate than ourselves and compassion for others. We will prepare and have a feast at school on Tuesday, November 24. Prior to our feast we will be cooking and writing about what we cook daily. Remember, cooking is always a science and math lesson disguised as fun.

In December and January we will learn some world geography and about the cultural traditions and foods of Ramadan, Diwali, Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. Exposure to these holidays gives the children a glimpse into

the cultural experiences and geographical origins of different people all over the world. We will not touch on the religious aspects of these celebrations.

Conferences for K-Too will be held during class time Thursday, November 13. Please arrange for another parent or sitter to watch your child during conference time either at Mushroom or home.

2015-16 Class Parents

Early Learners (T/Th):

Natalie Leone

Early Learners (W/F):

Melissa Lepley

Threes:

Nadia Wright and Michele

Napierkowski

Three/Fours:

Elizabeth Shirey and Bri Ivey

Fours:

Kate Gigliotti-Gordon

PreK AM:

Kim Yetter

PreK PM:

Martha Jurczak

KToo AM:

Joyce Kraemer

KToo PM:

Jemma Premus

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EVENT DATE AND TIME	FUNDRAISING GROUP
Tuesday 11/3, 11/10, 11/17, 11/24 5:30 AM - 7:00 PM	Mushroom Family Learning Center
	BAKERY ADDRESS
	Cochran Rd. ~ 1644 Cochran Rd Pittsburgh, PA 15220 (412) 561-5560

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH
12:00PM

CYCLE FOR MUSHROOM

Ever want to try indoor cycling?

Now could be the time. Come try a beginner, 45 minutes class to help support our school. There are only 30 seats available, so purchase your tickets now. Checks can be made out directly to MFLC and tickets will be available in the office until they are gone!



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HeartSaver®

CPR/AED COURSE

WHEN

Monday, November 16, 2015
6:30-8:00pm

WHERE

Mushroom Family Learning Center
1900 Cochran Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15220



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Tri-Community South EMS
and MFLC

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Sign up with Joan or
Email Hollie DeLuca by
November 9th
hbednar@yahoo.com

Advance registration
and payment is
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