

Mushroom Family Learning Center

Individual Growth in a Shared Environment



An independent, secular, nonprofit preschool since 1973

1240 Washington Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

(412) 531-1225

mflcdirector@hotmail.com

mushroomfamily.org

News & Notes

MAY 2015

SEPT. TUITION DUE MAY 1

(No Global Connect contact forms were included in the mailing to parents; only school directory forms.)

MAY 13: ICE CREAM SOCIAL AND MUSICAL

6:00-7:30pm

MAY 19: LAST DAY OF SCHOOL/ END-OF-YEAR PICNIC

Picnic 11am-1pm, Mt. Lebanon Main Park. *If you have one, please wear your red MFLC T-shirt!*

MAY 20: TEACHER APPRECIATION DINNER

Parents contribute goodies for our teachers to have a nice evening to themselves! Look for a sign-up sheet soon.

TEACHER IN-SERVICE DAYS: MAY 20 (9-1) AND MAY 21 (9-3)

SEPT. 8: FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR 2015-16

WAYS TO HELP MUSHROOM

- Donate to Mushroom on the Move expenses/supplies!
- United Way agency # is 885339.
- Giant Eagle Apples for the Students program # is 5245.
- Save Labels for Education and Tyson frozen product labels.
- Donate to the MFLC Scholarship Fund.

Our new address starting July 1!

1900 Cochran Road

Pittsburgh PA 15220

Same phone: 412-531-1225

Same email: mflcdirector@hotmail.com

Welcome Future Mushroomer!

Dean Asad, born April 4
Proud big sister Amina (Pre-K pm)
and parents Amy and Ali

From the director...

So much to do, so little time... The school year is quickly coming to a close, and there is so much to do before we say goodbye for the summer.

We will not only be saying goodbye for the summer but to our home of 38 years. There will be many opportunities for all of you to help as we move into our new home. We will need packers, movers, boxes, bins, packing tape, bubble wrap and lots and lots of boxes. When we arrive at our new home we will need unpackers, cleaners and gardeners for our new playground. You will have an opportunity to sign up at the Ice Cream Social. We will also have a Mushroom on the Move jar available for donations and gift cards to Walmart/Target/Home Depot to help defray our costs.

Thank you in advance for all your support helping us make our new home a success as MFLC moves into the future!

As we end the school year, I would like to thank **each of you** for the part you played in making this a great year at MFLC. To the many parents who volunteered in the classroom, donated snacks, and supported our school in so many ways, thank you.

Thank you to our wonderful **board of directors**, Diane Rattay, Erin Betler, Kelly Lotter, Carrie Stock, Melanie Johnston, Jamie Geisler, Hollie DeLuca, Amy Cornelius Dembosky, Jennifer Fitz-Gerald, Patrick Furey and Susan Sarkis for the time they spend each month to make wise decisions on behalf of our school.

I would especially like to thank our **board president**, Diane Rattay. I do not know where to begin. Diane has been the biggest supporter of our school. She graciously stepped up when we needed to fill our president's position this year. Diane has never stopped for a single moment since she took office. She worked tirelessly this past summer helping to institute our new security plan for the current school year. She has assisted me with registration, office work, and school maintenance. There has never been one request I have asked that she has declined. And, believe me, there have been many! Diane had no idea one of the duties of president would be to find us a new home. Once again she rose to the occasion without a blink of an eye and found one. Thank you, Diane — we have been so blessed by your love and dedication to our school. I know I say it from all of our staff, students and families: THANK YOU!

I would also like to thank our **superb staff** who have been such a support to me each and every day. This wonderful group of teachers has such incredible creativity, enthusiasm and energy. They are why MFLC is such a special place for learning and enables each child to experience "individual growth in a shared environment." Thank you for creating amazing experiences daily for our students to learn and grow.

We would like to wish our oldest students much success as they make their journey on to kindergarten and first grade. We want to thank you for entrusting our staff at MFLC with your most prized possessions, your children. You have touched our lives with your help and support over the years. Thank you.

To the families returning in the fall, we say thank you. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to continue to watch your children grow and learn. To the families who are unable to follow us on our move, please know you will always be a part of our Mushroom Family.

Please look for your 2015-2016 beginning-of-the-school-year information the last week of July. The first day of school will be September 8, 2015!

Joan

Joan Harrison

Thank You to...

- Mariam Khan-Afridi (4s) and family for sponsoring the chick-hatching project.
- Miss Cara and her family for fostering our new chicks.
- Hollie DeLuca for coordinating our Taste of Lebo spirit fundraiser.
- Jake Belczyk for being our #1 "Fix-It Man" this year.
- Miss Jamie for coordinating our Mushroom musical.
- Our Ice Cream Social/Picnic in the Park/Teacher Appreciation Dinner committees and volunteers.
- Mushroom parents for the gift of your time volunteering during this past school year.
- Diane Rattay and our dedicated Board of Directors.
- To the most wonderful group of teachers ever!
- Kelly Lotter, the editor of our #1 fabulous newsletter!

We welcome new Mushroomers!



There are still openings in some of our classes for next year.

Please tell your family, friends, acquaintances and others looking for a preschool. Thank you — You are Mushroom's BEST advertisement!



Mushroom on the Move...
Look for information, and ways you can help, at the Ice Cream Social on May 13!

From the president of the board...

Happy May! Spring has sprung at Mushroom! The walls are adorned with "springy" artwork, and the window sills are home to pots of grass and flowers. The weather is finally starting to warm up, and the students (and the staff!) have been thrilled to be able to go outside on a more regular basis. The beautiful trees in the neighborhood have been blooming gorgeous shades of pink, purple and white. After such a long winter, seeing all of the colors is much appreciated.



With less than a month to go we have a few special events planned. You have all received a flier in the cubbies titled "Hey Hey Hey, It's May!" It spells out some important dates in May to watch out for. Be sure to double-check your calendars because some of the dates have changed! I hope to see you all at the Ice Cream Social and the end-of-year picnic in Mt. Lebanon Park.

This spring, I've been thinking a lot about new beginnings. In the forefront of my mind is the Big Move! Our new home on Cochran Road is almost ready for us to start moving in. We are all very excited about the new opportunities our new home will be able to afford us.

I have also thought back to last spring when I was discussing with my husband the possibility of my stepping up as president to finish Susan Sarkis' term. I've been reminded often of my response at the time, "Sure... It's only one year. What could happen?" Looking back over the last nine months, I have to laugh at my seemingly flippant attitude. I never imagined we would have the need to find a new home and leave Sunnyside. As this is my last newsletter article, I'd be remiss to not mention those who have had a hand in helping make a difficult situation a bit easier.

To Joan: Through the ups and downs (and there were many), you were there, often waiting with a bottle of Mtn. Dew or can of cranberry sauce to cheer me up. For your never-ending faith, encouragement and for being here when we need you, I thank you.

To the Board of Directors: We saw a lot more of each other than we wanted to some weeks, but I think the results are well worth our efforts. Every one of you have put in hours of hard work. You truly went above and beyond the call of your volunteer duty. I thank you.

To Board Members Amy, Patrick and Jen: The time and energy you have put into the last few months are so appreciated. From knocking on doors of possible new homes, to translating legalese and red-lining documents until your eyes crossed, your expertise made a difficult time a bit easier.

Knowing you three had my back gave me the confidence I needed to push forward. I thank you.

To the Staff: Your dedication to our school and its students knows no bounds. From the moment I stepped into this building seven years ago with my children, I knew you were special. The support you have shown me was more than I could ask for. I thank you.

To the Families: So many of you trusted that there will always be a Mushroom. It means a lot to the staff and board that so many of you will be continuing with us next year in our new home. I thank you.

And so my last newsletter article as president comes to an end. It has been an honor and a privilege to lead our school into this next phase. It truly takes a village, and I couldn't have done it without you. I thank you.

Diane

Diane Rattay

News from the Early Learners classes from Sheila, Amy, Marlene and Jamie...

April showers do indeed bring May flowers! We practiced saying this while we painted and glued our umbrellas and raindrops in April. Now our room is full of pretty flowers and the butterflies they attract! Thank you to everyone who attended Open House. We hope that you and your visitors had a lot of fun.



Words can't adequately describe how much we have enjoyed working with you and your children this year. This was a new endeavor for Amy and Sheila, and seeing your children each morning made it worthwhile. Thank you for your support and your help throughout the year! Your children have grown so much and watching them open up more and change has been so rewarding. Thank you for sharing them with us!



Due to the need to move our school, there will be no Slice of Summer summer camp at Mushroom this year.

Ice Cream Social with all-school musical!
May 13, 6:00-7:30pm, rain or shine, at MFLC!



End-of-Year School Picnic
May 20, 11am-1pm, Mt. Lebanon Main Park. If you have one, please wear your red MFLC T-shirt. Bring your blankets and lunches to celebrate our year! (No rain date.)

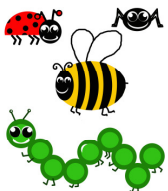
We appreciate the yummy snacks that you brought as well as your flexibility when we sent you home with a child speckled with paint and glue. This year was definitely one of transition, but your support and consideration were infinitely helpful.

To those of you whom we won't see on a regular basis next year, we hope that you will keep in touch. You have our contact information — please drop us an email and let us know how your family is doing. To those of you continuing your pre-school journey with us, we can't wait to see how your wonderful children grow and develop in the years to come. Have a safe and happy summer!

News from the 3s class from Jamie, Debbie, and Melissa...

I remember my first year of teaching at Mushroom Family Learning Center. I don't know who was more nervous, the students, the parents or myself. On the first day, 18 beautiful children walked into my classroom and I fell in love instantly. At the end of the year, I was sure I could never love a class as much as that one. Well, here I am at the end of my ninth year and have fallen just as hard for this class as I did that very first year.

There is something special about the relationship between a teacher and her students. Debbie, Melissa and I continue to be amazed by the growth each and every one of our students has made. They walked into our classroom in September curious yet a bit hesitant. The students now enter the classroom with confidence and excitement to start the morning. They understand the routine of the classroom and how to interact with 17 other children. The students make us laugh, they make us think and they make us understand how lucky we are to be a part of their lives.



Our class was very busy during the end of the school year. Spring decided to finally appear, which allowed us to dig for worms, explore new growth and meet new pets. We were fortunate enough to watch eggs hatch into chicks. This was definitely a highlight of our year.

We took on the role of mother and father to the chicks and observed them as they grew. We also adopted Froggy and

Flower into our classroom. These little frogs provided lots of laughter and entertainment. We practiced for our musical, created special projects for our moms and enjoyed the time we had together. We will finish the year with a classroom party and then a school-wide field trip to Bird Park on the last day of school.

Debbie, Melissa and I would like to thank all of our parents for the support you have given us, the endless love you give to your children and the trust you put in us to take care of the most precious people in your lives. Your children are fantastic little people. Although I am sad to see them go, I am excited to see the growth they will make in the years to come.

News from the 3/4s class from Liz, Marlene, and Melissa...

On a recent day, I looked around the classroom and noticed something amazing. Every child was actively engaged in an activity. Small groups worked together, smiling and laughing, successfully cooperating and negotiating. Everyone looked so comfortable, confident, and capable. This scene amazed me not because it was rare, but because this has become commonplace. They have all grown so much!



At the beginning of the year, these children were already wonderful people. They have been a joy since day one. However, when I look back to those early days, I realize how little they were. Many of our students were separating from their parents for the first time. Some were having their first experiences with peers. Just getting through the school day was a success, and required lots of hugs and encouragement (not that we minded the hugs!). It has been a thrilling privilege to watch them blossom into independent, secure preschoolers. They have made friends, learned new skills, and discovered more about themselves. We are so proud of them!

In April, we learned about the extraordinary egg. We learned about the life cycles of frogs, butterflies, and chickens. It was a thrill to watch real baby chicks grow!

Our final month will be a busy one. We are working hard to prepare for the school musical. We look forward to the ice

Enrichment Classes in May

Contact Jamie at jamie_geisler@comcast.net for info and sign-up.

Monday (Miss Sheila)

May 4 > Sharks Galore! We will be making a shark tooth necklace today.

May 11 > Have you ever made Slime? Make Polka Dot Slime with enough for everyone to take some home!

May 18 > The Season Finale! BINGO games and prizes for all!

Friday

May 1 > Miss Marilyn / Cloud Science — Watch a cloud form in a jar, learn the different types of clouds from Tomie dePaola's *The Cloud Book*, and make some cloud art to take home.

May 8 > Miss Amy / Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Spring art with recycled materials.

May 15 > Miss Marilyn / Art and activities based on Eric Carle's *A House for Hermit Crab*.



cream social and a field trip to Bird Park. In the midst of all that activity, we also hope to slow down and take the time to simply enjoy each other's company.

Marlene, Melissa and I have enjoyed every moment with this delightful, loving group. We are grateful to you for entrusting us with your treasures. We have been blessed to know them and to know you. Thank you for your support. It has been a fantastic year.

News from the 4s class from Liz and Marilyn...

It has been a wonderful year! Marilyn and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with your children. It's been a pleasure to see the friendships they have made, the skills they have mastered, and the confidence they have gained. We will miss the thought-provoking discussions this group has had.

In April, we learned about life cycles. We witnessed new life all around us: animals, insects, flowers, trees, and children ready to explore new territory. We were so ready to get outside again and spread our wings after the long, cold winter!

In May, we will be busy preparing for the school musical and our trip to Bird Park. We will spend our remaining days together enjoying each other's company and following where the children's interests lead us. Already, we have turned over the task of formulating the Question of the Day to our students. We will encourage them to take ownership of their own learning process to an even greater extent. Rather than having one theme, we will invite the students to suggest areas of study and we will build our lessons around their ideas.



As the end of school approaches each year, I find myself reflecting on what a magical time of life this is. Preschoolers are filled with joy, love, enthusiasm, wonder, silliness and creativity. I feel so incredibly fortunate to dwell in this space with them for a time and watch them grow. We love each of them and will treasure our time together. Saying goodbye is the hard part, but we are excited for them, too. They have grown in

every way and are ready to take on new challenges. We have a terrific group of kids and families! It has been a pleasure getting to know all of you, and we are deeply thankful for your support.

News from the Pre-K classes from Cara, Jane, Melanie and Marikate...

There have been so many magical moments this school year, and boy-oh-boy, did we add some more in April! It was a magical moment to introduce the children to the life cycle of the chicken by candling our incubated eggs with a flashlight. The children were able to see small movements made by the chicks growing inside the egg... magical. Then, how wonderful it was to introduce the children to the five chicks that hatched later in the week. Their excitement, squeals of delight and smiles lit up the room. I can't thank Homestead Jenn enough for starting the program Hatch the Chicken, so that our children could experience the magic of watching life grow. **(See next page for pics of the process!)**



We finished our investigation of the solar system as we first spent time exploring stars and constellations. We then were introduced to Vincent Van Gogh's painting "The Starry Night," which provided the inspiration to create our own masterpiece. We had the opportunity to share these with our families during our Starry Night Open House, which was another magical moment this school year. It is always wonderful to see the children so proud to show their families their classroom space! It is also wonderful to share an evening with the families because every day you are part of our classroom.

We have also begun to get together with all of the Mushroom classes to begin to learn the songs for the Mushroom musical. We will continue preparing for the musical in May, learning the songs, creating the scenery and props as well as the costumes. We are excited to share this performance with the families the evening of Wednesday, May 13!

We have a few more magical moments to share this school year, together!

News from the K-Too classes from Marilyn...

I can't believe this is the last newsletter of the year. The children have had a wonderful year of exploration and have formed warm friendships. K-Too was meant to foster the enjoyment of learning in a social environment, and I think it succeeded. Both classes were always ready and willing to learn new things and worked well together. I will miss your children. Please come back for a visit this summer and in the fall.

The children really got their creative juices going in April as we put together electric houses. The wiring was a significant small-motor challenge, but they soldiered through and were delighted by the bright results. We painted, glued, and constructed furniture, all from materials the children collected from home, recyclables, and some Mushroom art supplies. The final touch was a creature to live in our house; of course it had to be a "Mushroom Mouse," a colorful cat toy.

This project allowed the children to be creative, solve problems, observe cause and effect, and participate in a long-term

effort that required patience and planning. They were extremely proud of their results. We concluded our electricity unit by following the path of electricity into Mushroom school. Outside, we found the school's wire, meter box, and transformer topping the telephone pole.



In May, we will talk about mothers, fathers, and the many combinations that make up a "family." We also will work diligently on our Mother's Day presents which require thoughtful, and sometimes humorous, writing about mommies. We will end May with a unit on time and money, good math skills for first grade readiness. The last day of school will be a trip to Bird Park with all of the classes at Mushroom.

Enjoy your summer!
Lots of love, Marilyn

**Cheep,
Cheep,
Cheep!**

Here are a few of the pictures from our egg incubation and hatching of chicks. A full display has been in the lobby. Thanks again to the Khan-Afridi family for sponsoring this project!



Hey Hey Hey! It's May!

Ice Cream Social



Join us for our last Ice Cream Social at Sunnyhill
Please note the date has changed.

**The Ice Cream Social will be
May 13, 2015 6pm – 7:30pm
Rain OR Shine!**

Join us for a fun evening! We'll have:



ICE CREAM!

Mushroom – The Musical - Performed by the Students of MFLC

Board of Directors Slate vote

Mushroom on the Move – sign up & delegation of duties

Donations toward moving expenses will be collected – cash or checks,
packing supplies, gift cards to Walmart / Target / Home Depot for the purchase of supplies.



End of Year Picnic

Please note the date has changed.

Wednesday May 20, 2015 11am – 1pm

Mt. Lebanon Main Park - Pavilion #2

Bring your blankets, pack a lunch and have a fun
afternoon at the park with our Mushroom Family!




Teachers Dinner

Every year, in appreciation of our wonderful teachers, the Board of Directors hosts a dinner in their honor. This year, the dinner will be on Tuesday May 19, 2015. Please watch for sign-up sheets to donate food and beverages to make their dinner a success!



Business Directory



<p>Reasonable Rates</p> <p>Pre-K to 8th Grade Reading & Math</p> <p>(412) 221-4174</p>  <p>Private Tutoring In My Home</p> <p>Jane Birris Experienced Teacher & Tutor</p>	
	<p>Your ad here! \$10/issue</p>