



Mushroom Family Learning Center
1240 Washington Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15228
(412) 531-1225
mflcdirector@hotmail.com
mushroomfamily.org

OCTOBER 2013

News & Notes

TUITION DUE OCTOBER 1

KIDSTUFF BOOK ORDERS
AND MONEY DUE NOW!

NEXT MFLC BOARD
MEETING OCT. 16

CHIPOTLE SPIRIT NIGHT
OCT. 22

Wear your MFLC t-shirt on
that day!

STAFF MEETING OCT. 22
Early dismissal at 11am; late
arrival at 1pm. No lunch.

SNACKS & FACTS OCT. 23
Talk to board members, Joan
and others and get answers to
your questions about MFLC!

MIXED BAG FUNDRAISER
October 29 to November 9

CONFERENCES NOV. 14-15
Details to come from each class.

ENRICHMENT CLASSES
There are some spots available.
Contact Jamie Geisler at
jamie_geisler@comcast.net.

OUTSIDE PLAY
Classes go outside if it's not raining
and 28 degrees or above.
Please be sure your kids are well
prepared (including proper play
shoes). And mark all outerwear.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!
If you have not yet, please return
the volunteers form from your
parent folder, or talk to Joan.

WAYS TO HELP MUSHROOM
- United Way agency # is 885339.
- Giant Eagle Apples for the
Students program # is 5245.
- Save Labels for Education and
Tyson frozen product labels (bin
in the stairwell).
- Help other families by donating
to the MFLC Scholarship Fund.

A Big Thank-You to...

- ✧ Maddie Senneway and family for their donation of bikes.
- ✧ Erin Bignell, Susan Sarkis, and Jamie Geisler for their monetary donations toward our 40th anniversary t-shirts.
- ✧ Amy Garces and Sheri Reddy who coordinated our welcome coffees and to the board members who helped.
- ✧ Diane and Scott Rattay for repairing our swing set and hand railings for the school, and for Diane's help in the school office.
- ✧ Susan Sarkis and the board who coordinated the family picnic.
- ✧ Ms. Theresa for her love and continuous care of our fish.
- ✧ To all our families who donate to our scholarship fund through United Way and otherwise.
- ✧ A *super big thank-you* to our dedicated teachers and board of directors and parents who make this school so amazing!

From the director...

As we begin to celebrate our 40th year, it is my pleasure to welcome you to our wonderful school. We are delighted to continue to provide children with opportunities to grow, to dream, to dare, to persevere and to succeed. Our dedicated teaching staff brings such creativity and enthusiasm to their classes that we are once again off to a wonderful start!



Thank you to Sheri Reddy and Amy Garces for coordinating our "Coffee and Smiles" get-togethers the first week of school. It was great to see so many of you there. I hope you had the chance to get to know some of the other parents from your child's class. Many parents form lasting friendships at Mushroom.

And thanks again to Sheri for coordinating a Spirit Night at Chic-Fil-A to benefit Mushroom. It was a fun night for all, and our school netted \$90! We appreciate everyone who bought dinner that evening to contribute to the cause. Our next Spirit Night will be at **Chipotle on October 22**.

Our family picnic was a great kickoff to the new school year! I loved seeing all the red 40th anniversary t-shirts. Thanks to Susan Sarkis for coordinating a terrific evening and to all our wonderful board members who helped. I hope everyone enjoyed the great food and wonderful weather, as well as connecting with "old" and new friends. Thank you for your donations to Mushroom's scholarship fund; your generosity netted \$58.

MFLC has lasted for 40 years thanks to the efforts of our parents. Our families are the "owners" of this unique school. I greatly appreciate your interest in and support of Mushroom, whether in the classroom or as part of various fundraisers which generate income to keep our school financially sound. And to keep our curriculum sound, MFLC is licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). The curriculum, as developed by our teachers and implemented successfully for many years, reflects the Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood.

The 11 categories cover free play, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, expressive arts, mathematics, perceptual and cognitive skills, language arts, science, nutrition, health and safety, and social studies/intercultural activities. Through these activities our teachers integrate developmental knowledge with the attitudes, skills and concepts children need to make progress socially and academically. The majority of our teaching staff has a background in education and been certified by the PDE.

Our two-year-olds/Early Learners program is licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare. Theresa Rosenberg created the program, developing the age-appropriate curriculum and designing the classroom environment where the children are able to learn through meaningful play, physical activities, exploration of their environment and interaction with peers.

I invite each of you to become involved and actively participate in your child's experience at Mushroom. Each of us has an opportunity to help keep MFLC flourishing for the next generation of children.

Joan

Joan Harrison



News & Notes

HALLOWEEN CELEBRATIONS Halloween at preschool is generally mellow and we ask your help to keep it that way. While costumes are allowed (over top of clothes), please leave masks at home to avoid frightening other children. And, as always, no weapons are allowed in the school. Please refer to your weekly class email for event details related to your particular class. Thanks for your understanding. *And remember a camera!*



~~ Happy Anniversary! ~~

- MFLC – 40 years!
- Jane Birris – 26 years
- Theresa Rosenberg – 25 years
- Debbie Beachler – 20 years
- Cathy Marmion – 20 years

Thank you for your love and dedication.

I'm happy to tell you that *Mt. Lebanon Magazine* will be featuring our school in the November issue. The staff wants to recognize our 40-year history and celebrate with us. You just might see a **smiling** face you recognize. I hope your child is wearing the MFLC 40th Anniversary t-shirt with pride and enjoying being a part of this historic year for our school. It just may be the best one yet!

Susan

Susan Sarkis

From the president of the board...

As the weather cools down and the leaves start to change, your preschooler and mine are finally getting into the daily routine. We love to see the **smiles** on their faces when they walk into school. The first week of school is always an adjustment and the Coffee Chats helped with those jitters. All of the grown-ups enjoyed seeing old friends and making new ones while the children did the same thing in their new classrooms. You probably noticed how NEW some of the classrooms really are after a summer of improvements thanks to a grant from The Home Depot. Volunteers helped install new carpeting and flooring and fresh mulch on the playground.

There were a lot of **smiles** at the annual Fall Family Picnic on September 18 as we kicked off Mushroom Family Learning Center's 40th year. The weather was perfect and the food was plentiful. It was our best picnic yet! Thank you for all of the delicious food and good company.

Back by popular demand in October...**Mixed Bag fundraiser!** It starts on **October 29**. It's a great time to get a few holiday gifts for babysitters or grandparents. If you aren't familiar yet with Mixed Bags, they are reusable bags and eco-friendly products that fit right into everyday life. The items will bring a 40% profit, which will come directly off your fundraising fee, if you have chosen not to pay the fee in full already.

Also in the coming month, we have a special event called **"Facts and Snacks"** on October 23. It's your chance to meet the Mushroom Board of Directors and ask any question you may have on your mind. Maybe you want to offer a new idea for fundraising or have always wondered about the history of our wonderful school. Get your answers! Watch for details on how to submit your questions.

Welcome to MFLC, assistant teachers
Amy Cornelius Dembosky (4s) and
Tori Yoos (3s)!

And welcome back **Mr. Brian**, who will be doing his field study for California University at MFLC this semester. He will be working in the PreK morning and K-Too afternoon classes.

News from the Early Learners classes from Theresa, Marlene, and Debbie...

We are off to a wonderful start to the school year. Each week we see more smiles on both the children's faces and our moms' as well. We are totally charmed by our little "mushroomers" and just thrilled to see them becoming more and more comfortable with us and their school environment.

September always finds us getting to know the children, helping them to learn the boundaries of the room (what is OK to do and what is not) and introducing them to painting and gluing. Your children are busy the minute they enter the room, are very inquisitive and enjoy exploring the toys for their favorites.

I'm sure you noticed that September was our apple festival month. Painting apples for our big tree, the children chose their favorite apple color (or maybe just their favorite color of all) and concentrated on the painting process. The uniqueness in our little artists' styles became apparent as some patiently took their time painting with every color available while others were done lickety-split! Whatever the method, our trees are now covered with red, green, yellow and even blue sparkly apples! Everyone had a chance to "paint" with glue as well



A few fender-benders have occurred recently— please be careful and keep our kids safe!

- Drive slowly and carefully, especially when backing out, and be observant of the cars and people around you.
- Stay alert and keep kids close to you when walking in the lot.
- Parking is not permitted in front of the school or along the left side of the exit driveway. This is a requirement of the fire department.
- Please observe the handicapped parking spots.
- Don't leave other children unattended in your vehicle or in the lot.

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when we made our apple trees. Sticky fingers were everywhere but the children waited patiently until we went to wash hands. The amount of glue and paint used on our projects always requires extra drying time but when they are ready, they brighten every home décor. Of course an apple festival is not complete without applesauce. The children were fascinated with the process of “smooshing” the apples. Their eyes popped open when they saw the sauce coming out of the colander. They did their own mixing of cinnamon and sugar and our applesauce passed the taste test with flying colors! “More, please” was heard all around the table.



October will find us doing a lot of fall things. We'll explore the colors of the falling leaves and create decorations to match the season. We'll be spending time in our gathering circle singing our morning songs and Pat the Cat will come visits us too. (He helps us name our colors.)

Everyone loves to go outside so send a light jacket as it is “chilly-con carne” in the morning hours.

We are having a lot of fun getting to know all the children's personalities. With the wonderful mix of Early Learners this year, we can tell we are going to have a blast!

Mushroom Summer Baby Boom!

Welcome:

- Kinsley Freedman**, born June 2, sister of *Kailee*, PreK-AM; parents: Jessica and Abe
- Nathan Shellenberger**, born July 12, brother of *Clara*, 3/4s; parents: Natalie and Jeff
- Frida Parker**, born July 19, sister of *Selah*, EL T/Th; parents: Abby and Darnell
- Austin O'Halek**, born July 19, brother of *Cameron*, EL W/F; parents: Erin and Scott
- Lydia DeLuca**, born July 19, sister of *Dominic*, EL T/Th, and *Vincent*, PreK-AM; parents: Hollie and Anthony
- Olivia Sarkis**, born July 21, sister of *Isaac*, 4s; parents: Susan and Brian
- Elena Buch**, born August 7, sister of *Stephen*, KToo-PM; parents: Sarah and Daniel
- Myles Dymond**, born August 31, brother of *Alyssa*, 3/4s; parents: Alex and Jacob
- Stephen Whisdosh**, born Sept 30, brother of *Claire*, EL T/Th, and *Margaret*, KToo-PM; parents: Bridget and Steve

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

One of the things I enjoy the most about teaching a three-year-olds class is the growth that is made from the first step they take into our classroom until the tearful goodbye, from their teachers, when they exit for the last time. This year 18 brand-new faces walked into our classroom with excitement and uncertainty. I can say without a doubt that it didn't take long for Debbie, Tori and me to fall in love.

We eased into our classroom routine by starting with the basics. We worked with the markers, scissors and glue. We practiced putting on lids, holding the utensils in the correct position and learning how to be independent.

We used our fingers, brushes and watercolors to paint magnificent pictures. We even made play dough and corn muffins during the second week of school. The students are learning that when they walk into our classroom they need to find their name and answer the question of the day. They are then allowed to participate in our learning centers which include math, writing, reading, blocks, imaginative play and art. The students are learning how to make independent choices and find their place in a group of 18 students.



We added clean-up time and gathering activities the second week of school. The gathering song is our cue to head to the carpet for songs. We love to listen to stories. We are also focusing on five social skills during small group time.

One of our favorite times of the day is snack. The children have their own snack chair. They are asked to pass the napkins and cups. We also use our good manners by saying please and thank you. Eventually we will encourage the students to pour their own water and pass the snacks. Our snack calendar is always full thanks to our supportive parents. When the students are finished with snack they are allowed to listen to a story read by one of the teachers or read independently.

We have been fortunate, up until this point, to go outside every day. We love exploring the sandbox for treasures, swinging up into the clouds on the swings and strengthening our gross motor skills by riding the bikes and kicking the balls. We hope



Is your child asking to stay longer at Mushroom?

SIGN UP FOR ENRICHMENT!

In enrichment classes, the children have fun making crafts, cooking, learning Spanish and reading new stories. Classes are available for those 4+ on Mondays and/or Fridays each month; \$14 per class.

Sign up for however many you like! Contact Ms. Jamie for more info at jamie_geisler@comcast.net.

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that the nice weather lasts all year. We finish each day by listening to nursery rhymes. The children are already off to a great start by reciting 10 nursery rhymes. This is a great way to end each of our days.

I am so excited about the class I have this year. We are following a great routine, learning how to interact with our peers and understanding the rules of the classroom. We are off to a great start. Let the fun and learning begin!

News from the 3/4s class from Liz and Sheila...

We truly enjoyed meeting our new friends in September! The beginning of the year brings so many new experiences. For some, this may be their first time separating from their parents for school. However, even our "veterans" need time to adjust to a new classroom, new teachers, and new classmates. Our slow pace at the beginning allowed us to introduce routines and rules without overwhelming the children. We focused on helping the children feel comfortable and find their unique place in the group.

Our first goal for this children this month was for them to develop feelings of safety and belonging. We told the children that our job is to keep them safe, and their job is to help keep the classroom safe. We approach limits on behavior as matters of safety and respect for others. We can see a sense of community developing already!

We spent a lot of time this month introducing and reinforcing routines. Children feel safe, comfortable and confident when they know what to expect. Transitions can be especially hard for young children. With predictable signals, the process becomes easier. For instance, when we prepare for gathering, we first arrange the "cushies" in a semi-circle (a visual signal), then sing the gathering song (an auditory signal). Once the children are seated on the cushies, we always sing "Open, Shut Them." At that point, the children are feeling successful and focused because they knew just what to do! Each regular transition has its own distinctive song.

We also display our visual schedule (school clock) so that the children always have a reminder about what is coming next.

They have also learned to refer to the clock when they are missing their parents. It is so gratifying to see a little one soothe herself by walking over to the clock independently and reviewing the activities that will lead to a happy reunion.

Another important routine is the Question of the Day. The children have learned to find their names when they arrive and place their name in the column representing their answer to the question. It is so much fun to have your say and compare answers with your friends that the children are unaware they are learning math (counting, comparing, representing data, estimating) and reading (name recognition, left to right progression, one to one correspondence for words, using cues to decode text).



This month we also learned to navigate the classroom, make choices, and use materials appropriately. We read several books that introduced the various centers available for play time. During small group lessons, we introduced the tools of preschool, along with the basics of their proper care and use. With our glue sticks we learned, "One, two, three, stick for me." We keep our markers from drying out when we "hear the click, watch it stick." Scissors, also known as chompers, can be hidden in our hands to keep them safe when we move.

As we move into October, we will explore fall. Pumpkins, apples, leaves, and Halloween will provide us with plenty of ideas to let our creativity soar. One big highlight this month will be our field trip to Simmons Farm on **Wednesday, October 9**. I hope you will all be able to join us.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with your amazing children. We are looking forward to a terrific year together!

News from the 4s class from Liz, Kim, and Amy...

Our 4s students are off to a terrific start! We really enjoyed getting to know our new friends in September. Many of the children know each other from Ms. Jamie's class. They have been happily reuniting with old friends and making new friendships with our wonderful new additions, who have folded beautifully into the group. It has also been fun to explore



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Our preschool directory will be out soon!

We are correcting names, email addresses and phone numbers.

Please check to be sure we have your current information, and remember that the directory and email lists are for school use, play dates, and birthday party invitations, but not for solicitation. *Thank you!*

the PreK rooms upstairs during our Friday adventures.

During September we explored what we can do at preschool. We were inspired by *The Little Engine That Could* to adopt a “can do” attitude toward learning new skills. We learned that we CAN create our own books when we introduced the children to their journals. At this point, our goal is simply for them to get interested in having their very own book to record their own pictures and thoughts. We hope that feeling the pride and joy that come with authorship will encourage them to keep improving their fine motor skills, not as an assignment, but rather as a natural outgrowth of their own expression. As the year progresses, they will find more “surprises” from us in their journals in the form of prompts.



We also learned that we CAN do many exciting things with our names. Because the group can already recognize their names in print, we took things to the next level. Forming letters is tricky for little fingers. While those skills are still developing, we still have many ways to become familiar with the parts of our names. We worked on learning the sequence of letters in our names, completed our own name puzzles, traced our names, counted the letters in our names, clapped out the number of syllables in each other’s names, traced our names, and charted the first letters of everyone’s names.

Gathering is always a fun time for us to connect, sing songs, share news, and listen to stories. We are learning that we CAN raise our hands and wait for a turn to speak. We met Talking Turtle in gathering. Talking Turtle likes to hear what we have to say. When you have Talking Turtle, it is your turn to speak. When you don’t, it is your turn to listen. We practiced passing Talking Turtle and taking turns answering a question or sharing news. With this activity, the children are learning to listen respectfully to their peers, to wait for their turn to speak, and to stay on a topic. They have so much they are eager to share!

As we move into October, we will explore fall. We will have a field trip to Simmons Farm for a hayride on **October 9**. I hope you will all be able to join us. We will introduce the calendar so that we have a tool for anticipating the arrival of nearly everyone’s favorite fall holiday: Halloween!

Thank you for sharing your precious children with us. We look forward to a fantastic year of playing, growing, and learning together.

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

What a wonderful first few weeks of school it has been! We have thoroughly been enjoying getting to know each of the children, as well as their families. We have been taking our time establishing routines and reviewing/discussing safety rules. Also, these first few weeks are about making the space theirs, which they have done in so many ways already. For instance, when you come into our space you will see our names in several different places:

- 1) There are our names on our cubbies.
- 2) There are our names for the Question of the Day.
- 3) There are our names outlined in a mosaic fashion hanging in the hallway.
- 4) There are our names and pictures in alphabetical order right as you come into our space.
- 5) There are our names on our handprints as part of the “Our hands, our hearts and our minds can” mural.
- 6) There are our names on our “All About Me” posters that now grace the hallway.

All of these pieces give our children a sense of belonging to their class and to this space where we share four days a week together. It is exciting to see the children making the space their own so that it is a place to expand, explore and test their thoughts, curiosities and imagination. It is magical to see them reconnecting with friends they already know and then making connections with new friends.



As we shared our “All About Me” posters with each other, it was heartwarming to hear them comment to each other on things they share in common such as, “Oh, I’m 4 too,” or “That is my favorite color too,” or “I like to play with that too.” We are learning about ourselves, our classmates and our place in the school community. The exciting thing is that this is only the beginning of the year; there is so much we are going to learn and grow with each other.



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We ended our month with a field trip to the Outdoor Classroom to learn more about nature's recyclers, which has set the context for our focus in October. As we explore the fall season filled with apples, pumpkins and leaves, we will look at it through a different lens of dirt, decomposition and.....worms?!

We can't wait to continue growing and learning with the children!

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

In September our classes got to know each other and their new teacher. We have a fun and comforting daily routine now. Ask your children about their jobs: calendar helper, recycle helper, line leader, snack (cups, napkins, preparer, and clean up) helpers, hand wash helper, and "hip and lip." Your children were delighted to have a snack where food was passed with serving utensils. Requests for more were preceded by their friends' names. Please and thank you were required! We all enjoy the familiarity we have, the coziness of our room, and the new big-kid responsibilities.

September's theme was "Apples," but the theme was merely a vehicle that helped the children get to know each other and the new routine of K-Too. The children made a class apple tree with a "spin art" apple and photograph. After telling the children a felt-board story about a little green worm who finds his home in an apple, the children made their own "book" that contained their homemade characters, key words, and their own felt board that they could use to tell the story themselves.



We sampled different fruits from the story: apples, pears, oranges, and pomegranates.

We charted the children's preferences and analyzed the results. We also made an apple crisp as a class and ate it for snack. We finished up the month with a field trip to the Outdoor Classroom in Upper St. Clair. The children enjoyed the experience so much that we made up a story and puppet show about a magical apple tree and its woodland friends.

The children also made their own personal journal to keep drawings, writings, and thoughts in at school. We started our journal work with pages on the first letter of their name and



Mushroom Wish List ~ If you or someone you know may be able to contribute, please let Joan know!

- Dress-up clothes (especially for boys)
- Helmets for playground

what they liked to do. We have added their daily first and last name printing practice pages, various drawings, and science table observation sheets.

In October we will start our "Me" unit. We will work on an "All About Me" series of journal pages. We will need to sharpen our math measuring skills, color words, and words for feelings. The unit will culminate in a full scale self-portrait of each child. We will talk and read about feelings, as well as choose to study a biological system of the human body. We spend a lot of time on this unit because it helps children think about and express what they know about themselves inside and out, as well as how they fit into the world. Of course, we will celebrate Halloween with songs, a class pumpkin patch, and writing.

Upcoming Fundraiser!

mixed bag designs

Eco chic reusable bags!




Shopping bags
Tote bags
Lunch bags
Snack bags
Laundry bags
Duffles
Phone, tablet, and laptop covers
Travel bags
Cosmetic bags
Garment bags
...and much more!

Begins Oct. 29; More info to come soon!
www.mixedbagdesigns.com

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>