



# OUR SCHOOL

teacher-parent cooperative

A Non-Profit Corporation Founded in 1973

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*Disclaimer: Views expressed in this newsletter are provided for informational purposes and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of Our School.*

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**  
*May there be  
peace and understanding  
here and abroad!*

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## **From the Chair**

The school is ready for the new spring semester. During the winter break, children are invisible, but work is being done behind the scenes. This means getting ahead with paperwork and the newsletter, sorting out material, getting an inventory of supplies, and extra cleaning. Oh, yes, some reading, and for relief and pleasure, a trip to Denver for a leisured but careful look at children's books in particular at the Tattered Cover. We purchased a few to add to the children's library at school.

The school fundraiser is getting closer. Before we know it, March 8 will be upon us! Everything is going smoothly. We are always

amazed by what parents' intelligence, good will and cooperation can do. Everyone received their tickets for the event and the raffle tickets as well. **No doubt some of you will need more event and/or raffle tickets. Contact Jim directly.** (Do not get tickets from other families! Jim, as Treasurer, has to keep accurate records of distribution, receipts and funds.)

Glance at the list of some of the items we already have (a current list is on page 4, and you can view the ongoing list at Our School's site: [www.ourschoolpreschool.org](http://www.ourschoolpreschool.org)).

***Please, do bring the items you have for the fundraiser now. It will help the item collection/computer committee to do their job without stress.***

Remember, February is the month for the **required** committee meetings. Please do attend. (They are scheduled well in advance so parents have no conflicts.) It's worth one hour of your time, so you'll know how to work together on your committee and prevent difficulties on the day of the event. ***Check your committee meeting date on Page 4 of this newsletter as a reminder.***

## **Teacher's Reflections**

*by Jim Heaney and Yvonne Mayer*

### **Expectations**

The spring semester will evolve a new tone in all the sessions. It predictably always does. Why? Of course, children's natural

development takes its course. But we all know it is not enough. In school, the attention given to the interactive educational process nourishes and stimulates each child's natural development.

As each child has become more and more comfortable in the school environment, each one has been acquiring a sense of a "family unit of peers," which, with growing maturity and experience, evolves into more complex "profiles" of others...even of teachers or coping parents. More mature and accurate observations will correct and refine children's assessments of things and people in the school environment, as teachers should expect.

As the curriculum expands at its own rate in each session, so do discrete, subtle or direct appropriate interventions that guide the intelligent maturing process of each child's brain. Without this atmosphere of psychological comfort, other learning is arrested or distorted. Social, emotional, physical and cognitive learning all affect each other and the myriad of landscapes within each type of learning. Experience is learned as an integrated whole, especially in early childhood. You will witness in the younger session that children will be much more aware that they live in a world of others with different or similar interests, while at the same time asserting their own legitimate personality development. Children closer to four years old are entering into the beginning cooperative stage of social

development. The perception is that they and others are slowly receding an egocentric outlook and instead are developing complementary roles in the world of ideas and understanding. With the teachers' expertise in mediation, play will increasingly reflect various children's mutual stimulation and input in ideas and conception. The older children, much more mature in development and experience, can be expected to express, to some extent in language but especially in skills and conceptual understanding, a jump in their level of developmental functioning. It is a high level of commitment to learning and interest in others that evolves substantially as the semester passes, which always amazes visitors in the afternoon. So, we will guide their intent and focus in pursuing a perfecting process in their undertakings so their learning may expand. We will guide their growing understanding among cooperative efforts that benefit all. No sacrifice is ever made to self-assertion, of course, rather a balance between it and responsible autonomy.

At the last Board meeting, the officers decided it would be interesting to have two former parents briefly answer some questions that reflect their Our School experience. Do you see a thread? Does the past loop into the present?

*(Christina Dickinson started Our School in 1972-73 with Jim and Yvonne. She spent 12 consecutive years at Our School as all four of her children attended the school. Christina helped to kick-off the first Our School Fundraiser Auction 30 years ago. Mia Fox, Christina's oldest grandchild, is currently in the 2-day session at Our School.)*

Here are Christina's answers to the following questions:

**Q. 1: What did you learn as a parent at Our School?**

**A:** "I am only recently aware, as my grandchildren arrived, that much of who I am as a parent, a therapist, and an individual in my community was born and nurtured at Our School. In a way, much like my children, the learning was deeper than I knew. The mastery of Yvonne and Jim's teaching was evidenced in the creation of parents who believed that they understood their own child and could carry forward the principles of learning and relationship in the years beyond Our School.

- Non-judgment
- Curiosity
- Responsibility
- Creative and imaginative learning
- Getting to the top of the hill with a rag and tire rather than one step in front of the other.

Given the encouragement and the responsibility, the children organically grow. It was not a free-for-all. There was a kind of moral structure that maintained the children's responsibility to themselves and others, trusting their own wisdom, ideas and imaginations."

**Q. 2: How did Our School affect your children in subsequent years, following Our School?**

**A:** "Simple as this: my children and their children are now enrolled in Our School and leaning together as I did with my four children 30 years ago. The cycle continues."

**Q. 3: What is your fondest memory of Our School?**

**A:** "My fondest memory was of Group Time. 'Here we are together, together, together...' That song still signals a time of coming together while allowing each person their individual expression. I found it wonderful to observe the interactions between the children and teachers. I was amazed how they sparked each other's thinking and how much allowance there was to think outside of the box. It was

the beginning of teaching children how to be part of the community while maintaining individuality."

**Q. 4: Do you still have contact with past Our School parents?**

**A:** "I do not have contact with past Our School parents. However, when we see one another around town, there is an immediate recognition and bond that goes beyond remembering individual children to the experience of being part of Our School."

*(Annette Stewart had two children at Our School for several years. Though now one is 9 and the other 11, they periodically pass by Our School for a prolonged "Hello!" Lucia has come back on and off for "co-oping" and recently choose Our School for her middle school practicum.)*

Here are Annette's answers to the same questions:

**Q. 1: What did you learn as a parent at Our School?**

**A:** "I learned to look at the world through my child's eyes."

**Q. 2: How did Our School affect your children in subsequent years, following Our School?**

**A:** "My children's internal measure of recognizing justice and injustice was fostered at Our School. It gave them the experience of expecting justice in the world around them and contributing to it. This is done by questioning and thinking, rather than simply just believing."

**Q. 3: What is your fondest memory of Our School?**

**A:** "Yvonne's warm gracious welcome and Jim's steady continuity. They have shown the truest respect for the individuals in our family. This is the most empowering gift a teacher can give."

**Q. 4: Do you still have contact with past Our School parents?**

A: "Although some time may pass between contacts with parents I met at Our School, when we do see each other we carry with us a real sense of community."

As noted above Lucia Stewart chose to do a two-week practicum at Our School. She helped the children with quiet reverence, enjoying their open comments at group time and eager participation as Dr. Seuss' *Snitches* was read to them. She wrote the following poetic observation for the afternoon children:

***Our School, Escuela Nuestra***

½ hours,  
2 hours,  
10 years,  
Nothing changes,  
I step into the  
Warm and enthusiastic  
Space,  
Laughter,  
Thought,  
Smiles,  
Concentrated eyes,  
Searching,  
Taking,  
Accepting,  
Respecting,  
Acting,  
Living,  
Our School,  
Escuela Nuestra,  
"Hello!"  
"I'll help!"  
"Hey friend!"  
With green starred bellies  
Different than me,  
Dat's okay with me,  
Our School  
Your School  
Come on!  
Join us!  
Teach us!  
We are here!  
We are ready!  
Our School  
Your School...

*Lucia Stewart*

To conclude, let us quote from an article we recorded in the Our School newsletter in 1985. The

children's concerns then (often expressed at "group time") seem to be relevant today. We cannot forget Malcolm's comment at group time, at a conclusion of a long discussion about war. His voice rose in a sort of reflective, tensely sad tone: "...and they even kill babies?!" A poignant comment, somewhat questioning, somewhat insightful. A moment loaded with devastating inarticulated questions: Is there discrimination in cruelty, death? Who'll take care of me in such a holocaust? Are mothers and fathers helpless? Who are they, these 'bad guys'? Why do grown-ups do such things? Is this just? What is it to be me...and them? What have I done? Am I humanly responsible?

*In the next newsletters, we'll write more comments from former parents.*

**Thank you, thank you** so very much for the "end of the semester celebration" and to all of you that contributed to the fund we received. What does this mean to us? It means that you give us a recognition and respect because we offer to parents not only a service of some kind custodial nature, but also the support, knowledge and understanding we bring professionally to children and parents. We strive to make a difference in the early education of your young children and the difficult job of parenting.

**Congratulations:** to the Suro family in the afternoon session. Their new baby girl, Natalie, was born on December 28, 2002.

**Regret:** Steve Sullivan sent his resignation to the Board due to lack of time and health. However, he will still be consulting with Jim on financial affairs anytime Jim needs him. We certainly will miss his input on the Board.

**ShopOurSchool.com:** Don't forget to visit [shopourschool.com](http://shopourschool.com) whenever you shop online. Our School makes a commission when visitors "click through" the vendors listed on the site. It is a great and easy way to support Our School!

**Calendar**

**Jan. 11 & 25:** Open house, 10 a.m.-noon (tell your friends, colleagues and acquaintances)

**Jan. 16:** 2-day session meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.

**Jan. 20:** No school (Dr Martin Luther King Day)

**Jan. 22:** Seminar, "Can we curb violence in words and deeds?", 7-9:00 p.m.

**Jan. 30:** Board meeting

**Feb. 1 & 15:** Open House; 10 a.m.-noon (tell your friends, colleagues and acquaintances)

**Feb. 27:** Board meeting

**Mar. 1:** Open House (tell friends, colleagues and acquaintances)

**Mar. 6:** 4-day session meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.

**MAR. 8: AUCTION/ FUNDRAISER,** 6-10 p.m.

**Mar. 10 (Monday): NO SCHOOL** (auction clear-up!)

**Mar. 12:** 3-day session meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.

**Mar. 20:** Board meeting

**Mar. 21-28: NO SCHOOL (CONFERENCES) Note:** Spring conferences days are *Mar. 9, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29*

**Apr. 1:** 2-day session meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.

**Apr. 9:** Seminar (topic undecided), 7-9:00 p.m.

**Apr. 12 & 26:** Open House, 10 a.m.-noon (tell friends, colleagues & acquaintances)

*(continued...)*

## **Calendar (continued)**

**Apr. 16:** SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING REQUIRED; Executive Board election and other matters, 7-9 p.m.

**Apr. 24:** Board meeting

**May 1:** Last 4-day session meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.

**May 3 & 10:** Open House (tell friends, colleagues & acquaintances), 10 a.m.-noon

**May 7:** Last 3-day session meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.

**May 15:** Last 2-day session meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.

**May 19:** New families/children orientation meeting for 2003-04, 7-9 p.m.

**May 26:** NO SCHOOL (Memorial Day)

**May 29:** Board meeting

**June 1 (Sunday):** Our School pot luck picnic for present and future families, 4-7:00 p.m. (site to be announced)

**June 6:** LAST DAY OF SCHOOL (Friday)

### **Items**

**February 22 (Saturday at 10:00 a.m.):** Set up/Clean up

**February 25 (Tuesday):** Cashiers, Tickets, & Bookkeepers

**March 4 (Tuesday):** Tallying

The chairs of these committees will contact you beforehand. All meetings are at Our School and at 7 p.m. (Except for the Set up/Clean up committee.) *If you cannot attend your committee meeting, the Steering Fundraiser committee will shift you to another committee where you can attend the training session*

### **AUCTION ITEMS SO FAR:**

#### **Active Life**

Guided dog sled tour for two (Frisco)  
Guided 2-hour snowmobile tour (Frisco)  
Schwinn Team short-sleeved jersey, XL  
Schwinn Team short-sleeved jersey, medium  
Schwinn Team short-sleeved jersey, small  
Five racquetball racquets, with Pro-Kennex Racquetballs and Rad Eyeguards  
10 visit guest pass to Flatirons Athletic Club  
45 minute aerobatic flight with New Attitude Aerobatics

#### **Arts & Crafts**

Framed photo of Bluebell Mountain  
Hanging basket by artist Katherine Adams, made from reed from Colorado and leather  
Standing Basket Tapestry by artist Katherine Adams  
Oil Painting on Box Canvas--"Old Guy"  
Blue Brocade wall hanging  
Wooden carved pencil holder and copper embossed pen holder  
Two pillowcases from India  
Small quilted birdhouse wall hanging  
A set of 4 watercolor prints of cats by Bryon Caver  
Handmade chainstitch wall hanging  
\$25 Gift Certificate for Shuttles, Spindles & Skeins

#### **Body Beautiful**

Gift Certificate and Hair Care Products from Crazy Horse II Salon  
"Celebrating Motherhood" gift set with 3 books, journal, CD, candles, etc.  
Two Sonicare Toothbrushes  
Gift Basket of Mary Kay Beauty Products  
Sobagana (buckwheat) contour pillow

#### **Entertainment**

Gift Certificate for 4 tickets for the Colorado Rapids 2003 season  
Autographed Herdsman Player Card (Colorado Rapids)  
Gift certificate for 2 orchestra I tickets to any CU Artist Series 2003 event  
\$20 Gift Certificate for Table Mesa Cards  
4 admissions to any Upstart Crow Theatre Co. 2003 production  
2 adult & 2 children passes, 4 soft drinks and parking pass to Ocean Journey

#### **Fashion & Jewelry**

Suburu Polo Shirt  
\$25 gift certificate for Ann Taylor Loft  
Leather mock alligator skin purse from Ann Taylor Loft  
\$35 Gift Certificate for lingerie  
CU sweatshirt, small  
CU sweatshirt, XXL  
3 Champion baseball caps  
Sterling silver amethyst huggy earrings

#### **Food & Wine**

\$20 in gift certificates for Belgian Bakery  
\$20 Gift Certificate for Cannon Mine Coffee  
"Wine & Grapes" Dinner Party Accessory Set  
Wine Tasting for 6 people at their home  
Pamperd Chef Gift Basket  
Gift certificate for red wine of the month club for 4 months for Pettyjohn's Liquors  
\$50 Gift Certificate for Wild Oats Market

#### **Home & Garden**

\$200 Gift Certificate for Ace Hardware  
5' 3" x 7' 6" Area rug  
14 Hand Embroidered Tea Towels  
26 gallons of paint  
6 placemats, 6 coasters and one centerpiece mat from India  
2+ Wall borders, floral  
3 Wall borders, "Precious Moments"  
\$25 Gift Certificate for Lafayette Florist  
Two spring flowers embroidered pillows  
\$25 Gift Certificate for Sturtz & Copeland  
Bird Feeder and Seed

#### **Kids' Stuff**

Children's Teapot Set  
3 children's books  
Gund Teddy Bear  
\$25 Gift Certificate for Grand Rabbits  
Nappysac diaper bag  
Children's Table Lamp  
Time Machine Toothbrush  
\$15 gift certificate for Playfair Toys  
\$25 gift certificate for Rocky Mountain School Supplies  
Harry Potter coin collection, available only in the UK  
Swing 'n' Slide kit  
Toddler's outfit, jacket and pants  
Lincoln Logs Sawmill Express Train Set

#### **Restaurants**

20\$ Gift Certificate for Via Toscanas  
\$20 Gift Certificate for 14th Street Grill  
Gift certificate for 9 free drinks at Café Sole  
\$50 Gift Certificate for Jax Fish House  
\$60 in gift certificates for Le Peep  
\$25 gift certificate for Pasquini's  
\$50 Gift Certificate for Rhumba  
\$50 Gift Certificate for Zolo

#### **Services**

\$250 Gift Certificate for 2-hour b&w photography in your home w/ 4 8x10s from Amy Freeth Photography  
One portrait session plus 1 8x10 from Beth Photography  
Gift certificate for up to 500 sq ft of carpet cleaning from Carpet One Cleaning  
1 Studio Setting (10 poses) and 1 8x10  
Portrait from David Schattler Photography  
Gift Certificate for 75 minute massage from Louisville Massage Therapy  
Photo sitting (24 exposures) B&W or color, outdoor in Boulder County from Michelle Burns Photography  
\$45 Gift Certificate for MotoPhoto club membership with 8x10 frame  
Parent's consultation w/ clinical psychologist  
Gift certificate for 1 pair custom molded foot orthotics  
5 gift certificates for dog washing  
Gift Certificate for one cut and style from Sunburst Hair Salon  
\$75 gift certificate for Wagg-In-Wheels Mobile Dog Grooming

#### **Vacations**

One week at Fraser, Colorado vacation home--sleeps 10  
Puerto Vallarta Condo, sleeps 4, right in town, 4-7 days  
1 week in 3-bedroom townhome in Winter Park

#### **Miscellaneous**

\$50 Gift Certificate for Bubbs Used Books  
\$30 Gift Certificate for Meow Meow Architect/Graphic Designer Portfolio  
Leather folder, aboriginal art guest book, eye glass holder and 3 wallets