



# PRESCHOOL NEWS

St. Stephen Presbyterian Preschool

January 2019, Vol. 1

## Message from the Director

Dear St. Stephen Parents,

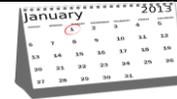
Welcome back and Happy 2019!

First, I want to offer many thanks to all of our families for making our Christmas and holiday celebrations so very special. The children loved performing for you at the Winter Sing-Along and the Toy Drive brought in over \$350 worth of items for children that might have gone without any holiday cheer. You were also beyond generous in your abundant giving to both the school and our beloved staff – sincere thanks, gratitude and appreciation from us all!

Second, (*and every bit as important*) As we greet the new year with reflection on past successes and an eye on new growth and future goals, I invite all of you to *continue to contribute your ideas* and perhaps some of your precious time towards joining us to grow St. Stephen Preschool into *the* flagship Early Childhood Program of the West Valley. We are anxious to add features that would make St. Stephen an even better home away from home for your family and others. And you are the key. I will be sending a short survey to all and would love 100% participation by way of your responses this month. I also look forward to holding “Director Chats” to get input and discuss topics of interest to you all. To a happy, healthy, blessed, and growth filled New Year!

Warmly, Tracey

P.S. Any families *planning to apply out to private kindergartens* for Sept. 2019-Most admissions deadlines are happening NOW. Don't wait. If you need help with applications or letters of recommendation, I am more than happy to be of assistance.



## DATES TO REMEMBER

- \*January 7 Back to School
- \*January 9 “Mommy & Me” Session 2
- \*Jan. 15 Kung Fu Moves \*Jan. 16 Science Class
- \*January 21 Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
(National Holiday - No School)



## What's Up↑ in JANUARY?

This month our artist of the month is Yayoi Kusami (aka The Princess of Polka Dots). Our yoga pose is The Boat and the author is Ezra Jack Keats. We will also be listening to drama of composer John Williams (dun da. dun, da, dun, da).

Our curriculum theme will focus on **People's Many Different Vocations**. We will discuss the reasons why people work and what they do. Please see your child's teachers about **planning a time to come into class to share about your job or a passion or hobby** at group time. Be Creative!! It could be as short as two minutes or as long as 20 min. (keeping in mind the children's attention spans 😊). Need ideas on ways to present? We have *plenty* of them, so don't be shy!!

We wish you all a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Love,

Ms. Vickie, Ms. Carla, Ms. Maria, Ms. Jeanie,  
Ms. Ana, Ms. Christine, Ms. Selene, and Ms. Betsie



1 More Thank You . . .

What: Three new classroom bulletin boards

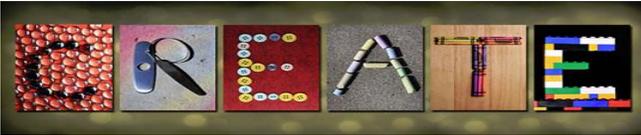
Where: Ms. Selene has claimed one for her outdoor classroom the minute they arrived in the office- Haha! And by executive decision I'm bequeathing one to Ms. Lois Ann (no more taping calendars and important budget stuff to the wall!). The 3<sup>rd</sup> one? Still up for grabs!

Who: The Popiel Family

\*\* And speaking of our Outdoor Classroom . . .

If you have any **children's books** that are looking for a new home, we would gladly welcome them into the play yard “Under the Trees Library”.

## "LETTER OF THE WEEK"



Beginning the week of January 21st, Rooms 2, & 3 will begin their "Letter of the Week" curriculum. A calendar for the letters will be sent home from your child's teachers. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to check in with them to find a convenient time to chat.

A variety of activities are meant to give meaning to letters and foster genuine phonemic awareness. Simple rote memorization of the letter shapes and their names will not produce readers. The Sound/Symbol connection that is the true precursor to reading is multifaceted and must be preceded by concepts of Sight/Symbol relationships, as when we teach children's eyes to track from left to right (not their normal dispensation) and follow a pattern across a page. The understanding of rhyming, auditory and verbal repetition come first. The concepts and being able to follow, replicate, and then design and vary a pattern of their own making are first necessary. Learning to comprehend and then predict what happens 1<sup>st</sup>, next, and last in a story are critical skills to understanding the rhythm of words and why they have meaning. Being able to physically cross their bodies midline and hop on one foot, are also milestones that your child's teacher keeps tabs on to gauge reading readiness.

***Hmmm, sounds like a perfect topic for one of those Director Chats – Jus' sayin'***

We would also like to call your attention to a popular website: [www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com). This free website reinforces letter recognition and phonics through fun games. While using the mouse and keyboard to play the letter games, your child will also build their hand-eye coordination and computer skills.



On a similar note 🎵

## Classroom Openings

We currently have some openings in our classrooms to add to your child's weekly schedule. This is a perfect way to give your child some extra time in a fostering & nurturing, experience-rich environment, with lots of one-on-one attention. You could also join afternoon Kid's Club and extend their morning program until 2:00 or 3:00 any day of the week.

For those of you who have children that will be going to an LAUSD T-K or Kindergarten program next semester, be mindful that they will be attending 6 hours/day, 5 days/week, with up to 23 other students. That is without two teachers and often limited support staff (and no parent). If you are interested in increasing the number of days your child attends school, please see Tracey.



## PRESCHOOL BLOG – 10X: "Good Job" Alternatives That ~FOSTER BRAIN DEVELOPMENT~

Parents and teachers often say "good job" as an automatic response to a child's action. "You ate all of your peas. Good job!" "You did a good job putting away the toys." A "good job" now and then is fine, but it doesn't help children understand why what they did was good. Preschoolers need to know what they did, why it worked, or why it shows they are capable. Try the following suggestions to give preschoolers specific, detailed information that recognizes their achievements and encourages their learning.



**1 Use sentence starters.** Say "I see you," "I hear you," or "I notice," followed by a description. "I noticed you sorted the leaves into two piles. These ones are from an oak tree and those ones are from a maple tree." Or try openers like "Tell me more about" or "You worked really hard to..."

2

**Notice and give feedback about efforts.**

“Jocelyn, you spent a long time figuring out where to put the last two pieces of the puzzle. You kept working until you were done!” On the same note, let them make mistakes and make multiple attempts. Rushing to show how to do something the “right way” is of little use in learning to problem solve.

3

**Invite children to talk.**

Children’s learning is enhanced when they talk about their explorations and creations. “That looks really interesting. How did you do that?” “You wrote a lot of words on your paper. Would you tell me what they say?”

4

**Pay attention to details.**

When talking about a painting, tell the artist what shapes, lines, colors, textures, and forms you see in the work. “Look at all of the green polka dots in the sky! You mixed many shades of green and blue to paint this picture.”

5

**Say “thank you.”**

When children are helpful, thank them. “Thank you for opening the door for me. While you held the door, I could use both hands to carry our bag of balls into the classroom.”

6

**Identify a goal before responding.**

Ask yourself: Do I want to acknowledge a positive behavior, an act of kindness, or use of problem-solving skills? To encourage self-regulation you might say, “How kind you are. You helped Jorge zip his coat, even though you wanted to run and play.”

7

**Give nonverbal feedback.**

A gentle pat on the back, a smile, a wink, or a fist bump tells a child, “I see you are learning.” This is especially appropriate for children who are dual language learners.

8

**Use mirroring.**

When a child goes up and down the slide on her own for the first time, notice her smile, then smile back with a specific comment. “Look at what you did! Just yesterday you asked me to help and now you can do it on your own.”

9

**Highlight children’s work.**

Invite children to help find a place to hang a painting. Plan a time when children can share their work with classmates. Include photos that demonstrate children’s efforts and accomplishments in a blog or a family newsletter. “Petra and Janine, please help me choose some photos for our weekly update. I’d like all the families to see how you worked together to make a book about our trip to the nature center.”

10

**Encourage next steps.**

After a child has one positive experience, suggest something that he or she can do that leads to another accomplishment. “The boat you drew has two masts and lots of portholes. What materials could you use to build it?” (Note the introduction of a new vocabulary word—portholes!) **TYC**

<http://www.naeyc.org/tyc/article/good-job-alternatives>

~ Coming In February ~



**See's**  
Famous Old Time  
CANDIES

**Valentine Fundraiser**  
**OH JOY!!**

## Ms. Ana, Room Three

As some of you may already know - our wonderful Ms. Ana Dolowy will have to leave us this semester for reasons having to do with the health condition of an extended family member. We are unsure the duration of Ana's need to be out of the classroom. So, at this time she has tendered her resignation so that we can make definite plans to keep Room Three running smoothly and consistently.

We are so very fortunate to have both Ms. Betsie Warren (who has taught prekindergarten here at St. Stephen for over 25 years) and Ms. Selene Acre (who knows each and every child and family from her daily work in every classroom) willing and able to step in for Ms. Ana. This will assure a seamless transition without the necessity to hire any new, unknown staff at this time. This also allows Ms. Christine to work with colleagues whose styles she already knows and with whom she has great rapport. Ana will be available to substitute as the care of her family's loved one is more certain. She will also still be aiding Ms. Christine with student evaluations and parent/teacher conferencing. Your children's educational program will continue uninterrupted as we also remain mindful of their continued social/emotional needs and growth through this transition as well.

We know that you will want to join with us in supporting Ana as she and her husband and daughter sort out this very difficult time. We are so very glad that they, and you, are part of this big, warm, nurturing, family community. Join us in wishing her all the best.