



Circle Time

The mission of the Parent-Infant Center is to support parenting by enabling young children to grow and learn in a safe, stimulating, loving environment

Shovel-ready PIC expansion begins

After two years of planning and negotiation with the University of Pennsylvania, construction is set to begin next door on the Marni Sweet Building. By spring, we will be opening two new classrooms, and expansion of the center should be complete by next fall.

Flatiron Building Construction will break ground this month, starting with interior demolition of 9,000 square feet of space that will be renovated to hold six classrooms, plus administrative offices and indoor multipurpose space.

We'll keep you updated as construction progresses; here are some important points to remember:

Construction: The project is confined to the building next door and will not interfere with PIC's basic operations. At times Flatiron may need to block the entrance at 42nd and Locusts Streets to load or unload equipment. Keep your eyes open for signs directing you to the other entrance at Locust Street and St Mark's Square; we'll try to give advance warning.

Construction crews are expected to follow PIC's no smoking policy and use appropriate language on the building site. If you have concerns about behavior of any crew member,



contact any PIC administrator immediately.

Parking: Although many families are accustomed to using the driveway for pick-up and drop-off, **fire regulation prohibits parking in the driveway at 42nd and Locust, even temporarily.** Technically, parking in the driveway is a violation and it will be enforced during construction. Please allow extra time in the morning and evening to find available parking.

Timeline: Construction is expected to be completed in March and we will open a new infant classroom and new toddler classroom as soon as possible. Throughout the project we hope to take advantage of any exciting development, like the arrival of a crane. Kids will be able to watch safely from the playground.

The Sweet Dreams Campaign is in its final push to raise \$300,000 toward the center's \$1 million goal. Do you have contacts with a potential donor who supports early childhood education? Does your company support nonprofit community organizations or make in-kind donations of furniture or supplies? If so, please contact Director of Development Chelsea Koziara [ckoziara@parentinfantcenter.org].

PIC Closed

Don't forget: PIC closes at 1pm on Thursday, Dec. 24 and we will re-open on Monday, January 4, 2010.

Now's the time to mark your 2010 calendars! PIC will be closed:

- Monday, Jan. 18 / Martin Luther King Day**
- Monday, Feb. 15 / Presidents' Day**
- Friday, March 19 / Teacher In-Service**

Bumblebees



As anyone who has spent time with children knows, anything can be a toy. Mom's or Dad's keys are great to hold and jingle, pots and pans make excellent drums, and the boxes a gift comes in can be even more fun than the present. The simplest of objects can have many uses for a young child.

We were once given a large paper bag to play with by a parent. After peering inside for awhile, one of the toddlers decided to drop a ball inside and pull the bag through the room. Some of the other children saw this and began dropping balls in the bag as well. The Bees then worked together, dragging the paper bag back and forth. Eventually the bag began to rip. This led to the next activity — tearing the paper apart. The Bees set to work pulling it to pieces, then crumpling their scraps. It was amazing to see all the ideas brought about by a simple paper bag.

We see this re-imagining of purposes all the time in the Bumblebee room. The baskets used for storing

toys are often used as hats or places to sit. Lately our blocks have been much more popular for banging than for stacking!

The Bumblebee teachers try to repeat this same creative thinking when offering activities. People figurines or bristle builders can become tools for creating impressions in dough or moving paint around on paper. Old food and formula containers become drums or shakers. We're always observing how the children are playing and exploring for inspiration when planning activities. Luckily, the Bees have no shortage of novel ideas to show us.

— *Chelsea Reichert*

Starfish

Here in Philadelphia, the days are getting shorter, the temperature gets lower each day, and the leaves are changing colors. It was the perfect time to introduce our next theme: Step into Fall!

The children worked on projects related to this theme, the first of which was to observe and talk about changes that were taking place in the fall.

We saw the trees on the PIC playground changing color and the Starfish decided to bring some of the outdoors into the classroom. The children used their creativity and their fine motor skills to decorate the classroom with fall colors.

They painted at the easel and finger painted using fall colors, made leaf collages, pine cone paintings, and a tissue paper collage with reds, yellows and browns. One parent said that the Starfish classroom



looked like fall!

We also began learning lessons about science through our everyday experiences. The children explored the neighborhood and PIC playground, collecting interesting fall leaves of various types and sizes. Along with pinecones and acorns they added all these new items into our classroom science center for the children to look at using magnifying glasses and other nature observation sets.

To help develop math skills, the children weighed acorns and pine cones on our scale and we matched leaves by shape, size and color.

The Starfish also did sorting and ordering. Teachers encouraged the children to line various leaves up from smallest to largest, and asked open-ended questions such as "Which leaf comes next? Which leaf is the next biggest?"

At Circle Time, the children learned a finger play call AUTUMN.

All in all, the Starfish enjoyed many new and interesting experiences and we explored all things related to our fall theme.

— *Johnetta Hurley*

Fireflies

In the Firefly classroom we are very interested in taking care of ourselves and taking care of the world around us. Last month we visited the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education where we had the opportunity to experience a very different environment than we are used to living in the city. We got to see what the world of nature was doing in autumn.

With our tour guides, we walked along the trails looking at what was happening to the trees and the ground around us. At our first stop, we got an up-close look at a daddy-longlegs spider. As we walked further, the Fireflies had the opportunity to see that animals are always around us, even when the air starts to get cooler.

We headed down to a pond, and



scooped around in the muck to find some very small tadpoles. Fireflies were excited to learn that these “little fishies” would, over the course of the winter, grow legs and mature into toads. It was amazing to think that under the icy water there are thousands of animals growing and hibernating.

Further on our walk, we saw sycamore leaves that were as big as some

of the Fireflies! We also spotted animal tracks left in the mud and some Fireflies spotted a large hawk. We wrapped up our trip with a picnic lunch and talked about the world, and how we could take care of it.

Our interest in the world around us gives us a sense of who we are and we are thrilled to see the Fireflies taking a personal interest in the environment. Whether it is in our daily activities of recycling and composting, or on special trips where we venture outside to see nature in action, the teachers in the Fireflies strive to develop awareness and appreciation for nature and how we can best look after the world we live in — inside and outside our classroom.

— Brooks Wilson

Dragontails/Starlights

The Dragontails and Starlights have completed a wonderful assortment of exciting projects and activities since the start of the school year. Holiday care days are an excellent opportunity for us to learn and grow as we have extra time spent together.

Election Day and Veterans Day were a big success. The children had their own elections for classroom jobs, which they now perform with pride. On Veterans Day, we made Thank You cards to send to veterans.

The after school clubs have also been a hit. Our second club cycle has already begun and it runs through winter break. In this club cycle we have placed an emphasis on extending school learning into a fun environment. Clubs include science, math, history, reading and art. The children now have the option to have time for



and help with their homework in the Homework Club, which will continue throughout the end of the school year.

Surprise Fridays are also a great way for us to complete diverse projects with the children. In the past we have done arts and crafts, dancing, and various seasonal projects. If you have a culture, talent or project

you would like to share with the Dragontails or Starlights, please ask me or Kendra for details on how you can share this with us on a Surprise Friday. We'd love to have you!

Lastly, our winter party is coming up on **Friday, December 11, from 5:30-7pm**. Please don't miss it! We will have fun crafts and activities for the children and parents to do together. There is also room for parent involvement; you'll be hearing more from your room parents.

The Dragontails and Starlights rooms are looking forward to an exciting and explorative new year in the ASC.

— Ashley Capelle

Building community with volunteers at PIC

Over the past six months you may have noticed some new faces in and around the halls and outdoor spaces of PIC. Administrative Assistant Dhatri Purohit has taken on the duties of volunteer coordinator, working with volunteers to ensure they are trained and matched with the right opportunity at PIC.

This past summer Drexel student David Curci helped us with our butterfly garden and with the greening project next to the Stucco building. Check out the fall foliage on the beautifully covered hill!

We partnered with Intercultural

Family Service and the Philadelphia Youth Network, which sent high school seniors to intern in July and August. Chiquita Smith worked with 2nd and 3rd grade students during the summer camp; Tyrone Tate worked with the Rainbow classroom and Katherine Flowers with the Peanuts.

College-bound high school volunteers from Mastery Charter School will be starting this month, working directly with teacher mentors. We are also pleased to report that several PIC alums have volunteered. Aylin Daldal, a junior at Lower Merion High,

Ayo Keys, a sophomore at Philadelphia Girls High, and Maddy Elwell, an 8th grader at Masterman, helped out with various administrative and classroom tasks during the summer.

PIC has always been an active part of the community and some of our teachers started as volunteers. However, volunteers are strictly "extra hands" in the classroom and never counted as part of the teacher:child ratio.

If you know of potential volunteers for PIC, please contact Dhatri Purohit at 215-222-5480.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Peanut Lead Teacher Kharma Hicks for induction into the Alpha Sigma Lambda Honors Society for her tremendous achievements at Chestnut Hill College. Kharma is on track to receive her BA in Early Childhood Education in May 2010. **Well done Kharma!**

In November we enjoyed the return of the **PIC Macaroni & Cheese Bake Off** with five teachers participating: Krystal Jordan, Joann Schock, Chelsea Reichert, Charlotte Danzy and Veronica Johnson. Our panel of judges included local police officers, University City District's Publicity Coordinator Katie Holeman and PIC's Maintenance Assistant Vernon Waiters. The top spot was hotly contested and we crowned two queens of mac & cheese: **Charlotte Danzy** of the After School Center and **Krystal Jordan**, teacher in the Rainbow Room. Coming up: the January Chili Cook Off!

Winter storm reminders: Will PIC close?

PIC tries to stay open so parents can go to work or school, but a winter storm may cause us to close.

If a storm hits overnight, we make a decision by 6am and will make every effort to post on PIC's website, www.parentinfantcenter.org and put a message on the voicemail system [215-222-5480]. Tune in to KYW News Radio (1060 AM) or KYW's web-

site and look for PIC's school closing number: **3018**.

If it snows during the day and public/parochial schools close but we remain open, we will pick up children enrolled in the after school center and bring them to PIC.

If weather forces PIC to close during the day, you will receive a phone call asking you to pick up your

child. If that happens, *please arrive at PIC as soon as possible* so that our staff can get also get home safely.

If Penn closes for a winter storm, PIC will close ... *but Penn hardly ever closes!*