

Open Classroom Community News



September 21, 2011 • Volume 12 • Number 3

Healthy Living Update

The Healthy Living Committee has been busy with Ruth's, Deb's, Shelly/Lena's, Amanda's, Christina's, and Leslee's classes. Here's what's been going on...

Initially, in the Emotional Wellness portion of Healthy Living, Rose discussed anti-harassment and what to do if students experience others being mean to them. You should have seen some information come home on this. The second week, we dove into the Expressive Kids program with the students getting to know each other by talking about how to greet others.

We practiced appropriate questions to ask someone you are just getting to know. We also emphasized responding to others questions and making connections. Hopefully, you have heard new greetings at home, or among the students. Last Friday we talked about our likable selves and how each person has got to like him/herself before others will. Students shared something about themselves with a partner and the partner responded with an appropriate comment, compliment, or connection. It was really fun to see the kids make connections in the whole group. Every week we will do an art activity, so keep an eye out for that, too.

Over the last three weeks in the health/nutrition portion of Healthy Living, we have talked about; what it means to talk care of ourselves, our community, and our world, how we can keep ourselves safe everyday and in an emergency, and how we can keep ourselves safe on the internet.

On September 9th, Firefighter Jayde came into several 1st-3rd grade classes, and last Friday, September

16th, Shanna, a representative from Netsmartz was able to meet with the K-3rd grades. You and your kids can find out more about internet safety at www.netsmartzkids.org. This website is a safe place for games and activities on the internet.

Here are some questions you can ask your kids (1st-3rd grade) to follow-up on what we have discussed:

Q: What does the word "community" mean? **A:** A community can be a lot of things; it can be our classroom, our grade, our school, our neighborhood. We are part of many different communities.

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Healthy
Living

Safety Reminders

A word for our all of us from our very own, Firefighter Jayde:



Editors Note: This is not really a picture of Firefighter Jayde Davis

My name is Jayde Davis and I was recently asked to conduct a personal and emergency safety class for several first and second grade classes. I am a firefighter for Salt Lake City and teaching kids safety classes is one of the many satisfying elements of my job but the fact that I also have children that attend Open Classroom, made this an opportunity I could not pass up. I thoroughly enjoyed sharing my knowledge and experience and was

very impressed with the children's attentiveness and respect they displayed. With that being said, it was quite a bit of information for first and second graders and they probably won't remember everything so I would like to share some of the main points with parents.

I talked to the kids about using their personal safety equipment. This includes but is not limited to:

- Helmets, pads, gloves etc.--Helmets can prevent serious head injuries on bikes and skateboards.
- Seat belts--without them, low speed accidents can cause extensive injuries. With them, rollover injuries can be as minor as scratches and bruises.
- Crosswalks--The jaywalker who gets hit by a car didn't step out into the street planning on getting hit. He never thought it would happen to him. The crosswalk is where we, as motorists, look for pedestrians. It increases your chances of making it across the street safely.

I also talked about having an escape plan should you ever have a fire in your home. This is something that requires participation from the entire family. There are several things everyone should know.

1. At least two ways to exit the house from their bedroom in dark or smoky conditions. This may require crawling to an exit.
2. Where to meet, should you not exit together. Having a meeting spot ensures that mom or dad don't go back into a house fire looking for someone who has already exited the structure safely. The meeting spot can be a neighbors house or across the street. It makes no difference as long as everyone knows where it is.
3. If you are unable to exit, do not hide. Close door to bedroom if not already closed and stay low. Get loud at the sound of firefighters. They are looking for you.

* I can't tell you the best way to exit your house because every house is different. It is up to you to discuss with your children an appropriate exit plan for your family. I realize it can be a scary topic to discuss, especially since we all feel "it will never happen to us" but believe me, having an exit plan will give your entire family the tools they need to increase their chances of surviving this terrifying scenario should it ever happen to you.

All of these are tools to significantly minimize the chance that I have to respond on an accident where someone is injured. They certainly don't guarantee safety, but they do help. Every accident I respond on, there is someone there who "never thought it would happen to them". That's why they call it an accident. It can and does happen...prepare effectively.

- Thanks, Firefighter and Dad, Jayde Davis

The Library Shelf

Hello parents and co-ops, the library is excited to tell you we are starting our school art displays next week with Alex's class. Please stop and take the time to appreciate our kids art!

Also so you know not only kids but you too can check out books from our amazing library. If you need a book for a co-oping course or from read aloud you can check it out! Or if

you see something you would like to take home you can after you check it out! -

- Darcy Murphy



Co-oper's Corner



In our family, we frequently ask our kids each evening to share the best part of their day or something they enjoyed at school. On really great days, the answer is Math. On other good days their answers may be science, art, or reading. Often, however, the answer is RECESS! Recess is an important part of the day for our kids and

since we are a community that believes in supporting “whole child” learning, recess should be an important part of the learning experience as well.

It is at recess that our kids get to go outside and practice many of the social skills we have been teaching them, in addition to supporting their physical development. Recess is also a great opportunity for us to support continued learning and strengthening of social skills. It is important when we co-op that we take full advantage of our time at the school – including recess time! Recess is not a break – it is just a different venue of learning. When we don't participate in recess, we miss great opportunities on the playground to support our kids and help them learn outside the classroom.

One of my favorite parts of co-oping has been organizing games on the playground. By learning 2 or 3 simple group games I have often been able to get to know kids from other classrooms and other grades, been able to model good

leadership, problem solving, and conflict resolution skills. There are so many kids that struggle knowing how to spend their recess time and we should be there to help.

Here are some suggestions and challenges to help you support a fun recess environment:

1. Google something like “recess games for kids.” This will give you plenty of websites with a lot of activity ideas.
2. Choose 2 activities that you think you could organize for a small group of kids.
3. At recess, invite 5 or so kids to play or learn one of the games.
4. WATCH WHAT HAPPENS! Other kids will see the game begin and want to participate.
5. Lead by example and INVITE anyone interested to play. Watch especially for kids looking shy or just standing around observing. Usually they are just hoping for an invitation.
6. Play with them!

Our kids learn a lot at recess. As co-operators, recess is a great time to support that learning in a positive way and by a positive example. Once you have played a game a few times with the kids they will start to organize themselves when you are not there and play the games without you. Our time as co-operators is precious. Many of us make great sacrifices to be there each week with our children so let's make the most of it and not let any of it go to waste – including recess!

- Jim Jackson

OC Community News

We will accept any articles, announcements, artwork, or fliers from school committees, staff, parents and students. We can accept word documents, email text, jpgs, and pdfs. If you do not have an article but you know of something that you would like to see included let me know and I will see if we can research it. Past OCCN issues are available at <http://ocslc.org/community-news/> Please send submissions to oc.communitynews@gmail.com.

The next submission deadline is Monday, October 3 at 9 pm.

Come to our Back To School Picnic (with Water Day)!

Where: Fairmont Park, North Pavilion (by Fairmont Pool), 1044 East Sugarmont Drive (2225 South) - a lovely area with big shady trees, nearby playgrounds, and a very calm, shallow, wade-able creek

When: September 23



3:30 pm: Water Day! Come with your water balloons ready! (The Pavilion will be a water-free zone.) Feel free to just come early and hang out even if you don't want to get wet.

5pm: Pot-luck Picnic.



Bring:

- A main or side dish, drinks or dessert
- Dishes, utensils and cups for your family
- Shoes for kids that are OK to get muddy -- they WILL want to walk through that inviting stream and we don't want them barefoot since there may be glass or other trash in the stream bed.
- A change of clothes if you are part of the Water Day bunch. We will have a changing tent.
- Kibble or bread to feed the ducks

Bonus: We are going to set up a CAR POOL kiosk at the picnic to help folks who still need rides for kids.

On your own (not school-sponsored): there is also a skateboard park, and a pond with ducks to feed (they love dogfood kibble).

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2. Q: If you were in a room that you couldn't get out of in a fire, where would be the best place to go? **A:** In the corner, as low to the ground as possible

3. Q: What is "jaywalking"? AND, where are the safest places to cross the street in front of our school? **A:** Jaywalking is crossing the street where there is no marked crosswalk. Have your kids show you the safest places to cross the street at the school the next time you drop them off or pick them up.]

4. Q: What can we say to ourselves when we are crossing the street? **A:** STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN.

5. Q: If you ever feel sad, scared, confused or uncomfortable when you are on the internet, who should you tell? **A:** A trusted adult. Not just any adult, but an adult that you know you trust.

Since Friday, September 23 is a half day we will not be having Healthy Living classes. And of course, Friday, September 30 there is no school. We'll be picking up with Emotional Wellness and Health/Nutrition topics on October 7th.

Sincerely,

Tricia Davis, Healthy Living Committee Chair & Rose Evans, Open Classroom School Counselor

Fundraiser Briefing - Prepare Yourself

Well, I certainly learned something at my last parent meeting - aside from the fact that a rat running on a wheel can be quite distracting/annoying in a room full of adults and that people will gasp audibly if you smack the cage. Ah yes, the learning... after three years of OC involvement, I found out that PFOE stands for Parents For Open Education! That's you. That's me. That's us. Go figure.

I also learned that in the true spirit of peace, love, and eternal grooviness (aka, the OC) we are setting a goal of 100% participation in giving to PFOE this year. Now you might not think that is new, but it is, it is. Trust me. It's a wee bit different from hoping every family will be able to donate the \$75 suggested amount. It's asking every family to donate something. Period.

So, if your pocketbook will only hand over \$39.79, then by all means, take that money from your trusty pocketbook and hand it over to the OC for all matter of goodness. Then get with the times and realize that the pocketbook went out long before the fanny pack (also slightly off the back of the times) and get yourself a duct tape wallet - I'm sure some 8th grade OC student will make you one if you ask nicely. I've even seen Hello Kitty duct tape at Target.

Finally, if you look carefully at the Fundraising Board (located slightly southeast of the office) you will find all KINDS of amazing information, but I will only highlight one awe-inspiring aspect. Houston, we've got a fairy. The goal of this fairy is to magically demonstrate all the ways your aforementioned PFOE money goes to work in our amazing school. Anyway the fairy, Larry. He's got his own limerick - which is more than I can say for most adults I know.

So here it is - and after you read it, have a private word with your pocketbook.

There once was a wee OC fairy

His hair was all curly, he's Larry!

He needs all your moneys

To give to his honeys -

The teachers, let's make them all merry!

Submitted as respectfully as she can make it by Rachel Fletcher



Editors Note: This really is a picture of Larry the OC Fairy

The Parent's Board

Starting Kindergarten, by Ilse DeKoeper-Laros

I can't remember my first day of Kindergarten, but I remember a day shortly after. Clutching my hands tightly to the bike seat on the back of my mom's bike, I was screaming off the top of my lungs to not have to go to school and stay at home with mom. Just recently, my mother told me on the phone that the teacher thought I was fine (my mom was worried and had called the school). The teacher said I was just quietly watching the other kids and seemed content. In my own memory, however, I remained terrified of the other children. I didn't understand why they were just running around, playing, chasing each other. I didn't have a clue about how they could know the rules of the games they played as we grew older. And I could not figure out how to connect to them. For the rest of my schooling, I remained socially anxious and awkward. Eventually, I decided to study Developmental

Psychology to try and understand. Now, decades later, I have researched parent-child relationships, peer relationships, and the connection between them, and taught undergraduate Psychology students about these topics. And yet, I was worried about my own child starting Kindergarten.

My son is a different person than I am, but he does share some of my characteristics. Like me, he is an observer who needs some time to warm up to new situations. However, he has had the huge advantage of having experienced a loving preschool teacher and a childcare that advocates surrounding children with a "circle of love." Here, he learned to feel secure enough to venture out, explore, and build relationships with other children and adults. Now, he is embarking on a new journey and he will be part of a "community of learners." And I am so excited that he has this opportunity.

STARTING KINDERGARTEN continued on page 8

Get to Know the Teachers

The Philosophy Committee is planning on highlighting three teachers for each newsletter through the end of the calendar year.

Jamie Farrimond - Kindergarten

Background - Family, where are they from, married, children, pets etc...

I've lived in Salt Lake all my life and absolutely love it here. I grew up an only child to wonderful parents whom I am still very close to. My husband, Jason, and I were best friends all through high school, and we finally started dating right before graduation. We were married in 2006, and we now live in Murray near Intermountain Medical Center where Jason works in the emergency room. We don't have kids -- yet -- other than our dog, Scout.

What is your favorite color?

Green

Favorite animal?

My dog, Scout.

Favorite treat?

Dark chocolate!

Why are you a teacher?

I have always loved working with kids. I was lucky enough to have a wonderful job as a nanny while I was attending the University of Utah. One of the perks of the job was being able to volunteer in the kindergarten and first grade classrooms of the kids I watched. I loved working with the kids, helping them learn to read and write, and instilling in them my love for math. Teaching is such a rewarding job. It pays off everyday when I see something I've taught "click" in the mind of one of my students.

Where have you taught?

After working as a nanny, I found a job teaching a 2-year-old preschool class at a high school for teen moms in West Valley. I taught there for two years and then got a job in the lab preschool at the University of Utah. I only worked there for one year before beginning my student teaching at the Open Classroom. I am so happy to be there still.



Why are you at the OC?

Before I started my student teaching at the OC, I was terrified to teach in front of a group of parents. But my fear didn't last for long. I quickly fell in love with the school and its philosophy. I enjoy working with parents who are so involved in the education of their kids. I think that getting to know the whole family allows me to better teach my students. I can better understand their backgrounds and the educational goals of the families. Plus, I have found that having parents in the classroom urges me to re-examine my teaching constantly. I am always striving to be the best teacher I can be.

Can you share an example of the OC philosophy in action in your classroom?

My classroom is a community of learners. I love teaching kindergarten and being, for many families, their first experience at the OC. In this first year, these new families are learning about the classroom, the school, and about how they, as co-ops, are teachers themselves. I enjoy being there to help them navigate through it all. And I always end up learning just as much from them (if not more) as they learn from me!

Get to Know the Teachers

Christina Lee - 2/3 Blend

Background - Family, where are they from, etc...

I grew up in North Carolina and then split my time between parents in Northern California and Arizona. I have two brothers, one older and one younger. We lived in Spain for a year as part of a study abroad program when my dad was a professor. Soon after, he left the university to become a full-time artist and encouraged me to express myself in creative ways. My mom is a social worker and helps single moms get education and careers. She inspired me to find my independence, pursue higher education, and deepen my sense of empathy.

What is your favorite color?

My color preference seems to be based on my moods. Currently, I like teal blue.

Favorite animal?

I have a new found love of birds, especially quails and owls.

Favorite treat?

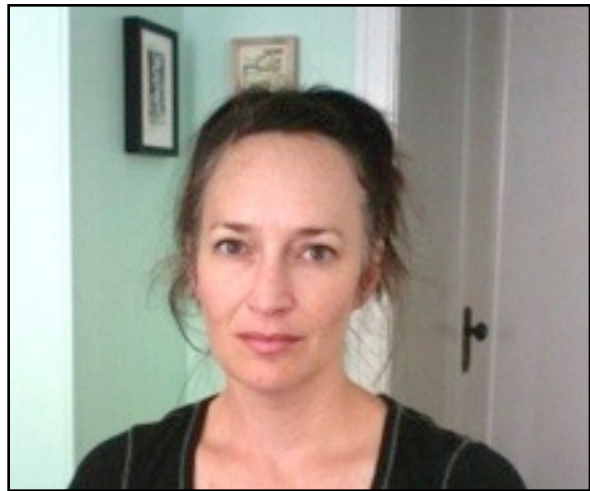
French pastries and good coffee from Tulie Bakery: chocolate croissant or galette and a cafe au lait!

Why are you a teacher?

I originally went into teaching because I enjoy the enthusiasm and curiosity of kids, and because it is a fairly stable profession. I have stayed in teaching for 13 years because I continue to enjoy the challenge of creating curriculum that inspires deep, meaningful learning for children. I have stayed at the Open Classroom because it cultivates collaboration, innovation, and unlimited potential for learning. Every year is unique and presents new opportunities for personal and shared growth. The Open Classroom is the epitome of lifelong learning in action.

Where have you taught?

The Open Classroom



Why are you at the OC?

When I graduated with my teaching degree, the OC was my dream job. It fit philosophically and felt familiar. I didn't think teachers ever left and wondered how long I would have to wait before I could teach here. However, a teacher did leave just after I finished college. A combination of perfect timing, perseverance, and passion led me to successfully fill an opening in a first grade position. It was my first job and my only interview, and continues to be the perfect fit for me as an educator.

Can you share an example of the OC philosophy in action in your classroom?

Daily circle talk is an essential part of my classroom routine. We begin morning circle with each child and adult taking a turn to share something about his/her life outside of school. Some days we have a theme, such as "what we did last night" or "what we had for breakfast." Other days, the sharing is open-ended. Circle talk reunites our class each morning and helps to create a sense of caring and connection. It highlights moments that matter to the kids, providing insight into what each child values, as well as giving a peek into their emotional landscape. Circle talk enables quiet or shy kids (and even some co-ops) to express themselves in front of a safe audience, while allotting time for more verbal kids to practice attentive listening. When the adults in our circle share, we gain a glimpse into their personal worlds and personalities, deepening the relationship between adults and children. The experience is always unique and carries a sense of lightness and acceptance. Circle talk is a daily routine that sets the tone for our day and reminds us that we are a community of whole people learning together.

Get to Know the Teachers

Ruth Hansen 1st Grade

Background - Family, where are they from, married, children, pets etc...

I am married and have one daughter, Solana, who is in the 4th grade here at the Open Classroom. I was born in Cleveland, but moved around a lot as a kid. My family moved to Salt Lake when I was in the 3rd grade. I attended The Open Classroom when I was in 5th and 6th grades when it was first part of the public school system. I went to college in Boston and after college I lived in a few other cities. I moved back to Salt Lake City in 1995.

What is your favorite color? It varies. Right now I really like Bluish Purple

Favorite Animal? I love dogs. We have two.

Favorite Treat? Chocolate covered Strawberries.

Why are you a teacher? I love working with kids. I get to learn a lot, be creative, and have fun.

Where have you taught? I've taught in Seattle, at The JCC School (which is now McGillis), Whittier, the OC, Jackson, Highland Park, and back at the OC as of 5 years ago.

Why are you at the OC?

I am here because my teaching philosophy fits the OC. I feel like I am a link in a strong chain. I know the foundation the kids have received before they get to me and what I have to build on. And, I trust that when I send them on at the end of each year, they will go on to continue to build on what I have added to that foundation. Our "whole children" benefit significantly from that philosophy continuation from year to year.

Can you share an example of the OC philosophy in action in your classroom?

Problem Solving. When a kid encounters a problem with another person, we take the time to address the problem and to help the people involved figure out a



solution. We give the kids as much support as they need to resolve the problem without solving it for them. In addition to being a valuable life skill that is practiced often at the OC, successful problem solving results in kids who are in the classroom ready to learn instead of worrying about unresolved issues.

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As I expected, his first days in Kindergarten were a little challenging. He did not play much with other children yet, felt anxious, and wanted me to stay all the time. But in the second week, he was able to go by himself and already made a friend! There will be challenges, such as handling feedback from adults or dealing with children who have different styles of interacting. But he already loves going to school. He weaves OC activities into his pretend play at home, such as collecting one stick for every day at school and then making a bundle of ten, just like Jamie does! Unlike my schooling experiences, I know my son's will be based on a circle of support around him that will help to teach him about how to handle difficult situations so that they don't stick with him for so long. For him to become his unique self, while still feeling comfortably connected to a community is my single most important goal for him in school. I trust that the OC will help him do this (and I'm sure it will teach me a thing or two as well). ***This is my dream school!***