



Fruit & Flower Happenings

October - November 2009

UPCOMING EVENTS

Nov 19th – Harvest Night

Bring a vegetable for our soup when you bring your child in the morning; then join us from 5:30 to 6:45 for a Fall Celebration. Share in the soup and join in the sing-along at 6:15.

Nov 20th – Pictures retakes.

If you are not satisfied with your child's pictures or missed the first time, this is the opportunity for retakes.

Dec 5th – Kindergarten Q&A

If your child will be heading for kindergarten next fall, join us Saturday morning from 9:30 – 11:00 to learn about making the transition from F&F to the world of elementary school. Child care is provided.

The Center

The annual meeting of Fruit & Flower was held on Thursday, October 29th, at the center. Jenny Turner, Board Vice President gave an update from the Board president and a brief financial update. Board committee chairs reported on end of year status of the Board's activities. Congratulations to the new slate of officers for 2010:

President ~ Gretchen Cole

Vice President ~ Jennifer Turner

Secretary ~ Emily Becker

Treasurer ~ Mike Wardwell

Development News

Square Deal Wine Shop hosted a benefit for us on Oct. 23rd. Dan Beekley, owner, estimates that Fruit & Flower will receive \$750 from the event. Thanks to Square Deal for supporting Fruit & Flower.

More than 100 families and friends of Fruit & Flower met Clifford the Big Red Dog at the after-hours party at the Portland Children's Museum on Tues., Nov 10th. **Thanks to Joani Wardwell for making this happen.**

The Annual Fund has raised more than \$32,819 so far, and we will receive generous matching support of at least an additional \$27,000 from the Maybelle Clark Macdonald Fund. Your contributions of all sizes add up quickly. Fruit & Flower is a nonprofit with a strong commitment to helping families in need with Scholarship assistance, and donations beyond your monthly fees are tax-deductible. We need to raise more money to keep the Center affordable and accessible to families, and are counting on your help from now until June 30.

Families

Welcome to our new families

- Both Room 4 and Room 2 gained new friends as the Kapka/Patel family joined us. **Naiya and Rohan Patel** started at the beginning of November. Their parents are Tanya and Surj.
- **Jackson Chaddick** started in Room One. His parents are Jane and Bradley.
- **Sienna Lee** joined the toddlers in Room Six. Her parents are Jamie and Richard.
- **Sadie Stoddard** started in the Infant Center. Her parents are Nicole and Tim.
- **Hayden Jones-Moffenbeier** is the latest baby with an older sibling here to begin in the Infant Center. Her parents are Carey and Brian, and big sister is Marley in Room Three.

Staff Anniversaries

- **Kathy Raifsnnyder** started in the Infant Center on Oct. 1, 1991. That makes 18 years of caring for babies!
- **Joy Nantharath** is celebrating 12 years in the Infant Center (since October 1997). Since Joy was also employed in the IC from October 1992 to January 1997, that makes a grand total of over 16 years!
- **LaFonsa Clay** started in Room Six on October 16, 2000. Nine years with toddlers is quite a milestone!

Staff continued >>>

FLU UPDATE

The number of cases of H1N1 flu is increasing quickly in the Portland area. Please keep these guidelines in mind:

- Children whose fevers exceed **100** degrees must be excluded according to County, State, and Federal guidelines.
- Children must be fever-free **for at least 24 hours** before they can return to group care.
- Please help us to keep the Health Department informed on the spread of the H1N1 flu virus. When you call the Center to let us know that your child will be out for the day, please tell the receptionist if your child is out with a respiratory illness. We have been asked to make a daily report on the number of children who are out ill and the number of children whose illness is of a respiratory nature.

WISH LIST

Below are a few items the Center needs. Please contact Mary Felice (maryfelice.crowe@fruitandflower.org) with questions.

- Refrigerator for Room 6 (our current one is experiencing a slow and certain downfall!)
- Crib sheets for the infant center.
- Volunteer to sew cot sheets.

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THE PROGRAM

Snack Survey Results

We got a very lively response to our snack survey last month! There were 43 surveys returned, and they certainly covered the full range of possible responses. Obviously, our survey was not scientifically designed. (In fact, one responder described our survey as 'bordering on insulting'. Ouch!) But there was some general agreement on the overriding question of what makes a good snack at Fruit and Flower. 77% of respondents indicated that they limit their children's intake of sugary and sweet foods. 72% of respondents would prefer that all snacks and celebration treats were less sugary. It seemed clear that parents prefer fresh vegetables and fruits (70.7% and 73.2%). Bean dips and other protein snacks and whole grain crackers also scored well as best choices. 26 of the 43 parents who returned their surveys felt that our current snacks are acceptable in terms of sugar content.

The idea of consolidating celebrations into monthly events was well received by 66.7% of respondents, while there were others who felt that giving children a special day, that they don't need to share with anyone, is too important to discard. Almost 84% of our responders felt that candy (hard or soft) was not acceptable. Although we never serve candy, sometimes it is included in treat bags or piñatas that accompany celebrations.

We will discuss the results of the survey and make some decisions about changes to make based on your input. We will continue to work toward finding a nutritionist who might volunteer to work with us on making improvements. We also plan to do a revision of our birthday policies, reminding parents about the sugar concerns and asking them to keep in mind our goal of providing healthy snacks, no matter the occasion.

In the meantime, please remember that all foods served to our children need to be prepared in a commercial kitchen. Unfortunately that includes cut-up fruit, cheese, or other healthy birthday snack alternatives you are bringing in from home. If you bring them in and ask Karen, our Cook, to do the cutting, we would be happy to serve them

DID YOU KNOW?

ECO-Healthy Tip:

Never microwave or cook with plastic, even if it is labeled "microwave safe". When plastic is heated, it can leach toxic chemicals like BPA and phthalates into food. Use glass, paper plate or towel, or wax paper to cover your leftovers instead of plastic wrap or plastic storage containers!

The Donation Barrel in our Lobby is meant for a very special food donation. We are asking families to bring non-perishable food items that can be given to school children for healthy backpack snacks. Please remember to bring in a donation to help fill the barrel.

Staff Changes

Fond Farewells...

- Shawn Sanford, our exuberant Room One Assistant for over four years, has left us to accept a Lead Teacher position at another center. We wish him all the best.
- Jake McKinney, who worked in Room Six as the 10:30 to 6:00 Aide for a couple of months, is completing his teaching degree requirements this fall.
- Noemi Semadeni, our Early Morning Float, left in October and has returned to her former work as an airline flight attendant.

New Staff and Other Changes...

- Sandra Simmons recently started in Room One, working with the children for whom Kandis was caregiver. Sandra worked as a nanny and child care attendant at a fitness club.
- Jessica Nokovic recently started in Room 6 to take Jake's place. Jessica has worked as a research assistant in a lab school, a sub, and a tennis coach for children.
- Jenni Murphy started in September as Assistant Teacher in Room Five. Jenni has a BA in Education, and has worked as a nanny and a teacher in preschool and early elementary school. She also spent time as a volunteer English teacher in India.
- Molly Klein started last month in Room Four, as the Assistant Teacher. Molly has worked in various roles with young children for over eleven years. She is interested in cooking, and is taking classes on weekends.
- Kandis Bracken, who had worked in Room One for about a year and a half, has moved to Room Two, taking the shift that had been filled by Leigh Dodson.
- New subs: Join us in welcoming a great new group of substitutes to the Center. Sarah Gamby, Veronica Gardea, Emily Hill, Adriann Pogue, and Terra Marsh are energetic and ready to help. We also have a few former staff members who will be returning to sub for us. Michelle Calvert was an Assistant Teacher in Room One a few years ago, and she will sub as she finishes her schooling. Mariela Harte, who worked as a sub and with our infants and toddlers, and Haley Chandler, who was in Room Six until last spring when her baby was born, are also back to help! We will get their photos on the Staff Photo Board soon!

But Wait, There's More...

- Our Admin team has grown with Marcia Mulvey, our interim Executive Director for the next several months, and Vega Tom, our new interim bookkeeper.
- We also gained a new afternoon receptionist, Jen Troy. Please help us make everyone feel welcome!