



Spuyten Duyvil

P R E S C H O O L

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Curriculum Nights Margaret/Barbara Sept. 34
Nursery & Annex Sept. 25
Grazia/Dayana Sept. 27
- Sept/October Scholastic Book order released Wed, Oct. 10
- Fall Festival Saturday, Oct. 27, 11am- 3 pm**
- Kindergarten Parent Meeting Thursday, Nov. 1, 6 pm
- Photo Day Tuesday, Nov. 6

This is also Election Day- We DO have a regular school day even though public schools are closed.

Sept. 24, 2018



Getting to know you –First Days

Dear Families,

Every year I am caught off guard about how many details need to be attended to at the start of school in Sept. It doesn't matter how well I plan ahead, or how many years I have been doing it (my 11th at Spuyten Duyvil) there is always a lot. This year was no different, but as of last Friday night we were truly all set. Thanks to Ed and Ted (Ander's and Fern's dads) we closed the week with even the wild front yard mostly under control! Many thanks to them both for getting us out from under all those weeds- that's a (not so subtle) outreach to everyone else- a hour of assistance is always welcome, and much needed all year!

Now that the Jewish holidays are behind us we can get into a steady rhythm here- this is our first full week of school. It does make an enormous difference to kids and adults to have a regular, reliable schedule.

Nature work began 2 Fridays ago with Nancy Ortiz-Surun taking small groups of kids from each class to weed, harvest and generally explore and observe. Music class started last Thursday with Janet Winston- see her curriculum letter attached to this one. This week will welcome back Chess@3 classes. Alex Frankel is returning as our instructor again. MWF Nursery children will get their turn when we switch to Wed Chess mid year, generally mid-February.

NEW STAFF:

Our UPK teaching group has not changed in quite a while- and that's a good thing. They are a finely tuned group and we are lucky to have them. Oscar is still our "go to guy" for everything everywhere. Yasmin and Melissa are still the Extended Day teachers. Now that Yasmin has finished her Bachelors Degree and not in school anymore she will be here every day from 11-6 too.

There are some new faces in the Nursery. Kate Ofori is the Head Teacher in the Nursery class, joining us after Zoe decided to relocate to Miami. Martha has returned as Assistant Teacher; Michelle Aguilar, who subbed often in the Nursery last year, is now the 3rd teacher. Kate is currently a student at Bank St. College of Education completing her Masters Degree. She has taught 2 year olds for several years. We welcome both her experience and patience with our youngest group and her growing understanding of our child-centered philosophy. The Nursery team has bonded very well already, the results easily seen in how well both nurseries are functioning already.



Lunch Bunch in action

SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUBS:

We take part in the Scholastic monthly book orders. Many of you probably remember this from your own time in elementary school. Scholastic offers enormous choices of books for family and school purchase for extremely low prices, generally under \$5.

See the attached flyer for how to order, but the short version is you can hand in the paper order to me to send in, or most efficiently, do it yourself online. Just use our school code. There are many different flyers each month. I do not send them home anymore, but I do put a few packets of the hard copies downstairs for review. You leave your order and pay Scholastic directly; I just release the order at a set time. You are free to order anytime; it does not have to be when I announce it. I try to do it in bulk so we get the maximum benefit with rewards from a large order. The overwhelming bulk of our extensive school libraries have grown from Scholastic book points.

LENDING LIBRARY:

UPK classes will all start the school-home book borrowing in the next week. Your child sits a few minutes with his/her teacher and chooses 2 or 3 books that have interest. Over time the teacher will begin to know your child's tastes and literacy levels, helping them make useful choices. I add a monthly Literacy Tip each month if you are looking for some thoughts on how to support your child in his/her literacy development, most of which you are more than likely already doing. This is what we believe quality "homework" looks like.

COMMUNICATION:

Parent Handbook copies are given out each year to new families. It is a pretty comprehensive list of who we are and why we do what we do. Anything not covered and you want to know, you just need to ask.

School Directory will go home to every family shortly so that families can easily reach out to each other for playdates and other community interests. If you do NOT want your contact info included you should have indicated this on the permission form you turned in at the beginning of the year.

Contact Teachers – Every class has their own email account to reach their own families or for you to direct questions to them. They do not check it during school hours so do not use that to let us know of same day pick-up changes. Use the school phone or my email for that.

Class Newsletters are written by your teachers each month. They will probably continue to send home a paper copy; families should always check their child's cubbies or Nursery mailbags for notices going home. **This is the only Family Letter I am printing out this year. Unless you tell me otherwise, I will only be emailing my letter and accompanying articles to families. A hard copy is also always posted on the bulletin board downstairs.**

PARENT WORKSHOPS;

I would like to hold several get-togethers this year to bring parents and caregivers together around common issues. Families are under a lot of pressure these days in so many areas of family life and child-raising. None of us have definite answers to any of it, but there is a lot of experience among us as to systems and ways of thinking that can help. Topics will depend on interest from our families this year.



Speed Sliding!

One definite meeting will be on the Kindergarten application/enrollment process. Past years I have only sent home a description of the different schools and how to proceed, but it is clear that families need more. There are more schools with different processes. It does seem overwhelming from the beginning, but it actually can be managed. We will do this together, beginning with a UPK Parent Meeting on Thurs Nov. 1 at 6 pm. In the meantime, collect your questions and try not to panic (yet). It really is no different than the way you went about finding a preschool- and look how well that worked out!

FUNDRAISING:

As a contracted vendor with NYC Dept of Education, we receive monthly funding for the UPK classes. But that amount pretty much just covers salaries. We are very frugal in recycling materials. In fact, part of our philosophy is to make something out of nothing, to find the magic and imagination in everyday items. But that doesn't work to pay for our specials. So we need to turn to our families to fill in the gaps.

In addition to the bonus points we earn from the Scholastic orders, there are a few other ways you can help our school:

Amazon Smile Foundation: This is a parallel site to Amazon- uses exact same catalog of items, same personal account. However, when you sign up you are asked to pick a donation site. You enter Spuyten Duyvil Preschool and all your purchases earn a small percentage from Amazon to our school. It is not a lot but the more our families log into this, and send the word to their extended family and friends, the pennies build.

Popcorn Sale: We did this for the first time last May and it was incredibly successfully- and super delicious! We will do it again this January. More information then.

Donations: Of course you can always give hard \$\$\$, but in addition:

- Does your company make any in-kind offers to non-profits?
- Are you able to offer supplies such as copying paper or services like bulk copying for us?
- Costco or BJ member? We are always happy to get fresh fruit for snack.
- And, of course, you can donate yourself- do an activity with your child's class, help in the garden, bring in a specialty or idea for us to work on together. Our yard renovations, chess and music program and Afterschool Music all came about from parent suggestions or volunteers.
- Chess@3 – amazing program, but very costly- \$250 each week, which is \$50 per class. We have raised some of that cost from our families in different ways over the years. Trying something new now- If you miss the presentation at your class Curriculum Night this week, be sure to check out the display downstairs!

PRIVATE PAYMENTS:

It took a while for me to catch up with all the Sept. billing, but it is done and most accounts are up-to-date. From now on monthly invoices will go out automatically on the first of the month. There is an option to pay through bank transfer which works very well for us, but you are also welcome to pay in cash, check or money order in person. We appreciate payment at the beginning of the month, but also understand that families have a lot to cover. If there is particular issue, just let me know. Otherwise, any payment not made in the month due will be charged a late fee.

PARKING:

As you have surely learned by now, it is getting harder and harder to park in the neighborhood. While we don't have our own parking area, I can give you a bright green Courtesy Card that has almost always given families a few minutes to run in and out. Just don't park in front of the church, even with your blinkers.

AFTERSCHOOL MUSIC:

UPK kids have the option of adding violin or recorder privately to their afterschool schedule. The violin classes are pretty full but we could manage several more into recorder. Class is Mondays at 3 or 4:00. We serve snack, have some music warm-up- songs and movement- and then on to the instrument. Recorder is \$10/week plus \$10 to purchase 2 recorders, one for home and one to stay in school. Let me know. This promises to be quite an interesting musical adventure!



ARTICLE OF THE MONTH:

Testing is Not Teaching

Anyone with even a passing knowledge of our school knows this is a pet topic of mine- how so much schooling continues to serve politics and commercial interests and is not designed in the best interests of children. This is a short overview of what this is all about.

Here's looking forward to making Spuyten Duyvil's 91st year another one to be proud of!

Sincerely,

Judi