



# Spuyten Duyvil

## P R E S C H O O L

3041 KINGSBRIDGE AVENUE

BRONX, NY 10463

TEL. 718 549 1525

FAX 718 884 0667

director.spuytenduyvil@gmail.com

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Indigenous Peoples Day      SCHOOL CLOSED ..... Monday, Oct. 10**  
**Fall Festival for all families ..... Sat. Oct 29    11-3pm**  
**PreK 4 Kindergarten Meeting on Zoom..... Wed Nov 2   6:30 - 8**  
**Photo Day .....(we are open Election Day)..... Tuesday Nov.8**  
**Double Good Popcorn Fundraiser ..... starts week of Nov. 6 (info to follow)**  
**Veteran's Day ..... SCHOOL CLOSED ..... Friday, Nov. 11**

*Check your school calendar for dates for the rest of the year.- attached to this email for your reference.*

Sept 30, 2022

Dear Families,

As long as it is still Sept on the calendar I am not late with my first monthly newsletter of the 2022/2023 school year! We had the little Covid bump last week with the 3K staff, but the system held- kids were busy, schedules tightened up and we are at a comfortable, productive pace for the year now. All Back to School Zooms are done so we are really past the opening stage.

### WHAT'S NEW THIS YEAR?

The update here is a little different than in the past as we have contracted the school a bit. With the downstairs Annex a small classroom and 2 private Nursery sessions, there were a lot of moving parts to keep track of. We have streamlined a bit- 2 4K classes with a total of 34 kids and the 1 3K class of 15. The only private income now is the aftercare programming and a return of the 2-year olds Urban Explorers. With the restructuring we had to say goodbye to 2 staff members, but I am delighted that we were able to continue with familiar faces. Colleen moved from 4K to 3K, and Michelle made the change from 3K to 4K, so everyone knows everyone else very well.



With the elimination of the Annex 4K, we are now setting up that space as it was originally planned when we did our front renovation 6 years ago as a mixed use space. The highlight in that space are our 2 very strange looking hydroponics units. Chelsea has set up the water and will add our strawberries from the front yard next week. We are also planning to use this space for large construction activities with a mixed group of kids, for yoga, physical therapy activities and another space for afterschool. Preschools all received a large amount of discretionary funding last spring which allowed for this great influx of supplies.

### AFTERSCHOOL ADD-ONS:

4K children have had the option to sign up for afterschool classes whether or not they attend aftercare. We have had Suzuki Violin for quite a while, but

Drumming Circle is new, even though I have been trying to find the right formula to bring this into the school. Mary Cartales, who has done professional development for us for a few years on motor-neural development started providing weekly Movement for the classes. That continues on Thursdays. She is now also doing the Drumming. We started last Thursday- you may have heard the banging and stomping down the block! Violin starts next week.



Invoices for these activities will come shortly. This is separate from the regular aftercare tuition which is set up automatically depending on your contract.

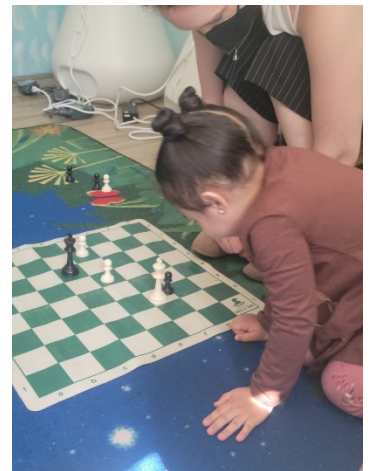


### **DROP-OFF FRIDAYS:**

Another new item this year. The pandemic forced schools to pull back on a lot of family interaction which we have been able to slowly reinstate. Some of the changes, like drop off at the gate, turned out to be a much better way for the children's days to begin- calmer, clearer boundaries, increased promptness, but parents miss coming in to see their child's class and we miss the energy that is brought into the building. We also want to share the work inside with you all. 4K has had 2 weeks of Drop-off-Fridays and they were very successful, so next week we will add 3K. That means that on Fridays 3K families bring their child inside to the side Nursery door at 8:30 (please not earlier), sign their child in, settle them in, look around and leave them ready for Morning Meeting.

## **Returning Specials:**

**CHESS@3** – All the children work with McKenna from Chess@3 on Fridays. Teachers break their class into 2 groups (other than Annex and PM Nursery that work as one). Half class goes to the Studio for a 1/2 hour lesson while the teachers have the other half in the room for more individualized activity. The children work as a team with focus on learning how each piece moves. There is a lot of mathematical thinking involved (diagonal, 1 space, etc.). Instruction is based on oral storytelling of a kind of fairy tale where the story explains why that piece moves the way it does. Do not expect your child to sit down quite yet with you to pit strategies, but even that can come in time.



**GARDENING** –Chelsea is back to work with small groups of kids every Tuesday. There was a lot to weed and clean out after the summer growth spurts but she will be setting up winter crops now. Parent/Caregiver volunteers are most welcome to assist. There is always so much to do; experience absolutely not necessary. Chelsea is a great teacher and efficient delegator of tasks.



**ART CLUB** - Grazia LaRocca, super long-time teacher at Spuyten Duyvil has returned to us once a week to offer each class open ended art activities as part of their regular Workchoice Time. We are thrilled to have her with us again. Look for samples of your kids' work with her in future newsletters.

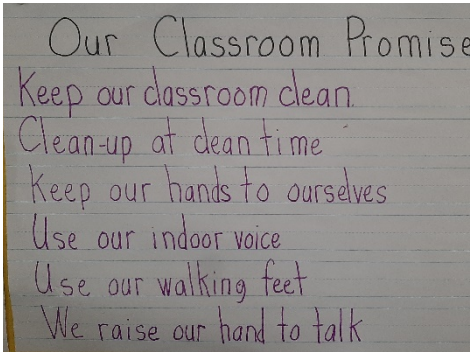
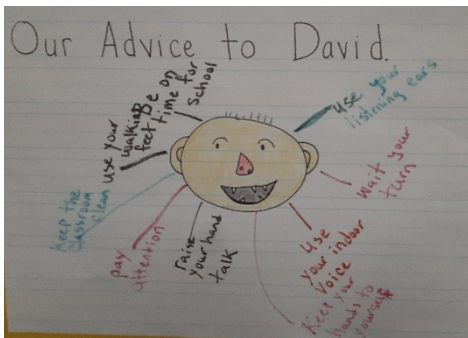
### **SNACK & MEALS: October Menus attached**

3K and 4K children receive lunch as part of the DOE funded program. Our vendor is Green Top Farms. We have had quite a few conversations about "picky eaters". More often than not this has more to do with habit than dislike. When a child tastes a food and doesn't care for it (like me with veggies), that is fine. It looks very different when the child pushes the food away, turns their head and says no. There is always fresh fruit and usually rice or pasta, so no one goes hungry. When a child won't even take the apple, it is generally not about the food. The food is tasty and varied; most children eat very well with more and more feeling comfortable each day. It is a very different setting than home and takes some adjustment. I will send you the monthly menus. Meals are part of our instructional program, first nutritionally, but also as a social experience, what it means to dine together, respect each other's tastes (Don't yuck someone else's yum.), and taking risks.

- NO nut foods at all – this includes almond butter. Sunflower butter is fine but needs to be labeled as such or cannot be allowed.



- Early Drop-off Breakfast-Children may bring breakfast from home if they arrive before 8 am. The school supplies snack.- milk/water, cheese sticks, pretzels, fresh fruit, goldfish crackers. We are happy to accept snacks for the class from home- remember to send enough for the whole class- we can never get enough fresh fruit- grapes, bananas, seasonal berries, peaches.
- And as showed here by Elisa and Eleanor, the classes all bake and cook every week. We make a mean pizza bagel!



Making of Class Rules connected to reading of a favorite book, *No David!*

COMMUNICATION:

**Parent Handbook:** We have a very complete Parent Handbook which has been sent out by email to all families already. If you did not receive or would prefer it in hard copy, let me know.

**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. Send me an email as a reminder also.

**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.

Margaret & Chassity 4K- class 2S <a href="mailto:mv.upk.sdp@gmail.com">mv.upk.sdp@gmail.com</a>	Alda & Michelle 4K- class 2N <a href="mailto:amupksdp@gmail.com">amupksdp@gmail.com</a>
Martha, Brenda & Colleen 3K Nursery <a href="mailto:Nursery.sdp@gmail.com">Nursery.sdp@gmail.com</a>	Judith, Director <a href="mailto:Director.spuytenduyvil@gmail.com">Director.spuytenduyvil@gmail.com</a>

**Class weekly Newsletters.** We will only be emailing these letters, accompanying articles and notices to families. If there are other parents/guardians that should be receiving these emails in addition to listed parent, please be sure I have that contact info. Teachers will be sending short updates weekly; I write a longer newsletter monthly.

PARENT WORKSHOPS:

In the past we held occasional workshops to bring parents and caregivers together around common issues. Families were always under a lot of pressure; I don't have to tell any of you what that is like now. 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.

I welcome any suggestion of topics. Previous ones have been: Setting Boundaries, Separation, Developmental Stages - please suggest others or specialists that may be good matches for our families to present.

And then there is the big topic - **What About Kindergarten?** We do have a lot of experience over the years in how the various schools have approached education philosophically and in practice. I can tell our 4's families not to worry, but you will. We do a comprehensive parent workshop on this with parents from previous

years at different district 6 and 10 schools sharing their experiences and answering your questions. The Zoom will be held Wed Nov. 3 This year we are doing the panel workshop on Wed. Nov. 2. I will share an annotated list of schools you may want to check out but the conversation about this has been very useful for families and is not something I can summarize afterwards so please make every effort to attend. I promise this is not as insurmountable task as it seems right now.



#### FUNDRAISING:

As a contracted vendor with NYC Dept of Education, we receive monthly funding for 3K and 4K classes. But that amount pretty much just covers salaries. The Dept of Ed has been even slower in funneling contracted funds these past few months and there are always jobs to do in an old building. We want to keep the consultants and special programs and want to be able to continue to compensate our very qualified staff appropriately. We are very frugal in recycling material. In fact, part of our philosophy is to make something out of nothing, to find the magic and imagination in everyday items. The take-away from all this is that as any not-for-profit can testify, funds are always needed. Our private programs do help, but we also do not want to price them out of reach for our families. So we turn to those families with .....

**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: DOUBLE GOOD POPCORN FUNDRAISER** This has been an incredibly successful fundraiser- and super delicious! The past 3 years we asked our families to put that friendly pressure on co-workers, neighbors and family. Clearly your communities are a bit different now with all the remote work at home but we still cleared over \$10,000 last year. There are 2 phases. The 4-day popup sale will start Nov. 6; the brochure sale will run til after Thanksgiving. More info when we get closer. Consider this as part of your holiday gift-giving. It really is extremely yummy and nearly no work for you or the school, just enter the orders and sit back! We get 50% of the sales.

**School Store:** not much of a fundraiser, more of a school spirit kind of thing. We have t-shirts, hoodies, coffee mugs, tote bags- all with our unique little blue house logo- attached flyer with prices.

#### PRIVATE PAYMENTS:

I am still catching up on contracts and invoices. Private bills will come automatically by the 1st of the month and due within 10 days. Quickbooks charges us for your payments so using VENMO @spuytenduyvil is appreciated if that is possible. Of course you can always pay by check, money order or cash if you prefer.. We appreciate payment by the first 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. Continued non-payment may result in your child not being allowed to continue in aftercare; please don't put us in that unpleasant situation.



#### PARKING:

Since most drop off and pick-up happens at the gate your cars are not left unmonitored. However, I do have Courtesy Cards from the school to let traffic officers know you will be right back. Cars with these green cards have very rarely been ticketed; be sure to leave your blinkers on and do NOT park in front of the church. That is much more likely to generate a ticket.

**IMPORTANT- gates are often left open. There are several to close when you come through- outside at sidewalk, at the tunnel and at the playground. PLEASE be sure to keep each closed. This is an essential safety piece!!**

### COVID APPEAL:

I was surprised to see that only about half of our kids have been vaccinated. I just heard that only 8% of kids under 5 have gotten the shot, so I guess we are in better shape, but not high enough. For all our lives to go back to whatever normal used to be, Covid vaccinations have to be as universal as those for polio and measles which every child gets- and that is why those diseases are virtually eliminated.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- We have a baby changing table in our adult bathroom downstairs? Families are always welcome to come in and use it. We also have extra baby diapers there.
- **Help Yourself Box** in main entry area downstairs- stop by to see what others are giving away and leave outgrown clothes, books, this and that for others to help themselves to.
- We have more milk delivered every day than we can possibly use. Families are welcome to check out downstairs refrigerator every day and take what they can use. Any milk still there Friday afternoon is taken to the community frig on 242 St. but it can first go to our immediate community.
- Check downstairs for handouts, Bronx Family magazine, etc. Also notices on large bulletin board. Reminder notices also on buzz-in door at playground entrance.
- We have a private nature program for 2 and 3-year olds- **Urban Explorers**- flyer attached. Tell your friends. They can still start with prorated fees.
- We have several active **COMPOSTS** for our families to participate in- black bin inside gate collects for the city. Sanitation picks that up every Monday. There is also an active bin to the right of the greenhouse that will be available again once all the weeds Chelsea and volunteers pulled are chopped. Every class also collects food scraps from lunch and snack that the kids take outside every week.



## ARTICLE OF THE MONTH: **A Genius Cartoonist Believes Child's Play Is Anything But Frivolous**

Every month I send along a reading from the news on education, parenting, etc or a relevant article that has resonated with families over the years. busy day. This is an interview with cartoonist Lynda Barry from the NYTimes Magazine on Sept. 2. The title says it all- but you all know this, right? You enrolled your child at Spuyten Duyvil!

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/09/05/magazine/lynda-barry-interview.html>

Future newsletters will be shorter- I promise. I think I covered every possible FYI.

Sincerely,

Judi