



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. 9**
Fall Family Garden Party **Saturday, Oct 21**
PreK 4 Kindergarten Meeting on Zoom..... **Wed Nov 1 6:30 - 8**
Photo Day **1/2 Day School noon dismissal** **Election Day**..... **Tuesday Nov.8**
Double Good Popcorn Fundraiser **starts week of Nov. 6 (info to follow)**

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

Sept 22, 2023

Dear Families,

As chaotic as beginning of the school year always feels, I objectively do know that this was as easy a start as ever. Having experienced teachers doing what they love to do makes it all go smoothly. All 3 Back to School nites were well attended. We all appreciate the extra effort so many families made to come into the school rather than Zoom. I certainly feel much more connected to this cohort of families after mixing together. Same for Friday's Drop off Friday in the 4K classes. We will add 3K to this weekly visit in 2 weeks- kids have pretty much adjusted to their new setting, but let's give it a little longer to be a bit more solid.

WHAT'S NEW THIS YEAR?

What a relief to have no big schedule changes this year! We are glad to welcome Cathy Matos as 3K assist and extended hours teacher along with Tiara who is still doing this work.

AFTERSCHOOL ADD-ONS:

Violin and Drumming Circle start this week for 4K families who chose to add it to their child's schedule afterschool. You should have received the class list for violin. More info about this class will come from Janet this week. First class is to meet the kids, make their foot charts, introduce them to the cardboard violin which will be their "instrument" for the next 4-6 weeks.

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.



TOWN MEETNG- another Spuyten Duyvil piece to connect parents with the daily work of the school. The 3 classes get together at 9 am the last Friday of each month. We push the furniture back, the kids sit in a big circle, we share songs, read a silly book, talk about what the host classroom has been studying. Caregivers who came for Friday Drop-off can say. Our first Town Meeting is this Friday, but we are only doing it with the 4K classes in September. October will be really whole school.

Returning Specials:

CHESS@3 – All the children will work with Matt) from Chess@3 on Mondays. Teachers break their class into 2 groups 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 –Michelle B. started with small groups last Friday- her regular day will be Wednesdays. Kids harvested tomatoes and purple beans. As the weather gets colder the garden will get browner and browner so they will be pulling out a lot before setting in cold weather crps. Parent/Caregiver volunteers are most welcome to assist. There is always so much to do; experience absolutely not necessary.



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. Grazia joins classes on Friday mornings.



MOVEMENT WITH MARY – Mary is a licensed therapist in neuro-motor rehabilitation which focuses on how the brain connects physical development (crawling, running, sitting cross-legged) with behavioral milestones. She has been a great resource to teachers and parents in understanding how and why their children are growing. She also has an enormous amount of energy and uses it to set up very active classes. See her write-up attached. She comes Thursday mornings.

SNACK & MEALS:

3K and 4K children receive lunch as part of the DOE funded program Our vendor is Lunch Runners 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 forward you the following week’s menus every Thursday or Friday when I get it. 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.

If you are using Early Drop off your child may bring breakfast if arriving before 8 am.

- 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 Maya M, Violet B and Melody the classes all bake and cook every week. We make a mean pizza bagel!

COMMUNICATION:



Family Handbook: We have a very complete Family 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.

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. You can also use your class Bloomz account. Just be sure to use the private mode when writing to your teacher.

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

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 please be sure I have that contact info. Teachers will be sending shorter weekly reviews along with photos of your kids at work.



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 up til now. 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, DOE and charter, sharing their experiences and answering your questions.. This is not as insurmountable task as it seems

right now. This year we are doing the panel workshop on Wed. Nov. 1. I will send home an annotated list of area schools later in October. Meanwhile you can start reaching out to schools you know you are interested in to ask about their tour schedule. DOE opens application early in Dec; all applications are due back by Jan. 19.

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. We love our old, special little building, but the OLD part is always a challenge. Last year we added bathrooms to the upstairs 4K classes, we are covering the front vestibule entrance in white metal sheeting due to leaks below- the wood is all original from 1905, and many of the outdoor lights need replacing; there are always jobs to do in an old building,.We also want to keep the consultants and special programs live and teacher salaries have not been at the levels our staff deserves. 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 extra income is always needed. We don't want to put pressure on our families, but there are relatively painless way you can all help-

Popcorn Sale: This has been an incredibly successful fundraiser- and super delicious! I 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, but we still cleared \$5000 in our share last fall..

DOUBLE GOOD POPCORN FUNDRAISER to start Nov6 and run most of November. 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 the 1st of the month and due within 10 days. We accepted VENMO or direct payment through your Quickbooks, invoice; paying through Venmo helps us avoid the Quickbooks fees, but do whatever is easier for you. 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.

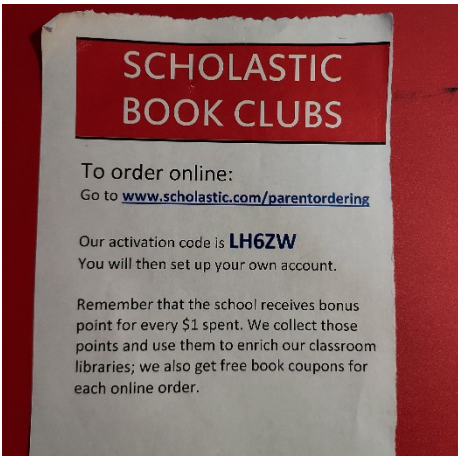


PARKING:

One problem that has taken care of itself is parking at the school. 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. 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.

THIS AND THAT...

- **Scribble Art- is** an open-ended visual arts program we have worked with in the past. We rented space in our bulding to them this past August; several current students attended. They are renting from us again this fall on Sundays from 2-4 for another preK program. FLYER ATTACHED. Scribble Art is a separate program from Spuyten Duyvil but I have known the founder, Sasha Schwartz, for years. Their work with kids is compatible with the way we work in our classrooms so I am comfortable making the recommendation. Get in touch with them directly if you are interested.
- **Scholastic Book Club** – Everyone who went to grade school must know about Scholastic Books. That is the company that did the Book Fairs in the schools along with the flyers that used to go home monthly. Our families used to buy a lot through Scholastic. The books are a wide range of subjects, lots of them high quality literature by established authors. This is also a great way to find out about new authors. Think Mo Willems and all the Pigeon and Elephant books as a great example. Difference is the prices are a fraction of what they would be through Amazon or in a bookstore. AND we get points for every dollar spent. Many of the hundreds of books we have in our classrooms and our shared libraries came as freebees or at these low prices.



I no longer send home the monthly flyers and families can order anytime- I will always leave the latest ones hanging in the back entrance so you can take a look. But there are many, many more categories on the Scholastic site. Be sure to use our school code when ordering. There is nothing stronger to encourage eager readers than the gift of a shiny new book- this month had Pete the Cat, I Spy, Llama Llama, and much more.

SCHOOL CODE LH6ZW



SAVE THE DATE--- FALL FAMILY GARDEN DAY OCT 21

Whole school event- parents donate lunch and baked goods for sale, work on garden maintenance, kids play in backyard- More info closer to the date.

ARTICLE OF THE MONTH: Preschool and the One Size Fits All Curriculum

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. This month I am sharing something from Chalkbeat, <https://www.chalkbeat.org>, a non-profit news organization that often has useful articles on current educational topics. The background now is the Dept of Education's new push for accountable curriculum. Those of you who came to the Back-to-School Nites heard me reference this. As keeps happening in education, old is out, new is in, often simply because it is seen as "new." There is no one quick fix for any of society's problems; education is no different, but the hard work of implementing long-term policies that would build economic, educational, and cultural equity is not flashy. Instead politicians too often decide they have the one answer. In this case, it would all PreK programs using Creative Curriculum. This article is a teacher's carefully explained reason why this is a bad choice. One that I totally agree with. The city opened very many new programs way too quickly, often without much planning or oversight, as 3K was started and then expanded. Many start-ups truly didn't know what to do with the kids. Giving them a set curriculum is a good idea. This also allows the support people from the district to have a clear model to work on. But that is not Spuyten Duyvil or so many other established schools in the city. What is sound about this new package is already in place. The rest is way less than the work we already do. Just wanted our families to know this if and when you hear news snippets about the "mandated curriculum". The new policies also include a prescribed assessment program that has its own problems. Meanwhile teachers are getting to know your kids in the context of their new group. We have been reaching out to families as needed for more background. More about in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judi".