



# The Nursery News

A Newsletter from Winnetka Community Nursery School  
October-November 2011



## Important Dates

**October 3-7**  
Class Photos

**October 5**  
Parents go-to-school night,  
7pm @ WCNS

**October 28\***  
2012-2013  
applications due  
for returning  
families

**November 4\***  
2012-2013  
applications due  
for new families

\*Applications are processed in the order that they are received. Please see application on the WCNS website for more details.

**November 4**  
NO SCHOOL,  
conferences

**November 5**  
Super Science  
Saturday, 10 a.m.  
@ WCNS

**November 16**  
PJ Storytime  
6:30-7:30 p.m.  
@ WCNS

**November 17 & 18**  
Book & Toy Fair  
@ Book Stall  
& Village Toy

**November 23-25**  
NO SCHOOL  
Thanksgiving  
Break

## Letter from Elise Hansen

Dear Families,

Welcome to Nursery School!

Winnetka Community Nursery School is a special place. We hope that you find this an extraordinary and motivating environment from the time you walk in the door. There are things to look at and wonder about, activities to explore, people to meet and friends to make.

Please, accept this invitation to get involved:

- In the classrooms
- In the school community
- As partners in your child's education

Classroom parent participation includes: reading to children, helping with cooking and art projects, joining us for walking field trips in the neighborhood, sharing your family holiday customs with the class, or sharing your special interests with us. (i.e. playing a musical instrument, gardening, or other.) If we have not thought of a way to help you participate, please let us know your ideas. This is your school community and we are here to provide ways to help you enhance your child's learning experiences.

Our teachers are spectacular learners. They observe, listen and talk to your children to get to know them. Using

this information and their knowledge as early childhood educators, they plan activities and experiences so the children have the opportunity to explore. They help children learn to compare and evaluate results and to solve problems. The teachers marvel at the different personalities among the group of children and work with everyone to help convey respect and acceptance.

As experienced professionals, our teachers are ready to work with you to support your child's learning. We prefer face-to-face communication with you when possible. Teachers are available at drop-off and pick-up on a daily basis and also at our Parent-Teacher conferences scheduled three times during the year.

This is a friendly and welcoming community. Whether you've been here for years or this is your first experience at WCNS, please take time to introduce yourself to others and meet someone new. Find out what interests you have in common. Perhaps you have a favorite park or playground where you could meet when you're not at school. Or perhaps you could help a new family with babysitter connections. There are many ways to socialize with other parents at our school and in your child's classroom.

(Continued on page 2)

# WCNS News and Information

## From the Office

### (Letter from Elise Hansen, cont'd from page 1)

Let us know if you are looking for ways to volunteer and get involved and we can help you find your niche. We rely on our returning families to help pave the road for new families and to help carry on meaningful traditions.

Sometimes young children and teenagers come back through our doors in the fall just to travel back in time to nursery school. They don't recall everyone or everything about their preschool experience but I've heard them say that they have fond memories of the school. They must have a sense of belonging and content. Know that each child has the potential to have a meaningful experience when parents and teachers work together to help young children learn. As you get to know and gain confidence with us, your child, in turn, will gain confidence in experience of learning and discovery.

Our door is open; please come in.

Sincerely, Elise Hansen

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### Communication from WCNS

Please use our website to keep updated on current events and school information.

[www.winnetkacommunitynurseryschool.org](http://www.winnetkacommunitynurseryschool.org) To communicate with you, we use paperless electronic mailings, newsletters and a few "refrigerator flyers" during the year.

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### Looking Ahead to Kindergarten Registration

District 36 Kindergarten registration will open Friday, December 2, at 9:00 a.m. Registration takes place at the school your child will be attending. Fliers will go home with WCNS children as soon as we receive them from the district.

For further inquiries call the District 36 Pupil Services office at 847-446-9400.

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### A Word about Halloween

At WCNS we are sensitive to the developmental stages and needs of our young students. We use a "seasonal," nonsectarian approach to celebrations instead of a holiday-centered approach. This allows everyone to celebrate in something that is universally shared, such as autumn. It is our goal to create an environment where everyone feels accepted and comfortable. In keeping with this spirit of celebration, please do not send your child to school in Halloween costumes. Many children do not understand the concept of "dressing up" and may be unsettled by seeing a friend in a costume.

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### WCNS Staff Birthdays

Daphne Fugate (November 8)

Mary Watt (November 17)

Anja Peterson (November 23)

# WCNS News and Information

## From the Office

### Current Openings...

WCNS still has openings for Splendid Day on Monday, Thursday and Friday for the 2011-2012 school year. Please contact Alex Wood, Registrar, at (847) 446-0063 or [awood1226@gmail.com](mailto:awood1226@gmail.com) for more information.

### Registration for 2012-2013 School Year

Registration for the 2012-2013 school year will be October 24-November 4. Applications for returning families will be due by October 28 and November 4 for new families. WCNS Board member applications are due on October 21. Meeting these deadlines ensures the best chance for your child to be placed in your top choice class. As part of our school's effort to go "paperless," please note that acceptance of class placement notification will be sent via e-mail on November 14.

Please contact Alex Wood, Registrar, at (847) 446-0063 or [awood1226@gmail.com](mailto:awood1226@gmail.com) for more information.

### The Alliance for Early Childhood

(formally known as Winnetka Alliance for Early Childhood)

Did you know that WCNS is one of the 34 member organizations of The Alliance for Early Childhood? The Alliance is a not-for-profit organization that serves the community by providing programs, support and collaboration for parents and professionals who teach and care for young children from birth to age eight (or 3rd grade).

Among its many services, the Alliance:

- offers Teacher Tributes, allowing families to recognize outstanding teachers with a donation of \$75
- distributes free copies of its semi-annual 16-page newsletter, Early Childhood, to all families at your school
- organizes TV Tune Out Week-a week long event which gives families the opportunity to evaluate the role that screens play in their lives and to participate in a variety of programs and activities offered throughout the community (save the date for this year's TOW-March 6-12)
- offers educational programs for parents and professionals, including speakers and roundtables on nutrition and special needs.

To learn more about these programs and more, please visit [www.winnetkaalliance.org](http://www.winnetkaalliance.org) or talk to your school representative.

#### Upcoming Alliance Events:

**Monday, Oct. 3, 7-8:30pm @ Winnetka Community House Rm. 111, no charge**

**Preschool Expo (formerly The Preschool Fair)** Meet representatives from local preschools and childhood enrichment programs in Winnetka and the surrounding North Shore communities. Find information on school programs and registration procedures for the 2012-2013 school year.

**Wednesday, Oct. 5, 9:30-11:00 @ Winnetka Community House Rm. 111, no charge**

**Encouraging Child-Directed, Creative Free Play**, featuring Joan Almon, an internationally recognized expert on children's play. Joan is a co-author of a widely quoted report, *Crisis in the Kindergarten: Why Children Need to Play in School*.

\*Please RSVP to Blakely Bundy, [director@theallianceforec.org](mailto:director@theallianceforec.org) or 847-441-9001

# WCNS News and Information

## From the Board of Directors

### **A Letter From Amy Day, President, WCNS Board of Directors**

Once again, the hectic nature of back-to-school month took me by surprise this September. Getting used to a new schedule, helping the children through transitions, and projects like changing out the clothes closets for the new season all can make the first weeks of school very overwhelming for most families. But hidden under all the stress, is a truly meaningful time for children as they begin a new year of school. You can see their enthusiasm everywhere. It's a sparkle in the eye of the child who realizes they finally get to play on their new school playground. It's the way the children proudly wear their new backpacks and sneakers. It's the shy smile when meeting a new classmate. I try to reflect on this magic as the month seems to overwhelm me. These moments remind me of why this time is so special for my children.

Thank you to all our teachers and staff who have made the first month of school so welcoming to our children and families. As a parent in the Older 2s class, I have seen first hand how talented our staff is as they demonstrate their skill in helping both parent and child through transitions by creating a warm, welcome environment for our youngest learners. I know those same qualities are clearly demonstrated in every classroom in our school.

For me, one of the most impressive characteristics of WCNS is the parent community we have built through the years. Many of our family's best friends today are the people we met 7 years ago when our oldest child began school at WCNS. I hope you will take advantage of the many events the school has to offer throughout the year from PJ Storytime, to classroom parent parties, to the school benefit (February 4<sup>th</sup> – mark your calendar!), to the Children's Fair in June. It is these occasions, along with the children's play dates and lunch bunches, that create this very special community we have at WCNS.

On Wednesday, October 5, WCNS will host Go-To-School Night for school parents. The program will begin at 7 pm with a presentation about the school, our educational philosophy, and the business operations. There will also be an opportunity to visit your child's classroom and interact with the teachers. I encourage all parents to attend this informative evening.

On behalf of the WCNS Board, thank you for choosing WCNS for your children. I hope your family has a wonderful year at WCNS. Please feel free to contact me at any time if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely, Amy Day

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### **WCNS Board Positions Available**

One of the things that makes WCNS such a remarkable school is the involvement of our parent community through the Board of Directors. School finances, registration, fundraising, publicity, the Winnetka's Children's Fair and much more are all managed by a dedicated group of parent volunteers. Joining the WCNS Board is a great opportunity to get involved, meet new people and have fun.

For information, contact Robin Scheier at [robin.scheier@gmail.com](mailto:robin.scheier@gmail.com).

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### **Raise Funds Every Time You Shop at The Grand Food Center**

Thanks so much to everyone for turning in their Grand Food Receipts this year. Last school year we raised a total of \$2,210 for WCNS. Please be sure to save your receipts and drop them in the black metal mail box in the school entry hall. The Grand contributes a portion of each receipt (3% of total after taxes) to WCNS! If you have any questions, please contact Lucie White at [Lucie.N.White@gmail.com](mailto:Lucie.N.White@gmail.com).

# WCNS News and Information

## From the Board of Directors

### Thank you Room Parents!

Thank you to those individuals who have graciously volunteered to be room parents. We still have opportunities available! Being a room parent is a great way to get involved.

Please contact Erin Quinn, [equinn10@ymail.com](mailto:equinn10@ymail.com), (847-386-6764) or Jenny Ellis, [jennyllis28@hotmail.com](mailto:jennyllis28@hotmail.com) (773-517-5791) if you are interested in becoming a room parent.

#### Room Parents for the 2011-2012 school year:

Room 1 2's (T/Th)	Two parents needed	
Room 1 3's (M/W/F)	Christina Cripe	Ann Nolan
Room 2 4's	Kristina Bornhoeft	Jenny Ellis
Room 3 4's	Anne Ross	Tria Thomas
Room 4 2's (M/W)	Alison Randall	Kristin Baine
Room 4 3's (T/Th/F)	Katharine Elsbree	Kendra Thornton Quincy McCoy
Splendid Day	Two parents needed	

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### WCNS Community Outreach

#### The Pajama Program

In conjunction with PJ Storytime, WCNS is collecting pajamas for The Pajama Program, a non-profit organization that distributes pajamas to children in need around the world. Often the children who benefit from this program not only do not have pajamas, but also do not have the chance to experience the simple comfort of getting ready for bed with mom or dad. Physicians report that pajamas promote good health and provide psychological benefits. Donated pajamas must be new and unused, in sizes infant to age 5. Bring your pajamas to the WCNS lobby and drop them in the collection basket between Monday, November 14 and Wednesday, November 23. To learn more, please contact Erin Quinn at [equinn10@ymail.com](mailto:equinn10@ymail.com) or visit [www.PajamaProgram.org](http://www.PajamaProgram.org).

#### Book Worm Angels

On an ongoing basis, WCNS collects new and gently used children's books for Book Worm Angels, an organization that helps establish classroom lending libraries at inner-city schools and works to cultivate a love of reading among at-risk children. Book Worm Angels accepts fun, general-interest books for children ages pre-K through 8th grade. Please no textbooks, encyclopedias, or religious books. Drop off your books in the collection baskets near the front door of the school throughout the year. This summer we collected over 100 titles for donation! Please contact Erin Quinn at [equinn10@ymail.com](mailto:equinn10@ymail.com) with any questions or visit [www.bookwormangels.org](http://www.bookwormangels.org).

# WCNS News and Information

From the Board of Directors

## Mark Your Calendars!

### **PJ Story Time-Nov. 16, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

Our kick-off event for the Book and Toy Fair, PJ Story Time, will take place at WCNS on Wednesday, November 16, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. All WCNS families are invited to wear their pajamas to the school for an evening of stories read aloud by special guests and the chance to make a Fall-themed bookmark. This event is one of the highlights of the year and a great way to celebrate the power of literature with your children.

To volunteer or for more information, please contact Erin Quinn at [equinn10@ymail.com](mailto:equinn10@ymail.com).

### **Book and Toy Fair-Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 a.m. -5:00 p.m.**

Please join us at our annual WCNS Book & Toy Fair, which will take place at the Book Stall and Village Toy Shop on Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup> and Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. This is a terrific event for the entire family, and a great opportunity to get your holiday shopping started. From stationary and cookbooks to puzzles and games, both stores are sure to have something for everyone on your holiday shopping list. The stores will also have wish lists from the WCNS teachers that will include some of their favorite books and toys that may be purchased and then donated to the school.

Both businesses will donate 20% of all WCNS friend and family purchases during the two day period to our school. This year the proceeds will be used for new sand and water tables for the classrooms. Please encourage your friends and family in the area to shop at the Book Stall and Village Toy Shop on these two days.

Volunteers are needed at the Book and Toy Fair. Volunteering at the event will be a great opportunity to help raise money for the school while enjoying holiday cheer with other parents and staff.

To volunteer or for more information, please contact Erika Schmitt at [e3schmitt@gmail.com](mailto:e3schmitt@gmail.com) or Heather Boulanger at [heboulanger@yahoo.com](mailto:heboulanger@yahoo.com).

### **Annual Benefit and Parent Party-Feb. 4**

The WCNS Benefit and Parent Party will be held Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup> at Skokie Country Club. This year's Benefit will be a Luau, start practicing your hula moves now. In addition to being a fun night out with other school parents, the benefit is a major fundraiser for WCNS. The evening will feature dinner, dancing, casino games, and silent and live auctions.

If you have any items you would like to donate for the auction, please contact K.C. Simon at [kathleencsimon@gmail.com](mailto:kathleencsimon@gmail.com) or Liz Smylie at [lizsmylie@hotmail.com](mailto:lizsmylie@hotmail.com).

## **SHOP, CLICK, SUPPORT WCNS!**

Join OneCause and turn a percentage of your everyday purchases into contributions to WCNS at no extra cost to you. When you shop through OneCause at stores like Target and JCrew, you will save money and up to 20% of your purchases will be contributed to WCNS. There are hundreds of online retailers to choose from. Get started in three easy steps!

- 1) Go to [www.onecause.com](http://www.onecause.com) and click "Join"
- 2) Fill in your profile information and select Winnetka Community Nursery School to support
- 3) Start shopping through OneCause

### **Morning Ticket Ritual-Get your ticket here...**

By Elise Hansen

We use tickets for train rides, concerts, movies, carnival games and sporting events. Why do we use tickets for “admission” to preschool classes, you may ask? The answer is multi-faceted. Early childhood programs have long used morning greeting rituals to offer a well-being check for program participants. But it’s more than this. It’s our way of giving each child a moment of individual recognition with a simple greeting, a smile and eye contact. Whether they are receiving a ticket or turning in a ticket at the classroom door, they are practicing a social exchange with the help of a transitional object, or prop, a simple paper ticket.

Parents set an example for this thoughtful ritual each time you model a social greeting. You are expressing your family values and letting your child know your expectations for polite manners.

Know that your children notice. Even if they are not ready to try it themselves, they are observing you, formulating ideas and learning for the future. Personality and temperament also play a role in social situations. Your child may be shy, fearful, distracted or tired. They may still be developing the ability to adjust during transitional times. We provide the ticket exchanges daily so that there are plenty of opportunities for practice during your child’s learning years with us. We realize that not every day will be perfect, and that’s okay.

There’s also a progression to the ticket ritual. At a certain point they figure out mathematical comparisons of *more* versus *less* and they experiment with determining whether or not two tickets are better than one. I always wonder what they are thinking? Perhaps two tickets will provide them more energy, a better day or balance? But, I also know they may just be testing the limits, so I set the limit at two tickets.

Not all children need a transitional object like our special tickets and they are comfortable with greeting others. This is fine, but we do like to take time to acknowledge their presence as we look at their eyes, give them a smile and say “hello.”

# WCNS Early Childhood Education

## Parent Resources

### Try This At Home

*Sensory Experience/ Math & Logic/ Pre-Literacy/ Dramatic Play/ Individual Play*

Add two inches of yellow cornmeal (or white play sand) to a large foil pan or dishpan. Provide tool and activity choices: one or two small measuring spoons or small scoops, a shallow cup or dish, a toy vehicle, small toy animals, items from nature. (Hint- keep this simple.)

Set up pan in an area that is easy to clean up. Let your child explore the cornmeal in the pan:

- using their fingers to touch the cornmeal
- using their fingers to write and scribble in the cornmeal
- using spoons to fill and empty the shallow dish
- counting the scoops to fill the shallow dish
- comparing the amounts in the spoon and the dish
- driving a toy vehicle in the cornmeal
- setting up toy animals in the cornmeal
- burying items from nature under the cornmeal

Children learn about their sense of touch and develop their motor skills during this tactile experience. They learn to compare amounts and learn about the properties of a dry material as they pour and fill containers. They have opportunities to expand pretend play with toy vehicles and animals. Using items from nature provides further opportunities for all facets of these investigations.

### Book Recommendations

*Strega Nona's Harvest* by Tomie dePaola

[http://winnetkalibrary.bibliocommons.com/item/show/988808035\\_the\\_relatives\\_came](http://winnetkalibrary.bibliocommons.com/item/show/988808035_the_relatives_came)

*Leaf Man* by Lois Ehlert

[http://winnetkalibrary.bibliocommons.com/item/show/989907035\\_leaf\\_man](http://winnetkalibrary.bibliocommons.com/item/show/989907035_leaf_man)

*The Relatives Came* by Cynthia Rylant (Audiobook CD)

[http://winnetkalibrary.bibliocommons.com/item/show/988808035\\_the\\_relatives\\_came](http://winnetkalibrary.bibliocommons.com/item/show/988808035_the_relatives_came)

*Discovering Nature's Alphabet* by Krystina Castell

[http://winnetkalibrary.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1219858035\\_discovering\\_natures\\_alphabet](http://winnetkalibrary.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1219858035_discovering_natures_alphabet)

*Ten Little Hermit Crabs* by Lee Fox

[http://winnetkalibrary.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1719071035\\_10\\_little\\_hermit\\_crabs](http://winnetkalibrary.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1719071035_10_little_hermit_crabs)

### Great Websites

The Alliance for Early Childhood

Check out the "Let's Play" tab

<http://www.winnetkaalliance.org/>

Susan Salidor, our favorite music consultant, watch for public events

<http://www.susansalidor.com/>

Scholastic Books website is a great resource for parents and teachers

<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading/>

Reading Is Fundamental (JK and kindergarten level readers)

<http://www.rif.org/>

Wilmette Public Library Parent-Teacher Resources

<http://www.wilmette.lib.il.us/kids/parent-teacher/>

### Oh the Places You'll Go...

#### **Kohl Children's Museum**

**Science + You On Exhibit: July 19 – December 30, 2011**

#### **Things to Do:**

- Make a healthy “pretend” soup in a test kitchen by selecting appropriate ingredients.
- View nature objects and compare your finger prints to others using video microscopes.

<http://www.kohlchildrensmuseum.org/exhibits/science-plus-you>

Heller Nature Center, Highland Park on Patch

<http://highlandpark.patch.com/listings/heller-nature-center>

Winnetka Public Library Children's Programs

A-Haunting We Will Go (Oct. 27) & Stuffed Animal Sleepover (Nov. 21)

<http://www.winnetkalibrary.org/programs/ChildrensPrograms>

The Bookstall, Winnetka

<http://www.thebookstall.com/>

The Children's Theater of Winnetka presents Aladdin

<http://www.childrenstheatrewinnetka.com/FallPlayPerformances.htm>

Wilmette Public Library Events for Kids and Families

<http://www.wilmette.lib.il.us/kids/events/>

Wilmette Children's Theater presents Disney's Mulan Jr.

<http://www.wilmettepark.org/performingarts/wilmette-childrens-theatre>

Chicago Children's Theater presents Goodnight Moon

<http://www.chicagochildrenstheatre.org/2011-2012-flex-pass.html>