

Connections

News from St. Mark Community Preschool

November 2009

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Commemorate the Holidays with a Year-End Gift to St. Mark Community Preschool

This time of year is a wonderful time to count our blessings—to reflect on the many things we're grateful for in our lives. Each member of the preschool staff hopes that you count the preschool among the blessings in your life.



The preschool, in turn, is grateful for the blessing you have each been to us. We so appreciate working with your children each and every day. And, we thank those families who have been able to support the preschool with a charitable gift this year.

As 2009 comes to a close, we'd like to give our current and recent families one more opportunity to make a gift to benefit the preschool this year. Right after Thanksgiving, families will receive a letter from advisory board member and preschool parent Nikki Wood, asking them to consider a year-end gift to benefit the preschool. Gifts will be used to purchase smaller toys and supplies that were not replaced during our 2008 move, such as musical instruments, magnetic play sets, preschool-aged games, doll clothes, dress-up clothes, and small cars and vehicles. Gifts will also be used to further develop our new nature playground, which is used for active games and other activities which encourage the development of large motor skills.

If you do not receive information about this opportunity and are interested in participating (it will be distributed during the week of November 30), please call the preschool at 949-644-1442 or e-mail Mary Hornbuckle (preschool@stmarkpresbyterian.org).

St. Mark Community Preschool Receives

\$20,000 in Charitable Donations during 2009

Thanks to the tremendous support of St. Mark Community Preschool families and friends, the preschool has received more than \$20,000 in charitable donations during 2009 (to date). You'll be pleased to know that these funds have been used toward two major projects this year:

- To continue paying off our short-term loan to St. Mark Presbyterian Church. We've paid \$155,000 of the \$375,000 loan to date, with a \$220,000 balance remaining.
- To develop our new nature playground (the fenced area to the east of the preschool classrooms).

We are particularly grateful for your tremendous generosity during these challenging economic times. Thanks to everyone for making the preschool a priority among the organizations you support!

From the Desk of Mary Hornbuckle: News for Current Preschool Families

Thanksgiving Service: As we enter into the season of celebrations and traditions, we are learning about being thankful. To continue a 31 year tradition, we will assemble on **Wednesday, November 25** at 11:45 AM for our own Thanksgiving service. We DO have school that day, but if your child does not usually come to school on Wednesdays, please bring him or her with you at 11:45 AM. We will gather in the church sanctuary on the other side of the canyon to sing songs and hear the story of the first Thanksgiving. All parents, grandparents, siblings, and friends are welcome to join us, remembering this is a service of worship, not a performance. If you bring a camera, please be discreet, not distracting. This is an experience by and for the children.



Each child is asked to bring a package or can of food to our Thanksgiving service to be shared with people who do not have enough to eat, through one of our local charities. Sharing in this way is most meaningful to the children when they have helped to choose a favorite food at the store, and then bought two - one to keep and one to share. The Share Our Selves (SOS) food distribution program will be the recipient of the food collected at our service.

Following the worship service, we will have our traditional Thanksgiving Feast on the preschool art patio. The children will have spent many days preparing the food and they will

be so excited to share it with you. No lunches are needed on Wednesday, Nov. 25, and there is no extended day program that day. Please plan to stay to share our feast, and then take your children with you when it is over. If you are unable to join us, please come for your children at 12:45, our early dismissal time. School will be closed on Thursday, November 26 and Friday, November 27 for the Thanksgiving holidays.

Two more notes about holidays:

- Our goal is to keep this school a safe, predictable, low-stress environment for the children, especially during the December holiday season which can be overwhelming for all of us. In order to do that, we celebrate in a low-key manner, maintaining our regular routines and schedules. If you want to do something special with a class, a special treat at the end of the day or an art activity you plan with the teacher would be appropriate. Ask the teachers for suggestions on how to incorporate your ideas with their lesson plans.
- Our dismissal for Christmas is earlier than the school district. We will not have school on Friday, December 18 through Friday, January 1. We will return on Monday, January 4, 2010.

Emergency Information: Please be sure to update your emergency information sheet if there have been any changes or if you want to add people who can pick up your child. We need to have caregiver names and phone numbers, as well as those of any carpool drivers. If you are planning a trip or vacation without your child, be sure to let us know in writing who will be picking up your child, particularly if s/he becomes ill at school. It is also very important for us to have your current address and phone numbers, including cell phone numbers. Thanks!

Extra Clothes: Please check those extra clothes bags now and then, especially if your child has worn any of the items home. We do get wet and dirty here - all part of the learning process while we are having fun! Please return any of the school's extra clothes that may have come to your house.

Snack Schedule: The children appreciate the good, nutritious snacks you send. Have you signed up for November/December yet? Check with the teachers if you need good snack suggestions.

2010 Dates: Please note the following for future planning:

- We will be closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on Monday, January 18.
- We will join the public schools in closing for the week of February 15 through 19 for the Presidents' Week recess.
- We have scheduled Speech and Hearing Screening on

January 27 and 28. There is a small charge. Watch for the sign-up forms and more information after our December break.

- Vision Screening will be done by the Elks Special Project during school hours for all children, on February 8, 9 and 10. There is no charge for this service.
- The preschool and public school Spring Break will be the week of April 5 through 9.

Mary Hornbuckle
St. Mark Community Preschool

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