



## Director's Report: Kindergarten Goodbyes By: Claire Bainer

June always brings our first farewells to the Schoolroom children who are gradually moving on towards elementary school. A few will leave this month, a few more in July, and the rest in August after two good months of summer transitional kindergarten activities at BlueSkies. Sending children and families on their way is always a bittersweet moment for us. As both teachers and the director have become very attached to these children; we know the areas that challenge each one and the areas where each one is adept, and we have watched them working hard to learn to bring their most friendly, helpful, inquisitive and cooperative selves to the world. We know and have come to really appreciate their parents, too -- in some ways we are equally attached to them. We also say thank you to these parents who have generously given of their time, their money and their talents to further the work of BlueSkies. We stand proudly beside you parents knowing that we have worked together and done our best to help the children grow. Like you, we see they are ready and eager for the new world awaiting them outside our gates.

We send the Schoolroom children off to a variety of schools (as we know these choices are subject to change as wait lists adjust and parents firm up plans). So far we believe:

- Adela will attend Melrose Academy
- Frances will join her sister at Sequoia Elementary School
- Graham will go to Redwood Heights Elementary School
- Theo will go to Crocker Highlands Elementary School
- Kadiatu will join her sister at Redwood Day School
- Emilia will attend NEA Community Learning Center in Alameda
- Aya will go to Joaquin Miller Elementary School
- Connor will attend Chabot Elementary School
- Asa will attend Glenview Elementary School
- Liam will follow his sister to Thornill Elementary
- Ethan will attend Chabot Elementary
- Gus will follow his brother to Redwood Day School
- Jupiter will attend Aurora
- Nico and Gabe will attend Glenview Elementary
- Mavis will follow her bother to St. Paul's
- JB will attend Crocker Highlands Elementary
- Merritt may also attend Crocker Highlands

We have confidence that whether they are in local public, charter, or independent schools, these 18 children will bring a special set of skills with them. They will know both how to think for themselves, offer ideas and initiate activities and how to listen and follow the teacher's directions. They are well on their way to knowing how to stop themselves from following a misguided impulse, and they will know how to redirect an activity that's not working into a more constructive channel.

### Upcoming Events

#### Wed, June 12th

Parent Scholarship Committee  
6:15PM - 7:30PM

#### Friday, June 21st

Summer Program Set Up:  
Nursery School Closes at noon (Playroom, Homeroom and Schoolroom); Hedco open as usual

#### Thursday-Friday, July 4th & 5th

BlueSkies for Children closed for Independence Day

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Such skills are surprisingly rare, even in kindergartens where most of the children have had some preschool experience, and directly reflect the way that BlueSkies children have been coached and guided as they have played for the past 5 years. "Our view of children strongly determines if we support and challenge them or direct and correct them. Adults must believe that children deserve the right to choose and are capable of understanding that with rights come responsibility. If we believe this, then we will use our role to coach children in making good choices." (Deb Curtis and Jess Guiney, "Seeing and Supporting Children's Right to Choose," Child Care Information Exchange).

Children learn at BlueSkies that we do respect their ability to make good choices—but we also know that nobody is born knowing how to stay emotionally whole and socially adept; those characteristics are developed through thousands of positive human interactions. So many of these children have spent 5 years in an environment where people are kind, respectful, optimistic, clear about expectations and consequences, and accepting of the mistakes that come with immature development. These children carry the gift of knowing that these quality are the foundation of a happy life and they now carry them with them to share with the world. Best wishes to all of you, and come back to visit!



# Snapshot in the Schoolroom

Two girls have been playing happily, but suddenly voices rise and one begins to cry. The teacher has been nearby, helping some other children while keeping an eye on the girls where she saw a conflict brewing—one child not giving the other child a turn on the hanging bar. The teacher’s goal is to help these four-and-a-half and five-year-old girls practice solving their own problem with minimal adult help, so she strolls over slowly as if she knows they probably don’t need her. Knowing that these children have less than a year before they will be off to kindergarten, the teacher wants the girls to practice thinking up their own words and talking to each other. As for anyone, when emotions run high children find it challenging to manage their feelings and put them into words that facilitate constructive problem solving. However, the teacher knows that the girls communicate well when emotion is not present, so she offers her support only in the form of her neutral presence, purposely moving slowly and commenting in a supportive way “Hmm, it sounds like something isn’t working here.” With that comment the waiting child wails, as the other turns her back while holding tight to the bar. “My goodness,” says the teacher, “I wonder what happened?” Stooping low, she puts her arms around both children. “It looks like Peggy is feeling sad.” Peggy wails in agreement; Marty avoids eye contact. “I don’t think Marty understands; you’d better tell her with some words why you are crying so loudly.” Peggy collapses, crying, into the teacher’s arms. The teacher scoots with Peggy out of the way of the swinging girl on the bar.

“What is it, Peggy? Why are you crying?” asks the teacher.

Peggy responds “I’m crying because daddy left without a hug and now Marty is mean!”

“You wanted a hug but daddy didn’t know that?”

“I was swinging and he didn’t wait. When I stopped swinging he was gone.”

“Well, I know he loves to hug you so I guess he didn’t know you thought he would wait. We can write a note and say that next time you’d like a hug before he goes, even if you’re swinging.”

Peggy nods her head yes, and snuggles into the teacher’s arms with a sigh. They sit for a while watching Marty swing on the hanging bar.

While holding Peggy, the teacher continues to watch all the other children in the yard and listen to the tone of their voices, monitoring the activity levels in all the children’s play. The children, too, are listening and watching. They worry when they hear another child cry, knowing that they are also vulnerable in a big world, and that they sometimes have trouble and need help too. The children know that they need love and understanding as well, and someone who really listens instead of jumping to conclusions. While the attentive teacher had seen the problem with taking turns, she kept her comments open enough to find out that really the bigger problem was that Peggy was feeling sad about her dad leaving without saying good-bye. Children want to feel safe and supported in their world away from their parents, so they pay attention to those who care for them. As they see the teachers understand and care for another child in their group they relax, knowing that they, too, can count on being heard and cared for nicely.

The culture of kindness and respectful support reassures them that they too will be cared for when trouble comes to them. Days and years go by at BlueSkies with the children learning about a world where people’s feelings, harmony and cooperation are valued and peaceful community prevails. Long after these little children forget about BlueSkies they will remember how it felt to have experienced people getting along and helping each other—and they will see places where they can recreate that experience in their adult life. That is how society changes—step by step, little by little we thoughtfully live our lives, and life on the planet becomes more peaceful. This wonderful gift we give our children pays a gigantic dividend for society.

-Claire



## BlueSkies-isms

*Parents often hear their children using phrases that they suspect they learned at BlueSkies. Each month's "BlueSkies-ism" will include a phrase the teachers use all the time at BlueSkies, and some context to help you use the phrase at home too.*

*"It is a little tricky."*

Let's face it, many things are a bit tricky for a pre-schooler! We use this phrase to help children know that we don't expect a simple, easy solution. We want the children to know that we recognize that what they are doing might take a little extra finagling. Identifying the task as something to work on can help the children know they might have to be creative and try different solutions before they will succeed. We want children to go ahead and work on it, and we want them to know that even though it might not be easy we trust that they can do it.

## Scholarship Applications

June is the month to complete an application for reduced fees during the 2019-20 contract year, if you feel you will need assistance to continue your child's enrollment.

The application form is in the Parent Portal of the BlueSkies website (in Other Resources) Password: blueskiesparents.

See Spencer in the office with questions!

## Teachers out in June



The following staff will be out this month:

- Kwan out 6/3 - 6/13
- Ameena out 6/4 - 6/5
- Rosalia out 6/10 - 6/14
- Sandra out 6/17 - 6/26
- Michelle out 6/17 - 6/18

comings & goings

### Welcome!

Teachers Jennifer in the Playroom and Jessie as a full-time substitute!

Iris in the Baby House with parents Tony and Cindy!

### Farewell!

Teacher Jennifer Chen

## Books

Birthday

Birthday books and CD's are displayed in the front office and can be purchased for BlueSkies in honor of a child's birthday or any other special occasion.

## The Summer Program at BlueSkies

What IS The Summer Program?

Closing the Nursery School for a half day in June and another day in August allows the Nursery School teachers to reorganize and offer a summer that is different from the rest of the school year.

The oldest children will learn about kindergarten mores and expectations in the safe environment of BlueSkies. They will learn to sit in circle and raise their hands to take turns talking; they will learn about art projects where the teacher tells you what you are going to do. They will dictate stories for teachers to write, as well as writing on their own. Instead of nap and rest-time, children will sit under a tree and listen to the teacher read a chapter of an exciting story each day. They will practice making their own sandwich, packing it up and then eating it out of a bag! All of these activities will help the children feel prepared for the big new world of elementary school.

The Homeroom and Playroom children will spend the mornings together as their classrooms combine spaces to add a new dimension to play. The Playroom children can explore the Homeroom spaces that will soon become their own, and also begin to know the Homeroom children who will be part of their “extended group” in the fall. In the afternoons the Homeroom and Schoolroom will share spaces, while the Playroom welcomes a group of visiting Todds.

We are delighted that John Taylor will return to teach carpentry to the oldest children. We will have dance class once a week, and Bonnie will continue her weekly songfests through the summer. Naomi will continue to explore hands on science with the children all through the summer. The increased time with another age group will bring new ideas to the younger children and followers to the older ones! In short, summer brings fun for all.

