

Times at Harmony



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From the Director

The Big “30” - This year has been all about Harmony spirit. In August, the Nomad Pizza Truck - amazing individual pizzas made on-site in a brick oven, came to Harmony at Princeton along with a visit from the Mister Softee truck, face, painting, water fun, making visors and necklaces and games. Our Robbinsville school will celebrate similarly in the spring. We continue to celebrate our milestone anniversary with a first time “Halloween Staff Costume Contest”. Parents will vote upon the best individual costume and best team costume in each of our schools. Individual winners receive a \$50. cash prize and the winning team will split a \$100. prize. Parents can vote when they attend the Halloween parade on October 31st.

Winners of the “Count the Candy Corn Contest” were:

Staff winners - Princeton - Kristen DeLaRosa
Robbinsville - Christina Tan

Family winners - Princeton - The Scarpa Family
Robbinsville - The Wilkinson Family

The family prize was a \$25. Toys R Us gift card, and the individual prize was a \$25. Dunkin Donuts gift card.

What’s new at Harmony? Look for our new website, designed by Harmony Princeton parent, Laurits Hansen. We are also implementing new business software which will result in easier to understand invoices and other features to help us serve our customers more efficiently.

Curriculum Fun - Both schools were visited by their local fire departments in the month of October for Fire Safety Month. All the children got to see the fire truck and the older children had a lesson in fire safety from the visiting firemen. Stan the Magical Fireman also visited

Princeton. He teaches fire safety through magic and then takes the children on a ride in his special fire truck in the parking lot.

Prek and Kindergarten (at Princeton) visited farms as part of their fall curriculum. Princeton’s students went to Terhune in Lawrenceville and the Robbinsville students went to Windsor Farm.

Read - Read - Read! - Both schools are visited monthly by their Township librarian. At Princeton, our proximity to the Windrows and Pavilions complex make it convenient for the most mature members of our community to visit Harmony weekly to read to our students. PreK and Kindergarten students from Harmony visit Pavilions and Windrows too, to sing for the residents there.

The “Earobics” software that we use with our Prek and Kindergarten students prepares them for reading (as a supplement to the rest of the curriculum) and enhances the skills of children who are already reading.

In our Kindergarten program, the children receive individual subscriptions to “Time for Kids” a version of Time Magazine geared to their age group. “Time” features internet interactive learning activities for the children to do at home and in school.

Open Houses - both centers are having an Open House on November 19th from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon.

Parent Referral Bonus -It “pays” to say nice things about us! As you know, if you refer anyone to one of Harmony’s programs, you will receive one free week for your youngest child in our program, once the referral has been enrolled in the program for sixty days. Be sure to tell your friends to write your name on the registration form so that you receive this credit.

Professional Development -

Infant-Child CPR and Basic First Aid Training took place at both schools recently. Jill Ryan, Cherie Saranin, Barbara Burton, Christina Tan, Janet Lee, Beth Lane, Mary Ouskin, Lisa Forrester, Brittany Forrester, Tessie Rupprecht, Maria Birtok, Kim Smith, Kirsten DeLaRosa, Mita Bhattacharya, Nandita Kumar, Danielle Wood, Michelle Rosenberg, Amy Stevens, Shalini Kulshresthma, Noorah Zaidi, Neera Ghate, Sadhna Sharma, Esther Dada, Barbara Abode and Indrani Moitra.

Child Development Associate (CDA) studies - Mary Ouskin, Janet Lee, Beth Lane, Indrani Moitra, Neera Ghate, Maria Birtok, Julie Vaughan, Shalini Kulshresthma, Mita Bhattacharya, Sadhna Sharma, Nandita Kumar and Esther Dada are all in the midst of fulfilling the requirements of completion of their associates degree in Early Childhood Development. They will not all finish precisely the same date, but all of them expect to have completed studies by June, 2012.

Childcare Connection Annual Conference - Kim Smith, Maria Birtok and Jill Ryan attended this conference in September. Maria and Kim are both lead teachers in our infant rooms, so they took several workshops regarding infant-toddler curriculum and classroom management. Jill, our Robbinsville center director, attended workshops in the administrative track.

Mary Ouskin from our Robbinsville center attended two workshops in October, “Mother Goose on the Loose”, and “Girls and Boys; Different Learners and Children at Play”.

Christian Tan, from our Robbinsville center attended four workshops in late spring entitled, “Dramatic Play; Beyond the Kitchen Area”, “Sensory Play Activities”, “Planning for Outdoor Play”, and “Meeting with Parents; Planning for the Parent-Teacher Conference”.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) hosts its’ annual conference in November, the biggest gathering of early childhood educators in the world. Lisa and Brittany Forrester have been selected to present a workshop on the topic of “Use of Technology in Small to Mid-Sized Child Care Center Companies”.

Lisa Forrester has been invited to join “Einstein’s Alley Entrepreneurs Collaborative” a networking group of Princeton area entrepreneurs and those agencies who serve entrepreneurs. Lisa was also appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Hopewell Valley YMCA in October.

Accreditation Update - In May, parents completed surveys to assist Harmony in our quest for accreditation by the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation program. Child care centers must be licensed, but accreditation is an optional process in which centers can voluntarily participate. Now that we have submitted our paperwork, we anticipate a visit from the national accreditation team in early 2012. The “validators” spend time in each classroom observing our teaching teams and insuring that our schools are operated under exceptional quality standards.



“Employee of the Month”

Harmony team members who exhibit great attendance, attentiveness to promptness, support of colleagues and exemplary classroom management are eligible for a bonus. Recent award winners are Nooriah Zaidi, Neera Ghate, Sara Nutt, Tiffany Zambrana and Amy Stevens.

“Spot Bonus Award” - our “customer service” award was replaced by the “Spot Bonus” program in 2009. When a director observes an employee exhibiting an exceptional behavior beyond the parameters of the job description, they receive a gift card and a certificate. Recent recipients have been Irene Aretakis, Danielle Wood and Esther Dada, Christina Tan & Janet Lee.

Staff Personal Good News :

Mary Ouskin, one of Harmony’s PreK lead teachers at our Robbinsville school will become a mother-in-law again. Daughter, Rebecca, gets married in January 2013. Mary’s daughter Tara, has two daughters, both of whom are students at Harmony.

Julie Vaughan, a member of the Bumblebees Infant room team in Princeton, is engaged, and will be getting married in September, 2012.

Amber Forrester, Harmony alumna, and daughter of Lisa Forrester, sister to Brittany, is also engaged and will be getting married in September 2012.

Miss Vanessa - who previously worked at Harmony in Princeton gave birth to her second son, Alejandro at the end of September. Vanessa and her husband Josh and son Daniel, recently moved to Virginia. Vanessa taught our kindergartners last year and Daniel was in our preschool program.

Daylight Savings - don’t forget to turn your clocks back an hour on November 6th, and check your smoke detectors as well.

Holiday Closures - both Harmony locations will be closed on following holidays:

Thanksgiving - Thursday & Friday - Nov. 24 & 25
 Christmas - Monday - December 26
 New Years - Monday - January 2

Inclement Weather - as you may or may not know, Harmony does not close when it snows, unless there is a state of emergency declared. We also try very hard to limit our need for delayed openings or early closures, depending on the weather and road conditions. For the upcoming winter season we are excited to add our new website as a resource for checking on Harmony’s status when it comes to bad weather. We will not be sending out emails as we have in the past, but our Facebook page will also provide the same important information.

“Snip-Its” - a hair salon specializing in children’s services, will be coming to Harmony’s Princeton location twice per month beginning in November. Details to follow, but appointments will be scheduled between 4-6 pm so that parents can take their child for their haircut at pick up time just in time for the holidays (and beyond). Snip-Its is located in the Nassau Park Shopping Center, but having them come to us means one less appointment for our busy parents to schedule.

Holiday Pictures - Carriage Studios will visit our centers for individual shots only the following dates:

Princeton - Tuesday 12/6 & Friday 12/9 - morning
 Foxmoor - Thursday 11/10

A Message from Computer Explorers -

My name is Ms. Jennifer and I will be teaching the Computer Explorers program at Harmony School this year. Our small hands-on computer class meets weekly on Wednesday mornings for 30 minutes. My friend CT, the Computer Turtle, and I have a fun-filled year planned with lots of great educational programs, interactive activities, entertaining songs and interesting new devices! Your child will learn all about using the computer and many other technology devices including the iPad, digital microscope, digital camera, the smart board, robots and more! We have programs available for children age 3 and up, at any skill level that will reinforce established skills and continue to build upon them to learn even more.

I am excited about starting my fifth year with Computer Explorers. I am the proud mom of two little ones ages five and six.

They keep me very busy and love to help me preview all the computer programs! Before becoming a mom I taught first grade for six years. I took the position at Computer Explorers because it was an excellent opportunity for me to return to teaching and still have plenty of time to spend with my own little ones!

Give your child the opportunity to fully utilize the world of technology. If you would like to enroll your child in Computer Explorer classes simply stop by the front desk at Harmony and complete the registration form. For more information about our program please visit our website at www.computerexplorers.com or call 732-257-1966. I look forward to meeting your child and watching them grow and learn and they explore the world of technology.



Dairy-Free Cupcakes

Flavored with mashed banana and orange juice and zest, these scrumptious cupcakes are totally dairy-free - with no butter or milk - and egg free.

Cupcake Ingredients

2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
 1 1/4 cups sugar
 2 tsp. baking powder
 1 tsp. baking soda
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1 cup orange juice
 1/2 cup vegetable oil
 2 large ripe bananas, mashed (about 1 cup)
 1/2 tsp. grated orange rind
 1/2 cup walnuts (optional)

Glaze Ingredients

1 cup confectioners' sugar
 1/4 cup orange juice
 sprinkles

Recipe

1. Heat oven to 400 degrees. Line 18 muffin cups with baking liners. Coat liners with vegetable cooking spray.
2. In large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Stir in orange juice, oil, bananas, orange rind, and nuts if desired.
3. Divide batter among baking liners, and bake 25 minutes. Cool completely.

Enjoy!

