

Coop Scoop



• November 2008 •

Newsletter for the Cooperative Playschool • 611 East Prospect Avenue • State College, PA 16801 • 238-3922

November at a Glance

| | |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| 3 | No School (SCASD K-5) |
| 4 | Election Bake Sale** |
| 7 | Cup ½ Full Registration Deadline |
| 15 | Cup ½ Full Painting Session |
| 20 | Board Meeting |
| 24, 25 | Thankful Soup |
| 26-Dec.1 | Thanksgiving Break |

Theme Weeks

| | |
|-------|------------------|
| 10-14 | Native Americans |
| 17-21 | Thanksgiving |

November Birthdays

Looking Ahead: December

| | |
|-------|--------------------------|
| t- 11 | JCC Cultural Exchange |
| t- 18 | Cookie Exchange Social |
| 23 | Last Day of Fall Session |

**mandatory event, t-tentative date

Red Team Notes

October is the time when squirrels are gathering nuts and leaves are changing colors. Farmers are harvesting their crops, and apples are ripening. During this month the Red Team explored some seasonal themes. Our month was launched with the wonderful Way Fruit Farm trip and the theme of Apples and Down on the Farm. We used this theme to introduce the changes and growth we as four year old children are experiencing. We talked about what seeds grow into and how we grew from babies to toddlers to preschoolers. After collecting the photos of our classmates when they were babies, we matched them to their 4 year old photos. The baby pictures were story starters once we read a book entitled When You Were a Baby. We have since completed a collection of stories the children dictated about what they enjoyed doing when they were babies and what they

can do now. Hopefully, each child will bring home their copy of this team effort by the end of the month. Thanks to Aileen for generously offering to donate the copying of these class projects!

During Farm week we read the story The Very Busy Spider, by Eric Carle. The children enjoyed recalling the story by acting out the different animal parts while we wove a large spider web. We prepared a class book about what animals we would raise if we were farmers after reading The Day the Goose Got Loose. Wednesday children went on a leaf hunt after reading a book entitled Going on a Leaf Hunt, and we made nature collages on frames donated by Debbie Huckans.

We are now approaching Halloween and the kids are happily counting down the days until their favorite holiday arrives. We have drawn pictures of our costumes and sorted kids into groups of “scary costumes” and “not scary”. Harry and the Terrible Whutzit by Dick Gackenbach is one of my favorite read aloud this time of year. In this book the author talks about being afraid and overcoming our fears. The kids love this holiday but are often afraid at the same time. Reading and discussing the idea of costumes, real/ make-believe and monsters are riveting to these kids. Next week we will tell the flannel board story of Inside a House that is Haunted and write our own stories about a haunted house.

Many of these ‘class book’ projects are meant to be part of a notebook given to the children at the end of the year. We refer to these stories often during snack time and read them as a book once each child has completed their contribution. Occasionally, a child wishes to take home their page to share with mom or dad, we ask that they return them the following day so that child’s work can be presented/displayed with the rest of their classmates. The Red Team continues to count the days we have school using a piggy bank. We discussed a quarter, a dime and a penny. We will celebrate our 100th day when we reach it with a 100 day party.

We are very fortunate to welcome our latest addition: Mattie. Every one has been making friends and playing very nicely. Thank you for such wonderful children!

Mrs. Kat



Green Team Notes

October has been a time of settling in to the routines and rhythms of the green team. Our small group time begins with snack, often prepared with the help of the children. They are showing great hospitality toward one another, self control and patience as they wait for friends to pass out messy mats and napkins and for snack to be served. And most eat like there is no tomorrow! They use up so much energy being playful and silly and curious!

As the children finish snack, I'm continuing the practice of reading a story related to our overall theme or GT programming. Some October favorites included *The Apple Pie Tree*, *Caps for Sale*, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, and *Mouse Mess*. We're playing with letter and word sounds, exploring simple story sequencing, learning about cause and effect and just enjoying a good dramatic read!

Generally after snack and story time, we join together on the blue rug for our Friendship Circle where we continue to learn the names of our peers and take turns with musical instruments, story time props and Mrs. Lori's magical baton. The children delight in familiar and new finger plays, silly games, counting and guessing games. With jingle wrist bells, we've been exploring opposites – "jingle up, jingle down, jingle softly, jingle loudly" – and pretending the bells are falling leaves and raindrops.

If time permits we visit our "make it table" where the children participate in activities involving listening skills, picture sequencing, and creative expression. We "painted" with shaving cream, created paper bag apple trees, stacked up colorful paper caps (*Caps for Sale*), squeezed, scratched and squiggled in finger-paint to make "eggs in a basket", and made cotton ball bunnies after Emma brought in her real bunnies.

GT Halloween fun included shape identification, making traditional "jack o' lantern" faces on paper and making our own silly faces on Mrs. Lori's computer.

We've been lucky to be able to finish our days with invigorating outdoor play. As the children see their "mommies and daddies" arrive for pick up, they are eager to go home. (Thank you for arriving on time ☺)

Routine, rhythm, and transition are the name of the game right now as the children learn what to expect and what is expected of them. It's a season of change in nature and the children are changing too . . . little bits of time away, growing and learning, then back again to the comfort and yummy feelings of home. Each day they return to the Coop a little more secure, a little more expressive and eager to go. It's a delight to witness. Mrs. Lori

Reminders

If your child will be absent...

...please call the Co-op at 238-3922 to let the teachers know. You can leave a message on the answering machine if necessary.

Pick-up

If someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, it is important to call a teacher or let her know in person that morning.

Weather-related School Closings

When the State College Area School District cancels or delays the starting time of school; the Co-op will be closed. The Co-op also has the option of closing, independently of the SCASD.



December Holidays: Looking toward December when we celebrate the Festivals of Light theme, please share with us any special traditions your family honors so we may include them in our circle time discussions. As we reflect on what we are grateful for, the Co-op and the children are certainly high on our list! Thank you for all your hard work cleaning and maintaining the school—and for your creative and inspiring activities with the children. – *Kat and Lori*



Notes for Cold Weather

- Brr. It's getting chilly! Please remember to dress your children in clothing that is weather-appropriate. Pants, warm jackets, mittens (that attach to coats) and hats will soon be necessary for outdoor play.
- We do go outside every day unless it is raining or extremely cold.
- Remember self-help when choosing outdoor clothing for winter wear: boots that are easy to slip on, mittens rather than gloves, jackets with easy zippers, and hats that do not need to be tied. Encourage self-help at home so your child will be able to dress in outdoor clothing with only occasional help.
- To help children become more self-reliant when putting on their outdoor clothing, encourage them to use the "upside-down and over-the-head method" of putting on their jackets. Teach them to pull up their own zippers after grownups have helped to get them started.
- When the weather requires boots, children need to bring shoes or slippers to wear in school. A pair of slippers can be kept in your child's cubby. (Remember to put the child's name in each slipper and boot).



Fundraising Through Groceries

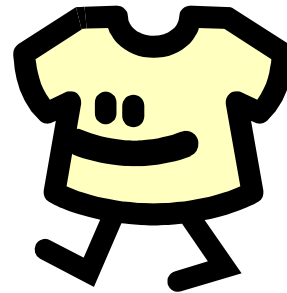


The Giant and Weis Gift Card fundraiser is proving to be a great success for the Co-op this year. We hope everyone will continue their support! Remember, you may have family members or friends who would be interested in supporting the Co-op through gift cards!

If you wish to participate in the Giant Cards A+ Program by designating your purchases to the Cooperative Playschool please contact Lauren Lowe for more information.

Please sign up (on the bulletin board) for December's gift card by **November 23rd**.

Fundraising Updates



T-shirt Sale

Thank you Co-op families! We had great success with our first sale, raising about \$300 for our school, and expanding awareness of the Co-op every time you wear the apparel in public (let it be an ice breaker!).

EXTENDED 2009 Co-op Photo Calendar Sale

For those families who missed ordering the 2009 Co-op Photo Calendars, you're in luck! **Calendar orders will be accepted until print date (early December)**. We hear there are some pretty adorable pics of our kids at school--baking bread, observing the natural world, and strutting around in their Halloween costumes! Savor our precious Co-op life throughout the year with a 2009 photo calendar for you and your kids. To order, contact Deb Huckans.

In Other News

America Reads

The America Reads at Penn State Federal Work-Study Program began in 1997, in response to the America Reads Challenge, a national campaign calling on all Americans—including businesses, education institutions, citizens, families, and college students—to help every child learn to read well. *College work-study students have played a vital role in this initiative.* Since its inception in 1997, the America Reads Program at Penn State has hired, trained, and placed thousands of Penn State students to provide educational support to *hundreds of thousands* of Pennsylvania's children throughout the Commonwealth. We are privileged to have an America Reads Student full time at the Coop!

Meet Brittney Diesel, America Reads Student

I'm so thankful to be joining you all again this year at school! I am a sophomore majoring in Elementary Education. In my hometown of Pittsburgh I did a lot of work with kids throughout my high school years. For example, I babysat, worked at an after-school daycare program and ran a preschool summer camp.

Technically, my position at school as an America Reads Student is to read books to the children. However, my position has expanded beyond the book reading because I couldn't help myself by getting a little more involved with the kids and their play!

*It's so good to see a lot of familiar faces at the Coop, and, for those of you whom I don't know very well yet, I look forward to getting to know you. It really is such a blessing for me to be able to get experience and bond with your children, who all are such amazing kids. Thanks!
Brittney*



From our Co-Chairs

Whew! October was a busy month for Co-op families and teachers! Thank you all for your continued energy and enthusiasm. We especially want to thank Lori and Kat for the extra time and effort it took to hold Parent/Teacher conferences this month. We hope you took advantage of this great opportunity to connect with

the teachers and share insights about your child.

We Co-Chairs have been busy too. Early this month we gave a presentation to Friends Meeting about the Co-op and some of our new initiatives (meaningful snack activities, Election Day bake sale, new children's garden, upcoming 60th Anniversary, etc). They seemed eager to hear from us about our program and had many comments and questions. In fact, one of the members (and Co-op alum), Jane Jenks-Small, was inspired to make a \$1000 donation to the Co-op in order to start a memorial scholarship fund in honor of our two founding members. We have gratefully accepted, of course! While Friends Meeting does not sponsor or govern the policies of our school, we have rented space from, shared resources with, and received building support from them for almost 60 years. For this we are truly thankful.

Our children's garden project also got underway this month. Special thanks to HyangJa Hardisty for coming out on a recent Sunday morning to help clear brush and grass. Now there are spaces to put in bulbs and other perennials! Anyone else who is interested in spending a few nice weekends digging and socializing should contact Angie to be placed on our email group. Ideas to implement include mulching some pathways and pruning out little tunnels through the shrubs for the kids to explore in. Any plants you have to donate would be great as well.

In November we look forward to many fun Co-op activities: two (!) fundraising events, the Election Day Bake Sale and our Cup Half Full Festival (see details in the fundraising section of this newsletter) and our Thankful Soup Celebration.

Thankful Soup is a Co-op tradition designed to showcase our interconnectedness. Every family will contribute ingredients to be used in cooking up a feast. Parents, grandparents, etc. are invited to come share this meal. Please come and enjoy the gathering that day with your family!

During this season of giving thanks, we are grateful for all our blessings. This group of families has really inspired us and reinforced our belief in the value of the Cooperative Playschool. Happy Thanksgiving!

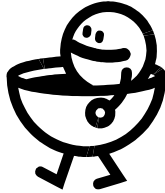
Angie & Paulina

Upcoming Events

Thankful Soup

What is Thankful Soup?

Based loosely on the folk tale Stone Soup, this is a Co-op tradition where we celebrate the power of community cooperation in a way the children can easily grasp. Every family brings in a donation and together we prepare a simple luncheon that the kids proudly present to their families. This year we are preparing two dishes: Macaroni & Cheese and Potato Chowder, accompanied by homemade rolls (made ahead by the children).



A sign-up sheet (or email) will be posted two weeks before the event, in which each family will be asked to participate by choosing one of the following three options:

1. Bring an ingredient needed for preparing the meal (one week prior)
2. Provide potluck dessert item (day of)
3. Provide drink item (day of)

This is a fun and relaxed social time and we hope you enjoy it. Parents are responsible for supervising their own children at the meal and are free to leave when they are finished eating so that the working parents can begin clean-up duties. In the past, many families have continued to play and socialize out on the playground after the meal.

Date

Mon, Nov 24th and Tue, Nov 25th

(If your child normally attends school both days, you should RSVP for both.)

Timeline

10:45 - Meet your child on the co-op playground.

10:55 - Proceed as a group into Friends Meeting Social Room, where everyone should be seated.

11:00 - Welcome Blessing, hand washing, and buffet style meal

11:45 - Clean-up begins

Menu

Potato Chowder

Macaroni & Cheese

Rolls (made by the children)

Assorted pies/cookies

Beverage

Working Parents

We have scheduled four working parents on each of these days. They will spend the morning preparing soup, macaroni & cheese and setting the tables with the children. Clean up responsibilities begin at 11:45. Two parents will clean the school as usual and two parents can work on cleaning Friends Meeting Social Room and Kitchen. Children of clean-up parents will need to be supervised (preferably outside on the playground, weather permitting) and we may ask for some volunteers to stay and help out with this.

Reminders

- ▶ Please RSVP by the deadline ([immediate and extended family members are welcome](#)) so we can be sure to provide enough seating and food.
- ▶ If you are unable to attend with your child, please inform Mrs. Kat or Mrs. Lori in advance so arrangements can be made for your child to be with friends.
- ▶ After you have eaten, you are free to leave with your child.



Cup Half-Full Festival

Working with a local pottery business, 2000 Degrees, we offer our families and friends a chance to paint their own unique designs on bisque (unfinished) ceramics. Participants receive a significant discount compared with retail prices--*so tell your friends they can save big bucks while helping the school!* Pottery sales help raise funds for operations and scholarships and the festival provides publicity for the Co-op. Best of all, this popular event is a fun day for the school and our community!

This year we have a wide selection of pottery to choose from, including mugs, spoon rests, bowls, trivets and four different ornaments. There will be free yummy snacks and local cider during the festival. After painting,

the pieces are professionally finished and returned by early December in time for the holidays. The finished "works of art" make great gifts for proud grandparents, family and friends.

You should have received a Cup Half-Full announcement with a detailed description, a flyer and an order form. Visit www.cooperativeplayschool.com for more information and to sign up for one of the three painting sessions being held on Festival Day, November 15th. Registration and payment deadline is NOVEMBER 7.

Deadline summary:

October 24 Begin Sale
November 7 Last Day to Place Order and Pay
November 15 Festival Painting Day at the Co-op
December 1 Begin Distribution of Finished Products

Board Meeting

The minutes of the October board meeting are posted at school in the Board Meeting Minutes folder. Parents are always welcome to attend Board meetings. The next meeting will be **November 20, at 6:30 PM** at the Co-op.



Thanksgiving Food Bank

As the Thanksgiving season nears, we remind ourselves of how fortunate we are. Although our town looks healthy and well fed, just a peek below the surface will show a leaner side. Throughout the year, the Food Bank of the State College Area, Inc. provides help for those in need.

Sharing is Caring

The Co-op will be collecting items for the Food Bank. During the week of **November**, our children are encouraged to bring in a non-perishable food item such as a box of cereal, macaroni and cheese, etc., or a hygiene product, for the donation box.

Our donations need not be specialty foods for the Thanksgiving table. Doubled paper grocery bags are appreciated for distributing food. Cash donations can be made in the envelope that will be placed in our

collection box. The State College Food Bank is located in St. Andrew's Church at 208 West Foster Avenue.

Enrollment Update

We still have openings available. Please contact Vicki at 209-0060 if you are interested in adding a day.

If you know any families with children who are looking for a unique preschool opportunity for the remainder of this year, please invite them to contact the Playschool (238-3922) to arrange a come and play day. Come and Play Days are an opportunity for new families to visit and experience a typical Co-op day.

Welcome Carey Family!

Mattie Carey is a new Red Team student, who will be attending on Tuesdays. Her parents are Sabine and Tom Carey.

A Special Thank You ...

- To Deb Huckans for running the great T-shirt sale. The school made about \$300 in profit and our kids wear lovely Co-op shirts now!
- Deb would like to thank all parents who participated; without you the sale would not have been so successful!
- To the Teachers for the Parent/Teacher Conferences. As parents it is important to us that you make time to focus one-on-one with us concerning the learning and development of our children.
- To Lauren Lowe for her continuous work with the Giant/Weis cards fundraiser and for adding the A+ Program.
- To all parents who came and helped during the Field Trip to Way Fruit Farm, it was lovely and fun!
- To the Friends School for inviting us to come and see Walking Jim Sholtz.

Co-op Community

Parent Tip of the Month

*Congratulations to Vicki Loren for winning last month's "Working Parent Tip!" Vicki, please contact Paulina to discuss prize choices! PARENTS: If you have a "Working Parent Tip" please feel free to submit your ideas for the next newsletter to Mary at newsletter@cooperativeplayschool.com and YOU too can be entered in the drawing to win a prize!

Vicki's Tip:

Save Time Cleaning: Use the dishwasher! There are handy instructions for the dishwasher on the key chain to the Friends Meeting. It only takes 10-15 minutes for the cycle to run. If there are ton of dishes, you can take one load over right after snack time and another load after dismissal. Trust me, I learned the hard way! I thought it would be too difficult and time consuming to figure out the dishwasher. I now know better!

Book reviews:



Last Child in the Woods, saving our children from nature deficit disorder by Richard Louv

"Writing to the heart and intellect with telling anecdotes and pertinent research, Louv gives the reader (parent, educator, scientist) an assessment of the social and ecological consequences of America's divorce from nature and prescribes new paths for reconnecting children with nature, resulting in healthier, better-adjusted kids who will care for our planet." –Craig Tufts, chief naturalist, National Wildlife Federation

~Available at Schlow Library

Submitted by Mary Lee

Call for Recipes

If you have a recipe you love, especially a kid-friendly one, please consider submitting it to the newsletter! I'll include it in the next issue. Leave a note at Co-op under Duncan, or e-mail me:

newsletter@cooperativeplayschool.com.

Face Book

The Coop now has a space on Facebook. Just go to www.facebook.com and search for cooperative playschool. You'll notice a picture of the tree and the bench beside the meeting house. Click on *request to join* and enter the information required. Note: you must create an account with facebook to join. This is voluntary and not at all required, but what a great way to stay connected to other coop families!

The Vaccine Book

Published in 2007, this book promises to bring to parents evidence based information and practical suggestions. After being at a Conference with Dr. Robert Sears, where he talked about the book, I can assure you that whatever your tendency is in terms of vaccines, you will like it. A great help for those important decisions.

Submitted by Paulina Erices

You are Your Child's First Teacher,

by Rahima Baldwin Dancy

Dancy is a Waldorf early childhood educator. This book provides child development information and parenting information from birth to preschool. I especially enjoyed the inspiration I acquired while reading chapters 7-11. These chapters primarily focused on encouraging play-based learning and exploration as well as establishing rhythm at home in accordance with the seasons. ~Available for check out in our Parent Library

Submitted by Mary Lee

**If you are receiving this newsletter and would prefer it to be emailed instead, please contact Mary by email newsletter@cooperativeplayschool.com*