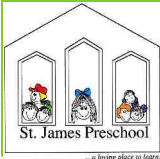


st. james preschool

FEBRUARY
2010



Dream A Little Dream

Sue Hardrath, Director

It is fun to dream, and lately, we have been doing some of that at the preschool – dreaming about a new playground. To make sure that we care for the physical aspects of our program (our equipment and facilities), we rehab and refresh everything in the preschool on an ongoing basis. Now, it is time to focus on the playground. Knowing this, we began our planning over a year ago, studying playgrounds, making a wish list, and endlessly discussing what we would like our playground to be. Using our mission statement and philosophy as a guide, we have thought about what our current playground says about us as a program, whether or not it provides the kinds of experiences we value for our children, and what kind of experiences it should provide. Through that process, we determined that we wanted our outdoor play space to extend the children’s learning, add to their experiences, serve multiple age groupings, and support our children as active learners. With all that in mind, we have chosen to naturalize our playground.

Natural playgrounds are areas where children can play with natural elements – much as many of us did growing up playing in nearby woods or our own backyards. Natural playgrounds focus on creating settings that enable the type of play that is most important to our young children – social play (pretending) and constructive play (building). Natural playgrounds encourage children to use their imaginations. They expose them to the smells, textures and wonders of nature. If you watch, you will regularly see our children on the playground choose to interact with nature in their play, picking up and organizing leaves and nuts or following chipmunks as they scurry in and out of their holes. By naturalizing our playground, we will be creating an outdoor play space that capitalizes on the children’s innate desire to interact with their environment.

A natural playground is typically very safe because it has no tall structures and no equipment with moving parts. It could include any of the following elements: hills which integrate climbing aspects and slides, shrubs for play forts or mazes, sand areas, plants to attract butterflies and birds, water features, paths that lead places, rocks and boulders for climbing or building, and tunnels. There are large open spaces for numbers of children to play together, and smaller, more intimate spaces that two or three children can share. While most of our current structures do not support our new design, some do, and they will remain on the playground.

Finally, it is important to note that natural playgrounds are green, and more aesthetically appealing without the rigid plastic structures, which are environmentally costly to manufacture, ship and dispose of. The materials for the new outdoor play space will come from local sources and native plants.

We hired a landscape designer who prepared a design that we reviewed at our January board meeting. (A copy of that design is included in this newsletter, so get out your magnifying glasses!). The facilities committee will meet to go over the plans in detail, and the final step will be for the church board of trustees to review and approve the plan. We will then display the design for everyone to see, and, over the summer, begin the actual work. We are very excited at the thought of turning our playground dreams into reality, and we are anxious for all of you to share in the excitement of that dream with us.



Happy Valentine’s Day ...

... to all of the parents, teachers, staff and students at St. James Preschool.

Make this a special day by showing the ones you love just how much you appreciate them. Pack a picnic lunch to share with your children. Make a special treat for an elderly neighbor. Put down your work, and spend a little extra time reading or playing with your little ones. Or simply share a kind word with someone you meet.

table of contents:

Black & Blues Bash	2
Book Fair Update	3
Playground Plans	4
Staff Spotlight	5
St. James UMC Events	5
Preschool Calendars	6

Join Us

FOR FUN AT
ST. JAMES
PRESCHOOL

Spring is Just Around the Corner

... and so is the 2010 St. James Spring Carnival

There is nothing better for preschoolers than an event planned just for their enjoyment! From moonwalks and face painting to pony rides and TumbleBus, there is fun around every corner. If you've never attended the spring carnival, you're in for a real treat. Speaking of treats, wait until you taste the fabulous food and baked goods served up at the carnival!



Plan to join us Saturday, April 24 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
All proceeds benefit St. James Preschool and its students.

The Spring Carnival is fun for the entire family, but it is no small feat to put this event together and make it a success. Luckily the extraordinarily capable Jennifer Entrekin is at the helm. In the coming weeks, Hollis Chamberlain will be recruiting a team of volunteers to support this effort. Volunteer opportunities include set-up, selling tickets, running games, providing baked goods for sale at the cake walk, clean-up and more. Please consider volunteering or sponsoring the event! For more information about sponsorship contact Jennifer Entrekin at j2entrekin@comcast.net.

You Are Cordially Invited to the Third Annual St. James Black & Blues Bash

The Third Annual St. James Black & Blues Bash

It's the biggest fundraiser of the year for St. James Preschool. It's an occasion to socialize with fellow parents. It's a chance to eat, drink and be merry. It's an opportunity to bid on (and win) amazing items. And it's lots of fun!

Come casual or in your Sunday's finest!

Date: March 27, 2010

Time: from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

(Blue Angel Reception: 6:00 to 7:00)

Location: The Ravinia Club

Tickets: \$80/couple, regular admission
\$150/couple, Blue Angel Sponsorship

How Can You Participate?

- Make a donation! Some of our biggest money makers from last year's auction were donations from our parents. Consider hosting a party or camp, donate a week or weekend at your beach or lake house. And when you eat at your favorite restaurant, ask if they'll donate a gift certificate. Contact Donations Chair, Amanda Hazelrigs at hazelrigs@bellsouth.net with your questions or donations.
- Consider being a Corporate Sponsor. Sponsorship levels are \$250 and \$500. For more information contact Ripple Alkire at ripplea@comcast.net.
- Come and bid!
- Become a St. James Blue Angel: You'll enjoy a pre-bash champagne reception, and browse and bid early!
- Questions? Contact Tara Neel, Auction Chair, at warren_neel@msn.com.



st. james preschool

our mission

At St. James Preschool we strive to put our mission into action every day, living by these words to the benefit of our children and their families:

"Our mission is to provide a loving place to learn where the seeds of Christian values and academic curiosity are sown in a safe environment and nurturing community of staff, parents, and church."

Volunteer Spotlight:

Maeghan Boyd, Facilities Coordinator

Maeghan and her husband, Todd, have three kids: Tate, Eden (who attends PreK at St. James Preschool) and Ivey – a St. James alumni who now attends High Point Elementary.

Maeghan has served several leadership roles at the preschool. Last year, she was the Ways and Means Chair, and she currently serves as the preschool's Facilities Coordinator, a role she has embraced wholeheartedly. In fact, our preschool's new natural playground plans are the result of her hard work and commitment.

A long-time vegetarian, Maeghan is originally from Arkansas, and she and her family are members at St. James United Methodist Church.

Maeghan was recently the subject of CBS This Morning's "Ambush Make-over" series, after which one of the stylists referred to her as "one hot mama!" We couldn't agree more!

Thank you Maeghan for all you do for St. James Preschool!

Summer Camp at St. James UMC

Here is just some of what St. James has in store for our little ones this summer. Registration materials will be available at stjamesatlanta.org in the coming weeks:

June 7-11 Club Scientific
June 13-18 Soccer Camp and "Put on your Thinking" Camp
June 21-25 Vacation Bible School
June 28-July 1 Basketball Camp
July 12 - 16 Camp Dogwood and FACE Camp
July 19-23 MAD Week
July 26-30 Club Scientific

Still to be planned: Toddler Camp; Kindermusik; Princess Ballet Camp

2009 Book Fair: A Resounding Success!

Special thanks to Nancy Guritz, Book Fair Chair, who did a masterful job managing the book fair this year. The fair was a great success with more than \$3,400 in total sales – more than twice the sales in 2008! Over 40 books were purchased for our classrooms and 11 were bought for the preschool library.



Thank you to the staff and teachers for "helping us help them." Also special thanks to Hollis Chamberlain, Volunteer Coordinator and all of the book fair volunteers: Megan Arena, Melinda Bailey, Elizabeth Barton, Swati Barve, Nancy Black, Tiffany Bok, Maeghan Boyd, Amy Cate, Hollis Chamberlain, Jennifer Dempsey, Courtney Deitz, Kara Dutta, Jill Elliott, Nan Ellis, Jennifer Entekin, Robin Fogle, Carolina Freyre, Liz Fusco, Kristi Gaffney, Christy Good, Laura Graber, Nancy Guritz, Amanda Hazelrigs, Sandy Hyman, Shawndell Hand, Kimberly Kritzer, Allison Massanelli, Mary Ann Mullins, Dana O'Donnell, Stephanie Roads, Lisa Simpson, Kellie Steedman, Cheryl Wellford and Dana Zahnle.

Interested In a Leadership Role at St. James Preschool?

St. James Preschool is unique in that Board positions are filled by parents who represent the interests of the students and fellow preschool families. We'd love for you to join us!

The Nominating Committee is accepting both self- and peer-nominations. Nomination forms can be found in the preschool office.

If you're interested in nominating yourself or someone else, please do the following:

- Review the position descriptions in the binder marked, "NOMINATING," located in the preschool office.
- Complete a form for either yourself or a fellow parent (please make sure the nominee is interested in serving before nominating them) and place it in the envelope marked "NOMINATING."

Keep in mind:

- Not every Board position is open for the coming year, so not every individual who is nominated will be able to serve in the 2010/2011 school year. However, nominations received this year will be maintained for review when future openings occur.
- Every nominee will have an opportunity to talk with a member of the Nominating Committee and will be kept updated on the status of his/her nomination.

If you have questions about the nomination process, contact Elizabeth Gregson at elizabethgregson@me.com or Kimberly Greaves at kbgreaves@earthlink.net. And be on the lookout for additional information through our weekly email blasts.

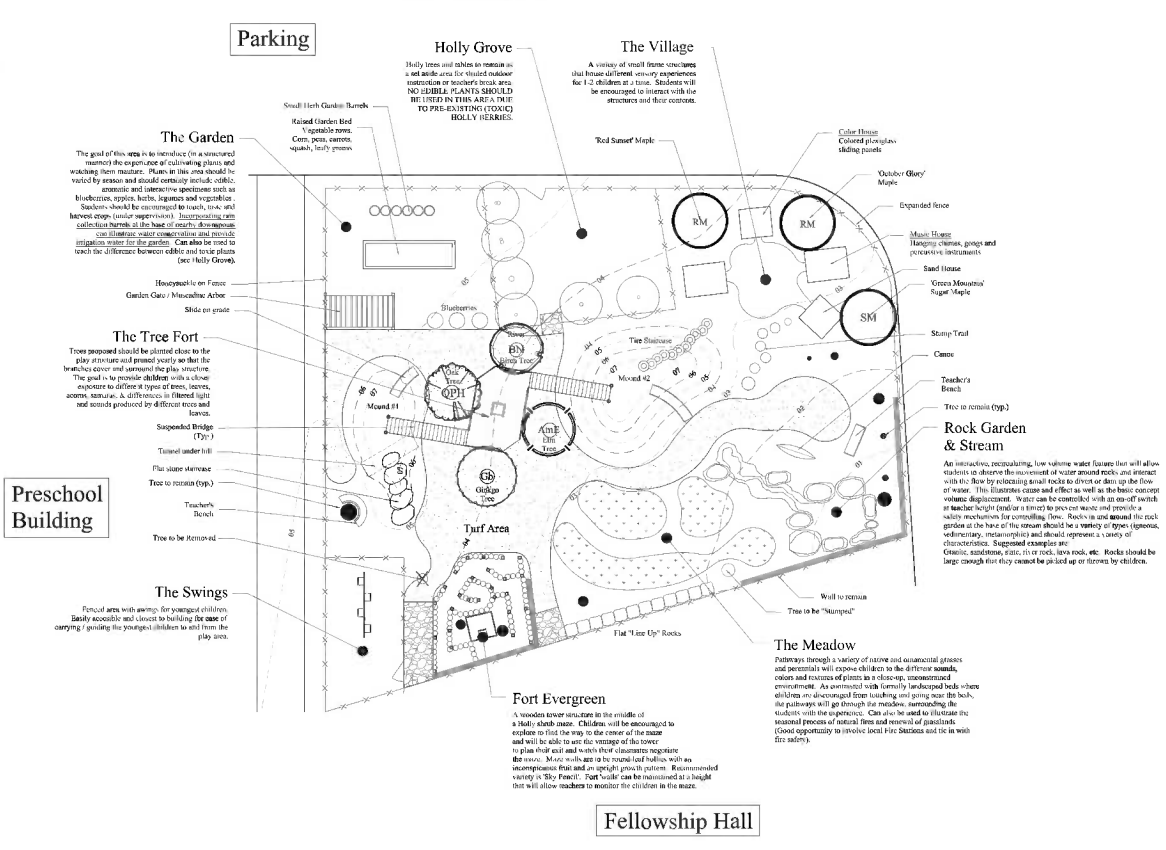
Haiti Earthquake Relief

As we all know, a devastating earthquake recently hit Haiti, a country already widely considered the poorest in the Western Hemisphere. An estimated 80 percent of the Haitian population was already living in poverty. Orphanages, hospitals, schools, homes and families vanished in an instant, and people are without the basic needs, including food and water. If you are able, please consider making even a small donation to the Red Cross or another credible aid agency. St. James and The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) are supporting efforts to aid Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake. See <http://stjamesatlanta.org/haiti-relief> for more details.

This concept has been designed to provide a number of different natural play experiences that will not only serve to entertain the children that interact with this space, but to expose them to nature and to teach them basic concepts about cause and effect, sound, light, exploration, balance, and movement. Each play area incorporates a different theme and different methods of encouraging children to enjoy the outdoors as a place of fascination and enjoyment. Material selections have been made to represent to students the great variety of trees, flowers, food crops and rocks that exist in nature. Students will be highly encouraged to explore these items.

Trees and shrubs have been selected for differences in leaf shape, color, texture and fall color as well as their various fruits (Acorns, samaras, etc). Boulders and stones have been suggested for various textures and properties (reflectiveness, porosity, etc).

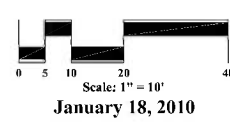
Food Crops have been suggested based on season, type of crop (fruit, vegetable, herb) and their relative ease of harvest.



Notes:

1. Topographical information is approximate and is based on field observations alone.
2. Drawings have been completed at the direction of the client to apply the concepts and theories expressed in "Last Child in the Woods" by Dr. Richard Louv. Some of the structures and materials may include additional (albeit slight) risk to children using the play area. Close supervision is recommended during use of the play area to prevent injury (either by accident or purposeful misuse of play structures).
3. NOTE: Any use of medium to large stones in the playground provides a possible source of materials for vandalism or destruction of property by trespassers.
4. Artificial turf may provide the most feasible conjunction of ideology and activity as it will hold up better than natural turf and appear more natural than a paved surface.

Concept Plan
St. James UMC
Preschool Playground



WHITE PINE
LAND STUDIO, LLC
 404.406.1577 info@whitepinelandstudio.com



A New "Natural" Playground:
Thanks to the St. James Preschool Community

Thank you to everyone who has supported the school through donations. With your contributions, we are creating a play space where our children's imaginations can take flight.

If you'd like to learn more about natural playgrounds, Sue will happily loan you the books that helped inspire the new plans:

- *Natural Playscapes - Creating Outdoor Play Environments for the Soul - Rusty Keeler*
- *Last Child in the Woods - Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder - Richard Louv*
- *The Great Outdoors - Restoring Children's Right to Play Outside - Mary S. Rivkin*
- *Plants for Play - A Plant Selection Guide for Children's Outdoor Environments - Robin C. Moore*

Staff Spotlight: Young 3s Teachers

Stacey Cimowsky, Suzanne Pratt, Camille Williams

Stacey Cimowsky

Members at St. James UMC, Stacey (originally from Arkansas) and her husband, Andrew, have a 14 year old son, Sam, an 11 year old daughter, Sara Beth, and several lovable pets: a dog, a cat, a rabbit and a fish! After working in corporate Human Resources for many years, Stacey chose to stay home with her children. While they attended the preschool, she served on the Board; then they graduated, but she never left. She is now in her ninth year as a teacher here. Stacey loves teaching preschool because she gets to see the world with a preschooler's curiosity, and she appreciates the opportunity to support her students' parents. During her free time, Stacey enjoys spending time with her family, doing yoga and gardening.

Suzanne Pratt

Originally from Murphy, North Carolina, Suzanne and her husband have twin sons, Adam and Andrew. She has a B.A. in psychology from UNC - Chapel Hill, and has been teaching at St. James for 21 years. In her pre-preschool life, Suzanne was a flight attendant for United Airlines out of Chicago. She believes you should never underestimate children - that they should be allowed to thrive in a creative environment where their imaginations can bloom with play-based activities, and they should spend time exploring nature. Suzanne loves teaching Young 3s. Her hobbies are step and kick boxing, reading, photography and gardening.

Camille Williams

Camille was born in Fairfax, Virginia. Her mother and father are both descendants from Trinidad and Tobago. Camille has seven brothers and sisters, and she falls in the middle. A graduate of Clark Atlanta University, she has been a nanny since age 16, and is now in her fifth year teaching at St. James. Camille enjoys shopping, spending time with her loving husband and beautiful daughter, Brianna, and watching her guilty pleasures: *Real Housewives of Atlanta* and *Desperate Housewives*. Her teaching philosophy is this: Each child deserves an opportunity to learn; whether the child understands the subject or not, they deserve the exposure. Camille loves to sing! She once sang with Whitney Houston in a Gospel Performance at the Kennedy Center.

St. James Preschool Hosts Accreditation Committee

Parents, please join us for
breakfast with the
accreditation committee!

February 8, 2010

8:45 a.m.

St. James Preschool is currently seeking SACS accreditation and will host the accreditation committee the week of February 8.

Parents are invited to join us for breakfast with the committee. This is an opportunity to express your appreciation for our preschool, the staff and our teachers.

If you plan to attend, please RSVP before January 29 by calling the preschool office at 404.237.7354.

St. James UMC February Events

St. James United Methodist Church offers many opportunities for kids and families of the preschool and community to get involved and have fun:

Wednesday Night Supper Programs

Dinner begins at 5:45 p.m. Programs start at 6:30 p.m.

- February 3: Mardi Gras Party! Join us for mask making and celebrating Mardi Gras. On the menu: bourbon chicken, bread, salad and dessert. For the kids: mini bagel pizzas.
- February 10: Performance of *Love's Cafe*; second performance on Sunday, February 14th immediately following the 10:55 a.m. worship service.
- February 17: Ash Wednesday Service. On the menu - soup, salad and sandwiches.
- February 24: Join us as we observe Lent and prepare to celebrate Easter. Children and adult programs offered. This is week one of a three-week program.

Spring Consignment Sale: March 4 - 6, 2010

One man's trash is another man's treasure. Don't miss the opportunity to pick up great toys, books, clothing and so much more at this Spring's consignment sale! If you have items you'd like to sell, visit stjamesatlanta.org and click on "Spring/Summer Consignment Sale." Here you'll find all the files for registration.

Show Your Appreciation!

Teacher Appreciation Week March 1 - 5

The teachers at St. James are second to none! These loving and dedicated women make it possible for us to have peace of mind, knowing each day we're leaving our children in the most capable and caring hands.

Take a minute to say an extra "Thank You," and show St. James teachers how much we love them!

february 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Elwood's	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 Accreditation Team Visit Doc Green's	9 Accreditation Team Visit	10	11 Valentine's Day Parties	12 Valentine's Day Parties	13
14	15 President's Day NO SCHOOL Chick-fil-a	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 Shane's Rib Shack	23	24	25	26	27
28						

Put Away the Pots and Pans: Eat Out for St. James!



You've already got enough on your plate! Take a night off and enjoy a dinner out with your family or friends. We've simplified the Dining Out schedule for the remainder of the 2009/2010 school year. Simply tell the restaurant you're from St. James when placing your order, and a portion of the proceeds will go to supporting St. James Preschool. We hope to see you there!

- 1st Monday: Elwood's
- 2nd Monday: Doc Green's
- 3rd Monday: Chick-fil-a
- 4th Monday: Shane's Rib Shack

Take Note:

Save Your Party Favors

If you have kids' meal toys or party favors sitting around your house unused, save them! They make great prizes for the Spring Carnival games. Collect them for now and we'll tell you soon where you can deliver them.

Need a Good Book?

Before you spend money at the bookstore, drop by the "Mom's Corner" at the children's library, where you'll find some great reads you can check out free of charge! The Mom's Corner is always accepting book donations, as well, so feel free to drop off books you've read and want to share with fellow parents.

ST. JAMES PRESCHOOL
4400 PEACHTREE DUNWOODY RD.
ATLANTA, GA 30342
TEL: 404.237.7354

plan ahead!

march

- 1 - 5 Teacher Appreciation Week
- 18, 19 Spring Conferences - NO SCHOOL
- 25, 26 Donuts with Dad
- 27 Silent Auction
- 29 Spring Music Program, 11:00 a.m.
(3s and Pre-K classes performing)
- 31 Easter Egg Hunts