

OUR COMMUNITY QUERY:

WHAT ARE SOME SIMPLE THINGS THAT WE CAN DO TO HELP OUR COMMUNITY?

— LOWER SCHOOL TASQUE

AMONG FRIENDS

FRIENDS ACADEMY MONTHLY E-LETTER | APRIL 2018 >> WWW.FA.ORG

EARLY CHILDHOOD VIDEO STORY



Hands-on!

*Building,
measuring,
exploring –
learning
best through
all senses*

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FROM THE HEAD

*An informational
e-newsletter
published monthly
for Friends Academy
parents, grandparents,
faculty/staff, trustees,
former trustees, and the
Alumni Board.*

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Friends Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities available to students at the school. Friends does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, financial assistance program, athletic and other school-administered programs.



Snakes, snow and sticks. It's early childhood education at its best. Experts in the field know that young children learn best through exploration. Forget the glittery pom-poms... All a child needs is what's available in the natural world!

This month's issue of *Among Friends* gives you a peek into the Early Childhood program at Friends Academy. Our 3s and 4s spend their days in the



ANDREA KELLY
HEAD OF SCHOOL

Withington House where the magic happens. Friends Academy's youngest learners remind us that the world is a place of wonder. In fact in our program at Friends Academy we view the environment as the third teacher, aligned with the classroom teacher and the curriculum. Children spend each day

exploring the outdoor world, a gift we never take for granted and time we know is well spent. Nature walks, leaf hunts, and cloud gazing in every season is the order of the day. Inspiration and adventure continues inside the Withington House. Blocks, paint and natural, found materials are our tools. Open-ended opportunities which allow for children to express their imaginings is our aim. The teachers are the guides supporting children as they build, create, and move in and out of their imaginary worlds. While at work indoors or outdoors our youngest learners ask questions, delve into their interests and expand their language about an ever expanding world.

An active imagination, authentic materials and open-ended experiences create the most important foundation upon which all future learning is built.

All the best,

Andrea



EARLY CHILDHOOD VIDEO STORY



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By KRISTIN MINUTO
EARLY CHILDHOOD DIRECTOR

Hands-on learning can also be thought of as experiential learning – the opportunity to learn through all senses, not just one or two. When young children can look, listen, smell, taste and touch, this ignites a fuller experience and caters to students who are may be different learners, be it visual, gross motor or others.

In the Friends Academy Early Childhood program, experiential learning is everywhere – from process art, to exploration of the natural world to building blocks. Through hands-on discovery, students begin to not only think critically, but their social and emotional development also deepens.



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Natural exploration and play

In our science and outdoor education curriculum, children have the opportunity to regularly explore the outdoor spaces of our ecologically diverse campus. Whether students are collecting leaves and acorns in the fall, looking for animal tracks in the snow during winter, or planting bulbs and flowers in the spring, children are developing everything from fine motor skills, to an appreciation of the natural world, and mathematical skills.

Discovering different items that they find in their natural element

allows children to begin to compare and contrast – a daffodil vs. a crocus asks children to stretch concepts of spatial awareness and use words such as “more than” and “less than” to describe size.

Children thrive outdoors. Their imaginations soar, their senses sharpen, and their innate sense of wonder is amplified. At Friends, there is so much nature to experience in a simple walk around our Quad.

Interestingly enough, risk-taking is a large part of natural exploration. When children jump off a log or

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CLICK TO WATCH VIDEO



VIDEO! Children... meet Turtle. Turtle... meet everyone! The natural world steps inside Early Childhood with a motley crew of slippery, shelled and feathered guests.



Pre-K students can't contain their excitement when a surprise guest is lifted out of the cooler.



A nature walk affords FA's youngest learners the chance to look, touch, smell, listen and reflect.

jump into a leaf pile they've just swept together, they are stepping out of their comfort zone. Classmates become peer mentors as confidence builds.

This year, Early Childhood took their nature studies one step further with a visit from The Theodore Roosevelt Nature Sanctuary, located in Oyster Bay Cove. Through supporting local resources such as TRNS, the goal was for the children to be introduced



Early Childhood students learn that Corny (the corn snake) likes to wrap herself around warm surfaces, like arms and legs.

to animals that can be found in their very own neighborhoods.

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The TRNS program helps to connect children to their neighborhood natural world as they learn about and touch real animals, including turtles and snakes.

Outside, a nature walk affords children the chance to search for birds commonly found in the area, such as finches and hawks.

Providing students with opportunities to experience the wonders of nature on our campus allows them to make connections between our school environment and that of their own backyards.

Block play

Along with natural experiences, the children in the Early Childhood program participate in open-ended play experiences on a daily basis, including Block play – a focal point in the day. Block play fosters a host of cognitive skills, including problem-solving, self-expression, geometry (shapes and sizes), spatial awareness (proximity of structures), collaboration and planning.

Children push creative boundaries by adding details to structures with repurposed materials, as well as naturally found items like rocks and sticks.

At the start of each week, children brainstorm together in a “block meeting” to discuss ideas for their coming builds. Many of the ideas are generated from actual experiences students have had and places they have visited.



Regular block play fosters a host of cognitive skills, including problem-solving, self-expression, geometry, spatial awareness, collaboration and planning.

Structures such as grocery stores, libraries, amusement parks, airports, and ice cream shops are just a few ex-

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By drawing self-portraits in black and white, Pre-K students can focus exclusively on the process of observation and translation.

amples of some of the ideas that have been shared and created.

Process art

Process takes center stage during art exploration. In one project, students are asked to draw parts of their face in black and white, while looking in the mirror at the same. In eliminating the act of choosing colors for aspects such as eyes, hair and skin, students can focus exclusively on how and what to draw.

In one art process project, teachers will present students with a tray of natural elements (pine cones, branches, etc.), paint and paper and allow imagination to take over. Teachers

give children an idea of “how,” but not “what;” ultimately, it is the students who can then explain the process.

Reggio-inspired

Through every hands-on encounter and experience, it is Reggio-inspired inquiry that guides our 3s and 4s to higher levels of critical thinking.

By asking and answering open-ended questions, such as “What do you think will happen if we put this cup of water outside and it’s 25 degrees?” children can form original hypotheses, explore cause and effect and then test their inquiries within an experiential program that values authentic, full body and mind learning.

Here at Parent Council, we are very excited for the community-building activities and meetings we have planned for 2018. We recognize that lives can be busy, so in order to more easily highlight how to get involved, Parent Council has created a monthly “Get Connected” e-mail that will provide you the exact dates, times and places about where and when you can connect with the FA Community.



**Parent Council – “Get Connected”
April 2018**

DATE	EVENT
Tuesday, April 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US Coffee – All are welcome (Jackson House, 8:15 am)
Thurs & Fri, April 19/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle School Play – “Starry Messenger” (Theater, 7 pm)
Saturday, April 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gideon’s Attic & Community Health Fair (Fieldhouse, 8 am-4 pm)
Monday, April 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent Council Lower School Milk & Cookie Story Hour (LS Library, 6-7 pm)

Get **CONNECTED**

Tues & Wed, April 24/25

- FA READS! Book Fair & Wind in the Willows Café (Dolan Center Atrium)

Friday, April 27

- Health & Wellness Parent Meeting – All are welcome (Mr. Baskind's conference room in Frost Hall, 8:15 am)

Saturday, April 28

- Junior Pre-Prom (KW Learning Commons, 7 pm) and Prom (Commons, 8 pm)
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Q:

Should you be reading [*Inside FA*](#) each week?

A:

Yes!
Why?

View video trailers of shows & concerts, glimpse into classrooms, and more. It's what you need to know this week at FA... in one bulletin... every Sunday... delivered to your inbox.



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Join us for the 19th Annual performance of OriginalWorks19 on Friday, March 23rd at 7:30 pm! Don't miss this evening of Upper School student original one-act plays, dance and compelling monologues. Includes high-school appropriate, mature themes; parental guidance for students 6th and under is required.

IN THIS ISSUE

Admissions >> Tomorrow tour our Middle School, Live! All School >> All-school Parent Meeting with [Walt Whitman](#) Arts >> A look at OriginalWork Athletics >> \$1,300 raised by L Early Childhood >> Rainbow L Lower School >> Grades 3-5 Pt Middle School >> This Thurs: I Uper School >> Reg. Tom Su



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Stay-cation or vacation, we hope you have a great week off with family and friends. Spring Break starts this Friday, March 30th; we'll see you back on Tuesday, April 10th!

IN THIS ISSUE



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As part of a collaborative peace and equality project, students in grades 6 and 9 used their Photoshop skills to create a collage. Scroll down to view a slideshow more photos.

IN THIS ISSUE

Admissions >> Walk-in Wednesday for All School >> March 1st All-Parent Meeting >> MS Play auditions Tues. & Wed.

Tomorrow, Mon. March 26th schedules work; Pajama Drive begins in 5th grade Friday Night - This Tuesday! Meet your classmate

Visit the Parent Info Hub



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Join us for this year's Jazz Concert, featuring performances from various Middle and Upper School Jazz ensembles. This Thursday, March 8th, 2018 at 7:30pm.

IN THIS ISSUE

All School >> RSVP to the Auction by this Wednesday! Arts >> Spend the summer with Artist's Institute: Creative Projects Athletics >> Join the 7th Annual Brian J. Hom Memorial Run on Saturday, March 17th