

COMPOST

The Parent Community Organization newsletter of Imagine Environmental Charter School **FEBRUARY 2009** Vol. 1, Issue 3



Our outdoor classroom

BY KATE LUCE ANGELL

This is the second article in a series of two about the Environmental Charter School's ongoing efforts to carry its environmental mission into every part of school. This article covers the ongoing development of the school's environmental curriculum.

Right now, during the most frigid days of winter, it's hard to remember that green things continue to grow.

But the single-digit temperatures haven't stopped Nikole Sheaffer, Principal McCann, and other staff members from continuing to develop what Mr. McCann calls "the core of our school" — the environmental curriculum.

Ms. Sheaffer pointed out there are three overlapping pieces to the curriculum project, the first being the creation of the curriculum itself. She's been at work on this piece since before the school year began, ensuring that the curriculum meets Pennsylvania's educational science standards as well as environmental education standards.

See Outdoor, page 2

A letter from Jon

I would like to thank ECS parents for their outstanding efforts in supporting our school programs during the first half of the year. The faculty and staff are looking forward to an outstanding third quarter that is full of academic challenge, outstanding student achievement, and environmental discovery. As we head into our third report period differentiated classroom instruction is increasingly driven by student achievement data. Several important curriculum components have been added to assist our students in meeting their academic goals. Firstly, **STUDY ISLAND**, a computer-based classroom center is designed to provide individualized instruction and practice for each child. Students will visit classroom computers daily and work independently on leveled content in reading and math. Parents will receive their child's login and password to provide additional

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ECSPCO.ORG HAS LAUNCHED!

The PCO is proud to announce that www.ecspco.org has launched. We invite you to come take a look around. The site is intended to be a one stop shop for all PCO related activities, announcements and information. On the site you will find all the ways you can help support the school, pertinent links to our partners, a calendar of PCO events and activities as well as a blog that will be used to keep you informed. Bookmark www.ecspco.org and keep checking back for up-to-date information. If you have any suggestions or comments on ways to improve the site, please send them to webmaster@ecspco.org.

Expanding the classroom beyond the building

Outdoor, from page 1

The second part, she said, is creating an integrated approach to the environmental curriculum that would extend into the math, reading/language arts and social studies arenas.

“We will use the environmental curriculum as a lens through which to see other subjects,” she said. “And then whatever experiences the kids have outside, the teachers will integrate that back into their classes.”

But by far the most important part of the curriculum, she said, “is ensuring the children are getting out of the classroom, having a unique experience with nature.”

For that, she added, “we absolutely need an outdoor classroom.”

That goal is more complicated than it might appear, she said, both because of the school’s limited outdoor space and the strict rules that govern use of Frick Park, a public space. And money required for outdoor education still needs to be found.

But although they conceded there were “a lot of challenges,” both Ms. Sheaffer and Mr. McCann are optimistic about creating such a classroom. Apart from applying for grants to fund outdoor learning projects, they attended a meeting with the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, January 15 that went well.

The Conservancy is a non-profit that helps protect and restore the city’s parks in partnership with the city and runs programs such as those at the Frick Environmental Center and the Urban EcoSteward Program.

Ms. Sheaffer said one solution to the problem of building an outdoor classroom in a public park might be to share it. “We could create a space that could also be used by Colfax students, and other nature groups, not just for ECS.”

Ms. Sheaffer said ECS is also beginning a partnership with the Audobon Society that may include maintaining a bird habitat near the school where the students can go to observe the birds.

Developing educational partnerships with local organizations and educators is the third overlapping piece of the curriculum project, said Ms. Sheaffer, and it requires a great deal of care.

One challenge is that the educational model ECS has in mind is so new. “Most environmental education programs are short — you go in, then you’re done,” said Ms. Sheaffer. “Our vision is more holistic, involving kids over the long haul.”

Building strong partnerships is also important, she noted, because these organizations could dramatically expand the resources available to educate ECS students.

“The program leaders at Frick Environmental Center, or the Zoo — they would be considered extended teachers for our school,” she pointed out. ECS is also working on a partnership with the Nine Mile Run Watershed Association.

Mr. McCann described this period of developing relationships as “a sensitive time,” and pointed out the need to move carefully and have patience.

“We want to do this right. We’re not talking about asking these organizations for \$15,000 — we’re asking for more like half a million.”

But Ms. Sheaffer said she was sure it wouldn’t be long before the students start to see the results of her and others’ efforts and planning.

One of the partnership opportunities she’s excited about, she said, was with Riverquest. “I am looking forward to seeing our kids out there, on the river, doing rigorous scientific inquiry.”

Whether they encounter nature on our rivers, in Frick Park, or through one of our new educational partners, what’s important to Ms. Sheaffer is that ECS students feel connected to the natural world.

“With kids, it doesn’t matter how you get them there,” she said. “We just need to get them connected.”

Granted: library receives \$1,000

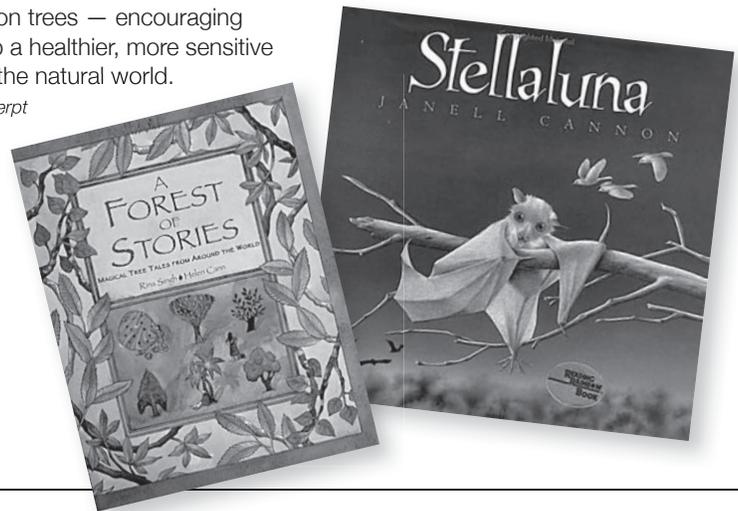
The ECS library is pleased to announce that it is the recipient of a \$1,000 grant from the Lois Lenski Covey Foundation. The grant was written by Heidi Green, mom of kindergartener Ben of Mrs. Meyer's class. Lois Lenski was an award-winning author and illustrator who wrote and/or illustrated more than 150 books, including the 1945 Newbery medal winner, *Strawberry Girl*. Grant applications were submitted by schools, libraries and groups nationwide. Librarian Kathy Hoel will use the ECS grant monies to purchase new nonfiction and award-winning fiction for the ECS library.

Principal McCann's library picks

The January Principal's book of the month was *A Forest of Stories: Magical Tree Tales from Around the World*. Storyteller Rina Singh has pulled together seven fantastical, thought-provoking folktales that ask us to rethink our relationship with trees and challenge us to look at them in new ways. From the story of the palm tree hat dances in a Nigerian marketplace to the tale of a fig tree that can cure blindness, these powerful stories help us to acknowledge our close connection with and reliance on trees — encouraging us to develop a healthier, more sensitive approach to the natural world.

-book jacket excerpt

February's book of the month is the well-loved *Stellaluna* by Janell Cannon. Separated from her mother when a night owl attacks and taken in by a bird family, the adorable fruit bat with the unusual name tries to adapt to her new surroundings. Readers learn about both bird and bat habits. Just as important, our students will be able to question if trying to be someone or something else is the best practice.



Letter from Jon: New initiatives

Letter, from page 1

access at home. Secondly, **FAST MATH** is another computer-based program designed to work on improving your child's automaticity around basic math facts. It is designed to be fun while dramatically improving speed and retention of math facts. Lastly, **READING A-Z** is a reading fluency program. It is a simple but effective way to improve the speed with which your child reads and comprehends content. Leveled stories will be coming home with your child that are designed to be read several times over the course of each week. Teachers will begin to assign these short stories as homework throughout this quarter. In an effort to provide parents a more detailed overview of these different instructional strategies, we have scheduled a series of curriculum orientation evenings. I hope to see you there.

The **ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS GROUP**, which meets from 6:30 – 8 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month, continues to work hard to ensure that school operations align with our stated environmental mission. New initiatives for January include (1) the completion of a school wide energy audit (2) the installation of low energy automated lighting zones in the lunchroom, library, auditorium, cafeteria, and bathrooms (3) the construction of a new recycling center outside the cafeteria (4) a commitment to purchase wind generated electrical power for our school, and (5) the installation of a solar panel to illuminate our outside bulletin board. In a continued effort to expose our students to additional environmental content, the school will be celebrating a series of themed weeks. Our students, parents, and faculty can look forward to themes such as energy, natural history, garbage, walking and cycling, trees,

recycling, birds. If you would like to join the Environmental Focus Group, please contact me here at school.

In a continued effort to improve school communications, the **TECHNOLOGY FOCUS GROUP** is working hard to redesign and replace our current Web site. Our goal is to move away from paper and to automate the vast majority of school communications. Teachers will be able to post all homework assignments to classroom pages, and parents will be given greater access. We would like to add e-mail and cell phone alerts for weather-related and emergency communications. In an effort to improve our current communications, we will also be installing a flat panel messaging board outside the main office. The board will scroll our current Web site calendar page and general announcements. I look forward to implementing these exciting changes as we continue an outstanding school year.

Meet Amy

My name is Amy Bianco, E-Day Deputy Director and newly appointed ECS Field Guide. As the new school Field Guide, I will be assisting teachers with outdoor lessons and activities. I will also be contributing outdoor/nature tidbits to the newsletter on a regular basis for your reading enjoyment. Whether it's a short feature on a native plant or animal or a journal entry from the latest student excursion, I promise to offer a little trivia and a little humor, which comes so naturally with nature!

I'm looking forward to working with the student body and teachers in promoting curiosity and wonder for the environment. Much can be learned from observing a busy ant colony or catching a snowflake; it's just a matter of taking the time to do it. To quote Tom Brown, expert animal tracker, "nature returns all devotions" and there are so many wonderful things to discover! Please feel free to e-mail me with any questions regarding unusual plants, bug oddities, or peculiar caterpillars that you may find while you're out and about. The ECS Field Guide is at your service!



10 ways to have a greener spring

1. Clean out the cleaners. Instead of commercial cleaners opt for nontoxic household staples such as baking soda, vinegar and lemon juice. They are safer and more cost effective. A 5%-vinegar solution kills 99% of bacteria. Add a few drops of detergent for a general purpose cleaner or a few drops of olive oil for furniture polish. For loads of recipes for non-toxic cleaning, check out www.care2.com/greenliving/make-your-own-non-toxic-cleaning-kit.html.

2. Hang a clothesline. Dryers can consume 10-15% of a household's energy, so every load helps. You may also find that sunlight disinfects and naturally bleaches. Clothes last longer when using a clothesline as well. Check out Project Laundry List for more information and inspiration, www.laundrylist.org/.



3. For many, spring cleaning means washing windows. Spray windows with a 5% vinegar solution, then rub dry with old newspaper to get the best shine.

4. Get a jump on your garden by restarting your compost pile and starting seedlings. It is also a great time to investigate a system for harvesting rainwater. Nine Mile Run Watershed Association has a great neighborhood rain barrel program. Visit www.ninemilerun.org for information.

5. Get rid of old toxic materials including the paint, cleaners, or CF bulbs hanging around in your basement or garage. To keep these material out of our landfills, take advantage of the collection event that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Household Hazardous Waste Task Force has scheduled for April. Disposal charge is only \$2.00 per gallon. More information can be found at www.swpahhw.org/e_faq.html.

6. Get your bike tuned up. Take advantage of the warming weather and start riding again. Check out Free Ride at <http://freeridepgh.org> for local biking information.



7. Indoor air quality is important so open your windows. According to www.treehugger.com, peace lilies, bamboo palms, and gerbera daisies are among the best house plants for filtering toxins from the air. For a natural air freshener, boil cinnamon sticks, cloves, or lemon peels.



8. Clean out your closets and organize a clothing swap with your friends. Outgrown clothes can easily be donated. Clothes too worn for donation can be cut up into cleaning rags.

9. Painting is a fast and easy way to spruce up your home – but choose low or no VOC paint. Be careful to not overbuy and dispose of extra paint responsibly.

10. Clear out old electronics. Functioning computers and computer parts can be donated. Goodwill pledges to reuse all possible pieces and responsibly recycle the rest. Visit www.reconnectpartnership.com. If you have a defunct television, it can be turned in at an area hazardous waste recycling event. See www.swpahhw.org/TVrecyclingevent.pdf for more information.



PHOTO BY PAUL G. WIEGMAN American sycamore in Frick Park near the confluence of Fern Hollow Creek and Nine Mile Run



Treespotting: Sycamores

BY PAUL G. WIEGMAN

Winter tree identification can be a challenge. There are no flowers, and most importantly, no leaves. The only distinctive part of the tree left is the bark.

Many species have similar bark, but there is one that stands out and is a cinch to identify in the winter—the American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*).

The older bark is reddish brown and has a flaky texture. Large plates of bark easily curl away from the trunk revealing lighter tan to almost white younger bark. The process of the bark of a tree naturally peeling away is called *exfoliation*.

When American sycamores exfoliate, the upper parts of the tree have a multicolored red-brown and gray-white appearance which can be seen from a distance. No other native tree has a similar look, so sycamores are instantly identifiable.

American sycamores are abundant along stream banks and on moist bottomlands. They do tolerate drier upland sites. There are some fine examples of the species throughout Frick Park, but the individuals that really stand out are in clusters in the broad open valley bottom around the junction of Fern Hollow Creek and Nine Mile Run.

The wood of the American sycamore is hard and difficult to split. Because it lacks prominent grain, it has been bypassed for furniture but is favored for

use as tool handles, butcher blocks, and wooden utensils. Another common name for the tree is buttonwood. That comes from the use of the wood to make inexpensive buttons before plastic dominated.

Next to Frick Park, along the streets of Regent Square, another member of the same family of trees is commonly found.

The same characteristic exfoliating bark is distinctive, and at times a nuisance, with large plates of old bark littering the lawns and sidewalks. This is the hybrid London plane tree (*Platanus X hispanica*). The tree is thought to be a cross between our native American sycamore (*P. occidentalis*) and the oriental plane (*P. orientalis*). It was first found in Spain in the 17th century where both the other species were planted together.

London plane is very tolerant of poor air quality and doesn't mind compacted soil, so it was widely used as a city street tree in temperate regions of the world from Shanghai to Chicago and Paris to Pittsburgh; however, it has drawbacks. The tree has short stiff hairs on the leaves and seeds. These are shed and can be an irritant exacerbating asthma.

Next time you want to get a look at both of these species walk through the Fern Hollow valley, up the Nine Mile Run ravine, back to Braddock Avenue and along any side street. This will take you past both American sycamores and London plane trees.

Java With Jon

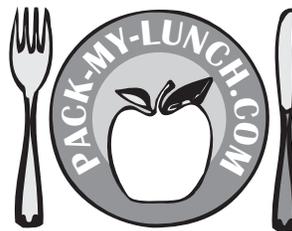


Bring YOUR hot topics—and your mug—to this informal gathering with our principal each month at ECS.

All parents are welcome!

Jon's Java Schedule:
Monday, March 2
Thursday, April 2
8:30 - 9:30 a.m.
ECS Cafeteria

Would you like to provide your child with a wholesome, delicious packed lunch every day?



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Visit Pack-My-Lunch.com for more information

What's **going on** here?

Local fun for your family

comPOST is looking for interesting family and eco-friendly events for the April/May Issue. Please send your ideas and events to newsletter@escpc.org.

Every Thursday
7 – 9 p.m.

FAMILY NIGHT SKATE

Schenley Park
www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/parks/html/schenley_skating_rink.html

The skating rink on Overlook Drive offers a variety of sessions all winter. On family nights, one child skates free with each \$4 adult admission. Children must be accompanied by a paying adult.

February 20 - 21
6:30 p.m. – 10 a.m.

DINO-ROAR! OVERNIGHT ADVENTURES

Carnegie Museum of Natural History
www.carnegiemnh.org/info/calendar.htm

Travel back in time to spend the evening in the world of the dinosaurs! Learn

more about our Mesozoic marvels as you take part in a variety of hands-on dinosaur activities. No bones about it — this is your best opportunity to explore *Dinosaurs in*

Their Time up close! Registration required.



February 22
2 – 4 p.m.

PITTSBURGH PARKS CONSERVANCY: WINTER GATHERING

Grand View Scenic Byway Park
www.pittsburghparks.org/_86.php

Learn the history of and future plans for Pittsburgh's newest regional park, and tour some of its highlights. RSVP Jeff Bergman, Nine Mile Run Watershed Association at jeff@ninemilerun.org.

February 24
5:30 – 7 p.m.

VENTURE OUTDOORS: GLOWSTICK SNOWSHOEING

Boyce Park
www.ventureoutdoors.org/Activities.aspx

We'll start with an introduction to snowshoeing and then tromp around in what snow is there. As the sun sets, the dark sky will sparkle with stars, and we will glow red, blue, yellow, and green! Fee includes snowshoe rental. Registration required.

February 28
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

SNOWSHOEING WITH VENTURE OUTDOORS

Pittsburgh Children's Museum
www.pittsburghkids.org

Get a taste of showshoeing *indoors* at the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh. Venture Outdoors will help you pull on a pair of showshoes and try the sport on a simulated snow terrain track. Free with Museum admission.

March 7
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

BLACK, WHITE + READ ALL OVER: WALTER DEAN MYERS

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
www.pittsburghlectures.org

Join award-winning children's author, Walter Dean Myers, for a fun-filled program, complete with a question-answer session and the opportunity to get personalized copies of his fabulous books. Myers' books "tell it as it is," exploring African-American lives and culture. Advance tickets required.

March 14
11 a.m. – 12 p.m. and 1– 2 p.m.

MAPLE SUGARING FESTIVAL

Boyce Park Nature Center
www.alleghenycounty.us/parks/calendar/boycenc.aspx#winter

Sample the sweetness of the maple season. Learn the history and lore of the maple sugaring process. Experience first-hand how to identify maple trees, tap, collect sap and then reduce it to syrup! Pre-registration required. Free event. For more information, contact Tammy Watychowicz at 724-733-4618



March 21
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

BLACK, WHITE + READ ALL OVER: STEVEN KELLOGG

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
www.pittsburghlectures.org

Steven Kellogg lives in an old farmhouse and so does his Great Dane Pinkerton, the inspiration for *Pinkerton, Behave!* Kellogg writes and draws about more than big dogs with over 100 books to his name, including *The Pied Piper's Magic*. Advance tickets required.

March 28
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

MAPLE MADNESS

Audobon Society of Western Pennsylvania
www.aswp.org/events.html

When the sap runs, it's maple syrup season! Our annual event features a pancake brunch and living history trail where the entire family can investigate the sweet mystery of turning sap to syrup. Reservations requested.

March 28
10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

PITTSBURGH PARKS CONSERVANCY: SOIL AND WATER

Riverview Park, Activities Building
www.pittsburghparks.org/_86.php

Learn about different types of soil and how they are affected by water with local soil scientist John Buck.

March 29
1:30 p.m. – 6 p.m.

GLOBAL WARMING: MAKING THE TRANSITION TO A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD

Phipps Conservatory
my.pennfuture.org/site/Calendar

Speakers include: Jerome Ringo, president of the Apollo Alliance; James Thorne, senior director of science, Natural Lands Trust; Lindsay Baxter, sustainability coordinator, city of Pittsburgh; and PennFuture staff members. A host of opportunities will be presented to help our community take action and to get involved. Registration required.

Reindeer Penny Wars cultivated **giving and goofiness**

BY KATE LUCE ANGELL

December 19 saw Principal McCann and several ECS teachers sprouting antlers — all in a good cause.

The Reindeer Penny Wars ran from December 1-19, as students voted for who would impersonate Santa's team by dropping their change into canisters with the teachers' pictures on them.

The winners (losers?) included McCann, who played Rudolph, and Curriculum Co-ordinator Miss Priganc, who was Dancer. Kindergarten teachers Mrs. Brunger, Miss Raimondo, and Mrs. Meyer were Prancer, Dasher, and Donner, while aide Miss White was Cupid. Second grade teacher Miss Wilson was Vixen, while third grade teachers Mrs. Rapport and Mr. Burke were Comet and Blitzen.

Miss Priganc noted some teachers went beyond antlers to dress as their name-



ECS kicked in \$100, bringing the total collected to \$960. Originally slated to be given to a local charity, Miss Priganc noted the funds went to help a family whose children had been enrolled at Imagine Academy at Sullivant, in Columbus, OH.



sakes, and that Mr. Schreiber led a holiday sing-along. "It was pretty fabulous, if I do say so myself."

On December 6, Julia Soledad and four of her children, ages 5 through 12, died in a fire at their town home. Her two eldest children survived.

Miss Priganc said that while the Reindeer Wars were "a fine chance to let the staff make fools of themselves," they were really about the message of giving to others.

"The holidays can be a time of 'gimme, gimme' for young children," she said. "This event reminds them of how important it is to give back."



Marriage and Sleep Study

**Are you married?
Do you and your
spouse sleep in the
same bed together?**



Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh are interested in couples and how they sleep together.

You might be eligible to participate in this research study if you and your spouse are:

- healthy, married, and between the ages of 18 and 45 years old,
- have a regular sleep schedule,
- sleep in the same bed together, and
- do not have sleep, psychiatric, heart, or other major medical problems.

Couples who complete the study will be compensated up to \$250 and will be entered into a lottery with a chance to win an additional \$500.

For more information, call 412-246-6674

Gingerbread madness!

BY KATE LUCE ANGELL

On December 12, Imagine ECS families got together in the school's cafeteria for a little home construction. Instead of boards and plaster, these little homes were made of graham crackers, assorted candy, and lots of white frosting, as kids and parents gathered for what organizer Angel Lerian hopes is the school's first annual Gingerbread House Event.

Angel estimates about 28 families assembled the holiday house of their dreams with the help of volunteers Barbara Hicks, Nicole Amole, Beth Lott, Kate Brennan, Kerry Fogarty, Cheryl Ritts Watt and Gretchen Zelinsky.

"Plus lots of clean-up help," added Angel, who planned the event along with Cheryl Ritts Watt, and Beth Lott. "It was a great way for ECS families to get together."



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Volunteer hub is here

Get involved!

The ECS PCO has purchased a license to use www.volunteerhub.com to organize its many helpful and committed volunteers. The site will enable Kate Brennan, the chair of the Parent Involvement committee, to keep track of opportunities to help out ECS teachers and staff both in and out of the classroom. Interested parents who have received the necessary clearances from the state will be able to register with Volunteer Hub to choose either individual assignments or to volunteer on a weekly or monthly basis.

Volunteer Hub will make it easier for parents to volunteer, and for Kate to fulfill the requests of teachers, as well as cut down on the volume of e-mails regarding volunteer opportunities. The PCO is currently setting up the site to make it as easy as possible for parents to get involved; check the PCO's message board at www.ecspco.proboards59.com frequently for an announcement that we are ready to register volunteers.

For more information about volunteering at ECS, or about registering with Volunteer Hub, contact Kate at parentinvolvement@ecspco.org.



A NEIGHBORHOOD
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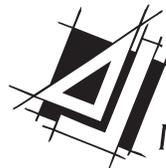
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Get fresh

A seasonal, money-saving recipe from John Lash

This recipe for vegetable stock can be made for under \$10 and makes 4 quarts. It is much more economical than buying a store brand and can be frozen for storage, as well. Sautéing the vegetables until caramelized brings out more flavor. The produce listed is just a suggestion; just about anything can be used.

VEGETABLE STOCK

ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp canola oil
- 6 carrots, unpeeled, chopped
- 4 onions, peeled, chopped
- 8 celery stalks, rinsed, chopped
- 4 tomatoes, quartered
- 2 potatoes, loose dirt removed, chopped
- 1 garlic head, loose skins peeled, chopped in half
- 1 bunch parsley
- 1 tsp whole peppercorns
- 3 bay leaves
- 4 quarts water, heated separately
- 1 cup cheap but drinkable white wine (optional)

directions:

1. Heat oil in large stock pot. Add all vegetables except the garlic and parsley. Sauté until caramelization begins, about 15 minutes.
2. Add garlic, parsley, peppercorns, bay leaves and hot water.



3. Bring to boil, then lower heat to a simmer. Cook for 35-45 minutes.

4. If using wine - add now. Cook for additional 10 minutes. The key to cooking with wine is to use something from the

state store, not a "cooking wine" from the shelves of Giant Eagle. Even bag or jug wine will give you decent flavor.

5. Strain stock.



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P A I R . C O M

5

QUESTIONS

Get to know an ECS community member better through 5 inane questions...this month, **Joe Burke, Third Grade Instructor**

1. If you could take any Steeler out to lunch, who would you pick, and what would you ask him?

I would take Mike Tomlin out to lunch and ask him what it's like to be the youngest winning Super Bowl coach in history.

2. What music inspires you to sing along loudly in the car?

My students will tell you that it's best when I don't sing at all, but I do occasionally sing along with Bob Dylan or my other favorite bands.

3. What is your favorite spot in Frick Park?

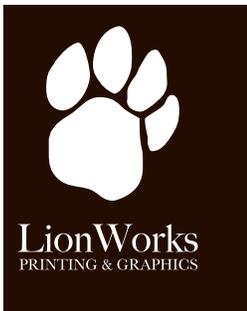
My wife and I live in the neighborhood so I get to walk in the park a lot. Anywhere on the Braddock Trail is nice.

4. Fries on top, or on the side?

A D's Big Ben Burger with fries on the side please.

5. What has been your most surprising moment at ECS this year?

Honestly, I was surprised by how much money ECS students were willing to raise to see me sing and wear reindeer antlers! Little do they know I used to do that sort of thing for free. I was the Dragon for the Warren Area High School Dragons, the Knight for the Sycamore Middle School Knights, McGruff the Crime Dog, and once I was even Barney the Purple Dinosaur.



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AT THE WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Advertise in comPOST

The Parent Community Organization newsletter of Imagine Environmental Charter School is distributed to every family attending ECS in addition to many Partner Organizations and a broad range of community support groups. ComPOST is also available online at www.environmentalcharterschool.org/

Insertion Fees:

1/8 pg (3 5/8" w x 2 3/8" h)\$15
1/4 pg (3 5/8" w x 4 7/8" h)\$24
1/2 pg (7 1/2" w x 4 7/8" h)\$42
full pg (7 1/2" w x 10" h)\$80

Deadlines:

All materials are due the 9th of each month for publication in the next month's issue.

Submission Guides:

Preferred ad format: high-resolution, press-optimized PDF file. Acceptable formats: InDesign, Quark, Photoshop and Illustrator. For a small fee, we will design your ad!

Send inquiries/files to:

newsletter@ecspco.org

Special **Thanks**

MOMS CLUB PITTSBURGH-EAST held a book drive during their holiday party on Monday, December 8 to benefit Imagine ECS. They collected 45 books and their support in helping the school expand the library is deeply appreciated.

The PCO would like to extend a special thank you to **POINT BRUGGE** in Point Breeze. With their help, we were able to give Principal McCann and his wife a night out to show how much we appreciate all the work he has been doing on behalf of our children.

With the help of the PCO and the community, the school collected a total of 759 lids for the Stonyfield KaBOOM! playground contest. The winner will be notified in mid-February and will be posted on the Stonyfield Web site in March. Thanks to the **EAST END FOOD CO-OP, MOMS CLUB PITTSBURGH-EAST, KATERBEAN,** and **REGENT SQUARE CIVIC ASSOCIATION** for helping us to collect the lids.

PACK-MY-LUNCH offers an option for customers to donate to the PCO while making their lunch purchases. The first quarterly donation in December totaled \$19. Thanks to Pack-My-Lunch and all of its generous customers for this contribution. Find out more about Pack-My-Lunch at www.pack-my-lunch.com.



MOMS Club collects books for ECS during their holiday party.

Help Spread the Word!

ComPOST is looking for an outgoing volunteer to assist with marketing and distribution in the local community.

E-mail newsletter@ecspco.org if you have a couple free hours and would like to help.



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Small grants for **big** ideas

As part of fulfilling our mission to support the school's faculty, administration, staff, students, and community, the PCO has voted to establish a process for distribution of funds for special projects. These can include field trips, guest speakers, equipment, or other services. We have drafted an application for those who are interested in pursuing funding from the PCO; the PCO Executive Committee will examine each application and make decisions monthly. Applications will be available at www.ecspco.org.

Requests for funds are limited to \$250, but "mini-grants" are anticipated to be in the \$100 range. If your project exceeds \$250, please feel free to contact the PCO Executive Committee to inquire about organizing a fundraiser that will fulfill your specific need.

comPOST

December Issue Correction

Volunteer names in the "You Are Here" article (page 6) were incorrectly reversed. Please note that Stephanie Land shared her volunteer moment from the Fall Festival and Laurie Kellern gave us a wonderful story from her experience working in the library. We apologize to these volunteers and our readers for the mix-up.

To contact us, e-mail:
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