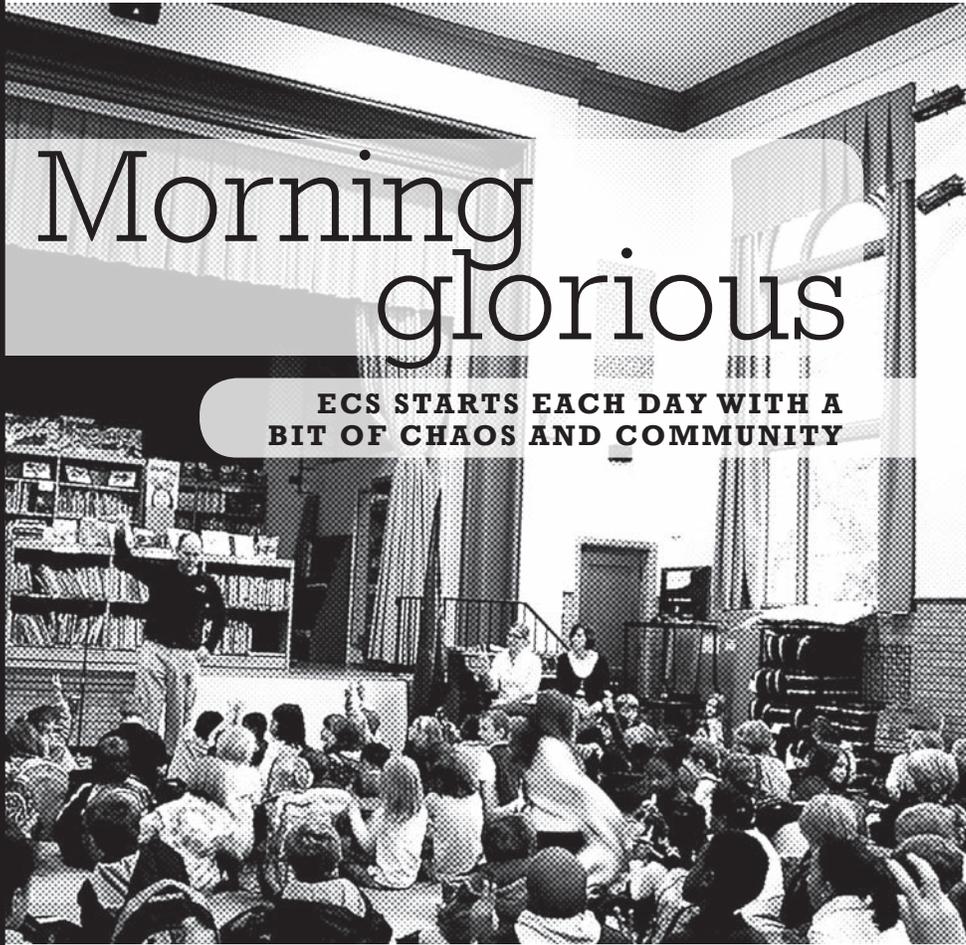


COMPOST

The Parent Community Organization newsletter of Imagine Environmental Charter School **DECEMBER 2010** Vol. 3, Issue 2



Morning glorious

ECS STARTS EACH DAY WITH A BIT OF CHAOS AND COMMUNITY

A letter from Jon

ECS Parents:

Movement towards school expansion is rapidly accelerating with the recent announcement of the City's Planning Commission's meeting scheduled for December 7th. This scheduled meeting is part of the public process mandated with all applications of this type in the city of Pittsburgh. As per the process, the City of Pittsburgh Planning Commission will review the application submitted by ECS and vote at the conclusion of the meeting.

As with any public process, especially those associated with urban building projects, opposition is part of the landscape. To contest the opposition before this point, ECS has engaged the community at several large meetings, as well as met individually with neighbors to understand concerns about the location of our satellite campus in Park Place.

See JON, page 5

BY MIKE BENNETT

When Principal Jon McCann calls morning meeting to order, students are still making their way, in trickles and occasional small groups, into the auditorium at ECS. Principal McCann claps three times, careful to stay near the microphone that his booming voice usually makes unnecessary. The students instantly respond with three claps of their own, over two hundred students acting in unison briefly to make the loudest noise they can. "Good morning everyone," Mr. McCann says brightly. The students answer as one, "GOOD-MOR-NING-MIS-TER-MC-CANN." Immediately afterward, they all fall silent.

Except, of course, that "silent" is a relative concept when we're talking about elementary school students. Principal McCann re-

See MORNING, page 2

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Morning meeting brings ECS together

MORNING, from page 1

minds the students to remove their hats and conclude their conversations quietly, waiting patiently but meaningfully at the front of the auditorium before choosing two students to introduce themselves and lead the Pledge of Allegiance. At the back of the auditorium by the modular walls that compose the Environmental Science classroom the ever-present group of parents who have stayed to watch the meeting provide a helpful thumbs-up after each student's introduction (name, grade, teacher) to show that she or he has spoken loudly enough to be heard. The entire student body rises to recite the Pledge, and the meeting can proceed.

ECS students are like those at any other elementary school: they refuse to pay attention, they roll their eyes at things adults say when they think those adults aren't watching. They struggle to control themselves, or rather they don't want to control themselves, so teachers must exercise that control, repeating instructions, reminding them to stop talking to one another. The teachers are reinforcing behavior, calmly but firmly. Sometimes it works. Every day, the students are learning what is expected of them in this particular school. Every day, they are learning how to be part of the common culture of the school.

On any given day of the week, it is one grade's turn to receive the assembled school's attention; today is a second grade day, which is why the students who led the pledge were second graders. So today five students from a second grade class present mini-commercials, advertisements for the grade's fledgling worm-supply business. They are making worms available for sale so that their customers can begin composting with them, turning kitchen scraps into fertilizer with the help of the worms' digestion. (It's better—and less stinky—than it sounds.)

Each of the students has created a poster, on the back of which they have composed a brief commercial pitch, and a puppet, made out of a tube sock decorated with magic markers. They've examined this enterprise from the multiple perspectives of reducing landfill waste, encouraging gardening, and creating a small business to support school activities. The project covers writing, art, science, and math, and integrates the school's environmental curriculum seamlessly. It is also, as the students reluctantly recite their

brief commercials into the microphone in Principal McCann's hand, profoundly adorable.

Next, Vice Principal Kristen Priganc takes the floor with a disintegrating nerf football in hand. She reminds students that this month's Shared Value is respect. The football in question is clearly ruined, the cover flapping open and revealing the foam beneath. It's part of a cache of new playground equipment that the school purchased a few days ago. Respecting the school and each other, Ms. Priganc

says, means taking care of the things we all play with on the playground. She encourages all the students to remind one another to treat playground equipment with respect by putting it away at the end of recess and refraining from, well, tearing the covers off the nerf footballs.

Principal McCann envisioned starting the morning with a daily assembly initially as an opportunity to "speak to the students as a whole body" every day. It replaces the usual morning announcements, but it also makes

In their own words: 4th graders' take on morning meeting

BY MS. HANIS, COMPASS CLUB

What separates our school from the rest of the schools? Well, there are many reasons why ECS shines but one main reason that seems to be a favorite for ECS students is the morning meetings. A jammed packed twenty minutes full of sharing, caring, learning, entertainment, acknowledging others, and a coming together as a daily "family community." There are so many different positive aspects of our morning meeting. The morning starts with a chipper "hello, ECS students," from our principal, Mr. McCann. He picks two students every day to greet the crowd and present the morning pledge. This allows students to practice their voice projection and presentation skills. A teacher or parent in the back gives thumbs up if he can hear their voice during their greeting. On Mondays, we have a special "tie" ceremony for students who made good choices all week. Each teacher selects a student tie person of the week, tells the school why the student was chosen, and then presents the student with a necktie to reward them. These ties allow others to recognize their accomplishment as a good community citizen.

Have you heard a "buzz" in our morning meetings? That special buzz is our very own character education Bee. He buzzes

around to give the monthly character education word. Also, he really buzzes when classrooms fill their honey pots with compliments for making appropriate choices by "beeing" good. Once they fill their pot, the bee lets the classroom pick a reward from his honey pot. Some rewards include extra Music, lunch with a favorite teacher, or a teacher wearing a funny hat! The fun does not stop there because the character education continues through "bully free and problem solving skits" put on by staff and students. Not only are they learning a lesson, they are being entertained by really talented performers! When students realize that they have the power to stop a bully, or realize what they were doing was actually bullying, they can make a positive impact in their community. Students also shine when their class is chosen to share for the day. Such sharing includes 2nd grade's commercials about worms, 1st grade's nature journals, and 5th grade's Power Points about birds. Friday is filled with birthday celebrations. If you have a birthday during the week, the entire school will sing you a birthday song! Now, that is a really big birthday celebration! The environmental theme is rolled into a cool nature adventure with weekly environmental trivia questions such as "Who is Jane Kirkland?" There are more events that happen during morning

a community—not only of each classroom but of the entire school. He describes the main goal of morning meeting as modeling positive behavior, whether through gentle reminders to be responsible for the cleanliness of the school and the state of its equipment, or through more formal programs like the anti-bullying demonstrations the teachers act out, to the amusement and edification of the assembled students. Quiet, respectful behavior is shown to be the “default setting” for ECS students.

Coming together every morning as a school, students are brought face to face, class to class, and grade to grade. Contrast this with the practice of conducting the morning’s business in homerooms, each class listening to the principal read the announcements and lead the Pledge. In that model, there is no interaction between classes or grades, no mutual recognition of students’ faces. Each class remains cloistered in its own room, students glumly staring at their desks, enduring—or ignoring—the drone from the PA speaker.

Morning meeting is finally about establishing a school culture by gathering all the students every day to see and hear and experience the same things. It’s imperfect and chaotic and unfinished. It admits differences in all things, but reinforces common bonds; some students need reminding to take off their hats, stop talking and pay attention, and many if not all students must be told again and again to respect the school, its teachers, and one another. At morning meeting, they learn to do all these things and more, one day at a time.

meeting that influence our daily life here, but to get a better understanding of why students enjoy the morning meeting let’s see through the eyes of our 4th grade students.

4th grade Compass Club students interviewed their peers to ask the following question;

Q: “Why do you like the morning meeting?”

Interviewer Sophie Lyons, 4th grade, Compass Club, Ms. Stewart



A: “It’s interesting, they tell you what’s happening in school. People do presentations, and how they announce the honey

pots.” - *Ana Chelosky, 4th grade, Ms. Stewart*

A: “I like it because it is a good way to start your day.” - *Quincy Graham, 4th grade, Ms. Stewart*

Interviewer Kyley Coleman, 4th grade, Compass Club, Mr. Burke



A: “My favorite thing is the birthdays.” - *Montea, 4th grade, Mr. Burke*

A: “I like the honey pots.” - *Terrance, 4th grade, Mr. Burke*

Interviewers Brynnie Luedde and Nile Ross, 4th grade Compass Club, Ms. Franklin

A: “When we get to celebrate birthdays, and we get to sing real loud. Also, I like the skits.” - *Tyrese W., 4th grade, Ms. Franklin*

A: “I like the people who go up to speak and present. I also like the birthdays when the teachers go up and don’t tell their real age. Morning meeting is really fun!” - *Asia C., 4th grade, Ms. Franklin*

A: “You get to yell on Friday CHA CHA CHA!” - *Cole, 4th grade, Ms. Franklin*

A: “I get to talk to people and get to scream on Fridays. I like listening to other people.” - *Mia, 4th grade, Ms. Franklin*

There are many reasons to like morning meeting! The equation is different every day but the answer is always the same... our morning meetings make students feel a sense of belonging in a positive family community. If you have never attended a morning meeting at ECS, we invite you to join our family community and watch first hand why ECS IS THE BEST!



Partnerships: ECS cares for waterways with RiverQuest and Creek Connections

BY BECKY RANDALL

ECS students in the 4th and 5th grades are learning about the waterways of southwestern Pennsylvania thanks to partnerships with two amazing local organizations, RiverQuest and Creek Connections. Both of these organizations are providing hands-on experiential education to students and faculty, teaching environmental science while fostering a personal investment in the health of our native ecosystems.

RiverQuest describes its educational philosophy as "Tell me, I'll forget; Show me, I might remember; Involve me, I'll understand." (www.riverquest.org) The parent organization, Pittsburgh Voyager, Inc. was established in 1991 by "a group of parents who wanted to use Pittsburgh's rivers as an experiential classroom to get children excited about science, mathematics and learning." ECS shares this vision.

With the help of Jeff Jordan, head of RiverQuest's educational department, ECS's partnership began this year's 4th and 5th grade students and will continue through 8th grade. Laura Micco writes that this "multi-year/multi-grade program mimics the vertical planning curriculum we do at ECS. This way, students are returning to RiverQuest every year, learning deeper information about the rivers in Pittsburgh and how to discover if they are healthy or not." With this multi-year approach, ECS students can track and compare water quality and learn first-hand about what is happening to the rivers over time.

In November, the 4th grade headed out on the RiverQuest boat, The Explorer, one of the world's first green passenger vessels. On these field trips, students practice the water testing skills that they learned when staff from RiverQuest came to the school. This spring, it will be the 5th grade's turn on the river to test and gather more data.

These testing skills are aided by a partnership with Creek Connections, an Allegheny College collaboration. (www.creekconnections.allegheny.edu) Creek Connections' liaison, Ms. Laura Branby, has visited the school and provided the 4th and 5th grades with both professional expertise and equip-

ment to do water testing throughout the year. What better place to apply this than at the Urban Eco-Stewards site in Frick Park?

Testing the creek water in Frick Park helps students see what is happening to (and living in) the small waterways that find their way to our local rivers.

Ms. Micco writes that the students "use a pH meter, turbidity test, dissolved oxygen test and thermometer to monitor the health of the stream." The students look for specific creatures or "indicator species" to monitor the health of the water. One such example is the mayfly nymph, which "can only live in clean water because their gills are located on the outside of their body. Therefore if you find a lot of mayfly in a body of water you can conclude that the water quality might be good." Students have tested the creek once a month since the beginning of school and they will compare what they find there with what they find in the rivers.

Partnering with Creek Connections doesn't end with the students. Ms. Branby also plays a crucial role in the continuing education of ECS faculty by teaching them about water quality and how to apply these tools in their classes. ECS's commitment to continuing

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education is a vital part of what makes ECS such a special school.

All of the data acquired from the rivers and creeks will come full circle in April. ECS will be in attendance at the Creek Connections Student Symposium where a select number of 4th and 5th graders will present the students' findings. ECS's partnerships with RiverQuest and Creek Connections help students to not only learn about their local environment, but to become conscientious citizens, dedicated to the health of the world around them.

JON, from page 1

Our traffic team has researched, reviewed, and revised potential traffic and parking plans to best meet the current and future vehicular and pedestrian traffic of the area. Finally, ECS has outlined opportunities for the extended campus to provide valuable assets to the community and pledged the importance of being a good, green neighbor.

Given the significance of this point in our expansion process, it is important that our school community is present in large num-

bers to show support for our application at the City Planning meeting. A strong showing at both the Planning Commission and City Council meeting will communicate wide spread support and provide momentum for final approval by City Council.

The format at both the Planning Commission and City Council meetings allows for members of the community to sign up to speak during a time dedicated to public comment. Please feel free to approach me if you feel strongly about speaking at this meeting. We are encouraging ECS supporters to wear green at both meetings to visually highlight support for our application. Additional efforts to emphasize the volume of support for our school include an online and traditional paper petition that will begin to circulate this week. The online petition is available through a link at www.ecspco.org and paper copies are available to sign in the office at all times. PCO representatives will be circulating petitions to any parents willing to gather signatures in their neighborhood. If you are interested please visit petition@ecspco.org.

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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING



In memoriam: Aimee Weslowski

The ECS community suffered a loss recently at the sudden passing of Aimee Weslowski, mother to Cameron and Xavier and wife of Zoltan.

If you would like to assist the Weslowski family, please visit: www.lotsahelpinghands.com/c/633078/ On the right of the page, there will be a section that says "interested I becoming a member of this community." Fill in your email address under this section, and follow the instructions from there. The family friend coordinating the website will then approve you as part of the Weslowski family support community, and you will be able to access information from there. Memorial contributions can be sent to the Weslowski family via the Weslowski Children Fund, c/o Citizens Bank, 1705 South Braddock Ave., 15B-0885, Pittsburgh, PA 15218.

What's **going on** here? (LOCAL FUN FOR YOUR FAMILY)

Sunday, December 12

Christmas Tree Hike

Join Venture Outdoors for a 3-mile hike on beautiful trails through the woods to the historic Woolslayer covered bridge over Brush Creek. We'll start and end our hike at scenic Lake Forest Gardens, near Zelienople. A Western Pennsylvania tradition, thousands of families come to the farm every year to grab a saw, hop on a wagon, and ride out to the fields to cut their own Christmas Tree. After the hike, you can hitch a wagon ride to the fields of Spruce, Douglas Fir, and Canaan Fir to cut your own! (Tree not included in program fee.)

Where: Lake Forest Gardens, near Zelienople. **When:** 1:00-4:00 p.m. **Cost:** \$10.00 non-member / \$6.00 member

Saturday, December 18

Origami: Beginner Class

Come to the Squirrel Hill library and fold magical creatures, all out of paper.

Where: Squirrel Hill - Children's Room. **When:** 12:00 p.m. **Contact:** squirrelhill@carnegieliibrary.org

Saturday, December 18

Family Snowshoe Walkabout

We'll provide the snowshoes and Nature will provide the snow, so bring the whole family for this fun-filled snowshoe day in the park. Drop-in anytime between 12-3 and get fitted for a pair of snowshoes and take a walk around in the snow! Guides will also be on hand to lead short nature hikes throughout the event. Walk-ups welcome. Sponsored by Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Location: Highland Park. **When:** 12:00-3:00 p.m. **Cost:** Free.

December 26-30

Family Fun Days

Pack up the kids and head for Phipps during the school holiday break. Fun and educational activities throughout the Conservatory feature learning stations, crafts, pot-a-plant and more. Free with paid admission.

Where: Phipps Conservatory. **When:** 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Tuesday, December 28

Imagination Builders: Lego Club

Children and caregivers are invited to use their imagination by building structures using a variety of building toys. Building blocks are more than fun toys, they are valuable educational and creative tools. While exploring their creativity and imagination children develop math, motor and communication skills. All of these skills support the PA Academic Standards. In addition, building programs provide children with the opportunity to express their interests, ideas and tastes.

Where: Carnegie Main Library, Oakland. **When:** 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. **Event fee:** FREE. **Contact:** children@carnegieliibrary.org

Thursday, December 30

The Power Flower and Robot Friends

Artist and inventor David Edwards demonstrates the inner workings of Pittsburgh's first wind and solar energy harnessing sculpture "Power Flower." The 14' tall, light and energy producing sculpture blends art and technology with an accompanying collection of fun interactive bug sculptures. This collection of metallic curious creatures are ready for hands-on play along with a kid-size Power Flower. Each toy is made from familiar recycled household items and demonstrate an innovative touch of discovery learning.

Where: Pittsburgh Children's Museum. **When:** 12 noon- 4 pm. **Cost:** Free with admission.

Friday, December 31

New Year's Eve Family Celebration @ Phipps

Ring in the New Year with the whole family at a special Phipps New Year's Eve celebration. Enjoy themed crafts, games, food and a lively steel drum band! At 8:45 p.m., participate in an early countdown to welcome in the new year. Free with paid admission.

When: 6-9 p.m.

Friday, December 31

First Night Pittsburgh 2011

Enjoy the grand First Night parade, plus an eclectic showcase of live music, dance and entertainment in the Cultural District. Kids both young and old will delight in this festive evening of fun.

Where: Pittsburgh Cultural District. **When:** 6:00 p.m.

Sunday, January 2

Family Dance Party

Dance your heart out as we transform the Theater into a healthy dance club with family-friendly DJ Raw-Z! Presented as part of the national We Can! program designed to help children maintain a healthy weight. Learn more at pghkids.org.

Where: Pittsburgh Children's Museum. **When:** 2:00-4:00 p.m. **Cost:** Free with admission.

Saturday, January 15

Mascot Skate @ Schenley Ice Rink

Skate with a menagerie of your favorite area mascots on the ice.

When: 1:30-3:30 p.m. **Skating Fee:** Adults - \$4.00, Youth (17 and under) - \$3.00. **Skate Rentals - \$2.50, Skate Sharpening - \$3.50**

Monday, January 17

Family Fun on Martin Luther King Jr. Day @ Pittsburgh Glass Center

Get ready for heat-defying acts of art and hands-on fun for the entire family on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Glass blowing demonstrations will be ongoing throughout the day, plus you have a chance to make your own bead or fused tile for \$15.

Who: All Ages. **When:** 10 am - 4 pm **Cost:** Free/\$15 bead making and fusing. **Visit** www.pittsburghglasscenter.org for more info.

Doing good: ECS students donate 705 pounds of food

Nsai Temko was inspired by the local people in need to begin a food drive for the less fortunate. She put together a small group of students to assist her in her mission to help fight hunger during the holiday season.

Nsai, along with Phoebe Richardson, Curran McCuen and Hal McCuen, put together posters and donation boxes for each classroom at ECS. These students then decided to make it a competition to encourage greater giving within the ECS community.

The Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank was very thankful for the contribution. Coordinator Chris Small noted that the need has grown largely in the Pittsburgh area.

Unfortunately, since we are in such tough economic times that the donations have been down. He then gave us a tour of the facility explaining what goes into getting food to the people in need.

The amount of food that they have at this time is visually overwhelming. Then to recognize that it is just not enough was a true awakening to the number of families that are



in sincere need of help in our city.

Your generosity brought 705 pounds of food to the greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank!

Congratulations to our fourth grade for collecting the most food. We hope you enjoyed your dress down passes.

Thank you to Nsai, for your compassion and awareness. Thank you ECS Faculty,

parents, and students for your support in helping fight hunger this holiday season.

— Mrs. Barbara Richardson

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WALK ABOUT

Walk to School Day was founded in 1997 as a way to bring community leaders and children together to build awareness for communities to be more walkable. By 2002, children, parents, teachers and community leaders in all 50 states and the District of Columbia joined nearly 3 million walkers around the world to celebrate the second annual International Walk to School Day. The one-day event has now grown to a month-long celebration. In 2009, students and parents from over 3,500 U.S. schools joined millions of Walk to School Day and Month participants worldwide. The reasons for walking have grown just as quickly as the event itself. Whether a community's concern is safer and improved streets, healthier habits, or the environment, Walk to School Day events are aimed at bringing forth permanent change to encourage a more walkable, bikeable America – one community at a time. For more information, visit www.walktoschool.org.



Photos by Molly Bennett



The Pumpkin Parade was once again a great success. Animals, athletes, super heroes, ghosts, princesses and queens, knights and other colorful characters took to the streets of Regent Square, led by our fearless leader, a rotund pumpkin.



Photos by Kirsi Jansa

Getting to know... **East End Food Co-op**

Address: 7516 Meade Street

Phone: 412-242-3598

Web site: www.eastendfood.coop

Hours of Operation: 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. daily

**ANSWERS BY ROB BARAN,
GENERAL MANAGER SINCE 2005**

1. What inspired the beginning of the Co-op's business?

Our Co-op was inspired by a lack of regional distribution for natural and organic products in the early 80's. We got our start as a small distribution warehouse running a couple of trucks. It was a classic example of people doing for themselves. Our building at the time had a storefront in it. One day, someone decided we should sell a few things in there to the public. Next thing you know, here we are, a mature and successful full-sized retail cooperative that has not owned a truck in decades.

2. What is your favorite thing about the Co-op's space?

I would have to say it's the feeling you get when you walk in. It has a post-industrial, progressive, community-place kinda feel to it. It reflects our roots, and the wonderful community that makes it their home.

And the photos of our farms and farmers above the frozen & produce departments rock, too!

3. What is the most surprising thing you have learned about running the business?

There were a lot of surprises, especially that first year. Probably the biggest one is how everyone has their own unique definition of what a co-op is or should be.

4. What is the one thing that keeps people coming back?

Values keep folks coming back to the Co-op. For some, it's that they value our economic model. Others appreciate our sense of community. And still others like the values inherent in our mission and high-quality

product lines. But values are definitely where it's at.

5. In what ways might you like to make a connection to the ECS community?

We wish to continue to support and partner with ECS to get good, healthy food— and education about that food—to the kids. That is the most important connection.



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Holiday marketplace: fair trade shopping for ECS

ECS isn't your typical school, so it's only natural that its holiday gift market isn't your typical school fair, either. Guided by the school's mission, the Holiday Marketplace aims to provide a selection of fair trade, sustainable, affordable gifts for students, staff and parents who want to do some holiday gift giving.

Why fair trade?

Fair trade organizations offer a wide variety of unique, often handmade products at affordable prices. Through fair trade, artisans and farmers in low-income communities are able to earn an honest living, to provide for their children and to be gainfully employed in a job that brings dignity and joy. Fair trade organizations cultivate partnerships with their suppliers and contribute to the development of communities through educational, nutritional, environmental, and health programs.

How did it come to ECS?

Many schools have some sort of holiday shopping event during which students can pick out gifts for their parents, siblings, friends, or other loved ones. The PCO wanted to offer an event more in line with the school's environmental mission than the typical school gift shop. The Holiday Marketplace Committee sought out products from a variety of vendors (see sidebar) who were willing to work directly with us to offer affordable prices. Many of them even provided their products on consignment, allowing for a greater selection of items.

When can I shop?

Students have the opportunity to shop with their classes during the school day. Families and staff are welcome to shop before the Winter Concert (December 8 and 9). We also hope to have a selection of items available at the Gingerbread House event on December 17.

With its attention to environmentalism and equality, fair trade shopping demonstrates not only true ECS school spirit, but also holiday spirit—no matter which winter holiday you're celebrating!

2010 Holiday Marketplace Vendors

Building New Hope is a volunteer-driven non-profit organization based in Pittsburgh, PA and Granada, Nicaragua that has been supporting grassroots development projects in Central America since 1992. They sell the fairly traded organic coffee that has been sold as a fundraiser at ECS. www.buildingnewhope.org

Education and More is a fair trade charitable organization providing assistance to artisans and their families through educational opportunities and fair trade. Their mission is to further the education of the children in the Lake Atitlan area of Guatemala and to reduce the poverty of their families and communities through implementation of Fair Trade practices with artisan groups. They make jewelry, key chains, baskets, purses, and more. www.educationandmore.org

Equal Exchange's founders envisioned a food system that empowers farmers and consumers, supports small farmer co-ops, and uses sustainable farming methods. They started with fairly traded coffee from Nicaragua and now partner with co-operatives of farmers who provide high-quality organic coffees, teas, chocolates, bananas and snacks from all over the world. Equal Exchange sets an example as a world leader in fairness, ethical commerce, and economic democracy. www.equalexchange.coop

HandCrafting Justice is a fair trade partnership working with women struggling for economic justice and independence in developing countries. They promote human dignity and justice by creating opportunities for economic and social transformation in part by marketing items the women make, such as candle holders, finger puppets, jewelry, coin purses, and much more. They also produce ECS's hand-embroidered polo shirts. www.handcraftingjustice.cedris.org

INTO is a fair trade organization working directly with families in three communities in the country of Ecuador. Due to their underprivileged situations our goal is to give our partner artisans the opportunity to establish sustainable living through their skilled work, therefore creating their own niche in the market. We are offering their hats and scarves. www.intoworld.org

Mad Gab's Wildly Natural Bodycare is a U.S.-based company with a unique, creative line of lip and body balms. They sell simple, natural products with minimal packaging. www.madgabs.com

Mr. Ellie Pooh is an eco-friendly, innovative company that sells 100% handmade journals, stationery, crafts, scrapbook/photo albums and various grades of paper made of 75% elephant dung from Sri Lanka and 25% post-consumer paper. www.mrelliepooh.com/index.html

Project Have Hope works with a group of 100 women in the Acholi Quarter of Uganda and helps them transform their lives and the lives of their families. Through the sale of their beautiful, hand-made paper bead jewelry, the women can feed their families, send their children to school, and look forward to a richer future. www.projecthavehope.org

SERRV is a nonprofit organization with a mission to eradicate poverty wherever it resides by providing opportunity and support to artisans and farmers worldwide. Through their work with community-based organizations in 36 countries, they create economic opportunity so these artisans and farmers can support their families and themselves. Their fair trade products include jewelry, ornaments, baskets, candles, and other food and gift items. www.serrv.org

Sustainable Threads is a fair trade, eco-focused company promoting handcrafted lifestyle products. They currently work with over ten artisan groups in India, with the goal of long term, deep partnerships. They offer notepads, ornaments, cloth napkins, letter openers and more. www.sustainablethreads.com

Wanderlust Handcrafted Jewelry is a collaboration between about 20 Peruvian artisans and Studio Hart to produce a line of hand painted jewelry. They have maintained a standard policy of fair wages for the artisans in Peru for almost thirty years. wanderlustjewelry.com

Women of the Cloud Forest, founded in 2001, produces beautiful jewelry in a never-ending range of colors, styles and patterns using sustainably harvested seeds from the dry tropical and wet cloud forests of Costa Rica. The women also sew bags, hand embroidered with colorful, accurate reproductions of North and Central American plants, birds, butterflies, and other animals. www.womenofthecloudforest.com

Women's Bean Project has been helping women break the cycle of poverty and unemployment since 1989. They are a nonprofit organization that teaches job readiness and life skills for entry-level jobs through employment in their gourmet food production businesses. They offer bean soup mixes, salsa, dips and more. www.womensbeanproject.com

The Zambian Soap Company is part of a new generation of African businesses giving pride and dignity to the most vulnerable communities in Africa. They are dedicated to producing a unique and wonderful soap using top quality natural, ethically wild harvested and organically grown ingredients. www.zambiansoap.com

Get Fresh: A seasonal recipe from Jamie Root, Culinary Coordinator

Holiday Left-over Sandwiches

No matter what your family eats for their holiday meal, there are usually some left-overs. In my family the two major holiday meals are turkey and roast beef. Here are three fun and interesting sandwiches to try out after this holiday season. Choose the meat (or meat substitute) that suits you best.

THE "GOBLER"

2 Slices of whole grain bread, a roll or any bread that you like

2 tbsp. Cranberry Relish

1 tbsp. Mayonnaise

3 Slices Turkey; or Tofurkey

¼ C. Stuffing

3 tbsp. Gravy, optional- you may use for dipping or topping

PREPARATION:

Mix the cranberry relish with the mayonnaise, then spread on the bottom of the bread. Top this with all the other ingredients. The order of this is up to you — I personally prefer the cranberry sauce that comes out of the can. I slice that and put it on the sandwich too.

ROAST BEEF, APPLE AND BRIE SANDWICH

1 Baguette

Sliced Roast Beef; or Seitan

2 tbsp. Mayonnaise

1 tsp. Horseradish, grated

1 Apple, sliced

Sliced Brie

PREPARATION:

Mix the horseradish and mayo together, spread it on the roll, then layer the ingredients as you like.



Know your home's score

A new Department of Energy program called the Home Energy Score is being introduced in 10 locations across the US. Allegheny County, PA. Through this pilot program, ECS parents can take another role in being the environmental leaders in their neighborhoods and communities.

In our area, the Home Energy Score is being introduced only as part of a 3-4 hour "whole home assessment" undertaken by a certified home energy professional. Thus, it will not only provide a current score for a home's energy use, but provide a list of improvements homeowners can make.

Those who undertake some suggested improvements to improve their score are eligible to participate in a virtual house tour and be recognized at the 2011 Allegheny County Green Innovation Festival. They will also be eligible for a host of other grants and credits. Pre-register for our area's program at www.energycypa.com/housetour

— John Horchner

{ The **Book** Nook }

PARENTS

The descriptions below are opinion pieces by an ECS parent, so please check print and online media reviews before purchasing. If you decide to purchase any of the books highlighted below, shop at amazon.com through the PCO Web site at ecspco.org/pco_blog/pco-fundraisers.html to support ECS or check your local library for availability.

PARENTING

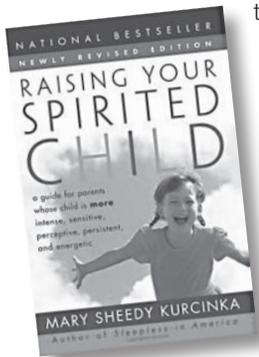
Modern Parents, Vintage Values: Instilling Character in Today's Kids

by Melissa Trevathan (B&H Books, 2010). "What do I do when my son learns phrases in school that he's not allowed to say at home? How do I teach my daughter caution but not fear?" This book "focuses on nine values that are foundational for the character development of children: kindness, integrity, manners, compassion, forgiveness, responsibility, gratitude, patience, and confidence." Note: The author's Christian values and experiences are significantly reflected in this book.



Raising Your Spirited Child: A Guide for Parents Whose Child is More Intense, Sensitive, Perceptive, and Energetic

by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka (Harper Paperbacks, 2006). In this award-winning, classic book "research shows that spirited kids are wired to be more - they are more intense, sensitive, perceptive, persistent, and uncomfortable with change than the average child." If you are raising a "spirited child," this book offers insight concerning "understanding your child's temperament traits, coping with power struggles, developing strategies for handling



mealtimes, sibling rivalry, bedtimes, holidays, and school, among other things."

THE ENVIRONMENT

As we approach the holiday season and struggle to balance being "festive" with our environmental values, please visit the **New American Dream** website, a section of which is devoted to simplifying the holidays: www.newdream.org/holiday/giftideastaff.php.

GIFT IDEAS: INTERCULTURAL/ INTERNATIONAL-ORIENTED BOOKS FOR KIDS

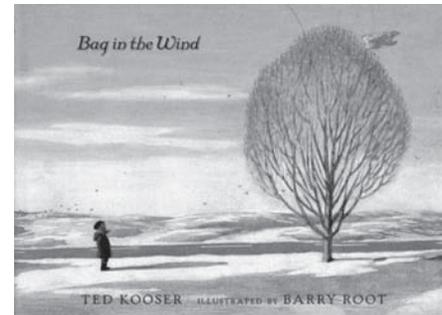
If you are looking for some unique books to buy for kids this holiday season that focus on intercultural communication and what it would be like to live in a different country (other than the US), look at **Karen Lynn Williams'** collection at www.karenlynwilliams.com. Some of these books (like Galimoto) are already being used in ECS as teaching tools and are available at Ten Thousand Villages in Squirrel Hill. The rest of her 15+ children's books are available online through her website which directs you to amazon.com, where you can purchase the books online while also supporting ECS' PCO.

JUST FOR FUN

Since so many ECS parents are exceptionally interested in quality of education, you might want to check out **EQ + IQ = Best Leadership Practices for Caring and Successful Schools**. It just may make you realize how good we have it at ECS (as if you did not know that already)!

— Melissa Reed

4 KIDS



Bag in the Wind (2010)

Written by Ted Kooser

Illustrated by Barry Root

What happens to an ordinary plastic shopping bag after it is sent to a landfill? In this story, the bag escapes on a gust of wind and becomes litter floating in the river, sticking in a tree, hanging from a fence. This book provides many opportunities for discussion of the ways people unintentionally create litter and pollution, as well as ways that people can make better choices and take care of our environment.

KID-FRIENDLY INTERNET SEARCH ENGINES

Did you know that there are many kid-friendly Internet search engines available on the web?

Ask Kids (<http://www.askkids.com/>) is one that Mrs. Fulton recommends parents bookmark for homework help. Ask Kids encourages the student to enter a question into the search box, and it returns a list of relevant kid-friendly websites. On the left-hand side of the screen, the user will find options for narrowing or expanding their search, also in brief question format. For example, if a user types "What is energy?" Ask Kids might suggest that they also try "Where does energy come from?" This enables students to develop good information-seeking habits. A subsidiary of Ask.com, this site aims to meet the educational needs of students 6 to 12 years old.

Sierra Club teaches E-Day students about sea turtles



E-Day kicked off this fall with a very special presentation by the Sierra Club.

The dedicated volunteer educators engaged the E-Day students in a program about sea turtles. The children spent the afternoon learning about the habitat, biology and ecology of various species of sea turtles as well as the threats that face them.

Sierra Club volunteers led numerous activities to reach the various learning styles of our students and which were engaging for all E-Day students. There was a presentation with props and examples to touch and look at. The afternoon wrapped up with the children expressing themselves artistically through drawing and craft projects. They were connected to real world activism through their work on a mural to be sent to the governor of Puerto Rico to request his protection of Leatherback Sea Turtles.

E-Day looks forward to our next opportunity to work with the Sierra Club to bring another interesting and exciting program to our students.

— Paige Wiegman

PCO Mini-Grants

The PCO awards mini-grants of up to \$250 to creative projects meant to benefit the students of ECS or to encourage the students to help their community. Mini-grant applications are available to parents, staff or community members of the PCO.

To submit an application, please provide a brief description of your project. Explain how it would benefit ECS, its students, and/or the community. Please specify an estimate as to how many students will benefit from your project. Include a brief budget for any goods or services needed. You can view the application guidelines online at: http://ecspco.org/pco_blog/how-to-apply-for-mini-grants.html

Send your application by e-mail to minigrants@ecspco.org or to the school office in an envelope marked "PCO MINI-GRANT APPLICATION."

PCO Grant Updates:

Becky Craig, ECS Environmental Fellow, received a \$250 PCO Mini-grant to print and post wall displays that tell stories about how children progress through creating their projects at school.

Laura Micco, Environmental Education Teacher, received a \$200 PCO Mini-grant that went towards the compost for the Living Laboratory.

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Breaking the Guinness Book of Records Zombie Style; **The Zombie Walk**

BY MALLORY ZANG, 5TH GRADE

In October, I went to the Zombie Fest with my Mom. Did I dress up? You bet I did! I wore a Matador costume with black and grey makeup under my eyes. For special effects I used fake blood! Once we arrived downtown, there were zombies everywhere, I mean everywhere! We were excited to attend this event because Amy from ECS E-day was playing lead guitar for her band the Motorpsychos! Amy jammed to over 5,000 zombies. Everyone was getting pumped up for the zombie walk which was actually ten minutes late so zombies were getting very restless. Why was this zombie walk important you might ask? It was important to me because being there with the awesome costumes, the zombies, and me in my cool outfit; I was going to break the Guinness Book of World Records for the most zombies in a zombie walk! During the walk, the streets were flooded with moans and groans, and buckets of fake blood and torn costumes! Let's just say I did not sleep well that night! After the walk was over, they rang a big bell, and fake moans went over a speaker. The announcer screamed "We just beat Seattle's record of most zombies in a zombie walk, and by a long shot!" I literally screamed as loud as I could. I, Mallory Zang just broke a World's Record, awesome!



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5 QUESTIONS

Get to know an ECS community member better through 5 inane questions...this month, **Thomas Pasquale, Physical Education**

1. If you could have lunch with any Pittsburgh athlete (current or past), who would it be and why? (And where would you eat?)



Mario Lemieux - Because I feel he is the best hockey player of all time and possibly one of the best all around athletes/role models of all time as well. We could eat any place he recommends, as long as he is picking up the bill.

2. Beatles or Stones?

Stones - I will take "Satisfaction" over "Sgt Pepper's" anyday.

3. What's your favorite spot in Frick Park?

The ball fields.

4. Most unusual item in your home?

Samples of dirt from both Three Rivers Stadium and Heinz Field.

5. If you were a superhero, what would your special power be, and how would you use it?

I'd want the power of invincibility so I could fight crime.

*** Bonus question (optional): Do you identify more with Sue Sylvester (from "Glee"), or Coach from "Cheers?"**

Well being that I don't watch "Glee" I guess I would have to say I identify with "Coach" from Cheers.

comPOST

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