

COMPOST

The Parent Community Organization newsletter of Imagine Environmental Charter School **OCTOBER 2009** Vol. 2, Issue 1

Extended Day Students Help Endangered Species



BY KATHLEEN SMITH

On Friday, June 12th the Endangered Species Action Team of the Sierra Club's Allegheny Group presented a program at the ECS Extended Day Program. Kindergartners and first graders met outdoors with Kathleen Smith, Laura Donovan, and Anika Jones who taught them about threatened and endangered species including Pittsburgh's own Allegheny River Mussels. The children enthusiastically participated in related games and then created a large poster for the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission who will be deciding the fate of the Rayed Bean and

See E-Day, page 2

A letter from Jon

The students, teachers and parents at ECS can be very proud of the school's accomplishments in its first year. Our 2008/9 PSSA scores place ECS in the top 10% of schools across the city and our Terra Nova results showed that nearly 84% of our students achieved more than one year's academic growth. Academic achievement is only possible in an educational setting in which teachers feel empowered, students are both nurtured and challenged, and parents are equal partners in the school's mission and vision. As ECS grows we are committed to our goal of fostering an educational environment based in mutual kindness and respect.

The Strategic Planning Steering Committee was formed at the mid-point of last year to start the work of creating a strategic plan for the continued growth and development of our school programs. Part of the strategic

See A Letter from Jon, page 7

In this issue...

What's New in Food?	3
Recess Before Lunch	4
Calendar.....	5
Treespotting.....	6
Debate	7
Field Guide	8
Book Nook	10
Recipe.....	10
Just 4 Kids	11
Green your Halloween	13

E-Day students help endangered species

continued from page 1

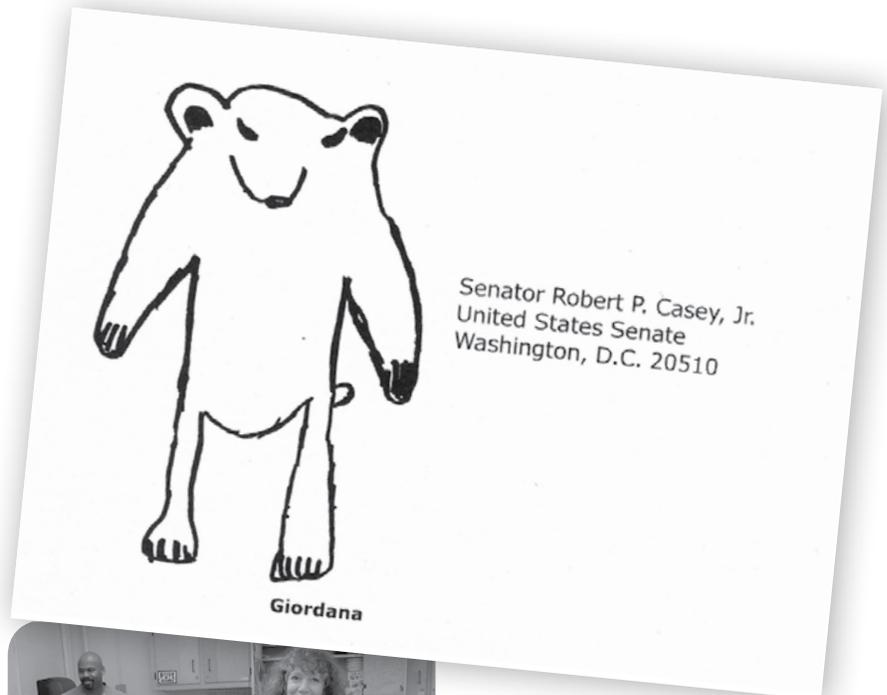
Salamander Mussels in October. The poster contained a letter composed by the children and a handmade paper mussel from each student. Color copies of the poster were mailed to each commissioner in the hope that they will choose to protect the mussels and not let them be dredged out of existence.

Back in the school cafeteria, the second and third graders talked with Sierra Club's Rosie Pinkus and Bett Beeson about polar bears and each student read a page from the book called *Knut* which is the true story of an abandoned baby polar bear, at the Berlin Zoo, who captured the heart of the world. The children then each drew a picture of polar bears and wrote their own letter to the President asking him to help the polar bears and save their melting homes of ice. These amazing letters and drawings have been sent to President and Mrs. Obama with copies going to Representatives Mike Doyle, Tim Murphy, and Jason Altmire and also Senators Specter and Casey. Each child was presented with a sticker badge which said "I helped a polar bear today".

For the grand finale of the day, all the students reconvened in the cafeteria and helped Mike LaMark, professor at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, draw a mural. The children told Mr. LaMark what animals and habitats to draw and then they added colors. This was the highlight of the afternoon and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The story gets even better from there. A polar bear drawing by 3rd grader, Giordana Verrengia was selected by the Allegheny Sierra Club to be on an official postcard to Senators Casey and Specter asking them to save polar bear homes and to help draft a strong climate and clean energy bill. The American Clean Energy and Security Act (ACES) is currently undergoing revisions in Senate committees and needs all the support for strengthening it that we can muster.

The Endangered Species Action Team began in March 2009 and has become an official campaign of the Sierra Club's



Allegheny Group. The Team is working hard to raise awareness of the accelerating extinction crisis through outreach programs such as tabling at events, public education, environmental programs, and action alerts. The response to this new campaign has been overwhelmingly positive and their need for more helpers has increased dramatically. In August, the ESA Team tabled at the Pittsburgh Zoo Festival of Water and gathered over 1,000 polar bear postcard signatures. For more information go to www.alleghenysc.org and click on The Endangered Species Action Team.



What's new in food?

BY HEIDI GREEN

A return to school marks a return to school lunches for many students, but the ECS community has already noticed that the school menu this year varies greatly from last year. It's not the "same old, same old" in John Lash's cafeteria.

The biggest change is in the menu. As ECS Food Services Director, John decided to contract with a new food service vendor, Springboard Kitchens, for the 2009-2010 school year. Behind the scenes, Springboard Kitchens is a job training and placement program for homeless and disadvantaged individuals—just the type of local effort the ECS community likes to support. In the lunch line, it provides fresh, healthy meals, with many items prepared from scratch in their Oakland-based kitchen. A vegetarian/vegan option is provided every day.

Typical entrées include spaghetti and meatballs (or spaghetti and vegetarian meatballs), cheeseburger (or black bean burger), BBQ chicken breast (or vegetarian chili), honey lemon chicken (or Boca chicken patty), Salisbury steak with a creamy mushroom gravy (or Boca patty with a creamy mushroom gravy). In addition, each meal includes a vegetable, a fruit and milk.

Last year's students may notice that the alternative sandwich option has disappeared from the ECS cafeteria. John assures us that there is good reason for this change. "Most children would choose a familiar sandwich over something that looked unfamiliar," he says, "and I want the students to be exposed to new items that they normally wouldn't see in a school or at home."

Three weeks into the school year, the ECS community is on board with John's changes. Parental reaction to the menu has been "almost overwhelmingly

positive," and student responses have been "mostly positive," too. What's more, there's been no decrease in the rate of student lunch participation. About 50% of students purchases school lunches last year, and about 50% have purchased it this year.

Some positive changes that might increase that number are in the works. For one thing, John has identified an online system, which will make it much easier for parents to pay for their children's at-school meals.



In addition, he has set up a Twitter account so he can quickly notify parents about changes to the school menu. Last-minute food changes can be unnerving to children. Students who planned to eat mac and cheese might find meatloaf completely unappetizing. Unfortunately, such changes will sometimes occur. Springboard Kitchens often receives its food shipments close to the serving date and turns away those goods its head chef deems unacceptable. It's a tough choice between "quality" and "sticking to the menu," John says. Letting parents know about changes to the day's entrée will ensure that students and their parents can make informed choices when they decide whether to pack or buy lunch on any given day.

The breakfast menu has also undergone some exciting changes. The EnviroKidz line of cereals is now being offered. These cereals are gluten-free and contain no added preservatives or flavorings.

Baked goods from the acclaimed Bagel Factory are offered too.

Buyers can choose bagels on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays or fresh-baked muffins on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The food service also provides a daily snack, free of charge, to all students. Typically fresh fruit, it may also include pretzels, yogurt or trail mixes. Accommodations are made for students with dairy-free diets and/or food allergies.

The school expansion will likely include a full-service kitchen, so expect more changes in the future. In the meantime, with just a prep space to keep the trucked-in lunches warm, John, along with Jamie Root, who also works in Food Services, manages to provide a variety of nutritious, delicious foods for our children each day.

Learn more about Springboard Kitchens online at <http://www.lsswpa.org/programs/springboard-kitchens> and sign up for twitter updates of ECS school meals at www.twitter.com/ECSlunch.

ECS students “**happier and healthier**” with recess before lunch

BY MARLA FERRENCY & MIKE BENNETT

Traditionally, eating lunch before going outside to play has been the norm in American schools—we take it for granted just like the morning Pledge of Allegiance and bringing home report cards every nine weeks.

But in a growing trend, some schools reverse this conventional schedule, sending their students to recess before herding them into the cafeteria. ECS has joined these forward-thinking schools in reaping the benefits of this easy, free, and effective refinement of students’ daily routine.

After a few hours in the classroom, children are ready for a chance to express themselves freely, get rid of some energy, and play. Bringing each class directly from their morning lessons to the cafeteria results in a chaotic and fast-paced lunch period, as students rush through their midday meals with their minds on recess.

But when teachers can lead their students to the playground area first, the children have an appropriate and safe way to release their energy. After 25 minutes of playtime, they have worked up an appetite and are ready to settle down and eat. With fun and games out of the way—and many burned calories to replenish--students tend to eat more of their lunch, and enjoy it leisurely. They return to the classroom satisfied and ready to learn.

After just a few weeks, ECS staff has marked a difference in the students’ behavior at lunchtime compared to last year. Vice Principal Kristen Priganc reports that the cafeteria is noticeably quieter and that students are throwing away less food. “We are seeing that children have more of an appetite when they are not worried about missing their play time. There is a more relaxed atmosphere in the lunchroom which is creating a happier and healthier environment.”

The health benefits of after-recess lunchtime aren’t limited to kids eating more of the cafeteria’s nutritional offerings, either. When students aren’t bolting their meals before rushing out to skip rope or play tag, they experience fewer headaches and stomachaches—and fewer visits to the school nurse to address these complaints.

So many benefits accompany this simple schedule change, from reducing waste to improving nutrition to eliminating behavior problems, it’s a wonder the practice isn’t more widespread. But it’s common-sense strategies like these that set our school apart from the crowd. And as usual, it’s our wonderful students who recognize what’s most important. As 3rd grader Jaden Willis says, “Running around calms me down so I can focus on eating.”



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

Saturday, Oct. 10, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

ECOFEST

Our 3rd Annual EcoFest is bigger than ever! Drop off working and non-working computers, printers and TVs thanks to environment-friendly Goodwill. Donate bikes you've been meaning to get rid of to Free Ride, and attend a bike workshop. Learn how to make inexpensive, safe, environmentally-friendly cleaning products for your home. Start tracking your ecological efforts as PennFuture brings the "Black and Gold City Goes Green" campaign to Regent Square. Enjoy Frick Park Nature Center children's activities. Be involved in a Children's Art show. Donate perennials for WSCC hillside, and help beautify our neighborhood.

Wilkins Community Center, Regent Square. Go to www.wscpcpg.org for more information.

Saturday, Oct. 10, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

FALL CLEAN-UP DAY AT ECS

ECS needs your help. Volunteer to spruce up the school. Projects include landscaping and other small clean-up projects.

For more information, contact the school at 412-247-7970.

Friday, Oct. 23 and Saturday, Oct. 24
6:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

Delight in this non-scary Halloween experience and trick- or-treat with the animals. Fireflies guide you on a trailside hike to encounter larger-than-life nocturnal creatures. Hear the hoot of Great Horned Owl, observe the acrobatics of Flying Squirrel, prickle your imagination with Porcupine, play 'possum with Opossum, and create a stink with Skunk! Snacks, drinks, crafts and story-telling are provided. Come in costume for twice the fun!

Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve Fox Chapel, Cost: \$6 per member; \$10 per nonmember; under 2 free Reservations are required.

Saturday, Oct. 24, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

4TH ANNUAL REGIONAL APPLE FESTIVAL AND PRO-AM APPLE PIE CONTEST

at
ECS

ECS Fall Festival **October 23, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.**

Last year, the Fall Festival was one of the most successful events coordinated by the PCO, thanks to the help of several enthusiastic volunteers. The Festival brought our school community together for an evening of family fun. This year promises to be even better, but only if you sign up to help with the games, food, storytelling, crafts, hikes and more!

Contact Angel Lehrian at social@ecspco.org to find out how you can help.



Celebrating Western PA's apples, apple growers and apple products with the best apples, the best cider and the best apple pies anywhere - no exceptions!

The Union Project @ Stanton and Negley Aves, Highland Park (Also: Pie Crust Demo/Class at Sweetwater Cooking School, Monday, Oct 5, 2009, 7pm. Details at slowfoodpgh.com).

Saturday, Nov. 7, 2 p.m.

ANNUAL MAP & COMPASS HUNT/HIKE

Using an easy to follow map of the parks nature trails, participants will practice the basic use of a compass and follow clues to find nature treasures!

Boyce Park Nature Center. FREE event for all ages. Pre-registration required at (724) 733-4618.

Saturday, Nov. 7, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

STATE OF THE WATERSHED

Want to know more about the health of the Nine Mile Run since the completion of the Nine Mile Run Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Project? How has it improved the stream and how are the group's programs making a difference?

This event is FREE, and a continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. For more information, contact Lisa at 412.371.8779, ext. 15 or e-mail lisa@ninemilerun.org.

Sunday, Nov. 8, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

TALKIN' TURKEY

How much do you know about November's favorite bird? Hit the trails to spot wild turkeys while

participating in our turkey challenge! Open to toms and hens of all ages.

Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve Fox Chapel, Cost: \$2 for members; \$5 per nonmember. Visit <http://www.aswp.org/months/september.html> for more information.

Saturday, Nov. 14, 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

JAY WALK IN THE PARK

Bring the whole family as we explore the Allegheny Commons from a bird's eye view! We'll craft fun bird masks before exploring the park. Afterward, we'll visit the National Aviary.

Cost is \$5 per person, or \$20 per family. For more information, visit ventureoutdoors.org

Friday, Nov. 27, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

HEALTHY HIKE IN FRICK PARK

Join fellow ECS students and their families in a healthy hike the day after Thanksgiving. We'll take a leisurely hike through Frick Park.

For more information, contact the school at 412-247-7970

Sunday, Nov. 29, 2 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

BLACK 'N GOLD SCAVENGER HUNT

Let us help you walk off all that Thanksgiving pie with this family friendly treasure hunt! We'll teach you about "geocaching," which uses hand-held GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) units to locate treasures with a black and gold theme - just in time for the game!

Cost is \$5 per person, or \$20 per family. For more information, visit ventureoutdoors.org

at
ECS

at
ECS

at
ECS

Treespotting: **The Maidenhair Tree**

BY paul g wiegman

Frick Park harbors a wide selection of native trees, but it also has some interesting trees that are not native to this region and have been intentionally planted as ornamentals.

One of the most interesting is ginkgo, also known as the maidenhair tree.

The ginkgo is the sole living representative of a genus of trees that are best known as fossils. The extinct relatives date back 270 million years. The ancestors of the modern ginkgo were widespread during the Jurassic Period when the large dinosaurs wandered through forests of needle-leaved conifers.

From ancient times to modern, the range of the ginkgo contracted. For many years the species was known only from the fossil record. It was then discovered growing in the wild in a small area of central China.

Seeds and cuttings were planted in botanical gardens around the world because of its unusual ancient lineage. The tree thrived in many habitats and places that are temperate and well watered. It entered the nursery trade and became a favorite tree in urban settings.

The trees grow well in compacted soils and are tolerant of polluted air. The endurance of the ginkgo in harsh environments was demonstrated at Hiroshima, Japan. Trees growing less than a mile from the 1945 atomic bomb detonation survived and are still alive today.

Ginkgos have unique fan-shaped leaves, 2 - 6 inches long. They have veins which come from the leaf stem and branch up along the fan. This is similar to the veins of maidenhair fern and thus the tree has a common name of maidenhair tree.

The trees are dioecious. That means there are male trees and female trees. In the spring, male trees produce small cones containing pollen. The female trees have ovules at the end of a short stem. Pollen is carried by the wind to the ovules which develop into the fruit and seeds.



When planting young ginkgos it is important to know the gender of the young trees. The male pollen is innocuous. However, the fruit of the female tree is best described as malodorous. Given the autumn odor of female ginkgos, more planted groves are male only.

A row of male ginkgos can be found along the north side of the clay tennis courts on the Braddock Avenue side of Frick Park. In the fall, the fan-shaped leaves turn a golden yellow gilding the edges of the courts.

What does the PCO do? Why do they exist? Who are the members?

Kate Brennan, PCO Executive Committee member and mother of two ECS students, answered these questions and more in her presentation at the first PCO meeting of the school year on September 17th. The short answers to the first two, in case you weren't there, are as follows:

The PCO acts as a bridge between parents, the community, and the school itself, and the group exists to make students' experience at school as positive as it can be.

The answer to the third question is simple enough to print in its complete form: if you received a copy of this newsletter, then you are a PCO member! Parents of students; ECS faculty, administration, staff, and Board of Trustees members; and residents of the surrounding neighborhood—all are members of the PCO. At the meeting, the PCO selected three new members to the thirteen-seat Executive Committee: Candy Smith-Vazquez, Laurie Kellem, and Susan Gunby. Congratulations to all three.

More information about the ECS PCO, including announcements, schedule, and bylaws is available at our website, <http://ecspco.org>.

A letter from Jon

continued from page 1

planning process included distributing a 360 Survey, asking for viewpoints on various aspects of the operations of the school (student outcomes, student welfare, the environmental education program, school staff, communications, community relations, and the strengths of the school and areas where development is needed) to all constituents on the school's mailing list. Additionally, over thirteen focus groups were held with staff, Board of Trustee members, Parent Community Organization members, pre-school parents and school neighbors to gather data on what participants felt were the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the school into the next three to five years. This data was carefully reviewed by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and the Board of Trustees to identify key focus areas and related goals, strategies, and activities for the strategic plan. Please take the time to review the complete ECS Strategic Plan posted on the school website, www.environmentalcharterschool.org.

Areas highlighted in the SP for development include the following:

- Maintaining and improving academic achievement.
- Continue to develop Environmental Education (EE) curriculum with a local footprint.
- Provide faculty with quality and applicable professional development.
- Increase the degree of cross curricular EE infusion.
- Expand the ECS character development program to include positive behavior and bullying prevention.

- Maintain the school culture through expansion.
- Maintain student and faculty diversity.
- Develop a comprehensive communication plan.
- Expand and maintain organization partnerships.
- Develop effective traffic control measures.
- Expand the school on-site.

Some key areas of improvement defined in the SP are already underway. Improved school communications have already started in the form of Wednesday notice folders, nurse and playground incident slips. Our new student information system (MMS) centralizes all student data and allows teachers to take attendance and record grades in an electronic grade books. When MMS training is complete a parent portal will be activated to allow parents access to information regarding ongoing assignments and grades. MMS also allows ECS to send email blasts to parents make it increasingly important to share current email address with their child's teacher.

Our parking policy has been largely successful to date and we will continue to engage the community to further refine it. Very attractive ECS window decals will soon be displayed on all ECS family cars. These ECS identifiers help both the school and the neighborhood manage the reality surrounding traffic volume. I would like to thank all of our parents in making the parking policy a success. Physical expansion plans are close to completion and the community engagement and application process will be announced shortly. This will undoubtedly be a busy year, one in which students, faculty, and parents continue a tradition of working together to meet individual and collective academic goals.

That's debatable: **yearbook**

SHOULD ECS SELL YEARBOOKS TO ITS STUDENTS?

Did you like last year's yearbook? Did you think it was too expensive? Do you think elementary students need a yearbook? Do you think your child would be sad not to have a yearbook? If you have a strong opinion either for or against yearbooks let us know and you could be featured in the next issue of comPOST. If you are interested in submitting an opinion please e-mail newsletter@ecspco.org.



Diary of the **ECS** Field Guide

White Snakeroot (July-October)

BY AMY BIANCO

The "turning of the comPOST" has occurred! As a result, we have a rich student body, full of the nutrients and minerals of solid outdoor experience! We're also about to witness the turning of the season, observing the bounty of nature's hard work over the summer. Acorns are dropping from the oaks, False Solomon's Seal is ripe with berries, and Jewelweed seed pods are plump for poppin' (an ECS favorite activity)! The wildflowers that were mere shoots last June are now 6 foot tall nectar hubs! I've noticed that some of the ECS kids have even sprouted a few more inches over summer break!

It's GREAT to be back as the Field Guide. My position has become a little more honed as the Environmental Education team pulls together the on-going plan of using Frick Park as an outdoor classroom. I've prepared themed hikes to compliment the environmental units throughout the year. Teachers can sign up for every one of them and repeat the same hikes to observe changes in the

park over that 8-week period. I'm also working with teachers on specific content during outside time. Hikes for Unit 1, All Living Things, focuses on observation skills: looking, listening, smelling, and touching in a way that is respectful to nature. Students are encouraged to notice similarities and differences among plants and animals. The "Landmarks Hike" allows classes the opportunity to create their own map using natural and man-made objects along a trail.

As always, the more, the merrier; parents are welcome to come along! Just get in touch with your child's homeroom teacher to see when a hike has been scheduled. Fall offers the heightened activity of harvest and preparing for winter. I'm positive that the ECS kids will be witnessing a number of amazing encounters in the months ahead. Look for Field Notes in the next comPOST for a full report!



White Snakeroot

PHOTOGRAPHY BY

amie

www.amiepowell.com



discovery toys

*Developmentally-
appropriate products for
all ages and all abilities.*

Lenore P. Wossidlo
dtlenny0196@aol.com
412-241-4370
412-480-7473 cell

www.discoverytoyslink.com/lenoremomkjpj

5

QUESTIONS

Get to know an ECS community member better through 5 inane questions...This month, **Rachel Sica, 4th grade teacher**

1. What was the best Pittsburgh thing you did over the summer?

I got to do a lot of great Pittsburgh activities. I'd say the best was taking my three nephews from San Francisco to a Skyblast Pirate's game. They love Pittsburgh even if the Pirates don't win.

2. If you could be a student at ECS, what would you like about the school?

No question. It would be the hikes. I remember going on a field trip in

second grade and we went on a naturalist-led hike. I thought it was the coolest thing ever.

3. Favorite spot in Frick Park?

Falls Ravine Trail. Gorges are gorgeous but ravines rock.

4. If John Lash were your personal chef, what would you have him whip up for your birthday dinner?

Anything with lots of fresh local produce - as long as it also included chocolate!

5. You're in the top 3 on "American Idol." What do you belt out to knock their socks off?

"Dirt Made My Lunch" by the Banana Slug String Band



A NEIGHBORHOOD
GATHERING SPOT

Belgian
Inspired
Cuisine
Featuring
Moules Frites

◆
Over 60 Belgian &
Specialty Beers
Desserts by Susie Treon

◆
Serving Lunch, Dinner
and Sunday Brunch
Closed Monday

◆
401 Hastings Street
(corner of Reynolds)
Point Breeze
412 441 3334
www.pointbrugge.com

Pittsburgh MAGAZINE
Best 25 Restaurants 2009

A New Resource in the Neighborhood...!!



Edgewood Psychological Services

Psychological Testing and Assessments for:

ADD/ADHD
Learning Disabilities
Dyslexia
Gifted Learner status
IQ-Academic Achievement

Pre-dementia assessments
Alzheimer's progression
Personality Disorders
Security Clearances
Vocational planning

Call 412 860-3275 or visit our website:
edgewoodpsychologicalservices.com

S. Alexandra Kreps, M.D.
Karen Christman, C.S.W.

Board certified general child and adolescent
psychiatry. Individualized approach to child,
adolescent, adult, and family therapy.

Park Plaza, Suite 217
128 North Craig Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Telephone: 412-681-3733 Fax: 412-681-4079

The **Book** Nook

ECS librarian Jackie Fulton first came to ECS as a library intern in December 2008. She is in the process of completing her Master of Library Science and K-12 Library School Certification at Pitt. Jackie is a native Pittsburgher who, as a child, often walked to the Swissvale branch of the Carnegie library with her grandmother. She remembers that library as “an exciting, colorful place full of adventure,” and hopes to help our children “build the same memories about their school library.”



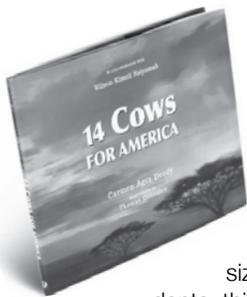
The Curious Garden (2009) written and illustrated by Peter Brown. Grades K-2.

A perfect complement to the environmental theme of Unit 1: All Living Things, this is the story of a boy who stumbles upon wildflowers growing in a “lonely patch of color” on the abandoned railroad tracks of a drab and dreary city “without gardens or trees or greenery of any kind.” Uplifted by the tiny patch of flowers, Liam decides to maintain the garden. Surprising things begin to happen all over the city. The magnificent illustrations and elegant prose of this book will inspire your little ones to appreciate nature, especially when it is discovered in unlikely places!



14 Cows for America (2009) written by Carmen Agra Deedy in collaboration with Wilson Kimeli Naiyomah. Mixed-media illustrations by Thomas Gonzalez. Grades 3-4

In the spring of 2002, Kimeli, a young man from a small Maasai village in Kenya made a long journey home from America to share a tale that “burned a hole in his heart.” He had been in New York on September 11, 2001 and witnessed the day’s tragedy first-hand. The Maasai people were touched so deeply by the news that they decided to do something. They invited a diplomat from the U.S. Embassy to a special ceremony in which 14 cows, their most valuable possessions and a symbol of life, were offered to comfort the still-aching hearts of our country. The now sacred animals can never be slaughtered and the herd has more than doubled in size, making it a growing symbol of hope. For older students, this book supports discussion of the anniversary of the World Trade Center attack with an emphasis on September’s character trait, kindness, rather than violence.



Get Fresh: A seasonal recipe from Jamie Roof

(Food Service Assistant)



CHEESEBALL: PERFECT FOR HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 8 oz. packages cream cheese
- 2 cups shredded smoked Gouda
- 1 stick butter- unsalted
- 2 tbsp. milk, cream, or half-and-half
- 2 tsp. A-1 steak sauce
- 2 cups crushed nuts, any variety
- crackers for serving

TO PREPARE:

Allow ingredients to soften to room temperature.

Beat them all together in a mixing bowl and form into a ball, or form into several small balls to suit your function/needs. Roll in crushed nuts and refrigerate. Remove from refrigerator and allow it to soften about 20 minutes before serving. Serve with crackers of your choice

Parking Reminders

- No parking on Milton
- No left turn onto Milton from the school
- Be mindful of the 25 mph speed limit on streets around the school
- Please park in the back lot for evening and weekend events. If the lot is full, please park east of Braddock or along the Frick Park side of LaClair. Please do not park on the bend of LaClair.
- **MANDATORY** - Place your school issued parking pass on the upper right hand corner of the windshield of each family car.



just 4 kids

How many ECS Faculty and Staff names can you find?

R S R A M G T D A T T I L O N
M H N S T E W A R T M I C C O
U E J X Z N O R B E M A C I S
R A R A I M O N D O H E H K L
R F R E B I E R H C S W Y N I
A F E K N I L K D M B Z O E W
Y E L L E S S E D N C U Q C R
E R A F U L T O N P A C R D R
B S H T R A C E Y B Z H A K P
H F S A T K A R I C H K O N E
M H U Q L M R E G N U R B A N
P R I G A N C R A I G P Q A L

BEY
 BRUNGER
 BURKE
 COWHERD
 CRAIG
 DATILO
 DESSELL
 FULTON
 HANDRON
 KARICHKO
 LASH
 MARS
 MCCANN
 MERENSTEIN
 MEYER
 MICCO
 MURRAY
 PRIGANC
 RAIMONDO
 RYPCZYK
 SCHREIBER
 SHALER
 SHEAFFER
 SICA
 STEWART
 TRACEY
 WILSON

kindergarten spotlight

What is the best part of Kindergarten?

- recess ★★★★★★★★★★
- centers ★★★★★★★★★★
- going on hikes ★★★★★★
- lunch ★★★★★
- having a class pet ★★★
- story time ★
- calendar ★
- gym ★
- art ★
- math ★



overheard:

- "I like having a lunchbox!" — Zofia
- "We get to play games at recess" — Naomi
- "I like working in my math book." — Amelia

Environmental classroom **wish list**

If you can provide any of these needed items please drop them off at the school.

**2
book
shelves**



**power
cord**



**butcher
paper**



**dry
erase
markers**



**vis a
vis
markers
(wet
erase)**



**24
small
white
erase
boards
(for
hikes)**



rulers



West Penn Energy Solutions

Residential & Commercial, Testing & Contracting

West Penn Energy Solutions

provides residential and commercial building performance diagnostics, installations and energy rater services across Western PA.

**To learn more, visit
westpennenergysolutions.com**

or call **412-352-3245**.

- HERS Ratings
- Solar Site Assessment, Design and Installations
- Energy Audits for Existing Buildings
- Air Sealing & Insulation Services



Green your **Halloween**

Halloween should give you some good scares, not actually anything to worry about. For a safe and ecofriendly holiday, try these tips:

1. Set a spooky mood with soy or beeswax candles, not those made from petroleum-based paraffin. If you like scented candles, look for ones with fragrances derived from essential oils rather than synthetic chemicals. *(Editor's note: Be careful to keep candles away from children, and avoid placing them where flowing costumes might catch fire.)*
2. Invest creativity instead of cash in your costume. Dig into the back of the closet (yours or a friend's) or hit the thrift store to find wacky clothes and accessories instead of buying plastic costumes. Need inspiration? The Green Guide and Care2 have clever DIY ideas that can be great projects for adults and kids. (You can make your own decorations too.)
3. Avoid masks made out of vinyl. Latex ones are safer, unless you're allergic to the material.

4. Whether you're going glamorous or ghoulish, use natural makeup to avoid chemical exposure.

5. Hand out fair trade or organic chocolates, organic hard candy, fruit snacks, or other ecofriendly edibles to all those cute trick-or-treaters. Global Exchange even sells a Fair Trade Trick or Treat Action Kit that includes individually wrapped chocolates along with Halloween-themed informational postcards.

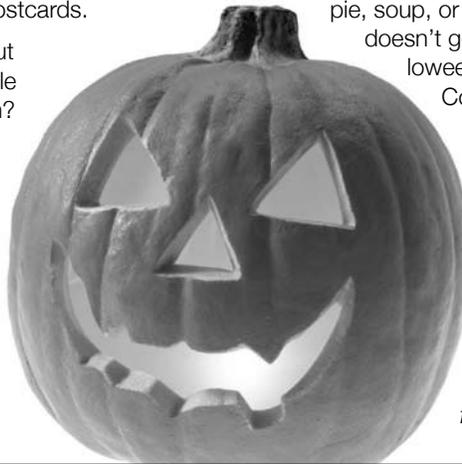
6. Worried about rotting those little monsters' teeth? Fun nonfood alternative treats include nontoxic crayons, coloring books, stickers, or even small change.

7. Whether for dressing up or handing out, avoid costume jewelry, especially glossy, fake painted pearls and toys from vending machines, both of which may contain lead. There were almost 30 recalls of lead-containing children's products this year, so use a LeadCheck kit if you're unsure about a toy your child already owns.

8. Look up some recipes for pumpkin pie, soup, or curry so your decoration doesn't go to waste after Halloween. (Not much of a chef? Compost that jack-o-lantern, at least.)

9. Don't forget a reusable shopping bag to carry your trick-or-treating haul!

Halloween Tips provided by The Sierra Club's "The Green Life." Visit www.sierraclub.org for more green tips daily.



You'll Reach Higher With a Trusted Advisor



A little guidance and support can help make a big difference in many endeavors, including planning for your future. A financial advisor can provide the assistance you need to set strategies and take action toward your specific goals and aspirations. Call your Waddell & Reed financial advisor today and ask about creating your personal financial plan.

Investing. With a plan.

Waddell & Reed, Inc. (09/07)

Member SIPC



R. Philip Hilf, CMFC
 Financial Advisor
 2790 MOSSIDE BLVD.
 SUITE 720
 MONROEVILLE, PA 15146
 412-858-9090, ext.119
hilf48903@wradvisors.com



Fair Trade Global Holiday Marketplace coming to ECS

This year, our students will have the opportunity to purchase unique holiday gifts made by third world artisans. These items help to teach our children about positive purchasing power. Fair-trade gifts = sustainable giving.

The ECS Holiday Marketplace will be open to students, teachers and even parents to do some holiday gift buying during the week of November 30 - December 4. More info will be sent home closer to the event.



DISCOVER...

Award winning books & financial opportunities for growing families.

LENORE P. WOSSIDLO
 dtlenny0196@aol.com
 412-241-4370 or 412-480-7473

Visit: www.myubam.com/c3679



Endangered Species Action Team

Good group... good food... good cause!



We would love to have you **join us** whether you have a lot of time, just a minute, or no time at all but have a lot of interest!

SIERRA CLUB

Contact: Kathleen at kbs_pgh@comcast.net or Bett at thebeesonfamily@gmail.com

An official campaign of the Sierra Club Allegheny Group
www.alleghenysc.org

TURNER DAIRY FARMS

from local farms to local families



*Our local farmers pledge:
NO ARTIFICIAL GROWTH HORMONES

*ASK for TURNER'S at finer grocers throughout Pittsburgh.

(Available at: Whole Foods, East End Food Coop, Right by Nature Market & Community Supermarkets)



PROUD TO SERVE ECS



www.turnerdairy.net



What more do you want from your house?

Improve comfort and efficiency. Create more living space.



AJ Stones
 Master Green Remodeler

Older houses our specialty

Consulting and Remodeling

ajstones.com

412-241-6042



Fundraising made **easy**

There are so many ways to support the school through your everyday purchasing and recycling decisions. Thank you for allowing the PCO to supplement our fall and spring fundraisers through your participation in some of these ongoing programs. Please share this info with family and friends who would like to support the school. Even more information is available for download at ecspco.org.

Carnegie Museum

When you buy a membership to the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh, a portion of your membership fee will be returned to ECS. Just go to this site when you renew your membership or become a new member: <http://members.carnegiemuseums.org/ecs>

Amazon.com

ECS will receive 4-8% of your purchase when you buy books, household products, gifts or more from Amazon.com. To ensure that ECS gets credit for your purchase, go to ecspco.org and click on the Amazon link under Support/Places to Shop.

Terracycle

Terracycle reuses and recycles, and they will pay us for collecting the following: Corks (natural and synthetic), Frito-Lay chip bags, Bear Naked granola bags, Kashi packages (inner bags and boxes), cereal bar wrappers, energy bar wrappers, Nabisco cookie wrappers, drink pouches. All items must be cleaned or rinsed, especially drink pouches. Look for collection boxes outside of the cafeteria.

Smencils

Pencils made from 100% recycled newspaper will continue to be sold for \$1.00 each. Please send in payment with child's name, teacher and desired scents. They are available in bubble gum, cinnamon, tropical blast, grape, cotton candy, orange, very berry, root beer, watermelon and black cherry.

Organic Coffee

Order coffee each month for delivery to your child's backpack on the first school day of the following month. Order forms available at www.ecspco.org.

Uniform Exchange

We are accepting donations of gently worn uniform pieces and shoes to eventually sell at a nominal fee. There is a collection box inside the front door.

Box Tops for Education

Clip and collect Box Top labels from General Mills products (Betty Crocker, Yoplait, Progresso, Old El Paso, Pillsbury, etc.). www.boxtops4education.com

Target

Visit target.com/tcoe, or call 1-800-316-6142 to designate our school for the Take Charge of Education program. Our school ID is 149779. Then use your Target Visa or Target Red Card every time you shop.

Giant Eagle

ECS will earn points to purchase educational materials through the Apples for Students program. The easiest way to enroll is by phone; it takes about 30 seconds. Call 1-800-474-4777, enter your Advantage Card number and our school ID# 5305.



NAR's sustainable property designation



Kathy Clevenger

C:412-969-7519

O:412-241-4700, ext. 38

1028 S. Braddock Ave.

Pittsburgh, PA 15218



Edgewood Family Chiropractic

Dr. Amy Andrews



249 Edgewood Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15218

412-371-6145

Focused on the chiropractic needs of the entire family.

In-network provider UPMC & Highmark



LionWorks
PRINTING & GRAPHICS

Providing quality printing and copy services to community groups, non-profit organizations and businesses.

BANNERS

MENUS

BUSINESS CARDS

NOTE PADS

BROCHURES

POST CARDS

CALENDARS

POSTERS

CATALOGS

FLIERS

lionworksprint.com

412.244.4254

East Swissvale Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15218

You are here. Volunteer.

LIBRARY

Choose from a variety of volunteer tasks, including helping students in class, organizing the library books, covering books with dust jackets, stocking library carts, and more. Special need for volunteers who can commit to helping specific classes/grades long-term. Contact library@ecspco.org

ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS GROUP

A collection of staff, parents, board members and interested community members dedicated to assuring that operations of the school, including energy use, minimizing waste, providing healthy meals, use of appropriate cleaning materials, making natural spaces available for learning and leisure, and all other aspects of the school are in line with the environmental mission of the school. Contact nikole.sheaffer@imagineschools.com

FALL FESTIVAL

Plan family friendly activities and games, arrange for food, advertise, set up and clean up. Contact social@ecspco.org

HOLIDAY MARKETPLACE

Set up eco-friendly holiday shopping, design schedules for classes to shop, set up and staff the market, contact vendors or donors for items, inventory items before and after sale. Contact fundraising@ecspco.org

WEDNESDAY FOLDERS

Copy and collate handouts on Tuesday mornings for the Wednesday folders. Rotating schedule of parents volunteer at least once a month. Contact secretary@ecspco.org

PHOTO MANAGER

Compile photos of everyday activities and special events. Manage photo permissions according to photo release forms. Contact webmaster@ecspco.org

For a full list of volunteer opportunities visit ecspco.org.

comPOST

To contact us, email:
newsletter@ecspco.org

CONTRIBUTORS:

Kate Luce Angell	Emily Escalante	Kathleen Smith
Molly Bennett	Marla Ferency	Felicia Turano
Mike Bennett	Heidi Green	paul.g.wiegman
Amy Bianco	Kirsi Jansa	
Brian Byrd	Ailish Luedde	

comPOST is printed on 100% recycled paper. 

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)	\$18
1/4 pg (3 5/8" w x 4 7/8" h)	\$30
1/2 pg (7 1/2" w x 4 7/8" h)	\$55
full pg (7 1/2" w x 10" h)	\$100

Deadlines:

All materials are due the 1st 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:

ads@ecspco.org



Piano Lessons for Children & Adults

Lois Rhoades

New Forest Hills resident with outstanding patience, enthusiasm and expertise.

570-575-0861

- B.A. in Music from I.U.P.
- Over 30 years teaching experience
- References available
- Criminal and child clearances



Imagine ECS
Environmental Charter School

Imagine Environmental Charter School
829 Milton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15218
412-247-7970 | environmentalcharterschool.org