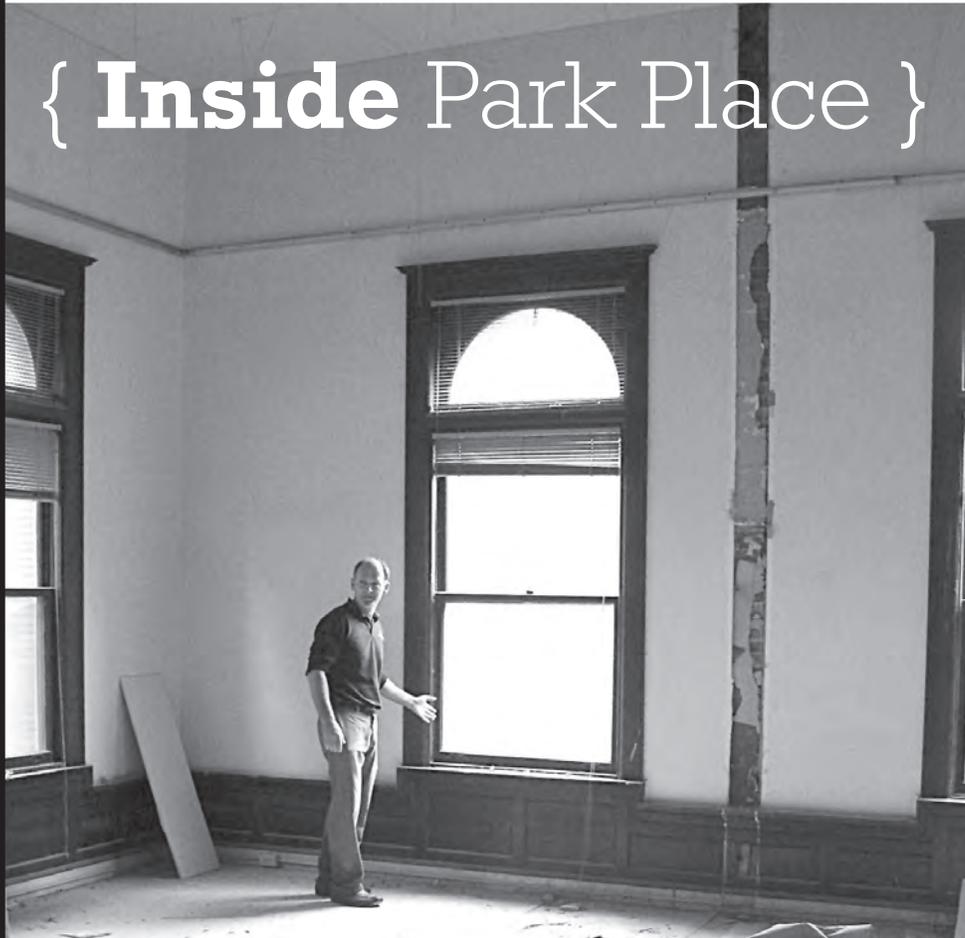


COMPOST

The Parent Community Organization newsletter of Imagine Environmental Charter School **OCTOBER 2011** Vol. 4, Issue 1

{ Inside Park Place }



BY MIKE BENNETT
PHOTOS BY EMILY ESCALANTE

We might have chosen the wrong day to visit. It's a stereotypical September day in Pittsburgh; a steady rain falls in the Park Place neighborhood, and the first yellow leaves are falling all around the grounds of the former Park Place school, currently under heavy-duty restoration. Yellow tape and piles of dirt and stone dominate the entrance to the open chain link temporary fence on Brashear Street, and the walk up to the portico on that side is muddy and unfinished, dotted with leaves from the giant sycamores that surround the school grounds.

See **PARK PLACE**, page 2

A letter from Jon

Teaching at ECS. I can't say enough good things about our ECS teachers. They are highly qualified, wonderful, dedicated, hardworking professionals who are committed to their ongoing education. Several are active within specialized educational fields and are leading conversations about best practices at local and state levels. It is widely accepted that teacher quality is the single most powerful predictor of individual student achievement. Subsequently, ensuring that ECS places the best teacher before your child is a fundamental goal of our program.

The following "best practices" are set as expectations for all ECS educators:

1. The ability to articulate your practice in front of all school constituents.

- What are you teaching and why?
- What are the expected short and long term educational outcomes?
- Defend your practice and instructional choices from a pedagogical standpoint.

See **JON**, page 5

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Pull-out Poster: ECS Family Tree	center spread

PARK PLACE, from page 1

The reason for the disarray, of course, is the continued re-purposing of the school from apartments back to its original use. Built in 1903, the school operated until the 1980s, when it was converted for use as apartments. Last year, ECS managed to work the historic building into its plans for expansion. Starting next school year (but perhaps sooner—more on that below), Park Place School will be the home, not to eighteen residential units, but grades K-3 of the ECS Lower School. This process requires, among other things, the removal of walls that formerly subdivided classrooms and offices into apartments, the installation of new eco-friendly systems, and the restoration of much of the building's original character.

Up the weathered stone steps the side door stands open. Heavy paper, scuffed with bootprints, covers the floors inside from wall to wall, a few tears and folded-back edges revealing the off-white marble underneath. Down the hall we skirt stacks of earth-friendly insulation to meet Principal Jon McCann and first grade teacher Margaret Sinnott in the grand entryway, an enormous open space between twin staircases with ornate bronze railings. Cast-plaster decorations trace the railings up the wall to the landing above, and between the staircases themselves, a heavy wooden door announces itself in bold black letters as the office.

Principal McCann, enthusiastic and energetic as usual despite the soggy weather, gestures around the entry hall's beautiful and delicate architectural flourishes, noting its great size and "palatial" atmosphere. This space, he explains, is large enough to accommodate the entire student body and faculty for morning meetings; indeed, this will be part of the daily plan when the school opens. A reception desk will occupy the space between the staircases, in front of the office door, behind which the Head of School and other administrators will enjoy a semicircular workspace overlooking the back patios and gardens.

The vestibule of the side entrance we came through earlier will become a terrarium room with instructional displays which will aid individual classes and lessons. Most of the transitional spaces in the school will also be used as teaching spaces, Mr. McCann explains as he leads us up the stairs to a landing that must be 200 square feet in area. It would be a shame to waste such useful space as this, he says, so educational displays will occupy this area as well.



The "palatial" front hallway, where Morning Meetings will be held. Right: Mr. McCann holds up the old Park Place School directory.

Upstairs, ducking into one of the enormous classrooms, we get a look at the numerous tall windows from the inside. They fill the room with what light the gray day can muster, extending most of the way to a ceiling that must exceed fifteen feet. However, workers are busily installing a modular dropped ceiling, not only to house important ventilation and data systems, but also to keep energy use—and its associated costs—down. Most of the classrooms have large adjoined cloakrooms, in the style of older schoolhouses. Students' lockers will inhabit these spaces, keeping hallways clear and limiting the need for students to leave the classroom to visit lockers.

A dedicated special education classroom sits at the southern end of the hallway near an elevator which is still under construction, but will bring the 108-year-old building into ADA compliance. Between the elevator and the SpecEd classroom is the entrance to one of the Lower School's innovations: an art, science, and design lab, to be visited regularly by students of all grades. Creation of this unique educational space comes from the school administration's brainstorming sessions with both the architects, Doyno and Rothschild, and CMU's Cyert Center for Early Education.



Further evidence of novel educational solutions in the Lower School are obvious on the building's ground level, which will house the school's two kindergarten classrooms. Noticing the abundance of exposed brick on this level, we ask if it will be kept that way or covered with drywall or plaster. Not only will the brick remain exposed, we learn from Mr. McCann, but so will some of the building's systems, such as ventilation and plumbing. That way, the inner workings of the building itself can be used as educational tools to help students understand industrial processes' environmental impact.



Left: The home of the new Art-Science-Design lab. Above: Original subway tile lines the terrarium, and exposed brick will be found throughout the building.

climbed to get into the school will come down to an amphitheater where teachers can bring their classes for outdoor learning.

But when, everyone wants to know, will ECS pick up the keys from the construction crews and start moving in? Obviously renovating a building originally constructed over a century ago is complicated to say the least, so it's next to impossible for Principal McCann to commit to a date when asked—and we ask, pointedly. Changes to the construction schedule necessarily occur weekly, if not more often. However, the plan is to phase in occupancy of the building over the school year, with the goal of moving many administrative functions and some classes up the street over the next few months.

This floor will also contain two large multi-purpose rooms, for use as cafeterias as well as in educational programming. Students coming down the stairs for lunch will proceed through the cafeteria line past the kindergarten classrooms, entering the large lunchroom at the front of the building (and directly under the entryway) through tall arches. In the other direction, a hallway leads past kindergarten to the rear entrance at the back of the building. There, we can see mostly mud and the odd piece of construction equipment—but all that will change with the rest.

Plans for renovating the grounds around the school are extensive. Behind the school will be parking for faculty, staff, and administra-

tors, as well as a patio composed of bricks engraved with the names of members of the school community. On the north side of the school, a terraced garden, sustainably watered by rain barrels, will stretch down to the rear of the building, growing native plants and vegetables, and providing the opportunity for students to play and learn in the outdoors.

In fact, no space will be wasted on the square acre occupied by the Park Place School. The grassy banks that currently front the property will be graded flat so that, according to Principal McCann, “the functional space runs right to the fence” at the edge of the sidewalk. On the school’s south side along Brashear Street, the steps we

For members of the community eager to see the move get underway, there are signs of progress to look for in the coming weeks. Those enormous windows throughout the building are due to be replaced with more efficient, modern versions—without sacrificing their great size or the ample light this provides. The school zone that will make the area around the building much safer—and provide students access to the park entrance just down the street—will also be installed soon. The completion of each of these projects is a landmark on the way to relieving the pressure on the current school building—and its faculty, staff, and students.

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How to speak ECS: curriculum lingo

Nikole Sheaffer and Melanie Cowherd share ECS's language for curriculum and instruction

As we grow, ECS believes in exploring and sharing language about our approach to instruction and learning with all of our constituents — students, families, educators, community members, and the greater region. Although definitions differ from institution to institution, ECS strives to create common language to help educators, families and students effectively talk about student growth and achievement.

Integration: At ECS, we are trying to be more specific in our conversations about what it means to integrate several disciplines of content. Integration means when students simultaneously learn content from two or more subject areas. Various levels of integration occur throughout the instructional day, most notably in the Inquiry Block.

Inquiry: Students AT ECS are encouraged to engage in discovery through various explorations in their education experience. Students use questions to delve into content and explore meaning. Inquiries often begin with “I wonder...” or “Why do you think...”

Inquiry Block: A daily part of the instructional day is focused on inquiry, integrated studies, hiking and/or project work. The work in this block is driven by an environmental theme or context, but often instruction during the Inquiry Block may “look” like social studies or science. All content and experiences in the Inquiry Block are tied to an Essential Question at each grade level, reflective of a general environmental focus. Grades K-5 focus on one Essential Question per quarter in the Inquiry Block. Grades 6-8 focus on one Essential Question per quarter in the Integrated Studies Block.

Integrated Studies Block: The Integrated Studies Block engages students in inquiry-based projects, supports students in developing science process skills (e.g., observing, analyzing, formulating hypotheses, experimenting, drawing conclusions and, when appropriate, formulating generalizations), and develops students' knowledge of social studies and environmental content. It provides

instructional opportunities for making connections among the disciplines, and unites history, environmental science, civics, and geography to current events and topics deemed as core concepts adolescents care about. Integrated Studies produces students that are critical thinkers and problem solvers.

Place-based: Instruction, inquiry, or experiences that are focused on the local area or environment. Depending on the developmental needs of students, the “place” can be very small (the ecosystem underneath a rotting log) or quite large (the watersheds of western Pennsylvania). At ECS, place-based instruction utilizes Frick Park, the Regent Square community, and the Greater Pittsburgh region. Place-based programs focus on local environments to connect students to their world.

Essential Question: Essential Questions drive the big ideas surrounding pieces of content and are explored at every grade level. Within the Inquiry Block, Essential Questions provide the over-arching context for both teachers and students throughout the duration of the unit. Ideally, students are able to articulate an answer to an Essential Question at the completion of a unit. Sample Essential Questions include: Kindergarten: How do living things stay alive? First Grade: How do life cycles connect to and impact the local environment? Second Grade: How are roles of living things connected? Third Grade: What is the relationship between living things and their environment? Fourth Grade: How are human actions connected to systems in Pennsylvania? Fifth Grade: How does competition impact balance? Sixth Grade: How do individuals shape events? How do the ancient cultures help us to understand environmental issues of today?

Guiding Question: A Guiding Question supports the Essential Question. Guiding Questions are used to help students build their conceptual knowledge toward the Essential Question. Guiding Questions are often used by teachers to divide a unit into a weekly focus.

EIC: Environment as an Integrating Context. This acronym was originally adopted by the charter to replicate the work of Green Woods Charter School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At ECS, EIC is the term used to talk about general integration practices

with an environmental theme or focus. ECS strives to use environmental content as a theme and context for all instruction, experiences, and decision-making.

Reading Workshop: Reading and language arts. During this large block of time, students participate in a variety of activities, which vary slightly at each grade level. Teachers provide a short mini-lesson around a shared text, and students apply that learning to their own texts. In addition to quality reading instruction, students build their reading identity in this model. The Reading Workshop model supports the ECS Strategic Plan to integrate science content with literacy instruction.

Writing Workshop: During this block of time, students participate in a variety of activities that support authentic writing. Teachers provide a short mini-lesson about the writing process and students apply that learning to their own writing. Students create many informal writing pieces during the year in a Writer's Notebook, and a handful of formal writing pieces that are often celebrated with an audience at the end of each unit.

Authentic Writing: Writing and processes that mimic the real life work of writers in various fields.

Robust Vocabulary: Vocabulary instruction stems from a shared text. All students, regardless of reading ability, are exposed to word study surrounding a shared text or from the Inquiry Block. Vocabulary instruction is connected to content or text, and not taught in isolation.

Shared Reading: A text that is read aloud as a class and shared for discussion and modeling purposes.

To learn more

about academics at ECS, visit environmentalcharterschool.org, and click on “Academics” on the menu at the top of the page. There, you will find the school's academic philosophy and mission, as well as the yearly curriculum schedule, unit by unit. Each teacher also has a link on the side of this page for important classroom information.

JON, from page 1

- How does your instruction connect to the ECS curriculum framework?

2. Know each one of your students.

- Describe what each student has mastered and what content he/she is currently engaged with.
- Describe any necessary interventions and how they will be managed at the classroom level to ensure individual student progress over the course of the school year.
- Apply appropriate formative and summative data to track individual student achievement and plan future instruction.
- Describe how each student will be

challenged both in and out of the classroom.

3. Articulate the educational vision of the school and how it relates to your individual practice.

- How does what you are teaching relate to the overarching education vision of the school?
- How does what you are teaching relate to the current environmental theme?

Thank you for choosing ECS as your public school; we look forward to serving you and your child throughout the 2011-2012 school year.

Show Your Spirit

A limited number of ECS Spirit Shirts are still available for purchase. If you are interested in having one, please e-mail fundraising@ecspco.org for size and cost information.



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Take a hike!

Let Amy Bianco guide your family excursion to **Schenley Park**

On a rainy Friday in September, I went for a hike in Schenley Park. I've been there on occasion to do conservation work on the trails, but I've never actually hiked any of them. Rain hikes are my second favorite (night hikes are number one) for the simple fact that I can get wet and muddy! Even in the rain, the trails were easy. This would be a fun hike for the whole family.

Schenley Park is pretty big, and the loop I took wasn't that long. A map displayed on the corner of Schenley Drive and Panther Hollow Road next to the Schenley Café helped me decide to take Hollow Run Trail to Lower Panther Hollow Trail with a stop at Panther Hollow Lake. I then headed down the steps into the park. Schenley Park has amazing stone steps and bridges dating back to the late 1930s.

As I descended the paved trail, I noticed odd fruit hanging from some of the shrubs. The fruits were about 1 inch long and looked like puffy balloons. They had a few dark seeds inside of them. I found that these shrubs/small trees are called Bladdernuts. Bladdernuts fruit from August to October and there were quite a few of them along the beginning stretch of the trail. At the bottom of the steps, you'll go straight across the gravel trail to the next set of stone stairs. At this point you'll notice the beautiful arched bridge towering over Panther Hollow Run, the small stream that empties into the lake. White snakeroot and jewelweed dominate the trail, while a few tulip tree saplings are among other flora.

Turn right at the bottom of the second set of stairs to get to the lake. While walking around the Lake, I was greeted by a busily chewing groundhog and two Canada



Schenley Park's coolest feature: its stone bridges.

geese. The animals didn't seem to be the least bit bothered by my presence and didn't flee. I was able to get a few snapshots! The lake was very peaceful and would be a great place to have a blanket picnic on a sunny day. I didn't see any fish because the water was quite murky, but I'm sure there are some living in there. Once around the lake, I continued straight past another set of stone steps onto Hollow Run Trail. This trail follows the stream. The wildflowers were beautiful on this stretch. In bloom were tall, yellow Wingstem (look at the stem to see why it's given that name), purple and white aster, evening primrose, and sneezeweed. Evening primrose is yellow and has a lemony scent to it. It blooms at dusk and closes by mid-day. Sneezeweed is another yellow flower that has lobed petals. According to the Audubon Society's *Guide to Wildflowers*, it's called sneezeweed because long ago, the leaves were dried out and used as a snuff to be inhaled to cause sneezing. The sneezing would supposedly rid the body of evil spirits.

wings when they take flight!

Hollow Run Trail ends at a "T" with Lower Panther Hollow Trail. You can turn right and take the Upper Trail, but I turned left to head back on the Lower Panther Hollow Trail. Here the trail is wide and graveled. Again, you cross over stone bridges, which are by far the coolest things about Schenley Park. On the way back I noticed stately basswood trees (aka lindens) and towering sycamores. Basswoods have large, saw-toothed, and roundish leaves with long, pointed tips. I read that it is sometimes called the "bee tree" because it produces a strongly flavored honey which attracts honey bees.

Before I knew it, I found myself back where I started — only I was on top of the first bridge instead of under it. The entire hike would probably be about an hour (I stopped a lot) and this particular loop is less than 2 miles. What was nice about this hike was that I was able to wrap it up with a hot tea from the Schenley Café. Perfect for the weather! Happy hiking!

Coming off of this trail at a "T", I took the set of stone steps to the right. This trail criss-crosses the stream by way of several stone footbridges. At a point, the trail runs right along the water, allowing prime opportunities for salamander and crayfish hunting. I spent about 15 minutes doing just that! I didn't see one other person during this stretch of the hike. It was quite peaceful. However, there were tracks in the mud from a recent cyclist and at least one dog. Yes, this part was muddy. I flushed out flights of mourning doves on a few occasions. They seemed to congregate at the water's edge most likely foraging for food. They sound like they have squeaky

Getting to know... **The Edgewood Club**

{ In each issue, we will ask local business owners these five questions so that we may connect more meaningfully to our community. }

Business:
The Edgewood Club
One Pennwood Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15218
412-731-3443

Interview With:
Ron Gallagher, General Manager

General description: The Edgewood Club is an athletic, civic, and social club located in the heart of Edgewood in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Now in our 107th year, The Club proudly remains a centerpiece of the Edgewood community and a gathering place for residents of Edgewood and the entire East End of Pittsburgh.

What inspired the beginning of your business?

In 1904, most Edgewood residents took the train to work, which meant that any athletic, social or cultural activity in the evenings had to be within walking distance. This need was the genesis of the Edgewood Club, a social and cultural club for the community.

The Edgewood Club and CC Mellor Library building, which was formally opened in 1918, is interesting architecturally because it is exactly fitted to its triangular plot. The building, designed by architect Edward B. Lee, is white stucco with a Spanish tile roof, a pergola and line of columns. According to Franklin Toker, author of *Pittsburgh: An Urban Portrait*, it is "a public monument...altogether one of the best public buildings in the city." Its unique architecture accentuates the building as a focal point within the community.



One of the Club's traditional activities was an Election Night Party. Initially the results were received by telegraph, but on November 2, 1920, with radio in its experimental stage, the Edgewood Club Election Night Party was the first large group ever to hear election returns by radio from what remains KDKA radio.

The Club served as the center for the community's wartime efforts including the wrapping of bandages and preparation of packages for soldiers.

A swimming pool was opened on the site in 1958 creating such a demand for the Club's facilities that a waiting list had to be

established.

In 2011, the club still remains the centerpiece of the East End communities of Pittsburgh. It's the place for family fun and familiar faces.

What is your favorite thing about your business?

The Club has a true sense of community and opens its doors to numerous organizations and individuals throughout the year. The Club Board is very welcoming to forming partnerships and creating win-win situations. We are always open to new ideas and opportunities to utilize our facilities.

What is the thing that keeps people coming back?

It's all about the kids! The Edgewood Club is home to The Edgewood Electric Eels, a swim team with about 150 swimmers ranging from 5 to 18 years old. The energy on a home swim meet night is electric! It's a privilege to watch the swimmers grow and develop their skills over the years. The majority of our lifeguards grew up participating on the swim team and remains with us through their collegiate years.

In what ways might you like to make a connection to the Environmental Charter School (ECS) community?

Many Club families attend ECS and we would like to welcome the ECS family to join ours. We would like to host an ECS Day at the Club and let your family experience what our family has been enjoying for years!



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Our tree has grown! Please rotate counter-clockwise to view properly.

Amy Lassiter
2nd Grade

Diane Karichko
2nd Grade

Shannon Shupak
2nd Grade

Rachel Meyer
2nd Grade

Becky Brunger
3rd Grade

Caitlin Carey
1st Grade

Heather Hoak
1st Grade

Jennifer Mars
1st Grade

Margaret Sinnott
1st Grade

Andrea Stewart
4th Grade

Shavonne Davis
4th Grade

Sarah Falbo
5th Grade

Allyson Sauter
3rd Grade

Deirdre Lynch
3rd Grade

Frank Linnelli
3rd Grade

Stephanie Franklin
4th Grade

Joe Burke
4th Grade

William Tracey
5th Grade

Vicky Hsieh
5th Grade

Kristan Abeshouse
E-Day
Director

Tamra Bouchard
6th Grade

Amanda Cribbs
6th Grade

Christy Purnell
6th Grade

Jerome Szpila
5th Grade

Tameka Thompson
E-Day
Assistant

Amy Bianco
E-Day
Deputy

Stephanie Smith
E-Day
Assistant

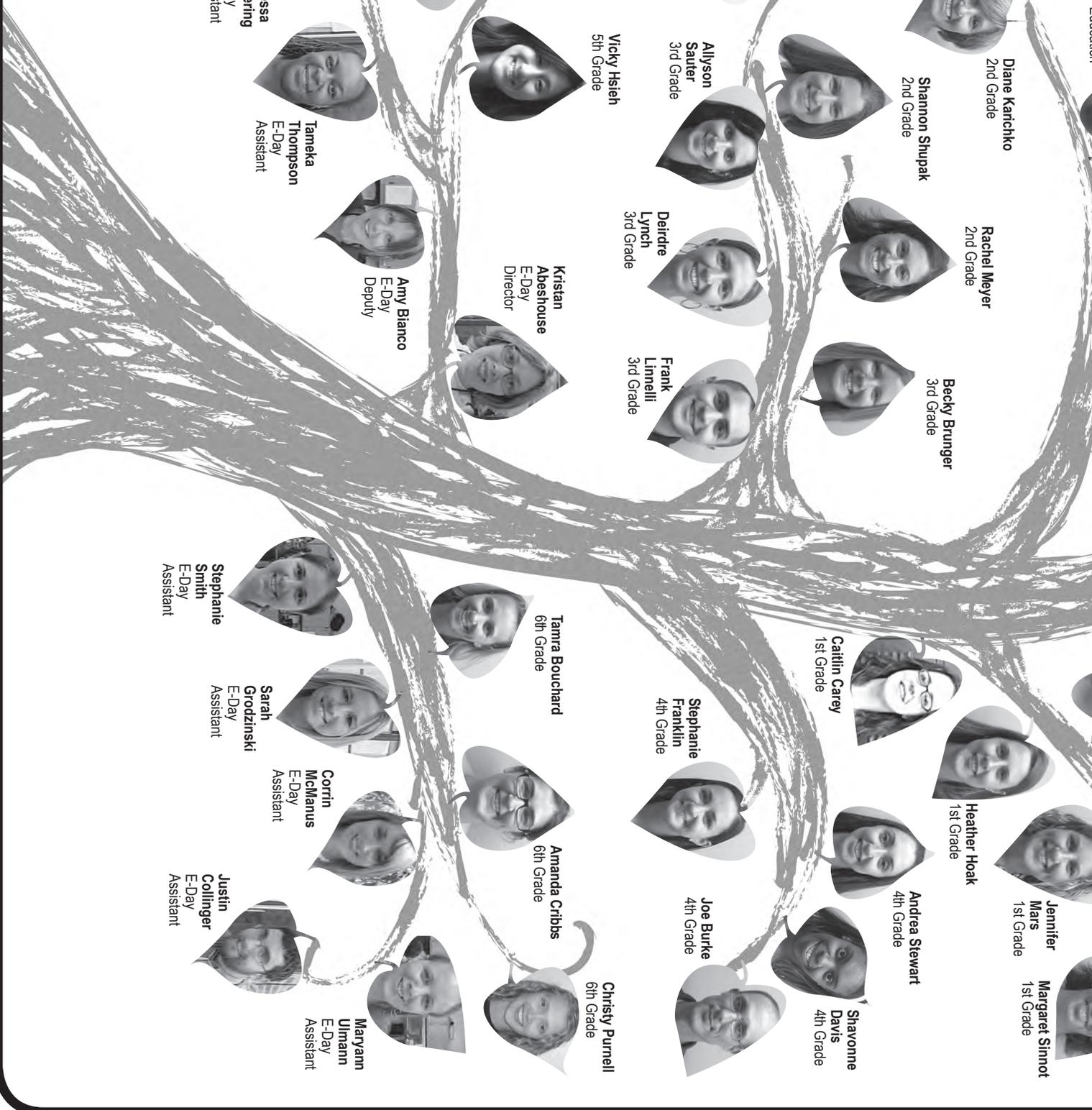
Sarah Grodzinski
E-Day
Assistant

Corrin McManus
E-Day
Assistant

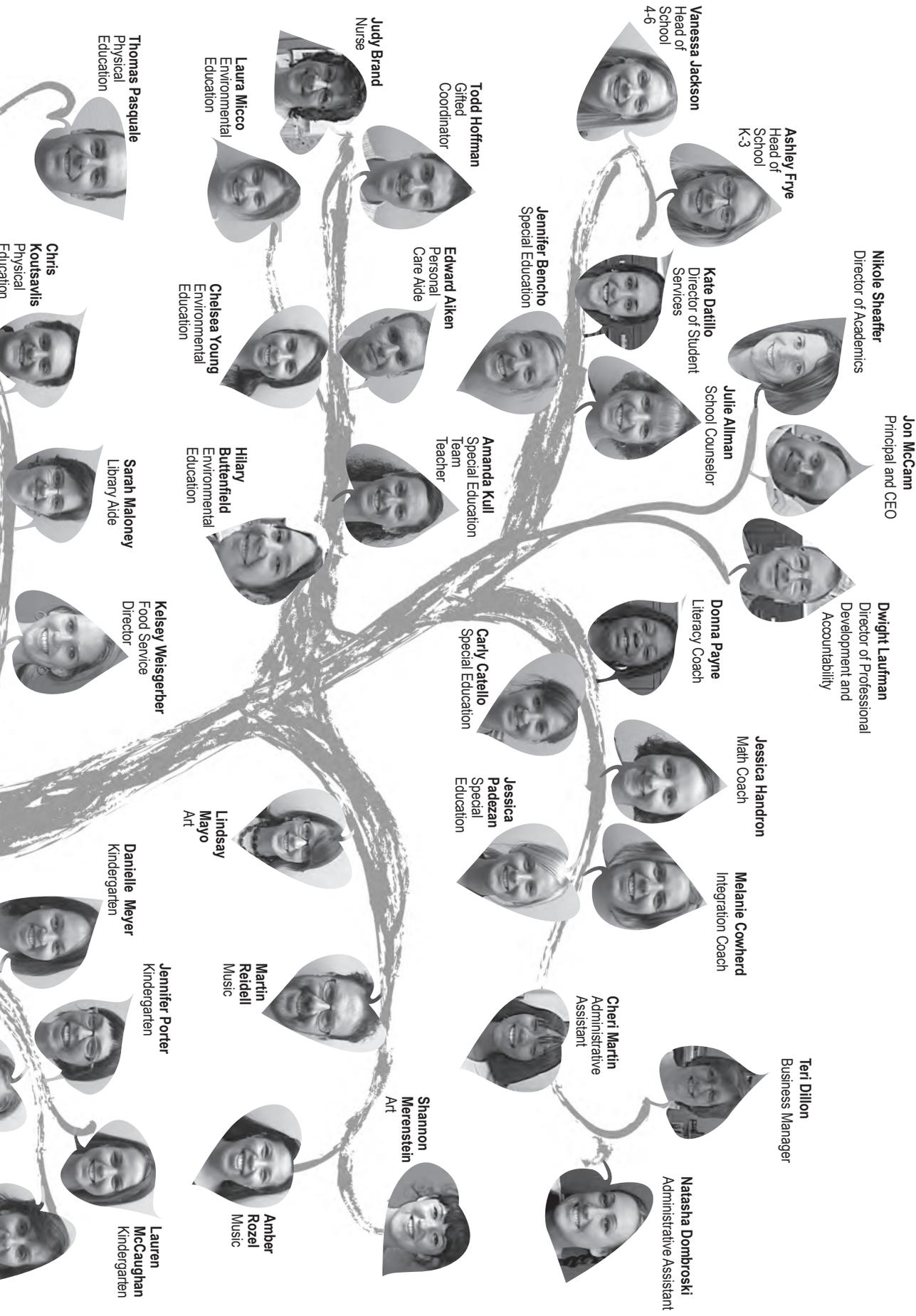
Justin Collinger
E-Day
Assistant

Maryann Urmann
E-Day
Assistant

Vanessa Kettering
E-Day
Assistant



2011-2012 ECS FAMILY TREE



What's happening? (Local events for you and your family)

Friday, October 21, 3 - 10 pm

Make-It-Now Pumpkin @ Pittsburgh Glass Center

Perfect for Halloween and Thanksgiving!
Make your own glass pumpkin. This is our most popular Make-It-Now workshop.

For ages 10 and above. \$25 per person. Pre-registration is not required, but we suggest that you call ahead because time slots fill up fast. For more details or to register, call The Pittsburgh Glass Center at 412-365-2145, ext. 201.

Saturday, October 22, 6 - 8 pm

Owl-O-Ween

Enjoy a ghostly but-not-too-scary evening at the National Aviary, with plenty of fun for children and adults. The evening will include a costume contest, storytelling, crafts, photo opportunities with Barkley, the East-

ern screech owl, and appearances by the Aviary's Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches, and loads of worms and crickets happy to not be on the birds menu, at least for the day. Trainers will also fly the Aviary's owls in the FliteZone Theater, and halls will be decorated to set the mood. Light snacks will be provided and the Aviary's café will be open for dinner. Advanced registration suggested.

\$13 per adult and \$11 per child. Members pay \$10 per adult and \$8 per child. Call the National Aviary at 412-258-9445 for information.

Sunday, October 23, 10 am - 3 pm

Clippis for a Cure Cut-A-Thon

Specially priced cuts, styles and manicures will be available in addition to refreshments and fantastic raffle prizes. All proceeds from salon services and raffle sales will benefit Susan G. Komen for the Cure in Pittsburgh.

For additional information or to purchase raffle tickets, contact Clippis Salon, 1117 S. Braddock Avenue, 412-731-3500.

Friday, October 28 and Saturday, October 29, various evening start times

Creatures of the Night @ Beechwood Farms

Delight in this annual non-scary Halloween experience and trick-or-treat with the animals. Fireflies guide you on the trails to encounter larger-than-life nocturnal creatures. Hear the hoot of Great Horned Owl, observe the acrobatics of Flying Squirrel, go batty with Little Brown Bat, play 'possum with Opossum, or create a stink with Skunk! The Grim Keeper may also make an appearance! Crafts and refreshments will be provided. Come in costume for twice the fun!

Registration required. \$6 per member; \$10 per nonmember. Visit www.aswp.org.



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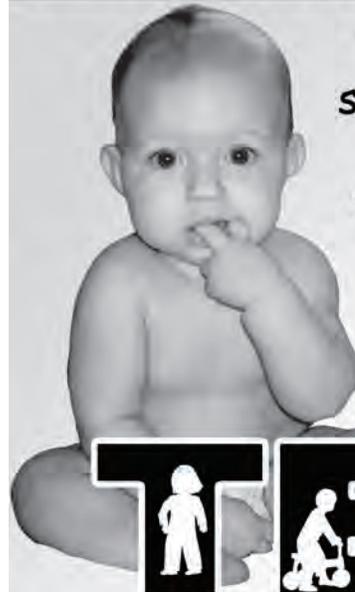
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Sunday, November 5, 9:30 am - 3:15 pm

Native Plant and Sustainability Conference

The Native Plant and Sustainability Conference is an annual event for anyone who appreciates native plants and sustainable landscape management, and wants to learn more about them. Experts will share their knowledge on a variety of topics, including landscape design, great native plants, sustainable practices, plant and wildlife ecology, and the natural history of Pennsylvania.

Register in advance either by phone at 412-441-4442, ext. 3925 or in person at the Phipps Garden Center in Mellon Park. \$80 per person prior to Oct. 20. \$95 per person after Oct. 20. Price includes a continental breakfast and lunch on the day of the event.

Saturday, November 12, 11 am - 3 pm

Polar Bear Birthday Party @ Pittsburgh Zoo

Join us for an Arctic blast as we celebrate the 6th birthdays of our polar bears, Koda

& Nuka. Kids will make a special craft, enjoy entertainment with Radio Disney, receive birthday cake, and learn how to help polar bears. Sing happy birthday and watch the bears receive a special birthday treat.

All activities are free and are included with general admission.

Sunday, November 20, 9 am - 1 pm

Highland Park Work Day

Bring a friend to the Parks Conservancy's biggest volunteer event of the Fall! Join more than a hundred volunteers planting trees throughout Highland Park. As always, we'll be working rain or shine.

Questions? Call 412-682-7275 ext. 232 or email scaffellow@pittsburghparks.org

Tuesday, November 22, 6:30 - 7:00 pm

Learn Sign Language

Children are born with an instinctive need to communicate. Using sign language gives them the ability to understand and "talk"

with their hands. Join us while we share stories, songs and more using basic signs in this language. Open to all ages.

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, 4400 Forbes Avenue. Register by calling 412-622-3122 or visit children@carnegielibrary.org.

Sunday, November 27, 2 pm - 4pm

We Can! Family Dance Party @ Children's Museum

Dance your heart out as we transform the Theater into a healthy dance club with family-friendly DJ Raw-Z!

Contact Childrens Museum of Pittsburgh at 412-322-5058 for more information or visit www.pittsburghkids.org.

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Home to Dr. Todd Wolynn, Winner of 6 Consecutive *Pittsburgh Magazine* Top Doc Awards (2006–2011)

Kelsey's Kitchen:

Where ECS goes to get fresh

BY KELSEY WEISGERBER AND BECKY RANDALL

October is National Eat Better, Eat Together Month!

You've probably heard it before: to eat better, choose more fruits, veggies, whole grains and foods grown as chemical-free and as close to home as possible. Eating better doesn't have to exclude dessert — just keep it as organic and as seasonal as possible and you'll be able to satisfy your sweet tooth.

Along with eating better, we also need to eat together. This can mean physically eating together as a family, sitting and sharing conversation and catching up, but it could also include the step of making meals together as a family.

Make it a priority this month to eat good, healthy food together at a table. **Here are a few tips:**

1. Try to have laid back conversations. Ask the kids about their day!
2. Involve your family in the process of preparing and setting up dinner. See if there's a certain task that the kids would like to help complete before dinner.
3. Even if you don't have a ton of time, make SIMPLE easy meals that can still be enjoyed in each others company.
4. **UNPLUG!** Yes, it can be hard; cell phones, television, Internet and gameboys all demand attention, but a meal together is thirty minutes where family is the priority.

Also in October:

ROOT 174 will be our "featured local restaurant." They will be providing lunch on **October 19!**

Double Wide Grill will be a new partner!

Looking ahead to November:

National Farm-City Week is November 18-24, the week leading up to Thanksgiving. The National Farm-City Council is a not-for-profit organization "dedicated to enhancing the linkages between farm families and urban residents, providing local organizations with educational programs and materials about who grows their food." (farmcity.org)

In celebration, ECS will be having a **Harvest Day** on **November 18**. There will be many exciting activities planned for the day. Among them, Ms. Weisgerber is working on an **Adopt-a-Farmer** program. Several classes will have designated farmers for pen pals. On Harvest Day, the farmers will come in and meet with the students. The goal is to create a great connection between the farm and the food we eat. That week, Ms. Weisgerber will also be sending home one seasonal and basic recipe from each farm to reinforce the connection between the kids and where their food comes from.

In November, it is the hope that the ECS family comes away with thanks and appreciation for those who are growing food in our community.

Kid's Corner

Napkin Folding

Visit www.napkinfoldingguide.com/26-napkinringfan/

This page shows one of the easier folds. Use a ribbon or yarn if you do not have napkin rings.

Setting the Table

- Plates go in the CENTER of the place setting, in front of the chair. The cup goes in the upper right hand corner.
- Napkins go on the LEFT or ON the plate, depending on the design (try the napkin ring, it's a great center piece on a plate)
- Fork's go on the LEFT. (You can remember this because F-O-R-K and L-E-F-T have the same number of letters!)
- Knives and spoons go on the RIGHT.



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Recipe: Cranberry Apple Crisp with Oatmeal Streusel



(Excerpted from *Bob's Red Mill Baking Book* by John Ettinger and Bob's Red Mill Family, ©2007, published by Running Press. All rights reserved.)

INGREDIENTS :

Topping:

- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 cup old-fashioned oats

- 1/2 whole wheat flour
- 1/4 cup unbleached white flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 pound (1 stick) unsalted butter, chilled and diced

Filling:

- 24 ounces cranberries
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 tablespoons apple juice or cider
- 1 1/4 pounds firm apples (about 3 medium), peeled, cored, cut into cubes

PREPARATION :

1. Combine the brown sugar, oats, flours, and salt in large bowl and toss to blend. Add the butter and rub in with your fingertips until the mixture resembles crumbs. Refrigerate while preparing the filling.
2. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Grease a 9 x 13 x 2-inch glass baking dish.
3. Combine the cranberries, sugar, and apple juice in a large pot. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring often for about

2 minutes. Stir in the apples and cook until the cranberries are softened and their juices thicken slightly, about 4 minutes more. Transfer the mixture to the prepared dish and sprinkle on the topping.

4. Bake until the filling bubbles thickly and the topping is brown, about 35 to 45 minutes. Let cool at least 10 minutes before serving.

*** Hint!** Because fresh cranberries are usually only available in the fall, you might want to pick up extra bags and stick them in the freezer for later on in the year. Then you can make this delicious crisp anytime.

STEPS YOUR CHILD CAN DO:

- Cut the apples (but teach your child proper knife handling skills.)
- Measure the ingredients and practice using liquid and dry measurements.
- Line up all the ingredients in the order they appear in the recipe
- Stir the ingredients in a large bowls.
- Sprinkle toppings.
- Eat!

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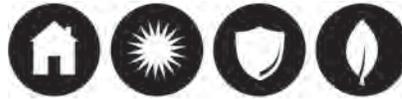
Grow Pittsburgh

BY LAINY CARSLAW

New for this school year, ECS and Grow Pittsburgh have established what that group's Josh Burnett calls "a symbiotic relationship." Grow Pittsburgh is an organization dedicated to developing and supporting local, urban agriculture. In addition to partnering with Pittsburgh restaurants to ensure that local produce is used in their kitchens, the group is working with four schools--including ECS--on an "Edible Schoolyard" curriculum.

ECS staff teach Grow Pittsburgh about the educational system, working with students, and using science in their edible schoolyard curriculum. In return, Mr. Burnett helps the ECS teachers learn more about working in the garden. This year, he has been working with Ms. Brunger's 3rd grade class and Mr. Tracey's 5th grade class, with guidance by Laura Micco. So far, the classes have completed seed-saving projects, harvested vegetables, and prepared the garden for winter.

By partnering with restaurants and local schools, Grow Pittsburgh is working to build a stronger, more sustainable urban agriculture community in our city. Its efforts were recently celebrated at its second annual "Taste of Pittsburgh" event, at the Mattress Factory in the North Side. For more information on Grow Pittsburgh and its' restaurant and school partners, visit www.growpittsburgh.org.



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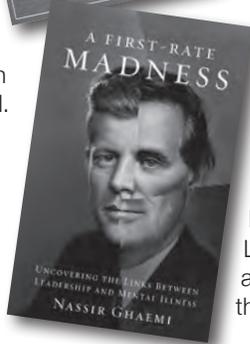
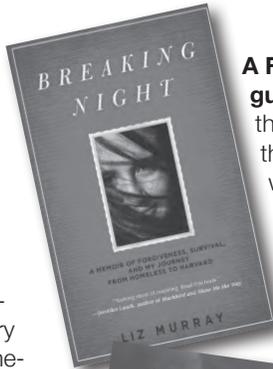
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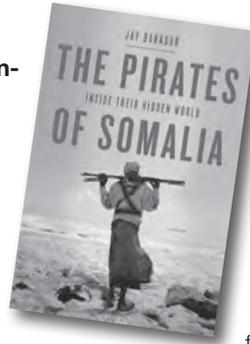
BY MELISSA REED

Breaking Night (Hyperion, 2010). In this *New York Times* Bestselling memoir, Liz Murray tells the story of living with (and loving) her diseased and drug-addicted parents, living on the streets, and, ultimately, attending Harvard University on scholarship. Written with extraordinary insight and passion, her “homeless to Harvard” journey teaches us about forgiveness, falling through the cracks, and, most of all, survival. Murray is now the founder and director of Manifest Living in New York, a company that empowers adults to create the results they want in their own lives (manifestliving.com).



A First Rate Madness (Penguin Press, 2011). With the presidential elections in the not-too-distant future, we might want to be paying closer attention to who seems most “normal,” then vote the opposite, according to author Nassir

Ghaemi. Ghaemi’s bold thesis, that the very qualities that mark those with mood disorders – realism, empathy, resilience, and creativity – also make for the best leaders in times of crisis, is supported well by his exploration of the lives of Lincoln, Gandhi, Churchill, King, and others. This examination of the intersection of leadership



and mental health is compelling, debunking the myth that mental illness is a largely negative phenomenon along the way.

Pirates of Somalia (Pantheon, 2011). When I saw this remarkably young author (Jay Bahadur) take the stage on TV for an interview, I thought, what could he possibly know about piracy in the horn of Africa? A lot, in fact. Bahadur spent months and months “in the field” trying to understand the inner lives of Somalian pirates and the result is a “first-ever,” fascinating, well-written look at the hidden world of piracy as an enterprise. You will learn as much about the history of Somalia as you will the pirates who have inhabited this land and the international response to their reign.

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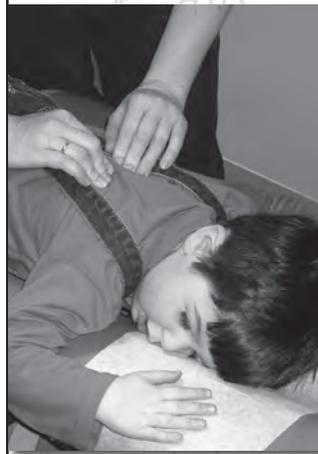
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PCO Mini Grants

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, teachers or community members of the PCO.

Go to www.ecspco.org and click on Mini-Grants to find out more about the criteria we use for judging which mini-grants get funding, as well as the actual application to fill out. Send your application by e-mail to minigrants@ecspco.org or to the school office in an envelope marked "PCO MINI GRANT APPLICATION."

The first submittal deadline is: October 15th.

5 QUESTIONS

Get to know an ECS community member better through 5 inane questions. This month, meet our new Heads of School, **Ashley Frye and Vanessa Jackson!**

1. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SPOT IN FRICK PARK AND WHY?

Ms. Frye: My favorite part is anywhere near the water. It is calm and peaceful!

Ms. Jackson: Anywhere on the trails because I LOVE walking!!!

2. WHAT IS THE MOST UNUSUAL ITEM IN YOUR HOME?

Ms. Frye: The most unusual item in my home is coyote fur. It's a long story, but it's death was by natural causes.

Ms. Jackson: A Seattle Seahawks gnome, due to my husband being a fan.

3. KARAOKE NIGHT IS SUDDENLY MANDATORY FOR ALL ECS STAFF. WHAT SONG DO YOU CHOOSE TO BELT OUT FOR THE OCCASION?

Ms. Frye: I would sing anything country, but if I had to choose, I would pick "Life is a Highway" by Rascal Flatts.

Ms. Jackson: "Don't Stop Believing" — I actually do sing this!

4. WHAT IS YOUR PERFECT PITTSBURGH DAY?

Ms. Frye: My perfect Pittsburgh day is relaxing outside. I'd like to be sitting where I cannot see anyone or anything, just trees and grass.

Ms. Jackson: A nice warm day where I can go on the river to enjoy the beautiful sights, walk around Station Square and have dinner down there as well.

5. FAVORITE THING OVERHEARD IN THE HALLWAY THIS YEAR?

Ms. Frye: Since we are having a ECS drink competition for our Book Fair, I have been hearing "Fryetastic, Fryetastic" chanted wherever I go.

Ms. Jackson: It was an "act-so-went" (instead of accident).

comPOST

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Submission Guides:

Preferred ad format: high-resolution, press-optimized PDF file. Acceptable formats: InDesign, Quark, Photoshop and Illustrator.

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