

FUMPS

FIRST UNITED METHODIST PRESCHOOL

January Newsletter

2019



Happy New Year to You & Your Family!!!

Welcome Back! I hope everyone had a Joyful Christmas & a Fun New Year's.

A New Year..... A Brand New Year stretches out before each one of us all clean and shining bright. What will come? What choices will we make? New Babies? New Homes? New Opportunities? New Adventures? Yes, it's all out there waiting for us, but for the most part we can't see it until it is right before us. Some choices we will make swiftly. Some choices we will agonize over. Yes, we will make choices in this New Year.... I hope they will be good ones for you & your family.

Speaking of choices...some of you will be deciding whether or not this will be the year to send your child to Kindergarten. Please read the back of this Newsletter & plan to attend our Kindergarten Readiness Meeting on Wednesday, January 16th. I think you will find this to be a very informative evening. Please bring your questions, too. Ms. Bruce has a very down-to-earth & relatable way of sharing her knowledge & expertise.

For all our Preschool Families, January is the time of year when we begin to have our Parent Conferences. Please see Mrs. Furby in the office to schedule your conference. Mrs. Furby has the Master Calendar and can coordinate the best time & day for you to observe your child & meet with their teacher.

So off we go into this New Year... On behalf of myself & our Wonderful Staff, I would like to wish all of you a Happy, Healthy, & Prosperous New Year! May God watch over you & keep you in the coming year,

Karen Wilson



Thank you for the home baked treats that were brought to the office all month. Thank you to **Henry** in the Friendly Fish, and his family, for the crackers; **Declan** in the Sunny Sunflowers, and grandpa, for the cuties; **Coralie** in the Sunny Sunflowers, and mom, for the Ritz crackers; **AJ** in the Little Rascals, and grandma, for the bagels and cream cheese. And a special thank you to **Virginia Haisten** for her time and talent to accompany our singers during the Christmas Programs. Thanks to everyone who helped to make our Christmas parties a festive success! From delicious goodies to festive decorations to extra hands, we appreciate everyone who helped make spirits bright! We are so grateful for any and all donations of snacks and supplies to help support our school. Please fill out the "Donations from Parents" sheet in Mrs. Furby's office each time you bring something in, then look for your name in the newsletter!



- 1 Happy New Year!
- 7 **Preschool Closed - Teacher Training**
- 8 Preschool Resumes
- 10 & 11 "Digging up the T-Rex"
- 14-18 All About Oranges
- 15 Parent /Teacher Conferences begin
- 16 Kindergarten Readiness Workshop 6pm in Fellowship Hall
- 21 **Preschool Closed for MLK Holiday**
- 22 & 23 Snow Days
- 30/31 Dentist Visits

Happy January Birthdays to...

Dancing Daisies

Mark Herman 1/24
Evie Fletcher 1/30

Friendly Fish

Alexandra Allen 1/4
Logan Wiley 1/8
Olivia Arnstad 1/18
Cooper Connolly 1/24

Little Rascals

Kai Bradford 1/11

Lucky Ladybugs

Aiden Chavez 1/3
Mason Maddox 1/7

Hats Off to our Cute Kitten Teacher...

Melissa Erdman was born in Orange County about a mile from Knott's Berry Farm. Melissa's family moved to Riverside when she was in first grade. She has one older sister who lives in Northern California and a niece and nephew whom she likes to visit. Melissa began her teaching career while still a student at RCC. She had stopped by their Work Experience Office to fill out job applications and while she was there, First Methodist's Director, Mrs. Natta Lea Wiffin called looking for an assistant teacher. Miss Erdman applied and was hired. Melissa has her Associates degree in Early Childhood Studies. She believes that childhood should be a journey and not a race. She believes the preschool experience is very important and she works to make it the best experience it can be.

These days Melissa opens each morning for Early Drop Off and Closes in the afternoon with Lunch Bunch. She handles our re-cycling of aluminum cans, plastic, & glass. Melissa collects Precious Moments figurines, loves cats, travel, gardening, the beach, cooking, and her Cute Kitten Class. Her favorite pastime, and one that she is expert at, is counted cross-stitch.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

January 15th is the start of our Parent-Teacher Conferences. It is a chance for you to observe your child in their preschool environment and to voice any concerns or questions you might have. To sign up for a conference, come see Mrs. Furby in the office and she will schedule it for you.

Tax Credits

Childcare, including preschool tuition, if it falls within the hours that you work, can be claimed as a tax credit. Our Federal Tax ID number is 95-215-9109. Please contact Mrs. Furby in the office if you need a statement for 2018.

Important Information

for our 4 Years Olds . . .

About this time every year many parents are faced with making a decision about next year. Is their child ready for kindergarten just because chronologically they are old enough? Does knowing their ABC's and numbers guarantee them success as they begin their formal academic education? What about maturity? Maturation evolves at a different pace in each child's body, brain and emotions according to their own personal development schedule and the experiences they have had. Educators will agree that most school failure is due to immaturity.

What does Kindergarten Readiness mean to Kindergarten Teachers? Data from a survey of kindergarten teachers in California's Santa Clara County compiled by Lisa Guernsey on November 2, 2009 adds to the mounting evidence that kindergarten readiness is not simple to define.

Contrary to popular conceptions of what it means to be a 5-year-old ready for kindergarten, most kindergarten teachers are not wishing for rooms full of children who can already identify the letters of the alphabet. What they want instead are children who have learned how to regulate their impulses, follow through on a difficult task and have the self-control to listen to the teacher's directions for a few minutes.

While academic kindergartens seem to be what's being pushed, most teachers do not report that children need to come in with a strong base in academic skills if they want to have a successful school year. Instead they gave top billing to self-care and motor skills followed by self-regulation.

Teachers said that it was easiest to help students develop their academic skills and hardest to make an impact in developing their self-regulation skills. In fact, they said they had to spend the most time in the classroom focusing on self-regulation.

This reinforces the importance of designing interactions in the preschool years that are developmentally appropriate. Worksheets that force 4-year-olds to trace the outline of a letter are a far cry from the types of experiences young children really need in the preschool years.

How can preschool and kindergarten experiences help children learn to self-regulate? Research on the importance of building self-regulation skills in young children has been accumulating over the past few years, and some of it is starting to zoom in on the significance of playtime, particularly pretend play scenarios that are child-led but feature teacher input. Classrooms that incorporate pretend play have been shown in scientific research to improve children's executive function and self-regulation skills.

The assessments in the Santa Clara Survey were not about standardized tests for 4-year-olds, but instead, information collected from parents, teachers and observations of children in classroom settings. The results were not used to determine where children should be placed or what schools they should attend, nor were they used to evaluate teachers or for other high-stakes purposes. The observations were done by trained teachers who looked for signs of children's progress on multiple levels. Some examples of what they looked for:

- Can the child operate zippers or work with crayons?
- Can the child follow one- or two-step directions?
- Can the child engage in symbolic play with others (like playing house or fire station)?
- Can the child count 10 objects correctly?

We at FUMPS are very aware of how important it is for a child to be ready socially, emotionally and developmentally for kindergarten. Chronological age should not be a major determining factor. The most recent studies in early childhood education strongly suggest, and are statistically proven, that children should be at least five years old by June of the year they are to begin kindergarten. There are still a few schools beginning in July, allowing some children to enter kindergarten at age four. If these children fall on the young side of the developmental readiness scale and are placed in classrooms with large student to teacher ratios, increased academic expectations and testing, not to mention having to compete with five & even six year olds at the same grade level, their chances of experiencing success in school may be greatly diminished.

We encourage parent/teacher conferences throughout the year. It is during these conferences that your child's readiness skills should be discussed. If there is some question in your mind whether or not your child should begin kindergarten or transitional kindergarten in September, these conferences can be very helpful. More often than not, if parents choose to wait a year before sending their child to kindergarten, that child "blossoms" when given a little more time to mature and their kindergarten experience is most often a successful one.

In addition to conferencing with your child's teacher, we encourage you to join us Wednesday January 16th for a Kindergarten Readiness workshop lead by Dr. Bonnie Bruce (*see Bio below). In this workshop Dr. Bruce will discuss how children learn, what we can do as parents to strengthen the learning process, what children need to know to be ready for today's kindergarten, and address issues that are pertinent to education today. This workshop will last approximately 1 1/2 hours and she will be available to answer questions. We will also have representatives from Harvest Christian, Hawarden Hills Academy, Immanuel Lutheran, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Reach Leadership Academy, Woodcrest Christian Day, Springs Charter School, St. Francis, and we have invited the local school districts. Please come & hear what Dr. Bruce has to say & visit with the Private & Public Schools that offer kindergarten programs in Riverside.

We also offer parents an opportunity to have their child screened for kindergarten readiness here at FUMPS during our morning hours. Mrs. Wilson has the materials, and the results are sent to a professional firm in Orange County - Chauncy & Bruce Educational Resources Inc. - to be reviewed. If you are interested, Mrs. Wilson will go over the screening process with you.

We encourage parents to listen, read, ask questions, and get other opinions whenever it involves your child. Action should not be taken based on one opinion or evaluation, but rather, all should be taken into consideration when making your final decision.

*Bonnie J. Bruce, MEd. is a Developmental Learning Specialist and has spent over 50 years in the field of education. She holds a BS degree in Child Development and Family Studies, a Master of Science degree in Special Education with an emphasis on early diagnosis of learning problems, and her Doctoral work is in the area of testing and assessment. She conducts on-going longitudinal studies on the development of children and the importance of school readiness. Mrs. Bruce is one of the founders of Chancy and Bruce Educational Resources, Inc. Her company works with over 250 schools in southern California and has assessed over 275,000 children over the last 33 years.



Did You Know???

You can be fined **\$150.00** each time you neglect to sign your child in or out of a child care center in California? **Please make sure you are following the State Regulation by signing both your full first name & full last name in the space we provide you on our daily attendance sheets.** Thank You.