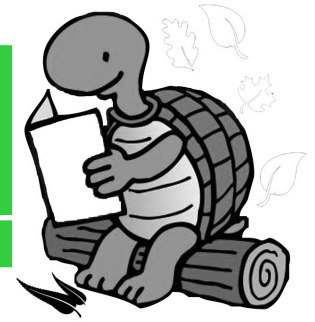


Turtle Times



Tina Vanderwarker, Director; Renee Cunningham, Board President

Director's Corner

Happy Fall! What a wonderful beginning to the school year we have had - this last month has been a new beginning for us all as we get comfortable in our new surroundings. I hope you have all been as happy in our new space as I have been!

I wanted to acknowledge, first off, all you parents for so bravely letting go of your children when it is often so hard. Helping children learn that they can be safe, cared for, and happy, even without the comfort of a parent nearby is a big step to helping them gain confidence in their abilities (and a big goal of ours at preschool!). As children adjust to being at school, it is to be expected that there may be some tearful goodbyes. Predictable routines, reassurances, warm smiles and hugs from teachers, reconnecting with old friends and learning names of new ones will help children learn to trust and depend on their new teachers and classmates. Parents can aid in this transition by being positive about the school experience, helping to verbalize for children what to expect at school and by creating predictable routines for saying goodbye (an Eskimo kiss, a kiss in the palm of your child's hand, a wave through the door, a high five as you get your child settled on the rug or at an activity, etc.). Be patient, and trust will soon develop as familiar, predictable events in your child's new environment replace the unknown. Keep in mind that there are many others around to support you during this transitional time - other parents, teachers, Martha (our family services coordinator) and myself!

On a different topic, one of the often heard frustrations of preschooler's par-

ents is the lack of information shared by their children about the goings on in school. Here are a few tips from an article in *The Well-Centered Child*:

1) Wait for a time when your child can think - a time when they are not hungry, tired, or actively playing. (As you're walking out of school is usually not the best time to share about the day.)

2) Ask questions that don't have a yes-no answer. (Who did you play with at school today? Vs. Did you have fun at school?)

3) Focus on one small piece of information rather than expecting a summary of the day.

And remember, preschoolers, unlike adults, can't summarize, thus making the question "What did you do in school today?" a rather difficult one. Further, adults can survey events to pick out what's important and can easily switch their thoughts away from what's in front of them. Not so with preschoolers - they have yet to master these skills. So be patient with your preschooler, and rest assured that even if you're not getting a lot out of your child, there's a lot of learning going on about how to separate from loved ones, how to play with peers, and how to navigate a classroom full of enticing materials!

To give us further opportunity to extol the wonders of your children, Fall Conferences will be here in a few short weeks. These conferences are a great time to touch base with your child's teachers to hear how your child has acclimated to the school day, who and what they enjoy playing with, etc. Parent-Teacher conferences (Oct. 20 & 21)

offer a unique opportunity to get some more detailed information from someone other than your child -- teachers are looking forward to speaking with you all!

We were happy to see many of you at Covenant's Curriculum Night - hopefully all who attended feel better informed about the important learning your child is doing during his/ her time here at school. Handouts from Curriculum Night are available if you were not able to attend - please come and see me or Martha for copies. And, if you ever have questions or concerns, don't hesitate to come see me in the office - my door is always open or feel free to shoot me an e-mail at

tinav@covenantnurseryschool.org.

Enjoy this wonderful fall weather!

Tina

**Mom's Night Out is
Wednesday, October 12,
6:30-8:30 at WineStyles .
Wine , cheese, treats an
conversation! Please RSVP
to Chandra Hammond at
chaniski@yahoo.com; \$20
per person.**



Letter from the President

Welcome Covenant families to the 2011-2012 school year in our new home at Trinity! This is my family's fifth year at Covenant and we are excited to be a part of this new chapter in Covenant's history. Our daughter Avery is currently a Turtle Champ before she heads to Kindergarten next fall, our son Ryan will be a Turtle Two next year and our oldest daughter Cameron just started 1st grade. This will be my fourth year serving on the board as I was vice president last year and was co-fundraising chair for two years prior to that. I'm excited to serve as Board President to help ensure that your family has as wonderful experience at Covenant as my family has over the years.

As you know, Covenant moved to our new location over the summer after spending five years in the YMCA building in downtown Evanston. I'd like to give a big THANK YOU to Tina and all the teachers who endured the move and worked very hard this summer to get our classrooms ready to welcome our children back to school. The Trinity community has been very warm and accommodating and we look forward to working with them for many years to come.

There are many ways to get involved in your child's experience throughout the school year. Becoming a

Room Parent and/or volunteering in your child's classroom are truly rewarding experiences for you and your child. The children get very excited to see their parent, relative, or caregiver read a favorite book, take dictation of the children's own stories, share a cultural tradition or go on a walking field trip. They see how important their school lives are to you and they feel very proud!

Another way to get to know our school community is by volunteering on various committees throughout the year. As you may have noticed in your enrollment packet, we pre-assigned families to various committees. Please let Tina or I know if you have a conflict or would rather use your talents in a different way. We encourage all parents to get involved in some manner and we certainly appreciate your time and effort!

Also our teachers recently hosted a very informative curriculum night for parents. If you were not able to attend, please feel free to contact your child's teacher to discuss any questions you might have.

I look forward to a wonderful school year with all of you!

Renee Cunningham

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Lunchtime enrichments begin **Monday, October 3** -- Friday lunch bunch is closed, all others are still open
- School picture days are **October 6 & 7**. Dress your special best!
- Covenant's first Mom's Night Out will be **Wednesday, October 12** at Winestyles 6:30-8:30. Hope to see many of you there! Wine, cheese and so much fun. Contact Chandra Hammond for more info and to RSVP, chaniski@yahoo.com.
- Covenant's first Family Craftivity Day will also be **Wednesday, October 12** from 11:45-1:00 in the playroom. We will provide pizza, craft, owl stories and an opportunity to socialize. Fee per family is \$5 to help cover the cost of food.
- Parent-Teacher conferences will be **October 20 & 21**. Your teacher will schedule a time with you soon!
- There is no school **Friday, October 21**.
- The **COSTUME** carnival is **October 29**, from 11AM to 1PM. Wear your Halloween costume, come for lunch and carnival games!
- Innisbrook Fundraiser will run **October 14-28**—don't forget to participate.
- Be sure to sign-up for Covenant Cards, a free to you school fundraiser. Contact Moira, Kinney, Fundraising, moira_kinney@sbcglobal.net

Welcome Back to School,
Turtle Families!

Turtle Twos and Turtle-riffic Threes

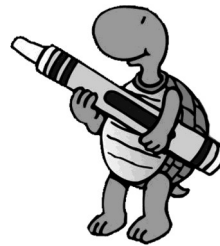
I can't believe summer is already over and done. This summer was often the summer that wasn't. I don't know how many of you got to the beach or pools but I went once! However, we are excited to be in our new classroom with our new classes. All of us, Martha, Michelle, Jackie and I are thrilled to be back having a blast with your children.

The summer coming and going so fast reminds me of the summers when my children were small. I was bicycling a couple of weeks ago and rode past some children playing in a "train park" in Wilmette. That park was a favorite of ours. I would bring my kids, Daniel, Michael and Madeline as well as a couple of other friends to that park. They loved pretending they were driving or attacking the train or anything else their imaginations could come up with. Whenever they would hear a real train approaching, all the kids would quickly scramble to the top of the play train to watch. They would stand on the top and wave and shout to the engineer. Sometimes the engineer would wave back! It was very exciting.

I share this memory to remind us that the years do go by fast and, though a truism, before you know it your children are big and off and busy with their own lives. However, I also remember how exhausting, frustrating and maddening small children can be -with some days it is all you can do to get everyone fed and in clean clothes, including yourself. For -get a shower. No one could make me angrier or more upset than my own children. But no one loved me more completely than

my own little ones. So, on one of those horrible days try to step back, take a deep breath and hold on to their infant- and childhood because it does end. Despite all you do they do grow up. (And believe me, the growing up is just as exhausting, maddening and WONDERFUL all along the way.)

A friend I know from Covenant once said "the hours go by like years but the years go by like hours."



The Turtle Twos classroom is settling in nicely. We have houses in just about everyone's cubbie and face/name tags for the attendance turtle. We are now making personal snack mats with colored paper and stickers.

Everyone has enjoyed the play dough table, doll house and kitchen as well as building lots of towers of blocks. There is a lot of painting going on too. Snack and the playroom are especial favorites. We are sings lots of songs and working on learning each others names.

Lots of fun and fun work ahead.

Elizabeth Goodbody, Michelle Brookfield, Jackie Dennis

The Turtle Threes are off and running; some literally! We have been singing lots of songs and name songs to learn each others names. Most our houses are up so the children can show off their Moms, Dads, Granmas, pets, etc. to each other (and remind themselves of all these significant people in their lives, too).

We have been making face/name tags for the cubbies and for the Attendance Turtle. Thursday we worked on personal snack mats with colored paper and stickers. There has also been lots of painting, too.

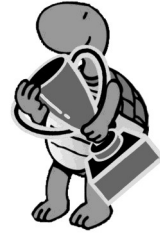
We went to the park with another classroom in our new strollers and to the indoor playroom as well. The children are learning how to walk down the hall and use the equipment safely. Rules are different at school from home and sometimes hard to remember. The children loved being outdoors and we hope to get outside, weather permitting, to the outdoor play area. We hope to have a nature walk outside before it gets too cold.

The class is settling in well and some friendships are forming already!

Thank you for sharing your children with us.

*Elizabeth Goodbody,
Martha Petersen, and
Jackie Dennis*

Turtle Champs



September has been a time for settling in to the routine of school, making new friends and learning through play. There is a marble maze in our classroom that is used on the rug. Children build the ramps and watch the marbles roll from high to low. It has proven to be a favorite activity of some children in the class. You will see from the children's responses that there are many types of activities available during each school week.

Some activities are in the classroom and some are outdoors. As children play alone and with others they are learning. They learn to ask for what they need, they take turns, children observe cause and effect and they give both their small muscle and large muscle a work out.

We often ask children a question and chart their responses so they see their own words written on paper and they see that we value their words.

At the end of the first day of school I asked, *What did you like at school today?*

Here are the responses:

Avery: Playing with toys

Anna M.: the kitchen and dress ups

Oscar: the train

Anna S.: the kitchen

Katie: the babies

Greta: marbles

Maddie: marbles too

Sasha: marbles

Harry: outside

At the end of the second week of school Mrs. B. posed the question again

What did you like at school today?

Lily: playing with the cash register

Oliver: the trucks

Kathryn: scissors and paper

Asher: I like the sand

Rory: playing in the sand

Luke: playing with Jaxson

Jaxson: I liked playing with puzzles

Hazel: I liked drawing

Through the many types of play in which the children are engaged the children are using their imagination, they are problem solving, they are becoming stronger and they are having fun doing it.

Allison Ashley

& Sonja Bruggeman



Sasha, Anna M. and Anna S. in the dramatic play area. Oscar looks on with interest.

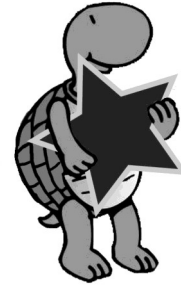


Greta and Hazel toss beanbags in the outdoor classroom.



Jaxson and Luke work with the marble maze.

Turtle Stars



We have gotten off to a wonderful start. The children are coming in happy and ready to learn. Our slow start week went pretty much as expected, with some separation anxiety and a little apprehension. However, because this is a multi-age group, the older and more experienced children, along with the teachers, were able to help the younger and newer students find their comfort zone within our classroom.

It's a big room with many daily activities, some quiet, some busy. After our Hello circle the children make their choices, and for about 45 minutes engage in free play. Activities may include building with blocks, playing with play dough, playing in the dramatic play area or choosing from a variety of art projects. At about 10:00 we all clean up together. We come together as a group for stories, music and movement, and finger play activities. We then do our jobs. Jobs include passing out napkins and cups, telling the

weather, helping with the calendar, inspecting the room, watering the plants and picking the coveted line leader position. It is then time for a bathroom break and snack followed by quiet book and puzzle time. At 11:00 we head out to the playground or down to the playroom. After 30 minutes of large motor play the children retrieve their belongings from their lockers and check their mail boxes. Our days fly by!

Our classroom curriculum thus far has been focused on becoming acquainted with each other, classroom rules. This week's theme was Friends. Next week's theme will be An Introduction to Autumn. The month of October will be devoted to fall related topics.

We are learning each others names and will continue to work on name recognition through songs, jobs and other social activities. We know that we have to be safe at school. This means following directions,

remembering rules and being kind to our

friends. Our year long themes will incorporate activities that will promote language skills, provide social studies (cultural and geographical information) as well as math and science activities. We will also (*and most importantly*) be working on self help skills. We will be encouraging your children to dress themselves for the park. So please remember to label all items that your child brings into the classroom.

A big thank you to all of you for helping us get off to a good start. Please continue to stay involved and keep our school strong.

Sincerely,

Linda Goad

and Jackie Jung



The Stars and Champs received a special treat this week with a visit from the Library Lady.

Covenant Cards! A great and FREE way to raise money for Covenant Nursery School. See Moira Sweeney to get your Covenant Cards—gift cards to do all your purchasing at Amazon, Whole Foods, Dominicks, Starbucks, and Jewel. Great gifts! An easy way to shop.



Family Services Forum

Welcome new CNS families, and welcome back old friends. It is so wonderful to see new students in our classes --many of whom are little people who just a few years ago were brand new (and often much-resented) babies in their sibling's families. How different they are from their older brothers or sisters. As any parent of more than one child well knows, pretty much everything you learned with your first child can be tossed aside; your second (and third, etc.) have different temperaments, interests, talents and styles. And they each develop at their own pace and in their own unique way - taking us along on the journey with them.

For those of you who didn't get to join us for Curriculum Night last week, I'll fill you in on the focus. Basically, we (staff) talked about how children are provided with the opportunity and encouragement to explore and engage in their environment through a variety of media. But whether it's blocks, art, the sensory table, the train playground or playroom, story time, etc., they are all working on three fundamental areas: Social-emotional, Physical and Cognitive

(the foundation for, but different from academic/intellectual). The emphasis will vary from child to child and from time to time; but all three are so intricately interwoven that growth is usually synergistic. With young children, the focus is on establishing a firm, sound social/emotional foundation that will carry forward to supplement and support growth in the other areas.

As an example, I offered the idea of a triangle. Rarely are all three sides and angles equal (each angle being a representation of each area of development). Usually, the angles are very unequal -- with a child in constant motion (gross motor), or dealing with separation (social-emotional), or recognizing their classmates' names in print (oops - crossover already: cognitive and social-emotional).

So if we look at the play of one of my three-year-old friends (I'll call him Louie), we can see how he is working on complex issues in a seemingly ordinary way. There were undeniable tears when mom left the room. But Louie exercised control and went to the sensory table - filled with blue sand. He repeatedly covered and uncovered a small,

round disc. Was he experiencing the feel of the granules? Was he checking out physics by carefully pouring the sand? Perhaps he was investigating object permanence. Yes, of course, but WAIT - THERE'S MORE! He was re-creating and re-enacting the drama of separating from mom. Creating and resolving the conflict under his control. Of course, all he knew was that he was playing in the sand table (as it should be).

If you'd like the handouts from Curriculum Night, just let me know. (No guarantees that I can re-create the dramatic presentations of my fellow colleagues.) Any other questions about your child, feel free to e-mail or stop in the office on Wed or Fri mornings during class. I am also working on our parenting lending library (the black shelf outside the office); you are most welcome to browse and borrow.

Martha Petersen

Family Service Co-ordinator

Happy September & October Birthdays!

Abby Quail, 3
Greta Coleman, 4
Kathryon D'Ambrosio, 4
Owen Cameron, 3



Anna McQuade, 5
Katja Wientjes, 4
Matthey Gilroy, 3
Thomas Gilrow, 3

Fundraising Corner

Dear Families -

Your Fundraising Co-Chairs would like to welcome you to another great year at Covenant and take a minute to tell you about some of the fundraising efforts that will be kicking off this month. We know the beginning of the school year is often very busy - and it is also a very active time for several of our fundraising programs. The good news is that participation in these programs is very easy and, in some cases, completely FREE!

DOMINICK'S FRESH VALUE REWARDS

Did you know that every time you use your Dominick's Fresh Values card, they will donate a percentage of all your purchases to Covenant? It's easy to register and participate in this FREE & EFFORT-LESS FUNDRAISER:

- Log on to www.eScrip.com and go to "sign up"
- Designate Covenant Nursery-School (Group ID# 500012865) to receive contributions.
- Register your Dominick's Fresh Values card

INNISBROOK - GIFTS THAT GIVE BACK

Our Innisbrook sale fundraiser is just around the corner. With great gift wrap, cosmetics, housewares, cookie dough, chocolates, magazine subscriptions and more, it's an easy way to make a dent in holiday shopping and raise money for Covenant. Find great gifts for family, friends, teachers, babysitters and more - and Innisbrook gives 40-50% of your purchase back to our school! Don't forget to take orders from friends, family and neighbors. This year's sale will take place between October 14-28. Look for your sales packet in your mailbox.

STOP BEFORE YOU SHOP

Before you head out to the grocery store, think about using pre-paid gift cards that can be purchased from the school at face value. Dominick's, Jewel, Whole Foods, Sam's Club, Amazon and many other retailers will donate anywhere from 4-18% of your card purchase to Covenant - and there's no cost to you! Just shop as you'd normally shop, spend what you'd normally spend, but use pre-paid gift cards instead of cash or credit. What an EASY and FREE way to help raise money for our school! Orders can be placed through the school the first week of every month. Look for more information and order forms for Covenant Cards in your mailbox.

Each one of our families plays an important role in our financial success and we hope you are able to participate in these essential fundraisers that help maintain and grow Covenant's programs. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Your Fundraising Chairwomen

Moira Stein (moira_kinney@sbcglobal.net)

