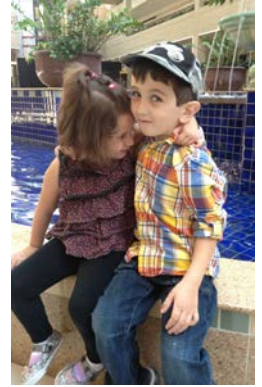


## Family Spotlight: Our Family

I am Rabab Tarhini, the mother of Ali 4 (Kindergarten), Sally 3 (AM Blue Room 3's), and Aya who is 3 months old. We are originally from Lebanon. I came here 7 years ago to join my husband, Ahmad, who is a physician and faculty at the University of Pittsburgh. I quickly fell in love with Pittsburgh for the wonderful city that it is and what it has to offer our family. We go back home to Lebanon once a year to spend time with our families and for our children to experience our eastern culture and the richness of combining the best of the two worlds. Ali is bilingual. He speaks Arabic and English. He can read children's books and write a significant number of words, mostly triggered by his love of searching and exploring topics on the Internet. He loves to play outdoors when the weather allows and is mostly into cars these days. Sally is bilingual too. She is mostly into handbags and little baby dolls. She also loves to listen to stories.



Our relationship with the Children's School means a lot to us. We have great admiration for and are fond of all the teachers, the staff and all the friends we have come to make. For the past 2 years, the teachers have helped Ali grow up to be a fine young boy who loves to learn and explore. The school has significantly broadened his interests and taught him a lot of great habits. As for Sally, she has been impatiently waiting for Ali's school to be "her school" too. It has been a long wait for her as she has been accompanying me for 2 years to drop Ali off and pick him up from school. She has a great time walking to her class to meet her teacher and friends in the Blue Room. She simply loves to go to school. Finally, I can't wait for Aya to be a part of the Children's School too. Thank you Children's School for being the BEST!

## Family Social Organization (FSO)

The Family Social Organization prepared for the school year over the summer with a few chances for the children to meet their new classmates and reconnect with their friends. The FSO got wonderful support from the Children's School staff when we hosted Playground Playdates in the Children's School playground this July. Thank you! The Playground Playdates were very successful and lots of fun! Friends also enjoyed a lovely night and nice music at the "First Friday at the Frick" picnic! Finally, right before the school year started, the whole school was invited to splash around and dive into the Whole School Water Unit with an outing to the Troy Hill Spray Park! The FSO hopes to build on the enthusiastic response to these events and provide the school community lots of chances to build lasting friendships this year. If you would like to be part of the planning team or if you have any ideas, comments or suggestions, contact Beth Lott (FSO Chair and mom to Isaac, AM 4s) at 412-243-2626 or [elisabeth.lott@gmail.com](mailto:elisabeth.lott@gmail.com).



## Family Spotlight:

The Simcox family has been involved with The Children's School since 2002, when Jessica was an Assistant Teacher in the Preschool 3's Program. She was attending Chatham University to earn her Master's in Early Childhood and Elementary Education, and she found her full-time work at The Children's School a valuable addition to her graduate classes. It was the foundation for every teaching experience she has had since then, laying



framework for so many classrooms full of positive interactions with children, and even now at The Open Door Youth Center where she coordinates an Afterschool Program for city school children. It's hard to believe that now the time has come for our own children to be in a school setting, and we couldn't be happier that Henry is in the Green Room with the same teachers who were such an important part of Jessica's early teaching career. It feels like we never left!

Adam, a nurse at Magee Women's Hospital, and Jessica Simcox reside in the West End of Pittsburgh, where they are raising Henry (4) and Campbell (2).



## Collecting Used Books & Magazines

Please help us collect used books and magazines for Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh's "adopt a book" program. The program allows all patients and their family members to keep any magazine or book that has been donated to the library. Please pull your name and address information off of the donated magazines. The program encourages magazines that are not more than one year old. Any books - for adults or children of any age - are welcome.



Bring your magazines and books beginning on December 1<sup>st</sup> to the Children's School office. Donations will be accepted until Thursday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, the last day of the fall semester. If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Morowitz at [jessicachristiemorowitz@gmail.com](mailto:jessicachristiemorowitz@gmail.com) or (312) 351-3617. Many thanks in advance for your assistance!

## November Web Artists

**3's Friends:** Simone B., Lola F., Tripp F., Basil K., and Sally T.

**4's Friends:** Mae B., Woojin C., Hugo M., Lizzy N., and Chase W.

**Kindergarten Friends:** Noah H., Giovanni Mc-C., and Liam S.





## Family Spotlight: Painting, Playgrounds & Play

My name is Leslie Aronson. My husband, Michael, and I are the parents of Ruby (AM Red Room, turning 3 in December) and Maya (born this past June). We also have a black lab, Mesi, and a cat, Mabel. Michael, a Squirrel Hill native, is a manager at GlaxoSmithKline, founder of several health and safety-related businesses, and a licensed paramedic (not currently practicing). I am a clinical social worker and have a part-time private psychotherapy practice, in addition to being a stay-at-home mom. I'm originally from Syracuse, New York and have been living in Pittsburgh since 2006.



Many people visiting our home have been offered a check up by "Doctor" Ruby, toy doctor kit in tow. In addition to her passion for helping people feel good, Ruby has a love of painting, playgrounds, and of course, playing with her baby sister. Maya is a very social and smiley baby who is currently into practicing new vocal sounds.



As a family, we enjoy going for walks, visiting the zoo, hosting brunches, and summer trips to Newport, Rhode Island, where we spend time at the beach and the annual folk music festival.



The Children's School is a great fit for our family. Our connection with the school dates back to 1979, when Michael was a preschool "friend" in Ms. Ehnes' class. That's him right in front of the teacher! He still remembers some of the children in his class, and, according to his mother, he liked the playground the best.

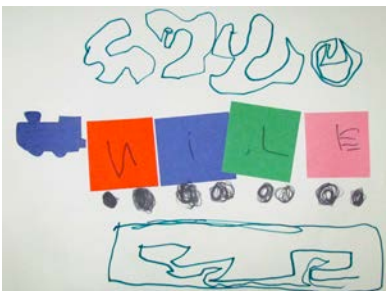
In addition to Michael's fond history, the school's role in psychology academia appeals to me. As a former undergraduate major in Human Development, I remember observing a similar laboratory preschool for a class called *The Role and Meaning of Play*. I was (and remain) fascinated by what children's play can teach us about individual children as well as about human psychology in general. I am so happy for Ruby (and eventually, Maya) to be a part of a school that is attentive to and knowledgeable about healthy psychological development.

The start of school this year has been Ruby's first experience in a structured environment away from her parents. It has been such a pleasure for Michael and me to learn even more about our daughter than we already knew, against the new backdrop of an enriching school setting. I love watching her from my car at dismissal time as she returns inside from the playground, holding a friend's hand, happily singing and swaying, pigtailed bobbing.



## Family Spotlight: Urban University Living & Learning

**Rubab and Thomas O'Connor**, the parents of **Shahrzad** (Kindergarten) and **Nile** (AM 4's), met 8 years ago at Carnegie Mellon's Heinz School where they were each pursuing a Masters of Public Management degree. Shortly after graduation, Rubab and Thomas married and settled in the burgeoning downtown neighborhood of Pittsburgh where they currently reside. Shahrzad, born on the most beautiful spring day of 2007, quickly revealed an observant curiosity and passion for books (in fact, her first word was book). She typically begins each school-bound morning with "I wonder what we are going to learn today?" and ends each day by recounting her newfound knowledge. Over the past two years, the wonderful teachers and staff of the Children's School have helped nurture that nature by revealing and encouraging the joyful side of learning. For that, the family is most grateful. Nile was born just 17 months after his sister and, partially owing to their closeness in age, has a deep fondness and admiration for her. His primary love is sports, but his affection for trains follows as a close second. His favorite



sports figures are Andrew McCutchen, Ben Roethlisberger, and Marc-Andre Fleury. And, even more than these, he loves his teachers! Outside of school, the O'Connor family enjoys participating in the many fairs, parades, and festivals in and around downtown. They enjoy attending museums, parks, and libraries, as well as learning tennis. Perhaps most of all, they enjoy quiet evenings at home playing Ludo and Candyland.

## January Web Artists

**3's Friends:** Sasha C., Elena E., Andres F., Rhiannon G. and Greta R.

**4's Friends:** Nera A., Alexander L., Boden M., Elisabeth M., and Nile O.

**Kindergarten Friends:** Sasha K., Will N., and Gabrielle W.





## Family Spotlight: Homeward Bound

We are the Sekula family--Anne, Raymond, William (6), John (4), and Jane (3). We have recently returned to Pittsburgh, where we previously lived for 10 years, after a 2 year stint up north in snowy Erie, PA. Anne moved back with the children in January, specifically so John and Jane could have at least a half year at The Children's School before John starts Kindergarten. While in Erie, the children enjoyed playing at Presque Isle Beach and hiking through The Asbury Woods Nature Center. William attended the Children's School and is a Blue and Green Room alumni. He is now enrolled in 1st grade at Sacred Heart Elementary. He was able to visit his teachers a few weeks ago during greeting. On his way out, he said he would really like to come back to The Children's School and wants to attend CMU so he can intern there.



Two years ago, we were fortunate to host three Korean students for two weeks who were studying American early childhood education at CMU. We learned a lot about the different styles of raising children between the two cultures like "Why do American children sleep in their own beds" (Because Mom would like her sleep) and "There is no such thing as Gifted in Korea". John (4) and Jane (3) have quickly settled in and are reminding William and Mom of songs and rhymes learned years ago ("There's a Bubble in Your Mouth", "What's The Weather"). Though they attended great preschools in Erie, they are much more animated about what they have been learning each day at The Children's School. John has unfortunately been exposed to Star Wars Legos by his older brother that is their primary past time. Jane would like for her brothers to play with her more, but is primarily interested in tea parties, play doh, painting, and princess or baby make believe.

Raymond is a Pittsburgh native and Central Catholic and CMU Business School graduate. He is a neurosurgeon at UPMC Hamot in Erie and is excited to return in March to work nearby at UPMC Presbyterian. Anne ran the grantmaking and community initiatives programs at The Erie Community Foundation, and is currently just getting everyone settled in Pittsburgh. Anne was excited to introduce The Imagination Playground that she learned of through the Children's School to the Erie early childhood community, as a way for snowed in preschoolers to expend their energy indoors. Serving on the Board of the Sprout Fund and the Spark Program, which funds projects aimed at children using technology, media, and the arts, Anne has been excited to see creative projects from the Children's School and CMU, like Message from Me, earn pilot support over the past few years.



During evenings and weekends, the Sekula kids are way over-involved in Chess, Wrestling, soon to be C-Mites, CMU Music Preparatory School, and Ballet. So we especially enjoy Friday Family Movie Night and Sunday Jammy Day. We live in Squirrel Hill and can often be found at all East Side playgrounds and Ice Cream shops.

## Family Spotlight: Love of Learning

Katie and Dave Gancy are the proud parents of Julia (4) and Cayla (10) and are thrilled with The Children's School. Julia is in the Blue Room this year. Cayla also attended and is now enrolled at the Environmental Charter School. The Children's School has been great for both girls helping them to make new friends and instilling a love of learning.

Cayla was delighted when her little sister was starting at The Children's School. She has the best memories of her time there and was so happy that Julia could have the same opportunity. Julia loves sports, dancing, reading and art, all of which she gets to do at school. She also enjoys walking to school with her parents as they live in the neighborhood.

Dave is a chef who owns The Red Oak Café in Oakland, and also operates the café in Tepper Business School on campus. Katie works for a movie theater company, which operates Waterworks Cinemas and Cranberry Cinemas (both theaters always have the latest kid movies).



The Gancy family enjoys getting outside and appreciates The Children's School's inspiration for outdoor activity. The family also loves learning together at the museums and libraries around town. They feel fortunate to be a part of The Children's School community with the incredible staff, dynamic teachers, and lovely families.



## Usborne Book Fair

We are very pleased to be hosting a virtual \*Usborne Books & More\* Book Fair from February 25<sup>th</sup> to March 25<sup>th</sup>, as well as a Book Show on Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup> from 8:30am - 12:30pm. Our classrooms will receive 25% of total retail sales in FREE books, so this is a wonderful opportunity to stock your own home-libraries, and to help our classroom libraries grow as well!

You can shop 3 ways:

1. Anytime at our e-fair link on the Usborne Books & More website  
<https://t3291.myubam.com/15715>

This is a great way for family and friends to support our school, too, so feel free to share this link with grandparents, neighbors, or anyone who loves books.

2. You may complete and return the Usborne flier that is being sent home with this newsletter. Please return your completed flier to school by Monday, March 18<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to place an order after that date, you may do so at the website through Monday, March 25<sup>th</sup>.
3. Visit the Book Show on Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup>. Peruse a selection of Usborne and Kane Miller titles, browse the full catalog, and leave a paper order with our Usborne consultant, Anne Lee.

Please note that our teachers have posted wish-lists for their classrooms in case you want to purchase one of their wish-list titles for the school. Please make a note by the title or cross it off the list to help us keep track of how our libraries are growing. We appreciate your support and look forward to seeing lots of fresh, new titles in our classroom libraries.

## Family Spotlight: High Standards for Education

Hello. We are the Kim family – Amy, Hoon, Basil and Calabria. Currently Hoon owns *Pittsburgh Prep*, an SAT Company, and *Fukuda*, a Japanese restaurant in Bloomfield. I, Amy, am a stay at home mom. Hoon was born in Korea and moved to New York with his family at the age of 9. He attended NYU for undergrad and Harvard for a Masters in Education. I was born in Pittsburgh, attended Carlow College for Elementary Education and U. Pitt. for a Masters in Early Childhood Education. I moved to New York City after graduate school and taught kindergarten for 7 years at a private school on the Upper Westside. Hoon worked on the New York stock exchange for 6 years. We met through a friend and were married in Manhattan in 2006. We decided to move to Pittsburgh to start a family and be closer to my family. Pittsburgh was an affordable city that would allow me to be a stay at home mom. I taught at Shady Side Academy for one year before getting pregnant with Basil, the love of our lives. Basil has always been a creative, imaginative little boy with many interests. He loved to pretend cook since he was 12 months and liked seeing watermelons and pumpkins at the markets. Now he has an interest in collecting toy spiders, exploring outside, singing songs, and drawing. He loves construction sites and can't get enough of watching real diggers at work, especially excavators, his favorite! He will often create an excavator out of anything in his sight (e.g., fruit, blocks, sticks, pasta).



Being an early childhood educator, I had high standards and expectations when researching preschools for Basil. After sitting in the parent orientation at the Children's School and listening to Dr. Carver explain the philosophy, I knew it would be a great fit! We have been so pleased with the Children's School. Basil has flourished here. He loves his teachers and shares everything they do in the classroom at home. During the "Animals in Winter" study, Basil would often say he is hibernating under the table or, while studying "Water", he would lay on the floor and be a puddle of water and then evaporate. Now he is very fascinated with scorpions from the "Desert" unit! Calabria, our daughter, who just turned 18 months, is Basil's number one admirer. She is adventurous and not afraid of anything. She brings us pure joy as well! We look forward to the time in two years when we can send her to the wonderful Children's School.

Reading is a love we share everyday. Basil has a growing collection of books counting over 500 (my addiction)! We also enjoy walking our dog, Gnocchi, eating ice cream in Shadyside, visiting Phipps (especially the Chihuly & to pretend to grocery shop), and exploring the museums. During the weekends, we relax, play at home, cook / bake, and often visit Basil's Nonna and Pappap in the country. Their house is a learning environment indoors and out!

We want to thank all the educators at the Children's School for being so kind, caring, and sensitive to Basil. You are all fantastic!!



## Family Spotlight: Growing Together In Pittsburgh

Since Isaac was 2 and in the Red Room with Mrs. Tomer and Mr. Salinetto, one of the first things I, Beth Lott, ask when he gets in the car is, "what was snack today?" He was a little late with talking so, in those early days, I didn't get much of an answer. Nowadays, I think the influence of an older brother is affecting the exasperation in his voice when he answers, "Mom, you ask that every day!" The worst is on Mondays when I also ask what his new job is. The only time he can't wait to tell me about his job is when he is the Line Leader (for the record, Caboose is his least favorite). I wonder if that desire to be line leader means something for when he grows up? One thing is certain; he is charming and charismatic so I bet he will go far in whatever he decides to do.

Our family is from Pittsburgh and aside from a brief stint in Raleigh, NC for college, we have always lived in Pittsburgh. We chose to settle here after Isaac's big brother, Alex (age 10), was born. We live 5 minutes away from both sets of grandparents, and we are extremely lucky that they are very involved in our lives. Alex and Isaac enjoy going to baseball games with Jeremiah's parents and they love sleeping on Friday nights at my parents' home. Jeremiah and I sure enjoy that too!



Jeremiah is a software engineer at a thriving young company, part of Pittsburgh's vibrant tech scene. I stay home with the children and volunteer as I can at their schools, including coordinating volunteers and planning events. Alex loves nature, swimming, rock climbing and math. Isaac loves playing outside, music, and making new friends. We are really looking forward to summer. Some of our favorite things to do in the summer as a family are hanging out at the pool, going to the beach, taking nature walks, visiting zoos and museums, and going to Pirates' games (though Isaac only goes for the Dippin' Dots!).

We thank the Children's School for being a wonderful school for our children. I was just pregnant with Isaac when Alex started in kindergarten at the Children's School. Isaac's application was in for preschool when he was just 6 weeks old. Both boys had fantastic teachers, learned a lot, and had a bunch of fun!

Isaac will be starting kindergarten in the fall at the Environmental Charter School. Alex is in 5th grade at ECS and we have been part of that community since the school started. We will be sad to leave the Children's School behind but at least we can always visit!

