

## Family Spotlight: Snapshot of Our Community

During September, the friends in all of our classes get to know each other by sharing information about themselves and their families, which prompts us to discuss similarities and differences so that we can better appreciate the diversity among us. The "All About Me" projects in each classroom give children and families an opportunity to get to know each other better. You'll get to see all of these at the Open House events!



This year, we have 88 families with 99 children at the Children's School, including 21 only children and three sets of twins. Twenty-four of these families are new to the school, including families who recently moved to Pittsburgh from New York, China, Columbia, India, and the United Kingdom. Among the returning families, we have three in which the father is a Children's School alum!



Ten of our families have a parent who is a graduate student or faculty member at Carnegie Mellon. Three of our fathers and 39 of our mothers identified themselves as stay-at-home parents. The other parents listed a wide variety of professions, including Attorney, Banker, Business Owner, Chef, Customer Service Representative, Entrepreneur, Financial Consultant, Geologist, Librarian, Manager, Mechanical Engineer, Physician, Pilates Instructor, Professor, Real Estate Developer, Researcher, Social

Worker, School Principal, Software Engineer, Teacher, Therapist, and Visiting Scholar.



Almost 25% of our children are dual language learners, and a few are trilingual. This year, we have families speaking at least 15 languages besides English: Amharic (Ethiopia), Arabic, Chinese, German, Hebrew, Hindi / Urdu, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Slovak, Spanish, and

Telugu (India). Each month hereafter, the Family Spotlight column will introduce one of the Children's School families in more depth. Feel free to contact Mrs. Rosenblum if you would like to be a featured family. You can also see prior family profiles on the Children's School web site under "For Families".



We also talk about the school as a community where we are all helping each other to learn. Sometimes we each contribute to a joint project (like the Kindergarten Community Mural) and other times we actually collaborate to create something more innovative than any of us could accomplish alone (like the Kindergarten Circle Mural Collaboration). Watch the school walls for more examples as the year progresses and feel free to offer your help to support our explorations!



## Family Spotlight: Guatemala to Pittsburgh

We are the Sanchez family! Carlos (dad), Maria (mom), Carlos A. (PM4's), Santiago (PM3's) and Emma (10 months).

Carlos and I are from Guatemala and moved to Columbus, Ohio where young Carlos was born in June of 2009. When he was one week old, we moved once again to Cincinnati, Ohio so dad could continue his cardiology training; and in the summer of 2010, our family welcomed a little boy and Carlos' best buddy, Santiago. After three wonderful years in Cincinnati, we moved to Pittsburgh and we couldn't be happier. It is a beautiful city with tons of things to do and very welcoming people. We also became a family of five when we welcomed Emma, who was born last December.



We feel very blessed to be part of The Children's School. Carlos is a child who loves learning new things, always asking how things work and WHY. He really enjoys the time at school where he gets to explore and learn new things. After all the stories and all the things Carlos shared with us at home about school, Santiago couldn't wait for his turn to be part of The Children's School. He is learning so much and is eager to learn more and more. They both come to school with the biggest smiles and we love the family time when they share all of what they did at school that day. For that we are very thankful and blessed!



## November Web Artists

**3's Friends:** Sahil C., Asher G., Jackie L., Roxie L., and Phoebe M.

**4's Friends:** Andres F., Tripp F., MinSeo K., Minwoo L., and Jane S.

**Kindergarten Friends:** Mae B., Boden M., and Lexi S.





## Family Spotlight: Proud & Grateful Newcomers

Hello, Children's School friends! We are the Mendez Family; Camilo, who just started a Masters in Information Systems Management at CMU; Claudia, currently a full-time mother; Jerónimo, who is 5 years old and recently joined the kindergarten class; Jacobo, who will turn 4 in January and is a class member of the Blue Room; and Antonia, who will join our family in early February 2014.



### Where We Come From

We come from Colombia...not Columbia☺ If you have misspelled it, don't be ashamed; it is a common mistake!!

Colombia is a beautiful tropical country located in the north part of South America. We feel very proud of our diverse natural resources and the warmth of our people. Following are some interesting facts about Colombia:

- 1<sup>st</sup> country in bird diversity in the world – 19% of all bird species reside in our territory
- 1<sup>st</sup> in fruit diversity in the world
- 1<sup>st</sup> in number of amphibian species
- 4<sup>th</sup> in number of mammal species
- 3<sup>rd</sup> in largest reserves of fresh water per capita – 7<sup>th</sup> of total reserves
- 1<sup>st</sup> emerald producer in the world
- Largest flower supplier for the US

We lived in Bogotá, the capital city of Colombia. Bogotá is a metropolis of more than 8 million people, that enjoys great weather (average = 66°F)... when it is not raining (average = 180 rainy days per year)! We don't have seasons, but you can get all of them on the same day; sunny morning, windy noon, rainy afternoon and hail storm in the night. Bogotá has developed vastly in the past 20 years and now offers a very attractive nightlife with multiple cultural and gastronomic alternatives.

### What We Have Liked About Pittsburgh and What We Have Found Different

So far, we have had a great experience in Pittsburgh. We have found very nice, warm and welcoming people and a very family-friendly city, full of parks and museums both for children and adults. One thing that we have found notable is the pride and devotion of the city to its sports teams; there is no day when you won't find someone with a jersey of one of the city teams. Autumn is also a different and beautiful experience for us; many times we are awed by the beauty of the fall leaves. The other difference for us is the weather...the cold weather! The children are anxiously awaiting the snow; the adults are less excited and more frightened.

### Our Children's School Experience

Our experience at the Children's School couldn't be better. We had great expectations and they have been exceeded. We have felt a warm welcome both from the staff and from the Children's School families. We feel in our kids' attitude towards the school, the close attention, the care, and the love that the school's staff puts into their teaching. Another important thing is that the school understands the role they play in society in helping parents to raise not only smart children but more importantly happy and environmentally-conscious persons. The school has been fundamental not only for our children's smooth transition to a new country but also for the whole family's settlement process. We are very grateful!

## Family Spotlight: Nurturing Capable Children

The Balogs! Doug and I (Jennifer) met in 1999 while working for the same company outside of Boston. (Fishing off the company pier, he called it!) When we welcomed Jane into our lives in 2005, we started to think that Boston might not be the ideal place to raise a family. Exciting, interesting, beautiful, historically significant - we loved it. I had spent half my life outside the U.S., and Boston felt so familiar to me. But looking at sweet wide-awake Jane, it didn't seem to fit with our new role as a young family.

I'd always enjoyed coming to Pittsburgh to visit Doug's friends and family, and it hit me on one of them that I should look around a little harder and pay attention a bit more. On our way back to the airport, I asked Doug if he'd like to move back home. Jane was five months old when we moved into our house in Point Breeze. Happy baby Michael was born 9 months after that, and cuddly baby Mae another two years after that. And over the years, Pittsburgh has far exceeded my expectations.



We're now in our sixth and last (!) year at the Children's School. I don't remember how we first heard about it; I just remember wondering, "Is it really time to send Jane to school?" (Which now seems funny since as my mother says, "she just needs you to drive her places!") We visited many schools that seemed warm, inviting, nurturing - what you'd want for preschool. But the Children's School also believed that children are so very, very capable. Teachers can teach real, complex ideas as long as they are brought to the kids' level.



Each of our children learned how to take surveys, graph, sew, cook, hammer and drill. They experimented with technology, learned that their input was valuable (especially through lab research), and met university students who showed them so many additional ways to move through an adult world. Michael learned as a 4 year-old that outer space is a vacuum (one of many "oh yeah, I think I remember that from school" moments for Mommy) and, therefore has no sound, with a simple jingle bell in a jar experiment. He learned about Antarctica and that polar bears and penguins don't live at the same pole (really?). Jane learned and still talks about the human body and the systems that make it work. She taught us through retelling Native American stories that she understood people's emotions more than we knew. Mae learned about the preciousness of water, its cycle and its different states. And by enacting the Native

American "three sisters" farming practice, she will always know that beans were planted to grow up cornstalks, while squash covered the ground in between, so its broad leaves could keep the ground moist. They also made many friends and had fun.



Jane and Michael love coming back to visit and seeing what Mae is up to. And I know they'll still want to come back even after Mae has joined them at the Environmental Charter School (ECS). I'm not really sure what I'm going to do the first time my car turns onto Margaret Morrison Street and I realize I'm not supposed to be there. Maybe I'll stop in and learn something new!

*Editor's Note: You'd be welcome any time, Jennifer!*

## Family Spotlight: CMU Dad and Daughters

We, the Hayashi family, moved from Osaka, Japan to Pittsburgh in 2008. Our family has Eiji (dad), Eriko (mom), Anna (7 years old), and Sara (3 years old). Eiji is pursuing his Ph.D. in Human-Computer Interaction at CMU. I guess Eiji will finish his Ph.D. some time soon, but I'm not sure. When I heard that asking a Ph.D. student when he/she will finish the Ph.D. is equivalent to asking a woman how old she is, I stopped asking him about it. Anyway, it is great for him to have opportunities to do something he loves.



Anna, a second grader now, was a student at the CMU Children's School for two years. When Anna was going to the Children's School, Sara was born. It is surprising that Sara has grown so quickly and is going to school now.

Sara loves singing and dancing. At home, she always sings songs that she learns at the Children's School, dances pretending she is a princess, or jumps around happily. It is very fun to see how Sara and Anna, a rather shy girl, are developing in such different ways.

Finally, we are very glad that Anna was and Sara is part of the Children's School. Anna had an exciting two years with great people at the Children's School. Sara had been waiting for so long for the day when she could join the school. Now, it's her school, and she LOVES the CMU Children's School.

## Box Tops for Education

Continue to Save Your Box Tops and submit them to the Children's School office by February 19, 2014!!

To date this year, we have raised \$71.40 via Box Tops for Education!

**Box Tops for Education** has helped America's schools earn over \$400 million since 1996. You can earn cash for the Children's School by clipping Box Tops coupons from hundreds of participating products. Please see the enclosed list of products. Box Tops also offers easy ways to earn even more cash online at

<http://www.boxtops4education.com/Default.aspx>.





## Family Spotlight: A Parent, Grandparent, and Teacher's Perspective

As a Children's School educator for the past 18 years, I am a believer in the educational philosophy that providing a broad range of developmentally appropriate activities for our students enhances their learning experience. I observe this with my kindergarten students year after year.



Five years ago, the role of grandmother was added to my resume. My only choice for Lexi's first school experience was The Children's School. Yes, it was convenient to have her come and go with me, but watching her grow and blossom her first year with Mrs. Flynn and Mr. Salinetto was worth so much more than the carpool. She eagerly ran into the Blue Room and never looked back, so I was able to walk away knowing that she was in loving, caring hands for the afternoon. Lexi continued to grow in the Green Room as Ms. Mangan, Mrs. Solomon and the 4's team provided the perfect balance of play and learning, meeting her creative needs but also challenging her cognitively. Socially, she was encouraged to be a kind friend. Because of this mantra, Lexi has made friends with children and adults from all over the world!



Her kindergarten year has been joyful for me as I have watched her continue to build upon the foundation laid the previous years. As an educator, parent and grandmother, I have experienced the value of preparing the environment in such a way that allows children to explore and discover the world, independent of an adult's agenda. Watching their faces light up when the concept clicks is priceless. When the learning becomes their own, it is more likely to generate excitement that leads to more in depth exploration.



I had my "YES!" moment about the value of the Children's School education when I overheard a conversation that Lexi had with a friend. As the two of them came up with a solution to a problem they were having in the blocks, an adult in the classroom commented on their creative approach. Lexi replied, "Well, we are thinkers." The perfect summation to her time at the Children's School was stated by Benjamin Franklin. "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn."

Submitted by Donna Perovich,  
Children's School Kindergarten Teacher  
and Grandmother of Lexi Steiner (K)

## Family Spotlight: A Wonderful Welcome!

Hello... we are the (Colonna) Lancaster family: Don is a Regulatory Compliance Officer with BNY Mellon, Carolyn is a professional mom (also a graphic designer) and Jackie (who turns 4 in May) is a Blue Room friend at the Children's School.



Don and I met in Boston and later moved to Charlotte, NC. From there, Don was recruited to his current job here in Pittsburgh. The job was originally to be in New York and was changed at the last moment. So we moved here to Pittsburgh sight-unseen to an apartment we found online--our only Pittsburgh experience was "walking" our Shadyside neighborhood via Google Streetview. I was eight months pregnant when we moved, so Jackie was born here in Pittsburgh.



Pittsburgh has been an amazing city for Jackie's early years - with so many cultural, educational and inspiring options nearby... museums, theaters, restaurants, a botanical garden, a zoo, an aquarium, an aviary, festivals, a carousel, farms, parks and playgrounds. We have taken full advantage of all of these offerings!

One of our favorite aspects of Pittsburgh has been our experiences with the Children's School. Jackie heads off to school each day with a huge smile on her face and when I come at dismissal time that smile is even bigger. I love knowing that Jackie is truly cared for at school, by her teachers, by the staff and by her classmates. She is always so proud to share with us the art she creates, the songs she sings, the experiences she has and the new things that she learns.

The Children's School has also been wonderful for us adults. We love the level of communication the school offers with the daily blogs, monthly newsletters and open house nights. It allows us to truly feel like part of Jackie's experience. And as relative newcomers to Pittsburgh, it has been wonderful to be welcomed into the Children's School community. We have attended nearly every event put on by the FSO--which has been fun for Jackie and for us (thank you FSO!!). Through the Children's School, we have all made beautiful friendships that I know will last for years to come.





## Family Spotlight: It's a Family Affair

The Criswells: Roland and I (Bethany) met in 2000 while attending the same church. Little did we know, within three years, we'd be walking down the aisle together, watch both our boys being blessed at the altar and now, capture videos of our two boys singing in the choir.

After completing my Master's Degree at Temple University, I was led to Pittsburgh for my first job at Carnegie Mellon University. I had never been to 'the burgh' and only associated The Steelers with Pittsburgh. While working in the University Advancement Department as the Sports Information Director, I would often see children walking with the handheld ropes across the street and into the gym. I never imagined that my children would be attending the Children's School, which was just steps away from my building office in Skibo Gym.

My husband, Roland, and I brought home our first bundle of joy, Roland Andrew, in December 2006. It wasn't long before I was searching for the best Pre-K program to enroll my very bright three-year-old. I was led to the Children's School by the Pettiford Family who had their son in the program but were moving to York, PA. This created an opening for Roland in 2009 and we have been so grateful ever since.



Roland's love for building, tinkering and play were all nourished at the Children's School. I remember so vividly his first day as he yelled from the sandbox, "Mom and Dad, you can go now, I'm okay!" It was a bittersweet moment because I knew he would be just fine, yet I would miss him being with me all day. Roland enjoyed the Green Room with Mrs. Solomon's PM 4's, Mrs. Bird's Green Room Annex AM 4's with Extended AM, and finally the Kindergarten with Mrs. Perovich and Ms. Scholes. He has since matriculated and is doing phenomenally as a 1st grader at Shady Side Academy.

Then, there's our Baby Brandon - aka Mrs. Rosenblum's "boyfriend"! We brought him home in March 2010. This pleasant, mild-mannered child was truly different from his brother, yet in many ways the same. After three years of bringing Roland to school, Brandon was more than ready to go to "Roland's Old School", as he called it, so he quickly acclimated to the Children's School's program. It brought back special memories as I heard Brandon sing the "Weather Song" and "Down by the Bay." He absolutely loves being a part of the Morning 3's class with Mrs. Tomer and Mr. Salinetto.



Now that both boys are in school, I am back to work with my husband at the East Liberty Branch of our family business - Coston Funeral Homes, Inc. I can't believe how much the boys have grown. The Children's School has allowed our family to connect with other great families who have also matriculated to SSA and has made learning a lifelong adventure for our boys. We are so grateful for the sincere love and special care the teaching staff and administrative staff has shown to our children and our family. Although this is our last year, we will continue to stay connected to Carnegie Mellon as Roland has started the C-MITES program.