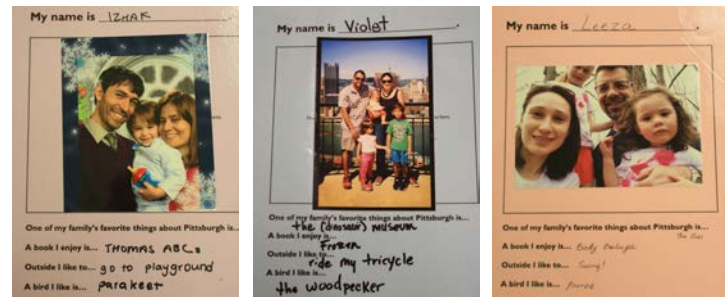


Family Spotlight: Snapshot of Our Community

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 85 families with 91 children at the Children's School, including 25 only children and one set of twins (see drawing at left). Twenty of these families are new to the school, including families who recently moved to Pittsburgh from Boston, Michigan, Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Turkey and Uzbekistan. Among our families, we have two in which one parent is a Children's School alum!

Fourteen of our families have a parent who is a graduate student or faculty member at Carnegie Mellon, and two are graduate students at Pitt. One of our fathers and 40 of our mothers identified themselves as stay-at-home parents. The other parents listed a wide variety of professions, including Antique Dealer, Attorney, Audiologist, Banker, Business Owner, Chef, Designer, Entrepreneur, Financial Consultant, Geologist, Librarian, Manager, Mechanical Engineer, Music Composer, Nurse, Physician, Professor, Real Estate Developer, Researcher, Social Worker, School Principal, Software Engineer, Teacher, Therapist, and Yoga Instructor.



About 40% of our children are dual language learners, and two are trilingual. This year, we have families speaking at least 17 languages besides English: Arabic, Bahasa (Indonesia), Chinese, German, Gujarati (India), Hebrew, Hindi / Urdu, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Slovak, Spanish, Telugu (India), and Turkish. 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 Neighborhood, and other times we work toward a common goal, like the 3's Peace Day Weaving. Watch the school walls for more examples as the year progresses and feel free to offer your help to support our explorations!

Family Spotlight: Kuhn Family in Pittsburgh

We are very happy to share a little Kuhn history with the staff, children, and families at the CMU Children's School! Mattias, now four and a half, was born in Brookline - a town next door to Boston. He has an older brother (Markus, almost 7) and sister (Beatrice, 9). Pittsburgh is the children's first move, and so far they are having a great time! Carolina, the mom, is a third-generation Japanese American. She is originally from Los Angeles, but has lived in many cities across the country as well as in Saudi Arabia for a few years and Brazil for almost 13 years. Very few people know that the largest group of Japanese outside of Japan is in Brazil, specifically Sao Paulo. In Sao Paulo, Carolina received her medical degree and shortly thereafter returned to the United States. In the Bronx, she completed a residency in Pediatrics, then moved on to Boston (to join her husband) for additional training. Since having children, she has decided to stay at home until... well that is still up in the air! Her hobbies are roller-skating, knitting, sewing and running. Mattias' father, Bernhard (with an "H"!), is from the former East Germany. He went to medical school in Berlin and decided that research was his main interest. He pursued a residency in Pediatrics in New Haven, then a fellowship in Pediatric Cardiology in Boston. He started his research laboratory there in cardiac regeneration, and this summer has moved his lab to Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. His hobbies are sailing and playing with the kids, and most recently fixing our new home here in Pittsburgh. Luckily he has many helpers (including Mattias and Markus, of course!).



Mattias has always been the "fofo" (sweet loving one, in Portuguese) in our family. He was born with a very common pigmented birthmark – a "nevus" - only that its locality and size make it extremely rare. Medically there is no need for treatment (except for sun protection, which everyone needs anyways!), and over the years he has reacted very well with the attention he gets. He has taught us, with the limited vocabulary a toddler can offer, a lot about ourselves and the world around us. We are very thankful that his family and friends have given him a nurturing and loving environment - including the Children's School. He is so, so happy here!! His hobbies are using the power drill (a real Black and Decker!!), biking, and impressing his older siblings in any way possible. This year we look forward to new friends and experiences in Pittsburgh. We feel very welcome and fortunate to be part of this forward-moving city!

Family Spotlight: At Home Away From Home

Namaste (*hello*),

We are a Hindi-speaking Indian family who came to Pittsburgh at the end of December 2013. Saatwik is the most energetic member of the family. He is now Mrs. Solomon's friend in the Green Room and will turn 4 very soon. Mani (father) is a faculty in the department of chemical engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Bombay, India. He is on a one year sabbatical at CMU. Alka (mother) is a Ph.D. in computer science & engineering. For the last two years, she has been at home so that she can spend more time with Saatwik and in the process learn more about herself. In her spare time, she keeps herself professionally engaged by working as a research volunteer on research problems of her interest.



In India, we live in Mumbai, which is on the western sea coast. Known as the “city of dreams”, Mumbai is most famous for “Bollywood”, a term derived from Hollywood that represents the Hindi movie making industry in India. Though geographically not huge, India is culturally a very diverse country with more than 20 officially recognized languages and with 30 languages spoken by more than a million native speakers (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_India). Even though not native to India, English is widely spoken as well. India is the biggest democracy in the world with almost all religions being practiced in the country.

This is the first visit for Alka and Saatwik to USA. When Saatwik would ask us in Mumbai about why we were going to USA, we told him that we were going to see the snow. He was really excited by that. Given the abundant snowfall last winter, we can confidently say that he was not disappointed. The snow made it easy for him to settle in Pittsburgh, and he is now rooting for a lot of snow this winter as well!! We (Alka and Mani), however found the weather harsh and daunting in the beginning. Slowly we realized that Pittsburgh is a fantastic place with lots of fun places, museums and friendly people. By summer, we completely understood why Pittsburgh is such a great place to stay.

We feel that the best part of our stay in Pittsburgh is that Saatwik really likes going to school. Initially, we were apprehensive about Saatwik being able to adjust in a totally different environment. Looking back at the events, we can now say that deciding to send Saatwik to the Children's School was one of the best decisions we made in our US trip. A pleasant thing has been that till this day, Saatwik has never refused to go to school, even during his initiation period. Personally for us, the Children's School has been more than just a school. We think of it as a big family that has been a source of information and support for us. Regarding pedagogy, we love the theme-based teaching practiced at the Children's School. We also love the fact that children are involved in cooking activities at school. As a result, Saatwik started helping in food preparation at home and also helps us buy groceries!!

We will be going back to India at the end this year. “*Give them roots and give them wings*” is our favorite quote that we read on the Children's School notice board. We don't know how much Saatwik will remember about this School when he grows up, but we will cherish the memories and are sure that the process of developing his roots and wings has been truly set in motion during his time here. Finally, if any of you are thinking about escaping the coming (or rather ongoing) winter, we strongly recommend that you visit Mumbai - a city with no winter. We will be happy to host you.

Family Spotlight: Australia to China (via Pittsburgh)

G'day Children's School Friends! Have you heard an Australian accent around the Green Room? It's probably us! Hudson's family - the Overetts - fresh off the plane from Canberra, Australia with Mom, Dad, Elijah (6), Hudson (4) and Denver (2)...and if you've been watching closely you'll know that little Oakley was born into the mob (Australian for family) in September (on the first day of school!). We've moved to Pittsburgh for 12 months as part of a longer family move to join CMU's new Engineering initiative in Guangzhou, China. For now, we are enjoying a year of preparation in lovely Pittsburgh before moving, again, into Asia with the family.



Many people have asked us if we move regularly. Actually until now, our boys had all been growing up in one house on a sunny hillside in Canberra. This move is quite an adjustment and adventure!

Where do we come from?

For the most part we come from Canberra, Australia, but if you look further into the history books you'll learn that Hudson's dad was born in South Africa before moving to Canberra as a teenager. You might also find out that Hudson's mom actually studied her degree in Georgia, USA and taught English in China for 2 years.



Canberra is the little known capital city of Australia and is situated between Sydney and Melbourne. It is a beautiful city, full of evergreen eucalyptus trees, where you can enjoy walking on the hills and seeing wild native kangaroos on a regular basis. We even saw some bounce past our house on a few occasions. We used to enjoy traveling in the summer months to take the boys camping on some of Australia's best beaches, and we generally enjoy getting muddy whenever possible.

What do we like about Pittsburgh?

Our favorite thing about Pittsburgh is that it is so kid friendly. We quickly snapped up annual memberships to the Children's Museum, Carnegie Museums, the Zoo, and Phipps while enjoying the spray parks and many playgrounds in the summer. We're tentatively looking forward to the bone chilling Pittsburgh winter so that we can enjoy some snow play. So far we've loved the summer (especially since we came from an Australian winter), and we were so thrilled when we got to see all the amazing Autumn colors in Pennsylvania. As for the cold days so far, you'll spot us a mile away since we're the crazy people smashing pond ice at the local park as well as jumping up and down with excitement at the first sight of a snowflake.

Family Spotlight, continued ...

What we have found different?

Well yinz drive a little different up here. The opposite side of the road and the occasional Pittsburgh left took some getting used to but now we quite enjoy it. On the local level we found our neighborhood really friendly here in Highland Park. Neighbors just spending time together on each other's front lawns in the summer was an unexpected surprise. Other new experiences include celebrating Thanksgiving, cutting down our first Christmas tree, skimming stones on a frozen pond, the Duquesne Incline (and learning to say it right), chasing squirrels, and seeing deer in a school playground.



Our Children's School Experience

Hudson really enjoys his days at the Children's School. It has been a massive adjustment for the whole family but especially for him. Moving continent, and then having a new baby on your first day of a brand new school takes some getting used to! We really like all of the clever ways the school builds learning and growing into its play and the friendly caring environment. Hudson has been directing his brothers in all sorts of shows and puppet plays at home since focusing on theater in the Green Room in

December. We're really thankful for the opportunity Hudson and our whole family has to spend this year at the Children's School. We really enjoy talking with people; so if you see us around (we're that crazy family with 4 boisterous but lovely boys in tow), we would love to stop and have a chat!

January Gallery Features

3's Friends: Andrew B., Kendal S., and Marina T.

4's Friends: Saatwik B., Owen L., and Maeve S.

Kindergarten Friends: Felicity A., Emma B., and Jane S.



Family Spotlight: Gratitude from the Johnsons

We moved to Pittsburgh from the NYC area in 2009. Unlike many, we had no family connection to Pittsburgh. Over our years here, we've come to increasingly appreciate the benefits so many multi-generational Pittsburghers accrue from living near family. In the few months that our son has attended The Children's School, we feel like its staff and students have become his missing extended family. We decidedly regret not having discovered the school earlier!

Our son attended a traditional church-based preschool when he was 3. Ever wanting to please mommy, he went 2 days a week, mostly without tears, but he never showed any enthusiasm for school. His attitude towards The Children's School is altogether different. He skips into the building. He often forgets a goodbye hug in his enthusiasm to get to work (play!). He learns so much, both from his fellow students ("do you know that my friend has had dinner on an airplane?!") and his teachers. He recognized a menorah on a street corner just yesterday and asked me how they said Hanukkah in Spanish. He is keen to understand how many friends in his class speak different languages and have families who come from different countries with different cultural traditions. Such diversity is a tremendous asset of the school.

On my initial visit to the school, I remember being concerned about class size. I worried that the larger class would be chaotic and overwhelming for my shy child. As I've discovered with many things in parenthood, the reality was in direct opposition to my expectations. I see now only the advantages in the larger class: more friends, more teachers with which to interact and bond, more activities, more FUN! So the Children's School has taught me a lot as well.

Thank you, Children's School, for welcoming our family. Our son has thrived here, and for that we are so grateful.



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

On January 19th, in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the preschool and kindergarten friends made Peace Chains out of paper links, colored symbols of peace such as doves and clasped hands, discussed Martin Luther King, Jr.'s work, and read a story about how harmony can come through diversity ("The Crayon Box That Talked" by Shane Derolf and Michael Letzig). In addition, the friends created two peace sculptures that are being displayed on the first floor of the Margaret Morrison Building by the rotunda entrance. Members of our Children's School extended family also joined the children for one of two "Peace and Friendship" sing-a-longs led by Mrs. Bird. During the morning singing, visiting early childhood practicum students from South Korea shared one of their traditional songs.



Family Spotlight: Pgh Home Away from Home

Greetings from our family - Yulduz, Rustam, Sardor and Zarina! Yulduz is our stay at home mother. She has graduated with honors from Westminster University and holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. Before staying home to watch the kids, Yulduz worked in the Oil and Gas industry in our home country, Uzbekistan. She loves to travel, learn different languages, and spend time with her family. Rustam is the father of the family. He has also graduated from Westminster University with a degree in Economics and is currently pursuing his Master's in Business Administration at the Tepper School of Business. Before going to b-school, Rustam enjoyed a career in the telecom and real estate industries. His hobbies include playing soccer, watching TV shows, and reading about business topics on the web. This summer, he will graduate from Carnegie Mellon and move the family to Midland, Michigan as a finance manager for the Dow Chemical Company.



Sardor is our oldest son. He is a very curious child and has endless passion for learning. Sardor's favorite activities are playing with train sets and transformers, exploring new places, and making friends. He is currently a friend in the Green Room at the Children's School, and it is the best experience he has ever had. Zarina is Sardor's little sister. Although she is only 20 months old, she is a very caring sister and an independent little girl. Zarina loves playing with pets, reading books with Mommy, drawing pictures, and spending time outdoors. We are expecting our third child early March, and it's a boy. Sardor and Zarina can't wait to meet their little baby brother and our family is extremely happy and grateful.

We come from sunny Uzbekistan, which is a medium sized country in Central Asia with 27 million people. Before 1991, it was part of the Soviet Union. The main languages are Uzbek and Russian. Uzbekistan boasts a beautiful landscape consisting of plains, mountains, deserts and small forests. The country is well known for its rich history and culture, hospitality and cuisine. Yulduz and I (Rustam) were both born and raised in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan (photo to the right). No matter where we are, we always miss our home country, its culture, and its kind and generous people.



Below are photographs of ancient Registan Square in Samarkand, Uzbekistan (left) and a dancer and musicians in national costumes (right).



Family Spotlight, continued ...

During my (Rustam's) first year at the Tepper School, I rented a room from Mrs. Solomon. During my stay, we became great friends. She told me about the Children's School and how it would be perfect for my son when my family moved to Pittsburgh. Thanks to the help of Mrs. Solomon and Mrs. Rosenblum, we successfully enrolled Sardor in the school. He loves all his teachers and friends. Sardor always comes home excited about many activities he does at school every day. His favorite activities include gym games, going to the playground, and learning about new countries. Ever since he has been attending the school, we have noticed a significant development in his intellectual and communication abilities. We are very grateful to the teachers and all of the school staff for this wonderful opportunity and experience.



We absolutely love Pittsburgh. Some of our favorite places are the Children's Museum and Phipps Garden, which we visit regularly. Pittsburgh's abundance of parks provides great outdoor experience for our whole family. When the weather allows, we like to take long walks in the parks or play with our children at the playgrounds. We are still adapting to Pittsburgh's harsh and long winter, but nothing can replace sledding on the snow hills and building snowmen with our children. We wish we could stay longer in Pittsburgh before moving to Michigan this summer. We will miss Pittsburgh and the Children's School.

Pittsburgh Perspectives

As we transition from winter to spring, there are many opportunities to explore Pittsburgh's beautiful outdoor venues. Exploring flora and fauna in every season helps foster young children's connections with nature and commitment to caring for the environment. According to Pittsburgher Rachel Carson, "Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts." In *Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv touts the "emotional benefits of nature", both for nurturing solitude and promoting social interaction, and the "healthy development of the senses" that is essential for both learning and creativity. So, don the appropriate outerwear and explore on snowy days, rainy days, and sunny days alike!

March's Pittsburgh Tips:

- The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy (<http://www.pittsburghparks.org>) is a nonprofit organization collaborating with the City of Pittsburgh via "an official public-private partnership agreement to restore the city's four regional parks: Frick, Highland, Riverview, and Schenley." With volunteer support, the Parks Conservancy also promotes the enhancement of green spaces in many neighborhoods throughout Pittsburgh. Check the web site for a variety of family opportunities, including the April Earth Day weekend.
- Before heading outdoors, also check the web site of Tree Pittsburgh to learn about "Protecting and Growing our Urban Forest" (<http://treepittsburgh.org>). This non-profit organization is a non-profit environmental organization "dedicated to enhancing the City's vitality by restoring and protecting City trees." The web site offers diverse resources to help you best care for the trees on your property, as well as to advocate for planting trees in the public spaces in your neighborhood.

Family Spotlight: Grandparents' Viewpoints

At the Children's School, we value parents as partners in the children's education, so we endeavor to help educators and families get to know each other as a way to build solid relationships. Ten of our seventeen educators and all three of our substitute teachers are also parents of their own children, and five of those children have attended the Children's School (Joel and Steven Solomon, Darrah and Emilie Bird, and Ariel Carver). In the fall, Addison Armbruster will be joining our 3's program, just a few months after becoming a big sister!

Within the last few years, six of our educators have become **grandparents**, which has brought new perspectives on child development and education. We have all experienced the joy of new life, awe at the amazing potential of each unique child, and renewed wonder as we see the world through our grandchildren's eyes with each new milestone they reach and discovery they make.

Jean Bird reflects, "Being "Mimi" to Rowan has shifted my sense of time and relationship. I am so focused - wrapped up in this beautiful little being. Time moves both wonderfully slow, and then way too fast. It is all goodness, whether we are fascinated by the movements of the animals at the zoo, reading a favorite story, or sharing a meal with the whole family. As a grandma, I have a renewed and deeper appreciation for these gifts, and I cherish them."



Donna Perovich adds, "The best part of being a grandmother to Alexis and Holden is seeing the big picture and cherishing the present. Now I get the chance to enjoy the process of helping these little ones develop. I want the memories that they have of me to be happy ones."

Estelle Solomon reflects, "As a parent and teacher, I have learned that we have our children so that they grow up to be independent. Phoebe is already demonstrating her independence in many ways. She sleeps in a big girl's bed, goes to ballet class without a parent in the room, etc. Distance makes it hard for Phoebe and me to spend as much time together as we would like, but FaceTime is a great way for us to see each other and talk. What a joy it is to be 'Nan' to Phoebe. She gave me my special name all by herself! How cool is that?"



Charline Tomer with Ryan, who was born during spring break. Beth McMichael with Quinn and Will. Sharon Carver with Lucia.



Last week, all of our educators were inspired by a quote from Rachel Carson, who said that every child needs the "companionship of at least one adult who can share [a sense of wonder], rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in." May each of us strive to be that person for all of the children in our care!

Family Spotlight: Everything Our Kids Need to Know, They Learned at the Children's School

The Paris Family! Rob and I (Julie), both native Pittsburghers, met at a local bar after both living in different places in the US and around the world. Rob is a Systems Engineering Manager for Cisco Systems, and I'm a stay-at-home mom to our two boys. After getting married in 2006, we welcomed our bright and sociable son Ari into the world in 2008. His curious and imaginative brother Judah came soon after in 2010, and our lives in Squirrel Hill were filled with trips to parks, museums, libraries, and everything that Pittsburgh has to offer. I knew from the time I was pregnant that I wanted to send my children to the Children's School, after hearing the most wonderful things about it from friends who went 30 years ago and current parents. Ari spent his first year in the 4's with Mrs. Solomon, and was in the Kindergarten with Mrs. Armbruster, Mrs. Perovich, and Mrs. Blizman. Judah had Ms. Stevens in the Blue Room, and has spent this year in Mrs. Bird's group.



Every single day, we've been blown away by what our children learn at school. The thematic learning, the hands-on approach to education, the wonderful and nurturing teachers, the attentive administration, and the innovative approach to teaching are just a few of the reasons we love the Children's School. Ari graduated with a deep love of math, an encyclopedic knowledge of birds, a strong understanding of Ancient Greece and Native Americans, and many great friends. Judah has developed a passion for building, woodworking, reading, dancing, and using his imagination. He has absolutely loved learning about water, our home city, maps, and so much more. While my kids are complete opposites when it comes to their personalities, they have both been developing their passions and interests with the help of their supportive and loving teachers. I am grateful to be part of a school that is continuously trying to improve its teaching techniques, creative innovative



educational opportunities, and sharing everything our children are learning with us every single day. Most importantly, our boys have been so happy going to school, and we feel good about our decision to send them to a truly unique school. At every elementary school we visited, the Admissions Directors told us the same thing: "We LOVE Children's School kids!" Ari started elementary school with a strong foundation for learning and a love of school, and I credit the Children's School for instilling this in him. Judah shares the same love and passion for learning and is constantly teaching me new things that's he's learned thanks to his preschool experience.

I was asked to co-chair the FSO in Fall 2013 and have had a wonderful 2 years with Ameer Chaudry planning events for families to extend our connections beyond the school. This role has allowed me to get to know many of the wonderful families and given my children a chance to have play dates at fun places. I've loved the programs, especially Reilly's Farm, Morning at the Movies, a worm class at Phipps, The Heinz History Center (where children who participated knew almost as much about Pittsburgh as the curator!), the First Tee Golf practice, and so much more. Special thanks to Ameer, Mrs. Rosenblum, Miss Hancock, Dr. Carver, and Ms. Drash for making this volunteer opportunity so fulfilling and enjoyable. We are going to miss the Children's School as both our kids start at the Environmental Charter School (ECS) in the Fall, but we know that the friends we've made and relationships we've developed will continue to grow.

Family Spotlight: Nomads with 'Burgh Roots

The Chaudrys - Adil, Ameer, Kabir, and Sahil - think of ourselves as "the nomads who found our roots in the 'burgh". Adil is a native Pittsburgher, and Ameer grew up in the suburbs of Boston without ever thinking she would leave Bean Town! After getting married in 2004, we moved all over the country from Boston to Rochester to New York City to Los Angeles before finally settling in Pittsburgh. Adil is a radiologist in private practice with his dad at the Mon-Valley hospital, and Ameer is a biomedical engineer who worked in technology commercialization until about 5 years ago.

When we moved to Pittsburgh in 2009, our son Kabir was almost 3 years old. At the time, we did not know anything about preschools. The Children's School is very well known in the Pittsburgh area, and most parents have put their children on its waitlist as newborns. We did not know any of this, so we used the following criteria when we enrolled Kabir: 1) The Children's School is part of CMU, 2) it meets our logistical needs because the school timing matches Ameer's class times at Pitt, and 3) Kabir would qualify for the 3's program because they have a December 31st cutoff.



Boy, were we in for a pleasant surprise! From day one, the nurturing and intellectually stimulating environment that the Children's School fosters blew us away. As the year progressed, we saw our curious and sweet "baby", Kabir, blossom into an assertive, strong boy. In 2010, we welcomed Sahil into our lives and had no question where one day he would attend school.

Kabir and Sahil could not be more different from one another in terms of their personalities. Yet, we have seen how the Children's School educators have enhanced their best traits and taught them how to manage conflicts in a mature, calm manner. As all parents, we try to instill values of "do the right thing", "use your words", and "be a kind friend". It is a blessing to know that they are getting the same affirmation throughout the day at the Children's School.

We grew up watching Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. I (Ameer) always wished that I had Mr. Rogers as my teacher in "real life", and I wished that I could do all the cool activities that the characters did in the "land of make believe". My children *actually* have teachers like Mr. Rogers and *actually* do all those cool activities everyday at the Children's School. To me, that is a dream come true.



When asked to co-chair the FSO with Julie two years ago, I was excited and honored to take a more active role in the Children's School. FSO has allowed me to get to know many wonderful families, develop lasting friendships, and participate in many fun activities.

Saying goodbye to the Children's School is bittersweet. We are truly going to miss this special place and the wonderful people that make it special. Every teacher and administrator at the Children's School has touched our hearts, and we are truly thankful to the entire team.