

### Director's Corner

May 2018

Dear Fraser Families,

I think spring has finally arrived! Please take your child's winter gear home, including boots from off the top of the lockers. Any boots or unclaimed, unlabeled winter gear that is left on May 24 will be packed away to use as extras next year or will be donated. Thanks for helping to keep Fraser School clean!

Now that we are not wearing winter clothing, children's skin may be exposed to the sun. Fraser's policy is to provide sunscreen for the children. If you would like to bring your own sunscreen, please label the bottle with your child's first and last name. Also, each child must have their own bottle, even if the children are siblings and in the same classroom. Fraser School's external Health Consultant just completed a walk-through of the school and found that we were allowing this to happen with diaper cream and told us that we could no longer do this.

Fraser School staff will apply the sunscreen with a gloved hand to exposed areas of the child's body, including his/her face, about 30 minutes prior to outdoor activity. We will re-apply it later in the day about 30 minutes prior to outdoor activity. If you generally arrive while your child's classroom is outside, please apply sunscreen before you leave home. If you haven't applied sunscreen prior to arrival, the teachers will apply sunscreen but it will not be as effective if it hasn't had a chance to soak into the skin for 30 minutes.

Spring and summer can also be severe weather season in Minnesota. Beginning in April, Fraser School is required to practice severe weather drills

at least once per month. As part of the drill, we relocate the children to the basement while attendance is taken. You may hear the children refer to "Code Black," which is our walkie-talkie code for a severe weather drill. If the children talk about it, you can reassure them that it is just a drill and we practice to make sure that we all stay safe.

Finally, I want to alert families to Fraser's electronic tool to ensure that emails are secure. We use a product called Zix, which encrypts an email if we use the word "secure" anywhere in the subject line. If you receive an email that has the word "secure" in the subject line and it is requesting that you click on a link, please know that this is a legitimate request and not a scam. We are required to use this service anytime that we are communicating confidential information, such as billing information, medical information, or contact information. If you do not open the email, Zix keeps the email and alerts us after 30 days. Therefore, we do not know that the information was not received until an entire month has gone by. If you have questions regarding this service, I can get more information from Fraser's IT department.

Thanks for sharing your children with us,

Deedee Stevens-Neal

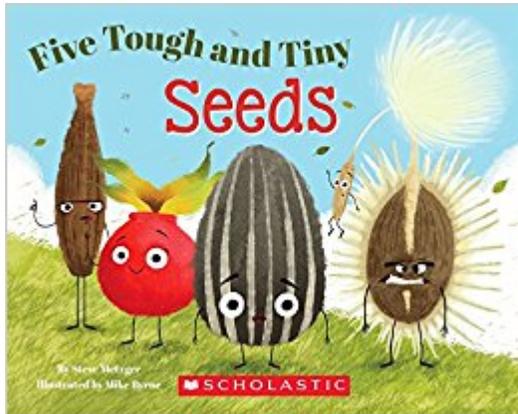
612-798-8319

[Deedee.Stevens-Neal@fraser.org](mailto:Deedee.Stevens-Neal@fraser.org)

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## Fraser School Family Fun Night



The last Family Fun Night of the 2017-2018 school year is scheduled for Thursday, May 17. The event will occur from 6:30-7:30 PM and, weather permitting, will be out on the playground.

The evening will begin with the reading of the book, Five Tough and Tiny Seeds, which was written by Steve Metzger and illustrated by Mike Byrne. Following the group reading, there will be a variety of activities that children and their families can do together. As part of the activities, we plan to plant the garden boxes in the playground. Each family is asked to bring some flowers to plant.

The collection of garden boxes on the Fraser School playground is a memorial garden for a former Fraser's client's mother that passed away. The memorial is called Nellie's Garden. Nellie's parents raise money each year for Fraser as a memorial to their daughter and in celebration of their grandchild.

We think that it is a wonderful way to celebrate the devotion that Nellie had for her child by having children and their families plant the garden boxes together. We have invited Nellie's parents to join us for the evening so they can participate in the planting. We hope to see you there.

## Teacher Appreciation Week

The first full week of May is celebrated as Teacher Appreciation Week. As part of that event, I want to express my appreciation to the teachers and assistant teachers at Fraser School.

Early childhood educators are some of the most hard-working, caring multi-taskers that I know. Imagine you and your partner in a classroom for 8 hours per day with 8 infants or 10 toddlers or 13 preschoolers or 16 pre-kindergarteners. You need to teach children concepts such as color or shapes or letters or numerals; you need to teach children to take turns, share, and resolve conflicts; you need to wipe tears and put on Band-Aids; you need to answer questions and emails and phone calls. Many people would not be able to juggle all of the things that early childhood professionals encounter in one day of caregiving, let alone juggling all of those things for five days per week, for week after week. It can be a very difficult job, which is why the staff turnover in early childhood is so high across all programs.

So, during Teacher Appreciation Week, please make sure to acknowledge all of the things that your child's teachers do to care for your child. Your gesture does not have to be grand to show your appreciation. Please consider writing a card, having your child draw a picture, or giving a small token of your gratitude. It is a wonderful feeling knowing that you can leave your child in a safe place with loving caregivers while you work or go to school.



## Volunteer Appreciation Month

April was designated as Volunteer Appreciation Month so I also wanted to express my gratitude to the many volunteers that give their time to Fraser School. Currently, we have about 50 volunteers that help in the classrooms. Some of our volunteers have been with us for many years and some are with us for just a few months. We have high-schoolers who come after school; college students that are completing a practicum; family members of Fraser clients that want to help; and senior citizens that want to give back to the community.

Each volunteer must be at least 16 years old to be eligible. They complete an online application and must attend two orientations. The first is general for all Fraser volunteers and includes guidelines regarding confidentiality and safe work environments. The second is specific for Fraser School and includes information regarding our policies and procedures. Even practicum students or interns must complete these orientation requirements.

We ask that each volunteer commit to at least one time weekly for at least three months. It can be difficult for children to have a variety of different adults come into the classrooms so we want volunteers to come long enough to form an attachment with the children. By requiring a commitment of service, we also ensure that the volunteers are here long enough to really help the teachers.

We utilize our volunteers to give the teachers and assistant teachers an extra set of hands in the classrooms. We encourage volunteers to help children with art activities, engage children while playing, and to read books. This helps us give all of our students that extra attention that they all deserve.

## Staff Development

Fraser School will be closed to students on Thursday, May 24 and Friday, May 25; however, Richfield's Autism Day Treatment and pediatric therapy programs will still be serving clients.

Fraser School employees will have staff development on those two days. Licensing requires that each staff member obtains 21-42 hours of training each year, depending upon their secondary education and their field of study. In addition, each school employee is required to have annual updates to many trainings including, Sudden Unexpected Infant Death, Abusive Head Trauma, Fraser School's Child Care Risk Reduction Plan, Fraser School's Emergency Action Plan, the Positive Supports Rule, Person-centered Planning, Cultural Competence, and Health and Safety training which includes cleaning up bodily fluids and preventing allergic reactions.

It is important to provide these professional development days for our staff. When surveyed, Fraser School staff stress the importance of having these days to bond, learn, and catch up with cleaning and paperwork. It is vital to keep these days in our school calendar in order to maintain or decrease our staff turnover rate.

In addition to the mandated trainings, we plan to have a training on communication with others depending upon their personalities. We also plan to have a guest speaker from the Center for Inclusive Child Care present about typical child development and red flags that could indicate concerns.

Thanks so much for your continued support of our staff's professional development.

### *This month's events*

> **Family Fun Night**

May 17, 2018  
6:30-7:30 PM

> **No School**

May 24-25, 2018  
Staff Development

> **No School**

May 28, 2018  
Memorial Day

### *Upcoming events*

> **No School**

July 4, 2018  
Independence Day

> **No School**

August 30-31, 2018  
Staff Development

> **No School**

September 3, 2018  
Labor Day

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## Fraser's Walk for Autism Recap

Despite the snow falling heavily and quickly, we had record attendance at this year's Walk for Autism on Saturday, April 14. This year's Walk also set a record for fundraising, with donations totaling over \$120,000. Luckily, everyone was out of the snowstorm since the event was held at Mall of America.

In a recap email, Fraser's CEO and President, Diane Cross, stated, "What amazed me most was the dedication that the families, staff and volunteers showed in supporting Fraser by attending this early morning Saturday event despite the major snow storm. One mother told Rose [Rosario, event coordinator] that her family has been planning this all year and her son's heart would be so broken if we cancelled the walk. She said there was absolutely no way they wouldn't be there! We still had people signing up on Friday even though they were predicting a full blown blizzard."

Thank you to anyone that participated or donated in the Walk for Autism. We hope to see you next year!

## New Staffing Coordinator

Kristin Caquelin had her baby on Saturday, April 27! Kristin has worked at Fraser School for 5 years and has worked as the lead teacher in the Platypus classroom, as the special education coordinator, and as the staffing coordinator. Her last day of work was Thursday, April 25, which was just in time because her labor started on Friday, April 26. She delivered a healthy baby boy, who weighed 9 pounds, 15 ounces! We expect Kristin to return after her maternity leave in a different role.

So, I want to introduce our new staffing coordinator. Janel Morton started at Fraser School on Monday, April 23. She is finishing her Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from Metropolitan State University in May 2018. She has worked in early childhood education since 2001, including as an assistant teacher, lead teacher, and an assistant director. Kristin began Janel's orientation and I am continuing until Janel feels comfortable with her new duties.

Welcome to Fraser School, Janel!