



Ravinia Blue News

Message From Kathy

I hope everyone had a nice winter break and enjoyed all the holidays. Welcome back to the warmth of Ravinia and to the second month of 2015.

I had the pleasure of spending many extra hours with my four grandchildren, now ages two and a half to eight years old. I was amazed to observe that although they are all very interested and proficient in various types of "screens" and technology they still enjoyed traditional play activities. I watched (and assisted) them in making forts, messy art projects, a play dough bakery, board games, dress up, and hours of fantasy play. In this age of increasing dependency on screens and technology it is important to remember the value and long term gains of traditional play activities. Many studies and articles still continue to circulate confirming this idea. In the fall I distributed to all of you a wonderful article from the New York Times highlighting play and reaffirming the philosophy on which our school is based. Then last week at a networking Early Childhood dinner that I and several of the staff attended the keynote speaker was nationally renowned Samuel Meisels, his presentation was about why play and what children do in the

early years is so important to future success. Between research, observing my children and grandchildren, and spending time with all of your children I have gathered some information that I hope is of interest to all of you on this topic.

PLAY and CHILDREN

Children everywhere and throughout time need and desire time to play. It must be direct play, active and hands on in order for children to learn. They need to use all their senses in a three dimensional world to maximize their learning and brain development. Research is showing for the first time young children are having less active play and more sedentary type of play. Researchers have also found significant decrease in creativity in some young children. Many feel that this is in part due to the decrease in direct play.

IMPORTANCE of PLAY

Since you have all chosen Ravinia I realize you value play, but what does it do for a young child? Here at Ravinia we see every day that this creative process fosters imagination, problem solving, emotional health, critical thinking, original thinking and self-regulation. Neuroscience tells us that when children play with open ended toys

(play dough, blocks, art, building materials, sand, water) pathways to the brain will solidify. When they make and count the play dough balls they remember that math to a greater degree!

THE RESULTS

Pretend Play improves pre-reading skills such as vocabulary, comprehension and recall.

Play with Blocks, play dough, sand, and water boosts math and science skills such as counting, sorting and sequencing.

Fantasy Play like dress up, housekeeping, pet stores, doctors' offices, airplanes/airports, bakeries, office play etc. enhances imagination and logical thinking.

Play with Others builds social and language skills in a way nothing else will.

Recently I tested this out with my grandchildren and said we were going to play with just play dough and things in the kitchen. It took some time but once they got going the kitchen became a play dough bakery and the 8 year old was selling their products. To quote from Plato on the importance of play: "You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation."

February 2014

Calendar

February

- 8 Daddy Daughter Dance
- 9 Valentine's Party at Senior Center 11:45-12:30
- 12 Valentine Parties T/TH Two Cans and Preschool Classes
- 13 Valentine's Party W/F Two Cans

16 NO SCHOOL President's Day

March

- 14 SPRING EVENT
- 20 Two Cans Undernighter @ RNS 5:30-6:30

Spring Break

March 27—April 6

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Message From the President

The New Year is off to a fun-filled start here at RNS. So many wonderful things have been happening and even more are on the horizon. The morning classes had a fantastic Undernighter on January 23rd. Many thanks to Cyndi Wood and Chelsea Duggan for (once again) planning such a fun night for the A and B Classes!

There are several must-attend events on the horizon that I hope everyone will put on their calendars. First, on Sunday, February 8th RNS will host its annual Daddy-Daughter dance at Sole to Soul dance studio. This is one of the cutest and most memorable events that we do. It is such a special time for our "daddies" to spend with their little ladies. A good time and many photo opportunities are guaranteed. Morgan Rosenberg and Rebecca Carson have planned a party you will not want to

miss! Next on Monday, February 9th we will have a Valentine's "party" at the Highland Park Senior Center. Agi Semrad and Melanie Stagman have planned such a nice way for us to give back a little to our community by spending time with these seniors and brightening their day. The seniors absolutely adore visiting with the children and parents.

And on Saturday, March 14th I want to make sure no one misses the annual RNS Spring Event! Please join us for some March Madness fun at Michael's in Highland Park. Marci Taub and Kisha Mani have an extraordinary night in store for us all. Check out all of the Spring Event details on our website and don't miss the fun!

As you can see there is much happening at RNS and in our community during the month of February. Your RNS Board of

Directors has worked tirelessly to make all of our RNS events possible. They are truly an amazing group of ladies and our school is a better place because of all of their hard work. If you are interested in participating on the 2015/2016 RNS Board, please fill out the Board Membership Request Form located under the "Forms" tab on our website or reach out to me for more information. This school thrives because of the spectacular level of parent involvement that we have. Please consider sharing your time and talents to help us keep RNS the special and dynamic place that we all love for our children.

And as always, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me anytime!

Take care,
Kristen Ramirez

Daddy Daughter Disco Dance

The Fifth Annual Daddy Daughter Dance is just around the corner. It is scheduled to take place on Sunday, February 8, 2015 from 3:00-5:00 pm at Soul 2 Sole Dance in Highland Park. Dads & Daughters - Put On Your Dancing Shoes and Get Ready to Boogie! RSVP required in advance. Please email Rebecca Carson with questions (RSCarson@gmail.com).



RNS Spring Fundraising Event

You deserve a night out! Come out of the cold and join your friends and teachers from Ravinia Nursery School at the 2015 Spring Event on Saturday March 14th at 7:45 at Michael's Restaurant.

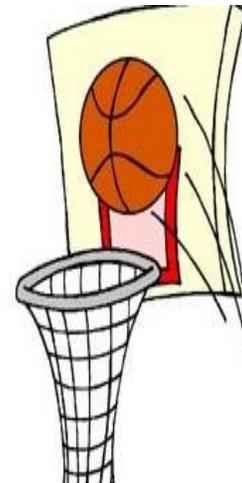
Enjoy:

- All you can eat and drink at Michael's Restaurant in Highland Park including beer, wine and margaritas
- Friendly competition in the 3rd annual March Madness

basketball pop-a-shot tournament; winner takes home a full-size pop-a-shot game donated by Costco Wholesale

· Valuable deals at the Silent Auction including personal chef, birthday parties, date night and spa packages

RSVP today and visit ravinianurseryschool.com for more details and photo from last year's fun!



Grocery Dollars

We are now in our third Grocery Dollars period of the school year. Order forms have been distributed for this round of Grocery Dollars. They will be due on Friday, February 6th. It's a great opportunity to give back to our Little Blue school essentially for free! We have done a great job this year so let's keep up the good work! Any questions give Katie a call at 312-375-5885 or email me at katiepowers@hotmail.com.



Valentines Parties

All the classes will be celebrating Valentine's Day by having class parties and exchanging Valentine cards. The preschool classes and the T/TH Two Cans will celebrate on February 12th. The W/F Two Can class will celebrate on February 13th. **The Children will bring in a Valentine for everyone in their class (including one for themselves) with only their own name signed.** Class notes to follow.

Summer Camp 2015

Ravinia Summer Camp program is continuing to take applications for the upcoming summer session. We have openings in both our preschool camp and our Two Can Camp. The applications can be found on line (at our web site under "forms") or are also available in the RNS office.

The camp will run for seven weeks, beginning on June 15th/16th and ending on July 30th/31st. The time frame for the Preschool Camp will be 9:00 until 12:15, with the children bringing a sack lunch to be enjoyed with their

friends. The Two Can Camp, for incoming Two Cans, will be 9:15 to 11:15 on Tuesday and Thursdays. I will be happy to answer any questions or address any concerns you may have about these programs.

Weather Closing

In January we had our first potential closing due to weather. As in the email blast that was sent to all the Ravinia families we do use the District as a "guide" but also will take individual factors relating to our school situation into consideration. We did decide to stay open on the two days that the district closed due to the cold, as we felt it was safe for our children to come to school, and the factors affecting the school district were not relevant in our

school environment. In the future event of the necessity for our school to close we will notify you via email as early as possible. We will of course concur with the Districts closing policy if we feel the travel to school is not safe or the weather conditions are extreme.



Community Service

We are excited to announce our 8th annual **Valentine's Party at the Frank B. Peers Senior Housing Center** in Highland Park on Monday February 9th from 11:45 - 12:45. A fun opportunity to brighten one another's day! There will be Valentine's Day activities for our little ones & snacks for all! If you have any questions or if you want to volunteer to help out at this fun event please feel free to contact Melanie Stagman or Agi Semrad. We will be needing volunteers to help set-up, clean-up, and assist the children in activities.



We have also teamed up with local **Moraine County Township Food Pantry** for our annual **Food Drive** which services residents of all ages, from children to seniors in our community, providing them with food and non-food items.

You may have already seen the felt board in the hall, covered in felt food items, the Food Drive will be running through **March 26th**. Your child can take an item off the board and bring it back the next day with a donation for the food pantry that matches the food from the board. It's another way your child can feel a connection to the community, and the satisfying feeling that comes from helping others less fortunate than they are.

To learn more about the **Moraine County Food Pantry**, please vis-
it <http://www.morainetownship.org/super/pantry>

Again if you have any questions or simply want to know how you can volunteer for any upcoming Community Service projects please feel free to contact

Melanie Stagman
at pastrypixie@gmail.com

Agi Semrad
at semrad.agi@gmail.com.



Kindergarten Registration

School District #112 is now taking kindergarten registration for next year. All children attending kindergarten in the fall need to be five years old by September 1st. Call your home school now to get specific

details and to and put your child's name on the list off incoming kindergarteners. The schools will advise you of dates of kindergarten meetings and the necessary requirements you will need for the fall (ie physical, vision test etc).

Registration Continues For 2015-2016

Registration for next year is continuing to go very well. At this point two classes are full: the 9:15 Parent and Child Class and the T/Th Two Can Class. We have added a second Parent and Child Class at 10:45 so that is now also an option for that age group and for our Two Cans we still have spots available in the W/F class. We continue to have families visit our Preschool classes and I am happy to say that many new families

have signed up last month. If you know of anyone that you feel would be interested in having their child attend RNS next fall please tell them to call the school to set up a tour. Current families and alumni are always the best reference for our program. The families that tour our school are always so complimentary and so often I am told by them that they can see we truly offer a wonderful and unique early childhood experience for children.

Thank You

To the Castle Family (Kyle, D class) for donating a *Light and Color Building Set* for the light table to the classroom in honor of his fifth birthday.

To the Rago Family (Naomi, C class) for donating a set of *Giant Paper Punches* to the classroom to celebrate her fifth birthday.

To the Ashpole Family (Benny, W/F Two Cans class) for donating the books The Three Pigs, The Toy Story, and The Lion King to our school in honor of his third birthday.

To the Doepke Family (Miles, T/Th Two Can class) for donating a set of

Boomwhackers to the classroom in celebration of his third birthday.

To the Kiferbaum Family (Ethan, T/Th Two Can class) for donating a play *Garbage Truck* to the classroom in honor of his third birthday.

To the Figenholtz Family (Mara, A class) for donating the books Tangled and Happy Birthday Princess to our school in celebration of her fourth birthday.

To the Johnson Family (Eve, C class) for donating a *Cookie Baking/Decorating Set* to C class in celebration of the winter holidays.

To the Drake Family (Lilah, D class) for donating a *Cookie Baking Decorating Set* to D class in honor of her fifth birthday.

To the Duggan Family (Maverick, A class) for donating the book Mr. Silly and three wonderful *Construction/Transportation Puzzles* to the classroom in celebration of his fourth birthday.

To all the room moms and wonderful volunteers who made the children's holiday parties so fun and successful.

To Lynn Richman for donating the book The Book with no Pictures to our school library in celebration of her birthday

A & B Class Undernigh Thank You

To all the rock stars from A & B class who rocked OWL night at the Undernigher on January 23rd, Thank You. It was a hoot! We ate pizza in our pj's and made tamborine shakers, then we sang and danced the night away with

Miss Aimee Leigh! Thank you, also, to all the wonderful parent volunteers. We couldn't have done it without you! We'd like to thank the Carson Family for donating the delicious Oreos, and thank you to the Ramirez, Fick, Sagett,

Figenholtz, Powers and Dopkins Families for donating the Moccio's pizzas. Your generosity is so greatly appreciated. Rock on, little night owls!

-Cyndi Wood & Chelsea Duggan

Parent Reminders

- **Valentine's will be exchanged.** Please send enough signed cards (without names) for the whole class including your own child.
- **Camp registration is Open.** Please send yours in as soon as possible if interested. Forms are on our web site or available in the office.

- **Label, label, label** all of your children's items that come to school. Many of you share the same wonderful taste.



- **Early Childhood Screenings** School District 112 will offer screenings for children 3 & 4 years of age for whom there is a concern in the area of speech and language, learning and/or motor development. Screenings will be taking place monthly. To make an appointment, please call Maggie Roman at the Green Bay School.