



Reflections from our Executive Director:

*I don't know about you, but I am so in love with autumn... and this year seems like a REAL autumn. A time to prepare for upcoming cold weather, to begin planning time with family and friends in celebration, and to settle into*

*introspection – these are some of the things about autumn that I savor. I also savor my time with each of you, and with your children. The relationships we enjoy here at Middle Earth continue to enrich my life every day. And, I thank you for that! There is a lot of news to share, so let's get started.....*

*Elizabeth*

**DRYBC**  
*Keepin' you Crimson & Cozy*



**Integrated Business Core(IBC)/OU:** We hope you've noticed the display of the OU blanket in the front lobby! Those of you whose children attended last year may remember the fleece blankets that were part of the IBC program where we were 'adopted' for volunteer hours as well as financial contribution from this OU effort? (The contribution last year was \$13,000!!!) Well, we are so excited to have been 'adopted' again! This semester, we have been adopted by the **DryBC Company!** They will be volunteering throughout the semester PLUS they will be donating their excess revenues after expenses to Middle Earth! Their product will be on display and

available for order until November 16<sup>th</sup>. If you want to take an order form to your place of business and gather orders for us, there is a special form available – just ask! The blankets make nice holiday gifts, too! Thank you to DryBC.....it's nice to be adopted again! You'll see these students often this semester.

### *Family Leadership Committee*

Amber Bui (Hudson- Tot I) and Buffy Meiser Herren (Grady – Discoverers) have accepted the role of co-chairs of the Family Leadership Committee. And, they have jumped right in and are doing a wonderful job! Previous chair, Angie Beery, left big shoes to fill and these two ladies haven't missed a step. Many of you have remained faithful to this committee – and we appreciate everyone's support and creativity. If you're interested in participating, everyone is welcome. The next meeting is scheduled for January 4, 2010. Just so you know, childcare is typically available at these meetings. Hope to see you there!

### **Did You Know??....**

**Happy Birthday to the Dreamers Class!** October 6th was the actual 1 year birthday of the infant room. Special appreciation goes to Ms. Ashley (now Lead Teacher in Tot I) and Ms. Jessica (now the lead teacher in Dreamers) for successfully launching this wonderful addition to our program. This has been such a delightful addition to our Middle Earth family!

**Grandparents Day** was held Friday September 11<sup>th</sup> and it appeared to be a huge success! We hope that your family/extended family members that had the chance to participate enjoyed themselves! We always look forward to this opportunity to share a bit of your child's Middle Earth world with family members.

We have again been selected as a **United Way of Norman/Success by 6 "Norman Reads"** location! We are excited to welcome back Mr. John Kunau, and Representative Wallace Collins. This is such an enjoyable time for the children – and the volunteers!

Middle Earth was adopted by SuperTarget for the **United Way Day of Caring** which was held Friday September 18<sup>th</sup>. We had approximately 30 volunteers in the building and on the playground accomplishing a long 'to-do' list! We are so appreciative of the help. And, thank you Licia for playing such a vital role in organizing this effort.

Speaking of SuperTarget...We recently received a donation of **\$245.12 from Target and their Take Charge of Education** program. If you use a Target credit card, and designate Middle Earth as your charity of choice, Middle Earth benefits from a portion of your purchases! Information is available at the SuperTarget Store or online.

**Family Information Night** was held **Thursday, October 8 6:30-7:30pm**. This provided a special opportunity for you to meet with your child's teacher and learn more about the classroom activities, learning objectives and the daily routine your child experiences each day. Short notice plus Seattle weather effected our participation, and we hope to host this in September next year. If you have any questions at any time for your child's teachers, please let them know!

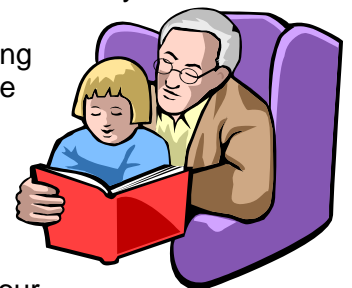
**Middle Earth Presented... "The Courage to Parent: Finding Your Inner Compass" with Nancy Jewel Poer - Monday, October 26th 7:00-8:30pm at Norman High School Auditorium.** This was an evening for parents, grandparents, educators and all advocates for children to hear this nationally known speaker, author and child development educator. The evening was very special and each of us was touched by hearing Nancy's gentle words of wisdom related to parenting and teaching. Special thank you to Ruth Ann Ball, board member, for sponsoring this powerful evening.

**Family Fall Festival and Silent Auction** – We hosted our third annual Family Fall Festival on Thursday October 29<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 – 8:00 pm. A special thank you to the Family Leadership Committee and Homeroom Parent networks for making this such a successful event! This event is a fundraiser benefitting the Staff Holiday Bonus Fund (ticket sales and dinner proceeds raised \$900!) and the classrooms (Silent auction basket proceeds raised \$1200!).



- Children and grown-up kids wore wonderful costumes to the festival.
- You all were so creative with the auction basket themes and items
- Thank you to the Poolaw Family (Tabe – Pre-K) for organizing, cooking, and serving the food aspect of the evening.
- Friday October 30<sup>th</sup> was PAJAMA DAY! I'm sure that was appreciated ☺
- **Note from Exec. Dir:** I had to miss the festival this year:☹ but, I had a good reason! I was in Louisville, Kentucky, visiting our son Destin who is a student at the University. I got to see the campus, his apartment, etc., but I especially enjoyed watching him live his dream at both Churchill Downs and Keeneland race tracks. I hated to miss the Fall Festival, but I very much enjoyed my mommy time ☺.
- Thank you to Rennie Cook for being our enthusiastic announcer for the evening!!
- Thank you to the DryBC volunteers for set-up, take down, and running the activities. Their support made an ENORMOUS difference to the staff and families.
- Thank you to everyone for donating and supporting all aspects of this event!

**Our Intergenerational Program** with our Grand Friends from Full Circle Senior Adult Day Center resumed for this school year beginning on Thursday, October 8th. The children who will participate this year are from the Discoverers class. This gives us the opportunity to include these children for two academic years and reinforces our goal of relationship building, long term friendships and the opportunity for comparative evaluation. These children form our "pilot group" for two years. In addition to our intergenerational music program with Jennifer Voss, we will continue to share arts & crafts along with other planned activities. We will also be providing our Grand Friends with the occasional opportunity to spend time in some of the classrooms, to engage in supervised activities with more children. We remain dedicated and excited about the positive benefits that intergenerational programming provides to both populations.



**Kansas Maid Braid Sale** (formerly known as Butter Braids) began October 12-26 and thanks to you, we sold 253 braids for a profit of \$1,454.75! Wow! Those proceeds go to the operating budget to support special programs. Thank you for your help and support of this yummy fundraiser. **Delivery date will be TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>** and you may begin to pick up your orders after 2:30pm. **We will need everyone to pick up their orders THAT AFTERNOON** as we are concerned that we will not have the freezer space to hold orders overnight. Please let us know if you might need some help with your order on the day of delivery!

**Parent/Teacher Conferences:** During the weeks of October 12th and October 19th the classes (Dreamers through Discoverers) conducted their parent/teacher conferences on designated days. The Explorers Pre-K/Bright Beginnings Academy(NPS) will have their conferences on November 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>. If your child is in this class be sure to sign up for a conference. We value this time with you on behalf of your child and welcome your feedback about this process.

### *Mark Your Calendars Now for....*

**December 3, 5:30 – 7:30 Celebration of Middle Earth Families:** This is our annual family pot-luck dinner coupled with the opportunity to celebrate the classrooms by sharing a gift, acknowledge the staff who give so much to the children, and engage with the families that make up our Middle Earth world. More information will be posted soon in each classroom! This is one of our most festive and attended events of the year, and we hope to see your family here at Middle Earth December 3rd!



### **Board of Directors Information**

**At the upcoming November 17<sup>th</sup> Board meeting,** we will say Thank You to Michelle Seybolt for her service to our organization by consecutive terms as our Board Chair. Michelle accepted her second term knowing that our imminent move was on the horizon – and she still said yes! Thank you Michelle for all you have done, and the professional contributions

you have made to Middle Earth. A new slate of officers, and some new members, will be joining us at that meeting. So, when the nominations and votes are in, I'll let you know who our new officers are, and new members, too! **We are currently recruiting** business professionals to our board, and maybe some male members, too ☺! If you, or someone you know, has an interest in serving please let us know. Terms are three year terms (unless you're filling a vacated term) and meetings are the third Tuesday of every other month. Diverse perspectives and leadership styles make for a better Middle Earth! We have a future to plan together ☺.



### ***We have a favor to ask of each of you:***

Please help your children understand **NOT to push the buzzer** at the front door as you arrive for school. The buzzer itself is very noisy and quite frankly.... annoying! Sometimes we're on the phone, or answering a time sensitive question for staff (ie: quasi emergency ☺) and the buzzer simply adds to the issue. Please help your children learn to wait while the swipe card is used. **Need an extra swipe card?** We can help with that, too! I hope you understand that - while your child(ren) might push the buzzer and you hear it that one time – so it might not seem like a big deal. But, we hear it over and over again! It's definitely a headache in the offing. So, please help us out by encouraging your children to leave the buzzer at rest! Thank you so very much.

### ***Some Program Notes from Ms. Judy:***

1. Dreamers-Discoverers are now using lesson plans that reflect child-based learning instead of group learning.
2. Funding was secured to provide for all school staff meetings this autumn. The first of these meetings was on Oct 19th. We look forward to engendering teamwork, developmental staff training, and more professionalism with these meetings.
3. This year accident/incident rates have continued to decrease in our classrooms. The teachers have been logging (and the administration along with the teaching staff have been studying) accidents and incidents since last January to improve the safety in our classrooms.
4. We are continuing with a teacher to team member mentoring programs that were started in the spring. These have been successful for the most part.

## Illness and School:

I would like to take this opportunity to remind families of our policy re: illness and attendance at school. Our handbook outlines situations that require us to send children home, and under what circumstances they may return. While we are not diagnosticians, we do our best to keep a healthy, illness-free classroom situation as best we can. **In accordance with State Licensing Requirements:** if your child has been sent home for vomiting, diarrhea, or fever: they may not return until 24 hours after the symptom **disappears without the use of pain relieving medication**; no child will be admitted with discharge from the eyes; and if a child's illness requires antibiotics, they must be taken for at least 24 hours before returning. In lieu of the heightened concern over potential H1N1 pandemic outbreak, these policies are even more important. We know it is difficult to juggle schedules when your child is ill; but, unless we work together to exclude sick children, the illness just circulates and we all get sick! Thank you for your support of our efforts to keep all children and staff healthy. And, thank you for taking the time to review your emergency contact information and receive our handout related to H1N1 and our policies.



**Note: a special thank you to Melissa McLawhorn Houston (Board member and mother of Robbie – Pre-K and Matthew – Discoverers), Amanda James (Cleveland County Health Department and mother of Mason – Tot II) and Eryn Tribble (Data Control Specialists and mother of Allyah – Discoverers) for their oversight and leadership related to the development of our information and policies about H1N1 and Middle Earth's responses and expectations. Their professional contributions were enormous!**



**New Shelves -** Special "Thank You" to Jesse Williams (dad of Milley in Serendipity and Hannah, an alumni), who recently built additional shelving for us in our back room. We continue to be creative about how we maximize our space and we very much appreciate the talents of our parents who help us so very much!

The shelves are awesome Jesse! Thank you again!

## In Memory...

**One of our dear friends**, and national presence in early childhood, passed away over the summer. Ms. Bev Engle provided innovative, thoughtful, and delightfully intense ☺ education related to mentoring, leadership, collaborative supervision, and co-developed the system we use of Focused Portfolios. We benefitted greatly from her expertise and friendship. In fact, she had used the philosophy statement of Middle Earth as a 'best practice' since 1980 – and we met her in 2004! Bev was a kindred spirit that we will miss greatly. Focused Portfolios is moving forward in the State of Oklahoma thanks to the dedicated staff at the Center for Early Professional Development (CECPD). We have been asked to help support the planning of the next classes and have been more than willing to do so. Bev, to you we say, Thank You.

*We know you're close by.....*

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## Remember These Dates:

- Kansas Maid Braid Delivery & Pick-Up Date: Tuesday, Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> 2:30p.m.
- Board Meeting Tuesday, Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> @ 6:15pm
- Thanksgiving Holiday Nov. 25,26,27 (closed)
- Celebration of Middle Earth Families Dec. 3, 5:30 – 7:30
- Winter Holiday Dec. 24, 25 (closed)
- New Year's Holiday Dec. 31,2009 & Jan. 1, 2010 (closed)

## Janice's Financial Corner

- ± **Tax Statements for 2009** will be available by **Mid-January 2010.**
- ÷ If you find yourself in a situation where you cannot pay tuition on time, please contact Elizabeth or Janice.
- × **Payments are due on first of the month,** if you pay monthly; 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> if you pay semi-monthly; on Mondays, if you pay weekly.

*The little money I have - that is my wealth, but the things I have for which I would not take money, that is my treasure.*

*~Robert Brault,*

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*Take care, have fun, and thanks for being part of our Middle Earth world.*

*Have a wonderful Autumn!*