

Pre-K Meets with Seattle University Engineering Students

By Teacher Lisa

Before finalizing their plans and presenting a project proposal to The Outdoor Planning Committee, two students, from the Seattle University design team we have been working with, recently came in to discuss the project with the Pre-K group. Students Ian Pumo and My Du, accompanied by a SU school photographer, wanted to know:

- What do you like about the King Street playground?
- What don't you like/What could be better?
- What would you like to see on a new school playground?

As I would expect from King Street students, the children had no shortage of ideas and explanations. In the lively discussion that followed, some of the children's ideas included:

- Push swings (It only takes 3 days to learn, 1 if you're really good)
- More tire swings
- A shelter, or large covered area, where they could be out of the rain, maybe with a table where they could rest their elbows (TV optional)
- Space where they could do art projects by themselves
- A trampoline or bouncy cargo net
- Tunnels and/or secret passages
- Angry birds (this was mentioned several times; perhaps we need to incorporate a giant sling shot...)
- Power Rangers
- More space for bikes
- Lots of telescopes, tunnels, and hatches

The SU design team is currently working on finalizing their plans which will include a modest amount of re-grading to make the space more usable, a new shed/play structure, and other design elements that will inspire investigation and imaginative play support gross motor development, and foster a connection to the natural world. I'm sure the children gave them a lot to think about!



King Street Cooperative Preschool and the Crisis Solutions Center Experience

By Jana Robbins, Board Co-Chair and parent of KSCP students Luc and Ian

Over two years ago, King County announced plans to open a Crisis Solutions Center (CSC) at the corner of 19th and Lane in the Jackson Place neighborhood, a few blocks down the street from King Street Preschool. The CSC is operated by the Downtown Emergency Services Center (DESC) which has many programs throughout the city serving individuals dealing with homelessness, addiction, and mental health. The mission of the CSC is to serve individuals suffering a mental health crisis, but who do not represent a medical or criminal risk, and who agree to treatment voluntarily. There are three different programs operating from their facility: Crisis Diversion Center (stabilizes individuals up to 48 hours), Crisis Diversion Interim Services (individuals stay for up to 2 weeks for continued support and connecting to community resources), and the Mobile Crisis Team (out in the community responding to and supporting law enforcement in assessing individuals in crisis). Before this program, these individuals who represent no harm to themselves or others would either be immediately released back into the community, taken to jail or transported to hospital emergency rooms. None of these scenarios met their immediate needs or connected them with long-term support services. All of the scenarios put these individuals back out into the community without support, and were costly to the law enforcement and health care systems.

When the plans for the Crisis Solutions Center emerged in the Jackson Place neighborhood, there was strong opposition by some community members and an alliance was made that ended up filing a lawsuit in an attempt to prevent the center from opening. During this process, King County and DESC invited and engaged neighborhood representatives to come together to create a Good Neighbor Agreement document that would help outline the CSC process in regard to concerns and questions about operation of the facility, as well as create an openness of

communication between the neighborhood and the center. Ultimately, the courts ruled in favor of the facility and it began operating in September 2012. The Good Neighbor Agreement also provided the framework for the Neighborhood Advisory Council, which continues to meet regularly and communicate directly with the County and CSC. For more information, you can visit:

http://www.desc.org/crisis_solutions.html.

For the past two years I have had the privilege to represent King Street on these two committees in our community. Why has it been a privilege? Because the work on these committees has so much to do with what we do every day with our children at King Street and with our core values as an organization. It has been an opportunity to “live out” the ideals that we teach and really see them as a force in the world.

At King Street we empower our children to solve problems. We encourage both sides to state their needs and concerns, and also listen to one another through that process. We ask for ideas from both parties on how to negotiate, compromise and solve the problems that arise. Through this dialogue, we are seeking to understand one another, and therefore find commonalities and areas we can work together. Being a part of the Good Neighbor Agreement formation was proof that this philosophy we teach our preschoolers is a life skill they will need as adults as well, and that will enable them to be positive ambassadors in their future communities.

At King Street we also work around Anti-Bias in our curriculum and in our daily dialogue with our children. Because they are preschoolers and they are developmentally noticing and categorizing differences and re-organizing their understanding of the world, we commonly deal with themes in play around exclusion and power. There is a great article by

Teacher Lisa on exclusion on our website:

http://www.kingstreetcoopreschool.org/parent_resources.php.

One universal rule that we've been able to develop as a school in navigating fair and unfair rules for games is: *We can't make rules based on how someone is born, or based on something they cannot change about themselves.* And so with that limit in mind we help children develop fair rules for games that honor their need to create, imagine and direct a game, while allowing others the ability to play if they choose. For example, a game may require participants to pretend to be cats who wander around on all fours meowing. Anyone can choose to play the part or negotiate a part they like better. However, excluding players from the cat game because of their age, appearance, gender, etc. would not be fair because they can't change that part of themselves. In this same way, the Good Neighbor Agreement process and the current Neighborhood Advisory Council is a means of living out an Anti-Bias philosophy. We must not exclude others based on something they cannot change about themselves.

In addition to seeing King Street philosophies in action, I've learned so much about mental health issues that I'd like to share:

1. Mental illness needs to be respected, diagnosed, treated and supported in the same ways that health professionals and society (us!) respect, diagnose, treat and support physical ailments such as broken bones or cancer. Ultimately, mental illness is a physical illness, like all health issues, but it deals with the complex organ of the brain.
2. Mental illness is not a choice.
3. The stigma of mental illness creates a barrier to conversation, diagnosis and treatment.
4. Mentally ill people are not violent. The rare violence that does occur with mentally ill individuals is primarily a result of lack of diagnosis, treatment and resources.

My time on the Neighborhood Advisory Council is running short, as my last child will be moving on to kindergarten. I feel strongly that King Street should continue to be a part of the conversation, education

and community outreach in regard to our neighbors at the Crisis Solutions Center, and here's why:

1. In a time when resources and programs serving the mentally ill are being slashed and minimized and in a time that all we seem to hear about is violence of untreated individuals suffering from mental illness, King County is taking concrete steps to develop a system that will meet unmet needs. King County, the CSC and the individuals served there need advocates.
2. In alignment with our core value of Anti-Bias, I'm proud to be part of a community that can include, or learn to include, those whose characteristics are new to our experiences, but who cannot change who they are. This is one of the hallmarks of our school philosophy and curriculum, and we need to be a leader and example in our community of seeking understanding of others, while also representing the needs of the school as they relate to the CSC.

This year we have two parents in our co-op community who work regularly with the CSC. I've asked them both to give a statement of their experience with the facility and those they serve.

"At King Street, we value teaching our kids to be safe, strong, and free. In my work at the Crisis Solutions Center, I think these same values are at the core of how we treat the folks who come there for treatment and support when they are experiencing an emotional crisis. At the CSC we believe that recovery from the struggles of mental illness and chemical dependency is possible and strive to create an environment that fosters this belief; our clients are seeking safety and building their own strength to persevere through difficult situations. King Street's anti-bias curriculum also connects the values of the two organizations. I am proud to bring my son to a school that teaches children that no matter where you came from or what struggles you endure, you have value and deserve respect. I am equally proud to help

lead a facility in an organization that fosters the same belief and value in the folks we serve.” – Ash

“I work at Harborview Medical Center in the Psychiatric Emergency Services. Having the CSC has been such a blessing. As a health care provider, it feels good to have a safe and supportive place to discharge people to when they need extra help. I know that CSC staff will help facilitate needed outpatient services.

Through screening people for admission to CSC, I also know they serve a wide range of people and carefully consider who gets accepted there. They have done a lot to educate providers about appropriate referrals and honor their "Good Neighbor" agreement. As a parent of a kid at King Street, I have no safety concerns regarding the CSC. DESC is truly a great organization. They provide innumerable services and do a lot to help the greater community.” – Jen

Additional informative and helpful articles:

http://seattletimes.com/html/opinion/2020216226_alantayloropedxml.html

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ross-szabo/mental-illness-stigma_b_2665627.html

http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2018828503_crisiscenter02m.html

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/26/us-mental-healthcare-system_n_2353319.html

<http://www.rentonreporter.com/news/170411626.html>

Scenes from the Classroom: Literacy in Action

By Teacher Lisa

In a play-based school such as King Street, academic learning may not be as obvious as it is in a more teacher-directed setting. However, as the following classroom scenes demonstrate, our children are not only learning a great deal, but are also more engaged and involved in their learning than in a “more structured” lesson on the letter of the day or a coloring worksheet. When learning opportunities come up naturally, as they do in play, and when adults offer ideas that extend from children’s chosen endeavors, it is also readily apparent to children how the concepts relate to the real world- Why do I need to learn how to write? To convey meaning and share my ideas.

Here is just a brief sampling of some of the things children have been up to:

- Looking at the cover of a picture book, before reading the title, Alexa knew it was going to be about bikes. When asked how she knew, she said, “Because there are bikes on the cover!”
- Teacher Teresa taught the children extra verses to the song, Row Row Row Your Boat (...gently down the stream, if you see an alligator don’t forget to scream). Many of the children wanted turns to make up their own verses, some not only recognized the rhyming pattern in the song, but were also able to follow it with a rhyme of their own.



- Kendra taught us lightning safety tips at the snack table and Teacher Lisa started a list, including, “If your house is made of gold, get out!” and, “Don’t go in the water!” Zach added information about nimbus clouds and thunder. This inspired Theo to dictate a list of Morey Eel safety tips and Great White Shark safety tips.
- Luke wanted some play dough, but we were all out. Teacher Lisa helped him write a letter to Nadine, our artist in residence and play dough maker. He requested “train play dough.” When asked, “What does train play dough look like?” Luke replied simply, “it’s green.” Soon after, Nadine brought in green play dough and Luke was able to enjoy driving cars through it and burying cars in it. The power of print in action!
- Elena made a snack menu with words and pictures so that children would know what was for snack. Teacher Lisa helped sound out the words and Elena figured out which letter symbols she needed to write in order to represent those sounds and convey meaning.
- Tallulah, Eva, Ne’ema, and Kendra drew illustrations and dictated stories to Teacher Teresa about what was happening in their pictures.
- Brandon, Ian Robbins, and Kieran were playing Star Wars and made name tags for themselves. Kieran and Ian each sounded out the name Yoda and wrote it on their name tags. Brandon was Luke Skywalker which was much harder to spell, so he helped Teacher Lisa figure out which letter each syllable started with.
- Annika drew a picture of a skeleton and used mock writing at the bottom of the page. “This says skeleton,” she said as she moved her finger across the lines.
- Ian Montgomery was pretending to be Thor. He explained to Teacher Lisa how Thor sometimes hits people with his hammer. Teacher Lisa asked why Thor hit and Ian responded, “Sometimes the Incredible Hulk hurts Thor, so he hits him with his hammer. “Does that solve the problem?” Teacher Lisa asked, “Is there another way that Thor could solve his problem without using his hammer?” “He could not use his hammer. He could say, “Stop!”” So Teacher Lisa helped Ian write a letter to Thor, giving better problem-solving strategies.
- Stella pointed to her name on the coat rack. “Sssstttteeeellllla,” she slowly enunciated while drawing her finger along the letters. “That’s me!”
- After reading *The Little Engine that Could*, Eva announced, “I am not an engine. I am not a train. I am Eva.”
- A class reading of *Go Dog, Go!* inspired a number of discussions and explorations of literacy concepts, including making predictions, spoilers (how people feel when someone shares the ending of the story), opposites, and rhyming words. The children also made some text-to-self connections in a discussion about the dog who keeps asking the other dog what he thinks of her hat. If he doesn’t like her hat, what else could he say that would still keep her feelings safe? (“It’s not for me,” “I don’t really like it,” “I like it,” “I like it on you,” “It’s pink!”), and why did the dog keep asking the other dog what he thought of it – does it matter?
- Luna found a pink, rubber duck at school and, was so enamored with it, she carried it with her for the remainder of the day. Teacher Teresa recorded Luna’s dictated stories of the little duck’s adventures.

Rock out with King Street is almost here!

The Fundraising team has been working hard to bring you this year’s Family Night Out on **SUNDAY, March 24, 2013** starting at 2:30pm. Remember this year’s theme is Rock Band and we hope to see you and your kids all decked out in your best rock star gear! The event is open to the public, so please invite all your friends and family. Tickets are \$16 for adults, \$8 for kids (purchased at the door). You’ll enjoy a concert by Recess Monkey, a fabulous Taco Bar dinner, and our silent auction.

Each family is required to work one shift for the event. You should have all seen the assigned jobs, which went out via email last week, and we'll be handing out more detailed information at this month's Parent Meeting. If you have any questions about your job, where to go, what to do, etc. please see our Volunteer Coordinators: Jessica Logan and Ryan Hoffman.

Dessert at the Family Night Out will be potluck style. There's a sign-up sheet at school, so please dust off your aprons and bring your favorite goodies with you to share!

And don't forget to bring your wallets with you, as we've got some fantastic items for sale in our Silent Auction. We're particularly excited about the chance to win a weekend in a mountain cabin near Lake Wenatchee, Roller rink birthday party, evening out a 5th Avenue Theater with dinner at Maneki, or Will preparation services.

Even though the deadline for procurements has come and gone, we know some of you are procrastinators so we're still accepting items for the auction. If you've got procurements keep bringing them into school. Our goal was to get \$20,000 worth of items for the silent auction and we're thrilled to announce that as of Friday 3/15 we had \$21,278!!

We will be selling raffle tickets right up until we draw the winners at the auction. If you need more, there are additional envelopes of tickets in the box on top of the file cabinet in the snack room. Please sign out which tickets you take (the register is in the box). This is also where you turn in your sold ticket stubs and money.

Thank you for all of your hard work in making our fundraising goals! King Street Cooperative Preschool receives neither public funding nor has any current grants, so we rely heavily on fundraising so we can keep tuition affordable for all families. If you have any questions about fundraising or your role, please contact Kelly Chavez at kg.chavez@gmail.com or 206-234-5468.

Your submissions to the KSCP newsletter are very welcome. The next issue will come out on Tuesday, April 9th. Please send submissions to Lissa Munger, ecmunger@gmail.com, by Friday, April 5th.