



newsletter

Fourth Quarter 2018



launch

Learn. Grow. Inspire.

Preschool Visit to the Pumpkin Patch

On October 18th, all of our preschool classes went on a field trip to the pumpkin patch - an annual Launch preschool tradition! We were also joined by some of our parents/guardians, and it was great to get a chance to get to know them outside of the classroom.

In addition to the pumpkin patch, our preschoolers also went on a train ride, visited the Pioneer Homestead where they milled corn, watched the farm animals

in the barnyard, and found their way through the hay maze. They even got to bring their very own pumpkin home with them!

Our preschool teachers have been doing lots of fun fall activities, so this field trip was the perfect complement to what's been happening in the classrooms.

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A Note from the Executive Director

We live in turbulent times, and the increasing level of polarization in our country is sad and disturbing. We may think that our children don't pay attention to the harsh rhetoric they hear on TV about immigrants and refugees, the LGBTQ community, and people of color, but they do and are deeply affected by it. We may think they don't understand or notice the news coverage about hate crimes and mass shootings, but they do and it scares them. That's why it's so important to talk with children about these issues, even though it's hard.



Intolerance is taught, not innate. When you walk into Launch programs, you see children from all walks of life playing together and learning from one another. They reject racism and bigotry and struggle to understand why some people discriminate against others just because of their skin color or religion. It's our responsibility to help them continue to be the welcoming, empathetic young people they've

always been. Programs like Launch can play a huge role in supporting and advocating for our children, and giving them a safe space to talk about what's going on in the world and how they feel about it.

We work with kids who are being impacted by racism and structural inequities every day and we need to do everything we can to change that reality. We need to be better aware of our own practices and policies that either work to eliminate or maintain the status quo. That's why the racial equity trainings our staff are currently attending (please see the below article for details) are so critical. This work will help ensure our programs are equitable and effectively support children and families in a culturally-competent way.

Brianna Jackson

Brianna Jackson
Executive Director

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Student Stories: Hailey, Age 9

Hailey (above on the right) is a 4th grader who's been going to our after school program for 2 years. We asked her if she'd share what she likes about Launch, so she wrote us a paragraph. Plus we also got a bonus picture she drew! She wrote:

"My favorite part of Launch is seeing my friends. You can do fun-ish projects and play games. There are rules but they are good rules to keep you safe. I think the teachers are fair, fun, and encouraging. Launch is a great place to be. I also think it is a safe place to be."



Racial Equity Training

This fall, Program Directors, Program Specialists and Admin staff are attending a series of racial equity trainings held by Equity Matters. The rest of Launch staff will also complete this training later this year. The goal of these trainings is to create a common set of understanding about racial

equity and help staff build and apply racial equity skills to their daily work with children and families.

The first training covered definitions (e.g., what is race, ethnicity, equity, etc.), the history of discriminatory practices in our community, and

gave staff the opportunity to share their experiences. The next trainings built on this foundation and looked at implicit biases and how we can be more racially-equitable in our work including specific strategies and tactics to use. Our staff are energized to put this training into practice!

What's Happening at Launch

Hawthorne students drew pictures of what different emotions look like and are making a life-size mood meter, which is a tool used in Seattle schools (and at Launch!) to help recognize and understand our own and other peoples' emotions. This art project is also giving us a chance to talk about concepts like complementary colors.

Kimball held their 10th annual Día de los Muertos celebration on November 1st. Our families brought food to share, plus teacher Biftu made chicken biryani and program director Jo made Mexican hot chocolate. We also played traditional Mexican games!

Madrona students had a family pumpkin painting night where they enjoyed delicious food the children made at Launch. The younger children baked and decorated cookies, and the older students made hummus from scratch.

Montlake school-agers have been creating their own board games! They designed their own games and then built them out of cardboard, paper, and loads of duct tape. The games our students came up with included marble mazes as well as more traditional board games.

Highland Park school-age students did a fun science experiment to test which type of soda would make the biggest eruption after adding Mentos. The kids examined the labels to identify differences between the sodas and made hypotheses about which soda would have the biggest geyser and why.

They then tested their hypotheses, which was a messy blast! A Launch parent judged the biggest eruption, and the winner was diet soda with a 6-foot-tall geyser!



Miller Annex

preschoolers in the Raven Classroom have been enjoying a pizza-making station where they create their own felt pizzas, complete with real pizza boxes. The children use menus and the cash register in the House Area to order and deliver pizzas. And they also got to make real pizzas for a pizza party!

Leschi school-age students learned about installation art and then made their own 3-D structures out of clay. The kindergarten-2nd graders got to do a cooking activity with visitors from Solid Ground. They talked about nutrition and healthy eating, and then worked together to prepare and enjoy delicious smoothies!

Beacon Hill school-age students have been super excited to use

fuse beads to create fun designs. They're also building all kinds of buildings and structures out of Bunchies, which are like Legos.

Rainier Community Center preschoolers have been practicing writing their names, and they even sign in every morning when they get to Launch. They also did a cool art project where they made pumpkins out of paper and then outlined their initials with beads on the pumpkins.

Maple 5th grade students decided to create their own handwritten Launch newsletter. They've interviewed other students about their lives, what they like to do, what their favorite thing is about Launch, etc. They're also making newsletter art including an amazing drawing of Mr. Nate that is an uncanny likeness. We can't wait to read the first issue!

Sanislo students participated in some cool fall activities. Children designed and built contraptions to hold their eggs and then dropped them from up high to see if their eggs broke. They also enjoyed apple tasting and a find the plastic needle in the haystack competition.



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Save the Date for Lunch for Launch!

Our annual fundraiser will be held on **Friday, March 15, 2018 at 12pm at the Seattle Westin**. Funds raised help us provide quality preschool, after school, and summer programs for kids, as well as tuition assistance for families in need. If you'd like to help plan the luncheon, host a table, or become a sponsor, please email rehana.lanewala@launchlearning.org.



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Thanksgiving & Winter Break Care

Did you know that Launch offers full-day programs for kids during Thanksgiving and Winter Break? When Seattle Schools is closed, Launch is open! Breaks are a great opportunity for us to do engaging activities with our kids, play games, and go on field trips. While our families are at work or school, they get the comfort of knowing their children are well-cared for and having fun!

Questions? Want to register your child for break care? Please talk to your site program director or go to launchlearning.org.

Teacher Dora Celebrates 25 Years at Launch!

Highland Park preschool teacher (and former long-time Madrona preschool teacher) Dora Newman just celebrated her 25th year of working at Launch! We've been so lucky to have a teacher like Dora at Launch. Not only is she a great educator who truly cares about children and families, but she is also a wonderful mentor to other teachers.

Outside of Launch, Dora teaches Brazilian dance and performs in a dance troupe, and has brought her passion for dance into the Launch classroom. If you walk into her classroom you're likely to see her dancing, singing, drumming, or sharing her Brazilian culture with the children.

When we asked Dora how she's stayed so committed to teaching after 25 years, she said "it's rejuvenating working with children. They're so alive. I love their spirit. To learn with them and grow with them - it's beautiful. That's what makes me keep going."

Launch Executive Director Brianna Jackson was a bright-

eyed 18 year-old new teacher when she first met Dora. Brianna quickly grew to appreciate Dora's teaching ability and the amazing sense of community she creates.

Brianna says, "when you look at the difference Dora has made for kids and families, as well as for the teachers she's mentored who have gone on to be full-fledged educators in the school system or early learning field, it's pretty incredible. It's inspiring to see someone who has continued to do what they truly care about and really walk the talk."

Dora, thank you for your dedication to Launch. Your passion, energy, and expertise has made a huge difference for our children and families, as well as for your fellow educators!

