



Parker-Chase Newsletter

PCPO (Parker-Chase Parent Organization) News

Teacher Appreciation:

The Teacher Appreciation Committee headed up by **Debra Reynolds** (Abigail, Timothy and Samuel's mom), is very busy this time of year! Plans are in the works for the *Valentine's Teacher Appreciation Luncheon* on Friday, February 15. Watch for flyers asking for volunteers to prepare food or to serve.



Mom's and Teacher's Night Out:

It is time once again to get all of the moms and teachers together for a "Girls Night Out". We have a private room reserved at Nico's Cantina Restaurant in Plano (southwest corner of Preston and Park—1941 Preston Road, Suite 1040) on Thursday, February 21st immediately following the PCPO meeting! Plan to stop by—it is a great way to get better acquainted with your child's teachers and for them to get to know you better. It's also a terrific way to get to know the other mothers in your child's classroom! And best of all—it's **FUN!**

Fundraising:

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Share the Love "Post-It" Notes

For the month of February, I've put a basket of Post-It Notes in the Lobby—and they're just for *sharin' the love!* Grab a Post-It and jot down your favorite thing about your child's teacher or Ms. Gail. Get your children involved—ask them why they love their teachers and Ms. Gail—and record what they say on a Post-It. Teachers—grab a Post-It Note and tell your co-workers what makes them special and what you admire most about them!

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Good Neighbor Program

I have a favor to ask. Project Walk/Dallas, my daughter Kendall's organization that helps people with spinal cord injuries, has just been approved as a partner in the Tom Thumb Good Neighbor Program. The next time you are at Tom Thumb or Safeway, please go to their customer service desk and link

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February 2013

Mark Your Calendars

- ☺ Feb. 1—Start "Sharin' the Love Post-It Notes"
- ☺ Feb. 7—CPR/1st Aid 6:00-8:00 p.m.
- ☺ Feb. 10—Chinese New Year
- ☺ Feb. 12—Fat Tuesday
- ☺ Feb. 14—Happy Valentine's Day ♥♥♥
- ☺ Feb. 15—Teacher Appreciation Luncheon
- ☺ Feb. 18—Frisco ISD Closed
- ☺ Feb. 20—Plano ISD Early Release @ 12:00
- ☺ Feb. 21—5:30-6:30 PCPO in Kiva—EVERYONE WELCOME
- ☺ **Feb. 21—6:00-9:00 Mom's and Teacher's Night Out @ Nico's**
- ☺ Feb. 22—Ms. Mahima's 3-Year Anniversary (Toddler 1)
- ☺ Feb. 23—Ms. Michelle's Birthday (Upper Pre-F)

Exploring the World of Science with Your Child

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Post your note outside their class-room (or kitchen) or on the window into the room—for all to see! Let's blanket this building with notes praising all of the amazing ladies who truly make a difference in your and your child's lives!!



it made!

Experiences like this remind us of how important it is to express things to the people we love, and especially to help our children recognize in themselves what we see so clearly: their strengths, their unique traits, their *good* behavior—the things we're proud

It's always fun to see how much confidence it of, the things that make us laugh, the things we instills in a person to receive a compliment, and call love. And the best is—it teaches our children to out all of the wonderful traits about them that you see those things in each other, too. What a won- love. I remember very specific instances in my life derful way to say..."You are special!" Happy Valen- when people did that for me, and what a difference tine's Day!♥!♥! ♥

Exploring the World of Science with Your Child

Preschoolers have an insatiable need to explore and understand things that adults might overlook. Children need an adult who can share this joy of discovery with them. You can help your child by sharing the joy of discovering science at home and in your neighborhood.



Go for a walk. Talk with your child about what you can see, hear, and touch. Look at clouds, smell pinecones, gently touch a caterpillar, see what's under rocks, and listen to birds and squirrels in trees. Take walks when it's rainy, when it's sunny, early in the morning, and in the evening. Talk about how the experiences are similar and different.

Discover answers together. Children often know all the dinosaur names or notice small details in a leaf.

You do not need to know the name of every plant, but you and your child can investigate and answer questions together.

Care for animals, plants, trees, and gardens. Plant bulbs (flowers or onions) and watch what happens. Put toothpicks in an avocado pit and suspend it over a clear container of water. Visit it daily. Soon you will see a new plant growing from the top and bottom of the pit.



Find science all around you. Learn about physics by playing with tennis balls and soccer balls. Which ball bounces higher? Which one can be kicked farther? Learn about chemistry while baking cookies together. What happens when the ingredients are mixed together and baked in the oven? Ask your child to share his or her ideas about what happens and why. If your child asks a question you cannot answer, write it down so that later you can look for the answer together in a book, at the library, or on the Internet. ♥

PCPO News

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- ♦ **Spring Flower Sale:** At the January PCPO meeting, the discussion was held about changing up our Spring Flowers fundraiser a little—and Ms. Eilene is looking into it. Watch for details soon. Proceeds go to the Teacher Appreciation Fund.



- ♦ **Save-Around Coupon Books:** We tried a new fundraiser this year—coupon books full of discounts at local restaurants, entertainment venues, hair salons, car repair shops,

etc. The results are still being calculated—we'll report final numbers at February's PCPO meeting.

Spring Book Fair:

Every year in April we celebrate the national "Week of the Young Child" with numerous activities. On the top of our list

of annual favorites is our Spring Book Fair that begins that week of April 15th continues April 26th.

Annual Picnic:

PCPO set the date of our Annual Picnic for Thursday, May 9th

(and a raindate of May 10th). As usual, we will hold it at the pavilion at Russell Creek Park. The date is reserved—but we still need a Plano resident to reserve the raindate of May 10th. If you live in Plano and can make that call to reserve it, please contact Ms. Sherry or Ms. Eilene for details. We do not want to let that date slip away. There is no cost to you—you just have to be a Plano resident.

Next PCPO Meeting:

PCPO meetings are open to ALL parents. The next meeting is Thursday, February 21, in the Kiva from 5:30–6:30. Plan now to attend and get involved! ♥

Good Neighbor Program/Project Walk Dallas

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your card to Project Walk/Dallas. Be sure to give them Project Walk/Dallas' Good Neighbor #12960. Every time you shop, Project Walk/Dallas will automatically earn a percentage of your purchase. There is no charge to you—the price you pay is not affected.

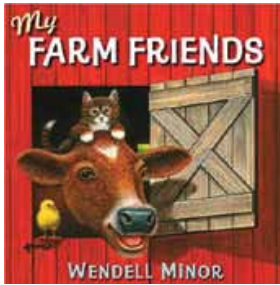
Project Walk Dallas is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with spinal cord injuries through intense exercise-based recovery programs, education, support and encouragement. Kendell and her trainers are proud to bring the expertise in spinal cord injury re-



covery that Project Walk has developed over the past decade to Dallas, Texas. As part of the world's largest non-profit spinal cord injury recovery centers, Project Walk/Dallas promises to provide clients a unique experience to recover and meet others experiencing similar struggles.

When you can, each of you should take the time to drop by Project Walk/Dallas—you will leave there completely inspired by the hard work and determination of the incredible clients who are determined to gain back function and mobility—and have fun and a lot of laughs in the process! ♥

Reading Chair

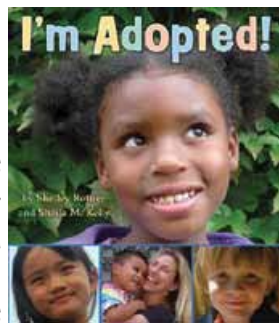


***My Farm Friends*, by Wendell Minor. Ages birth to 5.**

"Welcome to the farm," Wendell Minor writes in the opening of *My Farm Friends*, warmly beckoning readers. Each turn of the page introduces readers to one or two farm animals and teaches interesting facts and habits about each one with humor and rhyme. "Pigs can't sweat / Or jump in a pool / So they roll in the mud / That's how they stay cool" . . . "Chickens take dust baths / And wear a comb on their head / Chickens come in many colors / But their combs are always red." Wendell's love of animals will be clear to adults who read the book's dedication, in which he reminisces about loving his family farm as a child. Children will see the care he has put into illustrating each animal. He captures a pig's knowing glance, a sheep's tender nuzzle of her lamb, and the gentleness of a goat's droopy eyes and soft lips as it chews a stolen bandana. Additional fascinating facts about the animals are included at the back. The endpapers portray the calm of the farm while the sun is low on the horizon, either rising or setting, a tender way to begin and end the book.

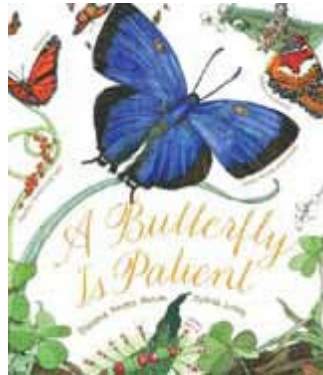
***I'm Adopted!* by Shelley Rotner and Sheila M. Kelly. Photographs by Shelley Rotner. Ages 2 to 8.**

While every adoption has its own story, this book covers many of the issues that families with adopted children have in common. The book touches on the reasons a family might adopt a baby, why birth parents might have been unable to care for a child, how some children are adopted in the country in which they were born and others arrive from far away, and how adopted children don't always look like their parents and siblings. The message is that there are many ways to make a loving family. Sixty-five photographs depict a wide variety of families, including Caucasian grandparents kissing a Black child, Black parents hugging lighter-skinned children, a photo with two moms, and others with two dads, making this book an especially



inclusive asset for the classroom.

Families tell and retell the stories that are important to them. This book recognizes the importance of a child's adoption story by concluding with a mention of how adopted children usually want to hear the stories of how they came into their families again and again. All readers—adopted or not—will identify with the message of family members loving each other.



***A Butterfly is Patient*, by Dianna Hutts Aston. Illustrated by Sylvia Long. Ages 3 to 8.**

Following *An Egg Is Quiet* and *A Seed Is Sleepy*, this is the third in Aston and Long's series about plant and animal life. Aston always conveys her story by turning science into poetry. "A butterfly is patient . . . helpful . . . protective . . . poisonous." Each double-page spread is headlined with one adjective and contains detailed information about that aspect of butterflies. Discover how some butterflies eat poisonous plants so that they, too, become poisonous and scare off predators. Learn the difference between a butterfly and a moth, and between a chrysalis and a cocoon. See the magic of huge numbers of monarchs gathering in Mexico as they wait for spring and metamorphosis up north. Visually stunning, Long's watercolor paintings are delicate, precise, and rich with color and detail. She captures a sense of movement and flight from page to page. Her endpapers are always interesting. Here, the opening endpaper contains varieties of caterpillars (all named), and the closing endpapers contain varieties of butterflies (also named), putting bookends around the process of transformation so beautifully depicted within the book. This author-illustrator team continues to succeed at making their works of fine art easily accessible to readers. This excellent nonfiction title can be used at story time, for one-on-one reading, or as a browsing book.

***Where's Walrus?* By Stephen Savage. Ages 2 to 5.**

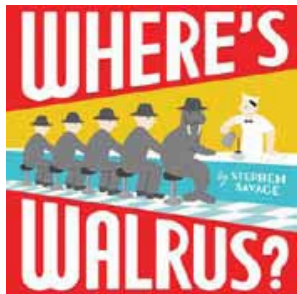
Wordless books provide a wonderful opportunity for

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Reading Chair

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children to tell the story and learn that their interpretation counts. This one opens with a wink from the main character, a walrus who is about to cause some mischief. While a zookeeper dozes, Walrus escapes from his tiny pool in the zoo and makes his way out into the city. It's not long before the alarmed zookeeper takes up the chase. Children will delight in seeing how Walrus hides in plain sight in various settings around the city. He poses as a mermaid in a fountain, as a businessman at the lunch counter, and as a window model in the dress shop. Savage, who finds interesting ways to adapt Walrus's shape to each new challenge, provides the kind of adventure that children adore—they are always one step ahead of the villain, the befuddled zookeeper. But he proves not such a villain in the end. When he spots Walrus participating in a high-dive event, he realizes that he can do something to make Walrus happier in his home at the zoo. He gives Walrus a bigger pool and a high dive, from which Walrus enjoys himself and entertains visitors all day long. Savage's illustrations use clean lines and blocks of color that lend a simple zippiness to the story. The book offers numerous possibilities for extending children's book experiences, including one with hats, as they are crucial to Walrus's disguises.

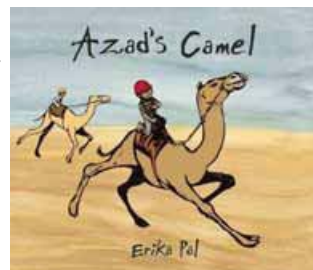


place on Jack's team, and readers will feel included in the mission, too. But no matter how successful they are in banishing the monsters, Jack must confront his fears as dusk arrives and giants descend (readers can see that they are parents) to pluck the boys for bedtime, one by one. Once he is left alone, Jack's bravery holds out only so long. He cries out for his parents, and they are right there to hug him and bring him inside. Bently and Oxenbury do a magnificent job of capturing children's need to fight fears through imaginative play, and to do so in a safe environment where they know their caretakers will save them in a pinch. While Jack's experience creates palpable tension, readers will feel secure knowing that the story is happening in Jack's imagination and that the giants he fears are really the parents coming to help. Bently's writing is a pleasure. The illustrations are so expressive that this can be used as a wordless book, too, with children chiming in to tell the story.



***King Jack and the Dragon*, by Peter Bently. Illustrated by Helen Oxenbury. Ages 2 to 5.**

Helen Oxenbury is famous for her tender illustrations—deliciously honest, not precious—of babies, young children, and animals (*Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes*; *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*). In this new book, she pairs those irresistible children with a set of ugly monsters, bringing to life Peter Bently's rhyming story of three brave little boys with big imaginations who fight creatures of the night from a tent they've created in the backyard. The team is made up of ringleader Jack, his second-in-command Zack, and their helper Caspar—a toddler sporting a onesie and a pacifier. Everyone has a



***Azad's Camel*, by Erika Pal. Ages 4 to 7.**

Part fantasy, part reality, this is the tale of young orphan Azad from a village in "Arabia" who is sold into camel jockeying, a real life sport in which children are put in grave danger because of the prize money they bring to their owners. Azad gets a big surprise when his camel, Asfur, starts a conversation with him one night. Azad tells Asfur that he's scared to race, and Asfur confides that he is frightened, too. The camel hatches a plan and tells Azad that all he has to do is hold on tightly during their race. After they cross the finish line the next day, Asfur keeps on running with Azad on board, escapes their owner, and runs all the way to the desert, where a loving Bedouin family adopts these two close friends. The story touches on themes reminiscent of "Cinderella" and "Hansel and Gretel." As these challenging stories have proven, children are moved by such mistreated characters and relish the opportunity to see them use cleverness, inner strength, and a bit of luck to outsmart captors and find a happy home. Pal's artwork of watercolor and ink contains a surprising vibrancy, given her palette of mostly browns and blues to illustrate the arid landscape. ♥