



Our two newest teachers on recent outdoor adventures:
[redacted] (at right, in red) and [redacted] (above).



Welcome back, and a special welcome to new parents, students, and teachers!

There's no denying it: the days are getting shorter. There is a chill in the morning air—but wait—wasn't that chill there all summer long? Well, no matter, fall is nearly here and we are busy gearing up for another great year of fun-filled learning and exciting discovery.

This fall we are delighted to welcome [redacted] to our teaching team. [redacted] who recently taught at Kapka, joins [redacted] and [redacted] in the K-2 Pod as a core group teacher. [redacted] who recently taught at Giddens School, joins [redacted] in the 3-5 pod and will head up the 3-5 science program.

By the way, did you know that U Co-op is rich? Well, we haven't exactly won the lottery, but we are rich in the areas that matter most! Adding greatly to the diversity and richness of our teaching team are the U Co-op teaching specialists. Our specialists are highly talented, creative, and skilled experts in their field, not to mention incredibly caring people! We are fortunate to have our entire specialist team return for yet another year of inspiring teaching at U Co-op. We welcome back [redacted]

[redacted] art teacher; [redacted] vocal music teacher; [redacted] instrumental music teacher; [redacted] K-2 movement teacher; [redacted] 3-5 Spanish teacher; and our steadfast [redacted] who teaches K-2 Spanish and much, much more. Thank you all for your tremendous teaching.

And while we are thanking people, it's time to give a shout out to all you parent volunteers! It's the parent community that keeps U Co-op running like a well-oiled machine. Thank you all for sharing your time, talents, and energy

with our school. We greatly appreciate all of your efforts!

So welcome one and all, new families and old—the 2011-2012 school year is about to begin. Lights, cameras, action! 📸

Important reminders! Read up!

School begins promptly at 8:45 a.m. Please arrive on time. It's difficult for the teachers and stressful for the child(ren) when they're late. Important morning work and activities begin at 8:45. Doors close (and lock) at 9:00. If you arrive after that, you'll need to escort your child inside; K-2 parents will also need to sign their child in on the attendance sheet.

School ends at 3:30 M–Th and

1:15 on Friday. School ends for short days (kindergarten) at 1:15 every day. Please arrive on time. If you are late, your child will be in EDP and you will be charged accordingly.

The School loading zone is only for drive-up purposes during drop off and pick up hours. **Do not get out of your car at these times!** A teacher or parent will be there to open your [redacted] (continued on page 6)

Mark your calendars!

For the latest scoop on the schedule, consult our Google calendar—www.ucoopschool.org/Calendar.html—(note: URL is case-sensitive).

August

- 29 4:30 p.m.: School picnic at Good Shepherd Center. Bring your own picnic.

September

- 1 All Health & Safety forms must be submitted to Paul Fishman by this date.
- 5 School starts for 3-5 pod*;
Home visits for new K-2 kids
- 6 At Indianola: Long Day (LD, 1st grade) & Super Long Day (SLD, 2ND grade)*;
Home visits: Short Day (SD) students
3-5 parent mtg 7 p.m.; 3rd grade mtg starts 6:30
- 7 LD and SLD at Indianola.*
Home visits: SD students
- 10 Teacher planning day, no school
- 11 EDP (extended day program) starts
3-5 classroom parents start "Slow start" begins in the K-2*
▶ SD: 8:45-12:00 (bring lunch)
▶ LD & SLD: 1:00-3:30 (lunch at home, snack at school)
- 13 K-2 parent meeting; core groups 6:30, pod mtg 7 p.m.
- 14 Regular K-2 schedule starts:
▶ SD: 8:45-1:15
▶ LD & SLD: 8:45-3:30 (1:15 dismissal on Fridays)
- 22 K-2 retreat, Camp Coleman
- 27 Board meeting 5 p.m.
- 28 Orientation for K-2 classroom volunteers, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

October

- 1 K-2 classroom parents start
- 3-5 3-5 trip to Coronet Bay
- 18 All-school meeting, 7 p.m.

* Health and safety forms must be complete for your child to attend!



POP QUIZ!

This raffishly coiffed Univeristy Cooperative School teacher is (select one):

- A. Enjoying a spa-quality facial treatment to help revitalize, purify, and tone.
- B. Confused about the difference between "emergent" and "immersion" curricula.
- C. Having an unforgettable time at University Co-op's second annual Mud Fest (last fall).
- D. On the verge of hypothermia and about to self-medicate with homemade apple pie.
- E. All of the above.

SAVE THESE DATES!

Mark your calendars now for two of the most entertaining social events you will go to all year! If you're new to the school, you just have to trust us on this: You do not want to miss out!

Saturday, October 20, 1-3 p.m.:

Third Annual University Co-op Mud Fest!

Saturday, March 9:

The Umpteenth Annual University Co-op Auction!

being, being, being . . .

Generosity, hugs, and cooperation

. . . keep us bouncing along

You have probably heard me say before that I feel like I increase my count of nephews and nieces by about a dozen or so kids each year! That is the magic of our school, and I know I am not alone in feeling this way.

We truly are an extended family of sorts. And I'm convinced that what powers our school family is an abundance of generosity and love.

Every day I am awed and inspired by how much love and generosity our little school holds. It's in the classroom, it's in the community, it's in the air, virtually bouncing from person to person. You'd think we were a pinball machine here! From the teachers to the kids, from the kids to the kids, from the parents to the parents, from the parents to the kids, and back and forth it bounces.

Let's bounce on over to our wonderful teachers. Time and time again, I see our teachers truly caring about each child and generously giving extra time and effort to get to know them as individuals. I can't tell you how many times I have seen the teachers meeting to discuss an individual child, how to best inspire them, help them grow, find their voice, nurture their passions, face their fears, foster independence, etc. And how many more times I have seen teachers in discussions

with a child doing whatever problem solving, counseling, consulting, or collaboration was needed that day.

Next bounce

is to our amazing parents. Our parent community is known for generously reaching out to each other. Sometimes it's in crisis during an illness or a death in the family. Sometimes it's in joy to help support a family after the birth of a new baby.

Sometimes it's just a kind word when someone is having a bad day or needs a ride for their child, a meal, a work shift trade, a playdate—even recently to help find a stolen car! The list is endless.

Of course the helping hands extend to the school as well. If there is a field trip to drive, a toilet to be unclogged, a computer problem to solve, an auction to run . . . any job, big or small, there is always a parent at the ready, generously offering to give their time and skills to help.

And then there are our kids, high-flying bouncers for sure. I am endlessly impressed with the abundance of generosity and love that the co-op kids show one another: the words of encouragement, the smiles, the friendships, the acceptance, the genuine kindness, and the pride they

have in each other's accomplishments.

It's no surprise that the co-op kids make deep and lasting friendships. For years to come, it's these friendships that continue to provide a circle of support. (Also true for the parents as well.)

And speaking of years to come, let's not forget the alumni. Tell me, what other school do you know of that refers to both the former students *and* former parents as alumni? To me that kind of says it all. We are all truly a part of this school and continue to feel the effects of a U Co-op education long after we have left the school. Last year an alumni parent whose child is in high school called us the night of the auction

to donate \$5,000 because they felt so much gratitude for the experience their child and whole family had at the co-op. That is generosity and love!

It is often said what comes around goes around. Maybe in our case it's what bounces around keeps bouncing around.

Wishing you a bouncy 2012—2013 school year filled with generosity and love! —



A University Cooperative School primer on

safe, happy, & courteous

pick up and drop off!

Whether you're new to the school or just want to brush up on our policies for protecting kids, making drop off and pick up efficient, and keeping our neighbors smiling along with us—this guide is for you!

What are the loading zone rules? The school loading zone is *only* for drive-up purposes during drop-off and pick-up hours—the city sign at the top (south) of the zone says those hours are 8:00–10:00 and 1:00–4:00. (Note that the afternoon times have been expanded to include the early dismissal time of 1:15, which kindergartners follow every day and the whole school follows on Fridays.) *Do not get out of your car during loading zone times.* A teacher or parent will be there to open your car doors and assist your child. If you would like to walk your child to or from the school or chat with other parents, please park elsewhere in the neighborhood.

Also, if you pull into the loading zone for pick up and your child's class is not out yet, but other classes have been dismissed, please circle around the block so that waiting kids can be picked up—or just park elsewhere and walk. *Never ever double park beside the load zone—this is extremely unsafe for the children.*

Can I use that area in front of the coffee shop? That area is not part of our school loading zone. As a courtesy to our neighbors, please do not park in or drop-off/pick up from the load zone in front of Herkimer and Ten Pachi. Herkimer in particular relies on these spaces to support its business. They often remind their customers not to use our school loading zone during pick-up/drop-off hours—let's return the favor!

Beware the bike lane! Please be aware that there is a bike lane that runs alongside the parking lane on our street and blocks to the south on University Ave. Several times last year there were some near accidents with bicyclists. So always check your mirrors for bicyclists before opening your door or pulling out.

Where can I park for an extended period?

For those of you new to the co-op and wondering where to park during your classroom shift, most of the spaces on our block are two hour parking, and the parking police are distressingly efficient about ticketing. You can find longer-term parking near Cowen Park, on Brooklyn, and some of the surrounding blocks. If you have any questions about parking, be sure to let us know.



"Drop off and pick-up: it's easy when you know how!"

university cooperative school is

EXPANDING

With our school expansion well underway, the excitement in the air is almost electrifying and possibly a contributing factor to the thunderstorm we had in Seattle last week. If you've been at the school this last week you've probably seen for yourself the enormous energy and positive vibrations crackling through the air. From the teachers and parents working up a storm to get ready for the start of school to the kids who have come by, the smiles are a mile wide.

SOME HISTORY

Our school hasn't experienced this kind of excitement and change since a group of visionary parents, along with our teaching staff at the time ([redacted] was among the leaders of that effort!) took a huge risk in purchasing and renovating our beloved 5601. Prior to that, the school rented space from a church.

It was a big risk, both for the school and for the individual parents, as several of them actually made substantial personal loans to help fund the project in addition to generous contributions. As we know now, that risk has totally paid off and we have come a long way since then. Our building has greatly increased in value, and everyday we reap the benefits of owning this awesome building, which is on its way to becoming even more functional and awesome. It is also very satisfying to be fulfilling the vision,

held from the moment we found this building, to one day expand into the downstairs.

In addition to increasing our school's function, the expansion will improve our ability to attract new students and keep our school running strong for years to come

SPECIAL THANKS

Hats off to the parents, board, and teachers of eleven years ago who bought us this building, and hats off to the current group of folks who have yet again shown (in the same way that we try to instill in our kids) that U Co-op families are willing to take on a challenge. Some special shout-outs

to some people who have been influential in getting this project off the ground and moving forward: teacher [redacted]; alumni parents [redacted] and [redacted]; board chairs [redacted]; [redacted]; Vibrant Space Committee members [redacted] and [redacted]; co-op parent [redacted] of CAST Architecture; Fairbanks Construction; and Sound Community Bank.

And finally, thanks to the board, teachers, staff, and parents from both current families and alumni who have gotten behind

this project, already contributed and/or will soon contribute (again!) to the funding, work parties, and more. This project has been an extraordinary group effort!



our new "active space" now (above) and soon (below, architect's rendering)



WE NEED YOUR HELP

Considerable funds have been raised for this project in a very short period of time, but we aren't there yet! We need to raise the remaining \$100,000. Please consider what our new space will mean to your child(ren) as well as future co-op kids, and pitch in! Just follow the link below to donate.

Please go to our giving page, scroll down, and click the "Just Give" button: www.ucoopschool.org/giving.html

U • C • O • O • P

just add kids and stir lightly

One of the unique things about University Co-op is the large roll that parents play. We have an amazing team of hard-working parents involved in nearly all aspects of the school from A to Z or from Administrative Assistant to Webmaster (*I couldn't think of a job starting with Z*). This year we have 58 outstanding families, all filling a vital position at our school. It's a virtual alphabet soup of parent support.

The saying is that too many cooks spoil the soup, but in the case of U Co-op, I would have to disagree! Granted, we have many cooks and the cooking does get messy from time to time, but because we are all working together with the common goal of providing a great education experience for the kids, our soup is extraordinary.

As with any good soup, there are also the ingredients to consider. Two key ingredients in the U Co-op soup are respect and cooperation. The teachers have tremendous respect for the kids and create an environment of cooperation rather

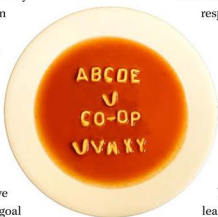
than competition. The kids in turn have an honest regard for each other, and, because they view each other as friends rather than competitors, they treat each other with respect and consideration.

Another important ingredient in our U Co-op soup is freedom. Our teachers have a large degree of freedom compared to other schools. As a result, they are able to rely on their own skills, experience, passion, talents, and intuition to teach what and how they think is best for the students. The freedom at U Co-op does not extend just to the teachers. At U Co-op, the students have a voice in their learning and problem solving. There is structure, but freedom and choices within the structure.

Mix all this together, toss in a healthy dose of engagement and trust, and the result is a beautiful soup created by the U Co-op teachers, children, and parents.

Have a wonderful year and savor every moment.

—Jeanne Garland



Bon voyage, 5th graders!

Congratulations to our recent graduates—we'll miss them! Here's the list of lucky schools welcoming our grads this fall:

Salmon Bay
Lake Washington Girls School
Eckstein Middle School
Morningside Academy
Tillicum School, Bellevue
Northwest
Billings
Our Lady of the Lake
St. Catherine's School

We wish them the best at middle school and beyond, and hope to see them back at the co-op volunteering on their days off!



Last year's fifth graders on the Rite of Passage trip.



In defense of *play*

University Co-op is a fantastic school. I often feel fortunate that my children have been able to experience it, and recently, an article and a conversation caused me to appreciate it all the more.

In a *New York Times* article ("Kindergarten Cram," May 3, 2009), journalist Peggy Orenstein talks about her difficult search to find a kindergarten for her daughter. She wanted to find a place that emphasized play, creativity, and social learning rather than testing and homework.

"Today's kindergarteners prepare for a life of multiple-choice boxes by plowing through standardized tests with cuddly names like Dibles (pronounced dibles), a series of early-literacy measures administered to millions of kids; or toiling over reading curricula like Open Court—which features assessments every six weeks," the article stated.

Orenstein went on to report that a recent study of 254 teachers in New York and California found that kindergar-



teners spend on average 2–3 hours a day in instruction and testing in math and reading and only 30 minutes playing. Orenstein felt that one of the most disturbing things about this and the additional demands of kindergarten homework was that it robbed children of time that could be spent on the one thing truly vital to their future success—play.

"Play at age five is of great importance not just to intellectual but emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual development," says Edward Miller, the report's co-author. "Play—especially the let's pretend, dramatic sort—is how kids develop higher-level thinking, hone their language and social skills, and cultivate empathy. It also reduces stress,

and that's a word that should not have to be used in the same sentence as 'kindergarten' in the first place."

Orenstein points out that thinkers like Daniel Pink have proposed that the country's continued viability will depend on what is known as the imagination economy: qualities like versatility, creativity, vision, and playfulness—that cannot be outsourced.

"It's a compelling argument to apply here, though a bit disheartening too: must we append the word 'economy' to everything to legitimize it? Isn't cultivating imagination an inherent good?" Orenstein asks.

Shortly after I read this article, I had a conversation with a friend that really drove the point home. My friend has a daughter _____ aged 7, who goes to a well-respected school in New York. One day _____ came home in tears. They had been given an assignment to write about anything they wanted to write about. Her daughter had poured her heart into

"Play... is how kids develop higher-level thinking, hone their language and social skills, and cultivate empathy."

—Edward Miller

writing about her green rug in her bedroom. She had written about her rug being a pool; how she fished and swam there; the creatures she met and friends she made; and all the many adventures she had in and on her green bedroom rug.

_____ was so proud about what she wrote and was so excited to bring it to school. Then she came home with her paper all marked up in red pen, misspelled words circled, her grammar corrected and her spirit crushed. That was the extent of the feedback on her writing assignment. There was no thought given to the actual story that she had written, the imagination and creativity that she had shown," my friend said.

After hearing this tale and reading the *New York Times* article, I can't help but think how lucky our family has been to have found U Co-op. My oldest son is heading off to middle school this year, and I cannot be more grateful for the nurturing, encouragement, respect, and inspiration that he received during his K-5 years, allowing him to become the confident and creative person that he is.

What a different education experience the U Co-op kids have from that described in the article and also by my friend. Cultivating imagination *is* an inherent good! And it really is all about the journey and not the race.





Learn, sail, love *(continued from page 1)*

kids from preschool through fifth grade. She has taught in both Quito (Ecuador) and Seattle. Carolina looks forward to teaching Spanish at U Co-op and working with [redacted] on some cultural studies this year, and we look forward to learning more about Ecuador.

In addition to these crew changes, you can look forward to a new library system! Thanks to the generosity of last year's auction donors, we have been able to purchase a library software system, hire a librarian over the summer who organized and cataloged our books, and made recommendations for the expansion of our collection. This school year our students will enjoy better organization and a computerized system for checking out and returning books as well as many new titles for them to dig deep into reading! Also, thanks to [redacted] we may even be able to check out books online. More details will be revealed at an upcoming parent meeting.

A navigational system that we would like you to pay close attention to is the online calendar. Last year there

was some confusion over the latest calendar updates, with discrepancies between earlier calendar handouts and the updated online calendar. So please be sure to consult the online calendar found on our website for the latest information regarding dates and events. You can sync this calendar to your own Google calendar (Apple Calendar, etc) and automatically receive the updates. An overview of this will be provided at an upcoming parent meeting.

We send a warm welcome to the new members of our teaching team. In addition to welcoming our new teachers, we send a most exuberant welcome aboard to our new families just joining

the co-op this year, a welcome back to all our returning families, and a hearty thank you to our seasoned Captains and Crew of highly skilled teachers, operations manager, and able-bodied parent board, who will guide our ship through another year of high seas adventure.

"Look ahead, look a stern, look a weather in the lee. Blow high, blow low, and so a sailing we" (as sung by [redacted] and the U Co-op sailors).

Anchors away! The voyage begins!



Kind of boring (but really important) reminders . . . *(continued from page 6)*

Please do not bring peanuts, pistachios and cashews to school. We have children with severe (life threatening) peanut and tree nut allergies. You can help keep these children

safe by not bringing these items to school. (See page 6 for more details.)

Please don't handle dry wheat (or other gluten containing) flours at school. Instead, mix the flour with wet ingredients on the sidewalk outside of the school or elsewhere off site. We avoid handling dry, gluten-containing flour on site in order to reduce the risk of airborne gluten exposure to children at our school who have a gluten intolerance or celiac disease. If you are cooking at the school and have any questions about this, please ask a teacher.

Please read the Parent Handbook. The Parent Handbook will be distributed soon. Be sure to thoroughly read it and let us know if you have any questions.

University Cooperative School News

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