

# The Chronicle





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# Greetings from Charlie

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Chronicle. In these pages you will find exciting updates from the Center School—our alumni, our parents, current students, teachers, and friends. **I'm celebrating!**



From Alternaprom 3!

The end of this month, for me, marks five years as Head of the Center School. I cannot begin tell you what a pleasure it's been so far! We've accomplished so much together in that time. Building on what was already wonderful about this community was the work of my first five years. Out of that work, the board of directors, staff and parent union have completed a fantastic new mission statement. We also have a new strategic plan, which will serve as the roadmap for the next three years toward improving, developing, and sustaining the school.

In 2012, several board members and I recommended looking at the feasibility of a preschool program, which could both serve as a feeder for the school and help build our enrollment. After favorable research results, a pilot preschool program began at the start of this year with six children, a full time lead teacher and a part time assistant. The preschool took over the old After School room on the first floor of the Brick Building. We call the class, "The Littles." Three of these Littles are the children of Center School alumni. Coming full circle, right?

Next year our new preschool will move upstairs across from the Primes (we'll move MUPS to the third floor). e've added two more sections and plan to have 12-15 Littles and more full-time teachers! That's a sign of a great beginning.

In celebration,  
*Charlie Spencer*  
*Head of School*

# *Driven by the Mission*

The Center School is a loving community that celebrates each child's unique personality, intelligence, and passion. Our school is a responsive learning environment, offering rigor and play in balanced abundance. Students emerge from our program with the skills and self-possession to be reflective, empathetic, and engaged citizens of our world.



## **The Essentials**

The Center School:

Embraces the natural diversity of learning styles and integrates academic, social, emotional, physical, and artistic learning.

Collaborates with students to co-construct knowledge through exciting and open-ended processes.

Encourages children and adults to form a vision of social justice – of equitable, compassionate communities – through active participation in their classroom, their school, and beyond.

Invites students to approach every project and subject area with curiosity, critical thinking and a spirit of inquiry.

Fosters a culture of connection and collaboration in which children feel truly known, valued, and motivated to learn and grow.

# Greetings from the Board Chair

By Alison Greene, current and alumni parent, Board Chair through May 2015

## **It's the big question – will our kids be prepared after leaving this nest?**

My son Ben is finishing his first year of high school after spending eight years at the Center School, and I have to say that the answer is a resounding yes.

Was it a seamless transition? The only things seamless in a 14-year-old's life are the doughnuts they inhale. Ben did face challenges: learning a new school's culture, figuring out a complex schedule, keeping track of homework, soccer cleats, pencils, and notebooks.

The important skills of learning, however, proved to be the foundation that he could rely on, even when all of his pencils disappeared in tiny, frequent nuclear explosions. He knew how to take meaningful, relevant notes. He had learned critical thinking skills. He could easily question his teachers, absorb challenging information, present arguments to audiences with accuracy and aplomb, be generous to other students and learn from them, and turn difficult, long assignments into manageable, achievable tasks.

What was truly significant was that he felt prepared. Even as he worked through a sometimes frustrating new world, his confidence as an accomplished learner al-



Ben, Alison, and Margo

lowed him to expand and excel in the challenges of high school.

The Center School has long been the educational home for my two children, a home I trust because it not only engages their minds academically, culturally, and socially, but because it sets high expectations that when they leave the school, they will have a foundational knowledge of their responses and responsibilities to the world we live in.

The Board of Directors follows this model as well: we work to be responsive to our community's needs, and fulfill our responsibilities to the mission of the school. Our major task this year has been to create a strategic plan for the next 3-5 years for the Center School. It will enrich curriculum, provide meaningful support for our faculty and staff maximize the use of our incredible physical environment, and ensure the growth of our school. We are in the process of articulating ourselves as a diverse community, and finding ways to let the broader community of the Pioneer Valley know about the rich and exciting work done at the Center School.

# Annual Fund Report

Thanks to all of you who have committed to supporting this year's annual fund campaign! More alumni and grandparents have given than ever before, and our numbers are UP! To date, 246 of you have contributed -- THANK YOU! **But we still have a ways to go!** As of May 23rd, we're at 61% of our \$70,000 goal. While more people are giving -- through Valley Gives, end-of-year appeals, Grandparents and Special Friends Day -- gifts have gotten smaller.

## Last year's Annual Report:

GOAL: \$70,000  
RAISED: \$71,060  
226 donors

- Gifts ran the gamut from \$2 to \$10,000
- The average gift was \$240, which is on a downward trend (\$300 in FY12, \$540 in FY11)
- 82% of donors gave \$100 or less
- 50 of you joined as monthly donors
- 68 of you gave to the School for the first time!

## Year-to-Date Progress (as of May 23, 2014)

GOAL: \$70,000  
RAISED: \$42,000 -- 61%

### **BEST PARTICIPATION YET!**

246 donors (which is 20 more donors than last year, up from 2012's 213, and 2011's 100). Amazing.

### **We still need to raise \$27,300 by June 30th!**

### **IT TAKES EVERYONE TO REACH OUR GOALS!**

You can use the enclosed envelope or go online NOW to give: [centerschool.net](http://centerschool.net). **THANK YOU!**

The Annual Fund contributes to staff salaries and administrative support, our beautiful facilities, and financial aid. It pays for books, professional development, band-aids and paperclips, technology, paint, beakers, and more.

If you haven't yet made your Annual Fund contribution, please do so now. Please honor the teachers, the founders, the students -- our mission -- and give today.

**It takes all of us! Please contribute now.**

# New Family Profil

## Meet the Rowen-Eppich-Morgans

By Liz Pryor, current parent

Ellie Morgan is “a bright and sensitive” kid (according to her mom, Cate) who is thriving this year as a new student at the Center School. Ellie, who lives in Northampton with her “mamas,” Cate Rowen and Rhys Eppich, and her twin brother Henry Morgan, came to the Center School this year as a 6th grader. In a nod to the family’s feminist values, the moms kept their own surnames and gave Ellie and Henry the last name Morgan, in honor of Rhys’ grandmother.

shuffle at their local middle school. Because Ellie is a good student who is attentive and willing to learn, she was often rendered invisible in the classroom. They came to recognize that a smaller, more nurturing environment would be a better fit for Ellie, especially during the middle-school years, so they landed at the Center School.

Ellie has already blossomed in the Uppers Classroom. She’s made great friends and she is thriving and challenged academi-



The Rowen-Eppich-Morgans made the transition to the Center School from public school because Ellie’s moms knew that she was liable to get lost in the

cally. In her Literature class, they recently read “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.” During the class, the students really dug deeply into the material and learned the

layered contexts of the Shakespearean play.

Ellie is also blooming creatively. Inspired by Ann, the music teacher, Ellie has started playing guitar, a talent she showcased in a duet at the Center School’s annual Variety Show. Even though Rhys plays and the family has a piano, music never really called to Ellie before and it wasn’t something she was comfortable with. Now, Ellie would rather strum away in her bedroom

than play on her phone! This is especially cool because now Rhys and Ellie play together at bedtime and the guitar is proving to be “a

really great fit for her.” Ellie has also picked up photography as a result of the work she did in her Uppers class project, a passion she continues to pursue at home.

When looking for schools, the family was particularly drawn to the Center School’s focus on social justice. Believing that anti-racism is an especially important component of such work, Cate, along with several other parents, teachers, and staff is participating in the newly re-formed

Diversity Committee that Cate expects will be even more active next year. Cate has been really impressed by the recent conversations our community has had about transgender issues and believes them to be “a fantastic model for the way our community can learn together about how to realize our vision for social justice in the area of antiracist education.” She also acknowledged that there’s some anxiety around conversations about race,

some of them warranted. Cate reflects that “if we aren’t intentional about creating anti-racist spaces in our school and classrooms, we can’t help but replicate cultural racism in

our daily lives.” As a remedy, Cate is excited about the work of the committee so far, which she describes as taking “a balanced approach of acknowledging what we don’t know while at the same time moving toward these conversations actively and not pulling away from them.” On that note, she encouraged other families to join the Diversity Committee and to participate in conversations that will enrich our entire community, much as conversations around transgen-

## Alternaprom 3 a success!

Thank you, PUC, and Ed Wierzbowski, owner of the Arts Block in Greenfield, for throwing a fantastic party. 3rd time’s a charm!

der and gender non-conformity clearly have.

No doubt, the Center School community has benefited and will continue to benefit from the addition of students such as Ellie and families like the Rowen-Eppich-Morgans who are will

ing to be actively engaged in the classroom and the community at large. Also, let's celebrate the recent wedding of Cate and Rhys, who after 22 years together, formally married on December 29, 2013! Congratulations to the family as we welcome them to the Center School!

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## 12th Graders, Class of 2010

**Cody Anderson-Salo**  
Oberlin College

**Jacob Black**  
SUNY New Paltz

**Julia Bryant**  
*gap year*

**Calvin Elison**  
American University

**Jace Hill**  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago

**Jonah Hudson-Erdman**  
Carleton College

**Jared Perkins**  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

**Zephyr Pope-McGraw**  
Roger Williams University

**Andrew Rowe**  
New England Conservatory

**Micky Strachota**  
Clark University

## Congratulations, Graduates!

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Our preschoolers in costume at All School!

# Faculty Profile

## Get to know Sara Johnson

By Sue Keller

### **Sara Johnson has two homes.**

One is where she lives with her two daughters and husband. The second she travels to each week-day: her 2nd and 3rd grade MUPs classroom at the Center School in Greenfield. Her level of commitment to the school is intense. Sara says, "It's not my job. It's my community--it's my life."

The classroom is child-centered, with Sara and co-teacher Oliver Brown knowing each child, being aware that each child is coming to their education from whom they are as unique people. By the end of their Center School journey, Sara hopes to have been part of guiding her students to be active learners, to be able to express and advocate for themselves in high school and the world. Sara notes, "The Center School values every child as an individual. We teach kids how to think critically and ask the right questions."

Some of the highlights of the MUPs' classroom this year include the Math Café, a field trip to Bay-state Franklin Medical Center, and MUPville. The Math Café is the culminating experience of a year of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and fractions. The 3rd graders use everything they know about math to make multiple batches of favorite recipes, sell the results of their calculations, make proper change, and raise money



for a local non-profit, chosen by the group. The class enhanced their study of the human body systems with a trip to the local hospital and received the opportunity to study cells with microscopes, see x-rays, and get an EKG reading. MUPville is an experiential opportunity in community building. Out in the woods and hills nestled up to the school, kids learn how to play with other kids in a different way. With dirty hands, wet shoes, pine cones, and forts, negotiation and cooperation take place once you pass the "Mighty MUP Tree." The walls are taken away, and it's just "you and the woods." Sara explains that kids form different relationships outside the classroom, and then bring those different relationships into the classroom. Whether building rafts in Shutesbury in September or going skiing at Berkshire East in January, outside the classroom kids see other kids taking risks, being strong, being scared, needing support. They rally behind

each other. If one child says, “I’m afraid to go down that hill,” or “I’m afraid to cross that stream,” MUPs step up and say, “We’ll do it together!” Then, they support each other in the classroom based on their prior experiences together outside.

where she was meant to be. With her husband Scott’s encouragement, Sara entered Smith College, graduating in June of 2007, with a one-month-old baby girl, Maeve, in her arms. She had done her student teaching at Jackson Street Elementary School in Northamp-



At a time when most public schools focus on standardized education, Sara emphasizes the Center School’s approach to individualized education. She notes that each child develops on their own schedule, not based on artificial timetables. She notes that a teacher can’t be accountable for a child’s development because “you can’t standardize a child.”

Sara grew up in Millers Falls, MA, where her small elementary school seemed similar to the Center School. She even knew kids who went to the Center School. She left school, did some factory work, a little waitressing, until age 25, when a quiet voice from deep inside her heart told her teaching was

ton, where she taught 2nd grade, was exposed to social justice by Mary Cowhey, was led by a dynamic principal, and enjoyed great diversity in the student body.

By the time Sara completed her schooling, and took a year off with her new baby, the job market was saturated. Sara’s local and family connections paid off her brother’s wife is the daughter of Greenfield Center School founders Jay Lord and Ruth Charney. The Middles class was growing large that year, and the Center School needed another teacher. Sara had an inkling that her Center School days would be different when she

**What’s so special about the Center School staff? “We love each other.”**

was interviewed by then Head of School Laura Baker and seasoned teacher Emily Cross in August of 2008. They asked, "What do you do for fun? Do you like to play outside? Do you ski?" Her answers and experience earned her a starting position on the Center School dream team in September of 2008.

When she started teaching, she thought she wanted to teach older kids. Now she's taught many of the grades: 2nd-6th. One class of lucky 4th graders had her for three years in a row! Sara worked part-time after her second daughter Sadie was born in 2011. Sara credits Sue Schwartz, Chris Sanborn, and Emily Cross for their dynamic inspiration and indoctrination into the world of the Center School. She observes, "It's not like any other school--there's a new language to learn." Throughout it all, there was the support, the positive feedback, and the feeling of becoming part of an incredible family. What's so special about the Center School staff "We love each other." Sara reports that the staff get together outside of school at least once a month, hang out together in the summer swimming or gathering for an evening at the Pint in Greenfield. After only one year on staff she joined the Board of Directors, to "somehow give back" to the school that has become her home. She didn't realize how important the board was until she joined the Building and Grounds Committee. There she is able to "take care of the place we love" for her students and her own daughters. Like any proud homeowner, Sara wants her school to look good, and be sus-

tainable. She helped organize the popular and successful first-ever Trivia Night this winter to connect families and staff and invite newer families to join in the fun of the community. On the Preschool Committee, Sara is helping to take our tiny pilot program to its next, bigger more permanent step as part of the Center School.

There is a rumor that Sara's contributions of curtains for each classroom that she has taught in will result in Head of School Charlie Spencer moving her to a new classroom in the school again soon so that eventually each of the school's room windows will be properly attired. But Sara is content to stay with her MUPs for now. She sits in the front of her classroom each morning, greeting each child as they arrive, conveying a very special message, "I am so happy to see you today!" If yesterday was a hard day, no matter. Every day is a new day, a new chance to be happy. She loves being at a school where it is ok to tell the kids that she loves them and to give hugs.

## Alumni News!

Michah Nussbaum's (2000) film "Teachings" premiered at the Maine Mayhem film festival  
May 8, 2014.

Again and again, Sara states simply and clearly, "**I love being here! This is where I am supposed to be-the best place I could have ever landed!**"

# Alumni Profile

## **Dimitri Krushnic/Misha Collins (class of 1988): Carpenter Actor Producer Do-Gooder**

By Isabella DeHerdt '13 and  
Jane Stephenson



In 1988, Dimitri Tippens Krushnic graduated from the Center School. He went to Northfield Mount Hermon and then onto the University of Chicago where he graduated with honors, earning a BA in Social Theory. Dimitri worked as a carpenter, learning woodworking in the Berkshires. He then interned at the White House during the Clinton Administration and worked for NPR in our nation's capital. Ten years after graduating from the Center School, Dimitri landed his first acting job in Hollywood. **Dimitri, now Misha Collins, is a nationally-recognized actor, producer and charitable entrepreneur.**

He co-produced the film "Foot," which won Best Documentary Feature at the LA Film Festival and he is well-known for his role as "Castiel", an angel, on the TV series *Supernatural*. He has guest-starred on many familiar shows: *NCIS*, *Nip/Tuck*, *NYPD Blue*, *CSI*, *CSI:NY*, *Monk* and *Charmed*, has had recurring roles on *24* and *ER* and starred in movies like "Girl, Interrupted" and "Karla."

Misha's acting work first grabbed our attention several years ago. Each year, during our 8th grade plays, we imagine our rising stu-

dents on the big stage of life. Center School alum Isabella DeHerdt, a musician and first year student at Northfield Mount Hermon, connected the dots with one of her favorite actors, to her past and current school. We were delighted to find that, in addition to acting, producing films, working in radio and politics, our esteemed alum has furthered his reach in two important ways.

In 2009, Misha founded an organization called Random Acts, a non-profit dedicated to supporting and encouraging volunteers of all ages, all across the globe, to perform their own acts of kindness wherever, and whenever, possible. Random Acts has built schools, clinics, homes, and orphanages, and mobilized people all over the world to participate in good works.

Misha also hosts the world's largest scavenger hunt: the Greatest International Scavenger Hunt The World Has Ever Seen (GISHWHES). GISHWHES is an annual global community of thousands of individuals (95 countries and growing!) who "gather" online by forming international teams, to go into the real world to create art and

do acts of service. GISHWHES has won five Guinness World Records and reached thousands of people across the planet.

We contacted Misha to ask if Isabella could interview him, which she did – via email – while Misha was on a plane.

**Isabella DeHerdt:** Hi Misha. Thanks for this interview. Because you went to GCS and NMH, and because that is my path as well, can you tell me what you remember about your experience at the Center School?

**Misha Collins:** *Thanks Isabella. Happy to do it. My time at GCS was a light at the end of a childhood academic tunnel. My family had moved around a good deal in my early childhood and I was in a new school pretty much every year. I had most recently been in a grammar school where I didn't feel like I could be myself. Landing at the Center School at the ripe old age of 11 felt incredibly safe and nurturing. I stayed for three years until moving onto NMH. Jay Lord and Ruth Charney were my teachers. They made school feel like a place to explore, not a place to fear. I played soccer and four square and performed in a school play. I found I had a proclivity for math and for the first time in my life I felt like I fit in at a school.*

**Shout Out**  
Middles made and sold granola to benefit Just Roots Farm in Greenfield The \$450 they raised will feed a family in need weekly produce for the whole summer. Just Roots is a community farm. Many of our community members including Jay Lord, our founder, are part of this amazing organization.

**ID:** I am a full-fledged completely devoted, child of the arts and would love to know the path that lead you to become an actor.

**MC:** *The biggest bit of advice I can offer is: Don't give up. It takes a long time, a lot of persistence, a bit of luck and a great deal of hard work.*

**ID:** What advice would you give to kids coming from GCS who want to pursue a career in the arts?

**MC:** *I think a lot of conventional educations leave kids with the feeling that they should chose "safe" "normal" jobs. I think the Center School helped me see that art could be "a real job." It helped me feel that pursuing something that I found fulfilling even though it was an unconventional path, was okay.*

**ID:** How did you meet your wife? Any good stories there?

**MC:** *I met my wife in Louise Schwingle's English class at NMH. I wrote her a poem about her nose.*

**ID:** Do you belong to a CSA?

**MC:** Yes.

**ID:** If you were a bird, or any other kind of animal, what kind would you be and why?

**MC:** *I would be a hybrid species: half rat and half bird.*

**ID:** Do you have any pets?

**MC:** *Two red-eared slider turtles and two human children.*

**ID:** What is your best memory from your time at the Center School?

**MC:** *My favorite GCS memory is of getting in trouble. My classmate Darius and I wandered off the school grounds one day and our punishment was to stay in the empty classroom instead of joining the soccer team in a match against Deerfield Academy. It turned into a rainy day so while our classmates were out there getting wet, we were in class where we had logged on to a mid-1980s computer and were playing a primitive video game called "Olympic Decathlon." We were making lemons out of lemonade. Oddly enough, I'm on a plane right now, back from a trip in Europe with Darius. It's almost 30 years since that rainy day and we're still the best of friends.*

**ID:** Any last words of wisdom for alumni or students from GCS?

**MC:** *If someone asks you on a dare--and this probably will happen at some point--to eat an entire, raw habanero pepper, don't do it.*

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*The Center School encourages the Chronicle readers to check out Random Acts and GISHWHES. Maybe you'd like to form a team this year? GISHWHES happens the first week of August*

*Thank you, Misha, for your time and attention to the Chronicle. And thank you for making the world a better place!*

**Alumni News!**  
(more on next page)

**Fred Jones (1999) received his Masters**

Degree in Business from the University of Maryland in May. Fred is a Legislative Associate at Alliance for Excellent Education in Washington, D.C.

**Michael Skillicorn (2000)** has joined the Center School Board of Directors as the first Alum to take that post.

**Kelly Schatz (1996) resides in Greenfield** and is a professional photographer and a CNA at the Faren on Montague City Road. She recently attended the Center School's benefit gala, the Alternaprom, with alumna and friend, **Julie Erikson.**

**Dearest Dear Ones, This is a very teeny selection of our alumni's exciting news. It was culled from scantily-clad sources like Facebook and seeing their parents at the pedicure salon. Please forgive errors and DEFINITELY forgive omissions. Please, please send us your news to [info@centerschool.net](mailto:info@centerschool.net). WE LOVE YOU ALL!**

# Alumni Announcements

## Center School "Legacy" Kids!

**Amber Gurley-Campolo (Mansfield) (1998)**, **Hannah Lord (1989)** and **Kim Thomas (Hake) (1995)** are all now Center School parents. Their children, Elias, Harper and Max are "Littles" in our preschool. **Maggie Sawma (Potter) (1998)** has just enrolled baby, Amelia, into the Littles for next year!



Amber and Elias



Hannah and Max

## OH, BABY!

**Alice Proujansky (1995)** welcomed William on June 11, 2012.

**Abigail May (Khan) (1993)** welcomed Elisa on Dec 10, 2012.

**Sarah Carroll (1999)** welcomed Jocelyn on Dec 8, 2013.

**Rosa Kessler (1995)** welcomed Rocco on Dec 24, 2013.

**Jesse Porter-Henry (1995)** welcomed Eliot on January 14,



Kim and Harper

2014. Eliot joined sister, Hazel.

**Nick Meyer (1996)** welcomed Frankie on March 20, 2014.

**Ella Bernard (LaPrade) (1997)**

welcomed Elise on March 24, 2014. Elise joined siblings, Lily and Maya.

**Dylan Cutler (1995)** welcomed a baby as The Chronicle went to print!

# Student Voice

## Three Projects

By Noah Pitcoff 6th Grade



Rufus Seward and Morgan Downham at the Center for Self Reliance food pantry

During January, the Uppers need a bit of a break. It's cold outside, and I, for one, was getting a bit tired of winter by then. Around this time of year, the teachers think of a few cool projects that we can do that give us creative art outlets, practical skills, and community service experiences. Then for the majority of each day, for three weeks, we just work really hard on projects. There are three projects, so each week is different, even though you are with the same group of about seven people.

The first week (for me) was art with Center School's music teacher, Ann Percival. Each day began with process painting, which was pretty open. The only rules were no talking, no commenting on other people's work, and have fun. Then Ann gave us more paper and gave us prompts of what to paint. Things like "Paint nine leaves" or "Make a long line of any color connecting the top right corner with the bottom left corner." There were a bunch of other art projects that we did, including covering our prompted paintings

with black ink and then washing it off and covering it in glitter. We make boxes full of little random little things and glitter. Come to think of it, almost everything we did had glitter. I guess Ann just really likes glitter.

The next week for my group was the Photo project with Barb Lockhart. The assignment was to document the school. We scoured every corner of the Center School campus for interesting photos and angles. We went over to the brick building and photographed things there. After about three days of taking pictures, we sat down and had to put together a top twenty slideshow. This was pretty hard. There were so many pictures that I had taken that I felt were worthy of this compilation. Barb helped me narrow it down to twenty, and I was pretty pleased. The slideshows were shown at many different All Schools.

**“I really felt good at the end of the week, knowing that I had helped other people.”**

My final week was the community service project with Chris Sanborn. The group all packed into a van and headed to the Community Action community center on Federal Street. When we got there, Becky Craig, mother of Center School student Justice, greeted us and showed us

around. She works there. It was a nice place, but it looked like it could use some fixing up and organization. So that's what we did. It was great. I got to paint a WHOLE ROOM in order to prepare it for use by the families and employees of Community Action. Margo and Kathleen organized the free area, where people can get gently used clothes they need. A lot of kids worked with the preschool playgroup. I fixed a shelf, which was fun. We also went to the Center for Self Reliance and helped out at the food pantry, loading bags with food for the families who are in need of support. I really felt good at the end of the week, knowing that I had helped other people. I felt even better because I knew that there were a lot of people that needed help and that homelessness was on the rise in Greenfield and we were supporting these people.

In all, it was great. We still did academic classes for the second half of the day, but I was always looking forward to the

next day. I had a lot of meaningful and exciting experiences along the way. It was a great way of having a little break from the ordinary.

# Faculty Voice

## Primes as Filmmakers

By Kathryn Swanson, Primes teacher

The Primes Green worked hard this spring to make a stop-motion animated film about bears. We learned all about the collaborative process of movie-making and how to work in “crews” to get our part done. **We learned that when everyone works together, each doing their own part, we can put those pieces together as a whole and come up with something wonderful.**



Step 2: Crews

Here was our process:

First we learned about the basics of stop-motion animation and how it



Step 1: Learning the Process

works. We worked as a whole class using Lucia’s “Boo” as a test subject. We would move Boo a little

bit, take a picture of him, move him a little bit more, take another picture etc. When we strung all those pictures together, we had a movie that looked like Boo was walking across our games shelf!

Next we broke in to “crews” to practice making our own little movies in a tight group. Each crew had a Director, an Animator, and a Camera Person. The director kept track of the action, making decisions about how the subject would move.

The Animator would move the pieces around the set and the Camera Person took the pictures. We had to have careful communication between Camera Person and the Animator to make



Step 3: Set Building

sure that we took pictures only when the Animator was out of the way or else they would be in the movie!

Now it was time to build our set. Every Prime Green helped! We painted backgrounds, made trees and clouds, and put them all together in to the beautiful set you see in the movie. The set was built in our Drama area, which now became our movie studio.

The four groups each took responsibility for a segment of the movie and got to work writing scripts. Once we knew what we wanted to say we knew how we should move the bears to match with the script. The crews got to work; we were ready to film! Each crew took a turn in the studio and during that turn, each child got to try the

different jobs. We worked hard on cooperation, turn-taking, and communication. We had a lot of fun!

Once all our footage was compiled in iMovie, we recorded the audio and put it with our moving images. After the addition of music and a few sound effects our movie was complete. It was so much fun to make, we hope you enjoy it!

<http://centerschool.net/classroom-projects/>



# Community Voice

by Kerrita Mayfield, Community Board Member

It all started with my visit to Rumpus. Three, maybe four years ago I was a Social Justice education professor at UMass looking for craft shows for Christmas gifts. After buying a few things, and eating a few PUC-made snacks, I stopped outside the Primes' classroom because I was absolutely awestruck by the documentation of work on these kid-centered posterboards. **These works demonstrated: creative thinking, clear articulation of process and outcomes, and a powerful narrative of student centered inquiry.** As a long time educator I knew I had to meet the teachers – for they were doing amazing things with young learners.

Now, I am on the board as a community representative, and my UMASS graduate students are placed in the Center School for their Social Justice Education with Youth and in Schools work. My students and I have spent at least a year talking about fancy pants theories of socially-just and progressive education of all sorts.

**What makes Center School so incredibly powerful is the way the entire community: students, staff, parents, administrators, teachers, wrestle in the sticky intersection of talking about being a good person with social justice aims, and engaging in the messy work of discovering how those aims**



Dr. Kerrita Mayfield

**are lived out every day – starting at school.**

## Shout Out

The Uppers entered their handmade and self-designed wind turbines in a GCC exhibition and contest. Several won trophies for a job well done.

As a board member, I have found it has been a great honor and privilege to work in such a place with such thoughtful practitioners.

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