

Bob Prichard



(707)
773-4850

An Early Childhood Education Program

Fall/Winter 2011

New To Shining Star

September used to be the traditional start of the new school year. Now, classes are starting sometime in the middle of August. So, by September our kindergartners had moved on. At the start of September we had the good fortune to have two sisters join our program.



Anja is 3½ and **Maija** is 16 months old. It's great to have two more girls at Shining Star and **Maija** and **Anja** have been delightful additions. A side story came out when **Katja's** mom Karri asked Sue (the girls mom) if they were of Scandinavian heritage. Not only was that the case but it turns out the grandparents for both families live in the same small Midwestern town!



Sue with **Maija** and **Anja** **Katja**

Now Kindergartners

We said farewell to two of our "graduates" in August. It's always a bit emotional to say good-bye when you have been together for a couple of years (and sometimes 3 or 4 years!).



Emery



Emery and Adrian

"Taking the next big step!"



Adrian

I've seen Emery a couple of times recently (today, Veteran's Day he's joined us) so I know that his adjustment to kindergarten has gone really well.



Field Trips: Bluesberry Farm

We have the good fortune to have one of our former families open their blueberry field to our group. Jeff Bechler an electrician by trade (Absolute Electric) along with his wife Elaine started their blueberry farm a



Elaine leads us into the netted field

few years ago. Although they have scaled back their business, they still maintain a large field next to their house.

We had great parent support on this trip (much like most of our field trips Thanks!). In addition, **Katie**



Avery

Chris and Emma with Harlan and Ryan



Bechler and a group of her Girl Scout



Nicole

Carter and Corey



friends helped out. Another former family joined us, Chris Fisher and his two daughters, **Emma** and **Madie**. Thank you **Elaine**, **Katie** and all!!!

...and the Pumpkin Patch

Another fun field trip! And again, we had great parent support. Spring Hill Cheese



Farm offers more than just the usual pumpkin picking: the wagon ride to the field



as well as the opportunity to dig up a few potatoes each. And then there's their home made ice cream (vanilla and pumpkin, of course). This trip rounds out our "field trip season," now, on to the Holidays!



More parents - clockwise: Sue, Jay, Corey and P.J.

Halloween

A skunk, a skeleton, a princess, a bird...
Darth Vader, a buccaneer, a blue Power



Ranger and an alligator round out our costumed group. Oh yeah, and me, a wizard.



Front row: **Anja, Avery, Katja, Maija** and **Nathan**
Back: **Carter, Ryan, Harlan** and **Trenton**



Our walk around the neighborhood Took us to **Carter** and **Ryan's** house (next door neighbors). Now the children had treats in hand as Moms Nicole and Corey joined us for part of our walk back to Shining Star. It was a "happy halloween."

**Have You Made Any Changes?
Please remember to
update your child's records.**

It is especially important that we have current home, work and cell phone numbers.

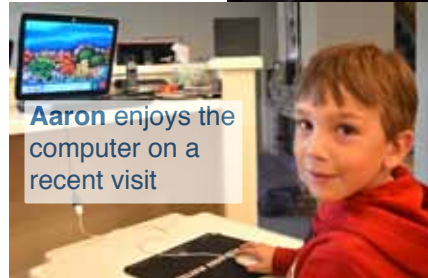
Thank you



Computer

Corner

was a regular column in our news letter for years. Unfortunately technology has moved way beyond our library of CD's. The computer in the heading logo is long gone too. Five years ago I "upgraded" to a used laptop that allowed me to run the older operating software so that the CD's would work. At the same time I partitioned the hard drive so I could also could run Mac's OS X. [Finding Nimo](#) is the only recent addition to our library that will run on OS X. Our "Corner" is now in the kitchen. The children sit at a small table and use a mouse to compute. The table ensures that the children aren't too close to the



Aaron enjoys the computer on a recent visit

monitor or key board (rarely needed for our activities).

The majority of CD's are age appropriate for most of our children. I usually allow our older children to have turns working independently. Many of our programs include toddler, preschool and kindergarten titles. In addition there are pre-reading, reading and phonics CD's. There are even a few that I will allow our youngest children to explore with supervision.



If by chance you come across a fantastic Mac children's CD, let me know.

Activities at Shining Star

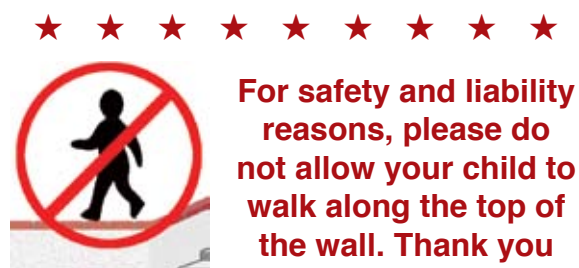
Whether it's books, puzzles, building or outside time, there are so many things that fill our days. Some activities are directed while others are independently chosen.

Recently we took a couple of walks with the purpose of finding a variety of leaves. I discussed looking for dry undamaged leaves of different sizes and shapes. We also collected some pine cone "florets" (they look like a rose opened up), lichen and some acorns. Later that week we made an autumn leaf collage. The following day each child got to make a small version to take home.

L to R: **Nathan, Harlan, Trenton, Katja, Anja, Ryan and Carter**



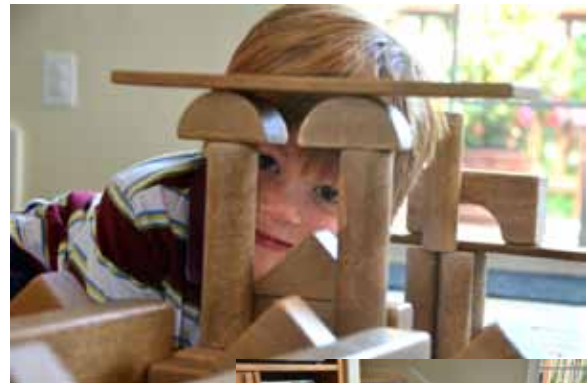
Trenton with waffle blocks, **Katja** and **Anja** with wooden blocks.



For safety and liability reasons, please do not allow your child to walk along the top of the wall. Thank you

Look at My Building!

The blocks and bricks are one of the children's favorites. Every day we see a number of different structures.



Ryan and Carter will spend a lot of time building.



Below, **Ryan** builds with a different kind of friend!



Below: **Harlan** works with the waffle blocks.



At this time of year we use the bricks to build the Mayflower. We will role play the Pilgrims, sailors and Indians as we reinforce the story of the first Thanksgiving.



To the left: **Nathan, Maija** and **Avery** are building with our large Legos.

On the right, **Harlan** and **Carter** construct with tinker toys.



Activities at the Table

There are quite a variety of things available for the children to use. Some are out and freely accessible while others they can request. Beyond what's immediately available, many of our supplies are stored and rotated throughout the year.

Below: **Ryan** watches as **Trenton** chooses one of the mini books from a "schoolhouse collection." **Harlan** is working on the space ship block box puzzle while **Anja** is using a hippo shaped abacus.



Often both before and after a meal, **Maija** and/or **Avery** will look at books while we finish our kitchen tasks.



Generally, there are a number of puzzles, color and shape activities, sorting and matching games from which the children can chose.



Above: **Trenton**, **Aaron** and **Harlan** are using markers to draw. Pencils and crayons are also available.

More Table Play

In the two pictures below there are three types of puzzles. **Anja** has one of our block box puzzles. She is working with one that has six fairy tale images. Barely visible in the lower left corner is the box with spaceship puzzles.



Carter is holding up the tractor for our farm puzzle. Next to him, **Ryan** is using a basket that has a collection of four vehicles with four pieces each.

Our Garden

We have had much better success in past years. This year between a few initial overly hot days and having most



of the summer being rather cool our plants really struggled. Our tomato plants only produced at the very end of summer, and then only a small number of undersized tomatoes with mediocre flavor. At least our basil plants fared better. What did produce well was our lemon tree. Of course, it received no attention! The 5 gallon bucket I left out to share the lemons was empty in just a few days.



One recent Sunday I was shooting sunrise photos near the Quarry Heights development. On my way out I was stopped by a number of police officers - the lead one brandishing an assault rifle. The housing security guard reported hearing gun fire. (Probably because he wanted a quick police response - if I were stealing construction materials.) I of course heard no shots nor did I see anyone except the guard! 15 or 20 minutes later, after interviewing me and searching my Land Cruiser I was free to go .



The placement of the jail cell photo was for "story enhancement." But, also to suggest a trip to Alcatraz. A few weeks ago, Patti and I went for the first time. The audio tour was excellent. It made the tour come alive with sound effects and story details.

www.AShiningStar/news

Shortly after publication, our newsletter should be posted to the above web address

A Few More Photos From Shining Star



A couple of more blueberry farm pictures. The dragonfly was briefly trapped inside the netting.

Sometimes just getting on and off the couch is entertaining. Ask **Nathan!**

Maija just beams!



And below **Anja** is busy with one of her favorites: books



2011 ~ 2012 HOLIDAY and VACATION SCHEDULE

**Thanksgiving Luncheon
Wednesday, November 24th 12:00**

**Thanksgiving Holiday Weekend
Thursday and Friday, November 24th & 25th**

**Annual Christmas Open House
Sunday, December 4th 1:00 - 6:00**

**Winter Vacation
December 24th through January 2nd
(New Years Day is observed Monday, January 2nd)**

**Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday
Monday, January 16th**

**Presidents Day
Monday, February 20th**

**Spring Vacation 2008
March 19th - 23rd**

**Memorial Day
Monday, May 28th**

**Summer Vacation 2012
One week: to be announced**

**Independence Day
Wednesday, July 4th**

Our newsletter can be viewed
online at: AShiningStar.com/News