



ALL SOULS SCHOOL

PARENTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2017

THIS ISSUE'S THEME: CREATIVITY

Providing the Space and Time for Creativity to Flourish

By Jennifer Vest, Ed.D., Director, All Souls School

In his 2009 TED Talk, *The Power of Time Off*, designer Stefan Sagmeister describes how he renews his artistic creativity. Every seven years, he closes his New York studio for a year-long sabbatical. During this year, he carefully plans opportunities for travel, study, and reflection to allow himself time and space to re-energize his work. His most recent sabbatical took him to Bali, and in his talk he shares the clothing, furniture, and artwork that were inspired by his time there. Serendipitous encounters, such as his daily interactions with the Balinese street dogs, led to the creation of quirky, fun, even irreverent, designs that only could have emerged through this intentional time devoted to renewing his creativity.

While listening to Sagmeister's story, what deeply resonated with me was the idea that creativity is not a static trait, but a well of inspiration that needs to be refilled and refreshed. The ancient Greeks believed this too, and tied creativity to the Muses, who visited poets, musicians, and scientists to inspire and influence their work. (continued on pg. 2)



SPOTLIGHT: Creative Trust in the Classroom

All Souls teacher, **Haven Mitchell-Rose**, reflects on her recent visit to Townsville, Australia where she was able to observe a preschool (kindy) that combines the creativity of the Reggio and Montessori approaches.

Upon entering Rowes Bay Kindy, I was immediately struck by its layout. Large sections of the walls of the single classroom rolled up like garage doors, leaving it full of air and light. There were centers set up in the wide, open space for art and blocks, a "doctor's surgery" and a play dough table. There were photographs on the walls documenting projects in which children wrote letters to other schools or released sea turtles at the beach. The outdoor play space had a swing set, fairy garden, climbing bar, and water basin. A sensory table was filled with various seeds and funnels, and there was woodworking table. Children constructed a car using PVC pipe, connectors, wheels, and boards. Everyone was barefoot and moved from one activity to the next entirely at their own pace for most of the day. There were brief moments when everyone came together, but mostly the children were free to engage with their environment in a manner, and for a length of time, determined by them. I was struck by the relaxed attitude that permeated this space. This created space for the students to take responsibility for pieces of their learning, and communicated to them a sense of trust. This trust is reciprocal: the teachers trusted the children to explore in a safe and constructive way, and the children trusted that they were protected at school and any issues that arose would be addressed. My experience in Australia this summer inspired me to reexamine how I work to implement trust at All Souls School. I think about it in the way I phrase questions to children, and rephrase them if the meaning is still unclear. I think about it in choosing materials to provide, and in my interactions with children as they engage with them. I have more tools now to provide an environment in which children can explore and learn what they need to learn in the way that they need to learn it.

Providing the Space and Time for Creativity to Flourish cont...

Creativity is a process, which ebbs and flows with exposure to new experiences and opportunities. At All Souls, this understanding of creativity as an element that can be nurtured, developed, and inspired, informs our practice as educators to support creativity in our students.

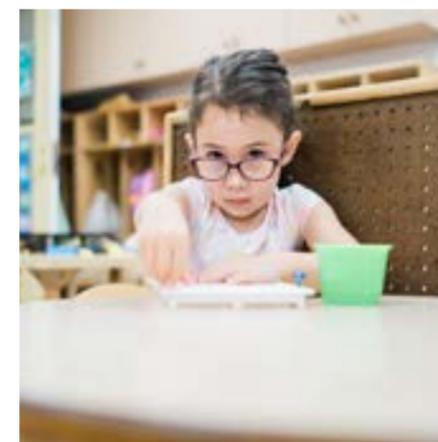
Just as Sagmeister found new inspiration in Bali, All Souls teachers know that space is an important facet of creativity. In the Reggio Approach, the physical environment of the classroom is described as the third teacher. The arrangement of furniture, the variety of materials, the use of light, the display of color, and the incorporation of natural elements are thoughtfully planned and intentionally chosen to support the children's exploration, independence, and appreciation for beauty and design. Our teachers support children's emerging interests in topics with books from our extensive library collection, items they collect in the community, and small group field trips. The places and spaces in which children inhabit offer them rich opportunities for inspiration.

All Souls teachers also understand the importance of time in nurturing creativity. Sagmeister described this as "time off," an opportunity to disconnect from the business and busy-ness of day to day life to focus on the experiences that could reinvigorate his imagination. For our young children, this concept would be better described as "time on." Our classrooms are structured to allow this time for children to have a conversation with a friend, explore how water flows out of a cup, poke holes in playdough to feel the cool, squishy texture, and curl up with a beautiful picture book on a pillow. The time spent exploring one's interests, connecting with peers and adults, and gaining mastery in using materials nurtures children's creativity.

As he describes his Bali-inspired work flow, Sagmeister shares how his one-year sabbaticals inform his work over the next seven years. In thinking about our children, and the importance of these formative years of their development, I love connecting these two ideas. Claiming the first five years of life as a child's sabbatical is quite provocative. If we declare the early childhood years as sacred and precious time and space for exploration, experimentation, and engagement in a wondrous and beautiful world, just imagine what the outcomes for the years of middle childhood, teens, and young adulthood could be! Our children will be creative, as well as confident, connected, and consciously-engaged members of their communities and society, qualities fostered in their early childhood years.



CLASS
2A
CANDIDS



ALL SOULS

IN ACTION

See how CREATIVITY is incorporated into the work - and play - of students at All Souls every day!

"In 3B we observe children's play and individual interests and incorporate what we see into our classroom. Although, we don't teach "creativity," there are many interesting, open-ended materials available that we hope inspire children's play. For instance, on the Roof children have been making Bat Caves using Foam Blue blocks but at the same time children have also been using the same blocks as fishing poles in the boat."

- 3B Teachers



ROOF

"Materials that invite creativity are available to children on a daily basis. One large table is set aside as a "Writing and Drawing" table for children's use. Nearby, one of us provides assorted markers, crayons, and other drawing/writing instruments, along with an endless supply of paper.

We also have a painting easel available for use each day. We offer a "provocation" to children, for example, by the choices of tempera paints provided. One week, yellow and red paint might be at the easel for children to discover that mixing the two colors makes orange. Another week, yellow and blue might be the colors, followed by blue and red to make purple.

We also prepare a weekly art experience for the children. Children might be invited to practice a new technique—such as using white glue and a glue brush, for example—or they might be invited to use a new material like watercolors. One teacher works with no more than two children at a time so the exploration can become deep and rich, and children and teachers have ample time to converse with each other."

- 4B Teachers



ART



"We enjoy watching students explore their classroom in creative and inventive ways. They use blocks, legos, and magnetiles to create elaborate landscapes. At the sensory table, we vary materials, and observe their curiosity as they encounter new items and use them in inventive play."

-2A teacher LouAnn O'Hara

"For our youngest students experiencing an organized school environment for the first time, we offer many choices to encourage their creativity. Dramatic play offers a variety of props, including dolls, dishes, and a high chair, for acting out familiar situations. When we add clothing and pocket books later in the year, it sparks further imaginative play."

-4A teacher Audrey Matson

"In 3B we also try to create group activities that invite playing out new scenarios. During Story Plays children make a drawing and tell us a story they are thinking about. As they tell their story, a teacher transcribes their words. Once the story is complete, the teacher and the author decide the character list so that children can act out the story. This is great fun for the kids and they often look forward to Story Plays."

-3B Teachers



"Any time we observe the children in 3A we are observing how children creatively use materials to suit their needs and creatively explore materials through their imaginative interpretations. At the open art table we've observed children using scissors to trim the corners of their paper to add that final touch to their drawing. During a painting exploration a project was initiated with non-traditional painting tools (Q-tips) and we observed the children's creativity expand to explore other materials as potential painting tools (spools, string, etc)."

-3A Teachers

PLAY



CLASS
2B
CANDIDS



CLASS
3A AM
CANDIDS



ALL SOULS AT HOME

Wishing for snow?

Get **CREATIVE**...and bring on the flurries!

What you need:

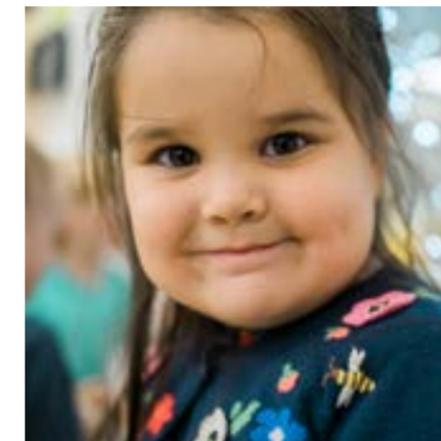
- Water bottle or jar
- Water
- Light corn syrup
- Glitter – one or more colors sizes/shapes...up to you!

How to make snow – no mittens required:

- Fill water bottle or jar a little less than half way with water
- Add glitter
- Fill bottle to the very top with light corn syrup. This thickens the liquid and slows down the movement of the glitter
- Seal the top and enjoy!



CLASS
3A PM
CANDIDS



“We are like snowflakes, all different in our own BEAUTIFUL way.”
- Unknown

ALL SOULS



THE TEACHER SAYS...
An Interview with Winnie Chan
By Luca Brown, Class 2B

All Souls teachers ask their students many questions every day, engaging them in creative conversation. Enjoy this interview where the tables are turned and a student in 2B, with his mother, is in charge of asking all the questions of his teacher.

Luca: What's your favorite animal?

Winnie: I really like dogs, and I really want a dog also. I'd love to have a husky, but it's just too big of a dog to have in New York City.

Luca: I have a silly question. Have you ever been to Egypt?

Winnie: No, I've never been to Egypt. I would like to go one day.

Luca: Mommy is just like that too. She's never been to Egypt. Me neither, because I've never been to Egypt in my life. I want to go. I made a plan and wrote it down on a list.

Winnie: Are there any other places that you want to go?

Luca: Yes, China!

Winnie: I've been to China. I went a couple years ago. I went with my family, and we started off in Beijing and then we went all the way down to Hong Kong. We were there for two weeks. The food was really good, but the only thing was it was really, really hot there because we went in the summer.

Luca: What's your your favorite sport?

Winnie: I actually do a lot of rock climbing. Every week I go climbing, and I'm trying to get a little bit better every day. I've been doing it for about a year.

Luca: I did it twice in camp.

Winnie: We also have a rock climbing wall on our roof.

Luca: I don't like climbing there because there's no harness. I wish there was.

Winnie: I try to do it with the harness, but I like free climbing more. That's what we have on our roof, where you don't have a harness and you try to climb and you go along with one color. Maybe you could try it later.

Luca: In camp you have to use a harness because it's really high up.

Winnie: Ours is not so high up.

Luca: Here's my last question. Have you ever been in Central Park?

Winnie: Yes, I have been in Central Park.

Luca: I've been so many times! Almost every time I get out of school. What's your favorite part of Central Park?

Winnie: I think it's The Great Lawn. It's a big open field and you get to run around.

Luca: Thank you!

Winnie: This was a nice interview. So many good questions.

ALL VOICES

THE SCHOOL DIRECTOR SAYS...
An Interview with Jennifer Vest
By PA President Gretchen Wiker

Creativity is such an important component of early education at All Souls School, not just in the play of students, but also in the thoughtful preparation by teachers. Enjoy our interview below where we learn more about how the staff at All Souls thinks creatively to encourage students toward their own creativity.



GW: How does All Souls encourage and support creativity in our children?

JV: Our educational philosophy is rooted in fostering creativity. As a progressive educational institution, creative thinking and creativity have always been an inherent part of an All Souls education. As our approach evolved to incorporate the work of the educators of Reggio Emilia, creativity through the utilization of the "100 languages" of expression has become an even deeper vein of the All Souls experience. To encourage our students to use their 100 Languages, our teachers provide a wide variety of materials, experiences, and most importantly ask LOTS of questions that spur creative thinking.

GW: What are some of the biggest obstacles to creativity?

JV: Adults' preconceived ideas of how something "should" be. Our children look at the world with fresh eyes, trying to make meaning of all the new objects, experiences, and sights to which they are exposed. Over our own years of experience, we have been taught that there are specific ways to use and engage with the objects in our environment. Our children don't yet have that. Giving them the space and time to explore and experiment with new materials and ideas helps unlock their creativity.

GW: Creativity is a natural part of good teaching, and our teachers are excellent.

Could you give some examples of the creative teaching going on at All Souls?

JV: Our focus on emergent curriculum and the project approach requires our teachers to be creative, out of the box thinkers. Traditional theme-based teaching can become repetitive and stale as the same themes and projects are recycled year after year. Our emergent approach, in which teachers follow children's interests to generate curriculum, is always fresh and exciting; a new experience every time! For our teachers to take unique topics, such as puppetry, coffee shops, or animal habitats, and craft them into age-appropriate explorations for our students requires a deep commitment to creativity and creative thinking.

GW: I bet creativity - and creative problem solving - are also essential parts of your job as the school's director. Could you talk a little about that?

JV: In much of my work, I need to simultaneously take the "big picture" or strategic view of an issue, while also fully evaluating the "nuts and bolts" of the implementation or execution of an idea. This requires me to view an issue from multiple perspectives, which can stretch beyond my own experience. This approach also necessitates that I keep myself grounded in two spaces, one to reside deeply in the mission, history, and culture of All Souls School, while also being innovative and responsive to the opportunities and challenges of our rapidly changing world.

GW: What are some ways parents can foster and support creativity in children at home?

JV: Less is more. I'm always amused after birthdays or holidays to hear parents lamenting that their young child spent more time playing with a box than the toy that came in the box. Children value simplicity and opportunities for open-ended exploration of materials.

ALL SOULS, ALL VOICES



THE CHILD SAYS...

An Interview with Soren Stavenas, age 4
By Kira Stavenas (All Souls alum, age 6)

In keeping with past issues, we present an interview between a current All Souls student and their older sibling, who was in class 3B last year. Many thanks to their family for helping to facilitate this discussion.

Soren: What do you miss the most about All Souls School?

Kira: I miss all of my teachers – I was in 4A and 3B.

K: What is your favorite thing to do at school?

S: I like to play in the block area and also when we play Family.

K: What is the first thing you do when you arrive in the morning?

S: First, I hang up my backpack and wash my hands. Then I check the job chart and sit down for the morning meeting.

S: Do you like your new school and what is your favorite thing to do there?

K: I love Marymount. I have great teachers there too and have made lots of new friends. I would say my favorite thing to do is music class.

S: What is your favorite book?

K: Right now, I like Fancy Nancy books, Naughty Mabel and Olivia books. I love to read! What are your favorite books?

S: I like Pete the Cat books and Star Wars books.

K: What do you want to be when you grow up?

S: I want to be Kion, the Lion Guard!

K: You can't turn into a lion!

S: I want to buy M&Ms.

K: Well, you need a job for that.

S: Maybe I will bake cakes.

K: OK, maybe I will help you!

K: What do you like better, riding your bike to school or your scooter?

S: I'll say scooter. How about you?

K: I like to walk to my school.

K: What is your favorite thing to do on the roof?

S: I like riding bikes and playing Lion King.

S: What was your favorite thing to do at All Souls?

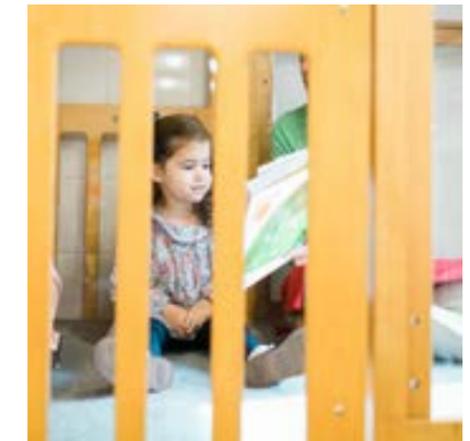
K: I liked everything. The other day I was thinking about a trip we took to the Skyscraper Museum. That was so fun.

K: Thank you, Soren. I enjoyed our conversation and I hope to come back to All Souls sometime soon and visit all my teachers!

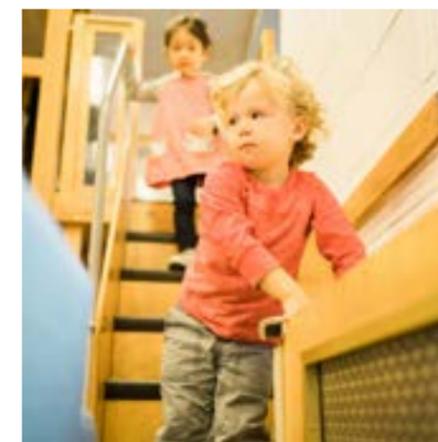




CLASS
4A AM
T/TH
CANDIDS



CLASS
4A
M/W/F
CANDIDS



NOTES FROM THE RAMP

More and more research is showing that physical activity can help boost creativity. A run up the beloved ramp at All Souls is an excellent opportunity for our kids to release a little energy and get those creative juices flowing!



CLASS
4A PM
CANDIDS



ALL SOULS IN THE COMMUNITY

"The time spent exploring one's interests, connecting with peers and adults, and gaining mastery in using materials nurtures children's creativity." - Jennifer Vest



A glimpse of the community outreach gardening initiative on October 14 at Carl Schurz Park.

Creativity and play go hand in hand, and what better place for children to nurture and express their growing imaginations than at a community park and playground. Each year, All Souls School families come together to clean-up and beautify Carl Schurz Park. The nearby park is one of the city's gems with something to offer everyone, and is especially supportive to the creative play of children. On October 14, our families rolled up their sleeves to help clear branches, rake leaves, and remove debris at Carl Schurz to ensure all children have the opportunity to play imaginatively through the fall season. The clean-up day also allowed All Souls students to connect with their peers and learn from adults as they used tools, like brooms, rakes, and leaf baskets, and got their hands dirty in leaves, sticks, and soil. A new opportunity for creative and imaginative play was instantly created as students engaged with new materials, while also learning the value of contributing to their community through the care of a favorite playground.

The annual park clean-up day is not the only event in which All Souls Schools families serve the local community. Please look for future announcements and volunteer opportunities from the PA!

ALL SOULS ONLINE

Please visit the All Souls website to check the school calendar, your class page, view many more photos, and download an array of articles and forms. 1000 thank yous to the parents, teachers, students, and administrators who contributed to this issue of the All Souls School Newsletter.

THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

Erin Welling: Co-Chair & Editor Erin Bays: Co-Chair and Designer
Elizabeth Keizner: Co-Chair & Editor Katasha Harley: Co-Chair & Editor
Alexandra Rowley: Designer
Kailuo Wang & Julianne Diaz: Photography Co-Chairs & Photographers

ALL SOULS, ALL HEART

WHAT WE DO WITH WHAT YOU GIVE

Want to know where your donations go?

Here's a quick hit list of the funds that support our school.

The Gunnar Johannsen/Kefalidis Tuition Assistance Fund Fully supported by contributions from parents and friends, as well as the proceeds of the Annual Benefit, scholarships are awarded on the basis of need by a non-parent committee of the Board of Trustees.

The Dr. Jean Mandelbaum Teachers' Enrichment Fund This fund allows teachers to attend professional conferences, pursue educational interests, and receive short-term, no-interest loans.

The Director's Fund for Children's Special Needs Started with a large donation from a school family, this fund: helps provide consultants (such as speech therapists, psychologists, and social workers) to the staff; adds materials or personnel to the classroom when special circumstances arise; and provides the Director with the ability to meet unexpected needs appropriately and promptly.

Unrestricted Needs Fund As a not-for-profit institution, the school depends on donations to this fund to help support operating activities.

ALL SOULS, ALL GROWN UP

WHAT WE DO WITH WHAT WE LEARN HERE

In this section, we feature alumni who have pursued careers related to our issues's theme, in this case **CREATIVITY**. Meet a handful of very giving, very awesome All Souls graduates:

Jack McCarthy (2009-2012)

Jack is currently a fourth grade student at The Dalton School. At All Souls, he explored his passion for theater and was encouraged to express himself through acting and music. Jack remembers writing a holiday play with his 2B classmates and playing Santa Claus! Now acting professionally, Jack made his Broadway debut at age 8 in *Finding Neverland* and can currently be seen as Douglas in the off-Broadway production of *Shadowlands*.

Stewart Manger (1970-1973)

Stewart attended All Souls in the 1970s and has since pursued a life dedicated to style and creativity. Following years of work with many world-renowned designers, such as Bunny Williams and David Kleinberg, Stewart launched his own interior design firm in 2016.

Elliott Wallis (2015-2017)

Elliott, age 6, is spreading his creative wings in Kindergarten at Collegiate. When not singing a song he learned at All Souls (seriously), he can be found playing violin at School for Strings or hammering together pieces of wood in his mother's studio. But really the most amazing ingredients for creativity for Elliott are a cardboard box and some unstructured time.



All Souls School Parents Association



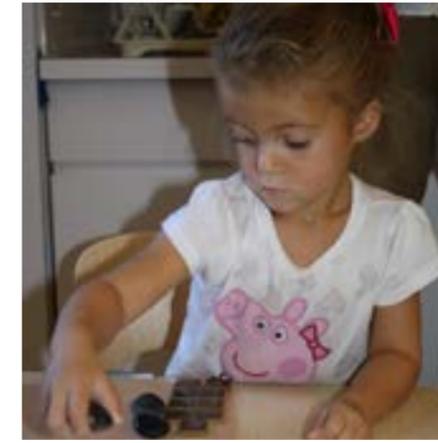
Join your school community for a night of dinner, dancing, and down home fun.

February 1, 2018

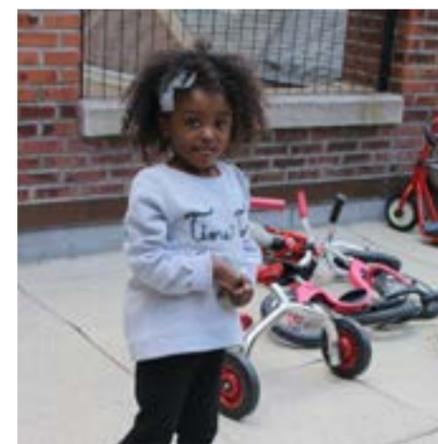
7pm



CLASS
4B AM
CANDIDS



CLASS
4B PM
CANDIDS



DID YOU KNOW...

Class 4B has a creative Story Writing Day most weeks? One or two children dictate a story with the help of a teacher and then might draw a picture about the story. At the end of the day, their stories are read to the class!

ALL SOULS

STORY + SONG

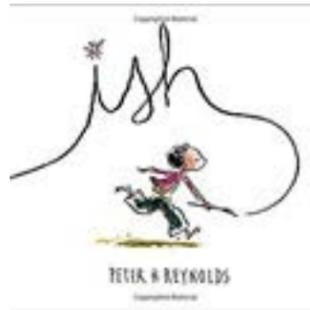
STRAIGHT FROM THE ALL SOULS EXPERTS: The best book and music selections to inspire creativity from library guru Mari Schermeyer...

Mari's book selections from the All Souls library provide thoughtful storylines about the challenges and rewards of being creative and the self-confidence built from a variety of forms of self-expression.

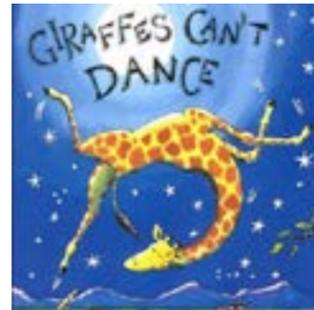


The Most Magnificent Thing by Ashley Spires is a charming book about a girl who is going to make the most MAGNIFICENT thing! She knows just how it will look and work. All she has to do is make it. Easy-peasy! But making her magnificent thing is anything but easy, and the girl tries and fails, repeatedly. This funny book offers a perfect example of the rewards of perseverance and creativity. The girl's frustration and anger are vividly depicted in the detailed art, and the story offers good options for dealing honestly with these feelings, while at the same time reassuring children that it's okay to make mistakes.

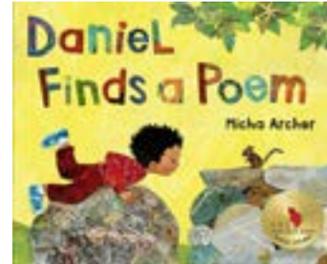
To Be an Artist by Maya Ajmera and John Ivanko explores what it can mean to be an artist and the ways that children around the globe express themselves through art, including drawing, making music, dancing and acting. Photos of children from dozens of nations accompany the motivational text, which addresses readers directly: "Dressing up, making sandcastles, taking a photograph... these are all ways you can show your creativity."



Ish, by Peter H. Reynolds centers on Ramon, who loves to draw. But his self-confidence plummets when Ramon's brother laughs at his attempts to draw a vase of flowers. After months of crumpled attempts to make his pictures look "right," the frustrated child announces, "I'm done." He discovers his sister created a gallery of his work. When Ramon complains, she responds, "Well, it looks vase-ish!" He then feels "light and energized. Thinking ish-ly allowed his ideas to flow freely." A tidy lesson in the importance of thinking-or drawing-outside the box and believing in one's own abilities despite others' reactions.



Giraffes Can't Dance by Giles Andreae is the story of Gerald the Giraffe, a charming happy gent who has one aspiration -- to dance. The extra-tall giraffe is a bit wobbly in the knees, and his every attempt to boogie results with Gerald on the ground. Sad and embarrassed after the annual Jungle Dance, he bumps into a compassionate cricket who suggests that "Sometimes when you're different you just need a different song." A mix of rhyming text and simple language creates a strong message about individuality and the power of dancing to the tune of a different drummer, a lesson that makes this book perfect for children and adults.



Daniel Finds a Poem by Micha Archer is a delightful story celebrating the poetry found in the world around us. What is poetry? Is it glistening morning dew? Spider thinks so. Is it crisp leaves crunching? That's what Squirrel says. Could it be a cool pond, sun-warmed sand, or moonlight on the grass? Maybe poetry is all of these things, as it is something special for everyone—you just have to take the time to really look and listen. The magical thing is that poetry is in everyone, and Daniel is on his way to discovering a poem of his own after spending time with his animal friends. If you look and listen, it's all around you!



...and music specialist Bill Gordh

Singing allows you to be alive in the moment, expressive of your feelings while using the melody and words of someone else – how magical. This experience empowers a child to recognize and celebrate their own energy and join it with those around them. This is one of the reasons the School Sings are so important. Creativity comes to play in these circumstances and supports the child exploring their own imaginative instincts.

And now some songs about creativity...

Once I Had a Donkey is a Chinese folksong we sing about a boy who falls off his donkey and lands in the mud. Rather than just singing it, we have added the chore of wiping the mud off ourselves – a sequence: "Wipe the mud off your boots! Yuck! Wipe the mud off your knees! Yuck! Wipe the mud off your elbows! Yuck! Wipe the mud off your shoulders! Yuck! Wipe the mud off your head! Yuck! Out of your eyes - yuck! Out of your ears – blonk, blonk. Out of your nose – bink-bonk. Out of your mouth – Yuck! Brush'a your teeth!" Then we sing the song again and of course follow the singing with ridding ourselves of the mud mess. The sequencing is a great early literacy skill builder (especially by accompanying it with gestures) and it also ignites the imagination – the foundation of creativity.



So when your child wants to sing **"On Top of Spaghetti"** or you make up a bed time song with three words repeated ("Go to sleep!"), your active engagement is encouraging them to delight in creativity.



We All Work Together (with a wiggle and a giggle) (Woody Guthrie). At the end of the song Woody has us chant, "With a wiggle and a giggle and a google and a woogle and a jigger and a jagger and a giggle and a grin" and then try saying it double time. By then, everyone is having a good time! Fun, silly words and sounds get the imaginations fired up – the sounds themselves are delightful and energizing and encourage the singer to consider the possibilities. Many traditional folk songs incorporate nonsense lyrics just for the fun of it. As it turns out, the "fun of it" encourages children to explore and to use their imaginations.

Roger Miller wrote a song called **"You Can't Roller Skate in a Buffalo Herd."** The opening line is repeated three times and the fourth is "But you can be happy if you've a mind to." He goes on that even if you can't take a shower in a parakeet cage or go fishing in a watermelon patch, you can still feel good about your life. It's a crazy imaginative song with a very important message that children can laugh about while listening or singing and still "get" the idea. This inventive approach of taking a circumstance and making it fun and funny while addressing a problem or conundrum encourages everyone to be creative.

THE BACK PAGE

"We make sure all art supplies are easily accessible so she can always grab some paper and get going whenever she feels a creative spark."

- Jeremy Hooper

"Katie loves exploring the piano. Often, we ask her to tell us a short story (e.g. Red Riding Hood walking through the forest) and then "tell" that story on the piano. The music is pretty contemporary, but one can never mistake the scary wolf in the lower register!"

- Dimitri Sogoloff

"Lately, I've been encouraging creativity with language and storytelling. When we sing songs, I consciously support riffs on language and sound, liberally playing with rhymes and words-both sensical and non-sensical. I also asked Ian to tell me a story and was astonished when he proudly exclaimed, "once upon a time..." the other day. His imagination is truly running wild, and it was a pleasure to observe him creating a new tale for both of us to enjoy."

- Jennifer Zenker

"We encourage Marcel's creativity by expressing our joy at his innovative ideas, like a corkscrew is a robot, even when they're annoying, like unrolled toilet paper is a river." -Neil Altman and Jillian Stiles

"We encourage Caroline and Whitney to be creative by presenting activities they can control. For example, we have a box of arts and crafts materials in the kitchen that the girls can access themselves. Another example, is when they help cook, we give them a bowl, mixer and various ingredients they can explore and imagine different dishes they are making...and Caroline's old fashioned CD player has led to many dramatic plays and concerts."

-Thomas Welling

"We've always tried to give Harper time on her own to play in order to encourage creative play and curiosity. Once she began talking, we made a point to always engage her in conversation and ask her questions. These conversations not only help Harper express herself, but also encourage her creative negotiations skills, to our benefit and detriment."

- Nathan Bays

"Walter will often do something with a project that is unexpected. For example, someone gave us a paper airplane kit that had cool prints on one side. He decided to draw on the other side first before making the airplanes. It's a small, but significant expression of his creativity, and I try not to control it!"
-Yul Kaseman

"I love it when we start with a blank page and by talking through everything from weekend plans to the weather to feelings, we end up with a unique and beautiful page."

- Anthony Keizner

"We bought a small art table for our children several years ago. It's been a wonderful investment in creativity. The kids and their friends churn-out artwork and drawings, use scissors to cut-out monsters and other characters, and regularly break for imaginary meals. Even though it's now covered in paint, tape, glue, stickers and some unknown substances, the table has survived and still manages to serve as a focal point for inspiration as well as many wonderful conversations."

- Harald Stavenas

How do you encourage creativity in your home?