

# What's Brewing

Summer 2009:  
Volume 6, Issue 1

## A Message from Our Head of School



**Donna  
Kennedy**

### *"Summer News"*

It has been an exciting summer at Gillen Brewer. As you will read in this newsletter, our classes don't slow down in the summer. In fact, it seems as though they kick into high gear! The summer curriculum encompasses rich, social experiences and active, hands-on learning. And because we believe strongly in exercising our bodies as much as our brains, we swim, play on the roof terrace and explore different playgrounds around the city. We take advantage of the six-week summer program to generalize skills into our larger community and engage the children in art and science projects that encourage them to delve deeper into an area of study and integrate other content areas into their projects. The children are motivated, engaged and active—all of the ingredients necessary for optimal learning! As we close the doors to paint, clean and prepare for the Fall, we say goodbye to some of our families and prepare to welcome new families into our community. It is a time of transition for all of us; and with it, new opportunities for learning right around the corner. I hope your summer has been as exciting as ours! See you in the Fall.

**Executive Director  
Head of School**  
Donna Kennedy

**Assistant Head of School**  
Milt Sleeter

### **Board of Trustees**

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### **Inside this issue:**

Achievement Ceremony	6
Alumni News	2
Arts and Science	3
Board of Trustees	2
Grandparent Corner	2
Grants Report	2
Save the Dates!	2
Smart Boards	6
Staff News	2
Summer Art Exhibit	3
Summer Program	4
Swim Program	6



*Lucia enjoying lunch and Patrick hard at work during their respective "Principal for a Day" experiences*



## Grandparent Corner

### Save the Date:

**Grandparents' Day is Friday, October 23, 2009.**

Make a weekend of it and come for **Fall Family Fun Day on Sunday, October 25, 2009.**

More information will follow by mail.

## Staff News

Staff members **Jessica Cosulich, Leann Gennaro, Westie Grosh, Kate Gugliotta, Audrey Halpern** and **Ivy Schneider** got married this spring and summer. Congratulations!

Occupational Therapist **Janet Krauthamer** is expecting a baby in December.

Caterpillars Head Teacher **Erica Schutt** is training for a half-triathlon (a 12-mile bike ride, a 3.5-mile run and a 1-mile swim) in Connecticut on September 13th. Good luck, Erica!

## Alumni News

We're looking for **Big Brothers and Big Sisters!** Gillen Brewer alumni are welcome to visit the school and "adopt" a class; volunteer in the classroom, read to students, send them notes about what your school is like.

Interested?

Email [development@gillenbrewer.com](mailto:development@gillenbrewer.com).



*Alumnus Greg, the Bugs' "Summer Intern"*

## Gillen Brewer Welcomes Clea Newman Soderlund to the Board for the 2009-2010 School Year

Gillen Brewer is pleased to welcome Clea Newman Soderlund as a Board member for the 2009-2010 school year. Clea is the Director of Development at Giant Steps, a Connecticut school that enhances the lives of children and adults with neuro-biologically based learning and developmental disorders.

## Grants Report

Gillen Brewer is honored to have received grants from the Hyde & Watson Foundation, the Michael Gordon Foundation and Newman's Own Foundation during the 2008-2009 school year.

## Mark Your Calendars!

September 10	First Day of School—Noon Dismissal ( <i>Note: Date Changed</i> )
September 11	Noon Dismissal
September 17, 6:00-7:30 p.m.	Open School Night
September 28	School closed—Yom Kippur
October 8	School closed—Staff Development
October 12	School closed—Columbus Day
October 23, 10:00 a.m.-noon	Grandparents' Day
October 25, 10:00 a.m.-noon	Fall Family Fun Day, location TBA
October 28	School closed—Staff Development
November 10, 12:30-2:00 p.m.	Fourth Annual Ladies' Luncheon at Colony Club with Speaker Michael Thompson, Ph.D.
November 10, time TBA	Parent Workshop with Michael Thompson at Cooke Center
November 11	School closed—Veterans' Day
November 13	Picture Day
November 24, 11:00 a.m.-noon	Thanksgiving Feast
November 25	Noon Dismissal
November 26-27	School Closed-Thanksgiving

This just in:  
The 2009-2010  
school theme is  
"Things from Outer Space"

## “As We See It: Our Environment”

On August 4th, over 150 parents, students and friends gathered at the Danese Gallery in Chelsea for our summer art exhibit, a collaboration of summer work in art and science.



*Guests enjoy the good company*



*Left to Right: Kate Gugliotta, art teacher, and Andrea Oliver, science and technology teacher*



*The birds' nest*

*Seamus checks out the stick sculpture "Sticky Ship"*



*Children play trivia games at the science wall*



*Amateur pre-school photographer Jacob capturing his art*



## Arts and Science News from the Summer Program



### Art

This summer the art classes focused on different aspects of nature and environment: from observing and documenting the growth of plants and various species of the animal kingdom to creating a to-scale playscape. Classes visited various parks and outdoor spaces to draw, photograph and record information to motivate each long-term project. Each class worked in various mediums including collage, printmaking, papier-maché and felting - to name a few. Our artworks were showcased in August at the Danese Gallery Show in Chelsea.



### Music

This summer the Preschool, Bugs and Alligators learned about the musical concepts of pitch, volume and tempo. Through songs and poems that rhyme, we discovered the high, medium and low tones that we can produce with our voices. Silly nursery rhymes, supported by visuals such as “Queenie, Queenie Caroline” explore this concept. Ask your child about this poem and see what happens. The song “Rocky Mountain” contains verses that are sung loud, medium and soft. We sang familiar songs or poems in different volumes, perhaps whispering a verse one time or singing it loudly another time. We checked to see whether we were “singing” or “shouting” the song. Yes, it is exciting and fun, but to be a musician, one must make sure one is using a singing voice. As always, we continued to do various movement activities and games, along with hands-on experiences playing different instruments to hear what sounds they produce.



### Science

During the summer we began learning about environmental sciences. All of the students studied about one or more aspect of the environment by performing field studies, in-class research and project-based learning. “Our Environment” at the Danese Gallery Show was the culminating showcase of our projects for which we created life cycles, soil layer interactives, pigeon facts and public service announcements on how to conserve energy. We learned about the interconnectedness of the various inhabitants of our planet and what it means to be good stewards of our planet Earth. Each class went into the field on trips to explore and get a hands-on understanding of what was taught in the science lab. From exploring the rainforest in the Central Park Zoo to exploring the interactions of plants and animals at Wave Hill Gardens and Cultural Center, we were able to observe the interdependencies of living and non-living things.

# Summer Program Happenings



## Pre-School: Caterpillars & Frogs

During the summer, the Caterpillars and Frogs explored many different places around the city. We went to a variety of playgrounds, had picnics in the park, rode the Roosevelt Island Tram and went rowing in Central Park. The pre-schoolers took on new challenges in gross motor movement by experiencing different playgrounds in the city. One of the most memorable experiences was climbing inside the hippo at Safari Playground. While out and about in the city, the Frogs and Caterpillars observed both our bustling city and its pockets of nature. We became interested in searching for different animals and found insects, turtles, fish, birds and dogs. We also observed the plant life in the different playgrounds and Conservatory Gardens. Back at school, we expanded on our experiences by maintaining a roof top garden, imitating animal movements and creating drawings about what we saw in the city. In addition, we worked on our independence skills by being responsible for carrying our own backpack and lunch supplies. Our GBS roof top was transformed into a beach oasis with beach balls, sprinklers, sand and our weekly picnics. The two classes had great fun this summer exploring new places, sharing new experiences and building upon new and old relationships.



*Camille sits on a lily pad at swimming; Kaitlyn inside the hippo's mouth*



## Bugs

This summer our study of New York City continued as the Bugs explored six different playgrounds in Manhattan. We learned how to make a list to record the different equipment at each park and investigated and explored the unique features and characteristics of each of these exciting playgrounds. The Bugs carefully recorded data using illustrations and checklists. Before heading back to school we engaged in hands-on research and tried out the playgrounds by using that time-tested ritual—play! Back at school we created classroom books about the playgrounds. These big-book sized books captured our group experience through our photographs, drawings and written observations. The summer ended with the Bugs working together to build a model of a playground that incorporated our favorite features and characteristics of the playgrounds we visited.

*Alex, Harry, Taina and Hannah investigate the de Kovats playground*



## Alligators

This summer the Alligators focused on learning about goods and services, exploring NYC and practicing our conversation skills. We started the summer by visiting the Bronx Zoo to get a better understanding of the animal kingdom and to be able to pick an animal to recreate in sculpture for the Danese Gallery exhibit. The Alligators also went to Governors Island. On our way we observed multiple modes of water transportation and the Statue of Liberty, which we had studied during our unit on American symbols. On Governors Island we interacted with many sculptures by drawing on them, moving them around and playing inside them. We also got to play on an artist-made mini-golf course which was a first for many of the Gators. Their third trip was bowling at Chelsea Piers with the Grapes. We got to practice math skills, motor skills and sportsmanship. Each week during the summer the classroom was turned into a restaurant during lunchtime so each student had the opportunity to practice the many different restaurant jobs. We also practiced conversational turn-taking during the meal. The culmination of our restaurant study was having lunch at Timmy's by the River. The Gators have worked very hard as a team to understand the world around them and work cooperatively and this summer we were able to practice our skills all over New York.



## Grapes

The Grapes had an action-packed summer! In Social Studies, we learned about how people lived in the past. It was interesting to see the different toys kids would play with and the clothing they would wear! As a class, we read a chapter book called *My Father's Dragon*. We followed the main character, Elmer, on his journey to rescue a captured dragon! Along the way, the Grapes learned many new vocabulary words. When the Grapes were not hard at work doing academics, we were busy swimming, playing at the park and going on field trips. On Thursdays, the Grapes improved their swim skills at Asphalt Green. We also had the chance to explore two different parks this summer, Asphalt Green and Carl Schurz. It was so much fun playing in the sprinklers and eating ice pops with our GB peers, the Alligators! Field trips included an exploration of the Bronx Zoo and bowling. At the Bronx Zoo, we were so excited when a peacock walked right up to us and fanned his beautiful tail feathers! While bowling at Chelsea Piers, we cheered each other on and practiced our math skills by adding up points. The summer program gave us many opportunities to generalize the academic and social skills that we acquired throughout the year. Over the past 12 months, our classroom has been transformed into a caring community. It has been a true pleasure growing and learning!

*Alligators and Grapes on a joint field trip, share lunch at Chelsea Piers*



## Summer Program Happenings



### Anacondas

The Anacondas continued our unit on “New York City over Time.” We began the summer learning what it was like to live in New York City long ago, listening to stories and completing lessons about the Native Americans, Henry Hudson, and the Dutch and English influence on early New Amsterdam. The class visited the Museum of the City of New York, where we got to experience “Traveling through Time: New Amsterdam,” a gallery experience that included hands-on activities. The Anacondas learned how and why New Amsterdam changed over time to become New York. While in the gallery, we were able to tour the trade and New York interior exhibitions, where all the kids were able to touch real beaver fur. Upon completing the tour, every Anaconda was able to make a “delft tile” which resembled a ceramic tile from the New Amsterdam era. The Anacondas also studied how New York City changed and grew during the 1800s and 1900s, focusing mainly on the physical environment, population, migration and immigration. We took another fabulous field trip to the Tenement Museum, where we learned about 14-year-old Victoria Confino, who lived in the tenement in 1916. We were able to role-play being new immigrants and ask Victoria questions about how to adjust to life on the Lower East Side in the early 1900s.



*Anacondas take notes at the Museum of the City of New York*



### Praying Mantises

There were many fun things in store for the Praying Mantises this summer! In addition to a trip to Central Park to collect materials for an art project with Kate and a trip to the Central Park Zoo with Andrea, the class visited Federal Hall in Lower Manhattan. This trip reinforced what the Praying Mantises have been learning in Social Studies about the origins of the United States government. The class finished a unit on the American Revolution, and studied the Founding Fathers and the writing of the U.S. Constitution. Federal Hall tied in perfectly with this topic because it was the first capital of the United States, and it's also where George Washington was sworn in as the first president. In Reading Group, the Praying Mantises started a new book called *Nim's Island*. This is a fun summer adventure story by Wendy Orr about a young girl who lives on a deserted tropical island with her father and some animal friends. In Writer's Workshop, the class began a unit of study on poetry, which really gave the Praying Mantises a chance to let their creativity shine! We also took advantage of the beautiful weather, when possible, to explore the community and use our math and writing skills. All in all, it was a busy but exciting summer!



*Praying Mantises at Federal Hall, the site of George Washington's inauguration*



### Dollars

The Dollars completed a social studies unit on ancient Egypt, which focused on four aspects of ancient Egyptian life—the Nile River, mummies, hieroglyphs and pyramids. Each mini-unit featured a hands-on element, such as making canopic jars and amulets for a model-magic Pharaoh mummy, drawing a sequential comic strip showing how to build a pyramid and planting seeds in sand and soil to illustrate the life-giving properties of the annual Nile River flood. We took a trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to see the Egypt exhibit. Our shared reading was the classic story, *The Boxcar Children*, by Gertrude Warner. We explored plot and character development, learned new vocabulary and Don Pearlstein, our volunteer, helped the students create a model of the boxcar home. The Dollars wrote short, character-based stories, as well as keeping up with our journal entries. We have also learned all the lower-case cursive letters, and practiced forming words and sentences. We enjoyed playing kickball and cooking each week with the Anacondas, and our final field trip together: bowling!

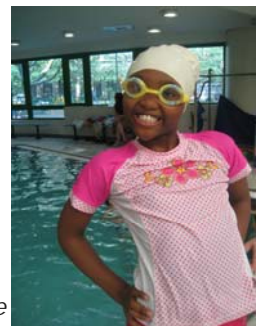


*Dollars at the Metropolitan Museum*



### Dragons

This summer was a time for the Dragons to extend our learning beyond Gillen Brewer's walls! In social studies, we built upon our extensive knowledge of Latin America with a focus on the ancient Mayan, Aztec and Inca civilizations of Mesoamerica. With a trip to the American Museum of Natural History's Halls of Mexico & Central American and South American Peoples, the enormous collection of artifacts and replicated architecture in the museum's impressive collection brought our learning to life. With multiple visits to Central Park this summer, the Dragons were able to experience the greenery of New York City's best park! Our visits helped integrate science and art in a collaborative project on environmental art. This form of art utilizes the beautiful and varying colors and texture of nature as its medium. With the work of Andy Goldsworthy, an artist who uses natural materials in his prolific work, as our guide, we collected pine cones, sticks, rocks, leaves and other natural and found materials for our artwork. On our next visit to the park we visited the Central Park Zoo, where the rainforest exhibit helped us experience the sights, sounds and smells of a tropical rainforest, or what the Dragons now call “the lungs of the Earth.” We were eager photojournalists recording the lush variety of plants and animal life in the Zoo's wonderful exhibit.



*DeVonni sporting her swim attire*

## Swim Program

As part of our sports program at Asphalt Green, the lucky students at Gillen Brewer were able to go swimming once a week in their warm water, raised-bottom pool. Students who could tread water were able to use the swimming lanes in the Olympic sized pool. Swim instructors Danielle, Jackie and Rebecca quickly assessed each child to determine his or her swimming skills. Afterward, the students were divided into small groups where they were given individual instruction. Jonathan, an Asphalt Green volunteer, and Ron, a swim instructor trainee, also helped our kids enjoy the pool and learn how to swim. It can definitely be said that swimming was one of this summer's highlights!



*Emma, Shayna and Marley of the Grapes practice moving their proper swim form outside of the pool*

## Achievement Ceremony

Family members gathered at Asphalt Green on June 19, 2009 to celebrate students' achievements during the 2008-2009 school year. Each student received a medal with a personal accomplishment written on it. Each class was recognized for a group accomplishment achieved this year.



*The Gillen Brewer community singing and signing together*



*Karen and Middy give out achievement medals to Joseph and Matthew*

*Teacher Ivy recognizes the Praying Mantises for their outstanding achievements as a class*

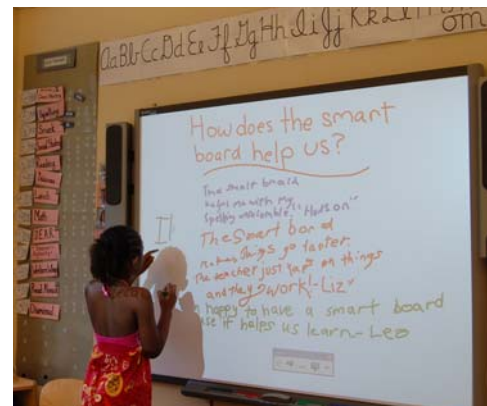


*Sarah, John, Yuvraj and Robert share a moment during the Achievement Ceremony*

## Smart Boards: Technology Tools to Enhance Learning

Students were amazed and thrilled to find a Smart Board installed in every school-age classroom at the beginning of July. We asked Leo of the Dragons what he thought about the Smart Board in his classroom and he said, "It is amazing. It is a board that is smart. It is so rare. It is useful. The Smart Board can do a lot of stuff a real board can't do. It is an honor to have a Smart Board in every class."

*DeVonni elaborates on how the Smart Boards help students*





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*The 2009-2010 Annual Appeal ends June 30, 2010.  
 Thank you for your generosity!*

**I wish to support Gillen Brewer in the following capacity:**

- Founders Circle:** \$50,000 and up
- Community of Learners:** \$25,000 to \$49,999
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