Notes from Kretcha

As EPH marks the end of the school year and the beginning of an exciting summer, I want to tell you about some sweet, daily moments with our children and staff. A highlight of my day is to come to preschool classrooms and be enthusiastically greeted by 42 smiling children. “Hi Kretcha! Are you staying with us today?” I love to see how engaged they are with each other and their activities (counting, building, in dramatic play). I hear their voices in the playground, and a teacher in a loud voice says “the spaceship is leaving, get on the spaceship!” In a hurry they come from all four corners of the playground to a big metal dome structure where they grab on and wait for the final countdown to launch.

It always fills my heart to hear a parent talk about what EPH means for their child and what a difference it has made in their family life. I am also constantly reminded of the commitment and dedication of our staff who have remained loyal to the mission of EPH.

Special Thanks!
To volunteers from Liberty Mutual for mulching our playground!

Robotics Course Engages Students with Creative STEM

What’s more fun than a robot? A robot that you code yourself! In May, our students had the opportunity to engage with a research program run by MIT students that introduced them to the basics of robotics and computer programming. Students were given basic instruction on how to use ipads, then allowed the freedom to program robots, build games, and train their own AI models. The curriculum is based on scratch programming language and offers a visual, user-friendly introduction to basic programming.

The MIT researchers piloting the program stayed on-site to provide support and guidance to EPH students. They were available to ask questions, troubleshoot issues, and inspire experimentation. The month-long program was even more popular than expected. “It was cool to try something I’ve never done before!” said one student who has been coming to EPH for many years. Another student was excited she could program her robot to speak, remarking “I liked teaching the robot to say my name.”

Save the Date for our Fall Fundraiser:
September 27, 6-8pm

Celebrate back-to-school with Elizabeth Peabody House at the Fall Fundraiser! Join us at Winter Hill Brewery for brews, apps, and updates from executive director Kretcha Roldan. As we kick off another school year filled with learning, joy, and community, the evening will benefit the preschool, afterschool program, summer camp, and food pantry through which Elizabeth Peabody House supports local families in reaching their full potential.

Grab your ticket early—we expect to sell out!
www.EPHFallFundraiser.eventbrite.com
Fun in the Sun at Camp Everwood

The summer is off with a splash! During the summer, EPH offers camp programming for students, alumni, and children from the Somerville community. Situated along the shores of Lake Massapoag in Sharon, our partner Everwood Day Camp offers campers ages 4-15 a summer of sports, arts, water and outdoor activities, in an environment that's uniquely suited to encourage their growth.

At the foundation of Everwood camp culture is the Five Star Points. These points embody five characteristics that are a reflection of the social and emotional goals for campers and staff alike. The Five Star Points: Independence, Integrity, Inspiration, Teamwork and Friendship—are integrated into everything we do. At the end of the day a child that exemplifies one of these points in particular will be rewarded with a small token called a "Warm and Fuzzy" along with a note about which of the Five Points earned this child the reward. Each year the preschool children that will be moving on to Kindergarten are offered the opportunity to attend camp for a 3 week session.

This year it was time for Laura to go to camp. Laura has been part of the EPH family since she was 2.9 years old. She is a very shy girl who had trouble transitioning into preschool when she first started. She would often cry when separated from her mother at the start of the day. The preschool teachers were able to provide her some comfort during this transition by bringing her pictures family and allowing her to hold on to those pictures whenever she felt sad.

Riding a school bus and making all new friends is a pretty big change from her usual day. Laura was hesitant when it was time to board the bus, and she cried and called for her mom. Counselors helped her through this transition in a familiar way by offering her support on the bus ride as well as bringing photos from home for her sad moments.

By the second week of camp, Laura was boarding the bus happily and with no tears! She now participates in all camp activities and is very excited to talk about what she had done and all that she experienced. Laura exemplifies the independence camp fosters in students, a skill that will benefit her moving forward in kindergarten.

Preschool Graduates off to Exciting New Beginnings

The room was filled with excited parents, grandparents, uncles, and siblings. For the families at EPH, Preschool Graduation is one the most anticipated days of the year.

The students proceeded down the aisle to the music of "Happy", and each class performed two songs. Graduates were called up individually to receive their diploma and Good Bye Book, a unique collection of work samples and photos from the student’s time at EPH Preschool. Parents were impressed by the level of work and dedication that teachers poured into creating these books.

"The whole event was amazing, and I can really see all the hard work that went into it! From the performances to the Good-bye books, we can tell you all worked so hard on it."

-EPH Parent

The ceremony was followed by a community-wide potluck. Parents and teachers brought platters of food to share, and sat together as one giant EPH family.

"It's like the United Nations in food," said Sheri Rios, the preschool Director. "There are dishes here from Haiti, Brazil, South America, Greece, Asia, and more. It's just so fun to see the diversity of our students represented in food!"

Graduation is a time of bittersweet goodbyes and hopeful beginnings. Twenty-one students graduated, most of whom are moving on to Kindergarten or Pre-K in the Somerville Public Schools.

Now enrolling for September!