



Newsletter

May 2020

A Note from the Director's Desk

Spring is here and ZALA is gearing up for an eventful summer! In honor of Teacher Appreciation this week, I would like to give a special shout out to all of ZALA's incredible teachers. Their passion and dedication is witnessed each day in their love of each child and the innovative ways of continuing to teach children throughout COVID. Thank you all!

We look forward to celebrating our moms this month. Unfortunately we won't be able to celebrate with our usual tea and craft but will do the best to share the love.

In April we said goodbye to Jolynne and Tressa. In May, we will say goodbye to Miss Cassie. Take a moment to share your own farewell with her before the 29th. The positive side to teachers leaving amidst COVID is that we have some great candidates applying for ZALA positions. Please welcome Miss Victoria, who is working primarily in Bridge. She will soon be one of our Summer Camp Teachers but will return to ZALA at the end of summer. Mrs. Megan has been hired for as Summer Camp Teacher also. Look for their biographies on the following pages.

Did you know ZALA has a Facebook page as well as a website? Check us out on FB at Zoot Adventure Learning Academy or on the web at <https://www.zootadventurelearningacademy.com/>. Have a great month ZALA families!

Rhiannon

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Dates to Remember

May 1: ZALA's 2nd Birthday!

May 4-7: Teacher Appreciation Week

May 10: Mother's Day!

May 25: Memorial Day-CLOSED

May 27: Scholastic Book Orders Due

May 29: Miss Cassie's last day at ZALA.

DATE TBD: Preschool Graduation

Zoot Adventure Camp (ZAC/PIR)

May 28: ZAC Summer Camp Registration Deadline.

June 5: PIR camp- 1-5 PM (Monforton)

June 8-12: PIR Camp

June 15: Summer Camp begins

June 21: Father's Day!

Weekly Happenings

Music with Mrs. Rachel has been postponed until further notice.

Yoga with Miss Kristen postponed until further notice.

Bookmobile has been postponed until further notice.

A Note from the Teachers

First Contact

April was such a great month in First Contact! The weather warmed up and we were able to go outside a lot more often. First Contact friends have loved this. We have loved looking at birds, trees, napping, and waving at cars passing by - Sloane is our professional greeter from the stroller to cars passing by! Besides the many walks we are able to take, we have really loved finger painting and exploring the cool things our hands can do! Our friend Weston moved onto the Bridge classroom and is absolutely loving it! We miss his cheesy grin and silly self. First Contact is excited for May and more sunshine!

- Miss Marisa

Bridge

Hello Bridge families! We had lots of fun this April getting to go outside and enjoy the beautiful weather. We are so glad to have all our friends back and welcome a new friend Olive! Another new face in our classroom is Miss Victoria! She has enjoyed getting to know the kiddos and is excited to keep working with them in May. We are also excited to announce that we will be welcoming Mrs. Brandi as our lead teacher toward the end of May! Make sure to keep a look out for their biographies on our website! We look forward to all the new adventures coming in May!

- Miss Laura

Warp Drive

Well, April has come and gone in a COVID flash. Here's to hoping May is healthier and safer for us all. Unfortunately, we weren't able to enjoy your special "Family Friday" snack, but we will host something once we know it's safe for us all to congregate. :)

We will be learning about farm animals, bodies of water, flowers, and celebrating Mother's Day, of course! In May we will be getting outside in the sun as much as possible, so thanks for sending in sunscreen and sun hats for your kiddos. Please keep the cooler mornings and warmer afternoons in mind when helping your child select their clothes, coats, and footwear in the morning.

- Miss Katie

Holodeck

April brought us a few changes in environment, first as we moved into the Warp Drive space temporarily and then into our "just-for-now" classroom in Zoot's boardroom. Despite these challenges, the preschoolers have continually shown what happy, helpful, and problem solving children they are! The loved the opportunity to be leaders and show the Warp Drive kiddos "how we do it in preschool". We have also been missing our friends who have been home and are so thrilled to have them returning to school. It was also a few months of birthdays as Katalina and Ryker both turned 5! We are all looking forward to a ZALA birthday bash when we regain some normalcy. During this crazy time, we have taken every opportunity to read extra books, splash in water in the sensory bin, listen to the birds, dig worms in the dirt, and run in the sunshine. The smiles and simple joy these bring remind us that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Be well everyone!

- Miss Megan

Staff Introductions

Hello! I am Megan Dunham and I am joining the ZALA team for the summer as a Summer Camp Teacher. I completed my Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education from Oklahoma State University and hold a Graduate Certificate from Covenant Theological Seminary. I spent the past two decades in a variety of child care endeavors including raising my four daughters, directing a home school co-op, and providing foster care to sixteen children between the ages of 0-5 during a 3-year period of time in Oklahoma City. My family moved to Bozeman in 2015 and I have been teaching First Grade at Petra Academy for the past three years. I am looking forward to spending the next few months with ZALA and the kids who will be joining us for this summer adventure!

Hi! My name is Victoria Schofield, I am an Early Childhood Teacher at ZALA. I graduated from Montana State University with an Early Childhood Education degree with a Preschool through 3rd grade focus. I currently have an active Montana teaching license. I have spent the last three summers planning and implementing summer programs around Montana and am very excited to be working with the Zoot Adventure Camp for the summer. During the school year I will be working in ZALA. Working with children has always been my passion and my dream, I am very excited to be able to live that dream with the ZALA family!

A Note from Miss Kristen

ZALA Moms,

The Mother's Day tea party was one of the events I was most looking forward to planning this year, (and not just because I enjoy a good mimosa and teeny tiny finger sandwiches.) Instead I want to express our appreciation, on behalf of all of us at ZALA: we see you, moms!

We see you working long hours. We see you working different hours that change up your family life. We see you working *from* home, and we see you working *in* your home. We see how you balance providing for your family with nurturing and growing your family. We hear of the dinners you make, the games you play, the stories you tell, and the rules you enforce.

We see your kids and we know what an excellent job each of you is doing. Each and every one of these ZALA kids is bright, curious, imaginative, and they say some pretty hilarious things! Most importantly, I can confidently say they are all genuinely happy kids who know they are so deeply loved. The way they care for their friends and let us love on them, shows the kind of values you are instilling in your child(ren).

Thank you for letting us work alongside you and be a small part of your family. We couldn't do it without you!! ...literally, our jobs depend on you producing babies! I hope each of you are able to take some time to rest and indulge yourself a little. Hug your kids tight, and then lock the bathroom door for a bubble bath in the quiet, or whatever suits you. You have more than earned it!

Moms, we see you and we thank you!

Developmental Tidbit

Topic: The Importance of Art in Early Childhood Development

Children are naturally curious very early on in life. They want to explore, observe, and imitate. They are trying to figure out how everything around them operates and how to control not only themselves, but the world around them as well. Art is an activity that is natural to children and supports free play. Arts gives children the freedom to manipulate materials in an organic and unstructured way that allows for exploration and experimentation. Art in early childhood creates skills that are not only useful for life, but also for learning!

As children participate in art activities they build fine motor skills, cognitive development, math skills, and language skills. Fine motor skills include things such as holding crayons and paint brushes. This development will help your child with things such as writing and buttoning their coat. Art in early childhood can help learn and practice skills like cause and effect. Such as "if I push the crayon harder on the paper the color will be darker". Children can also practice critical thinking skills by making a mental plan of what they intend to create which contribute to their cognitive development. Children can learn math skills through art that help them create and begin to understand concepts like size, shape, and counting. The last skill that art greatly contributes to is language skills. As children participate in art activities they will describe and share their artwork along with the process they took to create their piece. As children do these things they develop language skills. Caregivers can encourage this process by asking open ended questions to their child about their art.

Art is so important in the growth of children. All you need is a crayon and a child ready to create!

