



# Journeys School of Teton Science Schools

Academic Excellence · Extraordinary Relationships · Place-based Education · Global Citizenship

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September 9, 2011

Dear Pre-Kindergarten Parents:

Welcome to a brand new year at Journeys School. We are honored to have your children in our Pre-K program and have been delighted to get to know each of them over the past few days of school. The classroom has been full of smiling faces and shared joy while your children have been making new friends and learning more about their new community. As part of this exploration, children have begun to draw self-portraits and next week will begin to share their summer stories. The coming weeks will be filled with continued explorations, including journeys into our community.

As part of our professional development program, faculty are allowed time to participate in growth opportunities throughout the year. Jessica Barksdale went to California this past June for the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance annual summer conference to interact with early childhood educators throughout the world. The conference included lectures from leaders of Reggio Emilia and tours of Reggio Emilia inspired classrooms in the area. Jessica brought back a deeper understanding of the Reggio approach, the importance of connecting to community, and new activities for guiding collaboration in the studio. In late September through part of October, Erin Smith has the unique opportunity to combine a sabbatical leave and professional development by completing a "study tour" of the schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy where the philosophy originated. The tour will consist of visiting the Preschools and Infant-toddler Centers of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, presentations and analysis of research projects realized inside the preschools and infant-toddler centers, as well as time at the Loris Malaguzzi International Center to see current exhibitions, ateliers, documentation and their Educational Research Center. She will bring back a wealth of information to make our program even better. Our goal is to be one of the best Reggio based Pre-Kindergarten programs in the country and this is a step in that direction. We hope to be a great model for other schools.

Come late September, both Charlotte and Emmy will spend more time in the classroom to provide coverage in Erin's absence. Charlotte will also be taking on Erin's advisees. In addition to their support, we have hired Vanessa Bergmann to join the team during Erin's absence. Vanessa has an undergraduate degree and master of arts in teaching and elementary education from Smith College. We are grateful to have such experienced support. Erin will be checking-in with each of her advisee families prior to her departure and then will schedule Learning Team Meetings for the last week in October and first week of November.

Thanks again for a great start to the year. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Nate McClennen  
Head of School



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