



**Message from Susan E. Egan, R.N., MEd, Head of School**



Andrew, LE2, collects apples



Hannah, UE, during writer's workshop



Nico, T2, loves to read already

Welcome to Harborlight's 35th Anniversary Year! The Academic Year is off to a great start and all of the classrooms have the "hum" of busy workplaces full of happy and engaged children/students.

In answer to your many requests from the most recent on-line Parent Survey, we will focus on improving communications this year at the School. As part of this school wide effort, we are happy to report that we are publishing The Beacon monthly this year. To assist with this effort, please welcome to our community: Jennifer Sargent, Director of Development and Communications, and Kristen Broughton, Administrative Assistant to Jennifer and the Program Directors. Kristen will keep the website updated, help with the publishing of the Beacon and will serve as the Alumni Coordinator.

In celebration of the School's 35th Anniversary, we will focus on the Harborlight Mission in The Beacon each month with an emphasis on each of the basic nine tenets throughout the Academic Year. This October issue spotlights the first precept on how Harborlight fosters a love of learning and how this impacts all of the children. In this issue, each of the three Program Directors emphasize and demonstrate how this first part of Harborlight's Mission is manifested throughout all of the classrooms.

I did not like school very much growing up but I was very curious and loved learning and ended up learning more outside of School on my own than inside! After I had my first child, and wanting to give him the best education possible, I discovered the Montessori Method and Philosophy. This helped bring me to the realization

that the reason I did not like my traditional school was the way they were teaching. It was dry and boring and all about memorizing facts to pass tests. The rest is all history: I fell in love with the Montessori Method, left my nursing career, earned Montessori Teacher Certification and co-founded Harborlight. Now my curiosity and enthusiasm for learning is satisfied daily! I learn something new everyday from the children, faculty, staff and parents! I learned how to do a Power Point Presentation by walking into the Upper Elementary classroom last year and getting a lesson from one of the students! I walk or peek into all of the classrooms routinely and see something new and exciting going on. The Montessori Method is the best way to guarantee that children will love learning for life! Watching the children get all excited and enthusiastic about whatever they are learning is infectious! Anytime that any of you want to catch up on the care of plants, geometry, composting, geography, history or logarithms, just come to the School and catch Harborlight's "love of learning" bug as I have been doing for almost 4 decades now!



Haley, T2, helps Madison, T1

**Fostering a Love of Learning begins with Teachers & Staff**

All students at Harborlight would agree that learning here is not only an educational experience, but fun as well. A lot of hardwork and preparation go into making each school year an enjoyable one. Congratulations to our Harborlight faculty and staff members who have worked for ten or more years, seeing Harborlight through to its 35th Anniversary!:

- Susan Egan-35
- Bill McDonouch-31
- Jed Dickman-25
- Valery Madore-22
- Peter Dickman-20
- Cheryl Romano-16
- Gail Estes-16
- Kerrie Spinney-16
- Caroline Curley-14
- Nichole Schraftt-14

- Jane Alvord-12
- Rachel McAlpine-12
- Jessie Wegner-11
- Heidi Rombola-11
- Elisa Pitkin-10
- Beth Sieminski-10

*"Harborlight is the best! Thank you for founding the school which has provided wonderful opportunities for my kids."*  
Harborlight Parent

## Learning at the Top of the School

By: Elisa Pitkin, Director of Elementary & Middle School

Not only is the Middle School classroom on the second floor of the School, but the students represent the highest level of learning at Harborlight. The theme for the Middle School this year is My Community: My Responsibility and this can be seen in all aspects of the program. The group of twelve students and two teachers have taken their interests and studies on the road, beginning the academic year with a kayaking trip to Lynch Park on the second day of school! It was a brisk fall day and students mastered their kayaking skills while enjoying time with each other. They have also been to visit Endicott Park to conduct a leaf study. Back in the classroom the students are learning about field taxonomy, math, writer's workshop and much more.

Following the theme, the students have had the opportunity to interact more with the rest of the student body. They have shared their love of learning with the Early Childhood Program by accompanying their group on a trip to Green Meadows Farm. They also are leading the School with the Recycling Initiative, collecting paper from around the School and educating younger friends on what can be recycled and what cannot.

The Middle School students have already demonstrated great leadership and help to set the tone for community building for the whole school!

*"The School as an institution and the Middle School teachers in particular, have done SO much to nurture and educate and inspire our son."*

*MS Parent*



*MS students get ready to kayak*



*A quick kayaking lesson*



*Volcanos by: Lilly, E1*



*Scout, UE, places identifications of Australian waterways*

## Elementary Students Take on the Universe

By: Elisa Pitkin, Director of Elementary & Middle School

The new school year is off and running and the classrooms are already full of activity, new lessons, creativity, and learning. It's hard to believe that September is over!

Dr. Montessori says that teachers should give their students "a vision of the whole universe". The Lower Elementary students have been given just that by studying the creation of the universe. They have listened to many different creation stories, performed experiments, and created artwork to demonstrate what they have learned.

Upper Elementary is busy delving into many

topics such as biology, the composition of the earth, plate tectonics, world maps, and the Vikings. They have begun country studies as well and are exploring the cultures and places around the world. The students truly are reaping the benefits of having four teachers in the classroom!

All Elementary students also had the opportunity to take a trip to Cider Hill Farm to pick apples. While the students enjoy working in the classroom, their love of learning extends to the environment around them outside the Harborlight walls as well. The trip was a huge success!

*"Imagine a school where there is no limit to how far a child's interest and love of learning can take him/her. Harborlight's Elementary Program is that school!"*

*Elementary Parent*

## Early Childhood & Child Care Art

New to Harborlight's fabulous programs is Early Childhood & Child Care Art. Directed by new staff member Kerri Roland, ECE students are experiencing specialized art lessons in their classrooms on a weekly basis. In September, students created rubbings.

This art program is also available during Child Care after school. Following the Montessori philosophy, students signed up for after school have been able to experience art wherever they would like, even on the playground!



*Rafi, ECE1, creating art on the playground*

## Early Childhood Students Dig In

By: Gina Tzizik, Director of Early Childhood Education

The Early Childhood Program has wasted no time getting started. After saying goodbye to family and friends, the ECE students are well transitioned and enjoying their old and new friends in their classrooms. Ask any student in Early Childhood classes 1 through 6 and they will tell you they love what they are doing! The children are exploring various art forms, puzzles, learning to add and subtract numbers and so much more.

Towards the end of the month, the Early Childhood students visited Green Meadows Farm in South Hamilton to learn about composting. Farmer Andrew Rodgers, and educator Laura Davis, led the group through the process of composting step by step to make the learning visible. This hands-on adventure offered us the opportunity to sort materials, dig for worms,

and understand how farming practices cultivate the healthy growth of our food.

After having the chance to practice composting, students returned to the bus to find a surprise: the chickens had taken over the bus! The ECE students will take what they have learned back to the classroom and sort their lunch and snack trash daily for our outdoor compost pile, as well as maintaining their individual worm compost view boxes. The ECE program continues to merge these hands-on daily experiences with the established curriculum.

As October begins, students are looking forward to studying Native American life and culture with art and cooking activities, books and music in anticipation of a visit from Annawon Weedon of the Wampanoag tribe.

*"To have your child come home from school as a happy and content child and have so much confidence and self esteem is the greatest gift to a parent...Walking through the door of Harborlight is like walking into a second home."*

*Early Childhood Parent*

## Building a Foundation for Learning

By: Elizabeth Stone, Director Infant/Toddler Program

In the first few weeks of our Infant/Toddler Program we spend a great deal of time building up a secure relationship between child and teacher. This nurturing, trustful foundation will lead the child to explore the new environment with a strong sense of inner security. The child must first believe that the world is a pleasurable place to be in. With each shared experience the child reaches out with renewed curiosity, excitement and joy! As the child reaches out towards the new and exciting environment we must again look at what reality we surround them with. The adults in the child's immediate, extended and school family are the first to provide the experiences that will serve as the foundation for the child's perceptions of love, acceptance and reality.

The child can then feel safe at being able to communicate his/her needs effectively and from this security believe that "yes, I am competent!" What a wonderful place to start a life time love of learning!

*"Man himself must become the center of education and we must never forget that man does not develop only at university, but begins his mental growth at birth..."*

*Dr. Maria Montessori*

The foundation for all later learning begins here, now in each moment of discovery, each shared joy, as the love of learning becomes part of the growing child.



Bill and Green Meadow's chicken



Ben, ECE2, and Mattie, ECE2, composting



Eddie, Infant 1 studies shapes in the Infant room



Svetlana, T2, finishes a puzzle

# HARBORLIGHT



MONTESSORI SCHOOL

— Experience Excellence —

### Green Team Mission:

Harborlight supports recycling and waste reduction initiatives through creating awareness of waste issues, and promotion of sensible, sustainable alternatives.



## Harborlight's New "Green" Initiative

Harborlight Montessori School is "going green" and it pays! At the start of the school year, several interested staff members gathered together and created Harborlight's first ever Green Team!

The committee is exploring ways to pay more attention to the environment and educate students, families, and neighbors to do the same. The first evidence of the initiative can be found in the School parking lot next to the Salvation Army bin. Harborlight has partnered with Abitibi Paper Retriever to host a 24 hour paper recycling bin. The purpose of the bin is not only to encourage recycling among the Harborlight students,



Michael, MS, empties recycling

but to also raise awareness to the surrounding community about paper waste and lead by example. **This bin will also be a fundraiser for the Middle School. The Abitibi corporation will pay \$5 per ton of paper collected, and \$15 for four or more tons.** Some of the funds raised will help support the Middle School Spring trip and the rest will be donated to charity. It is important to spread the news about the program.

The more paper collected, the more funds raised! The bin accepts catalogs, newspapers, magazines, and mail. Items not accepted include phone books, glass, metal, and plastic. For more information about the program, visit [www.paperretriever.com](http://www.paperretriever.com). Middle School students are leading this initiative by collecting the recycling around the School at the end of the day and can answer questions about what can be recycled in the bin and what cannot. The Green Team is excited about the new recycling initiative at Harborlight, focusing on fostering a love for the environment by teaching students fun and easy ways that they can help. Look for more from the Green Team in the coming months, including used cell phone collections. Meanwhile, start bringing in junk mail, old newspapers and magazines and join in the effort!

## By Parents, For Parents:

### Harborlight Parent Association (HPA)

Harborlight offers an amazing classroom experience for each and every student who comes through its doors, fostering a deep and long lasting love of learning. As parents, this opportunity is also available to you! You could find yourself in the classroom baking with the children, visiting local businesses to help collect donations for the Annual Auction, or helping a child select a book at the book fair. The HPA needs your help wherever you are willing to give it. Stop by the front office for an HPA volunteer form or to give us ideas of how you might like to participate. The Harborlight school bus is a great example of what the HPA can do. It was the HPA in 1999 who spearheaded the auction to purchase Harborlight's very own bus!

Anything is possible when parents get together. The children benefit from the HPA, but the parent volunteers benefit as well. It is a great way to meet other parents and become actively involved in building community and School spirit.

**Volunteers are currently needed to help form the 35th Anniversary Auction 2008 committee.** There are small tasks and big tasks to accomplish. Any time that you are willing to give is greatly appreciated.

Don't miss out on the chance to be a part of the best school year yet, 35 years in the making! Please contact Jennifer Sargent, Director of Development and Communications for questions at [jsargent@harborlightmontessori.org](mailto:jsargent@harborlightmontessori.org).

## Coming Up...

**Infant/Toddler Potluck Supper & Parent Education-**  
Tuesday, October 2nd, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

**No School- Columbus Day observance**  
Monday, October 8th

**School Photo Days-**  
Thursday & Friday, October 18th-19th

**Public Open House-**  
Wednesday, October 24th, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

**Early Childhood Potluck & Parent Education-**  
Tuesday, October 23rd, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

**Annual Fall Family Festival Event at Moraine Farm-**  
Sunday, October 28th, 2:00-5:00 p.m.