

# Learning Together



## The Environment

The preschool environment is the third teacher. Within each classroom there are opportunities to experience the Catholic faith, literacy, music, science, art/studio work, cooking, building, and small/large motor activities. Teachers respect and value children's ideas and encourage focused learning through exploration of children's own theories extending on teacher's hypotheses. Our environment is a creative space that motivates learning, develops relationships and promotes a strong sense of self and security. We enhance our environment with many materials that promote higher level thinking and creativity.



"Children are miracles. When we invite a miracle into our lives, we prepare ourselves and the environment around us. We set out flowers, or special offerings. We cleanse ourselves, the space and our thoughts of everything, but the love inside us. We have made it our job to create, with reverence and gratitude, a space that is worthy of a miracle! Your child."

Anita Rui Olds, 1999



### Children

Saint Brigid Day School strives to have a strong image of the child. We believe that children are gifts from God. They come into this world full of ideas, thoughts, and curiosity. Our negotiated curriculum works with the children's interests and investigations. There is a collaboration of ideas between children and teachers, giving respect to the child's development and the many languages of learning: imaginative, cognitive, communicative, logical, creative, and spiritual.



## Educators

A staff of educators, including a spiritual teacher, studio teacher, music teacher, Spanish teacher, classroom teachers, as well as two directors, collaborate together on curriculum, environment, and the social /emotional growth of the children. Our educators are committed to continuing their education through professional development, seminars, and conferences.



By listening to and observing children closely, teachers discover and document the children's thoughts and ideas to enhance learning. They provide new occasions for discovery and learning, promoting higher level thinking skills, as well as the ability for the children to question. The teachers use this knowledge to set up an engaging environment in an effort to provide rich experiences.



## Parents & Community

Our community of children, educators, and parents are an integral part of our culture. We are committed to supporting each other in raising creative, thinking, loving children who know their immeasurable worth and are able to utilize their gifts and potential.



Our school is a Catholic faith based ministry. Our approximately ninety families value the importance of their Catholic faith. Our school is a place where we learn from one another. Moms and Dads will come and share their gifts; for example, a surgeon bringing an ultra-sound machine, a dad sharing his love of scuba diving, and a grandmother cooking with our children. The proximity of many local businesses, as well as the church itself initiates many learning opportunities. The study of stained glass windows, a walk to the local fire station or Fresh Market, or a gathering of families at Newtown Park are meaningful.



## Ordinary Moments

Ordinary Moment, extraordinary possibilities! It is an acknowledgement that even small, seemingly mundane moments hold great potential for surprise, wonder, discovery, and learning. On the playground Yunia, Tahini, and Kylie all encircled Mary in garden. "Oh Mary!," expressed Kylie with love in her eyes. "She has long hair," stated Yunia. The children continued expressing their love and through this ordinary moment on the playground shared their Catholic faith with one another. One only needs to observe a child marveling at the sky to understand the profound significance that an ordinary moment may have when she exclaims, "Ms. Bonnie the church is moving!" and thus begins a study of wind and how objects move. Through attentive and unhurried observation of a child's focus and intent, we allow ourselves to subtly deepen a child's experience. Often a teacher's timely expression of interest and support, coupled with a child's enthusiasm, can lead to extended and more reflective exploration of these moments. Our challenge as educators is to seek to remain present and engaged in the experience as it unfolds, following the child's evolving path of interest rather than focusing on a predetermined outcome.



