

# NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Good News About Neighborhood Schools, Inc. Vol. 23, Issue 1 \* Fall 2024

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Admissions Open House

Sunday, November 17th  
2:00 p.m.  
34 Peter Parley Road  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

### Winter Concert

Wednesday, December 18th  
6:30 p.m.  
Forest Hills Covenant Church  
455 Arborway  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

### Save the Date!

### Founders' Retirement Party!

Saturday, March 22, 2025  
5:30 p.m.  
Irish Social Club West Roxbury  
Contact Johnny Blazes with offers to help!



34 Peter Parley Road  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
(617) 522-0880

[www.neighborhoodschooljp.org](http://www.neighborhoodschooljp.org)

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## Rooted in Community, Growing Towards Justice

by: Tracy Pimentel & Tricia Morrow



NS students lead "Music at the Playground for Babies" on FriYay afternoons.

"How's the transition going with Tracy shifting from Level One teacher to Director?" That's likely the most frequent question we've heard this fall since beginning an overlapping year of Tracy and Tricia's leadership. "It's a gift!!" is our resounding response.

We are grateful for the efforts of NS teachers, parents, and Sustainers who are supporting this year of co-directing. Hiring a new lead teacher for Level One, Paige Brooks Cook, is one key to our success. As an experienced early childhood educator, Paige is ready to lead Level One and to learn from Tracy as a mentor. Leadership coaching for Tracy with NS alum parent and former Board Chair, Eleanor Chin, is both affirming and challenging. Funded training with the Center for Restorative Justice at Suffolk University is fueling Tracy's tank for leading staff, students, and parents towards healthy community and equitable relationships. And of course, day to day shared leadership with real life NS students, teachers, and parents provides plenty of opportunity to build relationships and learn all that is needed.

A large part of fostering relationships and building community is time spent with children, or "out in the field." Upon arriving to school, Tracy spends her day greeting children and parents/caregivers as they arrive and is sure to check in on teachers, too. Knowing the learners on a personal level (listening to their stories about what ignites passions inside of them), while offering her own stories and experiences, is one of the ways she develops a lasting connection with children in the NS community, many of whom are former students of hers!

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Tracy and Tricia tend to community roots at NS, alongside teachers who are committed to community care. We model taking time to know one another beyond the surface, seeing each person’s strengths, and caring for each member because this is how community deepens. Opening up to share feelings and needs, participating in meal trains, organizing carpools, and planning childcare swaps are some of the ways adults at NS connect.

One way NS is growing toward justice is working as an interconnected collective to meet one another’s needs. In a new role as Learning and Teaching Leader, Lisa Nam is bringing her decade-plus of experience and expertise to helping NS students and teachers learn what they need in ways that work for them and for the whole group. We’re cultivating beautiful ground as a learning community when we see and experience each person’s well-being as inextricably bound to our own. Tracy and Lisa facilitate weekly teacher learning on Friday afternoons this year while Tricia, Drew, and Seth coordinate FriYay afternoon mixed-age choice time for students. Retired NS teachers, current and former parents, and alums are welcome to join the FriYay fun!

Rooted in Community, Growing Towards Justice - that’s what we’re up to at NS in this year of leadership transition. ♦

## Falling into Learning



Level One students in conversation during a visit to Thornton Street Farm and Community Garden.

### LEVEL ONE

by Paige Brooks-Cook

In Level One, we've created a structure for class meetings that lets students share their ideas and experiences and present activities they are working on or have finished. During these meetings, children learn to join group discussions, take on different perspectives, and present their thoughts while receiving feedback. These sessions ensure students feel valued and encouraged as they express their viewpoints and efforts. We challenge them to be thoughtful in their decisions and reflect on their process. For example, if a student has been playing in the dramatic play area, they have the chance to explain their story and the focus of their play, or if they've painted a picture, they can discuss the colors they chose and why. When the class needs to decide how to care for classroom materials, we brainstorm solutions together. These meetings allow children to express their intentions, plan, regulate collectively, and unite as a classroom community. They learn to share responsibility with both their teacher and peers.



Level Two students play twister on a giant 100s-chart to learn about place value and “skip” counting.

### LEVEL TWO

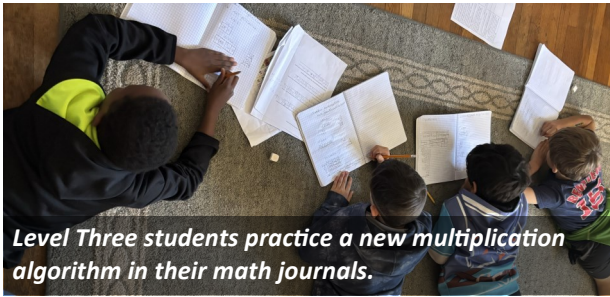
by Laurie Bozzi

Level Two students love math! Recently, during a particularly active math class, students played games on a giant 100s-chart they laid out on the floor of the classroom. Organizing and then playing games on the floor chart allowed students to have fun while seeing two-digit numbers in a new way! Skip counting patterns (such as 5, 10, 15, etc.) became more obvious when students hopped, crawled, and danced on them! Being physically active while learning can provide new perspectives and opportunities to synthesize information. It’s also fun! The lesson culminated in an enthusiastic game of Twister with students reaching to place their hands and feet on numbers and number combinations.

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## Falling into Learning

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Level Three students practice a new multiplication algorithm in their math journals.

### LEVEL THREE

by Malena Castilla & Adlin Mallebranche

Among our literary pursuits have been our first book club book, *The Hundred Dresses*, and fairy tales. We've had engaging discussions comparing and contrasting adaptations, looking at recurring elements, and listing the just desserts for villains, as well as practicing skills like summarizing. This is setting us up for deeper understandings of folktale structures and storytelling. We're playing outside while the weather is still amiable and took a jaunt in the Arboretum, looking at leaf shapes and exploring hidden paths (with cool frog pools). Our learning has ranged from place value to human rights to KenKens to etymology and emotions.



Level Four and farmers gather together to celebrate the end of our time together at Farm School.

### LEVEL FOUR

by Haeli Warren

This fall in Level Four, we have stepped into learning around our fall themes, including the history of voting rights of the United States and a novel study of Jason Reynolds' book, *Look Both Ways*. Our annual overnight trip to Farm School was a gift, as we had the opportunity to explore the land and learn from the farmers, the land, plants, animals, and one another. As Level Four continues to grow our community, both within and beyond the classroom, our foundation of considering how we learn through a model of critical and authentic care will guide us.

## Common Cents

This school year, NS granted over \$330,000 in Fair Share Scholarship as part of our \$1.2M budget, with 50% of our families receiving support. Fair Share is what enables us to enroll a wide range of learners to create a dynamic community representative of Boston's diversity. To fund Fair Share, we raised close to \$200,000 in contributions last year from alumni families, current families, and friends of NS. That's tremendous! Raising the full \$330,00 this year will close the gap between what we receive in donations and what we offer in scholarships. A fully-funded budget equips us to meet student learning needs as we hire and retain experienced faculty who are representative of our neighborhood and the families we serve, and as we look ahead at property-related expenses.

If you have ideas about potential major donors, corporate matches, or planned giving, please reach out to Tricia or Tracy: [director@neighborhoodschooljp.org](mailto:director@neighborhoodschooljp.org)



Music teacher Seth Hanson with Level One.

## 2023-24 Contributions

The NS Community donated \$197,000 last school year! Our sincere thanks to the more than 120 individuals who contributed to the Annual Fund in support of the 2024–25 Neighborhood School Fair Share Tuition Fund.

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