

# SCPENS NEWSLETTER: DECEMBER 2015

## Upcoming dates

### Thursday, December 17

Parent Meeting: 6:30–8:45 p.m.

Potluck: Bring something to share

### Fri-Sun, December 18–January 3

Winter Break: **No School**

### Monday, January 4

January tuition due

### Thursday, January 7

Board Meeting: 7–9 p.m.

### Monday, January 18

Martin Luther King Day: **No School**

### Thursday, January 21

Parent Meeting: 6:45–8:45 p.m.

Snacks: Wendy's Tu/Th Class

### Saturday, January 23

Yard Day #2: 9 a.m.–noon

Access the [SCPENS 2015-16 Calendar](#)

## Community Sized Thank You!

A big thanks goes out to our Board President, Cory Beardsley! She led our Rummage Sale Committee this year in addition to her normal Presidential & Life Duties! With her leadership and support of our wonderful parents at SCPENS, we were able to raise **\$2345.00!**

In addition to pulling off another successful sale, we were also able to help out Branciforte Middle School's Goodwill Truck Fundraiser and local clothing exchange Free 2 Be a Kid by donating all of the unsold items!

## Slowing Down for the holidays

The holidays can be a time of magic, mystery, excitement and tenderness but can also be nerve-wracking and stressful. There is incredible pressure placed on parents to create the "ideal" events for our kids. It can come from wanting to recreate the best of your holiday memories, or the stretching to try to do better than you had as a child. There can also be the tug-of-war among family members about where and how to celebrate. Then there is the double whammy of kids wanting so many "things" combined with the pinch of not being able to give them all that you want them to have.

The holiday mantra I'm going to try this year is "Being present is the best present." For me that means not just being in the room but being there with my intention and attention; trying to calm my stress so I can fully experience the "joy" in the good times and hopefully find a sliver of humor or at least the transience of the tantrums and other tough times.

Here's my plan for creating low-cost & free family moments:

- \* Heading to the library to find holiday books, music, and movies to enjoy together
- \* Cooking family recipes and trying new recipes to possibly add to our traditions
- \* Making decorations together for our house — glitter glue on everything!
- \* Going on a drive or walk to admire holiday decorations
- \* Checking out some of the free activities around town (I've found a lot on [santacruzlive.com](http://santacruzlive.com))
- \* Taking a walk on a cold day, then come home to warm up with soup, tea, or coco
- \* Talking about those who are in need and sharing what we can give
- \* Asking relatives about their holiday memories
- \* Paying attention to how my family is feeling, and calling it a day when we start to run out of steam even if we haven't done everything as originally planned

Whatever your family celebrates, and whatever traditions you have, I hope your holidays are full of fun, peace, and love, and the delicious feeling that your family is happy and enjoying themselves.

Happy Holidays,

Cory Beardsley  
SCPENS President



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## Participating in the Arts benefits child development!

Discussing, creating, and participating in art activities:

- Uses the right brain
- Engages all the senses and involves a variety of modalities including the kinesthetic, auditory, and visual
- Exercises cognitive skills such as reasoning ability, problem solving skills, creativity and inventiveness
- Supports motor, language, and social-emotional development
- Strengthens tactile perception (interpretation of information sent to the brain from the fingertips)
- Teaches children to make good judgments about qualitative relationships, instead of just following rules
- Shows children that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than one answer
- Celebrates multiple perspectives
- Offers an outlet for expression beyond language

## December Parent Meeting: *Holiday Art Night* presented by Rebecca Rae Picker

Parents, it's your chance to relax, eat, drink, be merry, and get creative!

Our December meeting is a little different to the usual. We'll start at 6:30 p.m. with a potluck. At 7:15 p.m. our guest speaker, Rebecca Picker, will explain how art benefits early childhood development, then let us have at it with some fun hands-on art activities. It's a fun, creative, social evening!

Rebecca Rae Picker is an art enthusiast with a passion for inspiring, healthy, smart, and creative children. Her experience with children blossomed when she led an after-school art program for six years as well as her experiences within her family.

Rebecca graduated with a BA in Art from UCSC. She is a professional performer,

costume designer and the founder of and facilitator at *Studio Sprout*; a children's art studio where experimentation is encouraged and making a mess is okay!



**When:** Thursday, December 17 from 6:30-8:45 p.m.

**Where:** SCPENS Toddler Room

**Potluck – Please bring something to share & CANNED FOOD for our Second Harvest Barrel.** Sign-up sheet will be posted in the classroom.

The content of this meeting is adult-specific (babies in arms are okay.)

## Holiday Art Night, Dec. 2013—fun and creativity with friends



# SCPENS Newsletter: November 2015

## Happy birthday to you!

### Birthday wishes to our 2-year-olds!

Quince Potter 12/8/2013  
Milo Paul LaRivire 12/24/13  
Naima Puhvel 12/31/13

### Congratulations to our 3-year-olds!

Xander W. 12/26/13

### Congratulations to our 4-year-olds!

Daisy Bowles 12/06/11  
Mathilda McDermott 12/30/11



## SCPENS Adopt a Family 2015

Hooray and thank you for supporting our annual "Adopt a Family" effort! It is always wonderful to see our community rallying together in support of another family in need!

Presents are being wrapped up this weekend and without a doubt Jake, Andrew & Kaylee will have a very Merry Christmas with their Grandparents this year!

## SCPENS Supports Second Harvest



Did you know that 1 in 10 families depend on receiving their food from local food banks? Considering SCPENS is a community of 40ish families; that means there are at least FOUR families in our community that DEPENDS on our generosity to feed their family!

Each year, SCPENS participates in Second Harvest's Food Drive. We receive our barrels in November and keep them until there are FULL! Ideally we would love to fill them once in November and then once again in December, but this year – the donations have been slowing coming. Please help us in getting them FULL by December 17<sup>th</sup>. We are asking ALL families to donate something every day they come to class AND please bring at least one item on Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup> when you attend the SCPENS Parent Meeting.

Here are some EASY ideas on how you can help us get those bins filled fast:

- Go through your pantry and see if you have well intentioned purchases that have gone neglected.
- Visit your local dollar store and get \$10 or more in canned goods – ANYTHING non-perishable.
- Visit a local grocery and take advantage of their 10 for 10 deals
- Buying socks and underwear for the kids? Consider buying 1 more package and putting them in the bin! Not a lot of people know that S.H. also collects clothing and toiletries!

## Keep the Giving Going!

Each year individuals and companies look for places to donate before year-end TAX TIME! Consider SCPENS for your charitable contribution this year! As a Non-Profit, SCPENS gladly accepts monetary donations of any size. Do you own a company or work for a company that participates in donation-matching? Many companies (such as Apple) have programs in place to match any donation an employee wishes to deduct out of their payroll. Inquire with your HR department for details. Or simply ask your company if they would consider a donation. SCPENS Marketing Co-Coordinator, Shannon Blount did – Scotts Valley based Intuvo offered to match her Holiday Bonus!

## Still shopping for AWESOME Holiday gifts?

Shop [Amazon](http://www.amazon.com/?_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&linkCode=ur2&tag=s09fd-20) to earn money for SCPENS. Bookmark our link:  
[http://www.amazon.com/?\\_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&linkCode=ur2&tag=s09fd-20](http://www.amazon.com/?_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&linkCode=ur2&tag=s09fd-20)

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## Carry the Future: *Non-Profit in Southern CA doing AMAZING THINGS!*

By Shannon Blount

These days it is virtually impossible to turn on the news, log onto social media or pick up a paper without reading about the global crisis arising from the Syrian Refugee surge. For the most part, our country has been somewhat removed from the multi-year conflict that seemed to hit a WORLD WIDE boiling point with the latest attacks in Paris. Personally, for my own “radar” it hit me in September when images of Syrian children (many the age of our SCPENS students) were photographed on the beaches of Lesbos, Greece – sadly, they hadn’t survived their journey!

More than half of Syria’s prewar population of 22 million is adrift with another 8 million being forced out of their homes due to escalating violence. The mass exodus has created an anarchic human caravan that appears out of control. Most of which is destined for the beaches of various Greek Islands.

According to UNICEF, half of the refugees are children. This statistic (along with the startling images flooding my newsfeeds) left me feeling helpless, and beyond sad. I wanted to help these babies. I wanted to help these parents but I didn’t know how. Then I learned about another Mom who felt the same, but she had a BRILLIANT idea: Cristal Munoz-Logothetis started [Carry the Future](#) with a modest goal to provide some baby carriers to displaced refugees in Europe. Her original Indiegogo Campaign (Operation Refugee Child) aimed to raise \$2,500 and 100 baby carriers. Instead she raised nearly \$100,000 and since then has traveled to Greece three times and fitted over 5,000 baby carriers to arriving families. With some carriers being fitted on other children!

Her new non-profit, Carry the Future now spans the entire globe! Like many others, I too have been so moved by Cristal’s brilliant idea – that I have also started collecting baby carriers! With the help of my fellow (generous) community members, I have collected 22 baby carriers to date. I would love to double this count! Cristal and her team of volunteers are collecting and sorting daily! In the first few weeks of January, they will begin their 4<sup>th</sup> trip out to Greece. There they will meet newly arriving families (thousands arrive daily), and fit as many families as possible. You can be part of this wonderful movement by doing the following:

- Donate your gently used baby carrier via SCPENS parent [Shannon Blount](#) (place in Wendy’s class, bring to the parent meeting or arrange for meet up)
- Ship one straight from [Amazon](#)
- Visit the Carry the Future [website](#) and donate directly
- SPREAD THE WORD!

The shipment collected via Santa Cruz families will ship out to Glendale December 20<sup>th</sup>.

## Community Calendar Dates

### [The Christmas Chorale \(Featuring Teacher Wendy\)](#)

December 19<sup>th</sup>, 8pm & 20<sup>th</sup> 4pm Holy Cross Church

### [The Nutcracker](#)

December 18 – 20<sup>th</sup> Santa Cruz Civic

### [Discover & Go: Museums for FREE](#)

### [Holiday Lights Train](#)

December 18 – 23<sup>rd</sup> Departing from the Boardwalk

### [Help Santa find his Reindeer](#)

Through December 20<sup>th</sup>

### [Santa Clause at Marini’s Downtown](#)

1-5pm Saturdays & Sundays in December

### [The Grinch – FREE SCREENING](#)

December 19<sup>th</sup> 10-11:145 am at the Nickelodeon

# SCPENS Newsletter: December 2015

## How to Give Experiences (Not MORE Things!)

*Ginger Carlson on Savvy Dec. 17, 2008*

Steam escapes from the open mouth of the engine's stack as we pull away from the station. Chugga-chugga-puff-puff is all we can hear as my son's nose is pressed against the glass with the force of gale wind. With every ounce of his being given to this moment, it seems nothing could pry him away. We smile and breathe in his joy, thankful for this atypical holiday gift and the other ones like it.

As parents, it's a given that we want our children to be happy and healthy. We also want to make sure our kids have a good example of the kind of people we hope they will become. The example we set by how we approach gift giving can set the groundwork for our children learning many things. "We are teaching children to value the concept of how much they can get from the outside. The idea is to teach them to feel, grow, and think from the inside out," says Dr. Sally Goldberg, early childhood educator and author of *Constructive Parenting*. "It is from this strength that they will become less dependent on gifts and presents from others. They will be better able to select and understand what would make meaningful gifts to others. They will focus more on giving and receiving the true gifts of respect, appreciation, time, and attention."

After a few holidays with a new baby and watching piles of toys enter our house, enough to fill a dozen childhoods, we suggested friends and family give experiences, not things. Once explained, it was a welcome suggestion, they say. And we weren't the only ones to benefit.

Holidays are often a whirlwind. Guests come in droves, kids are bombarded with gifts and pressure. And when it's all over, the children are left with a pile of gifts and hopes for what they will get next time. "We give more stuff to children than what they can manage while depriving them of the most important gift of all: our time!" says Dr. Charles Smith, author of *Raising Kids with Courage*. Such is the nature of our consume, consume, consume society. We do our best to try to not lead our children down a path to greed, but then barrage them with gifts on a single day, thereby whetting their appetite for wanting more. A catch 22 from all directions, something we made a conscious decision in our family to try to avoid. And we've been delighted ever since.

After putting in the experience 'requests', we found ourselves on trips to the zoo, swimming at the local wave pool, delighting in our first violin lessons, and wandering in a field of flowers searching for signs of fairies. Taking months to "cash in" on each special experience was a gift in and of itself. Each experience being spread out over time meant that our child wasn't overwhelmed on a single day; even months down the road, we were still celebrating.

Each experience was a way to connect individually with our child's special friends. One family member, who we hadn't seen much after the holidays, had made us a certificate for us all to go bowling together. The "experience gift" was the catalyst to get us back together, making us realize how the kids enjoyed each other and how much we were fed by sharing company.

We also found experience gifts to be a great way to connect with our child's adult friends. We treasure the fact that our child makes connections with people of all ages, so we were delighted when an adult friend, who works at the local bird sanctuary, gifted a personal guided tour. The gift that cost only a few minutes of his time after work was much more precious than any store bought item.

We discovered that our son was having real, meaningful experiences, and his gift-givers were enjoying the aftermath of his on-going delight. We began to realize that these kind of gifts were sculpted from the inner most being of the giver, and they were setting an example of how to give sincere thought to every gift. Our son is learning to call upon his most creative self to think up ideas for gifts and present them in exciting ways, empowered to share his own uniqueness through an individual interaction.

As we begin to take the focus off of needing to give or get a "thing", we begin to concentrate more on personal relationships. Rather than creating an insatiable hunger for more, we're learning to see gifts and the gifting experience as a tool towards opening compassion and are learning to appreciate one another more fully. Giving (and getting) gift experiences dusts off and breathes new life into the old cliché 'the gift that keeps on giving.'

For examples of how to gift experiences, rather than things [CLICK HERE](#)

# SCPENS Newsletter: December 2015

## Cheap thrills for young children (not all items are suitable for children under three)

1. Flashlight with batteries
2. Shiny letters like those used for mail boxes
3. New box of crayons
4. Magnets
5. Go Fish card game
6. Marbles
7. Little rubber coin purse (squeeze to open) with 10 pennies to count in it
8. Small rubber animals
9. Cheap costume jewelry; Mardi Gras beads
10. Old hat
11. Long piece of clear plastic tubing for blowing bubbles in the tub or sink
12. Funnels
13. Personal comb
14. Set of colored pencils
15. Hole punch
16. Special mug for warm milk or mint tea
17. Play bottle for feeding baby doll
18. Mittens
19. Sheer scarf for dancing
20. Little mirror
21. Package of stars or stickers
22. Rub-on tattoos
23. Refrigerator magnets of letters or shapes
24. Old sheet with window cut in it for table forts (can be decorated to make fancy)
25. Modeling clay
26. Prism/crystal to hang in a window to catch rainbows
27. Own placemat
28. Roll of shelf paper for finger-painting on
29. Rain boots (try used stores)
30. Sock puppet
31. Deck of cards
32. Harmonica
33. Magnifying glass
34. Paint brushes and plastic bucket for water painting
35. Tape measure
36. Packet of gummed hole reinforcements
37. Tablet of paper
38. Pair of child's scissors
39. Lotto game (made from old cardboard and stickers, pictures or letters)
40. Bag of rice with tub for pouring
41. Box of water color paints
42. Sea shells in a special box
43. Box of Band-Aids
44. Box of miscellaneous things to sort (buttons, shells, screws, etc.)
45. Sock end bean bags
46. Several pieces of felt to cut and glue
47. Pompom balls for sorting and gluing
48. Special bath or hand towel
49. Whistle
50. Spray bottle for outside
51. Trowel and packet of seeds
52. Piece of plastic needle point canvas, needle and yarn
53. Bathtub boats
54. Plastic stacking cups
55. Box of chalk
56. Packet of postcards with nice pictures and stamps for mailing to friends
57. Coupon for an ice cream cone
58. Beads or colored macaroni for stringing necklaces
59. Little cars or trucks
60. Ribbon streamers
61. Recipe on a card and a date to make it together
62. Small pitcher for own table pouring
63. Bag of macaroni for dying and gluing
64. Coffee can or oatmeal box (covered in contact paper) for a drum
65. Small photo book with pictures of family and friends
66. Marker pens
67. Special holiday button or pin to wear
68. Box of fabric scraps with different textures and colors
69. Small pulley
70. Small broom
71. Old wallpaper book to cut up
72. Play money
73. Colored pipe cleaners
74. Bells strung on a shoe string
75. Enlarged photo of self and friend or pet
76. Small rake
77. Goldfish in a bowl
78. Plant for bedroom
79. Packet of sequins or sparkly confetti
80. Bug boxes (fishing supply stores have these for tackle storage)
81. Box of envelopes
82. Night light
83. IOU for anything to do together