

*The MISSION of the Acorn School for Early Childhood Development is to provide high quality, accessible, early care and education programs and to advocate for higher standards in the field of early childhood education.*

## Letter from the Executive Director

It is amazing to me how quickly 2008 is coming to a close. Many great events happened this year with individual families, as well as within Acorn as a whole. Some highlights for me have been: The completion of the next 5-year Strategic Plan for Acorn, the best financial year to date in Acorn history; low student turn-over; consistently higher enrollment in all classrooms; increased scholarships; good grant returns; and corporate and individual giving is at an all time high. Awards this year that Acorn has received include: another year of NAEYC accreditation, 3-star Qualistar rating, Best of Boulder Child Care Center 2008, and Partners for a Clean Environment (PACE) certified.

The budget process is in full swing for The Acorn School administrative staff and the Board of Directors. Each year about this time, we put together a budget draft for the upcoming year. The Board then spends 2-3 meetings going through the projected income and expenses and discussing strategies for a positive plan for the upcoming year.

There is not a lot of wiggle room in the Acorn budget: we have tuition and we have payroll. Those are the two biggest items that impact the bottom line. We have spent a significant amount of time on grant writing this past year in an attempt to impact the income side of things, and they have had great success in bringing in over \$70,000 in grants. While it is not prudent to rely on grant money from year to year, it is a revenue stream that allows us to provide above-industry average compensation packages and continuing education courses to our teachers, renovated playgrounds, and hopefully continue to build on the high quality programs we all enjoy.

I want to personally wish each Acorn family the warmest holiday wishes this season. May each of you feel blessed by the relationships that have flourished this year. I have seen each of your children learn and thrive, and am very proud to see our children, staff, and families working, growing, and playing together. As always, we welcome your suggestions, feedback, and comments about all that is happening in your child's life.

Sincerely, Matt Eldred -Executive Director

## Important Upcoming Dates

### November

26th - Pumpkin Pie Party  
27-28th- NO SCHOOL,  
Thanksgiving

### December

6th - Holiday Bazaar  
17th - Return Parent Agree-  
ment Forms  
19th - Holiday Party!  
Dec 22-Jan 2 -  
NO SCHOOL,  
Winter Break

### January

5th - Back to School!  
8th - PIP Meeting  
19th - NO SCHOOL,  
MLK Day

### February

TBA - New Year Potluck  
16th - NO SCHOOL -  
President's Day

## We Voted!!

Acorn's Mixed-Age class organized a school-wide election this year, with a week full of festivities. Some of the activities included voting with picture ballots of Obama and McCain, watching "Schoolhouse Rock", making a giant American flag out of all the



kids' handprints, and each child will have the opportunity to tell what they would do if elected President. But the highlight of the week? A live debate concerning the pros and cons of running in the classroom and other important issues concerning preschoolers like peanut butter sandwiches with or without jelly. "It's not just adults who are excited about this year's election. The preschoolers at The Acorn School are getting in on the action too," said Suzy Evans and Jen Carpenter, mixed-age teachers. Everyone should have received an email with Acorn's election results.





## Update from the Child Health Liaison

*As we are approaching the sick season I wanted to send out a reminder of the Acorn's sick policy. It is important to follow the policy in order to keep sickness under control and keep it from spreading throughout the classroom and school.*

Please do not bring your child to school when he/she is ill. If your child has a contagious illness, they cannot return to school until they are no longer contagious. When a child becomes ill but does not require immediate medical help, a determination must be made whether the child requires exclusion.

The caregiver/teacher should determine if the:

- Illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- Illness results in a need for care that is greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
- Illness poses a risk of spread of disease to others.

(For example: Your child has an axillary (under the arm) temperature of 100° or more and he or she is acting abnormally sluggish and uninterested in participating in normal daily activities.)

If any of these criteria are met, the child will be excluded, regardless of the type of illness.

***If your child has exhibited symptoms of being sick, you must keep your child at home for a minimum of 24 hours, even if your pediatrician has given authorization for your child to return.***

If your child exhibits sick symptoms at school we will contact you immediately. You must pick your child up within one hour of notification. This helps us keep all of the children healthier.

Please alert your child's teachers of any medications your child has received within the last 12 hours. This information is important to know in order for The Acorn Staff to provide the best care possible for the children we serve.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Carpenter - Child Health Liaison



Child care settings are a home-away-from-home for many children. Providers can take simple steps to make this home happy, healthy, safe and green. Products such as cleaning supplies, weed killers and certain toys contain chemicals that are linked to health concerns, including asthma, learning disabilities and even cancer. Children are uniquely vulnerable because their bodies and immune systems are still developing. They eat, breathe and drink more pound for pound than adults and also have habits, such as putting objects in their mouths, that increase their exposure to potentially harmful chemicals. As a child care center, we play a very important role in keeping kids healthy by preventing their exposure to toxins.

**Eco-Healthy Child Care** is coming to Boulder! Eco-Healthy Child Care (EHCC) program helps child care settings be healthy, safe and green. EHCC supports child care providers as they make simple choices that benefit the health and well-being of all children in their care. The program was developed by the Oregon Environmental Council and was the recipient of the US Environmental Protection Agency's 2006 Children's Environmental Health Excellence Award. This year the program is going national, and Boulder is one of their Pilot Cities. Learn more at [www.oeconline.org/ehcc](http://www.oeconline.org/ehcc).

The Acorn School is striving to receive an Eco-Healthy endorsement in 2009. We will be beginning our checklist in January, and parents will be notified of anything important and any way they can help.

## Quotes from Mixed-Age Election Festivities

*If I were president...*

"I would have steak for everybody and have everyone stay up all night."

-Charley

"Everyone would play Zingo and do puzzles.

There would also be a 'No Sleeping Ever' rule."

- Aidan B.

"I would get apple fritters for everybody and sing Halloween songs."

-Xavier

*My vice-president would be...*

"My dad because he's so silly." -Lia

"Sarah Palin because she's a girl and I think I like her a lot." -Grace

"Barack Obama and we would watch Star Wars."

-Aiden S.

"Hannah Montana, but I'm actually the real Harrah Montana." -Anna



Acorn parents Karen Zeid and Sonya Gary hosted a Parenting Safe Children workshop on Oct 22 for a crowd of almost 40 parents and two Acorn teachers. The workshop, presented

by expert Feather Berkower, provided education, awareness, and practical tips on preventing child sexual abuse. Though the topic is difficult, participants left with the feeling that knowledge is power and that parents and children can be empowered to protect their families and communities against abuse. Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive: "It was phenomenal!" "It really should be a must-do for every parent." Acorn hopes to use this workshop as part of their continuing teacher education. You can find more information on Feather Berkower and Parenting Safe Children workshops at [www.parentingsafechildren.com](http://www.parentingsafechildren.com).



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