

[<<](#)

[>>](#)

Caroline School Gears Up for New Year

By Patricia Brhel

If you think you've seen more youngsters in Caroline, you're not imagining things. Tim McDonald, principal of Caroline Elementary School, is excited to be starting another school year and adding three more classrooms to his responsibilities, including a new kindergarten and new first grade classroom, bringing the total of each to four.

"We'll also be doing Singapore Math and working with a new literacy framework," he says. "Thanks to the leadership of Dr. Brown, superintendent of schools, we're trying new methods and hoping to be even more effective at teaching our children. We used to teach in a spiraling manner, introducing concepts and then coming back to them several times throughout the school year or semester. Now we'll be staying with a single concept until we're sure that it's mastered before going on to the next higher one."

McDonald notes that the school is using a common-core curriculum, a plan which was developed and promoted by a number of teachers throughout the district.

"With our outdoor classroom we'll be creating science lessons based on what the children actually experience as they study in our back yard," he says.

Thanks to an Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI) grant, two teachers, Whitney Antczak and Bob Graham, with guidance from Jon Ralmon from Lehman Alternative Community School, started a garden just behind the

school. By integrating science, math and language development with hands on experience, we expect that the children will better retain what they are taught, the principal says.

IPEI is a separate 501(c)(3) organization formed to raise money and provide teachers and schools with the extras that have too often been cut from the school district budget. McDonald says, "Thanks to IPEI, this year by October we expect to have an I-pod lab that will allow children the opportunity to enhance their education by exploring new options with technology to add to their classroom experience. We already have an I-pod mini lab, but this will allow more children to participate. We'll also be acquiring speech coaches and a literacy acquisition coach so that all children can learn to communicate effectively."

School secretary Janet Gordinier adds, regarding IPEI, "Most of our field trips last year were also funded by them." Gordinier, in the tradition of the best school secretaries, keeps track of everything that happens in Caroline Elementary.

While McDonald talks she's putting together staff directories, directing traffic down the newly waxed halls, helping new students and their parents with enrollment, accepting job applications, digging out phone numbers, paging other staff members who might have information a reporter needs and otherwise working to keep the entire building functioning.

Antczak is happy to show off the garden, which despite a summer of little tending is still producing veg-



Photo by Patricia Brhel

Whitney Antczak holds cherry tomatoes from the Caroline Elementary School garden.

etables, herbs and flowers. "We didn't have a lot of time to put it together, as we started just last May," she explains. "Even then, though, we worked a lot of what we were doing into our classroom learning. For instance, we planted the three sisters, corn, beans and squash, and talked about the Native Americans and the Iroquois federation. We worked math, science and writing skills into the classroom and the students loved working in the garden. They dug up the sod to make it happen. IPEI paid for the fencing and some seeds."

Nancy Helm, director of the non-profit Caroline After School Program (CASP), is, like Gordinier, working to keep a lot of things going all at once. "We've had parents wait until the last minute to

ask if we have space, and right now we don't, we have a waiting list. Fortunately, most of those parents do have alternatives and I'm working with the rest, adjusting schedules and trying to make things work. We don't have the extra space, even if we had the staffing, to add more children.

She adds, "It's going to be a good year. We're starting out with 60 children age kindergarten through fifth grade. We'll be doing the usual arts and crafts this year along with cooking and baking, science experiments and nature, sewing, working in our perennial flower garden, multi cultural projects, music, drama, language clubs, outside play time and of course time to just hang out with friends. This year

Please turn to page 11

Paving the way for your business since 1946.

MANCINI - FERRARA & SONS INC.

Our jobs are quoted, not estimated!
To find out how we can help call (607) 272-3600

Asphalt Paving • Drainage • Water & Sewer Lines • Excavating • Grading • Concrete Work
 Locally owned since 1946 • Fully Insured • 608 Elmira Rd. Ithaca • www.mancini-ferrara-sons.com
The Leader on experience, the leader on service.

Traveling?
 Read us on-line at tompskinsweekly.com

**The
Eight Square
Schoolhouse**

History Alive!
 Since 1827

TCAT Goes Where You Go!

Campus	Doctor	Groceries	Movies	Yoga	Library
Home	Transit	Nightlife	Downtown	Museums	Dining
Shopping	Parks	Airport	Work	Errands	Gym

Family Day at the 8 ☐
September 8th, 1pm to 4pm

**Brick Making
Purity Ice Cream
Open House
Live Music**

Page [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#)

Copyright © 2012 Tompkins Weekly Inc.