

A professor of education at Swarthmore College once said to me that the key to education is to make sure that the lessons are so fun that the children do not even realize they are learning anything. This week it feels as though that has been especially true. The community sing-along on Wednesday, for example, was a very joyous event with strong voices, great harmonies and counterpoint, buttressed by lyrics that emphasized peace and justice in the world. What our students were learning, besides music and coming together as a community, is the fact that these songs can serve as visions of for what we want in the world. On Thursday, the pasta lunch was a great event for children to help prepare a banquet: cooking pasta, cutting up vegetables, setting out silverware, putting out plates, washing large volumes of dishes and pots and pans, and all ending with another sing-along, with T. Andrea leading the tradition Hawaiian 12 Days of Christmas. The lessons there are that many hands make light work, and that there are numerous small tasks needed in carrying out something major. Other classes are making their own gifts and seeing the importance of generosity and carefully reading directions.

In the review section of last Sunday's *Times*, an article spoke of how an experience carries so many more memories than something material. We hope (and feel and know) that these kinds of experiences of community, making one's own music, breaking bread together, will live in your and your children's memories forever and that the lessons about working together, using one's hands, cooperation and collaboration, and joy will likewise last forever and carry over into all areas of their learning. Most importantly, we hope that they know that hard work can be and is joyful and an expression of care for one another.

We hope you have a very happy holiday and new year. See you in 2015!

Sincerely,  
John McKinstry