

# Special Edition

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Special News About Special People

## Annie's & Barb's Group

### Shop

*At this age, your children are firming up their new woodworking skills. They begin to move from scrap wood assemblages into more formal work, planning and working towards particular outcomes rather than interpreting the results of their labors afterwards. It is an exciting time in the Shop as your children and I teach each other what we know about woodworking.*

Dana started the year mirroring the technology that surrounds her on a daily basis, fabricating a laptop computer and a cell phone out of wood. Dana was especially taken with the use of leather hinges in both projects and was soon graciously teaching her newly learned skills to classmates who took up her ideas and ran with them. When these inevitable runs take place I find myself thankful that patent law has not yet reached the worktables.

Daniel took up where he left off building space-themed vehicles before nearing the terrestrial in building an airplane from plans in a project book. The chisel and mallet work to afford the aircraft with mortises to accept its wings marked the high point of Daniel's interest in producing the project. Daniel has since been perfecting the independent creation of personal electronic devices.

Davis' venture into technological mimicry came in the form of a walkie-talkie the plans for which were old enough to have the plaything listed as a "Field Radio." Davis has since gone on to build a miniature plywood table. All he needs now is to build a tent and a coffee machine and he'll have a serviceable forward command post.

Evan began the year piecing together a scrap wood "talking tree" and a pair of "rollercoasters" before looking for bigger challenges. Having committed to working through the several weeks necessary to guide a coping saw around the perimeter of a large, stylized turtle figurine, Evan proved more than capable of keeping his word and has since begun reapplying his new skill with the tool to the job of hewing out a Scottish terrier.

Two of the eight pieces necessary to build a small, live-axle vehicle awaited Felix when he returned to the shop this fall and he took up where he left off sanding a hand cut wheel. Three weeks into the process I talked with Felix about his projected timeframe for completing his current and three other wheels and he soon saw the wisdom in using the drill press and a hole saw rather than reinventing the basis of transportation in protracted serial fashion.

Francesca P. continued the work she had begun in Summer Camp and had soon finished cutting out and coloring sizable pig and cat figurines before banging out a laptop computer in an act of old school social networking. She has since been following commercial plans to craft a cat motif paper pad and pencil holder.

Fransessca W. spent her early months in Shop completing the stuffed animal house she began last March. Originally conceived of as a "duck egg house" with a nod to classmate, Margaret's, stuffed duck house that inspired it, Fransessca completed the sturdy structure in fine form before joining Davis and others in walkie-talkie production. "Who's Roger?"

Kelton began the year putting together a laptop computer and then apparently realized he needed a lap to use it on. Having assembled a functional chair out of blocks in Preday, Kelton was soon taking measurements and drawing up plans for a real piece of furniture. While I'm no quantum physicist, I can recognize an obvious leap.

Without the benefit of Preschool experience in Shop, Maddy got the crash course on safety and proper tool use and was soon cranking out miniature nail-legged tables at a prodigious pace. The move into laptop fabrication gave Maddy important and timely practice not only in a broader range of basic tool skills but also in problem-solving, patience, and perseverance, three cornerstones of a positive attitude towards work.

Maia put together a pair of "houses" and a "critter table" before making the jump into more formal work in the form of a project book inspired rabbit figurine. Maia has since put together a cell phone and done her first extended project in the form of a "critter fort." Are they still showing *The Beverly Hillbillies* on the TV Land network?

Philip nailed together an "airplane" and a "Blue Angels airplane" this fall before taking to the construction of hockey sticks large and small. Interrupted only by the construction of a seasonally appropriate "Punkin Chunker," Philip's work on the athletic equipment has often been attended by discussions with my helpmate, Peter, on how the NHL season is shaping up.

Quentin joined classmate Davis in starting his year making walkie-talkies. His decision to make two of the wooden communicators illustrated his commitment to realism in his fantasy play. Quentin was happy to share his new knowledge of the steps of the project with classmate, Fransessca W., when she signed on to build one of her own and he also took time off from his personal labors to repair a ring-catch game his brother had made in the shop in years prior.

Ruthie built a scrap wood house over the course of two periods to begin her year in Shop and has since moved on to learning how to make leather-hinged cell phones and laptops with the assistance of Dana and Daniel. When not so engaged, Ruthie has also found time to fabricate a “tree” and a “butterfly/lollipop,” the latter providing a lesson in the tendency of wood to split along the grain. “Mmmmm, Swallowtail, my favorite flavor!”

Sophia arrived to her first Shop class with the idea of making a doghouse – a full-sized doghouse. After talking with me about the number of periods of sawing the project would entail, Sophia decided that a small scrap wood dog fell more within her range of commitment. Sophia has since joined her classmates in overwhelming the school’s wireless capabilities with the addition of a new laptop and has just begun working from commercial plans on a sizable dog figurine.

Sydney began her year sanding the wheels for a small live-axle car she had cut with me at the drill press last spring. Having completed this mobile “leftover,” Sydney next followed classmate, Maddy, into table making, choosing to outfit her model piece of furniture with dowels instead of nails for legs. Sydney returned with me to the drill press to create hardwood disks to make a working yo-yo and has since used her coping saw skills to independently cut out a plywood “crown.”

Tivi proved a quick study of Shop’s rules and routines, committing them to memory in a single hearing before joining the cadre of walkie-talkie and laptop builders. A patient and capable builder, Tivi’s work on the projects has only slowed during the task of powering scissors through the thick leather he has chosen for his play devices’ straps and hinges. Who knew cows were such tough animals?

Trista drew plans and began work on a wooden spoon during her first Shop class and has since been using the coping saw and sandpaper to cut it to shape and smooth out its contours and surfaces. Trista will next have to decide how she wants to create the hollow in the diminutive spoon’s bowl. The current flatness of the utensil’s top would only make the spoon useful to serious dieters.

## *Sports*

Children at SRV are given room to explore and build upon their natural abilities, to play in a structure in which all levels of development are valued and supported. They learn that inability is a starting point for growth, and ability an opportunity to teach one another.

The Sports program and organized recess games include a rich mixture of group-building activities, competitive and cooperative games, classic and newly emerging “neighborhood” games, and physically challenging free play activities.

The program is defined by the individual groups. The younger groups and I take turns choosing activities every other week, while the Oldest Group builds their own unique curriculum from the ground up. The democratic process through which the children arrive at their decisions is as integral to the program as the athletics.

Here’s the program that your Kindergarteners and I have crafted thus far this year:

***Zoo on the Loose*** – Tag game. Animals tag humans who in turn become more animals tagging a dwindling human population.

***Sharks and Minnows*** – Tag game. A single “shark” calls all “minnows” to try to run past him/her to safety at opposite end of playing area. Tagged “minnows” become “sharks” in next round. Rounds continue until all “minnows” are caught.

***Ghost in the Graveyard*** – Hide and Seek in which seekers sound the alarm when they find the “ghost” and then try to run back home before the hiding “ghost” can tag them.

***Dodgeball*** – Players try to stay in defined area and avoid being hit by thrower on outside. Hit players join ranks of throwers on outside of area until everyone is out.

***Tag (Blob, Hug, Tunnel)*** – In the first, tagged players hold hands to form an ever growing “it.” In the second, players avoid being tagged by holding another player. In the third, tagged players stand with feet apart and are “unfrozen” by another player crawling under them.

***Ships and Sharks*** – Small groups of shipmates work cooperatively to try to “sail” their hula hoop “ships” from one port to another while keeping one another safe during “shark attacks.”

***Run the Bases*** – A Baseball style game played on the baseball diamond or in the gym. Tennis or foam ball is thrown rather than batted into play. Outs are made by catching ball in air or throwing and hitting backstop with ball when runners are between bases. No force-outs, unlimited base runners, and runners choose when to run. In variations, runners can choose to put tennis ball, soccer ball, Foxtail ball or Frisbee into play.

***Doctor/Spy*** – Team Dodgeball style game. Teams throw soft balls from one side of gym floor at opponents on other side. Hit players or those whose throws have been caught by opponent sit down and wait to be “healed” by “Doctor” on their team. “Guard” protects “Doctor” from being hit, “Spy” can venture onto opponent’s side to steal balls to throw. Round ends when “Doctor” is hit.

***Clean Up the Yard*** – Two teams vie to throw, kick, bowl, hike, and or bat the most balls onto opponent’s side of the gym before “Dad” gets home.

*Until next time,*

*Mike*