

Coastal Kids holds week-long celebration

Coastal Kids Preschool in Damariscotta recently celebrated the Week of the Young Child, an annual celebration hosted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, which culminated in an open house on Friday, April 27. Community, friends, and family were invited to tour the school, enjoy snacks, and participate in classroom activities.

According to Coastal Kids Education Director Priscilla Congdon, the purpose of the Week of the Young Child is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families. The National Association for the Education of Young Children first established the Week of the Young Child in 1971 to spread awareness that early childhood years (birth through age 8) lay the foundation for children's success in school and later life.

"Today we know more than ever before about the importance of children's earliest years in shaping their learning and development," Congdon said. "Our goal is to focus on the importance of early childhood education and early intervention and to celebrate the creativity and joy of our children."

During the week, children enjoyed a new and different focus each day. On "Music Monday," a sing-along was held in the school's studio. Community member Sylvia Tavares played her guitar as children sang



Local artist Daisy Greene (right) shares her painting "World of Joy" with students at Coastal Kids Preschool. Greene's daughter Heather (left) is a teacher at the school, and her great-granddaughter, Effie Vinal (center), attends the program.

and danced to familiar tunes. Students also created their own instruments.

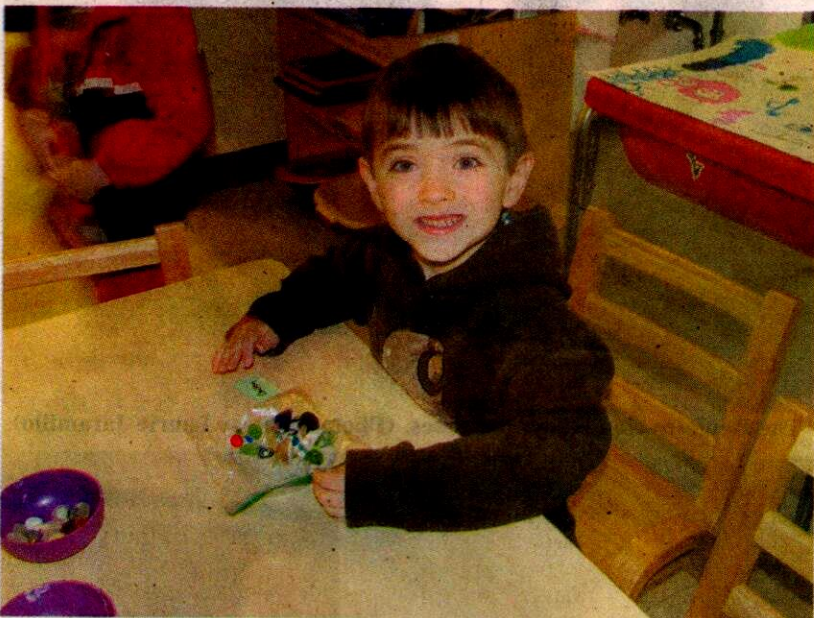
On "Tasty Tuesday," healthy eating and the Ready, Set, Go! 5210 program were highlighted. Each class prepared their own culinary treats: the Dolphins made smoothies, the Minnows made pizza, the Starfish made salsa, and the Periwinkles made yogurt parfaits.

On "Work Together Wednesday," children created individual and group constructions. The Minnow class built and painted a bench and two birdhouses from start to finish, including measuring, screwing, sanding, and painting. The Dolphins used recycled materials, collaborating on how to best reuse materials to make artistic structures.

On "Artsy Thursday," artist Daisy Greene came in to share her painting "World of Joy" with the children and discuss her creative process. The painting was created to commemorate the completion of Coastal Kids Preschool's building expansion in 2012 and hangs in the school's foyer. In response to Greene's painting, children created their own "World of Joy" playground murals, which were hung in the foyer for the art show along with early projects from the week. Classes also created clay pots and sculptures, rain paintings, and additional art projects for the art show.

On "Family Friday," Coastal Kids students shared their creations with family and community members.

The annual art show, which opened on the morning of the open house, stretches through the building and features work from even the youngest students. The display will stay up until May 4 so that families and community



Owen Benedix puts the final touches on his clay sculpture for Coastal Kids Preschool's annual art show, the culmination of the preschool's week-long celebration for Week of the Young Child.