

### ***What is The "Petite Artiste" Program?***

The Petite Artiste program is a unique extension beyond the daily classroom visual arts curriculum that we offer every child, every day at Annette's Preschool. Over the course of 6 weeks, Sherrie will guide children age 3-5 toward "visual literacy" as they both learn and express themselves through artistic mediums. This enrichment program is particularly suited for children with a natural interest in art, or for any child that loves to explore paper/textiles, acrylic paint, oil pastels, watercolor or clay. Linking the past with the present, each Petit Artiste will share thoughts and responses to examples of work from great masters all over the world. Projects will require consecutive classes to complete. At the end of the season, all children will be invited to display their work for the public at a Petit Artiste Gallery event!

### ***Why Is Art Important For Young Children?***

Art is a way of giving form to our imagination, of defining our surroundings, and of expressing our hopes and aspirations for the future! As young children today grow into the citizens of tomorrow, expectations for their future success lie in cultivating strong character skills that enhance learning in the real world. These character skills include self-control, openness, getting along with others and being able to make a plan and persevere. The artistic process naturally fuels a child's learning in all areas and engages each child in new ways of thinking about, and solving problems.

A quality early childhood art program fosters growth and learning in multiple ways. It motivates children to give shape to their instincts and ideas, encourages sustained exploration with unusual and varied materials and develops the fine motor and visual perception skills which are required to move, write, play or create a work of art. As a child develops physically, the body and mind work together to gradually increase coordination between eye muscles, arms, legs and hands and feet, gaining more control from the top down. For example, the young child of 3 uses the whole arm to draw at first, then bends the elbow for more control nearer 4 years, and eventually achieves mature fine motor control in the wrist and fingers by 5-5 1/2 years. When an idea in the head "takes shape" (quite literally!) in the hands, which in turn is valued by a teacher, a child learns that their thoughts, feelings and ideas are good and have a purpose and place in the world. This in turn promotes self-efficacy: the child's belief that he or she is capable of accomplishing any tasks and goals, even if they are difficult!

### ***What Does a Quality Early Childhood Art Program Look Like?***

A quality early childhood art program organizes groups according to developmental levels and age. It offers sequenced exposure to increasingly complex materials, without a predetermined product on a schedule. Children are encouraged as individuals to express their preferences through their work and when studying the art of others wonder, "how did they do that?" A quality early childhood art program values the responses of children and encourages language and communication skills by critiquing famous works of art throughout history. In an atmosphere of openness, everything is possible and every child feels like a true artist!

### *Who is Sherrie?*

"Working with art and children is my passion. My non-traditional method of teaching allows the child to learn to use actual tools and supplies to make art," says Sherrie Hiller. Sherrie's 15 years of experience teaching art education with children spans from nursery schools, to middle schools across New England. She was the former Visual Artist and Production Coordinator for the International Arts and Ideas Festival in New Haven, Connecticut, and then was appointed a member of the Hamden Art Commission, also in Connecticut. Sherrie moved to Vermont in 2006, and is now involved teaching art classes and jewelry making across the Burlington area. Annette's own Clubhouse Summer Campers enjoyed novel art processes this summer through Sherrie's unique program. We are excited to have her return as a teacher in the Clubhouse After School Program at Annette's.

### *What Will They Do During the Classes?*

We will be holding an "Art Program Demo" each morning this week for all children in the Preschool classrooms - Toucans (Tuesday 9/17 & Wednesday 9/18), Jaguars (Thursday 9/19), and Tree Frogs (Friday 9/20). This will allow children the opportunity to experience this Petite Artiste art extension first hand. We recognize each child as an individual, and understand that this program will benefit, enthrall, and intrigue each child in a different way and to a different degree. We do hope that you find the Petite Artiste Demo to be an exciting topic for "dinner table discussion"! Did your child enjoy the art program? What was their favorite part? What kinds of materials did you use?" "What did it feel like?"

### *How Will the Program Be Implemented?*

Each Petite Artiste enrichment class is 45 minutes long. Classes will be held twice a week in our Creative Studio located in the Clubhouse building across the driveway. Each group will consist of no more than 6 children of the same age. Sherrie will escort each child from his or her classroom to the Creative Studio and back again (as a group). Each session meets for 6 weeks, for a total of 12 classes.

The Petite Artiste Program at Annette's costs \$14 per week, or \$84 for a 6 week session (12 classes). You must enroll for a full 6 week session. You can choose to pay in advance, or simply pay using your weekly direct debit on your account. Look for a "Petite Artiste Palette" coming home this week with a registration form to be returned no later than Friday, 9/27 to secure a place. This Art Program will provide the "Petite Artiste" with the tools to explore, imagine, create and experience self-discovery in a supportive, enriched studio environment!