

# Annual Quarter Auction heralds half-century of Rockwood Nursery School

By: Vivien Fleisher

With 2017 close to over, the Rockwood Nursery school held its final fundraiser of the year. The Annual Quarter Auction last weekend, where patrons buy a paddle and use quarters to bid on a range of donated items, raised about \$2,000 for the school. But it's the February Spaghetti Dinner with its Silent Auction that brings in even bigger money. And the 2018 event will be extra special

because the school, which started as a play group in Eden Mills in 1968, turns fifty. When founding members Ann Vos and the late Shirley Facey got together with a group of moms that year to give kids a chance to play and learn, they could not have anticipated where it would end up. When Vos retired in 1988, the school hired Nicki Barens and Judy Rietkirk. Rietkirk retired in 2010, but Barens is still going strong, along with teachers Victoria Caulfeild and

Patricia Finnegan. Nothing stays the same, and in the world of preschool, big changes have happened on Barens's watch. Early Childhood Educators (ECE's) are now registered—or RECE's—and the advent of fulltime junior kindergarten in 2006 prompted a major shakeup in the school's programming, which was shifted from three and four-year-old classes to two and three-year-old classes. Prior to this, they were overseen by the Ministry

of Social Services, which then changed to the Ministry of Education. When Barens started, the cooperative was very hands-on for parents, who helped out on a rotating basis. Now, although they have the option to attend their children's class, the classes are run by teachers. But as Barens points out, one of the

many unique things about this pre-school is the very low turnover of staff and the community drive and support behind the whole thing. Her favorite part of the job is the children, and her least favorite the paperwork. Teacher Victoria Caulfeild says parents only see the surface, and not all the work that goes into the day-to-day operations. But

the perks are great, like in 2011, when the school held a mock Royal Wedding after William and Kate's. The kids wore fascinators, and put makeup on the teacher's faces. So on top of the excitement about their 50th anniversary, they have Harry and Meghan's wedding to look forward to in May, which fits perfectly with their schedule.



**RIDING RAILS:** Santa was at Halton Radial Railway's annual "Christmas Ride the Rails" on Saturday. Santa waited for the next train out to the North Pole with Nicki Barens and her granddaughter Kimberly. Santa is going to need those milk and cookies like never before in order to get through the two weekends of commuting the museum has in store for him. - Vivien Fleisher photo

## Christmas Memorial Dove Tree



Once again, you, your family and friends are invited to take a complimentary dove from our Memorial Dove Tree in memory of your loved ones.

The Dove Tree will be available in the funeral home from December 1<sup>st</sup> to December 23<sup>rd</sup> weekdays from 9 - 3 p.m. or evenings and weekends by appointment only.

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**SANTA SANTA SANTA:** It was hard to tell who was who as Keira Marshal and Fionn Marshall sat for a photo with Santa Claus at Rockwood Home Hardware on Saturday. - Les Schmidt photo

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