



## Falcon Homeschool Program Newsletter

August 12, 13, 14, and 15 2024

### UPCOMING DATES:

August 12-15: First week of school, 8:15-3:15

Front Desk Number: (719) 495-5373

#### **Class Updates:**

##### *Arts and STEM Exploration 4th/5th Grade Ms. Jill*

I'm looking forward to getting our year started! Students will participate in half a day of arts with me and half a day of stem with Ms. Heather. Some students will begin with arts and others with stem and then they will rotate to the other area for the afternoon. The curriculum is the same in both sections.

This week in arts, we will work on establishing our classroom expectations and creating our social contract. We will also be learning about and discussing what it means to be an 'explorer' as we get ready to learn about musical traditions and dramatic folk stories throughout our amazing world this year! Some reminders:

- If you were not able to attend orientation, I have a class overview available for you at pick up.
- Don't forget to send a **nut free** lunch and extra food for two snacks as needed by your student!
- We will dismiss both arts and stem students from the stem classroom starting at 3:15.

Please email me at [jill.foster@d49.org](mailto:jill.foster@d49.org) with any questions that come to your mind!

##### *Ms. Heather M*

I'm very excited to get started with your students this week. As Ms. Jill mentioned, your students will be

spending half of their day with me and the other half of the day exploring the arts.

This week in STEM, we will spend time getting to know each other better through some fun ice breaker games, going over classroom expectations and creating a social contract. We will also briefly begin scratching at the surface of discussing the human body and how it interacts in the space environment. Please reach out with any questions you have for me: [heather.mitts@d49.org](mailto:heather.mitts@d49.org).

##### *Middle School Arts*

##### *Ms. Jill*

I'm looking forward to getting our first year of Middle School Arts started! This week in arts, we will be setting up our arts sketchbooks, so please remember to bring your sketchbooks (9X 12 Mixed Media size preferred) and your 3 subject notebooks. We will also learn about the artist Roy Lichtenstein and then work on establishing our classroom norms and social contract through some 'dramatic' activities. It's going to be a great day!

Some reminders:

- If you were not able to attend orientation, I have a class overview available for you at pick up.
- Don't forget to send a **nut free** lunch and extra food for two snacks as needed by your student!
- Students will be dismissed from our arts classroom starting at 3:15.

Please email me at [jill.foster@d49.org](mailto:jill.foster@d49.org) with any questions that come to your mind!

## Ms. Stacy's Class (K-1)

A big Welcome to our K/1st graders and families. It was great getting to see you and your children at Orientation. I'm looking forward to an exciting year with each and every one of you! I can't wait for us to get to know one another most of all. Please know that drop off at first may be a bit misty eyed for some but this is normal and often short lived. We will have a GREAT day together!

A heads up to my Thursday families that our class will be taking part in a fire drill on our first day together. Please know this is a drill and though we are just getting started your children will be learning and experiencing an important safety lesson first thing. I will be going over lining up and where to go first thing so that they are ready and it's no big deal and they are prepared as best they can be.

This year will be full of a lot of amazing things. In Social Studies, we'll be learning about the history of the Native Americans this semester and in Science, we will learn about the amazing Rainforest. If you didn't grab a class "overview" at orientation, feel free to grab one off my board when you pick up your child. They are included with the pack that has the "Meet Ms Stacy. I'm excited to start this year with so many amazing families and thrilled to work with your children this year. Have a fantastic week and please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns. [skley@d49.org](mailto:skley@d49.org)

## Literacy Foundations

### Ms. Kassi

Welcome, LF families!!! I am so ecstatic to partner with you this school year and look forward to having all of your students in my class. *Please make sure you have purchased the materials on the Literacy Foundations supply list and have your students bring them to school on the first day of class. This includes their binder, dividers, and a book box.*

This week we are jumping right into our literacy adventure together. We will be creating our class Social Contract and learning daily classroom procedures, including literacy center rotations..

#### Week 1: Literacy Activities:

- Phonograms: A-Z
- Read Aloud/Grammar: First Day Jitters
- Phonics Focus: learning how to count sounds and word map, short a words
- Poem of the Week: "Open a Book"

- Writer's Workshop: Letters, words, sentences, illustration labeling, and spacing.

*Parents, I may also be completing a short diagnostic assessment with your students this week and next to be able to better pinpoint ways I can support them individually and in small groups! Be on the lookout for your privately shared google doc file, emailed to you this week.*

We are partners this year, I hope to hear from you often. Please email or chat with me anytime!

[kassi.nemeth@d49.org](mailto:kassi.nemeth@d49.org)

## Ms. Kassi's 2/3 Class

Welcome back 2/3rd grade students to our school year!! We are going to have a fabulous year learning and growing together. *If your student did not bring their 2/3rd grade enrichment supplies, including their binder and dividers, please have them bring them on the first day of class.*

This week we will be learning our classroom procedures and creating our class Social Contracts. We will also get to know each other by completing name webs and playing, "Find Someone Who" and completing a class scavenger hunt to learn where items are located.

Next week we will be jumping into our fall Social Studies and Science units: Pilgrims and Weather. *Please do not hesitate to email me anytime with any questions or concerns at [kassi.nemeth@d49.org](mailto:kassi.nemeth@d49.org).*

## Ms Leanne's Class (4-5)

I'm so excited for my classroom to be filled with little people! We will start off with establishing classroom norms: this is a safe place where we are kind and encouraging to everyone. We'll play get to know you games and students will create an art project that will tell us a lot about them. Don't forget to send a lunch and nut free snacks!

For Science, we will start brainstorming how to group people and animals together and introduce our unit on Invertebrates. In social studies, we'll be learning about the 13 Original Colonies. If I missed you at orientation or the open house, please introduce yourself at pick up. I will have a get to know me sheet and course objectives on my door: feel free to take one.

Pick up time is a time for me to brag about your child. Parents will line up outside my door and I will open the door when we are ready to dismiss, at approximately 3:15. We dismiss one child at a time, so please be patient with one another. I love this time. However, if you are in a hurry or have an

appointment to get to, send me a quick email so I can try to accommodate you. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

[leanne.mckinney@d49.org](mailto:leanne.mckinney@d49.org)

### *Ms Heather M (6-7)*

The school year is officially here and I can't wait to learn more about each and every one of your students that walks through the door.

This week we will spend time getting to know each other better through some fun ice breaker games, going over classroom expectations and creating a social contract.

In *science*, we will begin talking about ecology and start learning about the different components of an ecosystem.

In *social studies*, we will introduce the three branches of government, tapping into their prior knowledge to see what they know and getting them excited about what is to come in the upcoming weeks.

Please reach out with any questions you have for me:

[heather.mitts@d49.org](mailto:heather.mitts@d49.org).

## PROGRAM REMINDERS

### ***Calendars and Supply List for 2024-2025 School Year***

Please see below for our 24-25 School Year Calendar. This calendar will give you all the important dates including, start dates, dates of our breaks or holidays, special activities, etc.

[24-25 Student and Staff Calendar](#)

Supply List is on our website: <https://www.d49.org/domain/2042>

### ***Drop off and pick up***

One of our top priorities here at FHP is the safety and wellbeing of your students. For this reason we would ask you to read through the below directions regarding Drop Off and Pick Up.

Please note that the front doors will be opened and someone will be attending to the Kiss and Go lane **no sooner than 8:15am**.

To expedite the process and increase safety and security, strive to **drop off your students at 8:15AM**. We do share the parking lot with the preschool next door that opens its doors at 8:30AM.

#### **Entering the Parking Lot:**

- 1) When entering the parking lot, please **make the first right** and follow a counter-clockwise direction around the lot.
- 2) Decide whether you would like to park and walk your student into the building -OR- whether you would like to drop your student(s) off at the curb at Kiss and Go.

**\*Please Note:** Cars may not be left unattended along the curb. If you want to walk your student into school, you must park in a parking space.

**Directions for Kiss and Go, Drop Off Lane:**

- 1) Please stay as close to the curb as possible while you are waiting to drop off your student so that those wanting to park can continue around the parking lot.
- 2) Do not let your student exit the car until you have reached Ms. Nancy (or other FHP employee supervising Kiss and Go) and she has begun to assist your student in exiting the car.
- 3) Please make sure your student is ready to exit the car immediately once you enter the drop off cone zone so as to not hold up traffic.
- 4) Students may only exit the car on the curb side, DO NOT let them exit to the left side of the car as cars could be driving through the parking lot.

**Directions for Parking your Car and Walking Your Student Into the Building:**

- 1) If you are parking and walking your student into the building, please note that the safest way through the parking lot is to make your way to the west side of the parking lot (near the shed and large IVES playground) and follow the sidewalk/crosswalk to our walkway.  
**\*Please Note:** For safety reasons, students are NOT allowed to walk through the parking lot unattended, please use the Kiss and Go Lane if you will not be walking them in yourself.

**Dismissal Pick-Up:**

We ask that all parents come into the building to pick up their students. This gives you a chance to have a short conversation with your student's teacher each day. Please be sure to park in a designated parking space. We will open our main door **at 3:10 pm** so that you may come into the building and head to your student's classroom. Teachers will begin dismissal, from their classrooms, **at 3:15 pm**.

**\*Please Note:** Banning Lewis Preparatory Academy (the school adjacent to ours) dismisses at 2:45, please be sure to plan for traffic accordingly when scheduling what time to arrive at FHP.

**\*Please Note:** There is a neighborhood street (Pacific Crest Drive) just north of our doors that has parking along the street, a crosswalk, and a sidewalk leading to our doors. This will be a great place for overflow parking if it is needed.

**Safety Drills**

In our continued efforts to best serve your students and communicate clearly, we will be conducting our first school wide fire drill on Thursday, August 15, 2024. A fire drill will occur on various days, once a month according to the state law. This safety drill will last approximately 10 minutes. During that time, the fire alarm will go off and students will exit the building in an orderly fashion and meet at our FHP designated meeting point on the grass near the road with their teacher. All classes will be reviewing safety drills this week.

## ***Welcome from our new principal, Paul Austin***

I am excited, honored, and humbled to be the Program Manager for the Falcon Homeschool Program. As a family that has successfully homeschooled three children (two girls and one boy), I can confidently assure you that homeschooling is not only possible, but also incredibly rewarding. Ignore any doubts or skepticism from others; your choice to homeschool is a commendable one.

I've been in education for the past 33 years and have been married to my wonderful wife for 29 years. Over these years I was mainly teaching science and now have served in administration positions for the past three years. When the opportunity to pour my experience and expertise into homeschoolers, families, and education as a Program Manager...I was ALL in. I am always up to go fishing and would rather be outside than inside. Please know that my door is always open and drop in when you get a chance to say hi.

While homeschooling presents challenges, the flexibility it offers allows you to take breaks when needed, celebrate growth and progress, and discover that learning can occur anyplace, anytime. You know your child better than anyone, and this insight lets you tailor their education to what works best for them. Homeschooling means you can control the influences on your children's education, aligning their learning with your family's values, beliefs, and priorities. Homeschooling is a powerful way to preserve what matters most to your family.

We at FHP are here to support you in creating a supportive, comfortable learning environment that meets your children's personalized educational needs. I look forward to partnering together in this fulfilling journey of homeschooling.

Paul Austin

[Paul.austin@d49.org](mailto:Paul.austin@d49.org)

## ***Introducing our new Health Assistant, Ms Tracy***

I am so excited to be joining all of you this coming year here at Falcon HomeSchool Program and I am looking forward to meeting you soon! I am your new Receptionist/Health Room Assistant.

I have lived in Colorado Springs since 2005 when we moved here from Roswell, New Mexico, for my husband's job (*he sells lollipops!*), and we just fell in love with Colorado! My husband and I have a 21 year old son, he and his father own my heart and they bring me such joy!

I play bass and sing in a couple of Bluegrass bands with my husband, who plays anything that has strings and he sings as well. My son played baseball in high school and we loved going to all his games. We have three dogs, one for each of us in the family, their names are Rockette (Border Collie/Corgi), Dooley (Maltese/Yorkie), and Shady Grove (Border Collie). I love to crochet and have taught myself how to crochet animals and booties so far. If you ask, I might be willing to share a few pictures of my creations with you...heehee! I also enjoy drawing, painting, and quilting!

Well, now is there anything I haven't shared? Probably, but maybe at a later date we can enjoy more stories with each other! I look forward to learning all about each of you this year!

Tracy Denson

[Tracy.denson@d49.org](mailto:Tracy.denson@d49.org)

## ***Health Room Update***

Hello Wonderful Families! Just a quick reminder for you all about the D49 Annual Health Form that is to be filled out **each** year for **each** of your children found in your parent portal. This is a great tool for me to reference any health concerns and details that may pertain to your child. If your child has more severe health needs where medication is needed in my office, i.e. inhalers, epipens, controlled medication, and so on please connect with me to make sure we have proper documentation and action plans set in place- **these do need to be signed by a doctor**. If you need any forms I have some hard copies in my office or you can find a lot of useful information on the d49.org website under “nursing services”. Remember, I am a “health assistant” delegated by our school nurse Patricia Prettyman, so if you would like to get with her in regards to any special concerns, please let me know, she is the one I report to when it comes to meeting health standards. Some things to keep in mind- immunization shot records- we do need updated records as you have them. Also, if you are needing medical or nonmedical exemptions, you can find those on the d49.org website as well, including procedures on obtaining nonmedical exemptions. Again to reiterate, **we are a peanut/tree nut free environment and do have children with severe allergies in attendance, so please double check your ingredients!** Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

Ms. Tracy

[tracy.denson@d49.org](mailto:tracy.denson@d49.org)

## ***Everyone's Favorite: Beginning of School Paperwork -***

All FHP 'beginning of school' paperwork is electronic!! All parents need to log into their PowerSchool Parent Portal and select 'forms' on the left hand side of your screen and fill out all forms electronically. Please note, once you are in your Parent Portal, you will see each of your students have a tab at the top of the page. Parents will click each student tab, then choose 'forms', fill out and submit all the paperwork.

We need the following forms for each Enrichment/Bridge student, as soon as possible:

1. Annual Contact Verification
2. FHP - Annual Health Form (not the D49 one)
3. FHP Parent/Student Handbook Signature Page (our handbook is located on our website: [Parent Handbook](#) )
4. Photo Opt-Out
5. FHBE: Enrichment - D49 Computer, Network, and Internet Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA)
6. **Bridge Students Only:** FHBE: Bridge and Academic - D49 Computer, Network, and Internet Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA)
7. **Bridge Students Only:** FHP: Academic - Mutually Agreed Upon Plan (MAP) Form

**D49 PowerSchool Parent Portal:** [PowerSchool Parent Portal Link](#)

**Cannot remember your log in or password or having trouble logging in?** Please contact Nancy Carder [nancy.carder@d49.org](mailto:nancy.carder@d49.org) to get yourself up and running!

**Don't have a PowerSchool Parent Portal?** Please click here for a help page that will walk you through your set up: [PowerSchool Parent Creation Guide](#)

## ***Homeschool Helpful Tips***

### ***Starting the School Year: Slow***

Welcome Back FHP Families! I am so happy to get this school year started strong. If you are a traditional homeschool family just starting the school year, you most likely have all of your curriculum and first week plans ready to go (and if not, that is ok).

Remember, you do not have to start all subjects day one, especially if you have taken the summer off. Instead, try to start slowly with one or two subjects. Slowly add more as the days and weeks progress. It is often a difficult transition going from an unscheduled free summer to a full school day, especially for younger students. Let's face it, it is tough for us too!

This school year I am here to support your family!! I love to chat with homeschool families and problem solve challenges that may arise and/or celebrate successes. I am at FHEP all four days: Mon-Thurs and I am more than happy to chat through email for small questions/concerns or meet face to face. Homeschooling is one of the most rewarding endeavors you will experience, but the days can be difficult. We are here to help your family on your homeschooling journey!

*Find joy in your every day!*

Ms. Kassi, FHP Home Based Education Specialist  
kassi.nemeth@d49.org