

Our Mission:

To empower individuals of all abilities to take charge of their own learning and lives, making it possible for them to be competent, caring and contributing members of society; and to provide learning opportunities for families, professionals, and communities to support those efforts.

In the Spotlight! - Graduation!



On Friday, June 18th, IRL's Early Childhood Education (EE) hosted their first post-pandemic graduation ceremony to celebrate the achievements and successes of their students. Despite the challenges brought on by COVID-19 during 2020 and 2021, 13 students graduated from our program and are now moving on to a new chapter in their lives... Kindergarten. One by one, students were called by Program Director Tammie Pinelo to receive a certificate of completion, along with smiling faces, high fives and fist bumps. No

doubt that this class has it all... from firefighters, truck drivers, policemen and women, doctors, and rock stars... The future is waiting for you to become great and brave leaders in our community.

After the ceremony, we had the chance to sit down with two of the participating families...

“Supporting Family, Nurturing and Caring Education...” These are the words that the Ruvalcaba family used to describe IRL's EE program at this bittersweet moment of leaving the program and graduating to Kindergarten. We were intrigued to learn more about their son, Brandon's experience in our program during COVID, so Abel V. asked them a few questions.

Abel (A) - How did the COVID 19 lockdown impact your child?

Parents (P) - Brandon was able to stay in daycare during most of COVID. That helped to keep some sort of normalcy for him and the family. Overall, Brandon was fully aware of having a mask and needing to do extra stuff, such as constantly washing his hands and keeping distance from his friends. That was kind of weird for him, but he adjusted pretty well.

A - What do you like about the Early Childhood Education Program?

P - All the teachers are super nice and always tell us how much they love our kids. Both of our kids came to the school. It was recommended by a friend, and we recommended it to other friends who ended up in this program as well. We couldn't recommend it enough! We've been here for the last 5 years now... we just simply LOVE IT! The communication with all the teachers, staff, and Program Director Tammie has been great through all these years. As you already know, this past school year had its own challenges due to this global pandemic. However, we feel that the whole team was constantly adapting to stay on top of all federal and state regulations to maintain our kids' safety while at school and at home. And that meant a lot to us and our family.

We also had the opportunity to sit down and interview **Zailey (5)**, one of the recently graduated students who's very energetic and excited about her graduation day! “I love playing on the big slide, playing with my friends and learning about letters,” she told Abel when asked about her favorite things to do at school.

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In the Spotlight Continued...

Abel (A) – How do you feel today?

Zailey (Z) - I feel happy. I do a lot of fun stuff and I'm graduating today.

A - What is your favorite toy at school?

Z - My favorite toy at school is the donut car.

A – What is your favorite color?

Z - My favorite color is rainbow but there is no rainbow paper... (sad face).

A – Do you like playing with other kids at school?

Z - I like playing with Yule, but he is gone now. He went to a different school.

A – How fun is school?

Z - A lot of fun! I really like the school.

A – What do you like about your teacher?

Z - She gives us a lot of hugs.

A – What is your favorite school activity?

Z – Drawing... I like drawing Olaf.



Grants

The Green Foundation has generously given a \$25,000 grant to support IRL's general operating costs due to the loss of revenue related to COVID. This is the third consecutive year that The Green Foundation has supported IRL and its' programs. The first grant helped renovate our playground at Westmoreland Academy. The second grant helped establish a Motor Lab at Transition and Adult Services for clients to work on typing skills, computer skills, and interviewing skills to improve their opportunities for securing employment. IRL truly appreciates The Green Foundation's collaborative partnership and support of our mission and our programs.

THE GREEN
FOUNDATION



IRL's fiscal year ended on a high note for our Physical Education and sports programs. Good Sports, a non-profit organization committed to creating opportunities in sports and physical activity for kids by providing equipment, apparel, and footwear, will be donating baseball and softball gear and equipment to Almansor Academy and Westmoreland Academy. Our PE teachers are eager to add these two sports to their programs for the next school year! Good Sports made a two-year commitment to our programs.

In the News!

IRL is in the news! The South Pasadenan newspaper wrote a great article called "Special Needs in South Pasadena, Unwavering Care and Concern" and highlighted IRL and our mission of empowering individuals of all abilities to take charge of their own learning and lives. Click [HERE](#) to read the amazing article!



Also, don't forget our Amazon Smile account! "AmazonSmile" is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. Go to smile.amazon.com, login like normal, choose your charity (Institute for the Redesign of Learning) and you start to give with every purchase. Every dollar helps!



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