

PARSIPPANY'S GODDARD SCHOOL: NO MATTER HOW YOUNG THEY ARE, GRADS TAKE A LOT OF PRIDE IN THEIR DIPLOMAS

By Leslie Ruse • July 8, 2011



Goddard School owner Sushama Patil awards 5-year-old Jason Kahn a special certificate for attending the school since its opening.

Averi, 5, was excited to be graduating from her Pre-K class at The Goddard School®.

“She’s so excited to wear her cap and gown, the whole works,” said her mother, Andrea. “You’d think she was graduating from Harvard,” the Parsippany resident said.

Nearly 100 family members and friends attended the presentation of diplomas for the prekindergarten Class of 2011 at Parsippany’s Goddard School for Early Childhood Development in June. The graduation ceremony for 27 students took place in the school’s backyard.

“My son, Dominick, has been practicing. It’s just so adorable when you see all the kids in their caps and gowns,” said Stephanie Yturbe. “Dominick has been in the Goddard School since he was just about 2 years old. At that time, I wanted to enroll him somewhere for a couple of half-days a week for social interaction.

“Goddard was the first place I visited and toured, and I loved it right away. I did visit and tour several other facilities and not one of them even compared,” said Yturbe, the school’s PTO president.

Dressed in their white caps and gowns, the children took their seats under the watchful eye of Assistant Director Katie Cook of Bloomfield.

“The kids are so excited. They’ve been talking about the ceremony all day,” Cook said.

Director Linda Bartek started the ceremonies by speaking to the audience. “It’s a big day, and we’re really excited. I’m proud of each and every one of these children and wish them lots of success,” said Bartek, who has been a teacher for more than 13 years.

“We have some of the most dedicated teachers in the county. Without our teachers, this would not be possible,” she added.

The Pre-K teachers, Marissa Adams of Morris Plains, Jamie McIntyre of Morristown and Mohini Shetty of Pine Brook were presented with gifts from the school.

“This school is so terrific,” Adams said. “It’s a great place to work.”

Ravi Patil, owner of the school, awarded certificates to students who had attended the school since it opened five years ago. “This is our fourth graduation,” Patil said, smiling proudly.

After the procession, the class recited the Pledge of Allegiance and sang “Make New Friends” and “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.”

“Every time I hear this, it makes me cry,” said Dana Brannin of Denville, who attended the ceremony to see her 5-year-old nephew, Dominick Caponegro, graduate.

“He’s been here since they opened and got a special certificate for it. That was nice,” Brannin said.

“The teachers are really good here. They don’t miss a beat with the kids. They draw out the quiet ones and just really get to know the kids,” Andrew DeCicco said. “They do different things at this school. They make the kids be very disciplined and very courteous, which is good.”

After the ceremony, pictures were taken with the graduates, many posing with their teachers and family members. Then it was time for a celebratory piece of cake.

“I came because I wanted to see Averī’s graduation. It’s a really good school to start an education at,” Tara LoPiccolo of Long Valley said.

“Graduation can be a tough transition,” said Bartek. “But with the experience of our teachers, we know our graduates will make a smooth and happy move to the next level.”