

Congratulations GCC for Maintaining NAEYC Accreditation!

Happy Valentine's Day!

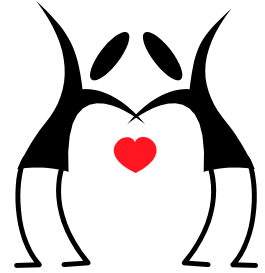
GREENBELT CHILDREN'S CENTER FEBRUARY 2012 NEWSLETTER

EDITED BY FLORA L. GEE, M.ED.

DIRECTOR

7600 HANOVER PARKWAY, SUITE 100

GREENBELT, MD 20770 (301) 345-8830 Phone (301) 345-0874 Fax



Dear Parents,

February marks the beginning of the Spring Semester. As we enter the second half of our school year, we welcome the new families that have recently joined us. We are very happy to have you here at GCC!

Parent, Khady Diene, (Awa-Rm 2), has been teaching French to each classroom in the Bonjour Francais Program. Khady is a graduate student at the University of Maryland and formerly taught French to young children while working in the Language Stars Program in Chicago. We are happy to highlight this enrichment program that benefits all GCC children.

We would also like to highlight our own music teacher, **Mr. James McKinney, parent of former students, Ambe & Azinwi, Rm 3**, who continues to be very involved in the **Grammy Awards** process and has been traveling to Los Angeles and New York recently. He was nominated in the 2009 Best Urban Alternative Performance category. He co-wrote and co-produced a re-make of Minnie Ripperton's "Loving You" for Maryland based artist, Wayna. He also produced the re-mix for the 2009 nominated performance of "Wanna Be" by Maishya. He continues to produce music and manage talented new artists. Last year he was nominated in the same category for artist, Carolyn Malachi. Congratulations to Mr. McKinney and we appreciate all that you do for the children at GCC in your music class.

Thank you to the following people:

- **Petra Foist, Kristina-Rm 3, for sending in the cakes for Three Kings Day**
- **Jennifer Simpson, Zoe-Rm1, for coffee & morning treats for staff**
- **Ms. Johnson, Rm 3 Assistant director/teacher for the wonderful hardback books from Weekly Reader that her grandson, Matthew, has donated to GCC**
- **Nissa Copeman, Daniel-Rm 3, for volunteering to talk to parents at drop off and followed up with emails to parents to encourage attendance at the Parent Advisory Board Meeting and the Parent-Teacher Training**

**And all the parents who volunteered their time to attend the meeting and training!
We know how valuable your time is!**

NAEYC Re-accreditation

How fast the year is passing! We are so proud of the efforts of all the faculty and staff for the hard work that is done every day to ensure that GCC is providing a high quality early childhood care and education program. The report from the National Association for the Education of Young Children received when we went through re-accreditation includes information about the term of our NAEYC accreditation (5 years) and a summary of scores for each of the 10 NAEYC standards. Our fourth and final annual report was sent to NAEYC last month along with our Intent To Renew form, required to maintain accreditation.

A summary from our last assessment visit shows:

| <u>Percentage of Met Criteria By Program Standard:</u> | | <u>Percentage of Met Criteria For Each Classroom Observed:</u> | |
|--|--------|--|-----|
| Relationships | 100% | Room 3 | 99% |
| Curriculum | 100% | Room 1 | 99% |
| Teaching | 100% | | |
| Assessment of Child Progress | 80% | | |
| Health | 100%* | | |
| Teachers | 80%* | | |
| Families | 83%* | | |
| Community Relationships | 100+%* | | |
| Physical Environment | 100%* | | |
| Leadership and Management | 100+%* | | |

| <u>Summary of Required Criteria</u> | | <u>Candidacy Requirements</u> | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----|
| 1.B.09 | Met | License Status | Met |
| 3.C.02 | N/A | Collaboration | Met |
| 3.C.04 | Met | Administrator Qualifications | Met |
| 5.A.03 | Met | Teacher Qualifications | Met |
| 5.A.12 | N/A | Assistant Teacher Qualifications | Met |
| 10.A.02 | Met | | |
| 10.B.04 | Met | | |

Note: To achieve NAEYC Accreditation, a program MUST: meet all Required Criteria; meet at least 80% of the criteria on which it is assessed for each program standard; and each observed classroom must meet at least 70% of the criteria on which it is assessed. Programs who do not meet Candidacy requirements may be subject to further verification.

* Score includes credit given for meeting Emerging Criteria (similar to extra credit, not yet required). Please note that even if our program scored 100% or better on a particular Program Standard, there still may be topic areas reported for ongoing improvements. This can occur because Emerging Criteria is extra credit when scoring. Therefore, there could be unmet criteria in a particular topic area although the credit given for meeting the emerging criteria raised the Program Standard score to 100% or more.

During each site visit, classroom observations are random and the assessor does an observation in 50 % of all classrooms. In the last visit, Rooms 1 and 3 were the randomly assessed classrooms.

We will be working on a program improvement plan for use in re-accreditation, based on our most recent Family Survey completed by parents in November and results reported in the GCC newsletter last month. (You can always go to www.greenbeltchildrenscenter.com to see past newsletters). We must continue to have the input of families in order to provide the best program for the children and we appreciate your time and efforts. NAEYC is considered the “Gold Standard” in early childhood education. You should feel very good about the choice that you have made for your child. Greenbelt Children’s Center is a very good place for children!

New Family Survey will be conducted by parents on Thursday, March 22, 2012!

Please put an extra couple minutes in your schedule to complete another required survey for the NAEYC re-accreditation process. We will be asking for parent volunteers to help hand out and collect the surveys so that parents are assured of anonymity and can answer candidly. It was suggested by parents at the Advisory Board meeting that the definitions for some items on the survey, be explained in our newsletter. For example, the term “child with special needs” can include a child with : a learning disability, a chronic condition such as diabetes or sickle cell anemia, a visual impairment requiring adaptive equipment (glasses), an orthopedic issue requiring braces, a food allergy requiring substitution of foods and/or medication in the event of emergency, asthma and many other issues including administration of medication or caring for a child who is mildly ill, until the parent arrives. So if you are asked if GCC accommodates children with special needs, we hope you will be able to answer that we certainly do!

February Activities:

Teachers have a full month of activities planned for your child, which may include units on Black History, President's Day, Valentine's Day, and Dental Health. Room 3 will also do a unit on dinosaurs. In addition to these units, children and family members will be involved in a Valentine’s Day Book Club event and continuing activities about different kinds of transportation and car seat safety. Look for the sign-up sheet to volunteer to read at the Valentine’s Day Book Club Event!

Lending Library Continues!

Have you been faithful about reading 10 books per month to your child? Thank you!! We need your help in fulfilling goals for the grant partnership with the local school system. We need you to *borrow, log and read 10 books every month!!* We need you to *return the books* after your child is finished with them (this may be several days as children may want to hear it again and again.). When you return the books, the staff will assist you in *getting new books* for your child. This is a three step process! Can we count on you? It’s a very good thing for your child! More and more research is showing that the children who love books are the children that succeed in school! We are offering an incentive to each classroom that has *100% family participation of ten books read to each child* by the end of February! Every family must meet the goal or the class will not earn

the incentive. Please make sure you are helping to meet this goal-**check out a book today!** Read 10 books each month to your child from our lending library! Help your child's class to meet the goal this and every month!

IMPORTANT TAX INFORMATION

When claiming child care on your income tax form, you will need to use the Center's **FEDERAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER** which is: **52-1689271**. End of year tax summaries were placed in Art folders in January for use in filing your income taxes.

EARNED INCOME CREDIT

Also, for *any family* with an income of about \$33,692.00 or less, be sure to fill out "Schedule EIC" to see if you are eligible for **UP TO \$4900.00** of Earned Income Credit (this is a Federal Income Tax Form). This benefit is for both married and single parents. There is also a **Maryland EIC for your state taxes**. For more information about the Earned Income Credit and where you can get your taxes done for free, call **First Call For Help at 1-800-492-0618** or the **IRS toll free at 1-800-829-1040** or go to www.irs.gov/individuals/topic.

ABSOLUTE NECESSITIES

Every child needs an extra complete change of clothes at all times! Please check, while you are reading this, to see if your child has underwear and socks as well as an extra shirt and pants. Remember - your child really counts on you for this! (Two changes are requested for the younger children.) **Please send boots and mittens so that we can comfortably enjoy the outdoors whenever the weather allows. Please label each item brought from home your child's name.**

Also, we are making a plea for parents to limit lunch that must be heated up to only 2-3 days per week, maximum. Think about it- there is only one microwave per class, 20 children and if everyone has something that takes *only 90 seconds* that is $20 \times 90 \text{ seconds} = 1800 / 60 = 30$ minutes! This equation does not account for putting things in and taking them out! The last child to get his lunch heated up is now crying because the others are finished eating. **PLEASE** help us with this problem! Children like sandwiches and salads too!

Did You Know?

- **That GCC is a nut free environment? We have children who have severe allergies to all tree nuts and peanuts. Please do not send in anything containing nuts. This is a life or death issue for some of our children and we thank you for being members of a caring community.**
- **GCC FOLLOWS THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SNOW OR EMERGENCY CLOSINGS. (IF SCHOOLS OPEN LATE, GCC WILL OPEN LATE ALSO!) Sometimes the public schools are closed when GCC is open, meaning no inclement weather announcement would be made by the school system. If that happens try WTOP 103.5 FM or FOX TV Channel 5 or News Channel 4 for a GCC announcement.** You can register for PG County School's email alerts at www.schoolsout.com and "friend" us on Facebook. All of these were used on Monday, January 23, 2012 when we had a 2 hour delay due icy conditions and public schools were scheduled to be closed.
- February is African American History month and Children's Dental Health Month.
- Lesson plans and monthly menus are posted in your child's classroom on the Parent



Information Bulletin Board. Be sure to stop and take a look at least once per week. Classroom Art Folders are considered "Parent Mailboxes". Be sure to check yours daily for important communications being sent home to you.

- Also, remember that you can view our Breakfast & Snack menu, Newsletters and Calendars for each month of the school year on our website at www.greenbeltchildrenscenter.com. Our web site now has a gallery for viewing photos.
- Our former student and friend, Saul, who has moved back to Finland, sent a package and letter to the GCC friends last month. The letter was charming; the pictures included skiing, a favorite sport and some children's CD's for the classroom. We remember our friend fondly and the children in Room 3 have decided that they would write back to thank him and his family for the gifts and share what the GCC children are doing. What a great pen pal opportunity!
- Please make sure your child's shot record is up to date in the office! Remember to *update the office anytime your child receives boosters! (Especially for four or five year olds who will be in Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten next year!)*
- Please remember to check the Parent Information Board in your child's classroom for specific details about show and tell each week. Parents' efforts with show and tell have been wonderful this school year!
- It's time to plan for the children's transitions for next school year. Some children will change classrooms in the fall: children turning four by September 1, 2012 may be eligible to move to Pre-k in **Room 1** if your family resides in Prince Georges' County and meets any other eligibility requirements needed. If you are an out of county resident, your child will join the Pre-k program in **Room 3**. Children turning five by that date will be eligible for the alternative **kindergarten program at GCC in Room 3**. We are counting on our pre-k families to enroll their children in our alternative Kindergarten program, if you would prefer a smaller class size and a very favorable teacher to child ratio for your child, prior to going to the first grade. Please support GCC's alternative kindergarten program and give your child the benefits that are offered here!
- Children entering the public school system usually need to be registered by May.
- GCC teachers will begin working on individualized transition plans which includes preparing information for each child's future teachers and discussing upcoming changes with children so that they will be well prepared for change.

Social-Emotional Skills that Promote School Readiness:

- ✓ Being able to wait
- ✓ Controlling anger & impulses
- ✓ Expressing empathy with other's feelings
- ✓ Following rules, routines & directions
- ✓ Giving compliments
- ✓ Helping adults & peers
- ✓ Identifying feelings in oneself and others
- ✓ Learning how to calm down
- ✓ Learning how to recognize anger in oneself and others
- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Sharing toys and other materials
- ✓ Showing patience for others
- ✓ Suggesting play themes and activities to peers
- ✓ Taking turns



- ✓ Understanding appropriate ways to express anger
- ✓ Understanding how and when to apologize

By giving children the tools that they need to work well with others, and be flexible and responsive, we provide the foundations for healthy social-emotional development. Let's work together at home and at GCC, to teach, model and practice these important life skills for our children.



Children's Legislative Day in Annapolis

Mrs. Gee participated as an advocate for early childhood care and education by joining many others from Maryland Family Network (MFN), Md State Child Care Association, Maryland Family Child Care Association and the Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC) to visit legislators in Annapolis on Monday, January 30, 2012. Please let Mrs. Gee know if you would like to attend any MFN Public Policy meetings in Baltimore to be a part of important discussions about legislative issues that affect children and families, especially the Maryland budget this year. The Children's Advocacy Evening is a yearly event attended by many providers who work in centers and family child care homes. Mrs. Gee was successful in meeting with Senator Peters, Delegate Hubbard and the staff of Senator Currie, Benson, Pinsky and left her card for Senator Muse. Other members of our Prince Georges County Advocacy group made visits to the rest of the county delegation.



Pre-school For All

Mrs Gee made a joint presentation with Amanda Smith, PGCCPS Educator, to the Director's Networking Meeting at the Prince George's Child Resource Center last month. The presentation included information on the 10 benchmarks of high quality pre-school and how they relate to readiness once children enter primary school. She will also present at the Celebrate Children Early Childhood Conference on Saturday, April 14 at Henry Wise High School. Mrs. Gee is also scheduled to attend the annual Public Policy Forum of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and will be visiting our federal legislators on Capitol Hill on February 28 and 29th, as a member of the Public Policy Committee for the MDAEYC.



Welcome College Interns!

We welcome students from the University of Maryland and the Prince George's Community College, as they begin fieldwork or internship placements under the guidance of our GCC teachers for the Spring Semester. GCC serves as an educational resource for the local colleges in our community because of the high quality of the program and teaching staff, as evidenced by the accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. We also have three interns from Eleanor Roosevelt High School's Child Development program and one from Parkdale High School. (Parkdale, PGCC and UM are Mrs. Gee's alma maters). Some high school students have the opportunity to actually earn college credits during their senior year of high school through this program. We appreciate the GCC teachers who are mentoring our interns. Unfortunately, this is the last year scheduled for the child development program at

Eleanor Roosevelt, as the school system is reforming secondary education into academies and the two closest child development/teacher education high schools will be at Northwestern and Parkdale.

Playground Fundraiser News: Franklin's Restaurant March 20, 2012

We have been working on raising funds to renovate the GCC playground which was installed new in 1993. Thanks to the efforts of our families, we have replaced the large climber/slide this winter but we must continue to make improvements for the sake of the children. As part of the re-accreditation process with NAEYC, we will have a certified playground inspector coming in March. It would be great if we could raise enough funds to replace the small spider climber and swings, neither of which meets current guidelines. So please help us with our continuing fundraising efforts. We begin a new fundraiser on Tuesday, March 20, 2012. **To support GCC, please tell all your family friends and coworkers to go to Franklin's Restaurant in Hyattsville on Route 1, for lunch or dinner or make a purchase at the General Store onsite and when paying, say to the hostess "We are here for Greenbelt Children's Center and give them the receipt. A portion of the profits from that day that are attributed to our center will be sent to GCC. Anyone choosing not to go out for a meal is encouraged to make a donation. Let's work together to get the job done!**

Wolf Trap Artist in Residency Program

The children will soon be enjoying activities with our Artist in Residency Program, again. Each classroom will be engaged in bringing language and literacy to life as they relate to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), through an innovative new program. Children participate using the performing arts to act out stories, learn skills such as perspective taking and character education and values as they take on the roles of characters in the stories. When Wolf Trap Foundation contacted us to invite our pre-school, pre-k and kindergarten programs to participate in this new and innovative offering for the years 2011 and 2012, we said "Sign us up!" We look forward to participating in this new endeavor, again. We think that your child will benefit very much from the participation of this program and we are happy to be able to offer it here at GCC.

