

MARCH 2009 NEWSLETTER

Greenbelt Children's Center

Accredited by NAEYC

Edited by Flora L. Gee, Director

7600 Hanover Parkway, Greenbelt, Maryland 20770 (301) 345-8830/345-0874 fax
www.greenbeltchildrenscenter.com

Dear Parents:

March 20th is the first official day of spring and we look forward with excited anticipation to this wonderful season. The children will soon enjoy nature walks around the grounds of the Center to look for signs of spring. The teachers at Greenbelt Children's Center enjoy the opportunity to help the children discover the changes of each season. Just imagine what it must be like to watch the beautiful miracles of springtime through the eyes of a young child! We hope that everyone takes some time to celebrate the season of spring with his or her child! Go visit the library, the zoo, or a museum with your child, or go to a park-*everyone* plays!

MARCH UNITS

This month the children will be finishing up Transportation Units. We hope that all families are faithfully buckling their child in the back seat in order to keep all our friends safe. We believe it's important to introduce the children to the world of work through the next unit, Community Helpers. **Parents, you are sincerely invited to participate by visiting the classroom to talk about your occupation (or a related one).** We suggest that parents bring "hands on" items to pass around or show to make the experiences more concrete for young children. For example; painter: paintbrushes and rollers; accountant: adding machine with tape and office supplies; nurse/doctor: stethoscope and flashlight, etc. **If you can participate, please arrange a day and time with your child's teacher.** Throughout the month, we will provide opportunities for the children to try on different roles from the world of work through dramatic play. We will also turn our house corners into post offices, grocery stores, a hair salons, hospitals, etc.

We are seeking empty food cartons, junk mail, dress up items, etc. that you might be able to send in to replenish some of the dramatic play materials for the Dramatic Play/Imagination Centers located in each classroom. Please save these items for us! Bring them in any time!
(OR ANYTHING ELSE THAT MIGHT BE GOOD FOR PRETENDING!)



Have You Checked The Bulletin Boards Lately?

Did you know that *every day* you can find out all the details about what the teachers have planned for your child? All you need to do is go to the classroom bulletin board that says "Parent Information". Your child's *Daily Schedule* is posted there as well as the *Weekly Lesson Plans* with all the activities that will occur each day. You can find out what's for morning or afternoon snack, what to help your child select for Show and Tell on Friday, and what story teachers will be reading to the children each day. You can find out what the

classroom is discussing for Social Studies (circle time) or what the Cooking Project will be this week! **Please also remember that Mrs. Gee has a Parent Resource Bulletin Board outside the office where items of interest that come across her desk are hung to share. It is our goal to keep you informed about available resources and your child's program everyday at GCC! A brief minute or two daily will be time well spent!**

From Childcare Information Exchange

Recent research on the impact of violence on children in their early years should prompt a call to action for all citizens." This stirring charge came from Kevin J. Swick and Nancy K. Freeman in their article, "Nurturing Peaceful Children to Create a Caring World: The Role of Families and Communities," in **Childhood Education** (Fall 2004;

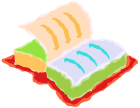
www.acei.org/cehp.htm). In this article, the authors talk about how adults serve as important role models on how to love and how to care. They share four elements identified by Pearl Oliner in children's early relations that enhance their growth toward becoming caring persons...

"Bonding: forming positive connections and establishing a sense of communion with others.

"Empathizing: understanding others' feelings and emotions, sometimes even feeling what they feel.

"Learning caring norms: acquiring rules and values, learning to recognize caring for what it is, and to respond to care with care.

"Practicing care and assuming personal responsibility: participating in activities and developing a sense of personal obligation for doing so."



The BOOK IT! Beginners program starts March 2nd! See details in your child's classroom. *This is sponsored by Pizza Hut.*



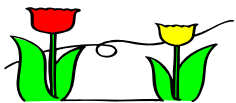
Judy Hoyer Grant and Extra Curricular Programs!

We are so fortunate to have a lot of different programs that our children get exposure to at Greenbelt Children's Center! Our Spanish language program takes place every week for all children. The Music Instruction and Physical Education programs take place every month. All classrooms enjoy the WolfTrap Artist in Residency program that focuses on drama and literacy-what a fun and educational program! The benefits of the grant also include the Lending Library, Book Club Events, technical assistance, and classroom computer support as well as Parent-Teacher training.



LOOKING AHEAD . . . THINK SUMMER!

Be sure to start thinking about your summer schedules because you will definitely want your child to enjoy the special opportunities we are planning for them at our Summer Camp Program this year! We have been busy working on our Summer Activity Calendar, we have some wonderful special events planned including some of the favorites that the children enjoyed so much last year! The Summer Camp Calendar will be available soon! Children attending the Camp Program can look forward to swimming at the pool, musical entertainment, drama, science programs, and pony rides - just to name a few!!



We *anticipate* Summer Camp to begin on June 22nd and continue for 9 weeks until August 20th. A schedule form for your child will be sent home soon so that you will be able to reserve a space for your child, **before** we offer spaces to the general public. It is very important to work on your summer plans now; we anticipate great demand and long waiting lists, especially now that all spaces for this semester have been filled.

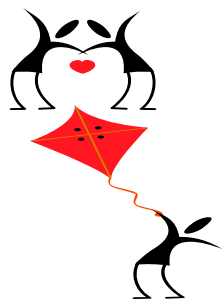
Look for the **Summer and Fall Intention letter** that will be sent home with your child. This form will be due back to the office in early **April**. It will have information about next school year's calendar and fees. Parents will need to complete the intention form for the upcoming summer and fall program at Greenbelt Children's Center regarding your child's continued enrollment. (**Summer schedules will be due by end of April.**) A transition plan for next year will be developed for each child as soon as parents notify the GCC office of their child's plans for the coming year. It is important that teachers help each child to transition to the next classroom situation so that the child will feel secure and confident and know what to expect for the next assignment. **Parents who commit to our fall 2009-10 program by submitting their NON-REFUNDABLE materials fee by April 17, 2009, will have tuition held at the current tuition prices: Rm 2 \$199 per week/ Rm 1 & 3 (pre-k or alternate K programs) at \$179 per week (reminder Rm 1 pre-k receives a 40% subsidy for the 42 weeks of the school year.) and \$139 per week for Before & After Care for Grades 1st-3rd. If you miss the deadline, tuition will increase as per published rates.**

Alternative Kindergarten Experience: Parents of children turning five by *September 1st, 2009* should see Mrs. Johnson or Ms. Jill about alternate Kindergarten options for the fall in Room 3's classroom at Greenbelt Children's Center. *We hope that there will be strong, continued support for the alternate Kindergarten program at Greenbelt Children's Center. The benefits for your child include the smaller class size, two teachers for more individualized attention, child care to cover your entire work day, a calendar with more days open, research based curriculum that is approved by the MD State Department of Education and an excellent four star NAEYC accredited early childhood program. These are very important things to consider as you make your choice for the fall. The value of our alternative kindergarten experience is exceptional. Please consider giving your child this gift the year before starting the first grade at public or private school.*

We will continue our **partnership with Prince George's County Public School for the Pre-k Public School Program that is here at Greenbelt Children's Center.** The age of entry into Pre-K requirement is: "turning four years old by September 1st, 2009." We have enjoyed the additional resources for all the children in the center that come with this partnership with the local school system (lending library, Artist in Residency from Wolftrap, Drama Program with Inter-Act Story Theatre, Book Club Events, Specialty Instructors, etc.) Tuition in the public school classroom receive the additional benefit of a **40% child care subsidy during the 42 week school year, bringing the tuition down to only \$107.40 for each of those weeks.**

Worthy Wage Day

Worthy Wage Day is held on May 1st of each year to draw attention to the inadequate pay of Early Childhood Professionals. In a recent publication, "Staff Turnover in Child Care Centers : Maryland 2006", by the Maryland Committee for Children, it was



reported that “Only 18 occupations out of 770 surveyed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2003 reported having lower mean wages than child care workers. Those who earned higher wages than child care workers included service station attendants, bicycle repairers, and locker room attendants.” The problem is pervasive in the field and the result is a major factor affecting the recruitment and retention of high-quality childcare professionals. This is linked to serious consequences that could adversely affect young children in care, as a result of high turnover of childcare staff. There is a saying that goes “Parents can’t afford to pay; teachers can’t afford to stay, let’s take action for a better way!) This has an effect that everyone in our society needs to consider. Even if your child is safe and getting a wonderful pre-school education in an accredited center, when s/he gets to higher grades, will the other children in his classes be well prepared and ready to learn? When your business needs to hire workers, will they be prepared, reliable, and able to function successfully? What about the children who are not nurtured and cared for properly? Research shows that this affects many things later in life, such as high school drop out rates, teen pregnancy, incarceration rates, drug use, and crime rates. ***Each child needs to have the best possible beginning and it is the responsibility of all citizens, businesses and levels of government to make circumstances good for all children.***



The children at GCC are very fortunate. We have very little staff/teacher turnover, partly because we work so hard at retaining the good teachers who are here.

It has been a tradition for parents to do something special to show appreciation for our staff at GCC on a Friday in May, date to be announced. If you would like to be on a parent committee or chair the committee, to plan something special to show appreciation for our hard working teachers and assistants, please let Mrs. Gee know.

Thank Yous!

Thank you to everyone who sent in donations for the goodies contributed to the Valentine’s Day parties and to those who will donate their time for the upcoming Book Club Event on Friday, March 20th! We will need volunteers to come and read to the children that day and help with a book distribution. Look for a sign-up sheet in your child’s classroom, coming soon!



Twelfth Annual Early Childhood Conference at Henry Wise Jr. High School

This conference will take place on Saturday, March 28th from 8 am to 4 pm. The conference is appropriate for parents, teachers, and administrators. Some topics include Early Literacy, Science, Health & Safety, Child Development, Parenting Skills, Discipline a “virtual classroom” a Literacy Concert and many more interesting subjects! Most of the staff at GCC volunteer at the conference or serve on the steering committee, as well as attend the trainings. There will be exhibitors with items for sale and booths for information. The conference is very popular, so sign up quickly if you want to attend. The cost is \$65.00 (\$85.00 after 3/13/09) and includes continental breakfast & lunch. Registration is by mail through the Prince Georges Community College.

Policy Reminders!

Keeping children healthy needs to be everyone’s goal. Please do not send your child who has awakened with a fever to school if you have given Tylenol or Motrin. This just masks the symptoms until the fever returns; **meanwhile this ill child has just exposed all the healthy**

children and teachers to the contagious illness. Remember to keep your child at home until symptom-free for 24 hours, before returning to school. Only send your child when your child is well enough to participate in all scheduled activities, including going outside to play.

Also remember to check your child's extra clothes. Are they weather appropriate? Did you include extra socks and shoes in case a puddle is encountered? Rain boots are always welcome! Help your child enjoy the spring outdoors.

Also, remember that a serving for a young child 2-5 years is: **¼ cup vegetable** or **½ cup fruit, one ounce of protein, ½ cup of rice, cereal, etc.** We sometimes see portions that are much too large packed in children's lunches. Please do remember to send in 2 fruits and/or vegetables each day for every lunch!



Hearing and Vision Testing

On March 5th, Maryland Vision and Hearing will be here at GCC to screen children ages 2.5-5 years for these important abilities. There is a very nominal fee (\$25.00 for both screenings) for their service and forms will be sent home in your child's art folder. The screening is free for families of PG County Public School Pre-k children who attend GCC. **All children enrolled in the Public Pre-k in Room 1 will have the fee paid for by the Judy Hoyer Pre-k Grant.** Children should have a yearly screening in the early childhood years, and we are fortunate to offer this service in a convenient way for busy working parents.

School Picture Day

On Friday, March 13th, the Picture People will be here to photograph the children for school portraits. Be sure to fill out the form in advance of this day. The forms will be sent home via Art Folders on Monday, March 9th and we will need your form back with the information and your permission required.

Protecting Our Children

April is Child Abuse Awareness Month, both in the state of Maryland and throughout the country. As child care providers, we are required by law to report any suspicions to the local Protective Services Office. Teachers are trained to pick up on early warning signals that a child is at risk and all staff members in a NAEYC accredited program are expected to do what they can to help prevent child abuse. GCC also has free supports for any family that may be dealing with any difficult family issues such as divorce, death in the family, separation, step parenting and blended family issues, etc. Each family may access the family social worker at Bowie Therapeutic Nursery through the Early Childhood Consultative Service that GCC subscribes to on behalf of all families here. Please see Mrs. Gee if you would like to access this free service available to each GCC family.

