

Greenbelt Children's Center

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NOVEMBER 2008 NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents,

The month of November is a time to be thankful and we certainly have much to be thankful for at GCC. Many thanks to all of you who have been able to take an active role in your child's program since the start of the first semester. Family support and involvement is an important component of our program. **Parents and Grandparents, you have simply amazed us!!!** Please remember that we sincerely welcome and encourage you to come and visit your child's class anytime. For anyone that can, bring a brown bag and come join your child for lunch! We guarantee the children will treat you as a VIP and your child will feel very special to have you visit at lunchtime.

NOVEMBER MEANS NUTRITION

November means the end of the harvest and the children will be spending the next few weeks learning about nutrition. They will be involved in units about the food pyramid food guide, where foods come from, and discussions about healthy foods vs. junk foods. **Parents can help by being sure that healthy lunches are being packed, using the guidelines in the GCC Parent Handbook.** (Remember: fruit roll ups, gummy animals, etc ARE NOT FRUIT! They are the equivalent to candy. We allow them but you must pack **2 SERVINGS** of FRUITS AND/OR VEGETABLES IN EACH LUNCH!) We'll be looking for those *two* fruits and/or veggies! This month will also bring discussions of the Thanksgiving Day Holiday, Thanksgiving traditions and our compassion for people less fortunate.



Parent Involvement: Parent-Teacher Trainings

We had our first Parent-Teacher Training last month on October 7th. We would like to see more parents come to evening meetings and we do all we can to support your effort to do so (free pizza & childcare) Latoya Harper-Williams from Gryphon House Publishing, Inc. was our speaker and handouts were given on "Supporting Young Children as Writers". It was an enlightening experience and a wonderful opportunity for parents and teachers to learn together. Remember, **YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S FIRST AND LIFELONG TEACHER!** If you missed this event and want a copy of any handout, please ask your child's teacher or stop in the office. **Parent-Teacher conferences will be available this month. Look for a sign-up sheet in your child's classroom.**



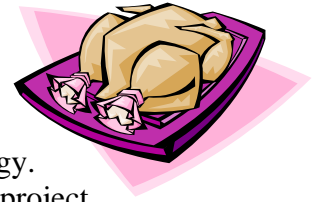
Canned Food Drive

Our center will participate in the canned and boxed food drive sponsored by the Greenbriar Community and to help stock the Bowie Food Pantry, which is experiencing a severe shortage. **From now until November 21st, you may have your child bring in a donation of canned or dry goods** to drop in the designated box at GCC. All foods donated will go to Thanksgiving baskets for local families throughout Prince Georges County who are less fortunate. We will also participate in the Greenbriar Coat Drive, so you may also donate clean and usable coats as well, through November 21st. A toy drive

will take place from December 1st through 15th.

Annual GCC Thanksgiving Feast

We will have our annual Celebration and Feast on the Friday before Thanksgiving, November 21st. As has been our tradition in recent years, we acknowledge that we are all working parents with limited time and energy. Therefore, each classroom will contribute to the feast by making a cooking project using corn, cranberries, pumpkin, or sweet potatoes as a major ingredient, and enough for all the children in the center (and any parents or grandparents who can join us). Then, on that day, the children will join together to enjoy these special treats with a turkey prepared by one of our staff. We are looking for a parent, aunt/uncle or grandparent who can come in early to carve the turkey this year. Parents are invited to join us for this and you don't need to bring anything but yourself! And promise to read to a child or two! (If you really want to bring something or help with clean up or settling the children for naptime, that would of course be so appreciated!) **We will combine this activity with a Book Club Event! We will need parents or other family members to sign up to volunteer to read to the children and help us with a book distribution so that each child receives a free book of their choosing to keep for their home library.. Please look for the sign up in your child's classroom and volunteer at GCC! Join us for the Thanksgiving feast!**



Congratulations to teachers Donna Bell-Nance and Sherelle Thomas!

Both were recipients of Teacher Honors at the 13th Annual Teacher Awards Dinner honoring Teacher-Artist Partnerships with Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts. Each received a plaque at the Awards dinner followed by a special citation from the Maryland Legislators from District 22. Each received a beautiful document with the state seal and ribbon signed by the Honorable Delegates Ann Healy, Justin Ross and Tawanna Gaines and Senator Paul Pinsky. We are very proud of all our GCC teachers but especially Ms. Donna and Ms. Sherelle for this recognition.

Thank You!

Thanks for all the party goodies for the celebrations in October. Thank you to all the families that supported the GCC fundraiser! Some of you made extraordinary efforts!

Congratulations to MacKenzie Creel, Rm 2, and family, for having the largest order! MacKenzie will receive the Savings Bond! Xavier Pickett's name was pulled in the drawing for a free week of tuition! Way to go Xavier & MacKenzie! We promise to provide more opportunities for fundraiser participation!

DID YOU KNOW???.

- **GCC is closed on November 11th for Teacher In-service Day? (Veteran's Day Holiday is also observed on that day and PG County Public Schools are closed.)**
- ...that ALL children should have extra clothes on hand in case of an "accident" or if juice is spilled, etc.? This prevents a distressed child and teacher from having to disturb you at work to bring something dry for your child! **A shoebox or similar**



container keeps everything together nicely and fits into the cubby space well. Cubby boxes make it easy for teachers and children to find things! **A photograph of your child or family**, fastened on the end is a wonderful identification marker and especially tells non-reading children where their belongings are kept. *Please check today* to see that your child has shirt, pants, **underpants**, and socks on hand at the center, and that all is **clearly marked with your child's name**. We request two complete changes for a younger child. *Please make sure that you TAKE OUT ALL SUMMER CLOTHES NOW before it becomes the dead of winter and we pull out a tank top and shorts!!! WE THANK YOU AND YOUR CHILD THANKS YOU, TOO!* Extra shoes are super too!

- ...that extreme caution should be used when entering/leaving the parking lot in case a toddler should pull free and bolt away from a parent! Drive slowly and be very observant!
- ...parents can go to www.greenbeltchildrenscenter.com to view the GCC newsletter or email Mrs. Gee?



SNOW POLICY REMINDER

Yes, we realize that very few of us want to think about snow yet, but as winter weather approaches, please remember our snow closing policy. Greenbelt Children's Center will follow the **snow or other emergency closing announcements made over the radio and television for Prince George's County Public Schools**. If the public schools announce that they will be opening late due to emergency conditions, we will open late also. For example, if public schools open 1 hour late, GCC would open at 8 am. If public schools open 2 hours late, GCC opens at 9 am. If the public schools close early, we ask that parents pick up their child as soon as possible and we will close when the last child is picked up or specify an early closing time for the center after calling all parents.

Extracurricular Activities

McKinney's Music Mondays have been fantastic! Children are learning about musical instruments, instrumental timbre (instrument sounds), musical notes and beats and musical terms. For instance, they learned about percussion instruments and each one was given the opportunity to play the drums during the last class in October. They enjoy this program very much and current research shows music and math are very closely related. Parents passing by often stop to watch because it is so engaging for the children.

Club Espanol is teaching the children and staff Spanish language and culture through activities and song. Teachers and children practice Spanish each day in every day GCC activities such as Calendar time, math, and social conversations. This year, the children are being grouped into Spanish 1st year and 2nd year classes to individualize the program. **Funtastic Fitness** gets everybody's heart pumping through challenging physical fitness activities as well as activities to teach balance, coordination, cooperation and team work. **Computer and technology support** has enabled each classroom to connect to the internet from their classroom computers. Teachers have

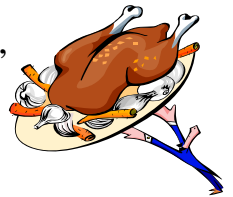
email access and received training on the use of the digital camera to document evidence of learning to share with parents and for classroom portfolios required as for NAEYC.

Inclusion of All Children

Greenbelt Children's Center advocates on behalf of all children and believes that each child has the right to be cared for in a safe, nurturing developmentally appropriate environment. Sometimes children may have sensory behavior dysfunction or poor impulse control or delays in speech or language skills. However, these children need us the most. Children are all children first, regardless of special needs. Please understand that staff and I are very aware of the levels that children may be functioning at and that we will be working with appropriate resources to ensure that children receive early intervention and services, as needed. Parents need to be aware that a child's behavior may look like aggression but may really be poor impulse control. We ask that our community of families be patient, understanding and tolerant of children who may have special needs as they are learning social, cognitive, physical and emotional skills, just like everyone else. They may just need more time than your child to learn these same important life skills. Thanks for your patience.

THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY REMINDER

Prince George's County Public Schools are closed November 14, 11, 26, 27 & 28th. **GCC will be CLOSED on Tuesday, November 11th as well as Thursday and Friday, November 27th and 28th**, for the Thanksgiving Holiday. We wish you and your family a safe and happy Thanksgiving!



From Parent Tip's:

“Make sure you read to your child daily, for the undivided time together and the literacy skills as well. This shows the importance that you place in books. Engage children in selecting favorite books. It's okay to select the same book over and over again. The repetition helps your child understand the story line and the characters, and helps them understand sequence, cause and effect. Link books and reading experiences with real life activities **and use non-fiction books**. This helps them understand that there are books that help people with every day activities. Share the newspaper with older pre-schoolers and school agers, especially the Mini Page of the Washington Post. Try the comics and the weather report! Ask librarians to suggest special books for your child. They are aware of children's favorites and award winners as well!

See That Your Child Eats Well! *Eating right provides your child with the*

energy to be enthusiastic and focused. Typically, preschoolers need three snack size meals and two healthful snacks a day.

- You decide what your child eats and when- but it is up to the child to decide how much. If most of your child's meals are healthful, he will naturally eat the amount that is right for his growing body.
- If your child doesn't want to eat, don't force the issue. Forcing your child to eat when he is not hungry encourages overeating, which can lead to weight gain.
- Introduce one new food at a time. Be patient. Remember, it can take a while for your child to develop new tastes.
- Certain items such as candy and fried foods can be enjoyed as an occasional treat in limited amounts.
- Breakfast really *is* the most important meal of the day and gives your child the fuel to start the day.
- Sit down and eat with your child. He will mimic your good eating habits.

Parent Tips in This Difficult Economy from the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Parents needn't despair. There are ways to help you save on child care expenses that doesn't entail bringing your child to the weekly sales meeting.

Take advantage of tax credits

Uncle Sam can offer cash-strapped parents some relief. The Child and Dependent Care Credit allows working parents to claim up to \$3,000 for one child and up to \$6,000 for two or more children on their 2008 income taxes for money spent on child care. Just keep in mind that the maximum credit to which you're entitled will be reduced if you use your employer's flexible spending account, says Bob Scharin, senior tax analyst in the Tax & Accounting business of Thomson Reuters. (More on this in the next section.)

Check IRS.gov for more information.

Open a Dependent-Care Flexible-Spending Account

Offered by 96% of employers, according to Hewitt Associates, these accounts function like medical FSAs by allowing workers to set aside pretax dollars -- a maximum of \$5,000 -- to pay for child care. Eligible expenses include day-care centers, baby sitters and even day

camps. To qualify, your spouse must be working, looking for work or a full-time student.

Remember that the same expenses can't be used for both the tax credit and the FSA, says Mark Luscombe, principal analyst at CCH, a unit of Wolters Kluwer, a tax information provider. For example, if a taxpayer had \$8,000 in qualifying expenses for one child, \$5,000 could be covered by the FSA and the remaining \$3,000 could qualify for the full child and dependent care credit, depending on your income. If a taxpayer had \$5,000 in expenses for one child, the costs could be covered entirely by the FSA and no expenses would qualify for the credit.

Seek Child Care Subsidies If you are Eligible

GCC accepts all child care subsidies and because we are NAEYC accredited, our families that are eligible can use them here. Check this out if you think you might qualify for a Child Care Subsidy:

Prince Georges County Department of Social Services, Purchase of Child Care Voucher 301-909-6200

**National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral
Military Child care Subsidy 1-800-793-0324 x 163**

Federal Employees Education Act- check with your Human Resources Department if you are a Federal Government Employee

