

GREENBELT CHILDREN'S CENTER OCTOBER 2008 NEWSLETTER

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OCTOBER NEWS

The month of October is a very exciting one for everyone at Greenbelt Children's Center! The units for this month include The Five Senses, Parts of the Body, The Season of Fall, and Fire Safety. Where do you find the daily activities scheduled for YOUR child??? On the Parent Information Bulletin Board in your child's classroom! Our teachers post them up just for YOU! Remember, YOU are the first and lifelong teacher in your child's life and we want to make sure that we include you in our program.

Parent-Teacher Night

We had a wonderful time at our "Back to School Night". Parents were given a lot of information about the goals for the children, information about children's assessments, curriculum, activities and routines, ideas for healthy lunches and much more! There was an opportunity to meet all the staff and taste samples from our fundraiser. We talked about the success that the entire faculty made towards the re-accreditation with the National Association for the Education of Young Children, getting the grant award for two more years that funds the Pre-k program in Room 1 which is subsidizing 40% of parent fees in that classroom during the PGCPs year. MSDE grants also fund the Spanish Language, physical education, and music programs, InterAct Story Theater and the Wolf Trap Artist in Residency programs, funds the lending library, the Book Club Events and pays for the field trips. All of the children and families benefit from most of these "extras". Kudos to the staff for all the extra work that must be done to document the outcomes of all these benefits, the paperwork is unbelievable and our staff goes above & beyond the call of duty in many respects. We also announced that we received a letter from the MD State Department of Education awarding a grant to Classrooms 2 and 3 for new curriculums. Room 2 will be receiving the Creative Curriculum by Teaching Strategies and Room 3 will be receiving the Houghton Mifflin updated version of their curriculum. The combined total of this grant is almost \$6000.00. We also shared our "Project Security



Blanket" Disaster/Risk Management Plans that our Disaster Planning Committee has been working on for several years. It was recently submitted to the state and received approval. All parents have been given a copy of the plan and are expected to know what would occur in different emergency situations and are invited to comment on the plans and suggest improvements. Parents are invited to take an active role at GCC, which includes responding to Family Survey forms asking you if you have been informed about all of the above information, including a lot of information from the Parent Handbook that was reviewed with each of you when you first visited GCC. We count on you to be able to answer all the questions favorably when the time comes to conduct the annual surveys again! If you need a new Parent Handbook, please just ask! Many parents expressed favorable comments about the Parent-Teacher event and their opportunity to meet with faculty and view materials of instruction. It was nice to hear parents express their appreciation of the teachers that evening and we encourage parents to do this often! Tell the teachers thank you when you notice their hard work and efforts, write a letter for their file, bring them flowers or breakfast! There will be a Teacher Appreciation Week in the Spring but don't wait until then to tell them that you appreciate them. They really have a demanding job! Come spend a day here observing or volunteering to see just how much they do each day. Teachers are happy to have such an enthusiastic community of parents to partner with this year! **Mark your calendar- the next Parent-Teacher Night is Tuesday, October 7th from 6:30-8:30 pm. We will provide pizza at 6:00 and childcare during the meeting for families that sign up in advance and commit to the entire meeting time.** We will be joined by the staff & parents of Greenbelt Nursery School. Latoya Harper-Williams, Early Childhood Trainer, Gryphon House Publishing will be teaching us about "Supporting Young Children as Writers" We are all looking for new ideas to help children be successful in school and in life. PLEASE JOIN US!

Congratulations to Greenbelt Children's Center!

Greenbelt Children's Center is a very good place for young children! Last year, the center underwent a new evaluation called the Program Administrator Scale (PAS). The purpose of the PAS is to measure Early Childhood Leadership and Management. Research has shown that overall administrative practices are crucial for ensuring high quality outcomes for children and families. GCC was assessed on 25 items by the Maryland State Department of Education. The national average rating is a 4.0 out of 7.0 and we are happy to report that our baseline rating was 5.8. The process was very complex and documentation to prove actual practices are reviewed. The center will be reassessed again this year to see if improvements were made. Congratulations to Ms Donna Nance and Ms Sherelle Thomas who will be honored

for their role in Teacher-Artist Partnerships at the Thirteenth Annual Awards Dinner by Wolf Trap for the Performing Arts for the Summer Institute that they participated in at GCC this past summer! They were one of 24 chosen from over 200 teachers and we are very proud of them. Mrs Gee and guests have been invited to the awards dinner on October 28th.

Fire Safety Education Program

This is National Fire Prevention Month and the children will participate in the Stop, Drop, Roll, and Cool Program and learn about fire safety and calling 911, in case of emergency. Practice at home with your child to learn their name, address and phone number. We hope you have the occasion to visit your local firehouse with your child as they have been scheduling open houses for this month! We are arranging for a visit from the Greenbelt firefighters to come to GCC also.

Annual Field Trip to the Pumpkin Patch!!

Children in Rooms 1 and 3, their teachers, and parents will have the opportunity to go to Clark Elioak Farm in Ellicott City, Maryland to pick pumpkins, go for a tractor pulled hay ride, tour the farm, feed and pet the farm animals, have a pony ride, and enjoy a maze & playing in hale bales!! *The cost for the children will be paid by the MSDE Hoyer Grant to the Local School System and includes one pumpkin per child.* Parent chaperones will need to pay admission at the farm on the day of the trip. **Details and a class permission slip will be posted in Classrooms 1 and 3 soon!** The children will eat lunch at the Center when they return from the Farm. Boots are recommended in case of muddy fields and the trip will occur even if it's just misty that day.

Parents must sign the classroom permission slip in order for your child to attend. We will need parent chaperones, so please volunteer to attend if possible. Please remember that parents of public school pre-k children must show proof of PG county Background Check. Besides, we like your company and want you to have some October FUN!

IMPORTANT REMINDERS!!!!!!

- Check your child's extra clothes box before leaving today. We have already had some cool weather and had only shorts and a tank top to dress a wet child in. Winter is coming! See if your child has seasonally appropriate extra clothes on hand in his cubby!! Your child depends on you for this!.
- Daylight Savings Time ends Sunday, **November 2nd**. Set your clocks **back one hour** and please change the batteries in your **smoke detectors!!**
- Please make sure that all forms are now complete and in your child's file in the office. Remember to **update** your child's **emergency information card** if any phone numbers have changed! Be sure to also **update** the office with any **booster immunizations** your child may have received!
- Have you checked out a book from the Lending Library this week? We have so many good choices

for you & your child to enjoy together! Remember the goal each month is **10!**

- **We have a child at GCC with a severe peanut and nut allergy so please help us to have a peanut butter and nut free environment for our dear friend!**

Military and Maryland Childcare Subsidy

We have signed an agreement with the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Association (NACCRA) that makes it possible for parents to participate in the United States Armed Forces program to subsidize the child care expense for any child with a parent serving in one of these capacities: Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom (first priority), children of active duty military members of all other branches of the Department of Defense (DOD) (priority two), , including the Coast Guard (priority three), and children of DoD APF and NAF civilian employees. You may contact NACCRA at 1-800-793-0324 x 163 for more information. There is also a Maryland Child Care subsidy called **Purchase of Care (POC)**. This program is available to income eligible parents, through the Department of Social Services. The number to call to find out if you are eligible is **301-909-6200**.

Policy for Delayed Openings & Emergency Closings

Remember that we follow the closing announcements for Prince George County Public Schools for emergency closings due to snow, etc. If PG County Schools are closed, GCC will be closed. If the public schools have a delayed opening due to bad weather conditions, then Greenbelt Children's Center will have a delayed opening also and will start at the time designated by PG County Public Schools. For example, if they open one hour late, GCC will open at 8 am, if they open 2 hours late, GCC opens at 9 am. If they close early, we may do the same. We do not want to endanger our children, staff or families and do this to keep everyone safe.

THANK YOU! We want to acknowledge some very special people who have made contributions to the GCC Community: Aditi (Rm 1) celebrated her birthday by donating a book to the GCC Lending Library. Help, Help has been enjoyed by the children in Room 1 who asked the teachers to read it repeatedly! Thank you to Donnetta Gregory (Joshua, Room 1) for helping teachers to print photographs from the digital camera for pictures to use for Room 1's Word Wall and the children's portfolio's. Great job to all GCC parents! Last month, all children were read at least 10 Lending Library Books and the children have chosen to have a Pizza Party for afternoon snack on Friday, October 3rd! Way to go parents!! What a caring community we have at Greenbelt Children's Center!



Fall Harvest Celebrations!!

On Wednesday, October 31st, the classrooms traditionally celebrate the Season of Fall and the end of the Harvest with fun and games and party goodies! **We are inviting parents and grandparents to come and join us if you can!!** Look for a classroom sign-up sheet to contribute goodies for the event in your child's classroom. And by all means, join us for a howling good time!! **(Please, no costumes for children).**

Speech Screenings on Friday, November 17, 2008

Take advantage of the availability to have your pre-school child's speech screened for a nominal fee by United Testing Service (UTS) on this date. The forms and payments should be turned in to the office by the Friday before the screening.

Fall Fundraiser

A special thank you to everyone who helped to raise money for the children and program! **Please mark your calendar to remember to pick up your order on WEDNESDAY, October 22nd between 3 and 6 pm, as we do not have refrigerator storage space at GCC. The drawing for a week's free tuition and Savings Bond winner will be announced at the Harvest Party on October 31st!** Unfortunately, only 9 families participated, 140 items were sold and approximately \$700.00 was raised including a donation (but after the savings bond and free week's tuition, that will be less). This is about half of the number that participated last year and may be a sign of the difficult economic times. **Many thanks to the families that collected from everyone and only turned in one check or payment, making it easy on Ms. Jill, who volunteers to do the fundraiser each year. Way to go!**

InterAct Story Theater

All the children in Classroom 1 and 3 will begin this wonderful early literacy and drama program this month for a 5 week period. It is a phenomenal program and the sixth year that we have had the opportunity to participate. We are very excited!. This excellent program is funded through the Judith P. Hoyer Grant to the Local School System from the Maryland State Department of Education.

Social Skills that Children Need

In Karen Stephen's article, "*Social Skills Children Need To Make and Keep Friends*" in the *Parenting Exchange Collection #10*, *Exchange Magazine* (*ChildCareExchange.com*), she observes that children must be able to:

- Recognize shared interests
- Gracefully join into play
- Pay attention to non-verbal communication cues
- Listen to and respect feelings

- Empathize with another person's perspective
- Cooperate
- Accept others
- Extend a trustworthy helping hand

Extracurricular Activities!

We are very happy to report that our children have been really enjoying the extra activities scheduled again this year! As I write this I am listening to Room 2 enjoying their first music instruction activity with McKinney's Music. Mr. McKinney is also a parent here of Ambe, (Room 3) and Azinwe (Room 2). All three classrooms will be enjoying this program monthly, usually on Monday morning. Funtastic Fitness has held a thrilling physical fitness class with all three classrooms and the children just love the program. They are learning physical skills and developing good health habits for life! Club Espanol, Spanish Language program is also involving all the pre-school children at GCC participating in learning Spanish. Senora Gonzales works with each class every Friday morning. Teachers are learning Spanish also and have been incorporating the language into daily activities such as calendar time. I hope that parents are use the file folder of Spanish words that will be sent home in October to practice at home too. We have so much to look forward to each month. What fortunate children they are!

Announcement! School pictures will be back on October 7th for you to view from 4-6 pm!

Reading Aloud

Research shows that reading aloud is the BEST way to give children the tools they'll need to become good readers, listeners and students. Reading together is also a special time for you to bond with your children. Let them snuggle next to you as you share stories, laugh at silly characters and root for heroes. Here's how: Read slowly with expression, use different voices for different characters, follow words with your fingers as you read, point to pictures and say the names of objects & colors, have your child repeat the names, make bath time reading time with waterproof books or telling a story to them while they bathe, take books every where you go (the car, doctor and dentist appointments, etc.)! Remember to have fun!



Remember to read at least 10 books per month from the Greenbelt Children's Center Lending Library!!!

