

# GREENBELT CHILDREN'S CENTER OCTOBER 2009 NEWSLETTER

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7600 Hanover Parkway  
Greenbelt, Maryland 20770  
(301) 345-8830/(301) 345-0874 Fax  
Edited by Flora L. Gee, M.Ed., Director



## 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.

### Back to School Night

We were overwhelmed at our "Back to School Night" with record family attendance! The quality and quantity of food brought to the potluck dinner was remarkable. Next year we may need to schedule two separate nights to make things smoother so that parents can get all the information about goals for the children, 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 were sorry that our friend Myra Katz had a family emergency and was unable to attend and bring books from the County Library but we will try to reschedule another visit this year.

The Hoyer grant award for this year provides funds for the Pre-k program in Room 1 which is subsidizing 40% of parent fees in that classroom during 42 weeks of the PGCPs year. This MSDE grant also funds the Spanish Language, Funfitastic physical education, McKinney's music, and the Wolf Trap Artist in Residency programs, the lending library, the Book Club Events and pays for the field trips.

Additionally, GCC received a matching grant from the MD Arts Council to bring InterAct Story Theatre workshops and a performance this fall. All the GCC children and families benefit from 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. We also receive an additional Hoyer Grant to Private Providers from the MD State Department of Education, which we share with

Greenbelt Nursery School that helps to fund the continuing professional development that is a requirement of employment and for state teacher credentialing. The grant pays for some, not all the costs of training as well as a retention bonus for staff that complete the required training in an effort to retain highly skilled, experienced teachers at GCC. Room 2 is using the Creative Curriculum by Teaching Strategies and Room 1 and 3 use the Houghton Mifflin updated version of their curriculum, which were also received from grants last year.

Our "Project Security Blanket" Disaster/Risk Management Plans that our Disaster Planning Committee has been working on for several years are posted in each classroom. There will soon be legislation making this a requirement in all early childhood programs. Become familiar with the plan to know what would occur in different emergency situations and feel free to comment or 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 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 Family Learning 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! Also, please welcome back Ms. Mimi to Rm 2 when she returns on 10/5/09 after complications from foot surgery.

## 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, and our current rating was 6.3 when GCC was reassessed again this year, well above the national average. The process was very complex and documentation to prove actual practices were reviewed by MSDE. Also, Mrs. Gee, Director and adjunct faculty of Prince George's Community College is now teaching a 3 credit class on Administering and Managing Programs in Early Childhood Education on Monday evenings this semester. The college has seen a 20% increase in enrollment in early childhood education and she has 32 students in her class. This required a slight schedule change on Mondays as she is here until 4 pm instead of 6 pm. The rest of the week her schedule is 9-6 pm except on Wednesdays when she works 7 to 3 pm.

### **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 Sunrise Farm in Gambrills, Maryland to pick pumpkins, go for a tractor pulled hay ride, tour the farm, and view the farm animals, and enjoy a maze & playing in hay 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.* **Details and a class permission slip will be posted in Classrooms 1 and 3 soon!** The children will carry and eat lunch at the Farm in a pavilion area, weather permitting. Boots are recommended in case of muddy fields and the trip will occur even if it's 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. Parent chaperones will need to pay admission in advance by October 9th. 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 1st**. 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!**

### **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 or other emergency, 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: Amber Rudy (Rm 1) and family donated markers & crayons to the classroom! On the second week of school, former student John James' mother Tiffany, who also happens to be the principal at St Hughes Elementary School, brought in donuts for the staff as a thank you for a successful year last year. Way to go parents!! What a caring community we have at Greenbelt Children's Center!**



### **Fall Harvest Celebrations!!**

On Wednesday, October 30th, the classrooms traditionally celebrate the Season of Fall and the end of the Harvest with fun and games, party goodies and a Book Club Event! **We are inviting parents, grandparents and other volunteers to come and read to the children and help with a book distribution.** Look for a classroom sign-up sheet to contribute time or goodies to the event in your child's classroom. And by all means, join us for a howling good time! **(Please, no costumes).**

### **Speech Screenings on Wednesday, October 7, 2009**

Take advantage of the availability to have your pre-school child's speech screened for a nominal fee (\$22.00) by United Testing Service (UTS) on this date. The forms and payments should be turned in to the office by September 30, 2009. We have arranged for Hearing and Vision Screenings on November 6, 2009. Look for details next month.

### **Fall Fundraiser**

A special thank you to everyone who is helping to raise money for the children and program! **Please mark your calendar to remember to turn in orders & money by 6 pm on Friday, October 2, 2009 and to pick up your order on WEDNESDAY, October 21st 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 30th. We appreciate families for collecting payments and turning in only one check for your fundraiser payable to GCC, making it easy on Ms. Jill, who volunteers to do the fundraiser each year.

### **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



**Announcement! School pictures will be back on October 13th and 14th 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!!!***

### **Books Are Fun!**

You may have noticed that there was a large book display just to your right as you entered the front door. That is a Books Are Fun display that comes to GCC every 6 weeks. It is a convenient way to purchase books for your family and other gifts or household items. For every ten items sold, GCC gets to choose a book to add to our lending library. There are order forms that you complete & leave with your payment made out to Books are Fun. Payments can be made in cash, check or credit card by completing the information on the Books are Fun form. Your order is filled on the day it is due, always marked on their display and are left in a bag for you to pick up that date. Books are fun will return the week of November 9th and items ordered will be here for you before the holidays! We hope that you enjoy this service and feel good about getting lending library books for the children.



