



# THE Centerpiece

THE CCC QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

## Director's Desk Fall 2014

Dear CCC Parents,

For 20 years, The Country Childrens Center has been reading the classic story of The Polar Express to the CCC children. At first, it was just a story read annually by me, dressed in my nightgown, while the children listened in their pajamas. From there, the Polar Express Party has expanded year by year, adding new activities and characters until it became its current form of a several day event with train sets, live reindeer and a visit from Santa Claus.

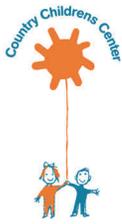
While the event has grown in magnitude over the past 20 years, the wonderful story of The Polar Express has remained the central idea motivating all the activities. The innocence of childhood, the need for children to be able to believe in things they have not actually seen and the importance of developing children's imaginations are the motivators for everything we do at the Polar Express party. Not just at this wonderful, magical time of year, but throughout the year, the CCC appreciates its privilege of providing children at such young ages the opportunity to be playful, imaginative and full of wonder.

With this in mind, it is our hope that this important foundation will stay with the children for many years to come. This is why every year the CCC continues to celebrate the story and timeless message from the children's classic storybook The Polar Express.

Happy Holidays,

Polly





## Toddlers: Moving Right Along



*Above: The Toddler 1 class enjoying lunch in their new classroom.*

*Below: The Toddler 2 children are painting with their feet.*



We have had quite a start to the school year. In September, Bedford Hills began a transformation to a multi-age program. Although it's been many years since we have employed this program, it is thriving. This is a direct testament to our staff and families.

In November, we had a group of babies, similar in age, ready to move up to the toddler room. While it's a bit atypical to have so many move at the same time, it provided a wonderful opportunity to keep them together. With these new additions, we now have two toddler rooms.

Toddler 1 is a younger group. Teresa and Maggy are leading the way as teachers. Teresa has been with the Country Childrens Center for fifteen years. Along with her experience she brings a Child Development Associate accreditation. Maggy joined us in August, and has immediately become an asset to the center. In her home country of Chile, she has run her own classroom, and obtained a four-year teaching assistant degree. Together, Maggy and Teresa have embraced this new room, implementing games, adding circle time traditions, and creating a home feel environment for the children.

Toddler 2 has a slightly older group who we describe as the veterans. The children have gone from a two room setting to one, but have responded well to change, and continue to grow by leaps and bounds. They will soon be on their way up to pre-school. Diana Monge is the teacher at the helm of the ship, and they are all riding the waves of change beautifully. Diana came to the Country Childrens Center in 2006. She also brings with her the Child Associate Development credential. Her daughter, nearly four years old, is also part of the CCC family. Diana takes ideas and an insight from watching her daughter grow, and combines that with her education to shape her programs.

I am thrilled how well this transition has gone, and the improvements to Bedford Hills are clear. The parents of our children deserve thanks and appreciation for their understanding and flexibility. Most importantly, the children have adapted so well, and have shown us all that change can lead to growth.

Shanna Krizan, Bedford Hill Site Director



# Fall Awakenings



Autumn at Kitchawan Barns is always a special time of year. As summer comes to an end, the gentle fall breeze awakens our senses to the beginning of a new school year. Mother Nature beckons the children to explore, discover and experience the many changes that occurs as summer ends, fall arrives and winter soon follows.

Nature teaches us that all things are interconnected and that the end of one journey marks the beginning of a new adventure - learning is circular. The children at Kitchawan Barns observe the spectrum of color that appears as the leaves change colors, they harvest the last of the veggies from the garden, they watch the squirrels move about gathering acorns for the winter months ahead, and the monarch butterflies flutter about the playground as if they are saying "see you in the spring!"

The change of season provides multiple sources of inspiration for teachers and students to explore in the classroom. The Pre-K classroom observed the change of season and made art-work that depicted the beginning, middle and end of fall. The infants journeyed on nature walks with their teachers to explore the fall season and learn new words. The toddlers explored the fall season with their senses - raking leaves into piles for jumping and collecting leaves on nature walks. The preschool classroom investigated the beautiful changes of fall learning about the harvest season with a visit to an apple orchard and creating their own apple farm in their dramatic play area.

We learn at Kitchawan Barns that nature truly is the great provider and teacher. As the holiday season is upon us, we are thankful that our classrooms are inspired by the beauty and grandeur of Mother Nature. The end is always the beginning!



*Above: Pre-K children collecting leaves on a nature walk.*

*Below: Miss Jessica and Miss Victoria had children paint with leaves.*



Lee Ann Johnson, Kitchawan Fall Site Director



## Creative With Our Curriculum



*Above: The Pre-K children are extending their creativity in the block area.*

*Below: Art with Miss Alicia*



Enthusiasm is what you feel as you enter the classrooms at Watson. The teachers are busy developing curriculum that's engaging, creative and fun. Meanwhile, the children are learning about the world through these exciting activities by going on nature walks, playing games, reading stories and cooking!

The Pre-school and Pre-K curriculum has taken on a new tone this year. With the pressures of some of the education standards, we found that we had to adjust our ways. Having given it a lot of thought, we made time for both small group work and creative play.

During our small group time, the program Handwriting Without Tears is being implemented for reading and math. This program uses hands-on, multisensory materials to teach prewriting skills, phonological awareness and basic math concepts. During reading and writing, the children learn to identify and write letters, both capital and lowercase. They learn how these letters work together to form printed words, and how printed words relate to spoken language. With playful manipulatives, music, and rhymes, the numbers and math program teaches counting comparisons, spatial awareness, patterning, sequencing, matching, sorting, problem solving, and even Pre-K geometry skills. They also get time to play with real objects and test their ideas so that math becomes real and meaningful. It's exciting to see children take risks and tackling concepts with confidence and continue to have fun while learning!

Of course, during our day there is always time made for creative expression and fun. One very exciting activity during this time has been cooking. All the children have had the opportunity to be little chefs while learning about measuring, kitchen safety, and practicing fine motors skills by mixing and dicing. Some of the delicious recipes include Pilgrim's pudding and pumpkin ice cream!

A special thanks to the teachers for working hard and making learning fun and exciting! Thank you to all the families for all their support!

Jean Nathanson, Watson Site Director



## Fall Happenings at the Farm



As the holidays approach, we pause to take a look at all the events that have occurred at The Farm.

Spirit Day is a chance for everyone to learn about being part of a community, and feel the impact the events have toward building cohesion among the children and staff. The Farm was filled with laughter and excitement throughout the day!

The Katonah Fire Department visited us during fire prevention month. It was so much fun to have them. The highlight of the visit for the children was allowing them to take a peak inside the fire truck. The firemen handed out pink and red fire hats for all the children to enjoy. A special thanks goes out to Ms. Pam from the Whitehouse for setting up the visit.

Most importantly, what makes the Country Childrens Center special is the families involved. It was an honor to meet the grandparents of The Farm children on Grandparents Day. We had seventy-five grandparents join us for the breakfast, which is a wonderful turn out.

We would like to give a special thanks to one of our parents for installing shelves made out of gutters in our Pre-k classroom! Joe Hattendorf, father of Sydney and Rebecca, came in on a Sunday and installed the shelves. They look amazing! We were the benefit of further generosity from the grandparents of Gunnar and Adelaide Schilke. They donated a new kitchen set to our Preschool room, and a bouncy seat to our Infant room. Finally, Jill Viggiano, mother to Jordyn and Jax, provided our Infant room a new swing, bouncy seat and bottle warmer. We greatly appreciate the generosity and support from everyone!

This fall we welcomed Ms. Jackie Grossman to our Preschool room. She was formerly a Country Childrens Center camp and afterschool employee for Mr. Brent. We are so excited have her. She and Michelle have developed into a successful team, creating a lot of fun and excitement for the Preschool class.

Our holiday concerts in mid-December will be here before you know it! We look forward to seeing everyone.

Noreen Cotter, Farm Site Director



*Above: Grandparents Day at the Farm*

*Below: Pre-K children enjoying the new book shelves in the reading area.*



# CCC White House Is The Place To Be!

Welcome to the new school year at the White House! The Pre-K programs started the school year off welcoming a new class to the White House. We now have a PK1 class and the new PK2 class! Although our school-age 'breakfast club' is still a part of the daily program, the Kindergarten or CCKK came to a close in June as the K/L school district became full day kindergarten. To start the year off and celebrate school unity and friendship, the WH Pre-K classes celebrated CCC Spirit Week. The White House was decorated in orange and blue with crazy hat day, inside/out day and crazy shades day. At the end of a wonderful week, we had a giant picnic together outside at lunchtime. Both groups cheered **"CCC is the place to be! Come laugh, learn and play with me...CCC'ya!"** It was awesome to see the staff and children come together to celebrate at the White House.



This year at the White House we welcomed back all of our staff with the addition of Deirdre Valentine who with Evelyn Muñoz-Moreno, is part of the new PK2 class. Both Pre-K classes began the school year with an ALL ABOUT ME unit and a fun trip to Wilkens Farm for a hayride to the apple orchard. During the month of October, both classes participated in the Westmoreland Sanctuary Fall Festival and made all the characters from the book, THERE WAS AN OLD LADY WHO SWALLOWED A FLY. They were displayed on their enchanted trail and then we used them at our very own Family Fall Festival at the Farm. It was a great way to connect CCC to the community by participating in weekend events.

*White House Pre-K 1 and 2 are outside enjoying their picnic lunch on spirit day.*

To welcome the new children and families to the Pre-K classes, the White House opened its doors in October to a yummy Ice Cream Social Open House. The classrooms were bursting with projects and activities for the parents to see while they enjoyed delicious bowls of ice cream with their children. It was a great way for parents to meet at the start of our school year and it brought a sense of community to the White House. And speaking of community, in November the White House enjoyed another family fun event...the annual potluck dinner! Tons of our families came, dishes to share in hand and enjoyed a meal together with their children and classmates. There were also door prizes and raffles.



Finally, the White House outdoor garden will become the next project for one of our community members, Dunlin Stathis. He is revamping the garden and creating a compost space in order to become an Eagle Scout. To reach his goal, he is having a fundraiser for the families at the White House called Dinner Done where families can pre-order a full meal cooked by Dunlin and his family which he will deliver to the White House. As you can see, CCC/WH loves being a part of our community. Best wishes for the upcoming holiday season.

Pam Belmonte, White House Site Director





## The Cook's Corner

Cooking is not only a fun, engaging activity for children, but one that has been used for years as an important teaching and developmental tool for all ages. This fall, the children of the CCC experienced the joy of cooking while learning many important skills. They practiced eye-hand coordination and small muscle skills by chopping, squeezing, spreading and mixing while working together to create something delicious to share. Cooking is a great way to inspire children's curiosity, thinking, and problem solving. It also allows children to explore foods in a completely new way. It was so exciting to see children try foods they have never tasted before! With many recipes and a lot of taste tests, there was always a favorite!

### Voted "Favorite Fall Recipe"

#### Yummy Pumpkin Ice Cream

4 medium Bananas  
1 cup pumpkin puree  
1/3 cup maple syrup  
1 1/2 tsp. pumpkin spice

Slice the bananas or break the bananas in pieces. Put all the ingredients in the blender together. Pour into a freezer safe container and freeze overnight.

Carmelina Myers, Educational Coordinator

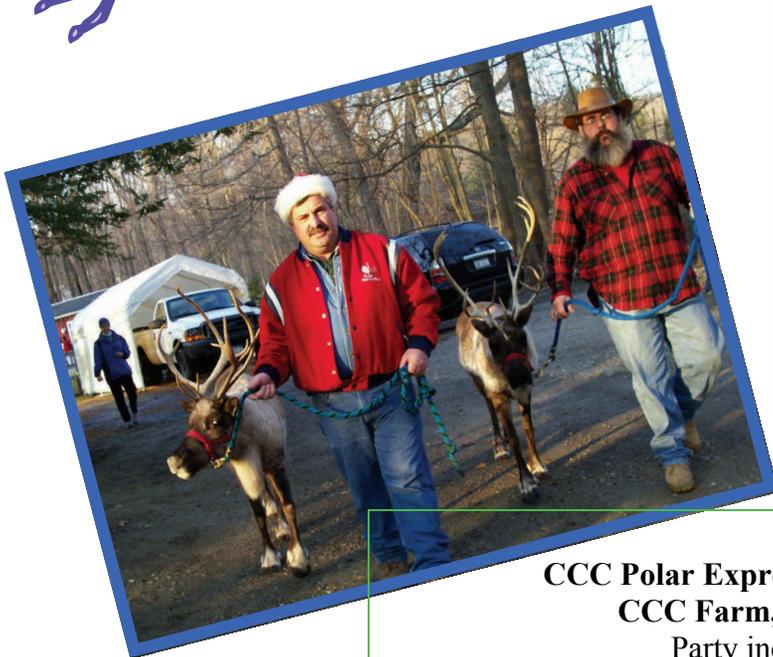
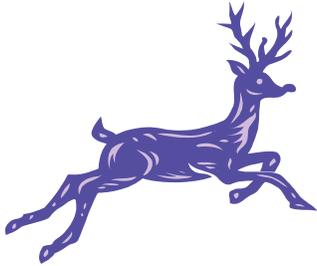




## All Aboard

### The Polar Express 2014

Weds /Thurs Dec 10 and 11



### CCC Polar Express Party at the CCC Farm, Katonah

Party includes

live reindeer , a ride on the "Polar Express" bus, Polar ex-  
press train set up

Reading of The Polar Express by elves

Visit with Santa, photo with Santa, reindeer or Frosty

Holiday treats and a special souvenir

\$12/child





### **Contact Numbers**

Main Office: 914-242-0520

Bedford Hills: 914-242-0520 Ext. 203

The Farm: 914-242-0520 Ext. 111

Kitchawan: 914-242-0520 Ext. 601

Watson: 914-242-0520 Ext. 412

White House: 914-242-0520 Ext. 301

After School: 914-242-0520 Ext. 302

# ***Save the Date!***

## ***The Country Childrens Center Annual Golf Outing***

***Wednesday, May 13, 2015***

***Centennial Golf Club***

***Plan to join us for a day of golf, dinner,  
door prizes, raffles and more!***

