

# The Centerpiece

Country Childrens Center<sup>SM</sup>



## Little Steps...Big Feats<sup>SM</sup>

### Director's Desk

Taken from Polly Peace's address at the Annual Meeting.

This has been a busy and productive year for the CCC.

**Our program** is thriving.

We have maintained all the special programs from the previous year like Polar Express and Week of the Young Child etc and have added others as well, such as Earth day and a program at John Jay Middle School.

Our intergenerational Program published our first book and exhibited it in March at the Katonah Museum of Art.

As a center we have embraced the Creative Curriculum and handwriting without Tears for our Preschool and Pre-K groups to add continuity throughout our sites.

Our summer program continued to provide full day child-care during summer months while affording children the amenities and experiences of a top notch summer camp.

**Our Staff**

Our staff remains the loyal back bone of our success.

We continue to try to reward them in as many ways as possible and have added to their benefits in several ways: EAP, HR online, staff development and training, flexible work arrangements to keep key personnel and additional support staff to help directors to work at maximum efficiency.

Turnover remains extremely low as compared to the average for our field.

This longevity of tenure of our staff adds continuity of care for children as well as strength to our relationships with parents.

**Our Administration**

Our office continues to find new ways to improve our communications, professionalism and responsiveness to the needs of the community.

Additionally we have worked very hard to find cost cutting measures that will improve our bottom line but not impact the level of services we provide. To this end we have entered into group purchasing agreements, reduced our insurance costs and locked in utility prices.

**Our Buildings and Grounds** surpass any childcare center around and set a national standard for how children should spend their days.

Director's Desk continued on following page.

### A New Center Wide Curriculum

By Caroline Paterno, White House Site Director

After many training sessions over this past summer, CCC has now adopted a new center wide curriculum. The Pre-school and Pre-K teachers attended these training sessions to learn about and know how to implement this new curriculum called *The Creative Curriculum*.

*The Creative Curriculum* provides teachers with a concrete way to apply child development and learning theories to their everyday encounters with children. Its philosophy comes from accepted research and theories of child development. There are many other curriculums that are also based on the same theories. What makes *The Creative Curriculum* different from the others is that this curriculum applies these theories to an environmental framework that focuses planning around indoor and outdoor interest areas, and clearly defined objectives. Because of this practical approach, the CCC teachers find it easy to understand and implement in their own classrooms.

Another special part of *The Creative Curriculum* is that it is able to meet the needs of children with a wide range of abilities. This allows children with different learning styles and needs to function together in an organized and developmentally appropriate environment. *The Creative Curriculum* helps teachers focus on the sequence of the development of skills and learning to help all children develop and learn.

With an understanding of content and how children learn it, teachers can expand the experiences they offer children to gain knowledge and understand concepts. When the content of the curriculum is taught with children's development in mind, children are more likely to be successful learners. Hopefully feeling excited about and challenged by what they are learning.

*The Creative Curriculum's* center wide use helps make each pre-school and Pre-K classroom equal learning environments. All the teachers are on the same page and will continue to receive training on how to better use this curriculum for the good of the children.

November

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Fall 2008

## Director's Desk continued.

We remain good stewards of our facilities and appreciate that as a staff we are as fortunate as the children to spend our days in such a nurturing and pleasing environment.

**Our Goals** for the future are not easily met.

These are challenging financial times. We will all need to cooperate to insure that our center continues to thrive and as such continue our good work.

Our good reputation was validated last Dec. when over 100 people from all parts of our community came out to honor us at our 40th anniversary event.

Our history is long and full of rich experiences. We have not been timid, and our progress has been constant.

Even in these difficult times, we courageously embrace new endeavors because we recognize that excellence as we provide in early childhood is not in abundance.

We are not be afraid of the challenges of striving for excellence and are committed to lead our field for the sake of the children who deserve all the best we can give them.

Our model is not magic or luck. It comes with commitment and teamwork and cooperation.

We look forward to the challenges ahead and are excited to face new opportunities to do more and better things for the CCC children and families.

Personally, this is my 21st year as Executive Director of the CCC. I remain as dedicated today as I did the first day I arrived here to try to do everything in my power to make this a wonderful and safe place for children, a good place to work, and a sound and solid resource for our community.

**Thank you to our Board for their vision and support**

**Thank you to the Program Directors for their commitment**

**Thank you to the CCC staff for their excellent work and dedication**

**Thank you to the children for inspiring us to always do our best.**

Fondly,

*Polly*

## Kindergarten News

By Pam Belmonte, *Kindergarten Director*

We have had an awesome start to the new school year in the Kindergarten program at the White House. The children are very eager learners and have all become fast friends. We have already completed four fabulous learning units and are off to a great start for the month of November. We are celebrating National Book Week and honoring families and traditions throughout the month as well as introducing our ongoing bird unit. We have the best view of all the winter birds right outside the classroom. Our binoculars are ready! A new part of our curriculum this year is an upgraded version of Spanish class. We have added an extra day and more in depth activities to support learning a new language during the school year. I thank the two teachers involved – Evelyn Munoz and Sandra Guillemi – for doing a wonderful job with the planning and the long term goals. The children enjoyed making ‘brujas’ puppets and learned how to say “FELIZ DIA DE BRUJAS” for the Halloween celebrations we had! The class also sings great songs in Spanish each week that we will hopefully perform at the end of the year for the parents. It is hard to believe the holiday season is approaching – look out for some outstanding special activities to come at CCC!

## All Aboard The Polar Express!

**Saturday December 13, 2008**

**9:00am — 5:00pm**

**CCC Polar Express Experience Including:**

**Live Reindeer and sleigh ride**

**Train ride, Train display**

**Reading of *The Polar Express***

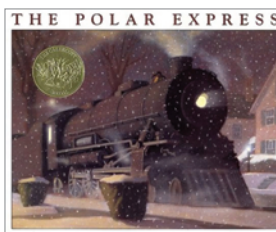
**by Mrs. Santa**

**Visit from Santa Claus**

**Holiday treats and a take away craft souvenir**

**For reservations call 914-242-0520**

**\$12 per child, adults are admitted free**



## Pre-Kindergarten at the Farm goes to the Apple Orchard—October 3rd, 2008



From right to left: Hannah W, Rylie N, Tristan L, Kye V, Tyler P, Andrew F, Ellen M and Zachary L. With Sue, our bus driver all looking at the apple sorting machine at Stuarts Farm.

By Cristina Ortolani, *Pre-K Teacher*

After immersing our classroom with apples in every center we set off to Stuart's Orchard with our clipboards to record all our observations and find out our answers to the questions we generated. Before our departure we came up with a list of 14 questions for our guide, Shaun Stuart. Some questions were: What do they sell in their market? How many people work here? Who drives the tractors and forklifts? How cold is it in the big refrigerator? How far away is it to the orchard? (We checked the odometer with bus driver Sue.) How many apple trees do you have? What kinds of apples do you sell? And how tall are the trees—will we be able to reach the apples?

In preparation we read stories about Johnny Appleseed and while we were there, Shaun told us that apple trees produce fruit for about 100 years, and some of the trees on their farm are almost that old, since they were planted by his great grandfather, so they had recently planted some new trees that we saw in the orchard.

Shaun showed us the apple sorter that divided the apples by size and polished them.

Then we visited the "cold storage" and Shaun told us that they keep it at 34 degrees Fahrenheit—because apples stay best in the cold and dark. We saw the forklift and noticed the bins full of apples, as well as some stuff we keep in the fridge at our own home, ketchup and bottles of water.

Another highlight of our trip was making observations of the renovations being done to the original farmhouse. The children watched 5 men using a cement mixer and building a stone wall and another driver on a backhoe leveling off the ground. We also drew pictures of the backhoe on our clipboards. We were able to climb up an old tractor and draw pictures of the tractor on our clipboards too.

We learned they grow over 30 different kinds of apples at Stuarts, and estimated they have over 300 trees there. We were relieved to discover that we could easily reach the apples. We counted 57 apples that we brought back in a ½ bushel bag. Back in the classroom our dramatic play included using the actual apples with blocks and rulers to build our own "apple sorting machine". They used the scales to weigh the apples for sale. The children turned the chairs into "forklifts" and tractors transporting apples to "cold-storage" and gave each other hayrides.

We also brought 3 pumpkins back to the classroom which we are carving for Halloween. We will use the seeds in a literacy project and author study of Laura Joffe Numeroff. We read her series including: "If you give a mouse a cookie", "If you give a pig a party", "If you give a moose a muffin", "If you take a mouse to the movies" and "If you take a mouse to school". Pre-K will write their own versions of "If I plant a pumpkin seed".

# Pre-K Entomology

By Evette Laguna, *Pre-K teacher at Bedford Hills*

This Fall the Bedford Hills Pre-K has experienced the fascinating process of development, called metamorphosis. We watched the metamorphosis of the ladybug, which are also called as Ladybird Beetles.

In September after discovering numerous amounts of ladybugs on our zucchini plants, we became very interested and curious about: Why there were so many ladybugs? What they were doing? Where do they go? We started observing and recording how many ladybugs we found on the plants. To find the answers to our questions we became Entomologists and started our ladybug life cycle study. We discovered ladybugs go through four life cycle stages: stage 1 – eggs; stage 2 – larva; stage 3 – pupa and stage 4 – adult ladybug.

Using the Creative Curriculum process we then discussed: What we know about ladybugs, what we want to learn about ladybugs? Lastly, what we learned about ladybugs. The children used their drawings and language to represent what they were learning.

We received a Ladybug Land with live larvae – stage 2, and to our excitement and wonder, we were able to watch our ladybugs grow from larvae, molt, form pupae and hatch as adult ladybugs. After hatching, we fed them raisins.

We enriched our vocabulary with many new words such as symmetry and exoskeleton. We developed a ladybug chart showing all the developmental learning areas we were developing through this ladybug study. Some of these areas were literacy, math, science, social studies, art and technology. We also did a life cycle stages art activity using recyclable materials such as cardboard, egg cartons, and tissue boxes. We also used items collected in nature such as; small pine cones, nutshells, seeds and buds. As we wrapped up our study we made a webbing with our drawings of the four life cycles.

We are now voting whether to let our ladybugs go outside to hibernate or to keep them in the classroom as pets. We will keep you posted!



# Contact Numbers

Bedford Hills  
914-242-0520

Watson  
914-242-0520: Option 4

The Farm  
914-242-0520: Option 2

White House  
914-242-0520: Option 3

Weather Line  
914-242-0520: Option 5

B.H. Elementary School  
914-242-0520: Option 7

Increase Miller  
914-763-7190

J.J. Middle School  
914-242-0520: Option 8

Katonah  
914-763-7795

Lewisboro  
914-763-7890

Meadow Pond  
914-763-7987

