

Director's Desk

There is a saying in the early childhood circles that goes "when life deals you lemons...early childhood teachers make lemonade". The point the saying makes is that in our field we don't have a lot of time for whining and complaining, we just make the best of situations and move on.

This fall I have had the privilege of seeing this truth played out over and over at every site and program. Working without power and lights or on generator power, perhaps at a different site, driving to work dodging trees and power lines, and in many cases without the comfort of showers and coffee at home, the CCC staff came to work and did much more than just step up to the plate. They hit grand slams!

The dedication and professionalism that was exhibited during the crises of this fall was incredible. What motivates these professionals? The answer is quite simple. It is for the comfort and joy of the CCC children.

For the CCC staff, the children always come first. Throughout the aftermath of "Sandy" and the following snowstorm, the CCC children were comfortable and happy no matter what the circumstances thanks to their caring teachers.

I am very grateful to the CCC



staff for helping to make our program so successful and such a safe and secure haven for children.

This week, the reindeer for our Polar Express party arrived a day earlier than we had planned on. This could have been a disaster. However, instead the day was wonderful, once again due to the flexibility and creativity of the staff. Everyone rallied and they embraced the change in

plans with typical aplomb of the professionals they are. The result...a great day for the children, as usual.

As we enter into this season of celebrations and reflection. I am so thankful for the opportunity to work with so many dedicated, caring people. I thank the parents for the trust they have placed in us and assure you we are doing our best to earn that trust each and every day.

It is my sincere wish and hope that you will all have some time during these holidays to experience fun with your children as well as the peace and joy that this season brings.

Happy Holidays to all.

Polly



Shanna Krizan Joins Bedford Hills Site

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Shanna Krizan. I am very excited about returning to the CCC family and especially about being the new Site Director for the Bedford Hills site. As Polly has written to you all already, I had been the School-age Director prior to Brent Morton, at CCC for the after school programs in the 5 elementary schools we service. I absolutely loved the job then, and loved being a part of this amazing Center. I left CCC in September of 2006, when my second son, Oliver, was born, but I have missed being a part of CCC since. In my heart of hearts I knew that I wanted to one day make my way back. My eldest son, Daniel, who is now 9, attended CCC at the Farm at the age of 11 months, while I worked full-time as the School-Age Director. As a parent, I couldn't have asked for a better foray into his educational and social journey, and as hard as it was at first to leave my baby for the day in someone else's care, I always felt completely confident that he was indeed in the most perfect place he could be.

I have worked part-time throughout the past six years at a camp, in head start programs implementing a science research program for young children, and as a Center Director for an achievement center for children with



learning and/or behavioral challenges. However, now that my children are somewhat older and in school, I am more than ready to return to work full-time, in a capacity that not only ex-

cites me, but to which I can feel I am giving "back."

My children both attended great pre-schools, and I know just how important good, quality, warm and loving childcare is. I have always had a passion for children and education. I love planning events, activities and finding out about what's "out there" for kids to do and learn. I take my own kids' education and "worldly learning" very seriously. I thrive when around children, for all they teach us as adults, and love to literally watch them have "aha moments" as they learn. As a parent who knows what it is like to leave one's children in someone else's care, I value the importance of this job. I strongly feel that the beginning to a child's journey and relationship with "school" does in fact "start at very beginning, and it's a very good place to start" (to quote Julie Andrews, *The Sound of Music*), and can be a huge source of who they become later on.

The past week has been busy learning and re-learning the job, and re-adjusting to being a working mom, but most of all, I have thoroughly enjoyed being around the kids. I had the chance to read to the Preschool children, sing to and play with the infants, and I can't wait to "ride" the Polar Express and bring my own kids there to see the Reindeer – it has always been one of my favorite CCC happenings!

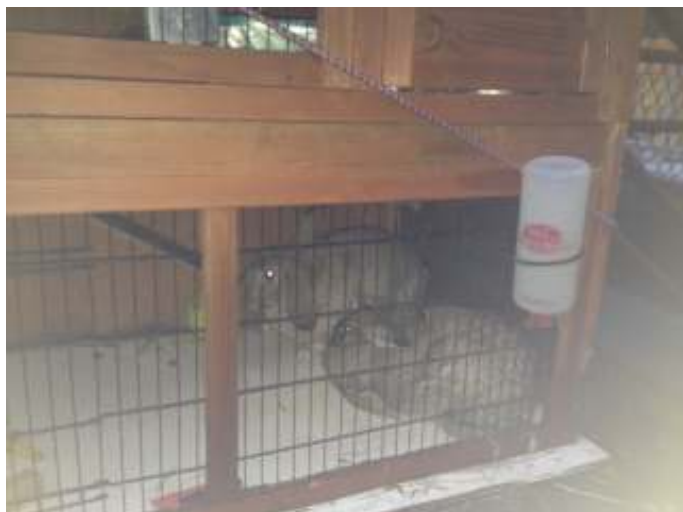
I thank you, in advance, for welcoming me back to CCC. Benan and I had worked together in the past, so I know the dedication and love she had for CCC, and that she will be greatly missed. However, while Benan is leaving big footprints behind, I am so very excited about filling them. I look forward to meeting and getting to know your children and your families soon. I hope to be able to meet many children and families from the other CCC sites soon as well- perhaps see some faces from the past (if you have younger children now coming to CCC).

Wishing you all a very Happy Holiday season.

Shanna Krizan, Bedford Hills Director



Pets on The Farm!



The Farm has had the pleasure of welcoming some more pets to it's site. Along with our ducks, Pip, Stretch, Tweedle & Tweedle Dee and our ever loving turtle, Tank, we are pleased to introduce our two Flemish rabbits, Mango & Tangerine, and two Betta fish. The preschool class has named their Betta fish Aqua Storm Fin and the Pre-k has named theirs Bluefish. The two rabbits are rescue ones that a family at our Bedford Hills site have donated.



Having pets is a very important part of the Farm's creative curriculum. It teaches the children responsibility and skills needed to care for other things. They had to vote and come up with a name for their pet and where it should be placed in the classroom. The same day that Monika, CCC's Educational Coordinator, brought the fish in, we read "One Fish, Two Fish.." by Dr. Seuss and "Swimmy" by Leo Lionni. In the classroom that afternoon some of the children were drawing fishes and in block area they were building a 'sea' for the fish. In the sea they had boats and that led us to our next topic of the children's interest 'transportation'.

As Monika said, "Having pets in the classroom builds a caring community of learners that work toward gaining respect for one another, taking on responsibility, and caring for others." We are enjoying our new pets very much and invite you to visit them .

Wishing you a Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah, Happy Kwanzaa, and a Happy Peaceful New Year!
Noreen Cotter, The Farm Director

Left: Pre-school's betta, Aqua-Storm-Fin (behind him is Bluefish).

Above: The new rabbits, Mango and Tangerine.

Right: Tank the Turtle.



Winter at Kitchawan



It is not even the actual winter season yet, but the children at Kitchawan have enjoyed the two snow falls we have had so far. The infants in the baby barn have enjoyed manipulating the snow in their sensory bin. They played with plastic animals and all different sized cups to scoop and dump the snow out. Each time it snowed the toddlers were the first to get dressed and out there. They have been trying to catch snowflakes on their tongue while singing “If all the snowflakes were candy bars and milk shakes oh what a day that would be. I would stand outside with my mouth open wide ah, ah, ah ah ah ah ah ah ah.” (While singing the ah, ah part they would be sticking their tongues out trying to catch the snowflakes.) The preschool and pre-k

class worked really hard together to make a large snowman. They also used plastic bins to make snow bricks and made a snow fort. Each class had their own way of enjoying the snow and I can’t wait to see what they do during the next snow fall!

Caroline Paterno, Kitchawan Director



Left: Pre-K playing in the snow!

Far Left: Toddlers catching snow flakes.

Polar Express 2012—A Great Time Had By All!



Photo Credit: David Torres

Hello From the White House



CCCK children are proud of their hard work!

It was a great start to the school year for the Pre-K and CCCK classes with just a bump in the road during all the crazy after-effects from hurricane Sandy but both programs have settled back into their usual routines. The Pre-K class has enjoyed many wonderful curriculum activities thus far including making awesome superhero capes for the "post Halloween" celebration and enjoying the Sharing Feast. Their new topic is "Animals in Winter" with a focus on hibernation, migration and adaptation. The class adopted "Chippy" the chipmunk (a beanie baby!) in the dramatic play area and even made him an amazing nest to curl up in. They also had fun pretending to be chipmunks living underground in nests and tunnels. Miss Jessica read the story THE NIGHT TREE by Eve Bunting and the class is currently involved in collecting all sorts of edible snacks to string together so they can decorate a Pre-K class 'Night Tree' for all the animals at the White House to enjoy.

Of course the Pre-k is spending lots of time practicing their skills with HANDWRITING WITHOUT TEARS and all the other wonderful Learning Centers the teachers provide the Pre-k class with on a daily basis. The Pre-K class welcomes "Spidey" the hermit crab to classroom environment...the whole class loves their new pet especially because he has a superhero shell to match his superhero name!!

The CCCK AM/PM sessions are moving full speed ahead into the TRAVEL AROUND THE WORLD curriculum with a strong focus on Social Studies and Geography. The CCCK class will explore the diversity of six different countries touching on the languages they speak, the food they eat, songs they sing and how they celebrate the holidays. The class packs their suitcases, grab their passports and "take off" on the CCC Express Plane visiting all the great countries they will learn about. Our holiday celebration focuses on all the foods from the each country we traveled to plus each CCCK kid will research a country of their choice with parent participation as we compile a classroom book to bring the unit to an end. The book is sent home to a different family each night so they can enjoy reading it together as a family and include their comments. Bon Voyage CCCK!

Miss Evelyn provides both sessions with Spanish Class and Miss Polly is currently running her Intergenerational Program with the PM session children who have enjoyed multiple visits to Somers Manor to participate with the senior population during Arts and Crafts time.

A peaceful holiday season to all from all the staff at the White House.

-Pamela Belmonte, White House Director



Pre-K children saying hello to Spidey crab!

The Power of Parents



Making fried rice with the Pre-K class.

We are grateful to the parents who have come to share time with us. A mother, new to our program, asked if she could come and spend some time in the classroom as she is not involved with her child's drop off or pick up. A nice idea I thought. And that it was. A good time was had by all. I believe she came away with an appreciation for what the teachers do and she got a bird's eye view of how her daughter spends her day. We had another parent volunteer to come in and cook fried rice. That day his daughter dressed up in authentic clothing and had her hair done in a way she usually doesn't wear it. It was special for the child, her classmates, and for her dad!

We also had parents in to celebrate Diwali, The Indian Festival of Lights. There's nothing like coming together to appreciate one another's holidays. We say we want to get to know families better and this is one way to do that. It's excellent to see the joy on people's faces when they are reading or talking about their holiday (we even had an alum come back with her mom), when they are dancing, answering questions, wearing national clothing, and graciously inviting us all to sit down and have some authentic refreshments (keeping in mind that fruit & munchkins may go over better with the children). The sharing and inclusiveness is what feels so good.

Last week, we had a mom come in to share a little about how her family celebrates Chanukah. Lighting the candles, learning some new vocabulary, answering questions, reading a couple of Chanukah stories, playing dreidel, and having

munchkins and taking gelt home were the highlights.

If finding the time to come in is difficult for you, we have another family who bakes cookies and brings them in every year proving that there's something everyone can do.

Wishing you and your family a very Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous Holiday Season and New Year!

Jean Nathanson, Watson Director



Above: Diwali celebrations
Below: Chanukah celebrations



Ensure a Safe and Happy Holiday



TALLAHASSEE, Fla., Dec. 4, 2012 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Federal Alliance for Safe Homes (FLASH)® reminds families that, as they ready for seasonal guests and travel, now is the time to make winter weather preparedness a part of your holiday plans. FLASH is offering useful tips for preventing frozen pipes, ice dams, chimney fires and more to keep families and their guests safe and comfortable throughout the holidays and the winter season.

"While we're all preparing for visitors or planning trips to see friends and loved ones, we can make getting ready for winter weather a part of the preparations," said Leslie Chapman-Henderson, President and CEO of FLASH, the country's leading consumer advocate for strengthening homes and safeguarding families from natural and manmade disasters. "Thoughtful touches like holiday hand towels will be appreciated as long as the water is flowing because you have prevented your pipes from freezing."

According to FLASH, damage from winter-related home hazards like frozen pipes, a leading cause of homeowners' insurance claims, can cost thousands of dollars of damage and become a major inconvenience to you and your guests. Tips to prepare the home include:

- Double check or install proper attic insulation to prevent water damage from ice dams
- Ensure safe usage of fireplaces, furnaces and space heaters
- Insulate pipes to prevent costly floods from frozen pipes
- Keep walkways around your home clear of snow and ice
- Winterize your windows and install window insulation kits to keep your guests warm and toasty
- Prepare to stay safe and warm during power outages

Additionally, it's important to prepare well for holiday travel, which can be treacherous in severe winter weather. Of the 17 deaths reported last year related to severe winter weather, 15 occurred in the exposed elements or in a car. "It's smart to prepare in case you are marooned by having a well-stocked winter storm survival kit in your car," said Chapman-Henderson. She suggests the following tips when making travel plans:

- Make sure other people know your travel plans and how to contact you. Travel in convoy with other vehicles if possible.
 - Prepare an extreme winter weather survival kit for your car. They also make great gifts for loved ones who travel frequently during the holidays. Include:
 - Non-perishable food such as canned goods or candy bars
 - Extra clothes and blankets
 - A battery powered radio
 - A shovel
 - Sand
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- If stranded, remain in the vehicle. Tie a brightly colored cloth to the antenna so rescuers can find you. Run the engine occasionally for heat making sure to keep the exhaust pipe clear. Open windows occasionally for fresh air.

You can find more tips and other winter preparedness activities at :

<http://www.greatwinterweatherparty.org/>

Country Childrens Center

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Polly Peace
Executive Director

Little Steps....Big Feats

Contact Numbers

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Kitchawan 914-242-0520; Ext. 601

Watson 914-242-0520; Ext. 412

White House 914-242-0520; Ext. 301

B.H. Elementary School 914-242-0520; Ext. 502

Increase Miller 914-763-7190

J.J. Middle School 914-242-0520; Ext. 503

Katonah 914-763-7795

Lewisboro 914-763-7890

Meadow Pond 914-763-7987

Scholastic Book Fair

Join us for our Scholastic Book Fair

At both The Farm and Kitchawan Barns sites

**From Monday, February 11th to Friday, February 15th
during regular business hours.**

**Don't miss our special Reading Event
with guest readers on Saturday,
February 16th at Kitchawan Barns!**

