



THE Centerpiece



THE CCC QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Director's Desk Spring 2016

Hello CCC families and friends,

I have been the Executive Director of the CCC for 29 years. In August, I will begin my 30th year of a career I never imagined would last so long or take me on such a fantastic journey. Twenty nine years ago, the CCC looked quite differently. It has gone through lots of transformations during those years.

Recently at the CCC Annual Golf Outing we honored Lee Roberts, Deputy Supervisor of the Town of Bedford, who played a very large part in the creation of my 29 year CCC history as well as in the CCC's transformations. Lee has an amazing resume of service to our community as both a volunteer and as an elected official. She must have mastered some kind of magic trick to have been able to do so much and have made such lasting contributions to this community. Regarding her role with the Country Childrens Center, Lee served on our CCC Board of Directors for 8 years. In 1987, in her 6th year, she was faced , along with the rest of the CCC Board , with the daunting task of replacing the Executive Director who had left unexpectedly.

This is where my path and Lee's crossed. I remember my interview vividly. It was a little scary as it was a group interview, and I had never done that before. I do remember , however, being put at ease by the kind sweet face and gentle voice of one of the interviewers. That was Lee. I left the interview not knowing if I got the job but definitely thinking that the people who were running the CCC were very nice and caring individuals, who could definitely become my friends.

Well now here we are 29 years later. Thanks to Lee and others on the committee, I was hired, and I began this amazing journey. I cannot thank Lee and others on the Board enough for putting their trust in me to carry out this wonderful work. I love my job every day.

Lee's leadership on the CCC Board brought the Center through some exciting times, from renting every Church in Katonah to owning our own buildings. Her leadership in the Town also helped us to work through the quagmire of many ordinances and endless meetings to successfully develop our model of using former residences to become childcare centers in residential zones with special use permits. This model has now been replicated 5 times.

As I move forward toward my 30th year as Executive Director, I am so grateful for the opportunity Lee Roberts and many others have given me to carry out this rewarding and creative work. Next year the CCC will turn 50! Thank you Lee and other members of our community for helping to make the CCC story one of such success.



Polly

A Day in the Life at CCC Bedford Hills

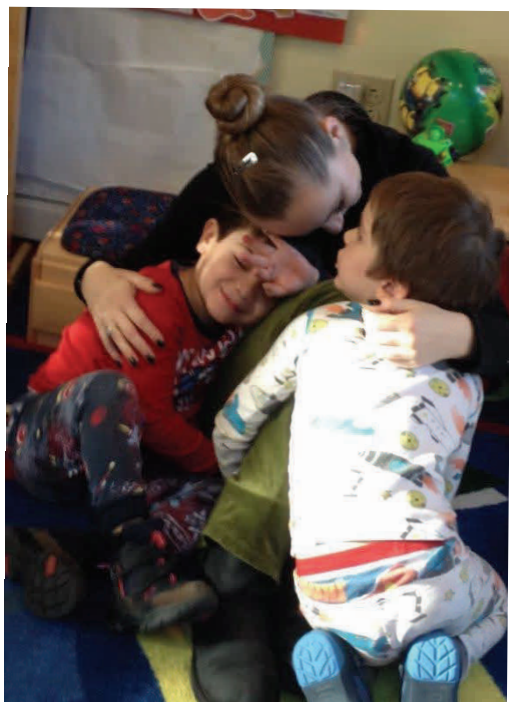


As a CCC Site Director, I walk into work with the same feeling that I hope most of our children here feel as they walk into our Bedford Hills Center... like it is my second home. It feels welcoming, familiar and cozy.



Above: Toddler dress up time!

Below: Special Pre-K Hugs!



Before I can even put my belongings down in my office, I am greeted with open arms and big smiles from the infants and toddlers. I peek into each classroom on my way up to my office to see trusting relationships and the love of learning develop. The infants are being snuggled or playing on the floor with their teachers while the toddlers are either dressed up in pretend play having a tea party, driving cars and trucks on the floor, playing with puzzles or reading books together like brothers and sisters in the cozy corner. As I pass by the preschool and pre-k rooms, I see children becoming more and more independent each day by having to find their name and placing it on the learning center board showing which area they would like to work in.

At every turn, I hear giggles with the wonder of learning whether it be about science or how to find a friend. Even on rainy days, I see children excited to put on their adorable rain boots and rain coats decorated with dinosaurs or lady bugs to jump in muddy puddles while they follow their teachers singing songs in Spanish. Summertime becomes a wonderland of summer fun filled with water play, swim lessons, themed weeks, and the ice cream truck each Friday—Bedford Hills turns into a real summer camp!

The dedicated teachers are also experiencing the love of learning through year round trainings and support from the education coordinator to truly understand and deliver our curriculum as well as live up to the high CCC and NEAYC standards. I see teachers teaching through play and playing while teaching ... improving themselves as professionals as they go.

The parents at Bedford Hills are so giving, supportive and willing to learn alongside their children. I truly believe that families are so lucky to be part of this special place. We learn and love here like a family and I am so fortunate to work here. CCC is deeply part of me, and a day in the life of a CCC Site Director is a pretty good day indeed.

Shanna Krizan, Bedford Hills Site Director



Spring Fun at the White House

Hello from all of us at the White House and Happy Spring! It seems like in the blink of an eye we went from our ever-popular fall potluck dinner through a mild winter to landing right into spring. When we last left off, we were heading toward the holiday season which only means one thing here at the CCC.... The Annual Polar Express Experience at the Farm site. This year the Pre-K classes enjoyed their experience immensely from petting the reindeer and watching Mr. Brent run the trains to sipping on hot cocoa while Miss Polly read to us The Polar Express.

After the holiday break, the Pre-K classes returned to some wonderful mid-winter events which included a visit from dentists from Dr. Sutera's office and the preparation of our 1st Family Science Night! It was a great night filled with fun experiments that brought our science program to life! The Pre-K 1 class experimented with magnets and all their capabilities while the Pre-K 2 class made faux whale blubber gloves to simulate how whales stay warm in the cold ocean.

The White House learning experiences continued with a trip to Teatown Lake Reservation for some maple sugaring. Miss Pat, our science teacher, prepared the children for the trip by tapping a tree right on our White House property! After a couple weeks of collecting sap and a little extra TLC from Miss Pat, we had our very own CCC maple syrup. It was a delicious highlight at our Family Friday Pancake Breakfast during Week of The Young Child.

This year's Week of the Young Child was a huge success filled with special events that included the making of a music video with Miss Ellen, special guest readers, a group art project, and the highlight of the week, Ice Cream "Wednesda"!

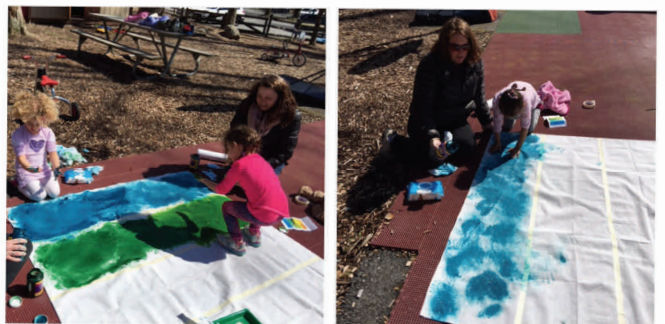
Our Mystery Reader program is in full swing due to the dedication of all the family members who come in weekly to surprise their kids and read to the class. Finally, we enjoyed Miss Jen from Kitchawan stepping in to pitch in for the Pre-K 1 team while Miss Jessica was completing student teaching for her Masters. Don't forget to save the date for Graduation! June 8th for Pre-K 1 and June 9th for Pre-K 2. See you then!

Pam Belmonte, White House Site Director



Above: Pre-K classes enjoying their trip to Teatown Lake Reservation

Below: Teachers and students working together to create a group art project.



Getting the Garden Ready at Kitchawan Barns!



Above: Pre-K class prepping the garden for planting.

Below: Toddler student exploring garden creatures with science teacher, Pat Krugman.



If you have not already seen Kitchawan's gorgeous garden- let me paint a picture for you....We are all very lucky here at Kitchawan to have such a great garden to work with. There are six raised beds that are the perfect height for our little gardeners to work comfortably in. It is enclosed with large tree branches holding up a net to keep the little critters out while keeping the little gardeners in. A large wooden table holding the tools used for planting and observing is perfectly placed at the corner of the garden.

Not only is our garden beautiful, but we have Ms. Pat, CCC's science teacher, working with each class to help bring the garden to life. In the beginning of Spring, everyone worked together getting the garden ready for planting. The preschool and pre-k children enjoyed cleaning up the dried plants and vegetables left over from last year while leaving the strawberries and mint that come back each year. With the help of Mr. Ric and Mr. Tony, CCC's maintenance crew, new top soil was added to each bed to make for perfect planting. Each week with Ms. Pat's help, each class, from infants to pre-k, have been spending time in the garden. To add to the garden experience, the children enjoyed learning about the different creatures that call the garden their home. The children searched for bugs and worms using shovel, rakes, and hoes.

With the garden ready, each class started planting seeds. Some seeds began indoors and then transplanted to the garden while other seeds were directly planted in the garden. So far, lettuce, kale, spinach, peas, mixed colored carrots, and radishes have been planted. We will continue to add more yummy veggies as the weather warms up!

Here at Kitchawan, everyone is excited to see the garden grow. Gardening is a great hands on learning experience for all children. They get to see how vegetables start from a tiny seedling and end up at their table to eat. The children will be given the opportunity to eat what they have grown in the garden. Children are more likely to try new vegetables if they grow them themselves. Let's see what we can grow and eat this summer here at Kitchawan!

Caroline Paterno, Kitchawan Site Director





Watson Festivities Are Always Fun!

The change in seasons brought special festivities for the children, staff and families of Watson.

March was a special month. The Watson Program celebrated 15 years! The children and staff had a 15 day countdown to the celebration with special activities and events planned for each day. The countdown concluded on the 15th with a catered anniversary dinner in the cafeteria of IBM. Families, children and staff gathered for a healthy child-friendly meal. It was a great night and wonderful to see staff and families enjoy a special evening and celebrate Watson!

As we moved into April, the children and staff anticipated the fun of Week of the Young Child. This week is a very special week to all children, staff and families. During the week of April 11-15th, the CCC celebrated the education of young children with special activities, guests, and delicious treats. The festivities began with a parade. Children marched around the building with banners, balloons, and instruments while singing some of their favorite songs including the ABC's and the Wheels on the Bus. The fun continued through the week with a special visit from Chad Wallace, a local author and illustrator of the book Mouse in The Meadow. The preschool and pre-k classes took an exciting trip to the Katonah Museum of Art to learn about their Nest exhibit while infants and toddlers enjoyed bounce house fun in jumping castles outside. Make your own sundaes was also huge hit! The children then came together and created a center-wide art collage made up of handprints, footprints, and free expression designs which turned out to be a masterpiece!

On April 20th, we were honored to be invited to the Earth Day vendor event at IBM. It was an excellent opportunity to meet perspective parents, recall beautiful memories of CCC Watson with former parents, and hear the wonderful things current parents love about the center, thank you!

The Watson festivities will continue on June 2nd as we celebrate our World's Fair and Pre-k graduation at IBM. We are all looking forward to it and hope to see you there!



Above: All the classes participating in Week of the Young Child parade.

Below: Staff and families enjoying the Watson Anniversary dinner.



Kristen Pollock, Watson Site Director



Keeping Busy at the Farm

The warm weather has finally arrived and the children at the farm are busy growing, learning and playing. Each classroom is filled with countless reasons to be excited.

The infants are busy reaching milestones while teachers are diligently developing the environment and creating activities to promote development. Younger infants are rolling over and learning to pull themselves up while older infants are independently holding their bottle, waving bye-bye, and moving from crawling to walking.



Above: Pretoddlers enjoying water play.

Below: Pre-K children enjoying a special lunch with Ms. Noreen.



In the pretoddler room, children are loving the opportunity to explore sand and water. These sensory experiences are a big part of their day. As they move outdoors, sand fun continues in the sandbox and climbing the structure is mastered.

As we move on up to the twoddlers, children are lucky to have Christina Talia, a John Jay Senior, join in their fun. She is doing her senior experience with us during the month of May and brings great company to the classroom. Her interactions with the children are both playful and meaningful. Please feel free to stop by and meet her!

The toddlers are spending their busy days developing their social skills by racing cars and trucks with each other, playing house in the dramatic play area, and building with Legos together. While practicing their independent skills, most of the children are reaching the potty training milestone with the help of their teachers and parents. This is a very exciting accomplishment for everyone!

Our high-spirited program continues in the pre-school room with a very energetic group that never ceases to amaze us! This year, the children went on their very first field trip. They visited the Katonah Museum of Art during Week of the Young Child. The bus ride was the hit of the trip! It was so cute to hear children from the pre-k class giving them tips about riding the bus. After all, the pre-k are the “seniors” of the center!

Speaking of “seniors”, at their great age of 5 years old, the pre-k are busy practicing for graduation. They are ready for sure! During practice, a “mini” graduation was held for Ella Sundh to bid her farewell as she and her family moved to Pennsylvania and then Sweden in the Fall. They will be dearly missed!

The staff and I would also like to give a big thank you to all the families that so generously provided delicious food for the staff luncheon during Week of the Young Child. We truly appreciate your support and participation!

Noreen Bisignano, Farm Site Director



Earth Day 2016 Big Blue Block Contest



Earth Day 2016 started drizzly this year on April 23rd at the Farm for the CCC. But the rain dissipated just in time for the Big Blue Block Construction contest, and then things got interesting.

Challengers, including children, staff, and parents, from each of the five sites had 20 minutes each to build something out of the soft, lightweight foam shapes from the Imagination Playground Company.

The Farm, Watson, and Bedford Hills sites, in that order, kicked off the competition. All three fielded strong teams, demonstrating spirit and fun, constructing organic creations with the blocks. But the heavyweights in the competition turned out to be the Kitchawan versus White House. A head to head battle wrapping up the day.

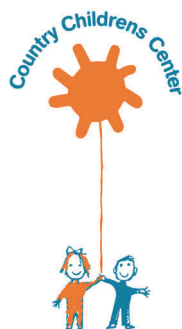
Kitchawan went first. In an exuberant display of teamwork, the band of Kitchawan Merry constructed a fort with people inside. The structure grew, and grew, until it all collapsed upon itself with onlookers and team members reduced to howls of laughter as the blue blocks tumbled all over the stage. Clearly, the Kitchawan team had the most fun in the competition.

Then it was the White House's team's turn. They gathered, planned what they wanted to build, and set to it in an awesome display of teamwork and coordination. They constructed a car, which looked amazingly capable of travel. Then they built a garage for the vehicle and closed out their 20 minutes time in the spotlight by adding a charging station for the vehicle, making it, appropriately for the day, an electric car...very earthy.

The judges convened, and easily awarded the winning nod to the White House. Setting them above the completion were their unity in action, purposefulness, and execution.

Super job, all teams, with winning kudos to the White House team!

Ric Peace



Brent Morton, CCC's School-Age Program Director, Receives Joey Award!



Each year, the Child Care Council of Westchester holds an annual awards breakfast to recognize and thank those who work so hard to prepare children to build their own bright future.

On Friday, June 3, the 2016 Joey awards will be presented to exceptional individuals caring and teaching children in early care and education programs.

Energy, commitment, experience and vision, for these reasons and others, Brent Morton, Director of School Age programs for the Country Childrens Center, receives the Joey award this year.

Brent came to the Country Childrens Center 10 years ago after leaving California where he was in charge of an after school program for over 100 children. As soon as he arrived, it was clear to us we had a gem in our midst. His enthusiasm and genuine joy in working with both staff and children was not only apparent but infectious.

He currently manages a staff of about 25 people who care for over 200 children at the five before and afterschool programs the CCC operates. His expectation of professionalism among his staff has paid off with a dedicated and motivated group of activity leaders and assistants who remained working for him year after year. For these individuals, he serves as an excellent role model, teaching and encouraging them to be the very best they can be for children. His vision is demonstrated in his quest for excellence in programming. His efforts have brought cooking, sports, music, drama, art, archery, and filmography to his programs on a regular basis.

Brent has a rare combination of the playfulness needed to relate well to the children with the seriousness and compassion needed to be there for parents when needed. He is loved by staff, children and parents alike. He is also well respected by the school district personnel he interacts with daily.

His talent and commitment enhanced by his years of experience make him a very deserving recipient of the Joey award. On behalf of CCC staff and families, Congratulations Brent!





days
for families



SAYING GOODBYE TO PRESCHOOL AND HELLO TO KINDERGARTEN



Photo: iStock / Mark Bowden

Here are some tips to guide your child through the move from preschool to kindergarten.

To Help With End-of-the-Year Feelings

- Place a sticker or make a mark on each day of the calendar every day during the last month of school.
- Encourage children to talk about their feelings about preschool ending; talk about your feelings too.
- Draw pictures and/or write good-bye messages for your child's friends or teachers.
- Revisit the events of the past year with your child by looking at drawings,

paintings, photos, and writing. Celebrate how much your child has learned this year.

- Offer stress-reducing activities at home such as water play, puppets, or playdough.
- Help the class plan an end-of-the-year family potluck.
- Plan ways to keep in touch with classmates or organize a regular play group.

To Ease the Move to Kindergarten

- Visit the new school before your child's first day. Point out ways the room is similar to his preschool room, but also discuss how it holds new materials to explore.
- Plan playdates with new classmates.
- Read books about starting school, such as *Look Out, Kindergarten, Here I Come!* by Nancy Carlson; *Will I Have a Friend?* by Miriam Cohen, illustrated by Ronald Himler; and *If You Take a Mouse to School*, by Laura Numeroff, illustrated by Felicia Bond.
- Describe the daily routines, including arrival, breakfast, snack, lunch, and bathroom practices.
- After your child is well settled into kindergarten, plan playdates with old friends.

Source: Adapted from the Message in a Backpack for Debora Jones, 2010, "Letting My Butterflies Go. Helping Children Move on to Kindergarten," *Teaching Young Children* 3 (4): 21–22.

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CCC Favorite Spring Recipe



Jelly Bean Nests

- 4 cups chow mein noodles
- 3 cups miniature marshmallows
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 30 small jelly beans

Directions:

1. line a cookie sheet with foil and grease with cooking spray oil.
2. Pour noodles into a large bowl. Melt butter and marshmallows over medium heat, stirring until smooth. Pour marshmallow mixture over noodles, stirring until well coated.
3. Rub some butter on hands and roll noodle mixture into balls. Place on a cookie sheet. With the back of a spoon make an indentation and fill with small jelly bean or other small candies.

Country Childrens Center

Graduation Schedule

- Watson**.....June 2nd at 5:30 at IBM
- White House**Pre-K 1 June 8th at 4:00
Pre-K 2 June 9th at 4:00
- Farm**June 15th 4:00
- Bedford Hills**....June 16th 11:00
- Kitchawan**.....June 16th 11:00





COUNTRY CHILDREN'S CENTER

Join us as the Renegades host the
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GA TICKET**

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