



# THE Centerpiece



THE CCC QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Editor, Carmelina Myers CCC Program Director of Education



## Director's Desk Spring 2017

Dear CCC Friends and Families,

This year the CCC is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This is certainly a significant achievement for any business, but particularly one for a nonprofit childcare center with humble beginnings in a church basement in Katonah NY. This anniversary was made possible by the efforts of many people over these years; people who have played a part in the lives of thousands of children and hundreds of families; families of all backgrounds and circumstances; families who work and desire to provide for their children but must have a safe and reliable place for their children while they do so. So, this has been our mission for 50 years...to be that place for families and that place for children in Northern Westchester.



At our recent Annual Golf Event in May, we honored 2 individuals who have helped to shape and perpetuate this mission. One was a staff member and one was a volunteer. Both of these individuals have demonstrated their devotion to children, loyalty to the CCC and commitment to the daily work of the Country Childrens Center.

Our staff member honoree was Noreen Bisignano, our site director at the "FARM". I met Noreen 30 years ago when I became the Executive Director of the CCC. At that time Noreen was still getting her degree and working part time as a teacher assistant after her classes. Noreen is the poster child for a career ladder in our field of ECE. Once she got her degree she became a FT assistant teacher, then when the opportunity arose, a lead teacher and finally when the Center grew to a level where I could no longer do both the job of site director and Executive Director, she became the site director at our beloved Farm. It was not easy to give up my role at the Farm, it was our 1<sup>st</sup> CCC owned property and as such our 1<sup>st</sup> "baby" so to speak. But, difficult as it was, I knew I was putting the Farm in great hands, those of a person who loved it just as I did. Over these 30 years Noreen has proven to be the perfect choice for the job she was given and has maintained and promoted the Center's reputation with grace and devotion. We were proud to honor Noreen Bisignano, super leader at the Farm, committed CCC staff member and terrific Mom to 4 outstanding sons.





Our volunteer honoree was another stellar individual in the CCC history book, Gretchen Wagner. I met Gretchen first when she was a Mom at our Bedford Hills site. I knew right away upon getting to know her that she was not going to be someone who simply dropped off and picked up her children each day, she was going to be involved in the place where they spent their days. Soon after enrolling, Gretchen joined our Board of Directors. There she used her significant experience with the not-for-profit world and her knowledge as a lawyer to guide the center through a complete overhaul of our bylaws and policies to make sure that the Center remained in compliance with changing rules and guidelines. Having demonstrated her abilities on many occasions, when a vacancy arose for a new President for our Board, Gretchen was a natural choice and gratefully she accepted. As President, Gretchen met with me regularly and helped me in countless ways to overcome some difficult situations. We still meet from time to time and I am always grateful for her sound advice and for her friendship. Gretchen was also the part of the Board who did not give up and helped to see the successful acquisition for our newest "baby" The Kitchawan site. Recently Gretchen had to resign from the Board due to requirements for her current position. This in no way, however, ended her commitment to the CCC. Instead, she has leveraged her position to allow us to tap into resources that we could never have acquired without her help. Her advocacy has led to amazing results and we are so grateful for her continued devotion to the CCC and her fundraising work on our behalf. It was an honor to recognize Gretchen publicly for her friendship, her advocacy and her deep commitment to the mission of the CCC.

Please mark your calendars for September 16, 2017 when we will celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and recognize many other people who have made this incredible journey possible.

Sincerely,

Polly

SAVE  
the  
DATE

## Country Childrens Center Celebrates 50 Years!

SAVE  
the  
DATE

*Since 1967, the Country Childrens Center has sought to be the premier childcare service provider in Westchester County. Through the generous support of people like you we can continue to do that into the future. Please celebrate with us as we turn 50!*

### Party and Picnic

**Saturday, September 16th 11a-3p**

**Lewisboro Town Park, South Salem, NY**

**Admission - \$20/car in advance - \$25/car at event**

**MUSIC w/ LIVE DJ**

**GREAT BBQ FOOD**

**CCC ALUMNI GAMES & COMPETITIONS**

50<sup>+</sup>

For info and payment options contact **Deric Peace 914-242-0520 ext. 510**  
Visit our website [www.countrychildrenscenter.org](http://www.countrychildrenscenter.org) and Facebook!

50<sup>+</sup>





## Happy Spring From the White House!

Happy spring from all of us at the White House! It was a busy winter here with the preschool and pre-k classes engaged in some stellar curriculum activities as well as our monthly pre-k trips to the library and an awesome trip with the preschool class to our very own Farm site. Of course, let's not forget about the ever-popular Week of the Young Child, where the White House kids enjoyed many special events from guest readers to bouncy castles as well as visits from The Nature of Things and Miss Stephanie from the Katonah Library. At the end of WOYC, the WH families gathered for a Family Friday breakfast followed by our first ever WH family gardening day. With the help of Ric Peace, the parents and kids, a new garden area was created along with pansy planting in old shoes and existing garden beds too! The White House children also participated in the first annual Muddy Puddles Project Welly Walk. We raised over \$400 in support of the Ty Louis Campbell Foundation and became the winners of a private meet and greet with none other than Peppa Pig, the queen of the Welly Walk! Finally, the pre-k class had their graduation ceremony on Wednesday, June 7, 2017. It was a gorgeous, spring day full of sunshine and smiles as we gathered under the tent to listen to the class sing songs for their families, receive their diplomas and send the butterflies out into the world just as we are sending them off to kindergarten! Happy summer to all of the White House families!

*Pamela Belmonte, CCC Site Director at White House*



## Connecting With Our Community

Four years ago, CCC Bedford Hills started a wonderful yearly tradition. The preschool class takes an annual spring Bedford Hills "walkabout", as we like to call it. The children get the opportunity to walk from the CCC center to the village of Bedford Hills. In preparation for the trip, the children look at a map of Bedford Hills, talk about different places in town, and write letters (or drew pictures) to be mailed to their parents. This special trip allows the children to actually meet some of our community helpers and heroes along the way. On the big day, the children are met by a police officer to help them cross over Route 117, so they can head to the post office to mail their letters. The next stop was the bakery for a cookie of their choice with the last stop being the library for story time with Ms. Sam. Needless to say, the children rested well that day. The Pre-K class also takes a special graduation trip to visit some local "hotspots" but this time in Katonah. After a short walk to the Bedford Hills train station, the children board the train for a short ride to the town of Katonah. There they visit the Katonah library for a special story and craft. Following with a slice of Pizza and icepop from the "Pizza Station". We are very luck to be located so close to our village and hope these trips leave lasting memories to hold near and dear in their hearts as they grow up in these towns.



*Shanna Krizan, CCC Site Director at Bedford Hills*

## Super Hero Staff at Watson!

There is a saying that goes, “Real heroes don’t wear capes, they teach”, and here at Watson you will find just that! During the week of May 8th we celebrated Teacher Appreciation Week. It is a special time to honor all the men and women who lend their passion and skills to educating our children. This year’s theme was “Super Heroes” and our teachers truly are! They deliver so much to our children and families-inspiration, motivation and ultimately their futures. The families and administration celebrated and showed their gratitude to the teachers with a special super hero breakfast to kick off the week. Each day, the staff received special treats such as super hero vitamins (tic tacs), lollipops and super hero ID badges. A special luncheon catered by Salsa Fresca was also presented to the staff by the families and administration to show their appreciation for all that they do. To end this wonderful week, these amazing heroes of Watson were also given gifts for their classrooms. Infants and toddlers received new bubble machines while the preschool enjoyed new sensory/fine motor bins and toys, and pre-k a new CD player. The teachers were blown away by the thoughtfulness, kindness, and appreciation that poured out during this week. The families went above and beyond to ensure each and everyday was special to the staff. We thank you for making this week so special for such a Super Hero Staff!



*Kristen Pollock, CCC Site Director at Watson Baby Blue*

## Out with Spring and In with Summer!

With spring almost over and summer fast approaching, we finally have some consistent warm weather. Spring was funny that way with it yo-yoing from warm to cold day by day. I am confident in saying that I think the warm weather is here to stay. Here at Kitchawan we wrapped up spring with our amazing graduation ceremony. The pre-k children practiced really hard and it showed in their performance. Graduation is always a bitter sweet event with it being sad to see our friends go but happy for their new adventures! Along with graduation, each class did something special to honor their dads for Father's



Day. We are always happy to have parents come and share these special events with their child. With summer comes our fun summer program which officially starts the week of July 4th. We have many fun and exciting events for the children planned. Of course, with this comes swimming for the preschool and pre-k and lots of water play for the babies and toddlers. All the classes will also be working together to tend to our garden and help it grow. Everyone is excited to see what we will be able to grow!

*Caroline Paterno, CCC Site Director at Kitchawan*

## Farm Families Have an Impact!

The relationship between school and family is so important in supporting children's development, expanding their knowledge, and impacting high quality learning. The Country Childrens Center is committed to building relationships and working together with families each year to provide such quality within our center. This year, the families of the Farm exceeded our expectations in partnering with us to make each of our events special for both the staff and the children, and I would like to commend them for that. Parents and grandparents were on board for so many special events in which they gave 100 percent! These include Grandparents Breakfast, CCC Spirit Day, Earth Day, Fall Fest, Thanksgiving Sharing Feast, Back to School night, Art Auction, Mystery Reader, Picture Day, Surprise Staff Luncheon with kind notes, Family/Swim BBQ, Polar Express, Science Fair, Book Signing, Graduation, Mother's Day Tea, Father's Day Breakfast and the CCC Golf Outing Dinner. I am truly impressed because it is not easy being a working parent with the hustle and bustle of everyday activities. Yet, you have come through all year and your cohesiveness with the staff and program are unfathomable. I consider myself lucky to be an employee of CCC for 30 Years! Thank You!



*Noreen Bisignano, CCC Site Director at The Farm*

## The Adventure Begins!

Thanks to all the parents and children for a great year at the CCC School-Age Programs! This year we operated 8 School-Age Programs including our inaugural year at the Pound Ridge Elementary School. As we wind down the last couple of weeks of school we are gearing up for another summer at the CCC Summer Adventure Camp. Camp runs for 8 weeks from July 5th- August 25 and this year we have some amazing things in store. Summer camp offers a wide variety of activities and workshops designed to stimulate the mind and body! We offer American Red Cross Swimming Instruction, sports and games which includes our new "Soft Stick Lacrosse" program, archery, arts and crafts, story telling workshops, talent shows, dance and movement workshops, nature hikes, field trips, camp Olympics and so much more. As usual, there will be special visits from Dinosaurs Rocks, The Franklin Institute's "Science on the Go" program, and the Game and Ride Video Game Truck! Every day at camp is an adventure and our staff has been hard at work planning what is truly going to be an amazing experience! .



*Brent Morton, CCC School Age Program Director*



## Generosity Abounds in 2017!

This past May 22, nearly forty golfers made their way to Centennial Golf Club, in Carmel, to brave the less than ideal weather and support the Country Childrens Center. The forecast called for steady drizzle, and steady would be an understatement. No matter, the golfers were there, and CCC parent Greg Gutter's foursome took the grand prize, shooting a sub 70. The dinner was a bit wet, too, but turned out ninety-seven people, our biggest yet. Guests vied for raffle prizes, made merry with other guests, and all told, raised over 10K dollars for the Center. We need to thank the fine folks at Centennial, GM Scott Klemme, Head Pro Dan Barnard, and Catering Brian Ledley and Maggie Flynn. We'd also like to thank the Board of Directors, who were there in full. Many thanks to the people who made donations or donated their time for the event, and the whole thing would collapse without Cheryl Flores. If you're reading this and thinking you missed a good time, you did! Sign up next year! Well on our way to another record year for fundraising, we invite you to our next outing, The Hudson Valley Renegades Game, Friday, July 14th. Kids from the center will be singing in the 7th, and yours can too! Details can be found online. Visit our website! Like us on Facebook, and feel free to write a review! Till next time!

*Deric Peace, Media & Marketing Manager*



### Country Childrens Center

FUNDRAISER



Join us on July 14th as the Renegades host  
the Mahoning Valley Scrappers at 7:05pm  
POST-GAME FIREWORKS

#### **\$20 PACKAGE**

GA Ticket  
Gades Group Hat  
\$5 Food Credit

Purchase online at [GadesGroups.com](http://GadesGroups.com)  
Password: **CountryCC**

TICKETS MUST BE PURCHASED BEFORE JULY 14th  
AND CANNOT BE PURCHASED AT THE GATES

Available while supply lasts. Online purchase only. Call us at 845-838-7084



Photo © iStock.com / Kail Nine LLC

## Tuning Out to Tune In: How Time Outside Can Improve Readiness to Learn Inside

by Andrea Laser

Outdoor time matters. I've certainly lost track of time and my thoughts and worries seemed to disappear - all because I was outdoors in a peaceful setting. As teachers we send wound up children outside to "burn off some energy." And many of us plan our vacations based on the outdoor scenery. Our need to be restored by the outdoors and nature's almost magical effects may actually have its roots in brain research. As it turns out, the time we spend outside can do amazing work getting our brain ready for the time we spend inside. Several years ago, the book *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv was published that described much of the research about the powerful effects of being outside for children. His book has many studies that describe the power of benefits of being outside and in nature for children.

### The Power of Outside

Nature has beautiful and unexpected ways of capturing our attention--the wind suddenly blowing across our face, our feet slowly sinking into the sand at the beach, or seeing an animal run in full stride in its natural habitat.

Researchers call this type of attention "involuntary attention" and believe that time spent in involuntary attention may actually be giving our voluntary attention an important time of rest (Kaplan, 1995, and Taylor, Kuo, & Sullivan, 2001). Voluntary attention includes such activities as focusing on a math problem, or writing letters- basically tasks that make a person focus on what he is doing. Involuntary attention is when we don't mean to pay attention to something, but our brain shifts our focus anyway (an animal making noise, the sound of thunder, the smell of lilacs, etc.) This research isn't new, but as academic expectations are pushed down into earlier grades, sometimes what is considered the "non-essential" and non-academic parts of a child's day, including recess, are tragically cut or eliminated. The reality is, outside matters, and children need time outside to be ready to learn inside.

### How can you encourage this power of the outdoors for your children?

- **Recess matters**

Advocate for your child's school to keep recess. If your school has cut or limited recess, ask to talk to the principal or director about why and how this decision was made. One guideline from [SHAPE America](#) (Society of Health and Physical Educators) is that children ages 3-5 years old should be engaged in 60 minutes of structured physical activity and 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity per day.

- **Windows matter**

Some research suggests that simply looking out a window can have some of the same revitalizing effects as being outdoors. When looking at schools and child care centers, notice how many windows there are and if children are to see out them (they aren't covered, and they are low enough for children to see out).

- **How you get to school matters**

If you live close enough, try walking or biking to school with your child. Not only will this give your child's brain time to revitalize, it also provides great opportunities for conversation and starting the day off right for both of you.

- **Take time to revitalize your brain too!**

Don't forget that revitalizing your brain is important too! Take time for yourself to be in nature. Throughout your day spend a few minutes outside and see how you can benefit from the effects of time outside.

- **If you can't get outside as much as you'd like, try bringing some of the outdoors in**

Both weather conditions and location can be a deterrent to safe outdoor play for children. If you cannot get outside, try to bring the outdoors inside- collect some natural materials for children to sort, count, pattern with, draw, and observe. In addition, consider having plants, fairy gardens, and observational areas where children can observe and have opportunities to document what they notice.



# Highlights...

why CCC is the place to be!



Pre-K's very own book signing event!



Making paper during science with Miss Pat!



Work together and build together with Big Blue Blocks-during Week of the Young



Having fun at CCC science night!



PreK Star of the week Invites his brother to perform for his class.







Watson's World's Fair! A celebration of family cultures.



We love our visits from Nature of Things!



The most wonderful time of year when Santa's reindeer come for a visit at the Polar Express!



CCC's yearly Thanksgiving Sharing Feast



Planting pansies with families!



Celebrating Dr. Seuss at its best!



Our very own special meet and greet with Peppa Pig!



A little snow never stops the toddlers from getting out!



Infants enjoying the great outdoors!

A wonderful summer to all CCC friends, families, and staff!!



