



Director's Desk Fall 2017

Dear CCC Friends and Families,

When I think about the CCC and its 50th anniversary certain words quickly come to mind that help me define our remarkable history. Some of these are words like community, consistency and continuity.

I also think of collaboration because without the support of many organizations, corporations and our greater community, our history for all these years would not have been possible. As a matter of fact, we reached a critical point in time about 30 years ago when it looked as though we wouldn't survive. At that time, we had exhausted all our housing options within the village of Katonah and had lost our leases at every church. We had to find a home but we did not have the resources needed to pay for one. Magically, at this crucial point in time, IBM, in the person of Ted Childs, entered and with the help of Pepsi and some other corporations provided the funds we needed to help us buy our first home, which we fondly call the Farm. The Farm became our model for delivering childcare services. This model is one of re-purposing former residences into childcare centers and creating a home like environment for children, families and staff. Inside, these homes provide a warm nurturing environment within which children can grow and thrive. Outside, the children enjoy not just a playground, but a setting that is like their own fabulous backyard with all the nature that would go with that.

The Farm also gave us other opportunities. It was our first infant and toddler site. Adding these very young children to our enrollment greatly enhanced our relationships with families. With infant care on one end and afterschool care on the other, we have been able to enjoy relationships that span 10, 20 and even more years. These relationships have made us an integral part of our community's





History, and we have cared for literally thousands of children during these 50 years.

Throughout all these years, the changes we have made have been made in direct response to adapting to the changing needs of the community. This responsiveness has made us an important stake holder in this community.

So many people and organizations have helped to form and formulate the story of the CCC. We are so grateful for the dedicated staff, volunteers and community members that have contributed to our successes. As we look to the future, we are committed to keeping the needs of our community as a focus while always striving to do the absolute best for the children who are placed in our care.

With the continued support of our community and the continued commitment of so many individuals, our hope is that this remarkable journey of the County Childrens Center will go on for many many years to come.

Sincerely,

Polly





Enhancing the Natural Beauty of the White House

Welcome to a new school year at the White House! Thanks to our wonderful staff, the preschool and pre-k programs had a successful start to the school year. All of the CCC sites are known for their outstanding grounds and here at the White House we are especially fortunate to have our grounds enhanced by Eagle Scouts from the community, annually. Past projects include a nature trail, outdoor amphitheater, and a new garden center. This year's project, an outdoor reading space made of old trees near the sport court, was brought to life by outstanding individual and Eagle Scout Thor Ademec. Numerous tree stumps left over from hurricane Sandy were utilized to create this outdoor reading area to extend our indoor classroom circle time. With a lot of hard work and dedication, he created the tree circle for us. On November 2, the White House children all gathered outside for Polly's dedication of the tree circle to Thor and presented him with an official letter and CCC t-shirt. The children also made a card for Thor and gave it to him after he read us an awesome story about fall leaves. We know that children for years to come will enjoy listening to many great stories and maybe someday read a book to their own children in that very same reading circle.



Pamela Belmonte, CCC Site Director at White House

CCC and IBM Celebrate Halloween and a Community Partnership



We know that the ingredient for every child's success in school and life is the collaborative relationship between early childhood programs and community organizations. Such a partnership results in sharing and maximizing resources for both the children and families. Here at Watson, we are fortunate to have our community partner, IBM, in our very own back yard. To sustain this bond with IBM, the children of Watson often share special events with employees so they can enjoy the experience of early childhood, and on

October 27th, the Watson preschool and pre-k classes joined the children of CCC's Kitchawan site at IBM for our annual Halloween sing along and trick-o-treating event. Once there, the children and staff gathered in the cafeteria and sang Halloween songs, like "The Monster Boogie", while marching in a costume parade. IBM then provided special themed cookies and milk for all. Finally, the CCC parents lined the hallway and waited for the children to march by and say "Trick-o-Treat"! Children, staff and IBM employees alike look forward to this annual event! Partnerships like this are rare, and the CCC is fortunate to have IBM as a neighbor and a resource.



Kristen Pollock, CCC Site Director at Watson

Making Parents Part of the Experience at Kitchawan

Did you know that children who have parent engagement at school are more likely to experience greater academic success and a stronger social emotional well-being? At the CCC we make it a priority to create opportunities for parents to be engaged because this is a powerful way to guide children's health and learning. For a second year in a row, the Kitchawan staff teamed up with families for a Trunk-o-Treating event. Parents and teachers decorated their parked cars, and children trick-o-treated at each vehicle.



Not only is this a safe and fun way to experience Halloween, it also gives our busy full time working parents the chance to be one with their child while in school. The staff, children and families really brought the spirit of Halloween to life. They gave it their all with the creative costumes, unique and special treats, and most of all, the outrageously decorated cars! A grand Halloween parade ended the festivities, and we know that this will be a great event for years to come!

Caroline Paterno, CCC Site Director at Kitchawan

“Change is hard at first, messy in the middle, and gorgeous at the end.”

~ Robin Sherman

We have certainly had our fair share of change here at Bedford Hills over the past 6 months most of which involved staff. While it seemed an impossible mountain to climb when these changes began, I am so proud and happy with the way our center has come out on top.....things are looking beautiful from the top of this mountain.....or should I say these “Bedford Hills”. With many of our seasoned staff still here, part of which makes Bedford Hills so special, some have fresh new roles. Miss Ivette,



a CCC teacher since 1966, is doing an incredible job as our new Spanish and Art Specialist. To bring her new role to life, a special space has been created in our Art Barn for her to bring the experience of the Hispanic culture and language along with open ended art to the toddler, preschool and pre-k classes. This has been a beautiful addition to our center. As we value our seasoned teachers, Bedford Hills welcomed amazing new teachers to all of our classrooms

each bringing skills and talents that contribute to a more positive and bright environment. The new teachers have worked tirelessly to revamp classrooms, which in-turn improved the overall learning and social- emotional development of each child. When you enter the building these days, the energy feels joyful with welcoming rooms, warm smiles, and laughter throughout. While change is not always welcomed when it arrives, it can be a catalyst to get you to a place where you need to be, and we, at Bedford Hills, have done just that. We hope that as you enter our front doors and take a look around, you feel it too, and to the children, it feels just like home.

Shanna Krizan, CCC Site Director at Bedford Hills

Farm Pays Tribute to Veterans

Happy Fall to you! It is hard to believe another year has gone by. This month we celebrated Veteran's Day. While most kids are off from school, here at the Farm we used this day as an opportunity to teach children about the concepts of hope, sacrifice, and courage while doing something special for the women and men who bravely served this country and the many more who continue to do so. Two very special projects were completed at the Farm to show appreciation and connection to those who serve in uniform. The first was organized and led by, intern and assistant to teachers, Sam Vidal. Along with the classroom teachers, Sam had the preschool and pre-K children take part in a "Soil for Soldiers" project to help those who serve overseas remember a piece of home. Each child gathered soil from the outside, placed it in a Ziplock bag and attached it to a special card in hopes a plant will grow from it. With that, teacher and assistant, Barbara Smith headed a collaborative project with the teachers to create a flag made up of the tiny hands and feet of children who enter our doors every day at the Farm. To show our gratitude and appreciation, the flag is hanging at the front of our building while being a remembrance of the history of this day and sacrifice and dedication of our US veterans. The CCC recognizes all Veterans!



Noreen Cotter, CCC Site Director at The Farm

CCC For Families

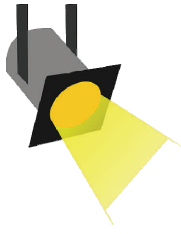
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Pumpkin Pie Play Dough

- 1 cup salt
- 2 cups flour
- 2 cups water
- 1 Tablespoon cream of tartar
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil or canola oil
- Red and yellow food coloring to make orange
- 1 1/2 Tablespoons of pumpkin pie spice (to bring out the fall smell)

Wisk all ingredients in a microwave safe bowl. Cook on medium heat for 2 minutes, stir and heat again. It will start out runny, but quickly form into a ball. When this happens (when it gets thick), remove from microwave, but continue to stir. When it is semi-cool, take it out, and knead the dough. Store in a Ziplock bag or get busy building and playing!

Bring
fun
play



In the Spotlight



Meet The New School-Age Assistant Director!

We are very pleased to announce, beginning this September, Tiffany Baffi-Munson, has been promoted to the position of Assistant School-Age Director!

Miss Tiffany, as she is known to the CCC kids, holds a BS in Behavioral Science with a specialty in Community Health Services. Tiffany came to the Center in 2008 after a 3 year stint as a Teacher's Assistant at Lincoln Hall in Lincoln Dale. Originally hired as the site director at our after school program at John Jay Middle School, Tiffany was transferred to Bedford Hills Elementary School in 2012 and became the site director at that school. In addition to her responsibilities at the BHE program, Tiffany has been part of the summer camp staff since 2009, and in 2014 become the camp's Co-Director. She is also the coordinator of the CCVC program.

Miss Tiffany is known for her friendly smile, attention to organization and detail, and her hard work ethic. She is a team player and a fantastic role model. Children and staff adore her, and she has become a staple at the school age programs. In her new role as Assistant Director, she will be able to offer her expertise in school-age care to a broader group of children and staff by making weekly visits to all the school age programs. Tiffany has a firm grasp on the Center's mission and understands our responsibility in the lives of children. When asked what her favorite part of working at CCC is she responded, "Watching the kids grow over the years and then coming back to work here!"

Congratulations to Tiffany, thank you for all the dedication and service over the past 9 years!!!

Brent Morton, CCC School-Age Program Director



Going for the GOLD!

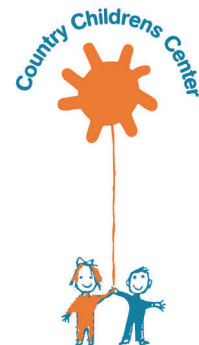
At the Country Childrens Center we know how important the early years are to children's success in school and life. We want to do everything we can to give children in our program a strong foundation for life-long learning. Ongoing observation and assessment of each child's development is a key factor for accomplishing this. It helps teachers discover each child's strengths, interests, and needs so they can effectively teach in ways that help each individual child develop and learn.

To help teachers better define the development path of each of their students, our Preschool and Pre-K teachers are excited to now be using an authentic, ongoing observational system for assessing children called *Teaching Strategies GOLD*. This developmentally appropriate assessment system is based on 38 objectives that are aligned with state early learning standards. It provides a structured method for our very busy teachers to use the objectives to focus their observations of children in a context of everyday experiences and plan appropriate learning experiences for each child.

With the use of *Teaching Strategies GOLD*, we have found many benefits for both the teachers and families. This tool is allowing teachers to be even more involved and leaving more time to interact with children because observations and evaluations are taking place while children are interacting naturally with their peers. Because this assessment system is ongoing, teachers are finding it easier to determine if a child is making progress while recognizing children who might benefit from special help, further evaluation or taking the next step in furthering their development. It also generates comprehensive reports that can be shared with families showing their child's progress and compare the child's knowledge, skills, and behaviors to what is developmentally appropriate in his or her age group.

Making sure children enter kindergarten with the skills to succeed is priority in our program. With the combination of our trained teachers and a more concrete way of tracking children's development, *Teaching Strategies GOLD* will bring this quality early education to our program even more.

Carmelina Myers, CCC Program Director of Education





What's happening at the CCC?

CCC Thanksgiving Sharing Feast

CCC staff, children and families come together to share their favorite foods in honor of Thanksgiving Day.

When: Tuesday, November 21 at lunchtime

Where: At all CCC locations

Donation Drive for Victims in Puerto Rico

CCC is taking donations for victims of the worst hurricane in Puerto Rico's history.

When: Now through December

Where: At all CCC locations

CCC's Annual Polar Express

The children take a ride on the CCC's very own Polar Express bus to see Santa and his reindeer.

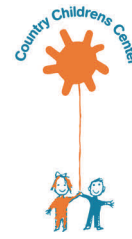
When: Wednesday, December 6 and Thursday, December 7

Where: At CCC Farm location



Welcoming

THE VOICE OF PARENTS



“The CCC and our children’s teachers have been wonderful, and I’m beyond grateful for the love and attentive care everyone provides the boys. Our son absolutely adores his infant teachers (well, he seems to love anyone who will smile back), and our older son, although very attached to me and most times difficult to drop off, has such an amazing connection to his toddler teachers so he feels right at home with them.

I’ve really been so pleased with the CCC and the warm and friendly environment the boys spend their time in each day!”

“We are so pleased that CCC is now using Tadpoles for communicating with Preschool parents. I am a parent who has opted out of having photos of my child on social media, and I was never able to get pictures of him during the day at school. Because Tadpoles is secure and comes directly to me, I now get to have pictures of my child learning throughout the day.”

“Our daughter was feeling a bit sad in the morning after I left and so her teacher made a video of her saying I love you and sending a flying kiss to me. It was a great idea and we loved it! We sent it to her grandparents too.

We are so happy to use the Tadpoles app. It not only streamlines the process but also makes our involvement that much more immersive and the memories section is fantastic. “

