

# The Centerpiece

Country Childrens Center | Winter 2018/Spring 2019



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

# Country Childrens Center<sup>SM</sup>

Serving the Community Since 1967

The Country Childrens Center provides a caring, nurturing, and stimulating environment that meets the individual, social, emotional, physical, creative, aesthetic, and intellectual needs of each child, ages 6 weeks through middle school.

It is our goal to establish a strong self-awareness within each child, which includes a sense of belonging, competence, usefulness, and empowerment.

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- Music
- Nature
- Cooking



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or call Karen Marino at (914) 242-0520 x501

Bedford Hills | Lewisboro | Katonah | Oak Ridge | Yorktown

## Director's Desk

Dear Country Childrens Center Families and Friends,

For the Country Childrens Center, the year just passed was a good one. We were able to continue our work by growing our enrollment to over 600 children. On a daily basis these children had fun and learned in a secure and engaging environment while their parents went to work. The committed, experienced and well trained staff of the CCC is directly responsible for this daily success of our programs.



Polly Peace, Executive Director

When people visit the CCC they are always in awe of the amazing sites we have where children spend their days. These sites offer enhancements to our programs that set us apart from other programs in the area. On a daily basis children can experience nature up close by taking a walk on one of our nature trails, working in our gardens, running in open fields, swinging under giant trees, feeding farm animals or even swimming in our pools under beautiful blue skies during summer months.

These are the things that visitors and families can easily see when at the sites. However, what is not so easily seen is what else is also part of the CCC program and also sets us apart. This is the heart of the CCC. Behind the scenes, for over 50 years, the CCC has been helping families who need childcare, want the best for their children but cannot afford the full cost of care. Last year the CCC gave almost \$200,000 to these families in need. These families come to us with a variety of different circumstances. Many are single parents. Some have recently lost a job and need help temporarily while they search for a new one. Some have experienced the death of one of the parents in the family. In these cases the CCC not only offers financial help, but emotional help to the families as well. Sometimes there are even more dire circumstances that we help with. Recently a family came to us who had a child who was extremely ill and they needed care for the younger sibling while they dealt with this unfolding family crisis. This situation was so time intensive for the parents that the mom could no longer work. So not only did this family need care, they had no way to pay for it. The CCC quickly took this child in and the child is happy and doing great each day while the family continues its struggle against unbelievable odds. None of us ever want to be in this kind of a position. However, it is fortunate for the community that the CCC is there with an open heart and an open hand when asked to help families. This is who we are and have always been though this is not so obvious to see when one looks simply at our wonderful facilities. This year Country Childrens Center opened a new program in Vista NY. With this expansion the CCC can once again provide a great environment for children in our beautiful new building with all its enhancements. Once again as well, we will be able to serve our community as we move to this underserved area and meet the needs of the families there.

We look forward with excitement to this expansion and to the opportunities the year will bring for us to better serve our community childcare needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Polly".



ENROLL NOW!

# Country Childrens Center<sup>SM</sup>

# SUMMER ADVENTURE CAMP



The summer camp program is designed to allow children to explore their world and environment with a hands-on approach to learning while teaching teamwork and problem solving. Our unique facility is located in Katonah, New York on four acres of beautiful wooded property. Our facility includes nature trails, a swimming pool, archery, beach volleyball, play structures, and an outdoor sports court!

The Summer Adventure Camp offers a wide variety of activities and experiences including:

- Swimming
- Nature Walks
- Arts and Crafts
- Story-telling Workshops
- Outdoor Sports
- Science and Technology Projects
- Games
- Field Trips

## CCC SUMMER CAMP IS ALMOST HERE!

For more information please visit [www.cccsummercamp.org](http://www.cccsummercamp.org)  
or call Tiffany Baffi-Munson, Summer Camp Director  
(914) 242-0520 ext 302

Thank you, we're looking forward to another incredible summer!

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Country Childrens Center provides a caring, nurturing, and stimulating environment that meets the individual social, emotional, physical, creative, aesthetic, and intellectual needs of each child, ages 6 weeks through middle school. It is our goal to establish a strong self-awareness within each child, which includes a sense of belonging, competence, usefulness, and empowerment. We are attentive to the needs, values and expectations of working parents, and make every effort to make childcare available to those that cannot afford the service.

The Country  
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Polly Peace photo by John Rizzo



Join CCC for  
**The Week of the Young Child**  
and

# **Celebrate Literacy**

**April 8 - 13, 2019**



# The Weeks Schedule:

## Music Monday:

Kick off with Parades

## Tasty Tuesday:

Books and Bites- Make a delicious snack based on a children's story

## Work-Together Wednesday:

Children and teachers will work together and make a class storybook

## Artsy Thursday:

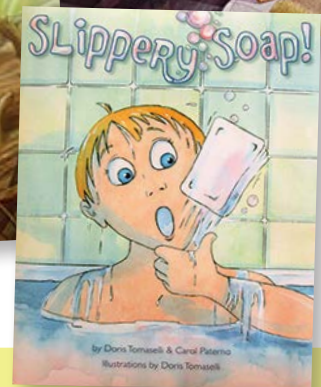
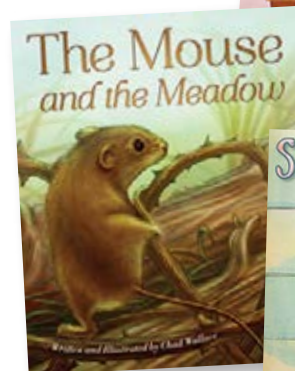
Dress up as favorite Character Book

## Family Friday:

Pansy planting with Families & More

## Visiting Children's Authors

Throughout the week there will be visits from local authors which include **Carol Paterno** Author of *Slippery Soap*, **Mike Ornstein** author of *Kindergarrrrten Bus* and **Chad Wallace** Author of *The Mouse and the Meadow*.



## Introducing the Newest CCC Site

# Oak Ridge



Jessica Sousa  
Site Director

### *New Year and New Addition to Country Childrens Center*

By Jessica Sousa

The new year brings a new addition to the Country Childrens Center family with the opening of the Oak Ridge location in South Salem, NY. We are ecstatic to announce that we have opened our doors at Oak Ridge and have welcomed new families and staff into the amazing CCC family. Prior to opening, the staff were hard at work preparing their classrooms for the children to arrive. Staff were waiting with anticipation for children to fill their classrooms with laughter and fun. On our first day, the children entered with smiles eager to explore their classrooms, the playground and meet new friends. The infants and toddlers have been enjoying spending time on the theater stage moving and grooving with their dance moves and playful expressions. In addition to this, the children enjoy watching for dogs that stroll by the windows while out for walks in the neighborhood. The preschoolers

are getting into their daily routines and are enjoying spending time on the playground structure and exploring balance on the outdoor balancing scale.

All the CCC programs have wonderful enrichment activities to enhance the program and provide a variety of engaging opportunities for the children at each of the locations with music and movement being one of them. In February we will be welcoming another family member to join the team, Robert the Guitar Guy. He will be bringing a new sound to the our center with his guitar and cast of puppets. We are excited for the new adventures ahead this year as we welcome more new families into the center and the Country Childrens Center family.





# Get to Know Oak Ridge Site Director Jessica Sousa

By Carmelina Myers



**Country Childrens Center new site director Jessica Sousa on how she went from Pre-K teacher to Site Director at the new center at Vista Commons in South Salem. As we talk she tells me how she hopes to use her new role to help “create a collaborative environment” with staff and families and what she’s planning to do in her new awesome role.**

## **What made you want to get into child education?**

I was fortunate to have an amazing teacher in high school, Mrs. Bell, who taught a two-year child-development class in which I found my passion for education. During my time in her class, I learned a tremendous amount about child development and was able to intern at a local elementary school while still in high school. I interned in a first-grade classroom with a fabulous mentor teacher and was able to experience firsthand teaching a class. I had the opportunity to work one-on-one with children, and by the end of my senior year, I was creating and teaching lessons. It was during this time I choose to pursue a career in education. After teaching in a Pre-k setting for several years, and seeing more and more children enter the program with a diverse set of educational needs, it was at that time I choose to strengthen my skill set and further my education by pursuing my master’s degree in early childhood special education.



## **What were you doing before taking on this role?**

Prior to taking on the role of Site Director at Oak Ridge, I was the head Pre-k teacher in the inclusion class at our Kitchawan Barns location. During this time I worked under a co-teaching model by working with a special education teacher and team from the Children’s School of Early Childhood Development.

## **As the new site director, what is the main thing that you’re focusing on right now?**

As a new site director, my main focus is to work with my teachers to ensure they are planning and

implementing an engaging curriculum on a daily basis for the children, all while providing a safe, warm and nurturing environment for all. Currently, my team of teachers have been creatively bringing their lessons and centers to life to engage the children in discovery, learning and imaginative play. Overall my main focus is to establish a collaborate environment with not only teachers but among families as well. The families have been contributing materials and books from their homes to share with the classrooms to further the development and enrichment in the center as a whole. In addition, the parents have offered suggestions about enrichment activities they have had at other centers that can enhance our program. I am taking into consideration all the suggestions and information provided by the families to always expand and to elevate our program further.

## **What is your favorite part of the new center?**

My favorite part of the new center is the children, families and staff I get to interact with on a daily basis. The children have brought so much fun and laughter into the center since we opened our doors a month ago. In addition to this, I am excited to work with the teachers and families to create a collaborative environment where they are learning from each other, sharing ideas and sharing resources amongst each other.

## **You’ve been with CCC for just about 5 years now, how does it feel to have a greater role in the growth of the organization?**

When I joined the organization five years ago, I knew there was opportunity for growth within the company as I had seen teachers move into various leadership roles over time. I am looking forward to the adventure that I am going to be taking with my staff as we establish an outstanding program at Oak Ridge. Within this role, I am hopeful that I will have a greater impact on the families we provide care for at the Country Childrens Center.

CCC Site Update:

# Bedford Hills



Shanna Krizan  
Site Director

## Bright Spots at Bedford Hills

By Shanna Krizan

At CCC we focus on a “habit of the month” and with 2019’s arrival, January’s habit had been to “Focus on the Bright Spots”....our strengths, assets and skills, professionally and personally. Other than the obvious bright spots here at Bedford Hills, the beautiful children that greet us each day with their warm smiles, tight hugs, sense of wonder and amazement; as a site director, I have been focusing on what each teacher brings to Bedford Hills that create such bright spots here each day. We have wonderful new and seasoned teachers who are all filled with creative ideas, enthusiasm, and lots of love for their class...and it shows in their rooms and their work.

In the infant room, Miss Erika has worked hard at making sure the babies always get to experience the world around them through art, and sensory projects. She has made sure that families also get to experience their children’s development along the way with pictures on the walls showing their journey. In the toddler 1 room, Miss Paige has made Circle Time extra special with her beautiful Song Board. Noticing that the pride each child feels when they get to choose the next song, each child now picks the picture of the song they want to sing. In our Toddler 2 class, Miss Heidi has

created some wonderful opportunities for learning self-help skills as well as organization in the classroom. The older toddlers in this class make sure when lining up, they find their picture on the laminated “feet” on the classroom floor. This teaches them how to line up and wait for the teacher...we love it, and so do they!! In the Bedford Hills preschool class, Miss Melissa has added an exciting science, sensory and discovery center to the room that also ties to outdoor activities. This is a big part of what CCC is about....so much learning can happen outside, and we love that this is valued by our teachers too!! So far, the preschool class has learned about snowflakes, ice, habitats, weather, and now they are venturing into balancing with scales. This has become one of the favorite centers! Additionally, here at Bedford Hills, Miss Ivette teaches Spanish to the preschool and Pre-K. Through some donations from a children’s publisher she has been reviewing books that are in both English and Spanish with the children. Ivette then teaches words as they read along, as well as songs that go along with the themes in the classroom. In the Pre-K class, Miss Nicole and Ms. Anna have worked hard at introducing a Kindness Curriculum this year. The children have learned about appropriate



and varied ways of greeting one another (for example, “Do you want a hug, handshake, fist bump, a wave or a high-five?”) The children can also earn “brag tags” - tags they proudly wear around their neck for the day if they are “caught” helping or being kind to a friend for example. One of my favorite sound bites each day is from the PreK Circle Time, as the class sings loudly the “Hello Neighbor” song (and often I go watch it too)—the children do a song and dance with partners, as they shake hands, give a wave, and a friendly hip bump, turn around chanting that “...it’s going to be a happy day!”

I cannot forget to mention one of our brightest spots here at Bedford Hills...Matthew, who is our all-around maintenance assistant, kitchen helper, Pre-K assistant during nap time, giver of supplies, and an all-around helper every afternoon at our center, who comes to work each day with the brightest smile. He shows up with such pride for his work and happy to be here while shining his positive energy on the children and on the staff. Matthew offers to help and often dresses up for the kids as the “Cat in the Hat” and other characters whenever asked. He is a wonderful team member! He may not be a lead teacher but is a very big bright spot and an important part of this Bedford Hills community. All of our staff contribute to the brightness that is here, and each adds light to the children’s days. It’s nice to be surrounded by such skill, beauty, and intent from the staff...and to watch it shining through to the children is what hopefully makes CCC a bright spot for the families to be.



*On the right: Students and activities at Bedford Hills.*

CCC Site Update:

# The Farm



Noreen Cotter  
Site Director

## Back in the Neighborhood at NAEYC

By Noreen Cotter

This past November, the Country Childrens Center sent Michele Long and Katie Monahan from the Farm to the annual National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Conference in Washington DC. This year's keynote speaker was



Joanne Rogers, widow of Fred Rogers (Mister Rogers' Neighborhood), who, along with other panelists, discussed the impact her husband had and continues to have on young children, including, inclusivity, love, and compassion. Michele and Katie also attended many training sessions: How to turn the outdoors into learning classrooms (from an all-outdoor preschool); How to incorporate cultural diversity within the classrooms (and making sure children's cultures are represented); How sensory processing can affect learning (Including use of sensory toys, tubs, and other manipulatives to help children learn); Supporting active children within the classroom; and even sessions on how to build a phenomenal NAEYC classroom and portfolio. After returning to the CCC, they were excited to share all that they had learned and eager to integrate it in both the indoor and outdoor learning space. It was truly a wonderful learning experience!



*Above: Michele Long and Katie Monahan at the annual NAEYC Conference in Washington D.C.*



*Above: Joanne Rogers, widow of Fred Rogers (Mister Rogers' Neighborhood) was the Keynote Speaker at the 2018 NAEYC Conference.*

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families

**Did you know that the National Association of Education of Young Children has family memberships?**

Join today for just \$35 and gain access to exclusive content, just for you. Your membership will include resources to help you discover what high-quality early learning looks like, encourage your child's learning at home, and become more knowledgeable about the best practices, and policies impacting your child's earliest learning experiences.

Don't wait! Become a Family Member at  
**[www.naeyc.org/membership](http://www.naeyc.org/membership)**



CCC Site Update:

# Kitchawan



Caroline Paterno  
Site Director

## When Cultures Come to Visit

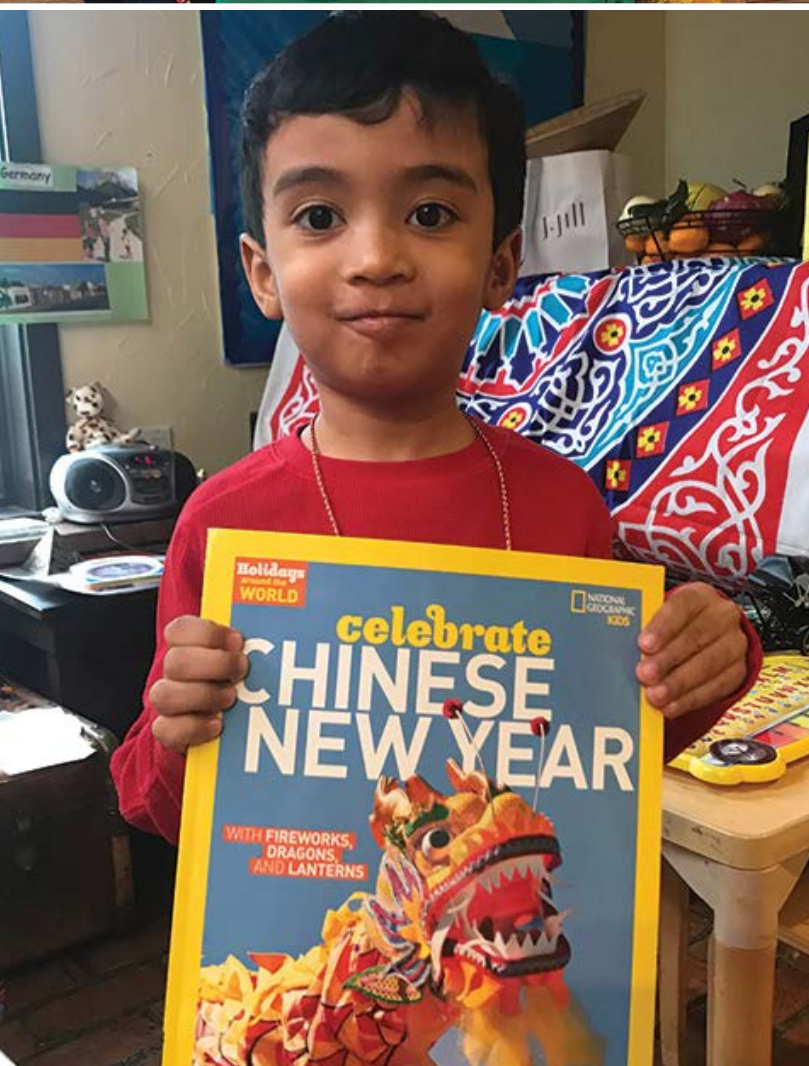
By Caroline Paterno

Here at Kitchawan we are very fortunate to have families from many different cultures. We encourage families to help us learn about their cultures and holidays throughout the school year. This can be done through the sharing of books, music, food, and sometimes parents come in and give a special lesson on their culture. In our Pre-K class they recently completed a Multi-Cultural unit. The teachers asked families to share items from their cultures with the class. These items have been arranged into the "Multi-Cultural Museum" which was set up as a center in the classroom.

When the children choose this center to play in, there were many different things for them to explore. We were able to encompass all five senses into this center. There have been several different CD's that have been shared as well. Using a CD player in the center the children were able to listen with head-phones to the different types of music, exploring their hearing sense. Along with the music, there were also different instruments that the children could play such as rain

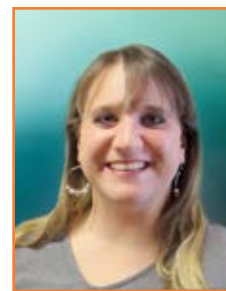
sticks, drums and string instruments. The sense of sight and touch contained the most in our cultural museum. Many shared an array of items from their culture such as coffee pots, scarves, magnets, utensils, and sculptures. One of the children's favorite things was to try on the beautiful clothing that has been shared. One of our Chinese families brought in a large bowl of fruit in honor of Chinese New Year. This bowl was placed in the museum and the children were able to touch and smell the different fruits. To conclude this unit, the class invited their families to join them for a multicultural lunch. Families brought different foods from their culture for the children to taste.

As early childhood educators, it is our responsibility to teach the children to accept people of all cultures, races, and religions. This knowledge allows the children to become productive citizens of the world, and prepare them for our diverse world where compassion and acceptance are always welcomed.



CCC Site Update:

# Watson



Kristen Pollock  
Site Director

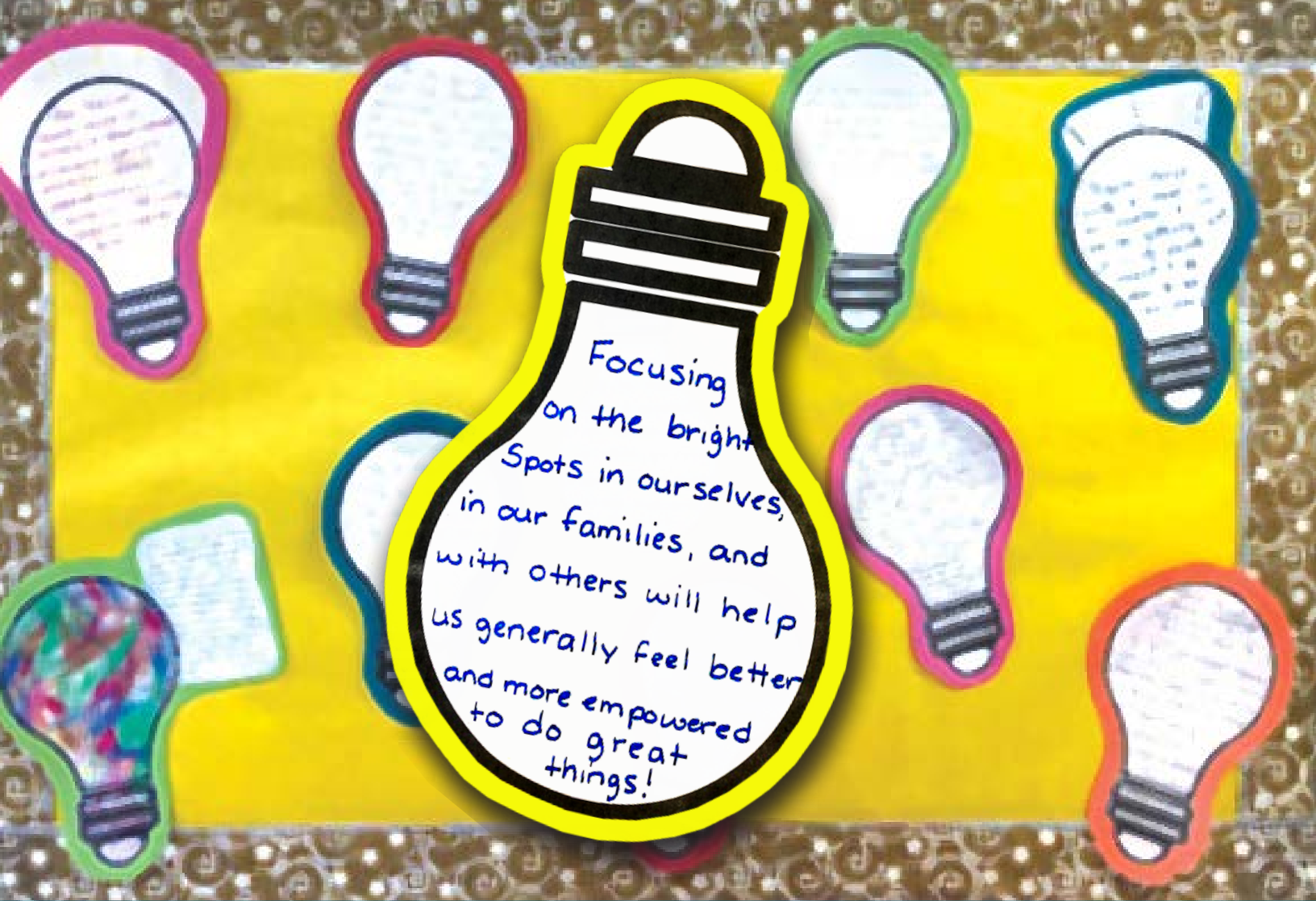
## Habit of the Month Spotlight on Watson Infants

By Kristen Pollock

Keeping families connected is an integral part of our program here at the Country Childrens Center. Teachers are always finding new ways to make the home school connection unique and meaningful for both children and families. Inspired by the "Habit of the Month", set forth by the Director of Education for Country Childrens Center staff, Watson infant teachers, Denise, Ashley and Kylie, used it as a springboard to develop a Habit of the Month Bulletin Board to promote family engagement in their classroom. In December, the Infant teachers did two very special things that centered around December's habit, contribution. As a team, Denise, Ashley and Kylie donated gift cards and special items to a single mom in the community who was in need for the holidays. With that, the classroom families

were invited to write about their special celebrations during the holiday season to be posted on the Habit of the Month Board. Moving into January, the habit focused on the bright spots in everyone's lives. Teachers, again, invited families to contribute to the board by asking them to share the bright spots in their lives. This idea has been a wonderful addition to the classroom. Not only has it made the home school connection very special, but it has connected teachers and families alike. A great job to the infant teachers of Waston! We look forward to what the new habits each month will bring!





CCC Site Update:

# The White House

## A Place for Families and Exploration

By Pam Belmonte

Hello from the White House! We had a great start to our school year and welcomed many new families to our White House family this fall. As usual we started our school year with a focus on our favorite family events like the Meet and Greet the Teachers, our Grandparent's Tea, as well as the ever popular Ice Cream Social Open House! All of which were very well attended by the families. We also ended the fall season with our annual Potluck Dinner and wow... the food was delicious, plus we gave away tons of CCC gear, door prizes and raffled off two family-friendly gift baskets! The PS and PK classrooms also enjoyed a new annual tradition that brings our families together – The Gingerbread Breakfast. In December, parents were invited into the classrooms to enjoy some homemade muffins and fruit salad, while they constructed and decorated gingerbread houses together with their children.



Pam Belmonte  
Site Director

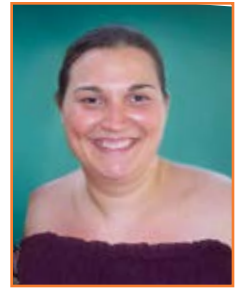
As you all know, our CCC classroom learning centers offer children the best learning experiences each day. In correlation to an excellent workshop the staff attended in the spring through Nature Explore, we extended those learning experiences to our outdoor classroom. With help from my awesome teaching staff here at the White House, we implemented four new outdoor learning centers to our already wonderful outdoor experience. We now offer the WH children access to a Nature Art Center, Music and Movement in the amphitheater, Sand and Water Play, and a Building Area during recess each day.

In the coming months, look for the addition of an arbor leading into the play areas and a Dirt Digging area with a mud kitchen. We can't wait for spring!



CCC Program Update:

# Before & After School



Tiffany Baffi-Munson  
School-Age Program Director

## Go In-Depth with CCC's New Before & After School Program Director Tiffany Baffi-Munson

By Tiffany Baffi-Munson

*I was asked to talk about my favorite part about working at CCC.*

My favorite part about working at CCC has been watching the kids grow over the years, especially when some of them come back to work here!

I've been working for CCC for the past 10 years and throughout my time here I've worked in several capacities. I was a Before and After School Site Director for 8 years, coordinated CCVC, and during the summer at our adventure camp, I worked as a counselor, health director, and director. I hold a B.S. in Behavioral Sciences with a specialty in Community Health Services. I am a NYS certified teacher's assistant, and I have worked with the special needs community as a Special Olympics coach and special education youth counselor along with the role of an office assistant & manager, religious education teacher, baseball team manager, district-wide sub, & a volleyball coach.

I'm very excited to be a part of CCC in my new role as School-Age Program Director and to be able to utilize all my present skills and talents that I have learned over the years through my experiences. As you know, CCC is very proud of the care we provide and working closely with parents and schools only make our programs stronger. One of my objectives is to offer a well-rounded enriching social environment for the children enrolled in our before and after school programs with monthly themes and activities.



Above: Students from the CCC After-School program.

PART OF OUR WEEK OF  
THE YOUNG CHILD CELEBRATION

The Country Childrens Center

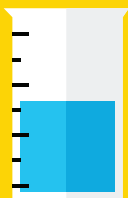
# Science Night!

Bring your family and enjoy hands-on experiments from Preschool and Pre-K classes.



**Wednesday April 10**  
**6:30pm - 7:30pm**

Increase Miller  
Elementary School Cafeteria  
186 NY-138  
Goldens Bridge, NY



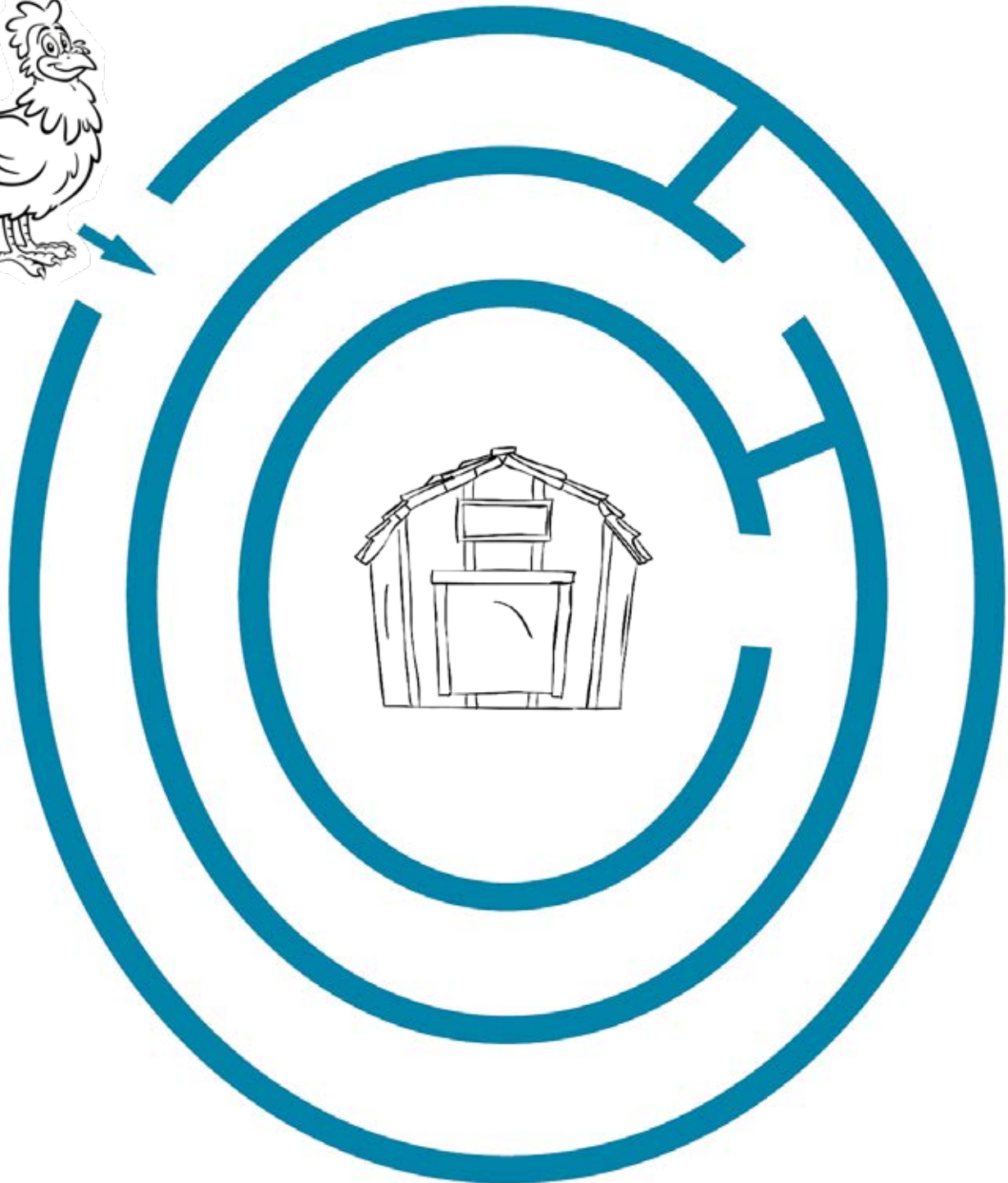
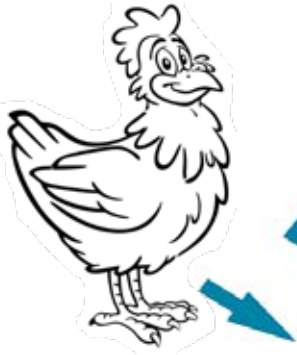
**PLUS!**

The evening includes raffles, snacks, and a take-home prize!

# Activity Page



Help one of Mr. Ric's chickens  
find her way home...



# Make Eating Right Easy



## LEARNING TO EAT HEALTHY

Using fresh local ingredients from Field Goods, Country Childrens Center classrooms are tasting and cooking produce to encourage healthy eating habits!

Easy to Join! Go to [field-goods.com](http://field-goods.com) for more information.

Use these three techniques combined with great produce to make quick, easy, and delicious meals.

## HOW TO SAUTÉ

1. Best for delicate veggies.
2. Cut into similar thickness.
3. Use a sauté pan.
4. Heat enough butter or oil to cover bottom of pan (about 1 Tbsp).
5. Add veggies and 1 Tbsp stock or water to pan for each pound.
6. Cook until tender 5 minutes depending on veggies.

## HOW TO ROAST

1. Try to cut veggies into similar thickness.
2. Toss with oil until shiny.
3. Use a pan, not a dish.
4. Leave space between the vegetables.
5. Roast at 400 degrees.
6. Cook for about 30 minutes or until veggies start to brown.
7. Turn at least once.

## HOW TO BRAISE

1. Cut veggies into similar thickness.
2. Use a frying pan with a lid.
3. Heat enough butter or oil to cover bottom of pan (about 1 Tbsp).
4. Chop 1/8 cup chopped onions for each pound of veggies.
5. Cook until soft.
6. Add veggies and 1 cup stock or water for each pound.
7. Heat until boiling then reduce heat to simmer and cover with lid.
8. Cook for 15-25 minutes until tender, depending on veggies.

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22

**Family Event!**

# **Country Childrens Center Earth Day & Art Sale**



**The CCC Annual Earth Day Celebration  
April 27, 2019, 11—2:00pm**

**CCC The Farm  
466 Cross River Rd, Katonah, NY**

**Planting/Gardening • The Nature of Things: Live Animals  
“Wellie Walk” in Peppa Pig Woods • Jumping Castles • Puppet Shows  
Balloons Face painting • Bubble Station • Great Food & Snacks**

**Children’s Art Show with artwork created by the  
preschool and Pre-k for purchase!**

**[Parking and shuttle from the CCC White House]**



# Place your bids for the amazing Preschool and PreK wall canvas art!

Online bidding for all art opens  
Wednesday, April 17, 2019 and will  
continue until Saturday, April 27, 2019.



To place bids go to  
[www.32auctions.com/cccart](http://www.32auctions.com/cccart)



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SAVE THE DATE

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# COUNTRY CHILDRENS CENTER 2019 GOLF EVENT

Thursday, June 20th at 11:00am

**Mahopac Golf Club**  
601 N Lake Blvd, Mahopac, NY 10541

Honoring  
**Dr. Peter Richel**  
CCC Grandparent and Supporter  
&  
**Kim Bennett**  
CCC Office Administrator  
(20+ Years of Service)



Event Includes: Golf, Lunch, Dinner, Raffles, Auction, and Awards

Proceeds support the CCC Scholarship Fund

To reserve a spot for this event,  
contact Deric Peace at 914-242-0520 ext. 510



For more information and sponsorship opportunities call 914-242-0520 ext. 510

**DONATE TODAY!**

# Country Childrens Center Tree Donation Program



**Please help keep our programs growing strong!**

- For every \$100 donation a leaf will be placed on our CCC giving tree at our new Oak Ridge site. Your name will be written on the leaf for posterity.
- For donations of \$500-\$1,000 a new branch will be added to our tree with your name inscribed on it.

Please use the donation form included below to make your donations towards our Center and special programs, or **donate Online at [www.countrychildrenscenter.org](http://www.countrychildrenscenter.org)**

Thank you from the Board of Directors, Staff, and children of the Country Childrens Center.

## COUNTRY CHILDREN CENTER — DONOR CARD

\$1,000     \$500     \$250     \$100     \$50     Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: (circle one: Dr., Miss, Mr., Mrs., Ms.) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- Check enclosed is payable to: Country Childrens Center.  
 Check enclosed is payable to: Country Childrens Center - Peace Endowment Fund

There are other ways you can help!

- I want to volunteer my time                       I want to donate professional/ trade service or equipment  
 I have enclosed a matching gift form            I am interested in planned giving opportunities  
 I would like to donate stock or securities

Please return this card with your gift to:

The Country Childrens Center  
P.O. Box 91  
Katonah, New York 10536



P.O. Box 91  
Katonah, New York 10536

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