



# Dartmouth College Child Care Center Newsletter

December 2011

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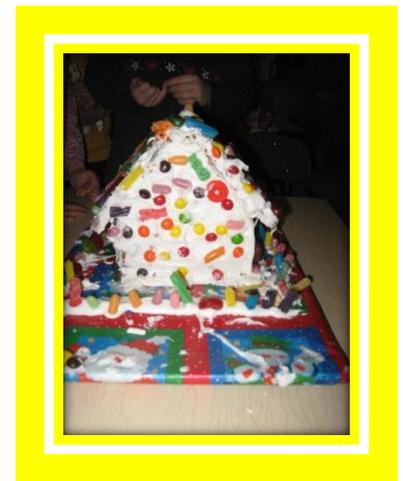
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**Office:** Jeff Robbins,  
Sunnie McPhetres,  
Terry Chase, Amy  
Potter

## Another year ends with festivity!



## From the Director

Dear Big Jeff,

Your newsletter column about traveling with children at Thanksgiving was huge for us. We didn't even know that we needed advice, but we decided to try some of the ideas. With a little readjustment of expectations for ourselves and for the children, some well-timed stops and a few appropriate activities in the car, the trip was way better than we expected.

Now we are headed into Shopping Season and would like to focus our attention away from buying and toward family. This is our first year away from our extended family and we'd like to establish some of our own holiday traditions. Do you think your readers might share their traditions? There are so many exciting celebrations of the solstice season and the advent of winter that don't involve trips to the shopping plazas.

Thanks,  
Family Guy

Dear Guy,

Thanks for the question. It was fun to think about the traditions in the Robbins family. In our case, a visit from the tomten on Christmas Eve played a central role in our festivities. For an introduction to the ways of tomtens, you can read The Tomten by Astrid Lindgren. Throughout the year the tomten keeps watch over our home and animals. On Christmas Eve we say thank you. When we leave for church on Christmas Eve, the children leave a message, a few cookies and a small gift on the porch. Upon returning from church they find a note from him in tiny, tiny handwriting along with a gift, often made from the natural materials that the tomten might find in the woods or in the barn. Later, we have a snack buffet in front of the fire. When the children were little, we all piled into "the big bed" to read The Night Before Christmas and to postulate on Santa's progress. Every year, at the exact same moment I had to let the dog in, we heard sleigh bells. I'd have to race back upstairs to ask if anyone had heard them!

We had a great response from DCCCC families. Read on to learn about some of your friends' and neighbors' traditions.

Happy Holidays,  
Big Jeff

- We always make some kind of decoration or ornament to keep. The children enjoy getting them out each year and remembering "when they were little". They really get a charge out of the things we made that our parents saved for us.
- My husband is the official Santa Claus for our family and friends, red suit and all. He comes before bedtime on Christmas Eve for milk and cookies. When he leaves, he reminds the children to go to bed on time because he'll be back!
- We have a Christmas cookie "contest" with friends. Everyone brings a cookie home-made or just home-decorated. We make up the winning categories as we go, "best holiday spirit" or "most outrageous" for example. We have a non-competitive cookie decorating event for the children, but they also like to see the adult hijinks.
- We cut our own Christmas tree, making it a family outing. We didn't even know this was important to the children until we tried to buy a pre-cut tree one year! Don't forget the hot chocolate.
- We ALWAYS go for a Family Walk on Christmas Day. Rain or shine.
- We make pine cone birdfeeders and hang them on trees outside to have the gift of birds come for the holidays. There are many recipes on-line, but we just spread peanut butter on the pine cones, roll them in seed and hang them with a piece of yarn.
- We often give "events" not "things" - activities that the whole family can do. Movie tickets, for example. We still like to open things, so we just wrap the tickets or a trinket to represent the activity.
- We try to shop locally, instead of buying at the big box stores. We appreciate our dollars staying local.
- Decorating the house is big part of our holiday season. We do one decorating activity at a time so we can appreciate each thing and so it isn't so overwhelming. We start on Thanksgiving weekend by putting the electric candles in the windows.
- We make home-made gifts for each other. I used to rack my brain for ideas but now I just Google "holiday crafts for children".
- We all go out to a local tree farm to pick and cut our tree. This is a full family activity and we put the tree up with lights but then wait for visiting family to arrive on Christmas Eve before we decorate the tree together. One year our family couldn't come so we invited friends.
- We buy fresh white pine garlands each year and wrap them with lights around the staircase banister, the ledges on the front entry and the mantle. It puts us all in the spirit of the season. They are pretty affordable at Price Chopper.
- Every year we pick out an ornament for the children that represents something that happened during the year, like a trip to the circus or a vacation to the beach. We label these with the date so each child will have their own set someday.
- We exchange holiday pajamas on Christmas Eve-- the only present we open that night before bed.
- We have a NO GIFT policy with adults in the family-- so we don't exchange-- just focus on our time together. We also collectively decided that we'd keep gifts for the kids simple and minimal (we ask grandparents, etc. to limit to one small gift OR to make their gift

something we can enjoy or do together like a swimming trip to UVAC. This has been great—it leaves a little something to open on Christmas morning but doesn't overwhelm and there is usually just the right mix under the tree (a few small toys and some funds for a family pass of some sort).

-We plan outings for the holiday week. The Montshire Museum is open every day but Christmas and Thanksgiving. The farm house at Billings Farm is decorated for Christmas and offers horse drawn sleigh rides (except Christmas day).

-Our favorite is a Christmas morning sledding trip with the kids. Back in time for lunch and a cuddle on the couch with a holiday movie before naptime.

-With Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Lunar New Year and other celebrations of light happening at this time of year, we put up white pin lights or electric window candles in the house to acknowledge ALL people who are celebrating.

-The children love to hear holiday stories about when Mom and Dad were little. We call it "Once Upon a Time". We can get pretty silly with it.

-We listen to an eclectic blend of music on Pandora.

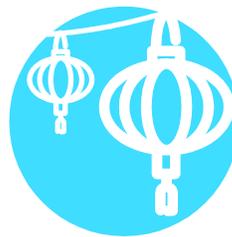
-For one meal, the children get to set the table by themselves with creative arrangements and decorations – mismatched plates even! Holiday paper plates are good, too.

-We always invite friends or neighbors who are not traveling for their holiday to share a meal or activity with us.

-We keep a supply of holiday art supplies in a special box: construction paper, glue, glitter, stickers or whatever.

-We have a PAJAMA DAY or two with tons of healthy snacks and a Morning Movie.

- We love our special Holiday Story time in the evening. We turn out the lights, light a candle and read with flashlights!



## Greetings From Sunnie:

Reflection on lessons from the dark afternoons:

As we all await the solstice and the hope of more daylight hours, the importance of light has come to the forefront of my thinking. I walk out to my car in the late afternoon and am struck by the darkness (which we are attempting to work on). As I drive home my attention is drawn to the street lights above me. I always notice when a light extinguishes as I drive beneath it. I realize the importance of the headlights to light my path home. I notice people walking and running with flashlights to ensure the safety of their steps. In the morning hours, I also notice all of the blinking lights: traffic lights that have not begun to stop traffic, warning me to watch for oncoming vehicles; a radar readout alerting me to my speed; blinking lights warning me of a pedestrian crossing ahead; and a quickly blinking light to remind me to slow down on Reservoir Road during the busiest parts of the day.

As I pass all of these warning lights, I often wish that children came with the same unmistakable beacons. It would be great if their belly buttons lit up when they needed us to slow down. How helpful would it be if their eyes flashed when we were approaching dangerous territory in their emotional lives? What if a huge light bulb flashed every time that they are thinking about doing something dangerous? We would be so prepared and could meet their needs much more easily and effectively! This time of year seems to be a time when those warning signs would be oh so helpful!

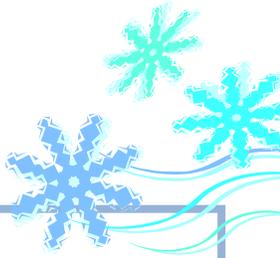
While the signals are not as obvious as we would like, I believe that each child does have signals. I know that when my fifteen year old daughter rolls her eyes it is not out of rudeness, but a signal that she is feeling frustrated and I should change my approach unless I want to wind up in a battle of wills where I always get my way but no one ever wins. I know that when my twelve year old daughter whines that her teacher is mean to her, it is a signal that she is confused and needs help figuring out something new that is happening in her life. I know that when a normally happy four year old is suddenly tearful on a regular basis, it is a sign that things are moving too quickly and we might need to slow down and read a book rather than making more cookies or more ornaments. I know that when a three year unexpectedly starts hurting others it is time for me to pay attention to her rather than attending one more party.

The “holiday” time of year, when the natural light is short and the dark is long we need to attend to so many things. This year, I pledge to slow down and attend to the signals that children are sending to me!

I wish you all a time of wonder, attunement, and comfort during this winter break!

Sunnie

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## **DCCCC Will Be Closed On The Following Days:**

- December 23, 2010-January 2, 2011 – Winter Break**
- March 19, 2011 – In-service Training Day**
- May 26, 2011 – Memorial Day**
- July 4, 2011 – Independence Day**

## **Snow Days**

Whenever Hanover schools close or open late due to inclement weather, DCCCC will have a late opening time of 9:00 a.m. A late opening at DCCCC will be announced on:

- WMUR TV Channel 9 and [www.WMUR.com](http://www.WMUR.com)
- WCAX TV Channel 3 and [www.WCAX.com](http://www.WCAX.com), (go to weather, select school closings)
- New Hampshire Public Radio web site: [www.nhpr.org](http://www.nhpr.org)

During school vacations, late openings will be decided by the Director in consultation with local authorities and will be announced in the same media as above.

Grizzlies may arrive at 9 a.m. too and pay the full day rate.

## **Reminder to Put Nut-Free Notes in Lunches**

**Some ideas that have helped other families:**

- writing on an item in the lunch (yogurt top, etc.)**
- using a laminated form that is dated and initialed each day with dry erase markers**
- using a photo copied note that is provided by DCCCC**
- calling DCCCC if you remember that you forgot the note**
- keep a memo pad inside the lunch box and write a new note each day**
- just write “OK” and the date**

# Resources for Families

**Tuesday, December 20: Skate With Santa in White River Junction:** 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Wendell Barwood Arena, 45 Highland Ave. Public skating with Santa. \$5. 802-296-5036.

**Tuesday, December 20: North Country Chordsmen Annual Christmas Caroling Tour:** Men's a cappella group sends two groups to the following locations: 5:30 to 6 p.m., The Woodlands, 125 Mascoma St., Lebanon and The Haven, Hartford Ave., White River Junction. 6:15 to 6:45 p.m., Harvest Hill, 125 Mascoma St., Lebanon and Valley Terrace, 2820 Christian St., Wilder. 7 to 7:30 p.m., Wheelock Terrace, 32 Buck Road, Hanover and The Greens in White River Junction. Free. All welcome. 603-763-9192.

**Friday, December 23: "Skulls" and "Mirrors" at the Montshire Museum in Norwich:** 1 Montshire Road. Learn about New England wildlife by examining skeletal remains at 11 a.m. and use mirrors to investigate symmetry at 3 p.m. \$10 and \$12, under 2 free. 802-649-2200 or [montshire.org](http://montshire.org).

**Friday, December 23: Bradford Historical Society Museum:** 10 a.m. to noon, Bradford Academy Building, third floor, 172 Main St., Bradford. Displays include "Toys, Toys, Toys" and Civil War items. Free admission. Sponsored by Bradford Historical Society. 802-222-4423 or [lccoffin@charter.net](mailto:lccoffin@charter.net).

**Saturday, December 24: Christmas at the Farm in Woodstock:** 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Billings Farm & Museum, Route 12 North and River Road. Explore the traditions of a 19th-century Vermont Christmas. Make authentic decorations, go for horse-drawn wagon or sleigh rides and more. \$3, \$6, \$11 and \$12; 2 and under free. 802-457-2355 or [billingsfarm.org](http://billingsfarm.org).

**Saturday, December 24: Community Arts Open Studio in Lebanon:** 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., AVA Gallery and Art Center, 11 Bank St. Children with caregivers make self-directed art projects using AVA's supplies. \$5 per child. Information: 603-448-3117.

# News from the Float Team

Eileen Ruml

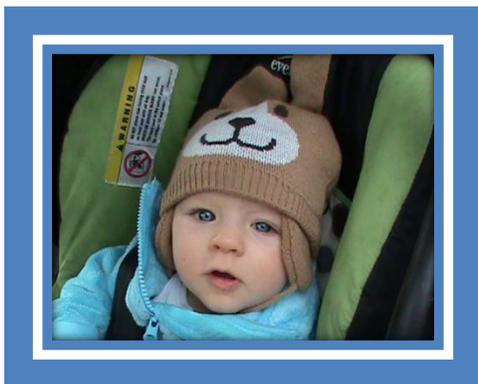
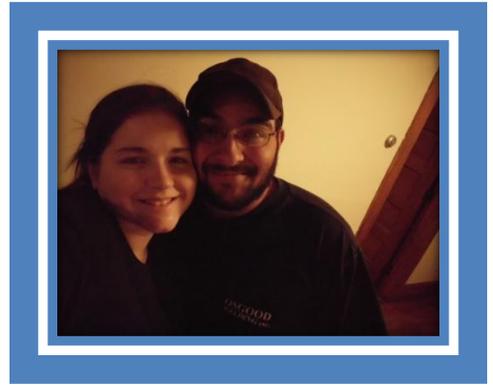
Gladness Msumanje

Elizabeth Harrington

Hello! My name is Miranda Arruda, and I am a floating assistant teacher here at DCCCC. I love the variety of my days and being able to develop relationships with everyone! At home I have a nine month old baby girl named Rylie Louise, a husband named Jason, and a cat named Brutis. My favorite things to do are to read and to take bubble baths, especially at the same time! Mostly my time is spent playing with Rylie and helping her to grow. I currently attend the Community College of Vermont and will be graduating with an associate degree in Early Childhood Education in the spring. I am

so excited to be here and I can't wait to see where this new phase in my life brings me!

Miranda



## News from Teddy One

Debbie Burnham,  
Lead Teacher

Wendy Irwin,  
Teacher

Michele Murphy,  
Assistant Teacher

Our Teddies are growing fast. We recently introduced painting to the older group. We have painted with brushes, roller bottles and fingers. These activities have been positive experiences.

Wendy had watched a film on the artist Peter Max and was inspired to use some of his techniques with the children. Look around our room for the new artwork and some photos of the teddies in action!

For our younger Teddies we purchased some new pop up toys. They are enjoying pushing the levers and seeing animals pop out! Some of the new toys play music so the children move in time to the beat.

Michele has recently taken an online course on child development through Manchester Community College. The course was based on child observation and milestones. This has helped her in her observational skills throughout the day here. Wendy and Debbie also attended a workshop on play based observations. Observing our children at play help us to see where each is at in their development and help us to plan for activities on a weekly basis.

We redecorated the room with snowflakes and shiny balls and have started singing "Frosty the Snowman". We do need to look up the words to the song though since we only know a verse or two! The children noticed the new decorations right away and love looking up at them.

Please remember we try to go out each day so please provide snow pants or snowsuit, boots, hat and mittens each day. The fresh snow provides a whole new playground for our group! Some are excited and some need a little more time to appreciate the beauty of our winter!

We hope you all enjoy this time of the year.

Fondly,

Debbie, Wendy and Michele



## News from Teddy Too

Terri Crane,  
Lead Teacher

Lori Higgins,  
Teacher

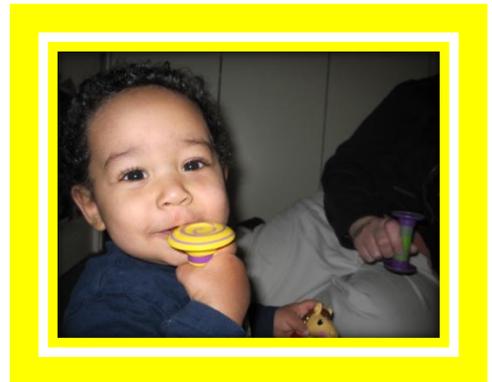
Denise Ayres,  
Assistant Teacher

The Teddy Too room is welcoming two new Teddy families this winter. We have Cedar Knight and his parents Marina and Chip. Cedar has already started and seems to be having a great time. We are glad he is enjoying his first experience at daycare. We will also welcome Jaclyn Lauer in January. Her parents, Andrew and Ana, are not new to the Teddy room they already have Kirsten in the Teddy One room. We have a room full of movers these days. During our time in the little multi we have crawlers and climbers, bike riders and the stairs and slides see a lot of action. With some new walkers in the mix we have



also increased our accident reports! Ouch!

The Teddies have been enjoying music class. They usually like to dance and move around to the music we play for them. Even the music button on our baby swing makes some of them move their bodies. But, sometimes in music class it's overwhelming and they just watch and listen and join in when they are ready. The instruments get shaken or sometimes just tasted for a while.



We have lucked out with outside time so far not too much snow which means our new walkers and crawlers have an easier time out there. We really appreciate you all remembering to send in "the gear", being able to keep warm and dry in the winter makes for more fun outside.

Thank you all for taking time out to come to the parent snack. We enjoyed being able to get together with all of you.

There are a lot of disruptive things this time of year that can throw a monkey wrench into your child's routine. Between the loud holiday parties, the late nights and long car rides during this holiday season remember that keeping a baby in their routine and allowing times of rest and rejuvenation for the whole family is a good thing. This time of year everyone usually has a lot to take care of; remember to take care of yourself as well. We are all looking forward to the winter break and the time

we get to spend with our families and friends. We hope you enjoy this holiday season, and that you have a wonderful break.

Happy Holidays!

Terri, Lori and Denise



## News from the Panda Bears

Susan Young,  
Lead Teacher

Jenn Boudro,  
Teacher

Teresa Hahn  
Assistant Teacher

2011 is winding down. We've had such a fun fall. The weather has even kept me on my toes with warm almost t-shirt weather to a good dumping of snow. I love it all! Thanks for continuing to send in appropriate outdoor wear. Please be sure to check your child's clothes supply regularly as lots of clothes are getting wet in puddles and melting snow and we're hitting the spares almost daily!

The Pandas have been enjoying music with Brooke on Tuesdays. I have started a display of the music that we do with Brooke and I will be adding music that we do in the Panda room on a daily basis. There are a bunch of pictures right across from the Panda door. The kids had a ball with the parachute a couple of weeks ago. They held the edges and up it went and slowly billowed down. Kids had turns running under while it was up in the air and trying to get out before it came down. There were squeals of delight echoing through the little multi!

I am enclosing a couple of recipes that I use for ornaments that you may want to try at home with your family.

### CINNAMON ORNAMENTS

1 c cinnamon  
1tbsp. ground cloves  
1 tbsp. nutmeg  
1 c applesauce  
2 tbsp. white glue

Mix it up like cookie dough. Add extra applesauce if it's too dry or flour if it's too moist.

Roll it out and use cookie cutters for your favorite shapes.

Lay on waxed paper for a few days until dry. I turned mine over after a couple of days.

Don't forget to poke a hole in the top for hanging ( Like I did!!)

And if you don't have nutmeg or cloves, not to worry.... plain cinnamon works just fine.

## SALT DOUGH ORNAMENT

preheat oven to 250 degrees.

1 c flour

1/2 c salt

1/2 c water

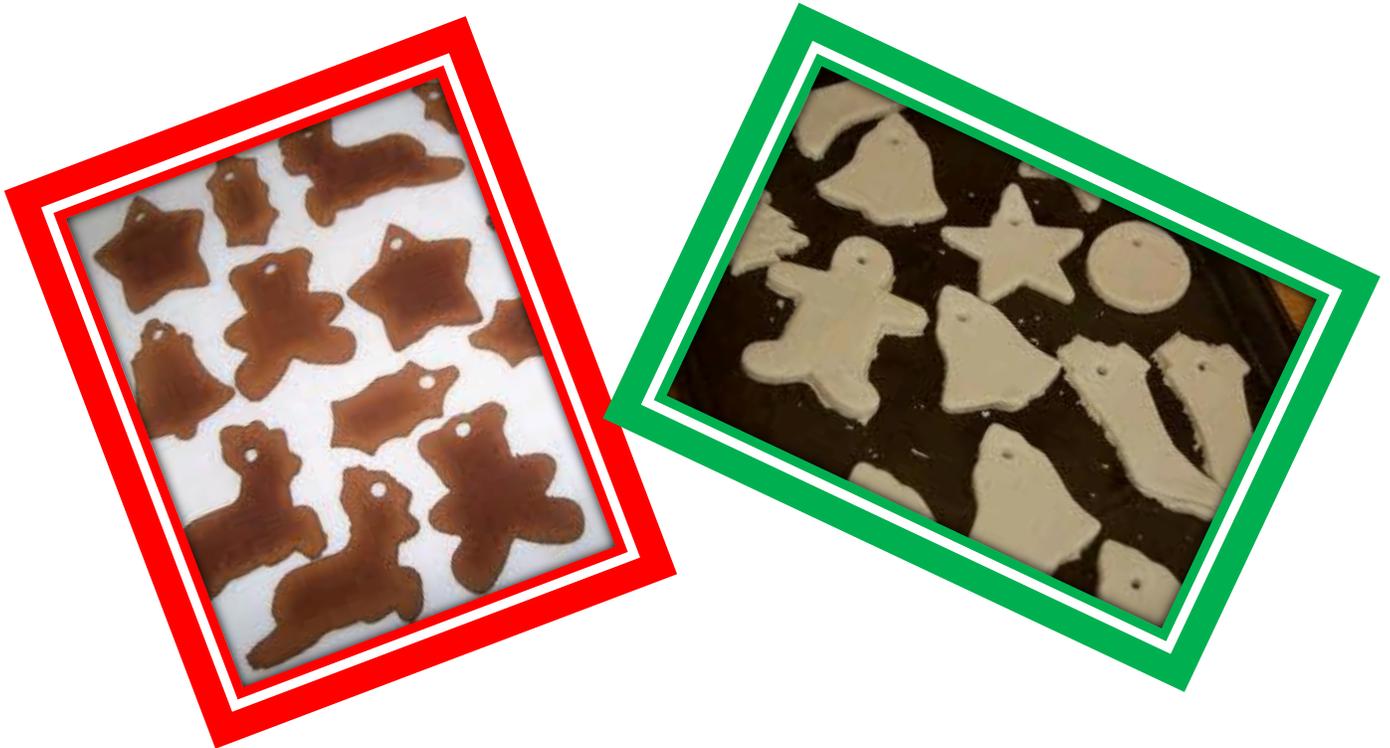
Mix the ingredients together until dough is formed. Remove from bowl and place on a lightly floured surface. Knead until dough is smooth. Lightly dust with flour if too sticky. Roll dough to approx. 1/4" thick and use your favorite cookie cutters to cut out shapes.

Poke a hole at the top of each for a ribbon for hanging when finished.

Bake for 2 hours. Remove and cool before decorating. You can paint these or "glitter" them. Use your imaginations!!

I wanted to let you know that I will be out for foot surgery from 12/21 to approximately 1/20/12. Aspen will fill in the middle shift slot daily and Holly will be helping every afternoon. Both are very familiar with the Pandas and the kids love both of them. Teresa and Jenn will be either opening or closing the classroom each day.

We all wish you a wonderfully relaxing and peaceful break.  
Susan for the Panda team



# A Toddler's Rules of Possession

1. If I like it, it's mine.
2. If it's in my hand, it's mine.
3. If I can take it from you, it's mine.
4. If I had it a little while ago, it's mine.
5. If it's mine, it must **NEVER** appear to be yours in any way.
6. If I'm doing or building something, all the pieces are mine.
7. If it looks just like mine, it is mine.
8. If I saw it first, it's mine.
9. If you are playing with something and you put it down, it automatically becomes mine.
10. If it's broken, it's yours.

# News from the Koalas

Terri Hollis,  
Lead Teacher

Bobbie Lynn Stone,  
Teacher

April Buchanan,  
Assistant Teacher

In the last Koala Newsletter, we explored the thought of what different types of activities bring us joy. What brings positive joy and stimulation to one does not bring joy to another. These pictures show the variety of activities and different children enjoying them.

On Behalf of the Koala Team,  
Terri

## A LITTLE "COOKING"



## A LITTLE DAB OF PAINT WILL DO



## WORKING THE MUSCLES



**WHO NEEDS AN EXPENSIVE HAIR APPOINTMENT WHEN YOU HAVE KOALAS?**



**NOTHING LIKE BEIGN GIVEN THE GREEN LIGHT TO MAKE A BIG MESS TOGETHER**



**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU MIX THIS WITH THAT?**



**ONE ON ONE TIME, ALWAYS NICE**



**I SEE YOU AND YOU SEE ME**



**AN UNLIKELY PAIR FIND COMMON ENJOYMENT**



**COMPANIONSHIP WITH A DINO**

## News from the Woolly Bears

Deb Girdwood,  
Lead Teacher

Barb Merchand,  
Teacher

Moya Stevens,  
Assistant Teacher

Hello Woolly Families,

We have welcomed December in and are still waiting for more snow to arrive. As teachers we have enjoyed the fairer temperatures and the ability to get outdoors a little quicker with less winter outer wear needing to be worn. But enough is enough we need more snow for sledding and igloo building and snow pie making!! Thank you for keeping up with the weather and providing a variety of outdoor gear for your children to wear. To our surprise last week it was like mud season on our back playground... we were coated in MUD!!

The Woollies have welcomed the worms to our classroom for the winter months. We have been cutting newsprint for bedding, as well as

chopping, cutting and squishing food to feed to the worms.

Please be patient with us as we learn the dos and don'ts of having a worm family in our room. We learned last week, the hard way, that all food that we feed to the worms needs to be frozen or microwaved first to kill fruit fly eggs.

Ooops! Now we are learning how to rid our room of fruit flies. We look forward to having more learning adventures with our worms.



Woolly Bear detectives were on the case once again as they had to use their discovery skills to figure out what a new machine was and how would you use it. The wonderful Woollies' ideas ranged from it was for making cupcakes, popsicles, lollipops, and applesauce or pear sauce. One friend thought it would make wine taste better. Other ideas included pouring water, drying your feet, clothes or boots. Or maybe it was for melting snow.

Anticipation grew as we finally put popcorn kernels into the hot machine and waited to see what would happen. Our second year Woollies smiled with joy as

they waited for their friends to see what was about to happen. The kernels jumped and rattled around until finally the first kernel exploded then more and more. The popcorn exploded all over the sheets in front of us. Popcorn was enjoyed by all!



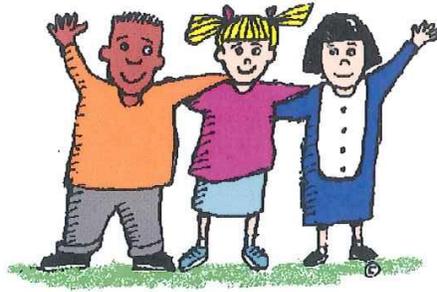
We continue to be a group of music lovers! We have enjoyed musical instruments shared by teachers as well as making a variety of musical instruments for ourselves. Peter and the Wolf is often asked to be played while we eat our lunch. The Woollies like to yell out what instrument is being played.

We are turning our focus now on to our families. We will talk about family traditions and celebrations. We will also talk about where we live and who lives in our families. Keep a look out for our family page that Barb will be putting into your cubby. It's a great time to celebrate your own family. We like to say a special thanks to Jim at Super Shoes for saving shoe boxes for Woollies to make their shoe box families.

By the time of this publication we will have said goodbye to two of our Woolly friends and their families. Allistar had his last day on Tuesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Nicolo and his family head back to Italy on December 15<sup>th</sup>. Our time has felt too short but we are so grateful to have had such a wonderful time with each of these families. We wish you well!!

We wish you all a joyous and restful holiday season,  
The Woolly Team

# "Play With Me"



I tried to teach my child from books,  
She gave me only puzzled looks.  
I tried to teach my child with words,  
They past her by,  
Oft unheard.

Despairingly I turned aside,  
"How shall I teach this child?"  
I cried.

Into my hand she put the key:  
"Come," she said, "Play with me."

*Author Unknown*

# News from the Polar Bears

Radoyka Garcia,  
Lead Teacher

Tatyana Bills,  
Teacher

Raquel Fluette,  
Assistant Teacher

## Festivities in the Polar Room! Happy Holidays from the Polar Team!



## News from the Grizzlies

Karen Gray,  
Lead Teacher

Kristin Ball Cole,  
Teacher

Although the short days and busy preparations make this a hectic time, the wonder and delight of young children can remind us of the miracles and magic of the holidays. The Grizzlies enjoy the preparations involved in making crafts, gifts, special foods and decorating. They enjoy the partying and being with family and friends. They love frolicking in the first snowfalls and anticipating all that's to come with holiday traditions as well as in the New Year.

During the month of December we have been learning about night...particularly about nocturnal animals and stars. We are trying to get a better understanding of the words "revolve" and "rotate" to figure out how we get day and night. We are enjoying doing some crayon resistant night time paintings as well as using gel markers and pencils on dark paper. We are making origami star ornaments and paper towel tube rockets. We have added some festive lights to our room as the afternoons are so dark. We are discussing how many cultures use light to celebrate or commemorate special occasions during the winter holiday season:

- In India, the Hindu Festival of Lights is called Diwali. During this celebration, special clay saucer lamps are lit and set out on rooftops and along roadsides and riverbanks. In some areas, the lamps are even set afloat in rivers. It is believed that the lights will bring blessings of wealth and good fortune.
- During the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah, a family participates in lighting the menorah each evening to symbolize the eight days that a temple lamp burned- with only enough oil for one day.
- The Swedish festival of lights- known as Luciadagen- is named for St. Lucia, the queen of lights. Remembering her serves as a reminder that brighter days will follow the dark days of winter. To celebrate, a family chooses a daughter to portray St. Lucia on December 13. She wears a white robe with a red sash and an evergreen crown sporting candles. Then she serves her family coffee and special sweet buns.
- Lighting candles have been a longtime tradition of many Christmas customs, such as the Advent candles and the welcoming candles placed in the windows of Colonial American and Irish homes. According to legend, Martin Luther was the first person to decorate an evergreen tree with candles to symbolize the stars in the sky.
- In Mexico and parts of the United States, the days from Dec. 16 to Christmas Eve are designated as Las Posadas. (Posada means "lodging") This celebration is a reenactment of the journey made from Nazareth to Bethlehem. During Las Posadas, celebrants line driveways and walkways

with luminaries (bags partially filled with sand and lit by small votive candles) to extend a welcoming glow to participants.

- Long ago during the winter solstice (the darkest day of the year), it was customary for a family to burn a great log in its fireplace. Burning this Yule log warmed and brightened the long, dark night. It was also believed by some that burning the great log brought good luck to the household.
- The African-American celebration known as Kwanzaa (Dec. 26-Jan. 1) centers around the lighting of candles. A special candleholder, the kinara, holds three red candles, one black candle, and three green candles. A different candle is lit every night to represent a different Kwanzaa principle. This special celebration is designed to help families express their values and to “light the lights” of respect for their ancestors.
- The Lunar New Year is a festive event marked by a variety of colors, but especially red- the color for good luck. This special occasion is also referred to as the Festival of Lanterns because bright lanterns are used to light the way for the New Year.

With only a few days remaining before the College’s extended winter break, we wanted to share with you some of the traditions your children recall and look forward to this holiday season:

**Matthew T.:** I celebrate Christmas with my family. We get a tree and put it up in our house in front of the fireplace. I have some of my own ornaments to decorate the tree but I have to be careful with them because they are fragile. Every year my two brothers and my aunt come to my house for Christmas. After breakfast we open our presents. We love to eat all different kinds of food everybody helps to make. I hope that during my holiday vacation I get to go to Boston and have a sleepover at my brother’s house.

**Henry W.:** I wake up early on Christmas day and wait for my sisters to get up so that we can open up our stockings in mom and dad’s bed. We all go down stairs to open presents together. I like to go outside with them and play in the snow and make snowmen and snow forts. During the vacation I hope I can go ice skating.

**Michael:** Every Christmas my family sets up a Christmas tree in our house. I get presents that I open up and play with. I am excited to have lots of time to play with my Legos at home during the vacation.

**Cynthia:** My family celebrates Christmas a little bit. Every year we decide on a special place to go. Last year I went to Disney and this year I am going on a cruise to the Caribbean. There are some water slides and pools on the cruise. Sometimes we go to China.

**Elena:** I decorate my house for Christmas. I send a letter to Santa letting him know what I want for Christmas. I go to bed early so Santa can come and leave us presents. I run downstairs and open presents with my family. We then play with them. I hope I can learn to sew when I don't have to go to school for the winter vacation.

**Freddie:** I get a Christmas tree that I decorate and I like to keep up until January. I write a letter to Santa asking him for the things I want. On Christmas day I like to go outside and go skiing and then come in for hot chocolate. Every year after Christmas I take a trip to Italy. I like to go to the park there.

**Nina:** I celebrate both Hanukkah and Christmas. For Hanukkah my friend Abigail and her family come over and we play dreidel and open presents. I light my menorah. This year I get to light the real menorah because I'm older. For Christmas, I decorate my tree. I also make cookies for Santa. I get to open presents when I wake up. My Grammy and Grandpa and Aunt and Uncle come over and we play together. I hope I get to play lots of games during the holidays.

**Rhea:** I celebrate Diwali and Christmas. Every year I go to the Dartmouth Green and light candles all around for Diwali. We all have Pooja where we sit around together and sing songs. I have a lot of guests come over for Christmas. We play a lot of games together like dominoes, UNO, matching games and Go Fish. I hope I get to go out to dinner on a day I usually don't when I'm on my school vacation.

**Henry C.:** At my house, I put an angel on top of my Christmas tree. We have an elf that visits our house every Christmas and moves all around and hides. He watches us all the time and lets Santa know if we are being good or bad. My family goes to Buffalo to stay with my Grandpa. We help him decorate his tree. When we wake up on Christmas morning we run downstairs and look at all the presents and then run back up to wake up mom and dad and Grandpa. We get to spend time with our cousins and my other Grandma and Grandpa later. I hope I can watch my cousin play hockey this year.

**Ian:** I get a Christmas tree and put decorations on it. My mommy and daddy get me and my sister presents. This year I am going to my Grammy Kathy and Papa Joe's house in San Francisco in the mountains. I also celebrate Hanukkah and we put up a menorah. We light the candles for 8 nights. I hope that I can have a lot of play dates with my friends over the holiday break.

**Katie:** Every year for Christmas my whole family goes to together to pick out a Christmas tree. I help to make special Christmas cookies. On the morning of Christmas I rush downstairs to open presents. My grandparents come to my house for Christmas. I hope that I can see some of my friends that I haven't seen in a very long time.

**Noah:** On every Sunday of advent I light a candle. I have an advent calendar and each day in December I open a door to count down the days until Christmas. On Christmas morning I open presents. I hope we get some more snow for the winter break so I can play outside in it.

**Aaron:** I go to California and stay in a beach house with my family, my grandparents and one cousin. I like to decorate a Christmas tree there. I also like to play on the beach.

We celebrate Hanukkah too and we light the menorah. I hope that I can put the highest ornament on the tree this year!

**Gabriel:** This year I am going with my family to Florida for Christmas. We make Christmas cookies together. I am excited to see baby Ava. We pray around the Christmas tree together. I hope I can watch a Star Wars movie when I'm in Florida.

**Ryder:** I stay home for Christmas. We decorate a tree together. I open presents in the morning for Christmas and then in the afternoon I open more presents because my birthday is on the same day. I hope I can ride on my brother's dirt bike during the school vacation.

**Pilar:** Sometimes I go to Rhode Island for Christmas and stay at my Nana's house. This year I got to meet Santa on a train ride. I help my mom make lots of different kinds of cookies to share with my family. I like when we spread different colored frosting on top of the cookies. I get to play with my cousins when we are at my Nana's house. I get to open presents in the morning and sometimes I have to wake up my mom and dad. We have a nice Christmas dinner together and then we get to eat the yummy cookies. I want to have time to play with all of the toys in my Nana's basement when we are there. I also want to watch the birds eating the food I put out for them at my new rental house.

**Andrew:** This year I will be celebrating Christmas in my new house. I like to open presents that my mom and dad give to me. My Amma and Papa will come to my new house. I was in a Christmas pageant at my church. I would love to play snow football with my dad during the vacation week.

**Matthew J.** This will be the first year of celebrating Christmas in New Hampshire. Last year in California I heard Santa when my mom opened the door. Santa brought me a new fire truck. I hope that the school vacation is over very fast because I want to come back to Grizzlies quickly to play with my friends and see Karen and Kristin.

Kristin and I have both enjoyed meeting with all of you for family conferences. It is always pleasant to have the chance to connect, share insights, and develop goals together for the year ahead. Thank you for taking the time to come in to chat and working collaboratively with us to make it a fun and successful year for each child.

We hope that you will experience the warmth of family love and togetherness, the joy of life and friends, and peace for everyone this holiday season!

Happy Holidays,  
Karen

## JUST PLAYING

When I'm building in the block room,  
Please don't say I'm "Just Playing."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play;  
About balance and shapes.  
When I'm getting all dressed up,  
Setting the table, caring for babies,  
Don't get the idea I'm "Just Playing."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play;  
I may be a mother or father someday.  
When you see me up to my elbows in  
Paint or clay,  
Don't say, "He is just playing."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I'm expressing myself and being creative.  
I may be an artist or an inventor someday.  
When you see me sitting in a chair  
"Reading to an imaginary audience,  
Please don't think I'm "Just Playing."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I may be a teacher someday.  
When you see me looking for bugs,  
Or filling my pockets with things I find,

Don't pass it off as "Just Play."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I may be a scientist someday.  
When you see me engrossed in a puzzle,  
Or some 'plaything' at school,  
Don't feel the time is wasted in "Play."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I'm learning to solve problems.  
I may be in business someday.  
When you see me learning to skip, hop, run,  
And move my body,  
Please don't say I'm "Just Playing."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I'm learning how my body works.  
I may be a doctor or nurse someday.  
When you asked me what I did at school,  
And I say, "I Just Played."  
Please don't misunderstand me.  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I'm learning to be successful in my work.  
I'm preparing for tomorrow.  
Today, I'm a child and my work is play.