



# Dartmouth College Child Care Center Newsletter

May 2013

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**Office:** Jeff Robbins,  
Sunnie McPhetres,  
Terry Chase, Dawn  
Cote

## 25 Years at Dartmouth!

Two DCCCC staff members will be recognized on June 18 for 25 years of service to Dartmouth College!



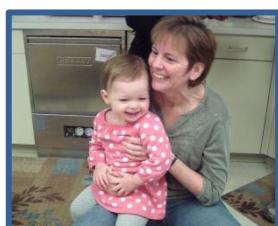
**Terri Crane**

**Susan Quimby Young**

## Other Milestones!



**Terry Chase – 40 years with Dartmouth College**



**Lori Higgins  
10 Years**



**Kristin Cole  
5 Years**      **Karen Gray  
15 Years**



## Meet Dawn Cote!

You may have noticed a new face in the office since Amy left last fall. Dawn Cote has joined our office team. She worked with us as temporary Administrative Assistant while we searched for Amy's replacement. Dawn liked us so much, she asked to be considered as an applicant for the permanent position. We met many people and Dawn was hands down our favorite! Dawn has quickly learned all about DCCCC. She is also the parent of a Woolly Bear so she sees us from different angles. She is ready to help you with your tuition questions just as Amy did. If you have any questions feel free to ask Dawn. If she doesn't know the answer, she'll find it for you! So if you were wondering, "Who's the new Amy?" you now have the answer!

I asked Dawn to tell us a bit about herself and her work and here is what she had to say!

I have always loved working around children and my strong analytical abilities in regards to office work allowed me to blend both my strengths and passion by working as an Administrative Assistant in the Child Care Center.

I have a background in accounting and customer service, in addition I am a parent and a consumer of child care services. These things allow me to relate to our families when I interact with them.

I love the atmosphere and the individuals I work with. There is nothing more fulfilling than seeing children smile and laugh all day long.

DCCCC is far more advanced in both physical and educational abilities compared to other centers I have seen. It has a family type of atmosphere, it is pretty cool to walk down the halls and have the staff, kids and families so happy to see each other. My daughter, Colbie (in the Woolly room) is receiving fundamental educational and social opportunities that will better prepare her as she begins public school in the fall. I feel so blessed that both myself and my daughter have had the DCCCC experience. It is a one of a kind place – the teaching staff, the administration and the families are all fantastic. We felt at home the very first day.



## From the Director

Dear Big Jeff

My beautiful, talented and typically kind daughter took a bite out of someone at school this week. She did this occasionally when she was younger and we didn't expect it to happen again. I really, really want to extinguish this behavior before she goes to Kindergarten. What can I do?

Signed,

Dental Dilemma

Dear Mother of Jaws,

Biting is a typical behavior. It's most common in the toddler years when children are physically active and vigorously exploring social relationships, but don't have the language or emotional skills to navigate social challenges. For some children, though, it's a strategy that they employ over time, sometimes on and off through their preschool years. It almost always disappears by school age. Still, like any other hurtful behavior, it needs to be addressed promptly. Here's my first, and maybe my best, advice: take a deep breath. Don't overreact and make this more difficult for you and your child to deal with. Know that there may not be a quick solution. Dealing with challenging behaviors is almost always messy. You have to be calm to work this through. It takes time for behavior to change. Approach this as an opportunity for your child to learn new, successful behaviors.

Although punishment may be your first reaction, it isn't the most likely thing to work. A more effective strategy is to try to prevent biting by identifying times, places and people with whom it occurs and reduce the child's exposure to these situations. For example, acting out behaviors may occur when children are

- a. in transition, moving from one activity to another, especially if they really don't want to stop what they are doing.
- b. crowded together like when they are lined up or squished together to hear a story
- c. experiencing strong feelings and unable to find the appropriate words or behaviors in the heat of the moment.

Sometimes inflicting harm, including biting, stems from the relationship between two children and may involve competition, social power and a history conflict. Not infrequently these are children with a "love-hate" relationship. They may seek each other out and play very well together most of the time. They may even be best friends. You'll want to preserve the friendship, but may need to find some "apart" times and build relationships with other children, too. This also applies to siblings.

At 4.5 years, depending on the child, you might consider a sit-down chat in a quiet moment, calmly outlining the situation. Here's a sample conversation. It would be different for each child and if you figure out the exactly right words, let me know and we'll write a bestseller. If your child isn't at the stage of development where this conversation would be developmentally appropriate, you can have this chat in your own head to get your act together. Since you asked about a situation that happened at school, here's a sample conversation between a teacher (me) and a child. I always aim for official child-development speak, but when forced to choose (or in the heat of the moment) I go with what feels authentic to me and to the relationship.

#### Conversation with a Biter

"I noticed that earlier today you got frustrated when (such and so) happened and you ended up biting the other child. They got hurt, you felt badly and I was worried and mad. Everyone was upset. Remember? Tell me what happened. Let's think of a way to handle it next time. Do you know some ways you could handle this besides biting?"

" Your parents and I have talked about it and we have some suggestions. There are some easy, and quick, things you can say. Actually, they aren't always easy, but you can learn to do them. Here are some suggestions and some strong things to say. I call them Power Words. It works like this:

- a. You can stop what's happening. You can say, "Stop" or "I don't like that" or "No"
- b. You can get help. Look at the teacher and say "Help" or "Teacher"
- c. You can move away. This might be the hardest one! Even grown-ups have a hard time walking away from things that make them mad. I'm not sure if there is a Power Word for this one. Can you think of a one? Maybe "I'm getting out of here"?

" I talked to the other teachers, too, so we'd all be on the same page. We notice that it's especially hard at school when it's time to wash your hands and get ready for lunch. Can you think of anything that would help? We thought we could help you pick a good time to wash so you don't get too crowded and too frustrated. Remember the Power Words if you start to get upset?

"Let's talk about another part. Remember how mad I got when you bit your friend the other day and I sent you to sit in the reading corner? I told you to cool off. You kept getting up and asking "Can I play now?" and I kept getting more cross and so did you. It didn't really help us learn better ways to solve problems than biting, did it? I know you don't like to feel bad and neither do I! I think that you don't really like to make other people feel bad either. Well, maybe in the moment when you are really mad, but then later you wish it were different.

Here's a better idea. We'll work together so you don't need to bite. If it biting happens, it will be kind of like an accident. If it happens I'm going to ask you to step away right that minute and I'm going to help the child that's hurt. If you want to help you can go get an ice pack. If you don't want to help, when I'm sure your friend is OK and starting to feel better, I'll come

and get you. Talking about it a little bit might help. Maybe we can figure out what went wrong and what to do next time. You already know that biting is against the rules so we won't need to spend a lot of time talking about that. By the time we are talking you might be feeling sorry. If you are, you can tell your friend. That might make her feel better. If you aren't sorry yet, you don't have to say so because that wouldn't be the truth. Maybe later you'd like to help your friend feel better."

"How does that sound? Any more ideas? OK, here's the short story.

No biting.

You can learn better ways.

Your parents and teachers can help.

If you are upset, you can stop, get help or move away.

You can help the other child feel better.

We can talk this over.

These are good things for everyone to know. Shall I write them down? No? OK, I'll help us remember. Or, you know what? I think I'll write them down so I remember!

"Let's practice. I'll be the annoying child and you be you. Pretend that it's time to line up and I'm behind you and I'm really close and I bump you hard!"

**"I'm going to say 'Stop it, you stupidhead.'"**

"You got it, sister! You can say 'STOP IT!' Try not to say 'Stupidhead' though, because that hurts peoples' feelings and makes them mad and makes it harder to get on with things. But I'll be honest with you, saying "Stupidhead" is way better than biting.

"OK, pretend that the annoying child bumps you again and you're getting really mad. Now what?

**"You could help."**

"Yup. You could say 'Help' You can yell it if you need to. After you've practiced, you'll be able to say it in a strong voice, without even being loud.".....

"Now, here's the hardest one. What if it happens AGAIN? You already said 'STOP IT!' You called the 'TEACHER' and maybe I was busy helping someone else. Now what? It's tough....".....

**"I'd bit him harder."**

"No, the rule is 'no hurting'. Biting is never okay, not even after you've done the right thing. Are you ready for the answer? You've gotta walk away. You can go sit in the book corner and be as mad as you want. You can go get a teacher. We have talked about it and we're going to try really hard, too, to help you when you need it."

**"OK, can I go now?"**

"You bet. Enough is enough. I'm feeling good about this and I'm ready to go outside. Let's do it. Want any help with your boots?"

## Greetings From Sunnie:

Connective Parenting Principle #2: Behavior is My Clue.

*Adults are quite capable of keeping their internal emotions under wraps, but children are raw – thank goodness. They don't know yet how to keep a lid on it. What specifically is generating the behavior may not be apparent. It's not always necessary to know.* Bonnie Harris – Confident Parents, Remarkable Kids

It would be great if babies could say, "I love you so much I just want you to be with me all of the time! When we are apart, I feel like something is missing from me. I don't always understand that you will be back later." While they can't actually say these things, they do tell us by crying when we leave or snuggling in extra close when approaching a new space. Their behaviors tell us that they are aware of what is happening to them and they want to let us know!

It would be great if toddlers would tell us, "I'm trying to figure out how I affect the world and those around me. I don't always like the way things go and sometimes I'm scared and don't know why. I feel like I need to protect myself and find a sure fire way to keep control in my life." Those feelings do not get interpreted and articulated in the life of a toddler. Toddlers can express those feelings by biting, taking things away from others, or clinging to an adult.

It would be great if our preschoolers said, "We need to talk. Listen, I know that this is a busy world and you want the best for me, but I'm having a hard time keeping up and meeting your expectations. I know that I'm cute and you want to make me happy, but I need to learn how to control my actions and I need you to help me do that by helping me to slow down." You'll never hear a preschooler say these words, but you will see preschoolers throw themselves on the floor when asked to wash their hands or yell, "I hate you" when you have to hurry them along to get to child care.

It would be great if Kindergartners articulated, "Wow! There have been a lot of changes for me lately. I've learned that I can be independent in a new setting. I'm learning to read and write and I understand many new concepts. I'm doing many big things and I'm proud of that, but I'm still little and I get a bit worried sometimes that I might have to do more than I feel ready for. I want everyone to think that I'm really big and strong but I don't know how to tell them that." What five or six year old is going to say that? They may tell us these things by rolling their eyes when asked to do something that they don't want to do or by saying things that other children that are not kind.

Care givers need to be intent detectives. They need to recognize that children's behaviors are communicating their underlying feelings and needs that they don't have the ability to articulate otherwise. They are not doing these things to irritate adults or to push buttons;

they just want to have their perceived needs met! Having a solid understanding of Early Childhood development helps DCCCC care givers to understand some of the root motivators behind behaviors. They understand that children are trying to tell us what they want and need by way of their behavior. They will often ask themselves and each other, "What do you think she's trying tell us?" Teachers use this information to make changes in their classrooms. When they notice that behaviors are telling them that children need some more relaxing activities, they increase the amount sensory play that is available or make more room in the schedule for small groups of children to be together. When behaviors tell that children are feeling stressed or out of control, they create more opportunities for physical activities both inside and outside. When behaviors are saying that children feel worried or insecure, care givers find time to give extra snuggles or words of encouragement during a private moment.

One thing that all of our teachers realize is that behavior is not the child. The child is trying to tell us something through their behavior but that doesn't make them good or bad children. They address the behaviors by trying to find the root cause and address those issues. Of course, there are behaviors that are not acceptable in the classroom such as biting or saying "mean" things to other children. In that case, the teachers not only look for the root cause but they also help the child to learn appropriate ways to express their feelings of anger, fear, or disappointment.

Working with young children takes a great deal of knowledge, curiosity, intuition and inquiry. We are so lucky to have the group of teachers that we have. They are able to help each child feel safe and secure enough to learn and grow and to know that they are loved and cared for!

\*\*Connective Parenting Principles are from the book, *Confident Parents, Remarkable Kids* by Bonnie Harris. It is a worthwhile read!\*\*

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## DCCCC Will Be Closed On The Following Days:

- May 27, 2013** – Memorial Day
- July 4, 2013** – Independence Day
- August 26 and 27, 2013** – Staff training and preparation for the new year!
- September 2, 2013** – Labor Day
- November 28, 2013** – Thanksgiving Day
- November 29, 2013** – Day after Thanksgiving
- December 23, 2013 – January 1, 2014** – Winter Break

## Anything you'd like to announce in next month's newsletter?

If you have any announcements that would be of interest to DCCCC families, children's articles you would like to sell, trade or give away, or if you are looking for a specific item, e-mail Sunnie ([sunnie.mcphetres@dartmouth.edu](mailto:sunnie.mcphetres@dartmouth.edu)) by June 10, 2013.

## Think cooking is a huge hassle?

Wish it was easier to make tasty, homemade meals?

**Solving Dinner** is simplifying home cooking. We create meal kits that have all the ingredients you need to make a meal, in the exact quantities, with everything already cut up so all you have to do is cook. And the meal is delivered to your workplace fridge or your office so you just pick it up from work before you go home and cook it!

Our meals are:

**TASTY:** Mouth-watering dishes, there's something for everyone

**CONVENIENT:** No hassle! You don't have to plan, shop, or do any prep work

**AFFORDABLE:** It's as cheap as fast food, starting at \$5.99 / person.

**QUICK:** Under 30 minutes from start to finish

**EASY:** Literally need no culinary experience; our college friends who only know how to 'cook' Pop-Tarts and popcorn made beautiful, tasty dishes

**HEALTHY:** Lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains

Order online on our website! [Solvingdinner.com](http://Solvingdinner.com)

Get **5 DOLLARS OFF** your first time purchase! Click [HERE](#) to fill out a short survey and at the end you will get the coupon code. Join our [mailing list](#) to receive discounts and reminders about when to order!

Send any questions you have to [Salman@solvingdinner.com](mailto:Salman@solvingdinner.com) and we will respond to them within 24 hours!

Thanks and take care!  
Salman



# Open Fields Medieval Festival

THETFORD, VERMONT

Saturday

**MAY  
25th  
2013**

11am - 3pm

On Saturday, May 25, 2013, [Open Fields](#) will hold its Medieval Festival on the Thetford Green from 11 am to 3 pm. During this family-friendly festival, the Green comes alive with the sights and sounds of a Medieval village. A King & Queen, knights and ladies, peasants, craftsmen, shepherds, and farmers gather to celebrate the age via music, dance, games of skill and chance, food, parades, storytelling, Benny the Dragon, and feats of juggling and acrobatics. Costumes are encouraged.

The 2013 Open Fields Medieval Festival will feature the talents of the **No Strings Marionette Company** performing their newest production, *The Hobbit*. Their production is based on the beloved fantasy adventure of the same name by J.R.R. Tolkien.

Our Medieval Festival is family-focused, with an emphasis on children ages 3 to 12, and is a wonderful community event. It is also a “green” event – in the past, our full day festival has generated only one bag of trash.

## Fun for Kids



The Festival caters to families with children of all ages and features fun, hands-on activities and entertainment.



## Entertainment

All manners of lively entertainment fill the Green, including the No Strings Marionette Company performing *The Hobbit*.

## Costumes



Celebrate the age in costume! Costumes and accessories are available to purchase or rent at the festival or wear your own.



## Feasting

Enjoy signature Festival foods or discover something yummy at one of our food booths, including selections for vegetarians.

## Artist Market



See demonstrations of traditional crafts by local artists and buy souvenirs of your journey to the Middle Ages.



# Trek to Taste

on the Trails of  
Woodstock, Vermont

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY  
Saturday, June 1, 2013  
10 AM to 3 PM

**GUIDED WALKS AT 10:30 AM AND NOON**  
or grab a map and take  
walks for all Ages and Abilities  
Music & Creative Fun  
for the whole family!



## Begin at the Forest Center

After parking at the Billings Farm & Museum (overflow parking across the street), join us at the national park's Forest Center to start your journey. Enjoy trail treats prepared by Upper Valley students who have been studying local food and farms.

## Walk to Purple Crayon and Mount Tom Farmer's Market 1 mile EASY!

**10:00 AM TO 1:00 PM** This family-focused walk features nature activities, trail games, creative crafts, and a chance to buy some of the freshest food in Woodstock.

## Hike to the Nordic Ski Cabin 2 miles MODERATE!

Follow the historic Mount Tom carriage roads through the heart of the national park to the Youth Base for Trek to Taste. Join the Woodstock Union Middle/High School Farm-to-School team to sample wood-fired pizza and join in games, and merriment.

## Break at the Pogue Base-Camp 2.5 miles MODERATE!

Visit local trail advocacy groups at the Pogue trail junction. Snack on healthy trail mix and learn about trail stewardship with hands-on activities and games.

## Trek to South Peak 4.5 miles HEARTY!

It's the best view around! At the top, you will be rewarded with gourmet tastings of food from local farmers and food producers provided by members of Sustainable Woodstock.

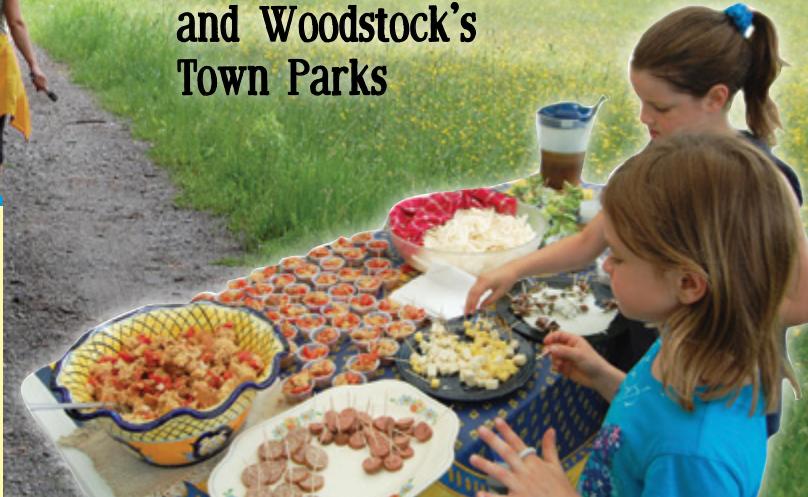
## Return for an Ice Cream Celebration RELAX!

**1:00 pm to 3:00 pm** Choose one, two, or all three of these enjoyable walks. Then reward yourself with a treat back at the Forest Center with music by CarterGlass.



## Local Farm-Fresh Treats

in Vermont's National Park  
and Woodstock's  
Town Parks



**Trek to Taste thanks its funding partners in bold  
and is a project of many, including:**

Appalachian Trail Conservancy • ArtisTree Community Arts Center • Billings Farm & Museum  
**Billings Park Commission, Town of Woodstock** • Change the World Kids  
Covered Bridges Half Marathon • Co-op Food Stores • Green Mountain Club • King Arthur Flour  
Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park • Mount Tom Farmers Market  
**Mount Tom Road to the Pogue Race** • Mountain Creamery • National Park Foundation  
Northeast Organic Farm Association-VT • Ottauquechee Health Foundation  
Ottauquechee Community Partnership • Ottauquechee Natural Resources Conservation District  
Ottauquechee Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area • Pentangle Arts Council  
**Sustainable Woodstock** • Upper Valley Farm to School Network • Upper Valley Trails Alliance  
Vermont Institute of Natural Science • Vital Communities • Wellborn Ecology Fund  
Woodstock Area Chamber of Commerce • Woodstock History Center  
Woodstock Inn & Resort Nordic Center • Woodstock Trails Partnership

### And the following Upper Valley Farm to School teams:

Barnard Academy, Brookfield Elementary School, Chelsea Public School, Dothan Brook School, Hanover Street School, Hartland Elementary School, The Newton School, Ottauquechee School, The Pomfret School, South Royalton School, State Street School, Tunbridge Central School, The Upper Valley Waldorf School, Woodstock Union High School, Woodstock Elementary School

**This event is free and open to the public**  
Thanks to our Funding Partners who are highlighted in bold



For additional information, see us at:  
**www.trektotaste.info**

# The Tot Trot, 2013



## **News from the Float Team**

Eileen Ruml  
Gladness Msumanje  
Liz Harrington  
Kelly Bosma  
Terri Crane

## **Meet Kelly Bosma**

Hi! My name is Kelly Bosma and I am a Floating Assistant Teacher. I have been working here at DCCCC since April, 2012. I started as a substitute and in September, 2012 I became a Float. I love getting the chance to be in all of the classrooms, seeing and getting to know all of the children. Most importantly, I love getting the opportunity to work with all of the teachers and meeting families. I love the teachable moments and the look of pride on the children's faces when they learn something new.

I live in Claremont, NH and am currently finishing my last semester at River Valley Community College. I am receiving a degree in Early Childhood Education this month!

Before I started working here, I had the opportunity to work in a variety of child care centers both here in NH and in Washington!

When I am not working, I love spending time with my family – especially with my 4 nephews: Connor, Braeden, Matthew and Aidan, and my adorable niece, Caelyn!



# Congratulations, Kelly!

Kelly Bosma, of DCCCC Floating Assistant Teacher fame, has completed her Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education. Kelly has persevered through many life challenges and has worked intermittently for 12 years to complete her degree! She will be graduating on May 17, 2013.

At the River Valley Community College Awards Ceremony, held Friday, May 3, 2013, Kelly received an award for exceptional performance in the Early Childhood Education Associate Degree Program.

While presenting the award, Kerry Belknapp-Morris, Program Director, Early Childhood Education Department Chair, Professional Studies at River Valley Community College had this to say about Kelly:

*A good early childhood teacher is a continuous, collaborative learner. This student has shown this trait throughout her program of study. Most recently during her capstone experience, she has demonstrated the ability to learn in multiple and varied ways.*

*She listens – truly listens – to children and is willing to follow their lead. This allows her to receive the powerful lessons that only children can teach us.*

*Also, she has discovered new ways to learn from her colleagues. She observes, listens, and asks others to tell her about their teacher decisions. In addition, she asks other teachers: "How can I help you?"*

*As you can imagine this quality, along with her sunny smile, make her loved and respected by her colleagues and the children and families with whom she works.*

*For her true love of learning, I would like to recognize:*

KELLY BOSMA



**The Polars congratulate Kelly!**



## News from Teddy One

Debbie Burnham,  
Lead Teacher

Wendy Irwin,  
Teacher

April Buchanan,  
Assistant Teacher

There is a usual flow to our days here in Teddy One. We have a few children arrive for breakfast, then more children come as more staff arrive for the day. We do bottles, breakfast, snack, diapers and nap. Then we are ready for activities and outside time. We generally keep the chaos under control. We do sometimes hit a bump in the road! One morning a few weeks ago I had several hungry, crying babies with more arriving before I could keep up. Wow! The room was LOUD!! We did manage to get everyone fed, changed and down for naps, but it was a hectic place for a while. Then came last month's parent snack and all was well with the Teddy Room. I looked around and saw happy children and parents visiting with each other. I enjoyed seeing everyone meeting and chatting. We will do another snack this summer and I hope you all will be back to party!

As I write this, our Friday morning has been magical. Everyone has been happy. We had a visitor who told me she wanted to come back and that our room was wonderful. Every child got lots of one on one time, music was playing and children were smiling. All was great in Teddy One.

Those hectic times have gotten fewer as our school year goes on, but they still do happen from time to time. We appreciate the calm, sweet times that we have with your children and we work through those crazy times by prioritizing, working together and breathing deeply! If you every have one of those crazy days, come see me. I have stress relief cream under the diaper cubby!

We have a new one year old...Eva turned one recently and Xaxi is soon to follow!

Some quick notes: April has returned and we are so glad to have our team back! With the warmer weather we are outside more and everyone should have a sunhat. Please sign and return to us the new topical cream form that is in your child's cubby. We hope you are enjoying the wonderful sun!

Fondly,

Debbie, Wendy and April



## News from Teddy Too

Radoyka Garcia,  
Lead Teacher

Lori Higgins,  
Teacher

Denise Ayres,  
Assistant Teacher

¡Hola Amigos! (Hello Friends!)

Teddy Too's are on the loose! And really on the loose... some runners and climbers, fast walkers, fast crawlers and one who is enjoying muscle strengthening in our bouncy Exer-saucer! There's lots of rolling onto our bellies, some tackling, hugging, kissing and with all this, learning our own personal space, wow! Talk about busy little bodies.

We are missing Lori, but she is doing an amazing job at home as she continues to heal. Gladness (Assistant Float) has been with us a few weeks and she has quickly become like a regular Teddy Too teacher. Denise and I are thrilled to have her with us. As they did with Lori, our Teddies enjoy Gladness' singing, story time and gross motor activities inside and outside. Special thanks to our floats, subs and afternoon helpers that have assisted us and have jumped right into our daily routines whenever we needed. *So far... we are still sailing smoothly.*

Our youngest Teddies have officially made their first finger-paintings at school! Those who attempted to lick their own painted little hands will remain anonymous! =) \*Although we use non-toxic art supplies, we are very cautious with these kinds of projects.\* We will miss having Music with Brooke on Tuesdays, but we know she will be back to sing for us... thank you Brooke! We beat the few rainy days we've had and got outside to play on our swings, climbers, sandbox and hung out singing under our shady tree. There are so many happy little faces at the playground. We get to see Teddy Ones and Pandas outside a lot. Some of our Teddies are already getting acquainted with their future Panda teachers. Time is just flying by... some teachers aren't ready to let go, but you can see that some children are ready for Take-Off! We'll still have the summer to make more memories together and we really look forward to the summer-fun! Stay tuned...

Also, be ready to swap out some of the extra clothes in cubbies; these babies and tots are growing right before our very own eyes. Since we spend more time outside, some may need more changes of clothes; sunhats and outdoor shoes. We'll be doing outdoor water-play very soon; we provide T-shirts, and sunscreen for this; *you don't need to bring swimwear.* Because we encourage our children to feed themselves, yet it's another reason to have extra clothes at school.

**Happy Birthday!** Our babies from fall/winter of 2012 have already turned '1'; now another wave babies of Spring 2013 have begun turning '1' and other Spring babies from 2011 will be turning '2' and this upcoming Summer of 2013, all our youngest will be '1'!!!

Until next time!

Ray...on behalf of Denise & Gladness

# News from the Panda Bears

Jennifer Sprague,  
Lead Teacher

Jenn Boudro,  
Teacher

Teresa Hahn  
Assistant Teacher

Pandas have been enjoying the warmer weather outside by bringing the classroom outside!

- Blowing pinwheels we borrowed from the Woolly Bears



- Planting in the gardens



- Fence weaving



- Climbing on the stumps



- Digging and finding tiny treasures in the sandbox



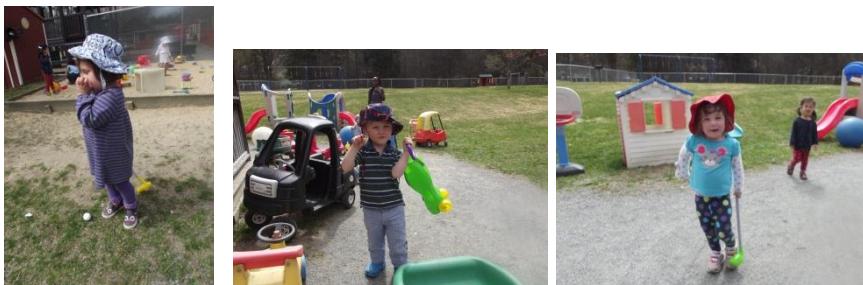
- Looking for worms



- Looking at the tadpoles we got from the vernal pool



- Playing golf with our new golf set



- Using scarves on a windy day



- Making pine cone bird feeders



We are looking forward to many more outdoor activities this summer!

Jennifer from the Panda Team

## News from the Koalas

Susan Quimby  
Young,  
Lead Teacher

, Joel King,  
Teacher

Loey Crooks,  
Assistant Teacher

I've been thinking a lot about DCCCC, the children and what they will remember from their time here, whether they are here a few months, a year or maybe even up to 6 years!

I have been to quite a few workshops that start with.....

Close your eyes. Think back to when you were a child. Where was your favorite place to play? What did you do in this place? What did it look like? Feel like? Smell like? Who was there?

(OK... just so you know... first of all, after repeated workshops starting like this, I really struggle to close my eyes that long when I really want to look around at all the other teachers to see if they are peeking! And if Terri Hollis happens to be sitting next to me as she often is at workshops, you can kiss that "close your eyes and think seriously" part goodbye!!)

With that said, it has been clear that many people's favorite place to play when they were little was OUTSIDE!! As lots of you know... I love taking the kids outside the playground for walks/hikes and

general exploring in the fields and gully, the community gardens across the bumpy bridge, the rugby house and fields and soon some walks to Storrs Pond and the baseball fields. I love how children pick up on things that lots of us might miss such as a funny sounding bird, a garbage truck on the road, train whistles from Vt., cloud shapes, etc. I know I've become so accustomed to school buses that I really don't notice them anymore at the Ray School but these Koalas do. They see with fresh and excited eyes. They hear so many sounds with open ears. They ask questions wondering why something happened. They are learning about the world around them.

I wonder what they will remember of their time here when they are adults. I wonder if they will remember the walks with sticks. Will they remember the pussy willow bush? Will they remember the Easter egg hunts in the field? Will they remember the footprints we found in the snow? Will they remember the deer poop? (Probably!!) Will they remember hiking through the woods down to Storrs Pond? Will they remember bean houses and cherry tomatoes and chives and broccoli and digging carrots and hauling mulch in the giant wheelbarrow when gardening time comes? Will they remember turning over rocks or wood to see worms and bugs underneath? Will they remember taking fall garden stuff and the evergreen trees out to the compost pile in the field? Will they remember running down to the canoe that they all can find now? I so hope some of these outside times will result in lasting wonderful memories. I know they do for me. Watching kids from behind as they run across a field or up a hill full of anticipation not knowing perhaps what to expect but eager to see is truly one of my favorite sites. I know when I grow up I'll remember all of these things!!!

OK... just so you know.. that was my newsletter from March! We are still getting out and about. Joel takes a group of kids on a walk almost every day. They come back talking about a bear hunt or something they saw. There are so many things to see out

there now. There are many different kinds of flowers on the trees now. The lilacs are out. We stopped to smell them yesterday when we went out in the field to dig up some compost for our gardens.

We are outside all the time now. Kids love the sand box area with the hose running. I watched some of the Koalas watch some of the big Polar bears make a river go under a beam on the edge. They were fascinated by the process. When the big kids left, they were down on their hands and knees looking closely and talking about it. One child looked up and said "WOW"!

We are planning a field trip to the Dartmouth greenhouses on June 11th. Becky Irwin, Nate's mom has arranged for us to go for the tour. We might even get to see dinosaur bones on a different floor!! We are looking for drivers to help transport the crew. The general time will be around 10-12. Please let us know if you can help out. Thanks.

Brad Taylor, Nate's dad is going to take us to the brook down by Storrs pond and show us different bugs that might be in the water. He'll bring nets and pans for us to use. I drove down to check the brook yesterday and it is low and perfect for the kids to check out.

And... what kind of spring would it be if we didn't walk to the fire station??! We'll set a date for that soon.

And the fun just keeps a-coming and a-coming for these Koalas! Gina, Annabel's mom came in and did a yoga class for the group. It looks like it was a blast from the pictures. And most of you know that we went up to the Coop for ice cream cones a couple of weeks ago. We would love to do this more often. I am going to put up an envelope for ice cream donation \$ so if any of you want to chip in, feel free. Joel found out that Cuttings Deli up the road has them for \$1 less than the Coop so we'll check that place out as well.

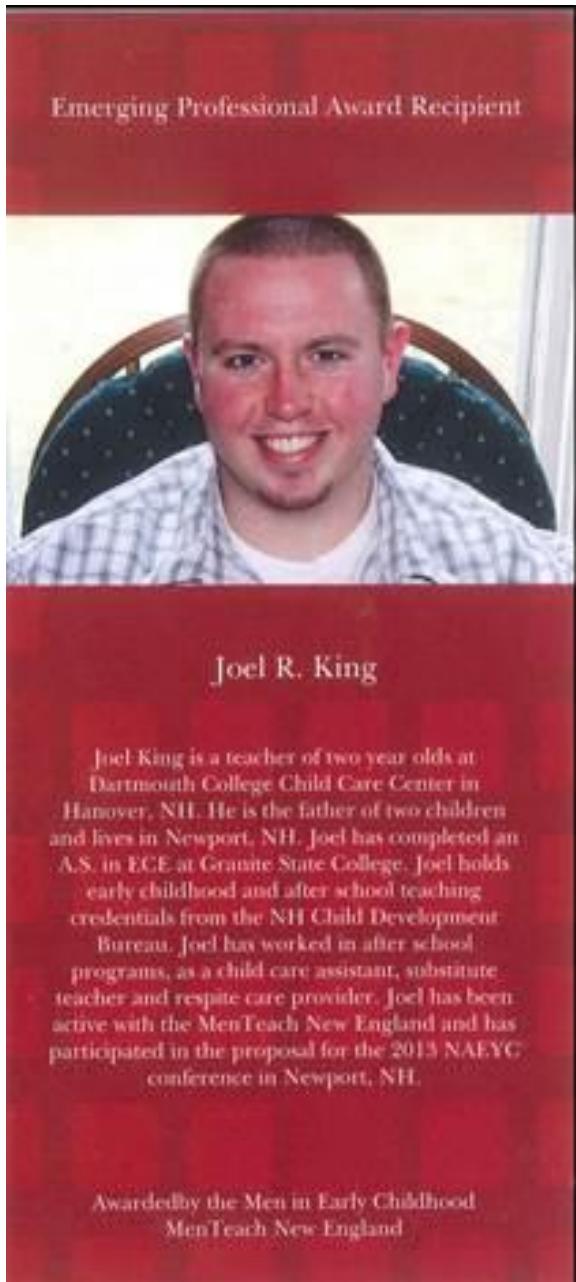
OK then! As usual please be sure your child has plenty of extra clothes. With the hoses going, kids are getting wet and muddy regularly. Please also be sure your child has a sturdy pair of shoes/sneakers for when we go on walks. If you'd like your child to wear a sunhat, please send that in as well.

I'll be touching base with several of you to talk toilet training in the next couple of weeks, Stay tuned!

Oh so fondly,

Susan for the Koala team

# Congratulations, Joel!



Joel King (teacher in the Koala Room) was selected as the recipient of the 2013 MenTeach-New England Emerging Professional award. This award is given to a man in the early stages of career development in early childhood education who has shown a commitment to the field through:

- direct work with young children and families,
- professional development
- advocacy for men as teachers and caregivers
- promoting gender balance and diversity in the field of early childhood education
- demonstrating potential for leadership in the field.

Joel was nominated by his former employer who had great things to say about him at the recent Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children conference.

Congratulations, Joel!

# News from the Woolly Bears

Barb Merchand,  
Acting Lead  
Teacher

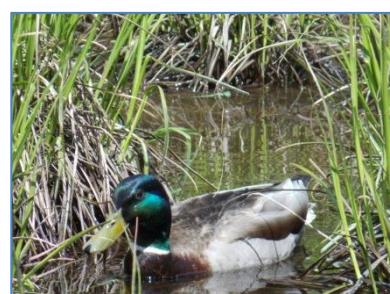
Moya Stevens,  
Assistant Teacher

The DCCCC workshop in March focused on “engineering learning, indoors and out” in the preschool environment. The WB Discovery Center was expanded to bring the “outside in and the inside out”....sounds like a Dr. Seuss storyline! Using simple science tools and four out of five senses, the Woollies investigated the vernal pool beyond Ray School, sand pendulums, and worm composting.

The Woollies were introduced to the vernal pond by video and learned it was a seasonal pool with no permanent stream that dries up. Fish can’t live in it, but it is full of life. In preparation for the first site visit to the pool, the backpack was stocked with magnifying glasses, binoculars, pipettes, water sample cups, flashlights, gloves, tape measures, and a notebook to record findings about the wet-dry ecosystem. The Woollies observed caddisfly larvae, frog spawn floating on the surface, and hundreds of polliwogs swimming in the shallow water. They noticed how teeny the tadpoles were yet how quickly they swished their tails to line the rim of the pail. They had many questions: What were they doing at the top of the pail? Could the polliwogs visit the Woollies? Where would they live? What do they eat? Do they have teeth? How do they sleep? Would they turn into real frogs or a frog prince? The vernal pool was an exciting place to explore!

“Inside”... water samples from the pool detected caddis fly larvae poking its head in and out of its protective case, tiny fairy shrimp, and a long white horsehair worm that looked like white string...except it wiggled!

On subsequent walks the Woollies noticed the pool was drying up, grass was growing in the middle of the pool, the tadpoles were getting bigger, the water was muddy, mosquitos were buzzing, two mallards were paddling, and hundreds of dandelions dotted the tall grass. They heard three different bird calls and spotted a bird (with red on it) camouflaged beneath the bushes. They craned their necks for the “tallest pine tree in the whole wide world”, and estimated a “hundred” or “a million” or “maybe a billion” pine cones were hanging from the branches. Several pine cones were pocketed for home, while others were counted and





examined for their texture, size, shape, and color.

Investigating sand from the “*outside on the inside*,” Woollies explored table top and ceiling pendulums. They noticed the harder they pushed the ceiling pendulum the larger the sand path. In fact it was so LARGE that the sand extended beyond the swimming pool!

After a winter hiatus the worms returned and Woollies learned how to gently handle those wigglers. During a discussion reflecting the care of worms, Woollies repeated again and again, “don’t do this” (slap your palms together) or they will “get squished and dead!” They discovered the worms are squirmy, have zero bones, and need to be hydrated just like Woollies. They were quite knowledgeable about the egg bumps inside the momma worms and explained they would “come out” as tiny baby worms. Some friends were fascinated by the yellow “stuff” that was excreted while others declared it “yucky”. All Woollies know that WB lunch remains become lunch for the worms and their droppings eventually become compost.

Woollies are building lifelong connections with the outdoors whether it is learning about local habitats, the forces of physics, or the creatures that live under and above the ground. However, nothing beats the best of nature when ... you build a fence around a chipmunk hole with sticks and pine needles...play leap frog across the playground... or just sit back and enjoy fun in the sun with your WB friends.

A special thank you to: Moya, Liz, Brian, Rosalind, and Eileen for supporting “*engineered learning indoors and out*” using the science inquiry process and expanding children’s conversations with intentionality and best practice.

Barb for the WB Team.



# News from the Polar Bears

Terri Hollis,  
Lead Teacher

Teacher

Miranda Arruda,  
Assistant Teacher

Hello Polar Families!

What have we been up to, you ask? Well even if you didn't ask here goes. Getting ready for chick hatching, wearing yellow to celebrate the arrival of the sun, bringing in books to share, bringing in objects from home that start with the same first letter as your name, hopscotch in the classroom, popsicles in the sun, water play in the sand box, several substances in sensory pool, practicing printing our own names on finished projects, observing and touching ladybugs, reading books in our library corner, celebrating birthdays, making volcanoes in the sandbox.

Although keeping your children stimulated by materials and their physical surroundings are very important there are other things that we have been working really hard on. We have also found it really important to practice, utilize, teach, follow through, and expect good social behaviors. Yes, it is so very typical and normal for children to test different behaviors and they have been. What gets me what I want? Will this get me attention? How can I get people to react? And well I have been getting away with it so I will just keep doing it, etc. As we all know for a very long time in their short lives it has been acceptable to do just what works for themselves without much regard for how and what they are doing impacts others physically and emotionally. As they are growing older and some will be going to kindergarten shortly we need to expect more of them as caretakers, not just for themselves but others. Here are a just a few of our guiding practices in the Polar Room.

- Give the hurt or upset child a voice; help them to say clearly and strongly that it is not okay.
- Do not keep overlooking repeated "small" behaviors such as name calling (it grows).
- Be clear! State behavior that was unkind and state consequence if it continues.
- Remember to acknowledge a child who has made change to behavior (it feels good, and worth doing the right thing for).
- In general it is important to work on kind behaviors with each other so we know they are able to do other types of activities out of the class. Earning special activities rather than assuming you can go no matter if you have been "in control" or not, kind or not is not a good practice or a good guide for them to live by.

From the beginning of time another factor to social behavior is good ole' peer pressure and wanting to be accepted. This is so hard. They want so badly to be a part "of". I have literally seen children having internal conflict. They know what they are doing is not the right thing or unkind but a friend is telling them to and they want to please the friend. Of course it is ultimately the responsibility they need to learn. Just because a friend is telling you to do it does not mean you should do it. Not so fast! It is also a responsibility to be a good friend and not tell other friends to do wrong things, or do things that we know will get them into trouble. Because we've all been working so hard on these things, we've been able to enjoy each other's company and have great times in the Polar Room.

Here's looking forward to lots of great times together ahead!  
Terri Hollis for the Polar Bears

## **News from the Grizzlies**

Karen Gray,  
Lead Teacher

Kristin Ball Cole,  
Teacher

The countdown begins...we have entered the final months of the kindergarten year already! As I write this newsletter, I am in awe to discover that there are only 27 school days remaining! We are beginning to prepare the children for the changes that will be rapidly approaching. Some friends will soon be having their last days, new friends will be joining us and we are anxiously waiting to have All Day Grizzlies EVERYDAY (which begins on June 20<sup>th</sup>)!

The warmer weather and sunshine adds to some great energy and good feeling in the group. Kindergartners have been excited about hatching baby chicks in their school classrooms and observing the tadpoles grow in the Grizzly classroom. Some of their own baby teeth are getting wiggly or even falling out. New shoes and bigger clothes for keeping cool are being fashioned

(we'll be working on shoe tying)! It's baseball season. It's biking season. It's gardening season. Some children are enjoying learning to jump rope. The swings are back and never seem to grow old. The water has been hooked up to the sandbox. And it seems like each day another child discovers how letters have become words, and words are stringing together into...reading!

The children are enjoying recognizing/recalling the many things they have learned throughout the year. We have had lots of time together to practice skills. By encouraging, supporting and teaching one another Grizzlies have been more willing to take risks, have patience and a positive attitude. They have gained more confidence when they choose to not give up and witness their successes. There have been so many accomplishments made this year! We wanted to take this opportunity to celebrate with you the many things the Grizzlies are proud of working so hard on and improving. Please enjoy their amazing illustrations and write-ups below!

**Our Grizzly Summer Packet will be in cubbies on May 29<sup>th</sup>!**

*Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday to Wyn Casey on May 4<sup>th</sup> and  
Zabava Halchenko on May 18<sup>th</sup>*

Happy May,  
Karen

