



News From the DCCCC Office

April 2015

Jeff Robbins, Director
Sunnie McPhetres, Assistant Director

Terry Chase, Administrative Assistant
Dawn Cote, Administrative Assistant

Staff

Chickadee One

Michele Estes
Denise Ayers

Chickadee Too

Teresa Hahn
Lori Higgins
Moya Stevens

Owls

Debbie Burnham
Wendy Irwin
April Buchanan

Hedgehogs

Jennifer Sprague
Jenn Boudro
Anna Fuller

Otters

Susan Quimby Young
Joel King
Valerie Stefani

Badgers

Terri Hollis
Miranda Arruda
Melissa Horrigan

Black Bears

Amy McLellan
Barb Merchand
Kelly Bosma

Floating Assistant

Teachers

Liz Harrington
Katie Robinson
Eileen Ruml
Kristin Cole
Brian Goodness
Terri Crane

AWARD WINNING TEACHER!

Guess who is a recipient of Early Learning N.H.'s Excellence in Child Care Award for 2014? Our own **Susan Quimby Young!**

Each year, Early Learning NH recognizes three outstanding early childhood professionals working in the child care sector in New Hampshire with the annual Excellence in Child Care Awards. These distinguished individuals represent the best in the field of early childhood education, are committed to helping every child in their charge reach their full potential, and receive their award for their outstanding dedication and professionalism. They look at family support and communication, innovation in the classroom and general contributions to the field of early childhood education. They pick 3 honorees from many, many nominations. Susan will receive her award on Tuesday, April 14, 2015 in Pembroke, NH at the 17th Annual Celebration of Early Childhood and Afterschool Professionals. Congratulations, Susan!



STAFF NEWS AND NOTES

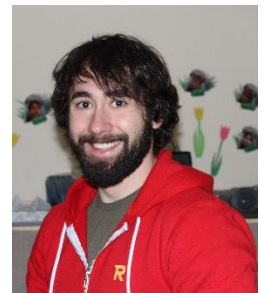
Welcome To the Float Team: Katie Robinson and Brian Goodness

We are happy that Katie Robinson and Brian Goodness have joined our regular staff! Brian and Katie have both been working as substitute staff for some time. Katie has joined us as a full-time floating assistant teacher and Brian has joined as a part-time floating assistant teacher



Katie has done extensive work here at DCCCC in the Koala room of the past and the current Owl room. We have been impressed with her maturity and her ability to get things done! Katie has been taking college courses through the Community College of Vermont to finish out her senior year of high school. She is pursuing an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education.

Brian has worked at DCCCC for many years! He spent a great deal of time in the Grizzly and Panda rooms of old and with the Black Bears and Hedgehogs currently. Brian also has the distinction of being a DCCCC parent to a Black Bear and an Owl, but he has worked with all ages here. The kids in every room get very excited when they see Brian arrive!



What's Going On?

Open Multi Wednesdays

As you can imagine, the multi is a very popular place! Each classroom has scheduled times to use the multi for big body play, group games, and just general fun. Each Tuesday, the multi is used for music class for the older classrooms. Now on Wednesdays, the teachers have decided to have open multi on Wednesday mornings. During open multi, each class can bring three or four children to the multi at a time. This allows children and teachers from different classrooms to get to know each other long before it is time to transition at the end of the summer. It also gives the children the opportunity to play with children of different ages somewhere other than the playground! It is fun to see how different the play is when there are children there from different groups!



Learning to Be an Audience

We have had several opportunities lately to practice the skill of being a member of an audience. I (Sunnie) am always impressed with how well our children attend and participate during whole center events. We have been able to practice being members of a large audience during a StoryTime performance, a presentation from the Upper Valley Music School, and a DCCCC Variety Show!



Week of the Young Child

The Week of the Young Child is quickly approaching: April 13-17, 2015. Each year, DCCCC participates in the theme of the year that is suggested by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The theme this year is Celebrating Our Youngest Learners and each day of the week focuses on a different aspect of life for young children. Watch your classroom to see what exciting things they will be doing! Ask your teachers what the children are learning during each activity. There will be a growing display in the multi to document what is happening throughout the Center – be sure to check it out!

The focus for each day will be:

Music Monday (music and movement)
Taco Tuesday (cooking/nutrition)
Work Together Wednesday
(building/construction and teamwork)
Artsy Thursday (visual arts)
Family Friday (celebrating families)

On Friday, April 17, there will be family breakfast time in each class at drop-off in the morning and a Center-wide gathering to share stories, songs and more at 4:00 in the big multi. Families are invited and welcome to join!





News from Big Jeff

Dear Big Jeff,

There are a lot of girly-girls in my daughter's preschool class. I think it's ok to say that because that's what their parents say. Most of their clothes are pink and purple. Disney princesses make up a good deal of their play. My daughter on the other hand prefers to play with the boys and is the first one in her snowsuit to go outside. I like that she is independent and doesn't feel pressured into make gender stereotypical choices, but I worry that one of these days other kids will start to tease her. Should I be doing something different?

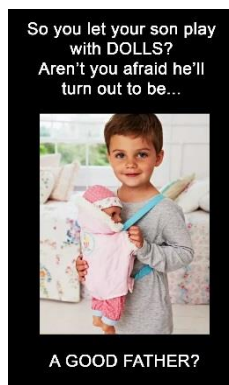
One Girl's Mom

Dear Mom,

There is a lot to know about gender, sex roles and peer culture. Most of it I don't know yet, but here's my boots on the ground attitude: No, you don't need to worry. Your daughter is developing wonderfully and being the person that she is meant to be. If she's happy, you can be happy. Perhaps the day will come when other children disparage her choices. Actually it will come – it's certainty for both boys and girls. My feeling is that the very best preparation for your child's next stage of development is to fully embrace her needs and interests right now. She may grow up to be a downhill racer or a fashion designer. Our adult children often turn out very differently than we, or they, imagined. Should your daughter begin to be concerned that the other girls have different interests, you can offer generic support like, "Yup, everybody gets to choose what they like to do." Her teacher will be a big help if you want to talk more about it. Me, too. If you want to drop by for a chat, I bet I have an opinion or two.

Just for fun, I've enclosed a couple of photos. Lego has been involved in some controversy for gendering some of their materials and advertisements, but I'm fond of this 1981 advertisement which was pretty progressive at the time.

Big Jeff



Ironically, this article appeared shortly after my selection of the 1981 Lego advertisement as a photo to supplement my Dear Big Jeff contributions on gendered play.

Exchange EveryDay

Legos for Girls

March 26, 2015

"Boys as well as girls should be able to play with the same Legos[®]," claims Lego[®]. However, [The Optimist](#) (Winter 2015) reported that most Lego[®] characters are still men, and when Lego[®] shows a profession, it's most often with a male figure. Women, on the other hand, are represented by princesses and mermaids.

A Dutch scientist, Ellen Kooijman, decided to do something about this. "I missed the female Lego[®] figures at work. It would make the Lego[®] community much more diverse," she contended. Kooijman responded to a call to design your own Lego[®] figures and submitted a paleontologist, an astronomer, and a chemist. Her figures were so popular that Lego[®] decided to make this set a reality. Coming to a store near you this summer.

Kooijman was satisfied with how Lego[®] executed her designs, but did have one criticism: "I highly discourage wearing makeup in the laboratory. It can contaminate the materials you work with."

DCCCC Will Be Closed On The Following Days:

- Monday, May 25, Memorial Day**
- Friday, July 3, Independence Day**
- Monday and Tuesday,
August 31 and September 1
To prepare for the new school year**

**The first day of school for the Ray School
and our first day of new groups will be
Wednesday, September 2.**

The Best Birthday Party Ever

What is the best birthday party ever? Research at DCCCC amongst DCCCC families indicates that "best" is certainly in the eye of the beholder. Responses to our survey ranged from "we try to keep it very simple" and "no presents" to moderately involved affairs. The good news, then, is that you get to pick what works for your family. For advice on lavish affairs, I suggest an internet search or browsing through Family Fun magazine, an inexpensive monthly with all kinds of ideas for families including those nightmare birthday parties put on by someone who has WAY too much time on their hands. Some families spoke of the multiple party birthdays with parties at mom's, dad's, school, kid party, grandparents', etc. Reactions range from dread to good humored acceptance. One family got away without having a kid party until their child was six, but commented that this works only for the first child!

Here's a look at what some DCCCC families have tried.

Places to Go

*The Montshire!

*The Black Community Center, Hanover: a gym and an inflatable jumping house.

*The Great Outdoors: we have camping birthdays! Sometimes we go to the College Grants.

*Billings Farm: The kids were allowed to pet a lamb and walk around the farm. We had a reserved room and brought the cake.

*Storrs Pond: we have had great success renting a pavilion at Storrs Pond for swimming and snacks.

*Swimming: to celebrate both kids' birthdays at the same time, we rented the pool at a local motel. Call around for prices.

*Northern Lights Gymnastics: The gym is available with an activity leader and a room for cake.

*Build-A-Bear

Invite just 2 or 3 friends and drive down to the Build-A-Bear workshop at the Mall of NH in Manchester. "Building" a toy means choosing a skin, getting it stuffed, putting a little pretend heart inside before they sew it up, giving it a pretend bath, picking out some accessories, giving it a name and printing out a "birth certificate." And it comes with a little cardboard house that the kids can decorate when they get home. Reserve a party slot ahead of time, and they do the rest. Then head on down to the food court for cupcakes & juice, and take a ride on the indoor carousel on your way out. Not so good for kids under 4. It's pricey, but your house stays clean, the activity is always successful and the cost is comparable to what you might spend on party favors and decorations. <http://www.buildabear.com/party> 603-624-0579

*Tiptop Pottery

We had a 3rd birthday party at Tip Top Pottery in WRJ. The kids each painted a piece of pottery which we picked up about a week later. We had the room for 2 hours, and had pizza and cupcakes during the

second hour. Parents were also invited, which was essential since 3 year olds needed some help with the pottery. 3 is definitely the youngest age I would try this with-- probably even better with older kids. It would be kind of pricey if we hadn't

*Apple picking

We have a September birthday, perfect for apple picking. We've been to different orchards. Riverview in Plainfield has horse-drawn wagon rides on weekends. Everybody takes home a bag of apples.

Activities

*Musical Treasure Hunt with Hot Chocolate

We've done successful treasure hunts, outside, with simple clues from one spot on our property to another. Goodies were hidden along the way and hot cocoa was set up at a mid-point. At the furthest point from the house there was a tub with musical instruments, so the walk to the final treasure spot is also a musical parade. The treasure has been buried in either dirt or a big pile of leaves, and has been a storage tub with simple goodie bags with cookie cutters and glitter etc.

*Pirate Treasure Hunt.

We bought a fake treasure chest and filled it with loot (candy, small toys and pretend coins), and hid it outside. We made a treasure map and a chain of hidden clues that led, one by one, to the treasure. We even wrinkled and burned the edges of the clues and the map to make them look old. Very effective -- and the best part is that the kids spent about 30 minutes running from place to place outdoors!

*Treasure Hunt with Goodie Boxes

We had a successful treasure hunt that ended with a chest buried in mulch that contained tons of "gems" (marbles, polished stones and glass beads from craft stores), small stuffed animals, plastic leis, lots of little junk that then kids took home in "goodie boxes" we had painted. We used wooden boxes available at craft stores, but you could paint bags or decorate cardboard boxes or whatever

*Ballet party

We hired her ballet teacher to do an hour of creative movement with the kids with dress up clothes etc..

*Teddy Bear Picnic

We invited children to bring stuffed animals from home for a Teddy Bear picnic.

*Peanut Hunt

A classic. Use wrapped candy or trinkets if you are invited a child with a peanut or tree nut allergy. Put the collected peanuts all in a big basket then divvy them up. It's a counting activity -- the kids get into it and it takes care of "She got more than I did."

*Scavenger Hunt

Another classic party activity which can be varied in difficulty depending on the age of the children. This can be accomplished in teams or as a whole group. The object is to find as many things on your list as you can. For young preschoolers, it may be as simple as finding colors. For older children, a simple list may include objects found in the house or outdoors e.g. a stuffed animal or a spoon, a flower or a round stone.

Games or not?

*Some organized activities seem to be in order, especially those that require a lot of running around outside and blowing off steam. On the other hand, the younger the children, the more they just want to play and to explore someone else's toys. You may want to plan for that in advance by helping your child identify things that are precious or breakable, so the remaining toys are "for everyone to play with for the party". Avoid the s-word – nobody just loves to share!

*Play games that keep all of the children engaged, rather than ones where someone has to sit out like musical chairs or adapt them so there is no elimination i.e. have one chair fewer than the number of children and play over and over.

*Have several alternate games planned in case one of the games doesn't work out.

*For help with crowd control and directing activities, spend some time in your child's classroom and observe the strategies the teachers use to get the children's attention, manage conflicts, settle them down, etc., and use these same magic strategies!

Food

*We've frosted cookies with the kids

*Cookout with hotdogs. For older kids, we've made s'mores.

*We always have ice cream cake. No preparation. No messy cake and ice cream plates. Just messy ice cream cake plates.

*Practically everyone will eat macaroni and cheese. We use Annie's.

*Once we made ice cream. The kids had fun making it, but didn't find it any more special than store-bought.

Gift-giving

*Book Exchange: I really enjoyed this little essay on slate.com about controlling the mania of b-day parties. www.slate.com/id/2135287/

*Donations to the Humane Society: kids can bring donations of pet food, etc. for Humane Society.

*Donations to the Haven. We called ahead to see what they needed (food, books, clothes), then delivered them together afterwards.

*Consider saving the gift-opening for after guests have left.

NEWS FROM STORRS POND

Hi Folks,

As spring approaches we are looking forward to another wonderful summer at the Storrs Pond Recreation Area.

Our crew will soon be hard at work making sure the area is beautiful as we wait for spring and summer to arrive.

The goal is to open early this year so everyone can enjoy swimming, camping, tennis and the brand new Disc Golf course. While we anxiously await mother nature to run her course please look at our website www.storrspond.org.

Swimming lesson registration has begun so do not wait as many of these classes will fill up before school is over. The SPRA is the "Hidden Gem" of the Upper Valley and only one mile from main street in Hanover. Please come and visit our wonderful facility and see all we have to offer, please call 603 643 -1222 if you have any questions ...

Jeff Graham

General Manager