



CHILDREN'S HOUSE FEBRUARY 2012 NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY THEMES



Black History Month

Mardi Gras (K)

Ground Hog Day

Healthy Habits

Valentine's Day

Dental Health

The Heart

President's Day (K)

Lincoln

Washington



...and any other topics the children express an interest in!

Please feel free to share any information or materials you may have relating to the above themes.

Staff are always looking for posters, hands-on materials, or additional tidbits of information that would make a lesson at circle time more interesting or lively!

UPCOMING EVENTS



2/14 Valentine Party

(See details later in newsletter)

2/20 Center Closed for President's Day ~
Have a nice long weekend!

Late February - FIA Meeting at MM - Date and Location will be announced soon!

VALENTINE PARTY



Our party will be held on Tuesday, February 14th. Children are welcome to exchange Valentine cards.

We ask that cards be sent to the center signed, but *not addressed to a specific child*. This makes it so much easier for the teachers, takes less time to distribute and prevents hurt feelings because every child in the class will receive a card from those who choose to participate.

We prefer cards not be sent to children *not* in your child's classroom for the same reason.

If you choose to participate, please bundle the un-addressed cards together (rubber band or all in one big envelope) and drop them off in your child's classroom Valentine box.

Refreshments are welcomed! **Please remember our "Nut Free" policy and include a complete recipe list with all home baked items.** Food items purchased from store also need ingredient lists in order for staff to be able to serve. We are not able to serve items labeled, "processed in a factory that also processes nuts" or anything similar.)



Remember, the children like fresh fruits and veggies as well as some of the more "sweet" items.

INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS...



We have been *so* lucky this winter so far!! In the event our luck runs out, and the ice and snow show up, we will do our best to keep the parking lot and sidewalk clear of snow and sanded or salted when icy. Please let us know if you feel the lot or sidewalk need attention. **It is also a good idea to avoid the ramp on icy days.** The area at the end of the ramp can become thick with ice because of the drainage from the

overhang. We are careful to salt this area, but it doesn't always go through the layers. At times, you may see this area "closed" because the amount of salt to cut into the ice is too excessive for only short term results.

On icy days, expectant mothers are welcome to park along the front of the building (in front of the P4 window in handicapped parking spot – *not along the sidewalk, please*) to shorten the walk in and out of the building (or, at pick up time, call ahead and drive up along the sidewalk – we'll bring your child out to you!) **All other parents should avoid parking in front of P4 and the sidewalk.**

The spot in front of P4 is specially designated for handicapped parking. Please only park in this spot if you are an **expectant mom coming in on an icy day** and you plan to be in and out quickly OR if you have a **current handicap placard displayed**.



MORE WINTER OR EARLY SPRING?

Punxsutawney Phil is the official ground hog for Ground Hog's day! The question is... will he see his shadow on February 2nd? *(He did! But six more weeks of this type of winter shouldn't be so bad! ☺)*

WELCOME TO OUR SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS

We have the pleasure this semester of hosting students from Springfield College.

Each Wednesday for this entire semester, students will be helping out in all the classrooms from 8:30-12:00 as part of their Occupational Therapy field work experience.

They have been assigned specific

classrooms, but may observe other rooms periodically throughout the first half of the semester. *Please note: Students have all had Background Records Checks and will never be left alone with any child.*

This is a great opportunity for all of us. We get the extra set of hands to help out in the morning and the students gain valuable experience working with varying ages of children.

DONATIONS APPRECIATED!



Over the past couple months, several parents donated items to the center. We've received some wonderful teacher resources, so many nice toys, and some winter clothing items to share with children who might not have their winter gear at the center. We appreciate *everyone's* generosity!

One thing we can always use in the future is old towels and wash cloths. You might imagine with the cleaning tasks we do around here that our towels and "rags" we use to clean up art projects and messy lunches are always in the wash! We can also always use scrap paper with at least one side clear. If you have anything you'd like to donate, feel free to leave it on the staff lounge table. *Thanks!!*

MMCJ OPENINGS

We currently have a couple of full time Preschool slots open and two full time Toddler slots.

We are also now enrolling for late spring and summer. There will be several preschool slots available and limited slots open in our Infant/Toddler classes.

Anyone interested can access information about Children's House via our website: www.childrenshouseinc.org or can contact Pam at: pflowers@childrenshouseinc.org or at 782-4448.

Remember there is a referral bonus for currently enrolled parents!



DID YOU KNOW??

Did you know? There is a **Community Information Board** just outside the Infant room and T1 room doors? We keep info we receive about upcoming events in the community posted for parents to view. Check it out when you have a minute!

Did you know? There are many free parent workshops available on great topics. See *The Puzzle of Parenting* flyer on the main credenza.

Did you know? Extra menus and newsletters are available on the square table in the main hallway at the beginning of each month. Just in case you were unable to print what we send out, feel free to pick up a copy there. However, we are trying to cut costs (and be “green-minded”) - so if you CAN print from your own computer, please do that so we can limit ink and copy paper use here at the center. Every little bit helps!



Did you know? Staff and children really enjoy it when parents come into the classrooms to read a story, share a talent or family tradition or participate in a craft activity. If you ever have a little extra time in your schedule, you are *always* welcome to spend it with us!

Did you know? Tuition covers a 9 hour time slot here at Children’s House. We are having some trouble covering the hours that children are here because of varied/inconsistent and long schedules during the week. It’s hard to ask staff to stay late all the time. We also don’t want parents to have to drop off in the morning to rooms that appear overly full and busy. So we’re challenged with creating staff schedules to try to meet the overall needs of the group.

Sometimes we’re short on staff because of the unpredictability and length of the children’s schedules and we apologize for that. We really need parents support and understanding on this matter. Children become cranky after so many hours in care (and staff can too if they have to be asked to

stay late a lot).

For everyone’s well-being, please try to have your child attend on a somewhat consistent, but no more than 9-hour schedule. *Thank you so much.*

ROOM REPRESENTATIVES

The following parents have been helping staff out this year by keeping others in the group updated on classroom happenings and teacher requests:

Infant 1 & 2 – Nicole VanHorn
nvanhorn@massmutual.com

Toddler 1 – Kristen Shejen
kshejen@massmutual.com

Toddler 2 – Kelli Pellegrino
kpellegrino@massmutual.com

Toddler 3 – Need a Volunteer!

Preschool 2 – Beth Bowler
ebowler@massmutual.com

Preschool 3 – Marc Milheiro
mmilheiro@massmutual.com

Preschool 4 – Lynne O’Connor
lynneoconnor@massmutual.com

Pre-K/K – Katie Shea
katherineshea@massmutual.com

As you can see, T3 (newly formed in late November 2011) is looking for a Room Rep. Any volunteers? Please see Maria if you’ll be able to help out.

OUR NATIONAL ACCREDITATION IS UP FOR RENEWAL!

We are proud to report that Children’s House (at 720 Wilbraham Rd.) has been accredited by the *National Association for the Education of Young Children* since 1991. Each year, we send in an Annual Report to keep them updated on staffing and to report on several other areas. Every five years, we are visited by NAEYC assessors

who will spend an entire day observing, checking files, looking over classroom and center portfolios and assessing our program overall.

Parents can support our efforts to be judged "in compliance" by being sure to update children's medical information as it expires (please make appointments early!). Your child's teacher may ask you to re-sign/re-date forms in your child's file and may remind you to sign in/out upon drop-off or pick up.

These few things may seem small, but they matter. The assessors will mark us as MET or NOT MET - there's no gray area and no excuses are accepted.

If you are not sure when your child's medical info will expire, please feel free to ask his/her teacher.



EMERGENCY MEDICATIONS
NOW NEED A PHOTO
ATTACHED

All children who currently have any type of emergency medication at the center now need to have a small photo attached to the medication box. Please leave a small photo with your child's teacher and she will be sure to get it attached to the box. This is an *extra measure* to ensure that the *right child* receives the *right medication* in the event of an emergency.

EZ-EFI FORMS CAN BE
DROPPED OFF IN THE TUITION
DRAWER

So many of our families are taking advantage of this new program! Feel free to contact Pam Frogameni at pfrogameni@childrenshouseinc.org if you have any questions or need a form.

