



CHILDREN'S HOUSE

FEBRUARY 2015 NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY THEMES

Chinese New Year

Black History Month

Mardi Gras (K)

Ground Hog Day

Healthy Habits

Valentine's Day

Dental Health

The Heart

Presidents' 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

2/2-2/5 Best Oral Health Dental Hygienists will be on site to provide services to children enrolled in the BOH program.

2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2/25 Springfield College Occupational Therapy Students on site for Internships!

Children's House will host 5 students this semester. (See more details later in newsletter.)

2/13 Valentine Party

(See more details later in newsletter)



2/16 Center Closed Presidents' Day
Have a nice long weekend!

2/19 Firefighter Joe Visits! His lesson will be: "Know the EXITS"

2/19 Chinese New Year



2/24 FIA Meeting at MassMutual
State Street Conference Room 3617
Conference Call Number 866-717-4564
PC 3890536316

All families are welcome to attend! Please contact Pam by the day prior to make arrangements to meet at the security desk if you are not an MM employee.

Agenda item suggestions can be sent to Pam at:
pflowers@childrenshouseinc.org

2/26 Cindy from Small Smiles Visits!
Cindy will do a presentation on how to keep teeth healthy!

VALENTINE PARTY

Our party will be held on Friday, February 13th. 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...

MOST of us are a little tired of the snow by now. But there's probably more to come!

We 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. For a couple weeks now, this area has been “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?



The ANSWER is YES! We can't figure out *how*, because Monday was quite messy for us here in MA, but it was reported that the Ground Hog saw his shadow. Six more weeks of winter fun to come!

WELCOME TO OUR SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS

Once again this year, we have the pleasure of hosting students from Springfield College.

Students will be in most classrooms on the following Wednesdays: 1/28, 2/4, 2/11, 2/18, 2/25. They will be on site from approximately 8:00 am until noon as part of their Occupational Therapy field work experience.

Each student has been assigned to a specific classroom, but may observe other rooms periodically throughout the first half of the semester. *Please note: Students will never be left alone with any child and will ALWAYS be under the direct supervision of our staff.*

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 arts and crafts materials, so many nice toys, a case of brand new crayons, some ice packs for injuries and some winter clothing items to share with children who might not have their winter gear at the center. We appreciate *everyone's* generosity!

Some additional items we can always use in the future are 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 any of these types of items to donate, feel free to leave them on the staff lounge table. *Thanks!!*



P4 is EXPANDING!

Over the next few months, our P4 classroom will be expanding from the group of ten that it is currently to a group of 15-20.

The initial group size increase will happen late February. We are currently in process of interviewing for a new full time teacher to work alongside Marta.

We anticipate several transitions for currently enrolled children – especially infants and toddlers aging into the new, older programs. Due to transitioning, we will have a part time M W F Infant slot and a full time Infant slot available soon and 2-3 Preschool openings.

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*** (a \$50 WalMart gift card) *or* a \$50 **tuition credit** for currently enrolled parents!

(*See Pam for details about referral bonus program)

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 posted on the Community Info board.

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 prefer a printed copy and are able to print from your own computer, we would appreciate it. It helps to 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 can't have our staff work longer than 9 hours daily (they'd be so cranky) so it would be a huge challenge to try to maintain our staff to child ratios if children were consistently here longer days than all our staff. Of course, we do try to be accommodating when an emergency is the reason for the extended day.

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 – Kelly Maguire
kmaguire@massmutual.com

Toddler 1 – Melanie Gagne
melaniegagne@massmutual.com

Toddler 2 – Leah Ramirez
qramirez@massmutual.com

Toddler 3 – Kristin Wheelock
kwheelock@massmutual.com

Preschool 2 & 3 – Kelly Maguire
kmaguire@massmutual.com

Preschool 4 – Emily Hannigan
ehannigan@massmutual.com

Pre-K/K – Carisa Cosimini
dqcarisa@gmail.com



EMERGENCY MEDICATIONS and TREATMENT PLANS NEED A PHOTO ATTACHED

All children who currently have any type of emergency medication OR emergency medical treatment plans at the center need to have a small photo attached to the medication box *and* the treatment plan. If this is not yet in place, please leave a small photo with your child's teacher and she will be sure to get it attached to the box and/or plan. This is an *extra measure* to ensure that the *right child* receives the *right medication* in the event of an emergency.

EZ -EFI FORMS AVAILABLE

So many of our families are now taking advantage of this program that makes paying tuition so much more convenient. Feel free to contact Pam Frogameni at pfrogameni@childrenshouseinc.org if you would like to set up automatic Electronic Funds Transfer tuition payments. She will be able to answer any questions you might have and can send you the correct forms to complete. Completed forms can be placed in the tuition drawer.

DOOR SECURITY/INTERCOM AT THE DOOR

Parents have been great about announcing themselves at the door and being very careful about not letting those they don't recognize in. We appreciate everyone's efforts!

A special request from Irene (who most often answers the door)...Please ask children to speak in a *regular voice*, not yell, into the speaker. It is quite sensitive and ends up being very loud in her ear when she answers.
Thank you!

