

**SMOKE SIGNALS**

**February – March 2015**

**OUR PARENTS (MAKE THE DIFFERENCE) NEWSLETTER**

Dear Parents,

I feel so fortunate to work with children. They are born with an inherent self that is intellectual, an inherent self that can dance, sing and has a sense of delight and joy in all things. Children are so present. It is this present moment that is important to a child. Adults think about tomorrow, next week and vacations next summer. Children can find joy in each moment in the little things that adults throw away or overlook.

Each morning when I arrive at the Center I hang up my coat and make my rounds in the classrooms. Many times I just stand in the room watching and smiling as I witness the children as they are involved in the many choices of activities available to them. Often they are so engaged that they are not even aware that I am there! As I watch I am filled with pride and wonder at the amazing way that they approach their work. A sense of joy is in the children as they move around the room exploring the various learning centers. Some children are building intricate structures with blocks, some are in the book area, while others are busily working on an art project. Their sense of joy can be quiet, loud, gentle or thoughtful. Their sense of joy can be heard, even smelled and tasted when children are making food for their afternoon snack. It can be wet and messy when children walk through puddles of rain or build castles in the sandbox. It can be blue, red, yellow, purple, brown, or black and orange when children are in the art center. I witness this joy in every age group and realize I have the best job in the world! A sense of joy can even be found in the aching tiredness at the end of the day for both the children and their teachers who have spent their busy day together.

The word “joy” will probably not show up in a curriculum guide. And I don’t hear politicians using that word when they talk about schools and money and accountability. But those of us working hard to ensure a meaningful childhood for so many children know that if we did not hear laughter, giggling, hoopla, shouting and cheering in our classrooms we couldn’t go on. It is the joy of each child that keeps us doing what we do.

Fondly,

**Judy Chosy, Director**

**OUR TEACHERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE…**

**AMY NEUBERGER,** Teacher in the Sunshine Room

Did you know that Amy helped open SRCC THIRTY-TWO YEARS ago? Since then she continues to attend workshops, staff meetings and seminars as well as presenting workshops to other professionals. By continuing her own education she has kept herself excited and current in the latest research in the field.

When asked what she enjoys about working at the Center, Amy says, “I enjoy the continuing challenge of providing a quality program and helping each child to reach their potential. Working with amazing, dedicated professionals, who happen to be my best friends and the sense of family at the Center and our caring families is a great model of teamwork and support. For all those reasons this the perfect place for me. After all these years, I still arrive each day with a smile.”

**Some facts About Amy:**

* Mother of two “grown up” children. Stefanie, 28, is finishing a Masters degree in Berkley CA to begin her career as a Behavior Analyst. And

Caleb, 22, is living in Columbus, is a drummer in a local band and is a server at Flipside, at Easton restaurant.

* In 2002, Amy won the National Scholastic Early Childhood Professional Honorable Mention Award.

**BECKY HEMM,** Teacher in the Toddler Room

Lucky for us, this is Becky’s **THIRTHTEENTH YEAR** teaching at SRCC. She joined us after graduating from OSU with a degree in Early Childhood Development and with high recommendations by her professors. She has lived up to all they said she would be. We appreciate her pleasant, friendly, flexible personality and all that she does to help make the Toddler Room such a special place.

“I love working at SRCC! Witnessing the growth and accomplishments of our children plus the special bonds that I’ve made with the children and their parents is priceless,” says Becky when asked what she would like the parents to know about her.

**Some facts about Becky:**

* She and Justin just celebrated their third wedding anniversary.
* Enjoys reading, doing puzzles, playing volley ball and working out

**KINDERGARTEN – READY OR NOT?**

Smoky Row parents were well represented at the January Kindergarten Readiness Program at two Worthington Libraries. In fact, it was such a success that our Center will again collaborate with the library next year to make arrangements for a panel of kindergarten teachers from area schools to come and share their expertise on what makes a successful kindergartner.

This year’s panel agreed that social and emotional maturity were important skills for success in kindergarten. These qualities take time and practice to learn. Give your child opportunities at home to begin to develop the following positive qualities:

\* Confidence: Children must feel good about them selves and believe

they can succeed. Confident children are more willing to attempt new

tasks – and try again if they don’t succeed the first time.

\* Independence: Children must learn to do things for themselves.

\* Motivation: Children must want to learn.

\* Curiosity: Children are naturally curious and must remain so to get

the most out of learning opportunities.

\* Persistence: Children must learn to finish what they start.

\* Cooperation: Children must be able to get along with others and learn

to share and take turns.

\* Self-control: Children must learn that there are good and bad ways to

express anger. They must understand that some behaviors, such as

hitting and biting, are hurtful and not acceptable.

\* Empathy: Children must have an interest in others and understand how

others feel.

Here are some things that you can do to help your child develop these qualities:

\* Show your child that you care about him and that you are dependable.

\* Set a good example. Children imitate what they see others do and what they

hear others say.

\* Provide opportunities for repetition. It takes practice to learn new skills.

\* Use appropriate discipline. All children need limits set for them. Children whose

parents give firm but loving discipline generally develop better social skills and do

better in school.

\* Let your child do many things by herself. Children develop confidence by doing

tasks such as dressing themselves and putting their toys away.

\* Encourage your child to play with other children and to be with adults

who are not family members.

\* Show a positive attitude toward learning and toward school. As your child gets

ready to enter kindergarten show excitement about this big step. Be enthusiastic

as you describe all the important things that he will learn from his teacher—how

to read, how to count and how to print letters and numbers.

**A GLANCE AHEAD TO SUMMER 2015**

As I write this, it is snowing but the calendar indicates that it’s time to work out the details for our 2015 summer session.

Summertime provides an excellent time for children to learn by doing. Therefore, activities are planned that engage all the children’s participation. Those activities are structured so they are interesting, challenging, rewarding and fun. Children are encouraged to explore ways to work both as individuals and together as a team building friendships.

* A School Age Summer Camp for children ages 6-10 will be offered. Just like last year, each week will have a different theme. In addition, there will be sports clinics, special visitors, field trips and regular visits to the pool. Children may attend two to five days a week for one to eleven weeks.

* Smoky Row will again offer a Preschool Fun Camp to potty-trained children who are 3-5 years old. Each camp will run Monday through Friday, from 9:00 until 12:00 A.M. and will be held in the East Building. Parents can pick whichever weeks they would like their children to attend.
* Summer is always fun for the children attending full day preschool in the West Building. Teachers take their classrooms outside. Then they design curriculum that will keep kids moving and learning new things in a nurturing and fun environment.

Details of the summer 2015 will be available in February. Priority will be given to our current and former families before opening the registration to the community.

**PARENTS, WE NEED YOUR HELP!**

We strive vigorously to give the children our best. In order to continue to do so we must periodically assess where our strengths and weaknesses lie. That’s where we need you. In March you will receive a *Parent Feedback Form***. Please take a few minutes to answer and return it to the box marked “Parent Feedback”.** This information will help us as we conduct our annual Center review at the April staff meeting. The classroom with the highest percentage of parent feedback returns will be given a special treat.

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We are pleased to welcome two Columbus State students, KASSI SHAFFER, in the Teddy Bear Room and SKYE CANTRELL, Toddler Room. They will be doing their field placement at the Center during Winter Quarter. Please take a moment to read about these students whose information is posted on the wall outside their respective classrooms.