

The Prouty Voice

Volume 5, June 2007



News from the Front Office:

Words are simply inadequate in expressing our gratitude and appreciation for all the help we received from parents and volunteers during our Taste of the Town event last month! It's a little early to say but the gross income for the evening was \$11,088.01. There are still some outstanding bills to pay but we'll let you know the final net when it's available.

You are to be commended for bringing your energy and creativity to the occasion. Everyone outdid themselves and the Center presented a wonderful, successful evening for all our attendees. It was loads of fun and made the work feel relatively easy. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

While the thanks are being sent out, we would be really remiss if we didn't hugely thank Jared Flynn for his amazing contributions to our landscaping and playground! Not only do we have our new fabulous forest of trees that will shade children for years to come, we also are blessed with Jared's artistic creations in the form of a grand stone bench, gigantic boulders that dress the building and our incredible new sandbox structure. We are all in your debt and as the years pass and these additions beautifully age, we'll all remember when Jared donated his time and efforts with unrelenting commitment.

Congratulations to the Lyford family! They won the Norwegian Cruise from Boston to Bermuda. Their son Jack was the recipient of the fabulous little tractor from the silent auction two years ago and featured on pg 6.



That's some sand box!

Announcements and Upcoming Events

Our Open House is still scheduled on Thursday, June 21st at 5:30 p.m. We want to keep it very informal and casual for our own staff and families and for the general public as well. We'll be setting up for hot dogs & tofu dogs with all the trimmings and lots of healthy salads to accompany. We hope to bring groups through the building for a tour and then out through the back doors to our playground and field for a picnic. Volunteers are always SO welcome. Let us know if you have the time and energy to lend a hand.

Executive Director News: The search has led to two final candidates and the interview process continues. It is everyone's hope that we will have a new Executive Director within a matter of weeks. As soon as a decision has

been made, there will be a formal announcement and you will be notified.

Ready for summer?

Bathing suit season is upon us so bring in one your child can have here (or swim diapers). Having names in them really helps when we're trying to dress a crowd! We also hope to be walking in the woods, and any place cool we can find, so flip flops, which are cool to wear but not the best for walking on uneven ground, could be supplemented with sturdier footwear in your child's cubby just for those times they're needed. Also, water bottles are very helpful for your child to have. **Please apply sunscreen before your child arrives at school!**

NAEYC...

We will begin implementing a new policy starting June 1st. As part of our NAEYC accreditation, we need to make some changes. One of the changes has to do with hand washing. Parents and children will need to wash their hands upon entering the classroom. Teachers are asked to do this as well. Thank you.

Funky Heifer: The classrooms have been creating "Winnie the Cow" for the Strolling of the Heifers. She's turning out to be colorful and gorgeous! We will be putting flowers, glitter, vegetables and galoshes on her. Grace proudly showed off our cow as "Daddy's". Thank you Gary for getting the plywood and cutting it all out with a jigsaw for us! Come see our cow on Saturday, June 2nd on the Common.



The Prouty Garden begins with a wheelbarrow!

Preschool News

We want to start our note off with a few words of thanks. We held our garden party on Saturday, May 19th and we extend a huge debt of gratitude to those families who attended and helped us redesign the garden and prepare two beds, a circle area for the pea teepee, and the sunflower trail for planting. We've started a few seeds indoors and all we need now are some warmer nights so we can plant outdoors! We are very excited to be part of the University of Vermont Extension Service's Youth Horticulture Project again this summer. They helped us with our small plot at the old school last summer and we eagerly await their volunteers to help us make permanent these new beds here.

We've begun to integrate the garden theme into our curriculum because as we know it's about more than the seeds and weeds. One day we traced squares and rectangles (math) and "planted" seeds by gluing them in rows inside the garden "plots". Another day we borrowed activities from the Youth Project's curriculum and played garden games like "Frozen Food" (a beanbag game: put the bag on your head and walk around, when it falls off you "freeze" until a friend can help you by putting it back) and our own adaptation of a game of theirs we called "My Garden Grows a Seed" played to the idea of "Farmer in the Dell". We also did Garden Stretches as a variation on our regular yoga activities in our daily circle. Another day we played pirates after reading a story about that and made treasure maps to help us plant our treasure (sunflower seeds along the sunflower trail). More will come as garden season goes by. We are already looking forward to harvest and what we'll get to eat!

Of course, there is more than just gardening going on in our classroom. We've been having mix-ups weekly, which will help with children who may be making classroom transitions in the summer or fall. And we had our first outdoor all-school sing last week. Can't wait to have more!

We often combine sensory activities with science/math as when we play with marbles but also sort and categorize them or play with water that is warm in one tub and cold in another with appropriate animals who like warm or cold climates
(Preschool continued on page 3)

Preschool (continued from page 2)

or when we measure and scoop birdseed and compare what sizes can fit through what container lids. Integrating activities with lessons seems like play but that's when learning happens best.

We also combined a fascination with bugs and all things that creep and crawl with some musical talent we have in our room (guess who!) and wrote a song to the tune "Down by the Bay". Here are the lyrics:

*Don't hurt anything
That is alive
Not a little tiny ant
Or butterflies.
Don't slam the bees
Or hurt the trees.
If you ever get an ant,
Crawling on your pants
Don't hurt anything. . .
(it all repeats, up til)
If you ever see a worm, just let it squirm...*

Can you think of more rhyme lines? Maybe at home over dinner talk?

Of course, there're lots of art projects happening all the time too. This past month's highlights were drawing from observation: we got a lot of beautiful still life art of some forsythia in a vase. We also made a glitterama of Mother's Day cards, and finally decorated our very own cow, "Winnie" the Prouty Center Cow, for the Funky Heifer contest. We hope you see her on the Common after the Heifer parade. She will come home and live on the playground for us to play with all summer. The "face hole" will make a great bean bag target!

Many of you came and met with us during parent teacher conference day. If you were unable to attend that date, it's still not too late. We'd love to meet with you and talk about your child. Please let us know you're interested and we'll schedule some time. It can even be by phone or over coffee downtown after hours. Talk to Nan.

We're so glad the warm weather has finally arrived, but it means we'll need to keep up with sunscreen and bug repellent. Check on your child's sunscreen periodically, maybe when you can put it on yourself

at arrival time (a nice morning farewell ritual) and if it's low, please restock.

Preschool continued in next column, this page)

Preschool (continued from 1st column on this page)

Another morning ritual should be hand washing upon arrival. It's a great one to do together, and it's a health and safety requirement.

Nan, Kate & Bob

News from the Younger Toddlers

Landscaping: Who would have thought that having landscaping going on outside our goodbye window could be so much fun? One of the first questions of the day would be "Is Jared (our board member doing this marvelous work) here?" Or "Where is the digger?" It was exciting to stand with friends at the window watching, or go to the field or playground to see what was going on there. On several occasions Jared patiently explained what he was doing and answered questions. We took walks to the field to see that big green John Deere backhoe up close. Now the place looks beautiful. Thanks so much Jared, for providing us with a wonderful new view of trees, boulders, and a bench that is a work of art in itself.

Transitions: It has been great having Louisa helping out as a summer assistant in our class. Tian joined Jasper and William in moving to the Older Toddler class. Briana, Skyla and Jackson will begin their visits there this month. We will miss Indigo who is moving to California soon. We are welcoming Julia soon, and have lined up visits for a number of children joining our class in July.

Parent Open House: Thank you to the families who attended our Open House Potluck on May 24th. After a perfect spring evening on the playground with fun, food, and friends, we did a model circle in both toddler rooms. The children were eager to show off songs and finger plays.

Science Fun: Every day last month the Younger Toddlers used spray bottles to water our classroom plants. Mastering the spray bottle was a big draw, but they all also enjoyed seeing the plants transform from seeds to grass or flowers. We also enjoyed the changing flowers on our walks in the neighborhood, especially the fragrant lilacs. We identified the woodpecker sounds and started to notice bugs, especially ants.

Younger Toddlers (continued on next page)

Younger Toddlers (continued from page 3)

Math Fun: We measured and stirred spice raisin bars and yellow play dough. We continued our daily counting, as a group and with objects. We were happy to receive new geometry puzzles from former EL1 parents, and we did all kinds of block building.

Literacy: Our caterpillar storyboard became relevant as caterpillars arrived on our playground. The children let them climb up their arms the way the imaginary ones did in our finger play. Others told us stories about seeing real butterflies.

Watch what you say! This group is picking up language wherever they hear it. Many in this group instantly learned to say “go to sleep” in Chinese: “shi jiao” pronounced *sway geeow* with the very forceful 4th tone, after hearing Susan say it to Tian. They also picked up “bad boy” somewhere outside of class, so we began talking about how calling names hurts people’s feelings.

An addition to our circle time has been a daily formal reading of a non-board book of interest for curriculum relevancy or picture/content vocabulary building. At this point in the school year our group is as old as we ever have in a Younger Toddler group. We are awed by the children’s new-found ability to talk with us and with each other in circle time mini-discussions now, and we are challenged by trying to meet the needs of different developmental levels within the group.



Younger toddlers head out for their walk!

Younger Toddlers (continued in next column)

Younger Toddlers (continued from 1st column)

Outside Fun: What a gorgeous month it has been! We watched the painting of the Creamery Covered Bridge up close. We got to play in a wonderful new sandbox. The field was our big discovery. From admiring the older children’s gardening projects on one end, to kicking balls on the other end, we enjoyed the brilliant green stretches of space in a way we had never done in the past.. The addition of trees has made it so park-like and pleasant. Once again, thanks to Jared, our landscape genius!

Looking ahead: Our color of the month will be changing from yellow to blue. In true toddler fashion we will revisit color blending, collage and play dough with it all being different with a different color. We anticipate that many of our Strolling of the Heifers fans will be interested in farm life after seeing the bovine beauties on Main Street, so we are planning a farm unit with Grandpa’s Farm Storyboard. Let us know if you have some contributions for projects related to farms, farm animals, etc. We will plan a field trip to the Retreat Farm Petting Zoo, and we’ll visit the weekend Farmer’s Market site.

Susan, Kathy & Marie



All sizes of shovels and people get the work done!
Older Toddler News:

Inch by inch, row by row...

This past month the children have experimented, explored and engaged with seeds and gardening. We began discussing seeds and plants during circle time. The children also became interested in whether we could eat seeds. During one of these conversations, one child asked whether raspberries have seeds. And so began our exploration of foods with seeds! Parents and children brought in different fruit and during snack time, we discussed whether we could eat the seeds or not. The children learned that we could eat seeds in strawberries, raspberries, kiwis, pumpkins and blueberries but not in mangoes, cherries, nectarines, plums and apples. It was wonderful to participate in these conversations, especially when one of the children introduced the word “pit”. We also discussed fruit that we liked to eat. The children also remembered that Katrina is allergic to peaches and that peaches have pits in them! We put the pits and seeds on the science table for the children to look at through colored lenses and magnifiers.

During our seed conversations, the children did some experiments with different growing

environments. We used kidney beans for our experiment. We put several beans in a Ziploc bag (with a wet paper towel), sealed it and taped it on a window. Then we put several beans in a small pot with soil. We then put several beans in water in a medium container. The experiment was to see which one would sprout first. The beans in the Ziploc bag began growing immediately! In fact, two beans began sprouting leaves! The beans in the soil (with lots of watering) began to sprout too! The ones in the medium container absorbed all of the water. We then planted the baby plants and the container beans in some pots. They are currently doing quite well!

Last week, a group of children went out to the garden and planted a row of sunflowers. The children did a nice job of poking a hole with their index fingers, dropping the seeds right into the hole and then firmly patting the soil. We had to gently remind a few that punching the seed into the soil wouldn't help the seeds! This week, five seedlings have made it to the surface! The children really enjoyed being gardeners. Another group got to plant flowers in a pot that we'll keep in the classroom.

Older Toddlers continued from 1st column)

Older Toddlers (continued from 1st column, this page)

Bigger vs. Taller vs. Older

As part of things “growing” and getting taller, the children have become very interested in the idea of getting bigger. One little girl clearly stated during one of our conversations about watering the plants (at snack time) and as she was about to drink some water, that the “water was going to help her grow!” She stated this with pride as she took a sip.

In the past two weeks, the morning questions have centered around planting, gardens and measurement of different body parts. As a way to tie the concept of plants getting taller to the children's own sense of themselves getting taller and bigger, the children were measured during small group time. The children also got to measure the different plants in the classroom: the tomato plant, the carrots and the kidney beans. After measuring bodies, the children became very interested in “growing up.” At snack one afternoon, several of the children were discussing their age. Then they were wondering what the other children's ages were. After a few minutes, one of the boys yelled, “I am 3! And I'm bigger yesterday!” I asked some questions about being “bigger.” It's amazing to hear how children

differentiate! Several of the children thought being 3 meant you were also the tallest. The children found out that there are a lot of 3 year olds and some of them are “shorter” than 2 year olds! This line of conversation has popped up again since that afternoon.

Older Toddlers (continued on next page)



*Our children know how to play together!
Older Toddlers continued from page 5*

Question of the Day...

The green books have come out again! Many of the children are beginning to recognize the first letter of their names. Many of the children can recognize the alphabet and can identify several of the letters. Several of the children are beginning to write A's and O's. A few of the children can recognize their names in different places and context. Because the children are becoming more literate, the green classroom books have become a part of our morning activity time. The question of the day is a nice tie in with our curriculum and a nice way to transition into the school day. The question of the day can be used as a separation activity as well.

Schedule change...

We have changed the small group time from 10:10 a.m. to 9:10 a.m. We did this for a few reasons: now that it's nice outside, we want to get out there earlier; and we have more early arrivals so our room is ready to boogie by 8:45!

The children seem to enjoy having an earlier structured activity time.

It was so nice to see all of you on Friday and be able to connect. Thank you for sharing your children. They are wonderful and it's always nice to discuss their successes. If you have any thoughts or have further insights, please share! You will get a copy of the Ages and Stages assessment and a Parent/Teacher Report by the end of the school year.

Thank you to those who came and helped at the Parent Open House. The food was good and the company was fabulous. It was also nice to share some of what we do during circle time. If you have any questions about our day or the specific routines, let us know.

Ana, Katrina and Sherri

Wish List:

SUMMER GUESTS WANTED!

Past guests have included pigs, violinists, jugglers, guitarists, snakes, police officers, dancers, bakers, game leaders, calves, clowns, drummers, flutists, guide dogs, etc. (not to mention parents with presentations of things their own children enjoy!

CDs, especially of world music, classical, ragtime, jazz, etc.



Jack on his great tractor from 2 yrs. ago

News from The Family, Infant and Toddler Program

Things continue to be busy in FITP! We are currently working with 50 families, and the calls keep coming in...

Over the past month, much of our energy has been on renegotiating collaborative Letters of Agreement with three supervisory unions in our Windham Region, as well as our Interagency Collaborative agreement with Early Education Services. We are also very involved in discussions about how to integrate our services more closely with our local Infant Child Guidance (ICG) and Healthy Baby Kids and Family (HBKF) programs, as part of a statewide Children's Integrated Services plan being developed by the Vermont Department for Children and Families, Child Development Division. This is a fascinating yet challenging discussion around things like eligibility,

funding, confidentiality, etc. We are lucky to have established such strong relationships throughout our community.

To get a better understanding of how children and families benefit from our services, FIT statewide has begun to collect Child and Family Outcome information. Just this past Tuesday, we attended our second training on this; a 3 hour Vermont Interactive Television discussion with representatives from all 12 regions to help ensure that the information we are collecting is both valid and reliable. We want to learn how effective our early intervention services are at helping children have positive social and emotional relationships, learn and use new knowledge and skills, and take actions to meet their needs. We strongly encourage our FITP families to complete the questionnaires they have been sent. Our main goal is like that of all of us who work here at The Winston Prouty Center—to improve the experiences, development and lives of the young children and families we serve.

FITP (continued in next column, this page)

FITP (continued from 1st column on page 6)

Next week some of us will be traveling to Bennington to attend the annual Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) meeting. The ICC is the advisory body of the Family, Infant and Toddler Program which oversees the development and implementation of our statewide system of early intervention services for families and their infants and toddlers with special needs. They will be discussing relevant specifics of the just released state regulations that guide how we provide services in compliance with the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). We will take notes...

While all of this is very interesting, we have saved our most exciting bit of news for last. By far, the most ambitious and interesting project happening in FITP at present is being supervised most skillfully by our very own

master of development, Kathy Hallock. She and Adam are expecting a baby! Join us in extending our warmest congratulations to them. This is truly a Thanksgiving baby!!!

Mary, Martha, Kathy & Joanne

FITP Wish List

Size 4 toddler girl sneakers
Infant mat with overhead play gym

Lindsey Cote

EL 2 – Older Toddlers Ext. 17
Ana Williams
Sherri Keefe
Katrina Irish

EL 3 – Preschool Ext. 22
Nan Mann
Kate Holdsworth
Robert Havens

Alfred Hughes, Jr.
Timothy Guarente
Lynne Call

Staff: 257-7852

Administration:

Patricia Field Ext. 25
Business Director

JoAnn Carew Ext. 10
Office Manager

Family Infant Toddler 258-2414

Joanne Shaw
Martha Healey-Nelson
Mary Coogan
Katherine Hallock

Early Learning Center
EL 1 – Young Toddlers Ext. 20

Susan Heimer
Kathy Wright
Marie Gorst

June Birthday Wishes to:

Tim Guarente's birthday is June 3rd and

Kathy Wright celebrates hers on June 22nd

