

# The Prouty Voice

Volume 6, July 2007

## Message from Our New Executive Director: Chloe Learey:



I am thrilled to have the opportunity to be the new Executive Director of The Winston Prouty Center. I have witnessed many changes at the Center since I started my tenure as a “Prouty parent” in 2002 when my son Cayden started with Susan and Kathy in EL1. Through the changes, however, there is a steadfast sense of purpose and community that persists, making WPC an incredibly special place. I look forward to helping strengthen this community as we enter a second year in the new building. The future holds exciting possibilities for the continued development and growth of WPC as a model center for inclusive early learning. This is a very important aspect of the job to me, to carry on the tradition of a place where, indeed “every child is special.”

I will begin full-time on Monday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, and look forward to connecting further with staff, parents, board members, and others. I am excited to hear thoughts and ideas about what is going well from people’s perspectives as well as what can be improved. There are challenges in every organization. I feel ready and able to help us face these challenges together, especially knowing what a strong foundation supports Prouty. Please do not hesitate to stop me and say hello, whether I am dropping my daughter Grace off in the preschool, playing in the beautiful new sandbox, or looking busy on the computer. Being accessible is one of my priorities as I listen and learn.

With warm regards,

Chloe

## Announcements & Upcoming Events

Our Open House is now firmly set for September 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM. We will provide more details as the date nears but we are planning a casual lawn picnic with simple foods that don’t require a lot of fuss. We will conduct tours of the facility that exit out the back doors to our playground and picnic area.

The Center will be CLOSED from July 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> for summer break.

Winston Prouty Center welcomes Ariani (Ani) Szykier as our new Documentation Coordinator. Some families may know Ani from her work at Windham Child Care Association where she served as Subsidy Specialist since 2004 providing administrative case management to hundreds of families. Look for her own comments later in this newsletter.



*Parent Open House being enjoyed by all!*

## **Report from the Younger Toddlers**

Reflecting back on June it is interesting how the farm theme grew daily as the projects with our seeds and the landscaping converged with our interests in animals and in what was growing around us.

Of course we started the month with the Strolling of the Heifers theme being an exciting provocation for our studies. Seeing farm-themed displays all over Brattleboro was great fun. Most children had been to the Heifer parade or the related Gallery Walk and were happy to share their experiences.

Our field trip to the Retreat Farm was a wonderful way to be out in our community with the children getting first hand experience with the animals we talk about so much with younger toddlers. Having a great group of parents along made one-on-one times with animals possible. It is hard to say which was more fun: being in the room with all the crowing roosters and chickens, holding soft baby chicks, petty rabbits, feeding the frisky baby goats, admiring the ponies and oxen, or finding out what pigs really say. But it was clear that the corn silo and the sawdust pile with all the tractors, tools, and farm toys was a huge hit. A bonus on the day we visited was construction equipment working on the new Grafton Cheese site—with our group that was even more exciting than the horses in the same vicinity!

Another field trip was to the “Little Pea Farm.” Our board member, David Petrie, lives within walking distance and raises chickens and rabbits. Family members showed us around and the children got to collect eggs that were still warm from under the hens. Then we boiled the eggs and had them for our snack.

Where the farm products end up is an important part of our study too, so we did a walking trip to the Farmers Market site. Most children knew that place from Saturday marketplace visits. The children loved pretending to be vendors at the empty stalls, as well as playing in the big sandbox.

You will notice that the children planted our Marigolds outside under the trees visible from our window. (Sprocket the toad lives in the same general area.) In the classroom we made pizzas, planted more seeds and a tomato plant, did

**Younger Toddlers (continued in next column)**

## **Young Toddlers (continued from 1<sup>st</sup> column)**

exploration of the color blue with shaving cream, play dough, paint and paper, and enjoyed our Grandpa’s Farm storyboard, changed to “Retreat Farm Storyboard” by the end of the month.

This has been a time of changes for our enrollment. We said farewell to Indigo but were delighted to welcome Julia. Maddie, Ridley, and Soitmatwa visited and are starting soon. Jackson, Skyla and Briana visited the Older Toddler Classroom and will be there for the summer program.

We loved having Louisa assisting during June on a regular basis. In July she’ll be with other classrooms more. She will be back to assist during Kathy’s vacation, the week of July 23<sup>rd</sup>, along with Sandy, a familiar teacher in the preschool.

Thanks to all the parents who participated in various ways, bringing in plants and items of interest, assisting in the field trip, and taking photos of us.

Looking ahead: we expect some major changes on the playground over the summer break, including a formal outdoor younger toddler play area. Water play will begin in a big way, both with our playground sprinklers and with our trips to the Memorial Park wading pool. Be sure to send swim diaper, sun hats and towels! We will have playground curriculum activities set up for the whole school and our children will participate in some of those as well as enjoying our own classroom projects.

*Susan, Marie, Kathy*



***What a day at the Retreat Farm!***

## **Older Toddler News**

We enjoyed the beautiful weather this month!

Gardening, gardening, gardening. . .

The children have been actively participating in our daily watering of our gardens. Last month, the children had planted our Kidney bean plants into a planter. During this month, the children watched the plants grow and change. They all noticed that the plants were flowering. This was a nice launching point for us to discuss why there needed to be flowers in the first place! They also noticed aphids and ants. One child stated, "Where are the ladybugs?" As the beans continued to grow, we began discussing transplanting the beans into a smaller garden. And so our mini-garden became a reality. The children also transplanted the huge tomato plant that had been growing in our classroom.

We have also added to the school garden. The past couple of weeks, the children have been planting more vegetables and flowers. We added more sunflowers to our Sunflower Lane. Hopefully, they will come up. The children have also been collaborating with the preschool children in our daily watering efforts. It's amazing how much the children have really embraced these gardens as their own!

Caterpillars. . .

This past month, with all of the trees surrounding our playground, we've noticed a lot of caterpillars. The children would bring them in and want them as part of our science table and/or want to take them home! So we had some morning questions about caterpillars and how they are different from us. It was very interesting to hear some of their observations. We also did a "Tim Sized" caterpillar. The children had Tim lay on the floor while they measured the paper size to his frame. After cutting the caterpillar size, the children used markers and crayons. They also added little feet to the caterpillar because all of them noticed that the caterpillars have tiny feet! We also discussed being gentle with caterpillars and how their bodies can be hurt easily.

***Older Toddler continued in next column***

## ***Older Toddler (continued from 1<sup>st</sup> column)***

Acting out. . .

We got several new library books this past month, "Muncha!, Muncha!, Muncha!", Thelonus Monster's Sky-High Fly Pie" and "June 29, 1999." The children absolutely loved Muncha! Therefore, we felt inspired to act this book out. Several small groups got to be the bunnies and eat all of the vegetables. Lynne became our Mr. McGrealy! During story time, many of the children loved this book so much that they remembered the text and they would read the story with the adults! Acting stories this past year has been a wonderful opportunity for the children to embrace dramatic and pretend play but also see that words can come alive through them! This was an important literacy piece to our curriculum.

The children also had lots of fun this past month utilizing our new sandbox; building with unit blocks and creating plants and fortresses. It was nice to see the children interact with the sandbox in a different way.

The children also enjoyed playing ball games and parachute games out in the field. The field has been such a wonderful part of our small group planning. The children see an open space and suddenly their eyes light up!

Goodbyes and Hellos. . .

This month we said goodbye to Owen and Nicholas. Both of them will be going to different schools next year. The children have been discussing this at circle time; remembering other children who have moved on!

We will be saying hello to Skyla, Brianna and Jackson. They are moving up from Susan's room this summer!

I hope you have a wonderful summer! For those who will not be with us in the summer, see you next school year! Take care.

***Ana, Sherri & Katrina***

## Preschool News

Throughout June we have gardened, among other things. Having planned it, prepared the beds and pre-planted seeds in May, we were ready, but the weather did not cooperate until we were well into the month. However, we persevered, watched our class seedlings develop, and finally were able to plant outdoors. Working with the Older Toddler class was a fun lesson in mixed age group teaching and both staff and children enjoyed learning from and observing each other. We now have peas, watermelon, nasturtiums, sunflowers, pumpkins, purple potatoes, dill, basil, parsley, lettuce, daisies, and tomatoes with a bit of room for more. The children enjoy the early morning job of watering and we have even used the sprinkler on both garden and children at the same time. What a great way to get the watering done!

Speaking of watering, we did a science experiment to learn how the plants drink water. Using a straw, the children practiced drinking from it, noting the direction the water goes (up). After putting color in the water, Kate had the class fill out a "hypothesis" sheet where they colored where on the plant they thought the colored would go. Then they performed the experiment by adding a white flower to the colored water and waited to see what would happen. We recorded the results with a photograph.

Early in the month Nan attended a workshop on math lessons and planning for early childhood educators and came back with new songs (Aroostasha and the Robot Song) and a new way of Participating in calendar (using our math hands, "What is always five?" "What are two fives?" and more) and some new games and vocabulary. (Do you remember what a rhombus is?) Soon we'll be playing Shape Sudoku as well.

Look for our Family Wall in its new location on stage. It's nice to have it there since all the photos are at child's eye level. If you haven't brought in updated photos for a while, now would be a good time to do that. Moving the Family Wall meant moving our location for circle, something the class as a whole adjusted to quite well. We use the already circular shape of the reading library and extend it to where the carpet meets the linoleum.

*Preschool continued in next column*

## *Preschool continued from 1<sup>st</sup> column*

That in turn has led to the ability to use the stage for a real dramatic play area. Nan's daughter, Louisa, donated her childhood Fisher-Price kitchen and we've set up a housekeeping area, complete with beds for the babies (also donated by Louisa). It is a very popular play area from the beginning of the morning and throughout the day.

What will be placed in the old Family Wall location? Keep a look out for curriculum updates, evidence of our projects and experiments, and general news of what's current in the preschool.

We've made a lot of art this month, "pop" up cards for Father's Day, pictures with wet chalk, a "hand print" garden mural among other things. Art is always a very popular activity during choice time and you will notice our supplies are at child level for continuous access.

Water play has been very popular with the onset of the hot weather and now that we can attend the pool at Memorial Park, we will be doing that three times a week. Whether your child is part of the park group or the school group, there will be sprinklers and water and wading galore. Please keep a swimsuit and towel here, and make sure your child is sunscreened upon arrival.

Our class is very musical and has been talking a lot about rock and roll and jazz. What's the difference, etc.? So we've been playing CD's of big band swing, guitar blues (Bob played some live too) and more. Nan brought in her dulcimer and showed how to tune it and play it. Then we made some harps and guitars out of boxes and rubber bands. Travis could start the ABC's song on his!

We are looking forward to the summer program and all it will bring us: a trip to Lake Spofford and All School Sings outside! We'll see you July 9<sup>th</sup>!

*Nan, Kate & Bob*

*"What lies before us, and what lies behind us, are tiny matters compared with what lies within us."  
Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*News from the Front continued in next column*

**News from the Front:**

Thank you to the very wonderful Prouty parents for their patience through this challenging year of transition. We had our Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees on June 19<sup>th</sup> at The Putney Inn. There was a great attendance by staff and Board members that began on that sultry night on the front porch and continued into the dining room for a memorable dinner.

The biggest announcement of the night was the presentation of the new Executive Director, Chloe Learey. Chloe is known to many as a Prouty parent of Gracie and Cayden. She has spent the past four years as Director of Operations of Monadnock Developmental Services in Keene, NH. Her educational credentials include a B.A. from Earlham College and an MBA and MPH from Boston University, Graduate School of Management & School of Public Health.

During the official meeting, we said goodbye to departing members Nancy Haydock, MD and Joyce Morin. Nancy has been a huge supporter of the Center for longer than any memories serve (better than 20 years). There are insufficient words to express our gratitude for her amazing commitment. She will still be our local pediatrician and continued community ally. We also thank Joyce for all her generous work and contributions to the Center. We will miss them both.

During that Annual Meeting, new members were brought onto the Board and we'd like to welcome them. Christian McLaughlin, Joanne Sprague and Dr. Liz Richards have joined the Board of Trustees. Christian is a former airline pilot looking forward to helping us fly high, Joanne is Assistant Vice President/Market Manager at Chittenden Bank and has a wonderful grandchild here at the Center, and Dr. Liz Richards, a former Prouty parent, is a welcome addition as our new member and pediatrician at the Brattleboro Primary Care.

*Pat*

You will notice a new "communication piece" has been set up right on the left wall as you enter the building (where the old bulletin board was). This is intended for mail or messages that require immediate attention or notice.

*News from the Front (continued from 1<sup>st</sup> column)*

unlike artwork or other less urgent items that may still be found in cubbies, these memos may need a signature or some response and should be checked daily! They are organized by family group name and classroom.

*JoAnn*

It is hard for me to believe that I've been at the Prouty Center for a month. I believe it is because of the warm welcome I have received. Sitting in reception has allowed me to have "the sweetest" interactions with families, Prouty Center staff, and community partners. My work here will be to help the Prouty Center develop and organize systems to complete the documentation requirements to maintain our NAEYC accreditation, STARS certification, and Family, Infant and Toddler state and federal requirements. I will have the opportunity to work collaboratively with all staff. I am currently working on a summary of the self study process (for NAEYC) which many of you participated in and to which you made very important contributions. In addition, I will participate in Building Bright Futures of Southeastern Vermont (formerly the Early Childhood Council), local and statewide meetings, task forces, trainings, and workshops as they pertain to my job. Please stop by and say "Hi", on your way to the jelly beans!

*Ariani*



*Prouty children enjoying the Retreat Farm.*

**Staff:** 257-7852

**Administration:**

Chloe Learey Ext. 11  
Executive Director

Patricia Field Ext. 25  
Business Director

JoAnn Carew Ext. 10  
Office Manager

Ariani Szykier Ext. 21  
Documentation Coordinator

**Early Learning Center**

**EL 1 – Young Toddlers** Ext. 20  
Susan Heimer  
Kathy Wright  
Marie Gorst

**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

**Family Infant Toddler** 258-2414

Joanne Shaw  
Martha Healey-Nelson  
Mary Coogan  
Katherine Hallock

**July Birthday Wishes to:**

Lucy celebrates her birthday on July 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Grace P. has hers on July 12<sup>th</sup>  
Daniel has his birthday on July 13<sup>th</sup>  
Tatiana & Jasper share birthdays on July 15<sup>th</sup>  
Grace L. turns 4 on July 24<sup>th</sup>  
Nicholas' birthday is on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July

Bob's birthday is on the 17<sup>th</sup>  
Kate's birthday is on the 21<sup>st</sup>  
Katrina's birthday is on the 27<sup>th</sup>

