

Whistle Stop's

Parent Connection

November-December 2007

Welcome New Staff

Marian Russell is a new part-time employee at Whistle Stop. She works in the Senior Building and occasionally in the Junior Building. Marian is a full-time student at Grand Rapids Community College majoring in Elementary Education. She will be taking classes at GRCC and Aquinas College next semester.

In her spare time Marian enjoys scrap booking, sports, music, and spending time with her younger sister, nieces and nephews.

Jenna Sterenberg has joined Whistle Stop as a part-time employee in the Jelly Bean room. Jenna is a Junior at Cornerstone University majoring in Elementary Education.

Originally from Holland, Jenna enjoys spending time with friends, traveling, being outdoors, music, movies, and crafts.

Welcome Marian and Jenna!

Holiday Information

In the next few weeks, Toni will be sending out a form for you to complete regarding your child's holiday schedule. If you know your family's plans before then, please contact Toni and let her know.

Thank You

Holiday Hours

Whistle Stop will be closed on the following days:

Thanksgiving Day (Thursday, November 22) and the day after (Friday, November 23).

Christmas Eve Day (Monday, December 24) and Christmas Day (Tuesday, December 25)

We will be polling families in a few weeks regarding their plans for New Year's Eve day (Monday, December 31). If enough families will need child care on that day, Whistle Stop will be open but only until noon.

Reminder

Now that the winter months are upon us, please remember to **send your child's winter gear** (hats, mittens, boots, snow pants, scarves, etc.) with him or her to Whistle Stop.

Please make sure each item is labeled with your child's name.

There are so many pairs of black snow pants that we need them labeled to tell them apart. **Please help us by making sure you label all of your child's winter gear ! Thank you.**

Cold Weather Policies

It is our policy that in winter children continue to go outdoors to play for a short time two times each day.

The only exception is if the temperature drops below 20 degrees. In that case, staff would use their best judgment in deciding whether or not to go outdoors.

Health Policy

Our health policy is that if a child is well enough to attend Whistle Stop, he or she is well enough to go outdoors.

Going outdoors for fresh air has great benefits and can actually help prevent the spread of germs during cold and flu season.

Staff Birthdays and Anniversaries

December Birthdays

Kathleen Reeves – Dec. 29

November Anniversaries

Andrea Stafford – Nov. 2004

There are no staff anniversaries in December.

(about 5 minutes). Remove mixture from the stove and use a wooden

We would like to extend a special thank you to **Tim Stafford** (Andrea's husband) for designing Whistle Stop's new web page. Tim is a full-time employee at Aquinas College and also maintains our new web site. Our web address is: www.whistlestopchildcare.net.

You can contact Toni via the website or by e-mailing her at toni@whistlestopchildcare.net.

Also, please be sure to pass on your e-mail address to our staff if you haven't done so yet and/or you would like to be included in Whistle Stop's parent e-mail group. You can simply write it down and give it to your child's teacher.

Reminders

Please note that the sisters at Marywood have notified us about their concern over **cars traveling too fast** along the driveways and parking lots around Whistle Stop.

We want to insure that everyone on Marywood's campus remains safe, so **please pay attention to posted speed limit signs and GO SLOW! Thank you.**

Severe Weather Closings

Whistle Stop does not usually close during the winter due to the weather. However, **if Whistle Stop should close due to severe weather, it will be posted on channels TV 8 and TV 13.**

Please check these stations for notice of our closing.

Music and Movement

Whistle Stop now has a new music and movement program for children. Once a month, **Meaghann Stawasz** (Debbie's daughter), will come in and lead 7 hour sessions for children in the Jelly Bean, Jumping Jack, and Young Explorer rooms. Dates will vary each month.

Meaghann has danced since age 2 7 and has taught dance for several years at the Moving Company in East Grand Rapids.

We're looking forward to the children having fun, learning new movements, and getting some good exercise!

Great Holiday Gift

Ideas

Looking for great holiday gift ideas? **Scholastic books orders** offer a wide array of children's books with great titles and neat gifts for kids, too. Contact your child's teacher for an order form or for more information.

Fun Thanksgiving Treat -

Edible Indian Corn

4 Tbsp. Butter (+ some extra)
4 cups mini marshmallows
5 cups puffed corn cereal
1 1/3 cups diced dried fruit (raisins, papaya, cranberries, apricots, etc.)
fruit roll ups (green and yellow)
Popsicle sticks

In a large pot, melt butter and mini marshmallows over low heat

spoon to stir in cereal and dried fruit. Allow mixture to cool for about 10 minutes.

Using buttered hands, shape each treat by pressing 1/3 cup of the mixture around a Popsicle stick.

Add fruit roll up strips (cut in the shape of leaves or husks) to the bottom of each ear. Slightly moisten to help them stick if needed. Serve and enjoy. These make great party treats.

Fun Thanksgiving Traditions and Ideas

Why not start a new Thanksgiving tradition with your family? **This year, have each person bring to the table three things that represent what they are thankful for.** (Smaller children can just bring the items they're thankful for.)

Give each person a chance to show what they've brought and tell why. It's sure to spark a fun conversation that allows each person to share what is important to him or her.

Another fun idea is to make a **Thanksgiving keepsake tablecloth**. On a large sheet of orange or brown butcher paper, allow children to write their names, make hand prints (with tempera paint), and write what they're thankful for. Let dry and display for the family to enjoy. This can be fun to bring out in years to come and look back on what each person wrote.

Enjoy a safe and Happy Thanksgiving!