

Whistle Stop's

Parent Connection

September-October 2008

New Faces

Lisa Freybler has joined the Whistle Stop staff working part-time in the Jelly Bean room. Lisa has an Associates Degree in Child Development from Grand Rapids Community College and previously was the director of Sacred Heart of Jesus school. Lisa enjoys swimming, home improvement, gardening, old movies, and spending time with family and friends.

Barb Groendyk has also joined the Whistle Stop staff working part-time in the Jelly Bean room. Barb graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in Education. She also previously owned and managed a nutrition store called Nutrition Plus of West Michigan. In her spare time, Barb enjoys reading, gardening, and hiking.

Whistle Stop also welcomes **Molly Bowman**, a senior at Grand Valley State University majoring in Special Education. She works part-time in the senior building and enjoys running, swimming, and volunteering.

We also welcome **Sarah Durocher** as a part-time employee in the Jumping Jack room. Sarah is a sophomore at Aquinas College majoring in

Learning Disabilities. In her spare time, Sarah enjoys swimming, reading, spending time with friends, and doing activities with her church.

Welcome Lisa, Barb, Molly and Sarah.

Seasonal Changes

As the weather begins to change, please replace the **extra clothing** your child keeps at Whistle Stop with long-sleeve shirts and pants.

Also, it's a good idea to keep a pair of **rain boots** at Whistle Stop as the children often take walks on the grounds and through the woods.

Please remember to label everything you bring. If you forget, we will do it for you.

Reminder

Whistle Stop will be closed on Friday, October 17, 2008 for our annual staff retreat.

We will join with the staff from our sister center, Creative Learning Center, to focus on the High/Scope Curriculum. Please make other child care arrangements for that day.

Staff Birthdays and Anniversaries

There are no staff birthdays in September.

October Birthdays

October 7 – Speranta Dumitrescu
October 8 – Ruth Francis

September Anniversaries

September 1994 – Speranta Dumitrescu
September 1998 – Kathleen Reeves
September 2000 – Sue Zimmerman
September 2005 – Gloria Tipton
September 2006 – Kotoe Laackman and Karin Smith
September 2007 – Marian Russell

October Anniversaries

October 1992 – Mark and Nancy Schaefer took ownership of Whistle Stop.
October 1994 – Ruth Francis

It's very unusual to maintain so many long-term staff at a child-care center, so we would like to recognize the **outstanding length of service** many of our staff have completed:

Sue Zimmerman – 8 years
Kathleen Reeves – 10 years
Speranta Dumitrescu – 14 years
Ruth Francis – 14 years
Debbie Matyas – 16 years
Phyllis Bush – 18 years
Toni Tyson - 19 years

Wow! Thank you, staff!

Welcome New Families

We welcome the following new children and their families to Whistle Stop:

Sweet Peas

Christien Fanta (Alan & Janet)
Travis Keller (Kurt & Pam)
Josie Kenward (Chris & Kim)

Jelly Beans

Nate Hart (Richard & Dawn)

Staff Training Update

Several Whistle Stop staff had the opportunity to attend a seminar at the Frederik Meijer Gardens on Thursday, September 18, 2008. The following staff attended: **Gloria, Kathleen, Lisa, Marian, Phyllis, Ruth, Speranta, Sue, and Toni.**

Dr. Sylvia Rimm, PhD, a best-selling author, psychologist, speaker, and TV and radio correspondent spoke on how to guide children toward achievement and how to parent children so they will learn. The information was helpful for both child care providers and parents as well.

Whistle Stop held their regular staff meeting on Wednesday, September 24, 2008. The staff reviewed the center's policies and procedures and did some team-building exercises.

Recycling At It's Best

Do you have any left-over craft-type items that you'd like to get rid of? Whistle Stop can always use items like empty toilet paper rolls, buttons, construction paper, milk jug caps, cotton balls, etc. to use as craft material. Feel free to bring these in and watch our creative kids put them to good use!

Scholastic Book Orders

Scholastic Book Orders are back! Scholastic offers a great variety of children's books (and some gift sets) at very reasonable prices. These make great Christmas gifts and can be easily wrapped and/or shipped.

The senior building would like to pass along a couple of great book ideas which will be available for you to order in our October book order. The books we would suggest are: #49 – The Kissing Hand for \$3.00 and #47 – If You Give A... trio (set of 3 books) for \$8.00.

All of these books are books we have in our classrooms that the children really enjoy. We will have the books in a special book basket in the senior building so you can read them and look at them to see if you would like to add them to your home library. Look for book order forms in your child's mailbox on October 1st.

Looking Ahead

Whistle Stop will be closed on Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28 for the Thanksgiving holiday. Please make a note of this and make other child care arrangements if needed.

Thank You For Your Patience

Renovations to the senior building lobby are in progress. Thank you for your patience as we still have a few items to complete. The new flooring is scheduled to be installed on Friday, October 17 (the day Whistle Stop will be closed for the staff retreat).

Great Fall Recipes

Homemade Applesauce

(From the 2004 Staff Retreat Recipe Book; submitted by Mandy Suttorp)

This is a great treat for a chilly fall evening.

For each quart of peeled and sliced apples, use the following:

1 cup water
1 tsp. lemon juice
½ cup sugar
¼ tsp. cinnamon
pinch of salt

Cook all ingredients until tender. Mash apples with potato masher or electric mixer, adding more sugar if desired. Serve hot or cold. You can also cook this in a crock pot.

Pumpkin Shaped Cookies

(From the 2004 Staff Retreat Recipe Book; submitted by Paula Boeve)

3 cups miniature marshmallows
¼ cup margarine
red & yellow food coloring
5 cups apple cinnamon Cheerios
10 green gum drops

Put marshmallows and margarine in large saucepan. Warm mixture over low heat until marshmallows melt. Stir in a few drops of yellow and red food coloring to make orange.

Fold in Cheerios. When mix is cool enough to handle, coat hands with cooking spray and form into pumpkin shapes. Press in a green gum drop on top for a stem.

Set pumpkins on wax paper until firm. Makes 10.

Article

"Take a Walk, Boost Your Brain", taken from The Grand Rapids Press, 14 Sept. 2008, Sunday ed.

Walking is good for your head. Sure, we knew about the improvements it can provide in aerobic capacity, not to mention muscles and joints, but recent studies show that walking can enhance brain function, too.

Walking or other repetitive exercise can change the brain in a number of ways, says Dr. Gary Small, professor of psychiatry at the Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior, at the University of California, Los Angeles. The heart pumps more blood,

affecting not only muscles but also the brain.

"Your brain needs blood, because in the blood are nutrients and oxygen, which are good for the cells and will make the brain healthier," he says. "The vessels that deliver the nutrients also branch out and become more effective."

The act of doing a movement over and over also can stimulate the brain's neurocircuits, he adds, resulting in activity in various regions of the brain.

Fun Fall Activities

Raccoon Tune, Cascade Public Library

Join the library staff and other preschool parents for an exciting adventure that focuses on wildlife activities.

When: Sunday, October 12, 2008

Time: 1:30-3:30 PM

Where: Cascade Public Library
2870 Jacksmith Avenue SE

Ages: Birth – Kindergarten

Call 647-3850 for more information.

Robinette's Apple Haus

A visit to Robinette's Apple Haus is a wonderful way to enjoy the best of the fall season. Visit their wonderful cafe and enjoy homemade breads, donuts, and pastries. For lunch they offer soups and salads with a cup of

warm or cold cider or a nice hot cup of coffee.

In the apple room, you can sample several different kinds of apples and purchase bags of apples and lots of Michigan made products. You may also catch them pressing cider (although they do not do this every day).

Outside they have a huge apple, an old wagon made into a slide that kids can play on, and a nice picnic area.

During weekends in September and October they offer horse-drawn hayrides through the orchards. You can enjoy seeing the start of the leaves changing colors as well as a variety of ripe apples on the trees.

The hay rides are offered on Saturdays from 11am - 5pm and 1pm - 5pm on Sundays. The cost is \$5 per person age 13 and up, \$3 for children ages 2-12, and free for under 2 years.

The Belgian horses that pull the authentic hay wagons love to be petted and are available to take pictures with your family to remember your special day.

Overall, it's a super location for fun and a great family outing. Don't miss it.