

# Good News Gazette

July-August 2011

## Ways to Have Fun with Your Children This Summer

- ⊗ When life gives you dandelions, make them into a necklace.
- ⊗ Be sure to walk in the summer rain when there's no lightning or thunder. When there is lightning and thunder, have some indoor fun by banging on pots and pans together. Can you be even louder than the thunder?
- ⊗ What can you think of for your child to string? Buttons, spools, shells from the beach? Sections of soda straws? Wrap a piece of tape around the end of yarn to make it stiff.
- ⊗ Take a bowl of soapy water outside, stick the hose of a bicycle pump in it. Pump and pump. Watch the bubble mound up.
- ⊗ Play wading pool basketball by floating a plastic bowl in the water. Your child can try to toss a lightweight ball into it.
- ⊗ Make a healthful fruit milk shake by blending 3 cups of fresh fruit, 1/2 cup of nonfat dry milk, and 1 cup of water with a beater. Add 8 crushed ice cubes and blend again.
- ⊗ Look for reflections in puddles after a summer rain.
- ⊗ Get up extra early and have a breakfast picnic outside.
- ⊗ Check out back issues of children's magazines from the library.

**Most young children are more interested in the feel of the paint than in making a picture...**

- ⊗ Hang an aluminum pan from a low branch or clothesline as a target for ball throwing.
- ⊗ Tie a rope between two chairs. Make it only a few inches off the ground. Your children can pretend to be ponies, kangaroos, rabbits, or whatever they please as they jump over the rope.
  - ⊗ Don't throw away old, worn-out pillowcases. Your child can use them for a potato sack race. Show him how to step in, pull the edges up high, and jump.
  - ⊗ Just working alongside you is fun for a young child—especially if the work involves washing something with plenty of water.
- ⊗ Catch some lightning bugs and admire them together. Then wave good-bye when you let them go.
- ⊗ Instead of buying dried apple rings, make them. Core and slice a few apples. Have your child arrange the rings on a baking sheet. Then dry them at the lowest possible temperature in your oven (even the pilot light on a gas oven is warm enough). Drying takes about six to nine hours. Enjoy!



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## Important Notes

### Junior Counselors

You may notice some new faces in the centers this summer, playing in the sand like one of the kids, but definitely too old for preschool. Please welcome our Junior Counselors! This program provides a pre-employment opportunity for middle-school youth who are looking for a fun job experience during the summer. Jr. Counselors are an extra set of hands for the teachers, and the children love having older kids to play with.

If you have a child who is too old for summer camp but needs some structured time this summer, please ask your Director about this program. It's not full day child care, but it is a great way for older kids to learn about job responsibilities in a safe, fun environment. Some Jr. Counselors have gone on to become teachers in our programs after they finished school!

### Vacations and Lazy Summer Days

Please let us know your vacation plans for the summer. Whether you will be gone for just one day, or more, it helps us plan for staffing and activities.

As the pace slows down for the summer, it is also helpful if you notify the center when your child will be arriving much later than usual. Teachers don't want to leave the center on neighborhood walks if one of their children has not yet arrived, so those calls are very helpful.

### Extra Clothes Reminder

Please check your child's cubby for extra clothes that are appropriate for the season. Children need a complete set of extra clothes, a bike helmet (older toddlers and preschool) and a bathing suit for sprinkler play. We also recommend "water shoes" to protect children's feet and allow them to get wet while in the sprinkler or sand box.

### Scamp Reminders

Our Scamp program is off to a great start! Please note the following:

- Scamp payments are due on the first of each month. If your child will not attend in August, your balance must be paid in full by July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Scampers need a water bottle, sack lunch and bathing suit and towel at the center every day.
- If your child will not attend as scheduled, please call the center by 9:00 am, so the staff know not to expect you.

Watch the dry erase board and parent board for any schedule changes or other important information!

### All GH Centers Closed

Wednesday-Friday, August 31<sup>st</sup>, September 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, for Staff Work Days

**"Don't worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you."**  
Robert Fulghum



## Neighborhood News

The **GH-Mt. Pleasant** center families enjoyed exploring a new park for our All Center Picnic in June. Despite a last minute deluge of rain, several families met at the County Farm Parks Playground to eat dinner, play on the playground and explore the community gardens. We look forward to having another picnic there again in the fall when the weather is more cooperative!

**GH-Mt. Vernon** preschool children delivered herbs to the Selma Café aka “the Chicken House.” The children picked various herbs from the center’s herb garden. The delivery included oregano, mint, chives, and regular as well as lemon thyme. The café will use the herbs in preparing their recipes.

This spring, **GH-Dhu Varren** along with several other Gretchen’s House centers participated in the Seed Starter Squad project through the Growing Hope Organization. They needed help growing vegetable seedlings in homes and centers because they did not have enough heated indoor space to start enough plants for their programming that they share and distribute widely in the community. The Garden Preschool were provided seeds, trays and lights. The children helped to care for the plants and were able to watch them grow until they were ready to give back to Growing Hope folks who made sure that they were used to help others.

The U.S. Department of Transportation visited **GH-Oak Valley** in June to conduct a child safety restraint survey. Many of our families took time out of their busy morning to participate in the survey, which is to be commended. The verbal feedback we received from their reps was very positive. They were appreciative of the number of participants and the overall safe use of restraints.

**GH-Mt. Vernon’s** spring potluck was a huge success! Over 100 people attended, not

including infants! Thanks to the beautiful weather we were able to be outside to enjoy food, friends, and fun.

The **GH-Mt. Pleasant** families donated toys to the Mott Children’s Hospital Cardiac Intensive Care Unit during the months of

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## Telling Time

learning to read a clock and understand how time is measured isn’t easy. You can help your child by timing various short activities together, using a clock with a minute hand and clearly marked minutes.

- Have your child look to see where the hand is pointing when you begin.
- Do an activity together—put away laundry, vacuum a rug, feed the cat.
- Check the clock to see how many minutes your activity took.

Timing activities will help your child internalize a sense of time and learn how a clock measures it.

*Reprinted from The Well-Centered Child, February 2008.*

## When the Refrigerator Door is Full

No more room for artwork on the fridge door? Arrange your child’s drawings and paintings on the kitchen or dining room table. Cover with a clear plastic tablecloth and create a mealtime art gallery.

*Reprinted from The Well-Centered Child, January 2008.*

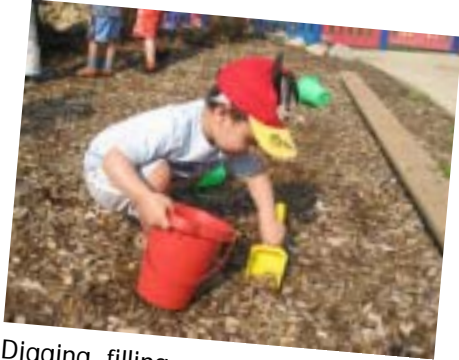


**These staff members are celebrating Gretchen’s House anniversaries this July and August!**

	Years
Paige Sienko	21
Heidi McFadden	19
Laura Griswold	19
Jinell Warson	17
Beth Renner	16
Marilyn Kettenstock	16
Amy Higgs	13
Rebecca Haft	12
Harmony Smargon	11
Stacey Marshall	11
Loisann Arnold	11
Christine Snyder	10
Nancy Mastie	8
Angela Brown	6
Megan Haight	6
Kellie Chestler-Root	6
Lori Williams	5
Jessica Humphries	5
Jessica Lapp	5
Julie Garbacz	5
Deb Oswald	4
Jamie Halliday	4
Leanna Holman	4
Caroline Penny	4
Heather Poll	4
Elizabeth Melampy	4
Timothy Stuck	4
Denise Lechtanski	3
Erin Brumm	3
Rebecca Ketchum	3
Marie Gaab	2
Kate Loukus	2
Tia Nguyen	1
Kathleen Bolthouse	1
Jennifer Rountree	1
Aubrey VanOchten	1
Stephanie Lingo	1
Tracey Robina	1
Shelly Allen	1
Dana Sprague	1
Chelsea Zimmerman	1
Anne Tillett	1
Kristin Litchard	1



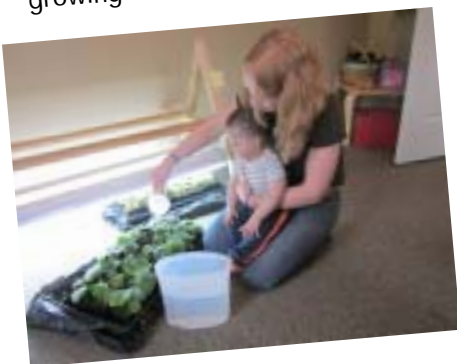
# The Great Outdoors



Digging, filling, moving, and going back for more—outdoor play offers many opportunities for making multi-step plans and following through with an idea. (GH-Dhu Varren)



Taking care of our plants for Project Hope was a great way to start the growing season! (GH-Mt. Pleasant)



It takes a lot of cooperation to get the pump going, save the water at the bottom, and to monitor the flow. Teamwork! (GH-Mt. Vernon)



When I help my younger friends do things, my brain makes new connections too. Being a leader is fun! (GH-WISD)



We're working out the perfect ratio of water to sand, for our building project. (GH-Mt. Vernon)



Picking dandelions: always a summer favorite! I share them with my friend. We count, trade, and compare what we find. (GH-Dhu Varren)



Building upper body strength will give me lifelong health rewards! (GH-Oak Valley)



The crates provide endless opportunities for building, for sequencing, and problem solving with materials *and* people. (GH-Oak Valley)



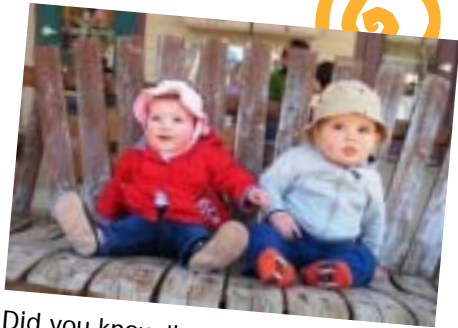
Planting seeds is a big job, but even the youngest gardeners learn a lot from helping out! (GH-Mt. Pleasant)



Making a basket takes a lot of practice! My arms get tired, but my muscles all work together and I keep trying. I'm building important skills that will help me later in life, beyond basketball. (GH-Mt. Vernon)



We love planting and watering, but our favorite part is eating the harvest! We're learning firsthand about locally grown food. (GH-Oak Valley)



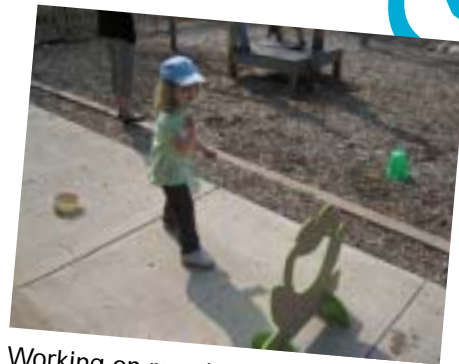
Did you know that rocking and swinging provide necessary stimulation to help our brains grow and make new connections? Singing songs on the glider isn't just fun; it's necessary for our development! (GH-Oak Valley)



We all need a little help from our friends! Balancing, taking controlled risks, and doing it all again—a great way to gain skills and confidence, whether you're the helper or the one being encouraged. (GH-Dhu Varren)



The picnic table gives us a lot of room to spread out and still be able to work together. We love working on the patio! (GH-WISD)



Working on my aim! Someday I may be a pitcher, but I'm also developing parts of my brain that will help me with reading and math skills, too! (GH-Dhu Varren)



Working outside inspires new ideas for our old materials! (GH-WISD)



## Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

Gretchen's House provides both sunscreen and insect repellent. Based on advice from our consulting pediatricians, we have developed the following policies:

*Sunscreen* will be applied at least twice each day, prior to going outside for children six months old and older. The sunscreen we provide is waterproof, at least 30 spf, and is paba free. Children who need their own sunscreen, due to allergies, need to have a note from their doctor (or have the instructions as part of their individual allergy plan). Those parents need to provide their child's sunscreen in its original container, labeled with their child's name.

*Insect Repellent* is only applied sparingly to the back of legs, neck or arms, avoiding lower arms, hands and face. For children two months to two years, we use insect repellent that does not contain DEET. For children two years old and older, we use insect repellent that has less than 10% DEET.

There will always be a note posted on the sign-out sheet when insect repellent has been applied that day. Children should be bathed at night when insect repellent has been applied. We will only apply insect repellent when mosquitoes or other insects are bothersome (typically in late summer). If you do not wish to have insect repellent applied to your child, you need to notify the staff in writing.



### Science and Your Fingerprints

Have your child look at the skin on her fingertip through a magnifying glass. Talk about the ridges, and then make a copy of the fingerprint.

- Have her put her finger on an inkpad and then press it on a piece of paper.
- Notice all the ridges and swirls.
- Look at the fingerprint under a magnifying glass. Suggest that your child compare her fingerprint with those of her friends.

*Reprinted from The Well-Centered Child, May 2007.*

## Summer Fun *continued from page 1*

- ⊗ When you're out doing errands with your child, let him or her hold your hand and balance along low walls, curbs, and other everyday "balance beams."
- ⊗ Your child can make an ant farm by placing a clear plastic jar inside a slightly lower one and filling the space between them with dirt. Add a few ants. Cover by fastening a cloth over the top with a rubber band. Every few days put a few cookie crumbs on top of the dirt. After a week or so you'll be able to see tunnels. Watch for a day or so and then return the ants to the outdoors.
- ⊗ Take a dandelion apart. It's actually made up of a hundred or more little flowers all packed tightly together.
- ⊗ Save socks that have no mates. They have lots of uses—sock puppets, filling and emptying the sand box, balls (roll one up inside the other).
- ⊗ Fingerprint outdoors where clean-up is easier. Mix liquid starch, a little talcum powder, and a drop or two of food coloring for a simple fingerprint. You needn't buy paper. Most young children are more interested in the feel of the paint than in making a picture, so have them paint directly on a smooth baking sheet. It can easily be rinsed off.
- ⊗ Use large plastic bottles to mark a riding course for tricycles and riding toys. Your child can weave in and out of a long row of them. (If it's windy, fill the bottles with water or sand to weigh them down.)
- ⊗ Pretend together. If you were an ant... a squirrel... where would you go? What would you see? What would you do at night? In the morning?
- ⊗ Your kids can create an instant golf game with some long cardboard tubes for clubs, coffee cans tipped on their sides for holes, and a ball or two.

*Excerpted from "51 Ways to Have Fun With Your Children This Summer," from The Well-Centered Child, May 2007.*



# Neighborhood News *continued from page 3*

April and May. Jana Von Stein and Rob Salmond coordinated the collection in honor of their daughter, Sophie. Thank you to all of the families who were able to donate toys for this important cause and thank you to Rob and Jana for coordinating the collection and delivering the toys to Mott.

**GH-Mt. Vernon** preschoolers visited the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) to learn about recycling. Each child brought an item to be recycled. The children were able to see a shirt made from recycled plastic bottles. The floor of the facility was made from recycled plastic, and the ceiling tiles were made from recycled paper. Each child received a pencil made from recycled paper to take home.

**GH-DhuVarren** Summer Camp is in full swing. So far the campers have been

enjoying outings to the pool, Mud Hens game, Putters, local parks, and a day at Turtle Cove. The weather can always be a factor and we typically have an indoor back up plan. Counselors will e-mail timely information and reminders throughout the summer. Be sure to check our website for fun photos and more details on the trips and outings. Please remember that camp tuition is due August 1st.

In June, **GH-Oak Valley** families met at Millpond Park in Saline for an All Center Potluck. We had wonderful weather and judging from all of the smiles, everyone had a great time. Thanks to all the families who came out for this event.

Several **GH-Early LCC** staff members visited London Bridge Childcare Center in Ontario, Canada in June with funding from the Great Start Readiness Program grant. London Bridge is a non-profit organization that has been in operation since 1993. Their programs are inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy. This center visit allowed the team to see a Reggio program that has been in operation for several years.

**GH-Mt. Vernon** children LOVE the new water pumps that were installed on their playgrounds. Water + Sand = Happy Preschoolers!

The Children's Garden at **GH-Oak Valley** is coming along nicely. Children are already enjoying salads from our garden. When you have a moment, let your child show you their gardens. Not only do we have our fenced in garden space, but some classrooms have raised beds elsewhere. You can see beans and squash growing on the Preschool playground and flowers and other veggies growing on the School Age playground. The children are very proud of their hard work and love when they get to eat from their gardens.

## Staff News

Congratulations to Sarah Kause who received her Child Development Associate certification (CDA) from Washtenaw Community College.

Tracey Robina, **GH-Early LCC** Head Toddler Teacher, recently visited Hilltop Children's Center in Seattle, Washington, while vacationing in the area. Tracey enjoyed seeing the Reggio Emilia approach in action at their new facility, which opened in 2008.

## Upcoming Events

**GH-WISD** will hold a preschool classroom potluck on August 26<sup>th</sup>.



## CPR/ First Aid

Parents are welcome to sign up for CPR and First Aid training through Gretchen's House. We schedule regular trainings each month for our staff. Cost to parents is \$20 for First Aid, \$14 for CPR, or \$30 for both. Classes are held at GH-Oak Valley, and they start at 6:00 p.m. Please contact Heike at [hampel@gretchenhouse.com](mailto:hampel@gretchenhouse.com) or 734.327.6126.

### Upcoming Classes at Oak Valley:

**July 12**  
Initial CPR/First Aid

**July 13**  
CPR Renewal

**August 17**  
Initial CPR/First Aid

**August 18**  
CPR Renewal

**September 13**  
Initial CPR/First Aid

**September 14**  
CPR Renewal



*...because learning should be fun!*

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## Media Day at Summer Camp

Early LCC Summer Campers experienced the real world of TV and Radio through Lansing Community College's campus stations! Emily Nartker, Head SCamp Counselor, and the children visited the campus studios in June!

