Clarity of Vision

An exciting thing happened to me this month – I got contacts! No more feeling around my desk for the lump under a stack of papers, or walking around the office, asking people if they’d seen my reading glasses.

But wait a minute... It’s not that easy to put them in, and I can’t see as well as I’d expected. In fact, I feel like a car with whacky headlights! And the worst part is that people are tired of hearing me talk about it. They don’t just smile politely anymore. Now they’re actually saying “Are you done talking about that? Enough about the contacts!”

As I was thinking about this column, I realized that this experience was giving me some new parenting insights (pardon the obvious symbolism and use of puns). As a mom, parenting hasn’t always been what I expected. I have often been “done” with a topic long before my child was ready to give it a rest. How many times have I told her that “we’ll talk about that tomorrow,” but tomorrow is busy too, and we never finish the conversation.

Beth MeLampy will be presenting her parenting workshops again, starting at the end of April. The focus during these discussions will usually be empathy. When we start with empathy, whether it’s with our children or with other adults, we’re able to see situations more clearly, and our communication is more meaningful.

You’re really disappointed... You feel sad right now... Wow – you’re jumping up and down! You’re excited about that! All of us want to be validated, whether it’s for our hard work, or just a little recognition that our feelings matter. It’s amazing how powerful empathy is – it can transform a “horrible, no good, very bad day” into a quiet evening!

Mark your calendars! Sessions at our Oak Valley center will take place April 25th, and May 2nd, 9th and 16th. There will also be a series our Dhu Varren location, on May 23rd and 30th and June 6th and 13th. All sessions will go from 6–7:30 p.m.

For more information, speak with your center Director.

Enjoy a new perspective, a different view, clarity of vision... you get the idea!

— Heidi McFadden
How To Reach Us

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Important Notes

CPR and First Aid Training

Sessions begin with CPR renewal, so those who do not need First Aid will be free to leave following the first half of the session. Trainings are held at our Oak Valley center. Sign up with Heike at 734-327-6126 or email her at heike.hampel@gretchenshouse.com.

April 5th
May 7th

SCamp

We are busy planning for our summer program, which serves children ages 5-11 years old. Our SCamp program features crafts, sports, music, swimming, and regular field trips. We provide breakfast and snacks, and children bring their own lunches. SCamp fees cover the full cost of the program: sunscreen, a GH t-shirt, and all field trip and swimming fees.

2017 SCamp rates (if registered after after 4/3/17) at all locations:
$290/week $68/day

Hours:
Ann Arbor centers: 7:15 am – 5:45 pm
Chelsea: 6:30 am – 6:00 pm

Locations:
Mt. Vernon (ages 5-7)
Oak Valley (ages 5-9)
Dhu Varren (ages 5-11)
Traver (ages 5-11)
Chelsea – North Creek Elementary (ages 5*-11)

*At North Creek, children must have completed kindergarten.

We have limited space available. Please contact your center Director or visit our website: www.gretchenshouse.com.

Spring Break – Schools closed

Ann Arbor and Chelsea Schools will be closed April 3–7 for Spring Break. Classes resume on Monday, 4/10/16. If you would like to sign up for care during Spring Break, please contact your center Director.

Memorial Day – GH Centers Closed

All Gretchen’s House centers will be closed on Monday, May 29th for Memorial Day. Have a fun, safe holiday weekend!

If we can bring children understanding, comfort, and hopefulness when they need this kind of support, then they are more likely to grow into adults who can find these resources themselves later on.” ~ Fred Rogers
Neighborhood News

GH-Oak Valley’s annual St. Jude Trike-a-Thon will be held on June 29th. Information to follow.

GH-WISD joined Honey Creek Community School and High Point School for an Annual Read-In. All three programs joined together to celebrate “March is Reading Month.” During the month we welcomed surprise guest readers, who shared their favorite stories. We ended the month with an evening Story Hour and Book Exchange.

The children at GH-Mt. Vernon have been busy exploring the neighborhood. We have been busy with local walks and trips to Eberwhite Woods!

In March, several GH centers collected non-perishables for the Food Gatherers/Rotary Food Drive. Parents very generously donated an entire collection box of food, and another large box of diapers. Thanks to all who participated in this worthy cause for our local community.

Thank you to Diane Tandy for being a guest reader at our GH Chelsea preschool. She helped us to celebrate March is Reading Month. Thanks go to the Powers family for bringing in their new born calf and piglets for the Preschool children.

GH-Dhu Varren families – mark your calendars! Parent-Teacher Conferences and Book Fair will be the week of May 22nd.

GH-Mt. Pleasant children passed out seed packets to their neighbors in March. We look forward to possibly seeing these flowers bloom and blossom on our walks this summer!

GH-Chelsea Preschoolers took two field trips this month. The first to Gigi’s Flower shop for a tour and the second to the Chelsea District Library for story time.

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Staff News

Jade Teachey, Kelly Potter, and Rose Rittinger will present on the topic of Infant and Toddler Language and Communication at the MiAEYC conference in Grand Rapids. In March, Karin Nowak and Shannon Steinbach presented at the Washtenaw County Early Childhood Directors Association on the topic of “Active Learning Outdoors” and will also present at the HighScope International Conference in Detroit.

Congratulations to the following staff for becoming HighScope-Certified teachers: Mt. Pleasant teachers Sandra Canales, Seema Ahuja, and Claudia Korf; Traver staff Danielle Wiener (re-certified), Jessica Cook and Chelsea Hendrickson. Your hard work is appreciated and valued!
There are many ways to paint. I can use objects, like a feather, I can use paint brushes, sponges or my hands. I also can use a spray bottle to change the color of snow. I can use a straw to blow bubbles to print on paper or I can use my whole body.

Part of creating is that I am able to express and represent what I observe, think, imagine, and feel through two-and three dimensional art. I like to use pencils and dry erase markers and boards.
Music and Movement are a part of our days at Gretchen’s House. Instruments are always available in our classrooms and you can always hear singing. Also, twice a month each classroom participates in Tammy Holley Time where we work our whole body in large movements. We also have a variety of rocking furniture that we have in classrooms and shared spaces.

Our HOUSE AREAS are rich in items that children observe in their life. Pretend play consists of expressing and representing these things. Feeding dolls, dressing up, and using puppets helps me do this.
Concentration

Remember this old favorite? Spread playing cards out in rows, face down. One player turns a card face up and tries to match it with another card of the same number and color. If he makes a match, he gets to keep the pair. If the cards don’t match, he turns them face down again.

If it’s too difficult to play with the cards face down, find the matches by starting with them all face up.

Keep the game simple at first by using only aces through fives.

Celebrating MOYC

Every center has plans for special activities in April to celebrate the Month Of the Young Child. Here are some highlights, but check your parent boards and email for specific plans at your center:

**Chelsea**

- 4/17 – Parent breakfast to go
- 4/18 – Community Helpers gifts
- 4/26 – family potluck at North Creek

Chelsea will be collecting personal hygiene items for Faith in Action throughout the month of April.

**Oak Valley**

Helmet Week April 3-7. Bring in your child’s bike helmet and look for proper fit. A video will be on hand for guidance, if needed.

Annual Family Surveys will be sent out on April 4th. We appreciate in advance everyone’s participation. The survey results are used for program quality improvements.

Breakfast to Go for parents on April 11th. Please be sure to stop in the lobby to get your “breakfast to go”. Donuts, bagels, bars, fresh fruit and drinks will be available.

April 12th: We will have both the fire department and police department here to talk with the children about their jobs and children will be able to sit in their vehicles.

April 20th: Popsicle Day

April 25th and 26th we will host our annual Children’s Art Show from 5:30-6:30. Children’s individual and group art projects will be displayed and light snacks will be available. Due to the large volume of attendees, we will offer both nights. Each teaching team will split the two evenings, and parents will be able to attend on the night of their choice.

April 28th: Preschool children will attend a concert at Washtenaw Community College. The teachers will let you know which show time your child will attend.

**Mt. Pleasant**

Parent breakfast will be on April 19th.

GH Mt. Pleasant children will have their artwork on display at Washtenaw Dairy. There will be an Art Show at Washtenaw Dairy on Wednesday April 12th from 6-7. Join us in supporting a local business and enjoying the children’s hard work!

**Traver**

April 12th - The annual family pancake breakfast will be held in the gym 7:30-9:30 am. Please stop by with your child for pancakes, sausage, yogurt and fruit prepared by Shannon and Danielle!

**Mt. Vernon**

On April 11th the children will prepare and deliver snacks for our community helpers.

Please stop by the kitchen on Monday, April 10th to enjoy our parent breakfast to go! Hot coffee, fresh juice along with fruit and yogurt will be available for parents to grab and go on their way out of the center.

Please look for child art work to be displayed at Hello Faz Pizza and Trader Joe’s! Art work will be put on display beginning April 14th.
Helping Your Preschool Child Become a Reader

Involve your child in making grocery lists and finding matching coupons. Let your child think of items for the “to do” list, help write notes and reminders, and so on.

While riding in a car or on public transportation, point out letters and words on road signs, buildings, license plates, the sides of trucks, bus headings, and so on.

Take walks with your child to look at street signs, house numbers, store names, apartment directories, etc. Ask your child to find familiar letters, for example, those in his or her first name.

Look up telephone numbers and addresses. Write them down and refer to them when you go to those places.

Read maps before you go places. Find the names of the beginning and ending streets and landmarks in between, and trace or highlight the route.

Read the team names and scores at a sporting event.

Read the daily weather report in the newspaper. Match weather symbols and pictures with words.

Write and illustrate recipes for your child’s favorite foods. For example, the ingredients in your child’s favorite sandwich or the toppings on your child’s favorite pizza.

Write thank-you notes and letters. Leave notes and reminders for each other, other members of the family, and caregivers.

Read the television guide together. List the shows to watch, along with their days and times. After watching a show, encourage your child to draw and write about the story, setting, and characters.

Help your child write, illustrate, and mail fan letters to your child’s favorite performers or athletes. Your child most likely will receive a letter and photo in return.


MOYC
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Dhu Varren
April 4th - Parent Breakfast to Go

Spring Potlucks and Children’s Art Shows
Railroad Wing 4/6
Pond Wing 4/25
Farm Wing 4/27

The week of April 10th we’ll be participating in a bike-a-thon to raise money for St Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital

4/24 thru 6/7 – Cereal donations for DMC Children’s Hospital of Michigan’s drive to help keep hungry kids fed through the summer

Stadium
4/3/17: Spirit Week- Dress up to participate in the fun
4/12/17: Parent to-go Breakfast
4/19/17: Magic Joe visits the center
4/18/17: Fire Truck Visit
4/27/17: Art Show for all classrooms at the center

Immunization Policy

Gretchen’s House requires that all enrolled children provide immunization records that are up-to-date and in compliance with the guidelines from the State of Michigan and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Non-medical (philosophical) waivers must be obtained through the Washtenaw County Health Department. Non-compliance with this policy will result in disenrollment. We want to assure parents that the number of non-medical waivers in our programs is very small.

Since August 2015, Gretchen’s House has required all staff to be current in the recommended immunizations for adults, as well as to have had this year’s flu shot. For staff, we only accept medical waivers, signed by a physician. We are not accepting non-medical waivers for staff.

We have an excellent rate of immunization in our population, and our Directors place a high priority on monitoring this particular issue.
Crayons

Because crayons require more pressure than markers to produce results, they are a wonderful way to strengthen hand and finger muscles.

Remember that young children need lots of experience with scribbling before they begin representational drawing. Be sure to approve of their efforts!

Here are some ideas for sparking your child’s interest in crayons:

• Have your child decorate a new container to keep the crayons in.
• Peel the paper off some of the short pieces and show your child that the sides of crayons are fun to use too.
• Draw or scribble to music together.
• Try using crayons on paper of unusual shapes and textures. What happens when you color on sandpaper? What does your child do with a long narrow piece of paper? A triangle? For an interesting challenge, cut a hole in the center of a sheet of paper.
• Paint with watercolors over a crayon drawing.
• When your child is old enough to enjoy coloring within the lines, suggest the lost line game. Have him draw a line that wanders all over the paper, making lots of loops and circles. Then color them in together.
• Play a color matching game. Take some crayons outdoors and match each one to an object in nature.
• Bring some leaves and other nature items indoors for rubbings. With younger children, it helps to tape the paper down to prevent it from sliding around.