

# Good News Gazette

February-March 2018

## What Do We Want For Children?

We often start our teacher or parent education workshops with the question "What do we want for children?" This opening exercise helps individuals and groups identify their priorities for the children in their programs, classrooms, or homes. If we're going to "parent with the end in mind," as parent educator Chick Moorman would say, then we first need to know what we want for children. After sifting through dozens of descriptors, most groups identify the following priorities:

- Healthy
- Socially well-adjusted
- Confident
- Creative
- Problem-solver

Looking at this list, is clear that the parents and teachers in our settings look beyond academics to the personal qualities that ensure success in all aspects of life. Research shows that adults who are successful are those with strong social skills. How do we help children become socially well-adjusted adults?

Take a look at the photos in this newsletter. Teachers provide an environment where children are given many opportunities to practice social skills throughout the day. What do I do when I want to join a game

that's already in progress? How do I tell a friend that I just want to be left alone for a while? When my friend gets frustrated because I sit too close to her, does that mean she doesn't like me anymore?

Opportunities to practice new skills! That's what children need from adults, even if developing those skills sometimes results in hurt feelings. When adults view conflict as an opportunity to practice problem-solving skills, children learn important lessons that will enable them to be successful adults.

My younger daughter's birthday fell later than most of her friends' in preschool. When her group of buddies went off to kindergarten, she had a period of adjustment that wasn't easy. As the oldest in the room that fall, she was able to practice being a leader and making new friends. Though she wasn't always successful, she was learning – in much the same way that some children learn to ride a bike after falling down many, many times. Her bruises weren't on her knees or elbows, but there were lots of tears.

We were fortunate that the teachers offered her (and her parents!) support and encouragement as she practiced negotiating and sharing frustration in positive ways. It is startling to look at her now, and realize that those social skills that come so easily in the young adult years were once such a struggle.

*continued on page 6*



### In This Issue

Important Notes.....	2
Neighborhood News ....	3
Bulletin Board.....	4-5
CPR & First Aid.....	6
Immunization Policy .....	6
Running on Empty? .....	7
Staff News.....	8



NAEYC Accredited



## How To Reach Us

Weather Hotline: 734.480.8592

700 Mt. Vernon  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103  
734.769.4402  
chrissy.mckiddie@gretchenshouse.com

721 Mt. Pleasant  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103  
734.662.2739  
danielle.grimaldo@gretchenshouse.com

1745 W. Stadium Blvd.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103  
734.663.4720  
sara.guoan@gretchenshouse.com

1735 Wagner Rd. (WISD)  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103  
734.994.8111 ext. 1696  
beth.renner@gretchenshouse.com

2625 Traver Rd.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105  
734.761.7030  
emily.frisk@gretchenshouse.com

2340 Oak Valley Dr.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103  
734.327.6125  
karin.nowak@gretchenshouse.com

1580 Dhu Varren  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105  
734.821.2800  
shannon.peitz@gretchenshouse.com

Chelsea Schoolage Program  
North Creek Elementary School  
South Meadows Elementary School  
734.433.2652  
shannon.steinbach@gretchenshouse.com

Human Resources Director  
Michele Davis  
734.761.2576  
michele.davis@gretchenshouse.com

Executive Director  
Heidi McFadden 734.761.2576  
heidi.mcfadden@gretchenshouse.com

President and Owner  
Gretchen Preston 734.761.2576  
gretchen.preston@gretchenshouse.com

## Important Notes

### Summer Camp

Our planning for this year's Scamp program has already begun. Four of our Ann Arbor centers offer a full day summer programs for children age 5 and older: Mt. Vernon, Oak Valley, Traver, and Dhu Varren. Specific ages served vary by location, so check with your center director for the location which best meets your needs.

We will also have a Scamp program at our Chelsea location. This program will serve children who have completed kindergarten through 5th grade, and will be located at North Creek Elementary School.

Scampers enjoy crafts, sports, swimming at local public pools, weekly local field trips and several special trips to the Toledo Zoo, Greenfield Village, and other popular destinations.

Registration forms are available now for currently enrolled families. We are allowing a couple of weeks for priority registration. We'll open up registration to the community at the beginning of March. See your center Director if you have questions about our summer programs.

#### Ann Arbor Public School Closings

2/28 Early release  
3/26-30 Spring Break

#### Chelsea Public School Closings

3/8 Early release  
3/10 No school

3/26-30 Spring Break

If you need care for your kindergarten or school age child on days the schools are closed, please sign up in your child's classroom or speak with your center Director.

### Unexpected Center Closings

Gretchen's House centers may close when the public schools close for inclement weather, or when mechanical issues arise that prevent us from providing a safe environment (such as no power or heat). We have several ways to notify parents and staff in these situations.

OneCallNow. We now subscribe to this service which allows us to send emails and/or phone messages to any family members who have signed up. At least one phone number and email address for your family is automatically included, and you may add as many additional phones or emails as you like. You may also change those numbers and emails whenever you would like to, and may also opt in to receive text messages. We have already used this system to announce closings this year. Please contact your center Director if you have not received notification from us with this service.

Our hotline (734-480-8592) will also continue to be updated with the same information, and we will also use Facebook to share our closing status.

In general, if the Ann Arbor Public Schools close due to weather (or Chelsea, for our programs there), you should look to the sources listed above for more information. GH centers in Chelsea and Ann Arbor will often have a delayed opening at 10:00 a.m. in these situations, but there are times when it will be possible for us to open on time, even if the public schools do not. (For instance, if the schools close due to extremely low temperatures, we are usually able to open on time). If we feel it is necessary to keep our centers closed for the day, we will make that decision by 9:00 a.m.

*continued on page 6*



# Neighborhood News

The **Mt. Pleasant** toddlers have enjoyed all of the snow we have been having lately. They have been going for walks in the neighborhood with their shovels and have enjoyed helping "clean" the sidewalks.

Several centers will be participating in the Rotary/Food Gatherers annual food drive. Boxes for donations of non-perishable items will be available at the centers from March 5th through the 16th. We have participated in this project for many years and invite parents to donate to this worthy cause.

The children at **Traver** have enjoyed cooking in the classroom recently! Our toddlers helped to scoop and stir chopped vegetables for our yummy chicken noodle soup and our preschoolers helped to crack eggs for our scrambled egg lunch.

**Traver** Cottage Preschool classroom visited the Traverwood Library and enjoyed story time.

**Dhu Varren's** AM preschool class held a wonderfully successful literacy workshop in January. Thanks to all of the families who participated!

At **Dhu Varren**, plans are underway to revamp our vegetable gardens this year. We are looking to plant many wonderful vegetables that we will be able to use for snacks and lunch. We are looking for family or staff volunteers who have a green thumb to help us plan. Please talk with one of our staff if you would like to help in any way.

**Chelsea's** Preschool Program collected food and personal hygiene items for Faith in Action. Thanks to all of the families who participated in this worthy cause.

Chelsea's South Meadows site has planned an outreach program with the Chelsea Retirement Community- playing board games and card games with the Assisted Living Residents.

**Mt. Vernon** celebrated in December with our annual Winter party. The children and families gathered to enjoy cookies, explore snow dough, record memories at a Selfie Station, make snow sticker creations and facepainting. The Big House would like to give a big thank you to Erin Dixon for providing musical entertainment!

During the months of January and February the **Stadium** Toddler and Preschool rooms will be participating in the National Kidney Foundations Regie's Rainbow Adventure! This program promotes healthy eating habits and physical activity in order to prevent health issues like diabetes and high blood pressure, the leading causes of chronic kidney disease. Each week the teachers will read a nutrition or physical activity story to the children that coordinates with a color of the rainbow. The children will get a chance to sample a healthy fruit or veg that coordinates with that week's color. Teachers will also provide take home activities for families to extend the learning at home too! Be sure to ask your toddlers and preschoolers about Regie and his adventures!

Staff in all of our programs thank families for the generous gifts during the holiday season!

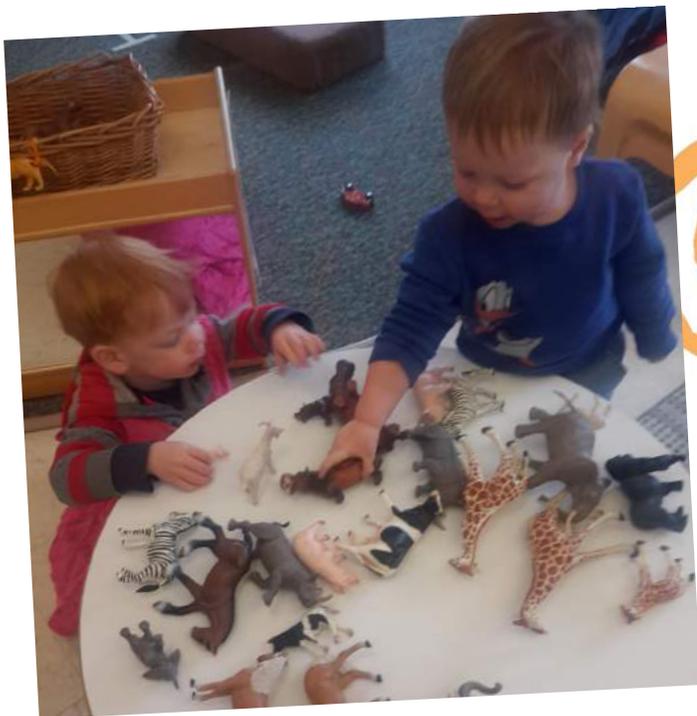


These staff members are celebrating Gretchen's House anniversaries this February and March!

	<b>Years</b>
Susan Petit	20
Allison Rogers	14
Eva-Marie Hatfield	11
Hala Hilmi	11
Jill Hegarty	6
Deborah Bossenberger	6
Tabatha Tyler	5
Anne Wilber	5
Paula Steffen	4
Mallorie Brazeau	4
Quinton Makgale	4
Janelle Nystrom	4
Autumn Jervis	4
Katy Czarnecki	3
Laura Shilling	3
Ison Reid	3
Amanda Olech	2
Megan Mellinger	2
Serpil Mercan	2
Erica Schrodtr	2
Ruth Brinkert	1
Kaitlyn Davis	1
Ying Gao	1
Alexa Williamson	1
Ashley Lisi	1
Cortney Downing	1



# Mathematics



Much more than rote counting, mathematics for preschoolers includes asking "how many?" questions, exploring shapes, comparing sizes, exploring patterns, and collecting and interpreting quantitative information. Our teachers support children's natural curiosity about mathematics and mathematical thinking by providing open-ended materials and interactive hands-on activities.







## 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.

## CPR and First Aid

We will now have one class per month. Each class will provide CPR and First Aid training. If you only need CPR, that will be the first part of the training. If you need both, you'll stay for the whole session. Trainings take place at our Oak Valley center and start at 6:00 p.m.

Sign up with Heike at 734-327-6126 or email her at [heike.hampel@gretchenshouse.com](mailto:heike.hampel@gretchenshouse.com).

Upcoming dates:

March 6

April 11

## What Do We Want

*continued from page 1*

If you can, I encourage you to brainstorm your own list of what you want for your child, and share it with your child's teacher. Some of you may be attending kindergarten open-houses during the next month. Keep your list in mind as you learn more about

the options for your child's next learning environment.

Our Directors have information on school readiness, and there are resources on our website: [www.gretchenshouse.com](http://www.gretchenshouse.com).

## Unexpected Center Closings

*continued from page 2*

So, in addition to confirming now that you are signed up for OneCallNow messages, you can check the snow line or Facebook for information when there is any question about centers being open. Although it is our desire to remain open, many of our teachers live outside the immediate Ann Arbor area. We need to have enough staff at the centers to be in compliance with licensing

requirements, and as always, safety is our first priority.

Staff members may not care for children during days when the center closes for weather conditions. We suggest that parents trade care with other families on snow days if your work does not permit you to stay home.



# Are You Running on Empty?

You're driving along, hurrying towards your destination, when you glance at the fuel gauge and realize you're running on empty. How did I run out of gas so suddenly, you wonder. Was it all those quick errands yesterday? That one long trip out to the mall?

Running on empty happens to people too. Especially parents. Just as small trips eat up gas, a series of minor crises can leave you feeling drained. Say that after a long day at work, you come home with the kids, open the refrigerator door, and—oops, the light doesn't go on. The motor isn't humming. And the milk is warm. but you deal with it. That's what parents do. You call a repair service and start to make sandwiches.

As you're putting the bread away, you notice a little line of ants marching across the countertop, down the cabinet and onto the floor. You sigh, sweep them away, and set out your safest anti-ant remedy.

You check your messages. Your child's teacher wants you to call her tomorrow. What's that about? You decide not to worry until you know more. that's what parents do. After all, maybe she just wants you to bring cookies to the class orientation. (Or maybe not.)

That night the kids keep waking up. You manage. You get one back to sleep and the other works up. You get her back to sleep too. You're tired and groggy the next morning, but you get the kids dressed and ready to go.

It's when you put on the black shirt you were planning to wear to work that things change. You discover bleach stains all down the front. Quite suddenly you don't cope, manage or deal with it, because without warning you find you're running on empty.

If you were a car, someone would point you towards the nearest gas station. But when it's you that needs refreshing, it's a bit more complicated. Sleep would probably help. So would some free time. But its not always possible for a parent of young children to find either one.

Some parents have found a way to refuel on the run. Here's what they recommend:

- Refuel by taking in the scenery along the way. Learn to look beyond the gnats on the windshield so you don't miss the sunrise. In other words, look beyond the minor annoyances of a busy life to see its benefits. For some, those benefits might be new skills learned at work, friendships for children at child care. What are yours?
- Conserve emotional fuel by planning ahead and expecting delays. Just as it's more annoying to be stuck in traffic with your engine running when you're late, it's more frustrating to find bleach stains on your shirt when you don't have time to change. Detours and delays are inevitable when you're getting yourself and your children from point A to point B. Allow extra time.
- Remember that well cared-for vehicles run more smoothly. People do too. Eating breakfast every morning, taking a long walk at lunchtime, avoiding junk food, and getting to bed a little early can delay the feeling that you're running on empty.

And, most important of all, when the road gets bumpy, take a look in the rear-view mirror to remind yourself that eventually this, too, will be behind you.

## 2017 Statements

If your child attended our program in 2017, you should already have received a statement for the year, showing your childcare tuition and payments. If you have not received this and need it for tax purposes, please see your center Director or Office Manager (Oak Valley and Dhu Varren) for assistance.

## Insurance Updates

If your family's insurance information changed in January, please notify your center director. We can make the changes on the emergency card if you email or call us with your new information. This is a good time to double check those contact numbers as well!



*...because learning should be fun!*

## Staff News

Oak Valley teachers **Alicia Olham**, **Lauren Dawson** and **Winnie Chui** all received their HighScope Teacher Certification, with another 7 teachers submitting for certification in Jan/ Feb.

Oak Valley Program Directors **Pam Preston** and **Knar Pifer** hosted a table at the Ann Arbor District Library's Preschool Expo on January 28th. They were on hand to talk to prospective families about high-quality preschool.

In January, Oak Valley teachers, **Stephanie Lingo** and **Alison Robbins**, attended an event called Washtenaw Resilience. The Michigan ACE Initiative, together with the Exchange Club of Washtenaw County and other local community partners presented a screening of the award-winning documentary, "Resilience-

The Biology of Stress & The Science of Hope". They highly recommend this film should it become available to the public.

Several directors attended the training, "Autism: Supporting the Child and Family. The presenter was Mary Burke, M.A., CCC-SLP, BCBA. This training, sponsored by the Washtenaw County Early Childhood Directors Association, focused on how we can best support children and their families when there is a concern.

On March 1st, several GH Directors will attend the 2018 State Level Public Policy Forum in Lansing, to advocate for the field of early childhood education. We are proud that our program is leading in professional advocacy efforts in this way.