

Good News Gazette

March-April 2019

Empower, Inspire, Direct

A friend of mine recently asked her "Facebook friends" to remember slang from our college days, for a book she's writing from that period. I laughed at some of the responses, and others made me cringe, because of their rudeness. I hadn't thought of those phrases in decades; they almost seem like a foreign language to me now.

What phrases do we use with children to convey encouragement and support, redirection or disapproval? How will those phrases sound to our children, years from now?

Despite the busy-ness of our daily routines, our Teachers and Directors spend a great deal of time reflecting on their interactions with children. We know that what may seem like a "throw away phrase" today could replay in a child's psyche for years to come. We want our messages to empower, inspire, and direct in positive ways. In addition, we want to think ahead and provide opportunities for children to be intentional in their own speech and actions.

After every school play or concert, my dad would say that he "burst his buttons!" For us, that was code for "I was so proud, I stuck my chest out so far that my buttons popped off my jacket!" I smile just thinking about the unconditional love represented by that phrase, repeated so often in my childhood.

While I love that memory, praise can become meaningless if we neglect

intentional, authentic interactions with our children. My parents didn't read magazine articles on early childhood topics, but I was lucky to be the youngest in my family, so they had a lot of experience! One of the ways this benefited me was that I heard a lot of conversations and observed my siblings as they navigated various stages.

Siblings often have a "family language" from childhood – the phrases used by their parents to convey positive or negative messages. When I get together with my siblings, our spouses share knowing looks when the stories begin, and we start speaking in that family code.

What is your family language? I found the quote, below, by *Pablo Casals*. It made me think about the opportunity we have to value each child – their unique personalities, humor, and yes, challenges. Our families and community are richer for the special contribution that each of them brings.

As we celebrate children and families in April, I hope you're able to think about the language you're learning with your child and the other special adults in your family. Thanks for being part of our family, too.

Each second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that will never be again. And what do we teach our children? We teach them that two and two

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Important Notes

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.

2019 SCamp rates (if registered after 4/1/19):

\$308/week \$71/day

Hours:

Ann Arbor centers: 7:15 a.m. – 5:45 p.m.

Chelsea: 6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Locations:

Mt. Vernon (Grade completed: Young 5s—1st grade)

Oak Valley (Grade completed: Young 5s—3rd grade)

Dhu Varren (Grade completed: Young 5s—1st grade)

Traver (Grade completed: (Young 5s—2nd grade)

GH Northside Church (Grade completed: 2nd grade—5th grade)

Chelsea – North Creek Elementary (Grade completed Young 5s and above)

*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.

Memorial Day – GH Centers Closed

All Gretchen's House centers will be closed on Monday, May 28th for Memorial Day. Have a fun, safe holiday weekend!

CPR and First Aid

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 and start at 6:00 p.m. Sign up with Heike at 734-327-6126 or email her at heike.hampel@gretchenshouse.com. Upcoming dates:

March 6	April 9
May 8	June 4

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make four, and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we also teach them what they are?

We should say to each of them: Do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In all the years that have passed, there has never been another child like you. Your legs, your arms, your clever fingers, the way you move.

You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up, can you then harm another who is, like you, a marvel? You must work, we must all work, to make the world worthy of its children.

~Heidi McFadden



Neighborhood News

Mt. Pleasant - In March we will be participating in the Rotary Club's Food Drive to collect for Food Gather's. Collection boxes will be located in each classroom.

Mt. Pleasant - We have started doing Yoga with Anita in the toddler room at Mt. Pleasant. The toddlers have been interested in learning new yoga poses. They love to stand and stretch their arms out into the tree pose.

Thank you to all of the families who attended the GH Stadium's Family Fun Fair in January. We were happy to get to spend time getting to know our families even better at the event. We hope you enjoyed it as well!

The Stadium Center will be participating in the Rotary Club's annual Food drive March 4-15. Once the collection is complete, the Tulip Trail preschoolers will take a field trip to deliver the goods to Food Gatherers. There they will get to check out how the donated items will help to feed families in need.

Chelsea site Partnering with the community will be collecting donations for Faith in Action during the month of April

Chelsea - No school April 19th and 1/2 day May 24

Gretchen's House WISD is proud to announce the renewal of their High Scope Program Accreditation.

The downstairs preschool at Mt. Vernon has been enjoying many Mystery Readers these past several weeks! They began with Brad Guoan coming back to read for his former classroom and have included many parents and even grandparents who have volunteered to come in and read to the class. We would like to thank all of our volunteers who take the time to join us and share their favorite stories!

The Big House is also excited that Yoga

with Anita has begun again. As we had just begun feeling a little cooped up inside during the cold winter or out of sorts with all of the snow delay days, Yoga has been a refreshing way to center ourselves and mindfully stretch our bodies and minds!

Mt. Vernon - In March the Upstairs preschool will enjoy a visit from local storyteller Laura Raynor on Thursday the 21st.

Traver - The school age children enjoyed a fun winter break with field trips and a pajama day! Thank you to the Huron Valley Humane Society for hosting a field trip for our Preschoolers. We are very grateful that we are able to make a generous donation of new toys to C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. A big THANKS to all of our families for your contribution to the toy drive!

Traver - Our annual family Winter Celebration was a huge success! Thank you to all of the families who joined us for an afternoon of cookies, winter fun and Magic Joe!

Dhu Varren had a very successful food drive for Food Gatherers in March. Thank you to our families for making our box so full!

In February, Oak Valley and WISD welcomed visitors from the Quality Improvement Southwest Resource Center. They were able to observe in our infant/toddler and preschool rooms. We welcome the opportunity to showcase our curriculum and talented staff.

In March Karin Nowak (Oak Valley Director) and Pam Preston (Oak Valley Assistant Director) will attend a luncheon lecture, "Insights on Grief and Loss from a Trauma Informed Approach".

Oak Valley will be participating in the Rotary/Food Gatherers Food Drive from March 4th-15th. Please drop off your non-perishable items in the donation box located in the lobby.



These staff members are celebrating Gretchen's House anniversaries this March & April!

	<i>Years</i>
Susan Petit	21
Erin Dixon	15
Eva-Marie Hatfield	12
Hala Hilmi	12
Anne Wilber	6
Autumn Jervis	5
Mary Davis	5
Emily Frisk	5
Megan Mellinger	3
Alexis Clark	1
Olivia Ousley	1
Natalie Schneider	1
Katrina Hamann	1
Colleen Ryan	1
Samantha Voss	1
Whitney Wallen	1
Kathryn Chinavare	1
Madelyn Orlop	1
Kayla Zyngier	1



Creative Arts



In our classrooms you will see a lot of building happening which often leads to pretend play and movement.



Having open-ended art materials available is only the beginning of our "Process not product" creative arts curriculum.



Playing drums with a friend is one way we get music into our classrooms. We have instruments available and ready to be use.



One of the best things about a Michigan winter is sledding!



Pretend play is another way we use creative arts. Our imaginations can take us anywhere. Here we are doing some boating, cooking and snake wrangling.



Building tents gives me a chance to take part in a project and engage in pretend play.



We are excited to welcome back Yoga time with Adita! She shows us how to stretch up high with our "suns", way out far and how to sit and practice mindfulness.



April: Celebrating Families

In 2018 Michigan AEYC announced that it would no longer sponsor the Month of the Young Child during April. Instead, MiAEYC is supporting the Week of the Young Child, which is consistent with NAEYC's long-standing focus.

Gretchen's House will continue to provide opportunities for family engagement during the entire month of April. Every center has plans for special activities in the coming month. Here are some highlights, but check your parent boards and email for specific plans at your center:

Chelsea

April 3rd Family Potluck 6:15 at North Creek Site for all Chelsea GH families

WISD

April 15 Parent Breakfast to go

April 24 Art Show

A calendar with more event will be coming soon!

Oak Valley

April 10th Parent Breakfast to go.

Breakfast selections will be available for adults to take with them on their way to work. Items may include fruit, bagels/donuts, bars, and juice/coffee.

April 18th, Neighbors and Community Appreciation

Some classes will make muffins or cookies, others may choose to deliver a bouquet of flowers.

April 25th Annual "Art Show" in the gym.

Times will be posted closer to the event.

Other events in April include a visit from our local First Responders, parent gifts made by the children and staff appreciation event for Opening Day (April 4th).

Dhu Varren

April 23rd Family breakfast to go

Other activities will include an art show, baking cookies for local fire departments and first responders and our service people; garbage and mail. Also, our PAG have some things planned for all of our teachers.

Traver

3/8- Art work displayed at The Big Salad

3/10- AA police visit

3/18- AA fire dept visit

3/23- Magic Joe visit

3/24- Parent Pancake Breakfast 715-845

Mt. Pleasant

April 9th: Parent-To-Go Breakfast

April 18th: We will be having an art show here at the center. The teachers will be scooping Washtenaw Dairy Ice Cream for families.

April 24th: Family Pancake Dinner here at the center

Mt. Vernon

April brings celebrations of children and families to Gretchen's House. In addition to the events below, we will also make connections with community with a field trip to a farm, baking and delivering treats for the neighbors, and visits from the police and



**“Every day,
in a 100 small
ways, our
children ask,
‘Do you hear
me? Do you
see me? Do
I matter?’
Their behavior
often reflects
our response.”
~ L.R. Knost**

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Five Ways to Build Compassion

Creative activity could be described as a type of learning process where teacher and pupil are located in the same individual.

—Arthur Koestler

On the Mindshift website, author Shauna Tominey writes about five ways to nurture children's compassion:

1. Use words that you would like to hear your child use now and in the future. As you choose the words you say to your child and to others, imagine how you would feel hearing those same words from your child... be intentional with your own word choices... choose to think and speak with compassion.
2. Live each conversation beyond your words. Do more than have conversations about being compassionate...look for ways to act compassionately at home and in your community. Explain to your child what you are doing and why so that your child hears what you are thinking and brings a compassionate perspective to their own thought process.
3. Look for role models and examples of compassion in your own community. Seek out examples of individuals and groups... that are working to make your community a

better place. Point these activities out to your child...

4. Recognize that building compassion takes time. Just like any set of skills, building compassion takes time and lots of practice. You may feel discouraged at times when you see your own child acting out or struggling to think about someone else's feelings, but this is normal. Developing compassion is a lifelong process that is easier for some people than others, and one that is challenging for everyone.

5. Learn from your child along the way. As you and your child find your voices together, take time to listen to and learn from one another. You may be surprised by the insights your child offers. Your child might think about other people's feelings in ways that you may not consider. When you learn something new from your child, let them know that. With all the ways they learn from you, they will love hearing that you learn from them, too.

Source: "Five Ways to Nurture Compassion in Kids" by Shauna Tominey, kqed.org/mindshift, January 3, 2019

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Celebrating Families

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fire department throughout the whole month of April

- April 1-30 Upstairs Preschool Artwork displayed at Kerrytown Found Gallery
- April 2 Parent Breakfast to Go
- April 18 Second Annual Pancake Dinner from 4:30-6 p.m.
- April 26 Art Show in Great Room from 4:30-5:45

Stadium

- April 4 Yoga with Anita
- April 5 Police visit
- April 10 Parent to-go Breakfast
- April 18 Art show at the center – Daisy Drive, Buttercup Boulevard, Lilac Lane
- April 25 Parent & Child Yoga
- TBD Fire and Ambulance visits
- TBD Art show at Kidopolis – Rose Ridge & Tulip Trail



...because learning should be fun!

Staff News

Tabby Tyler and **Autumn Jervis** (Stadium) did a small in-house presentation on using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire on Tuesday, 2/12/19

Congratulations to **Kim Tiemann** (Stadium) who received her Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education from Eastern Michigan University in December!

Congratulations to **Stacey Marshall** (WISD) and **Kelly Hayes** (WISD) on the renewal of their High Scope Teacher Certification.

Congratulations to our infant/toddler family group teacher **Courtney Rouse** (Traver) on earning her Associate's Degree in the Child Care Professional program at Washtenaw Community College!

Betsy Walsh (Dhu Varren) has been promoted to lead teacher in the AM Preschool and School Age programs.

Demetra Barnett (Dhu Varren) is now an AM BRT and Afternoon teacher in the Railroad Infant-Toddler program.

Anastacia Stoling (Dhu Varren) was promoted from afternoon teacher to family group teacher in the Railroad I/T program.

In February, **Jade Teachey** (Oak Valley) presented a training on "Open Ended Materials" for early childhood staff in the Grand Rapids area.

In April, Oak Valley teachers- **Jade Teachey, Ashley Gray, Rose Rittinger, Joyce Rayburn** and **Kelly Lessard** will be presenting at the MiAEYC conference in Grand Rapids.