

Good News Gazette

May-June 2019

How Does Your Garden Grow?

The temperatures may still be lower than we'd like, but the rain and ensuing mud tell us that it's time to start planning our gardens!

At Gretchen's House, our outside environments have been intentionally planned to include children's gardens. Every age group spends time planting, tending and harvesting their crops. It doesn't end there! Children and teachers enjoy cooking and eating the products of their hard work.

Gardening provides numerous curriculum opportunities for teachers and parents: math, literacy, social studies, science, social-emotional... Wait, social-emotional? Indeed, having real work that provides food for your family, solving problems, taking part in a long term project, and being part of the gardening team/family are proven ways to build a child's sense of empathy and self-worth. And research shows that these skills are keys to later academic and adult success.

Where should we start? The good news is that you don't have to spend a lot of money to have a successful gardening project with your child. Searching for fun containers can be part of the project. Your child will love going through the recycle center, stopping at garage sales, or perusing second-hand stores for containers (you can be creative – plants don't have to be in a real planter or excavated garden).



While you're thinking outside the (flower) box, consider planting in a variety of ways, to maintain your child's interest. It can take a long time for a seed to grow and produce fruit. In addition to seeds, you may want to purchase a couple of plants that are ready to sample – most grocery stores sell chives, oregano and other potted herbs in their produce sections.

Putting a bean in a zipped baggie with a damp paper towel provides a satisfying quick return for younger children, too. Tape it to the window for easy light exposure and frequent observation.

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Important Notes

School Age Care

Please note that the last day for Older Preschool and School-age programs in our Ann Arbor centers will be Thursday, June 12th. We will not offer transportation or care for School-age children on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday that week so that staff can spend time to prepare for our Summer Camp program.

The last day of school for the Chelsea Public Schools is a half day on Wednesday, June 12th. The last after school care is on June 11th and the last before care is the morning of June 12th. There will be no care for School-age children on June 12th, 13th and 14th, as staff will be closing the programs and setting up for Scamp at our North Creek location.

Summer Camp

Summer Camp begins on Monday, June 17th in Ann Arbor and Chelsea. We have four locations that offer Scamp programs for 5-11 year-old children: Traver, Oak Valley, Dhu Varren and Chelsea-North Creek School. Our Mt. Vernon location has a Summer Camp program for children ages 5-7. In addition to these locations we will also have a remote Dhu Varren location at Northside church on Barton Dr. This location is for children that have completed 1st – 5th grades.

If you have questions about Summer Camp, please contact your center director. We're looking forward to a fun summer!

Chelsea Scamp Families – Please join us in the Northcreek Cafeteria on May 21st at 6:30p.m. for an overview meeting about summer camp.

Vacation plans

Many families take vacations during the summer months. Please notify the center if

your child will not be at the center, so that we can plan for activities and staffing. Just a reminder that tuition is due on the first of each month, and late fees are assessed after the 10th, regardless of absence. We cannot give tuition credit for absences, as our staffing costs are the same year-round.

Center Potlucks

Mark your calendars! Our center potlucks are a great opportunity to meet other families and have a delicious dinner, too. We hope you can join us:

Mt. Vernon and Mt. Pleasant (combined)	June 6th at Mt. Vernon
Stadium	June 5th 5:00-7:00 p.m.
WISD	May 23rd
Traver	June 10th
Oak Valley	June 11th at Marsh View Meadows Park
Dhu Varren	May 22nd at Independence Lake

Parent Teacher Conference

Be on the look-out for sign-up sheets so we can have some dedicated time to chat about your child!

Mt. Vernon	May 20th – May 24th
Mt. Pleasant	May 29th and 30th.
Stadium	Tulip Trail, Buttercup Boulevard, Lilac Lane: Tuesday, May 14–Thursday, May 16
	Rose Ridge and Daisy Drive: Tuesday, May 21-Thursday, May 23
WISD	June 4th & 5th
Traver	May 21st, 22nd, & 23rd
Oak Valley	May: Dates and sign-up sheets will be posted at your child's classroom.
Dhu Varren	May 28th – May 30th



Neighborhood News

Staff from all of our centers express their thanks for the many ways families expressed appreciation to teachers during the April celebrations. Our families make Gretchen's House a wonderful place to work!

During April, Mt. Vernon infant and toddler parents were invited to come join their child to "Come Build with Me". Families were able to explore and build with different kinds of blocks together.

In the month of April, we held the Baby House Art Show and Ice Cream Social. Parents were invited to come and check out the art that the children created. During the Art Show teachers were serving up scoops of Washtenaw Dairy Ice Cream.

Mt. Pleasant had a successful food drive for Food Gatherers in March. Thank you to everyone who helped make it a success.

We want to thank all the families that attended the Chelsea potluck with Colors the Clown, joined us at Twisters for an ice cream cone, brought in treats and donations for staff appreciation and supported our donations to Faith in Action in April.

The children at Mt. Vernon enjoyed a visit from pilot Ann Marie who shared with them details of being a pilot, flying planes and even had pins for each of the children! Also, in April the preschool classrooms visited Whitney Farms where they saw farm animals and learned about making Maple Syrup. They were even able to bring some back to the center for the 2nd Annual Parent Appreciation Pancake Dinner.

Our South Meadows children in Chelsea made finger-knitted necklaces and bracelets to sell and earn money for Pediatric Cancer Research. They made over \$120 dollars!

Chelsea - Mark your calendars! On June 5th we will Celebrate our families with Rootbeer Floats at North Creek and South Meadows in the cafeteria from 4:30-5:45. Please plan

to stop by and enjoy a float with your child.

Stadium thanks all the families who helped celebrate the staff at the center during the month of April. You sure did make us feel special and appreciated! Thank you for helping to make our trike-a-thon for St. Jude Children's Hospital a success! Our Art shows at Kidopolis and at the center were fun and we were able to spend time together to celebrate the lives of all our kiddos. Finally, thank you for donating to the Rotary Club & Food Gatherers; we were able to provide 188 lbs. of food to local families in need.

Thank you to all our families for attending Traver's Annual Pancake Breakfast and thank you to parents who generously donated food items and treats for staff appreciation.

Traver had wonderful visits from the fire department and police department last month! The preschool children enjoyed a visit from the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra and their instrument petting zoo.

At Traver we are looking forward to planting our gardens with vegetables, herbs and flowers. Our Cottage preschool classroom has started seedlings in their classroom and will be transferring them to our outdoor gardens soon.

Oak Valley will host a Scholastic Book Fair in the lobby from May 20-23rd.

Dhu Varren's celebration of children during April was hugely successful. Each wing's artwork was displayed at Busch's on Plymouth Rd. Each preschool classroom took a field trip there to see their art exhibit and enjoy a special experience at Busch's.

Dhu Varren PAG representatives did an amazing job honoring teachers and staff this year with a catered brunch from Afternoon Delight, gift cards, and wonderful cards signed by families. Staff truly felt special and valued. The month was topped off by our annual St. Jude's Trike-a-Thon.



These staff members are celebrating Gretchen's House anniversaries this May & June!

Years

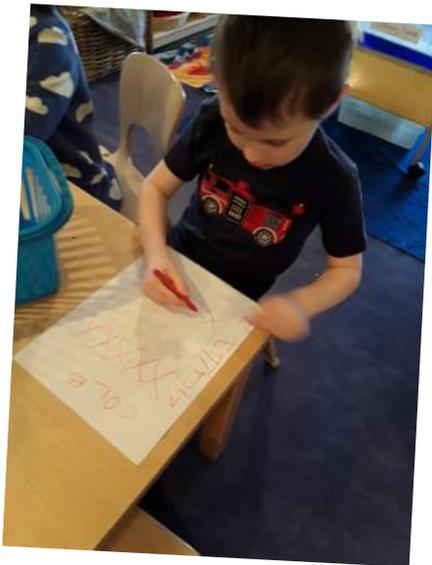
Lorraine Hergenreder	31
Karen Clark-Cantu	20
Pamela Preston	18
Bradly Guoan	13
Jerod Wesley	13
Sandra Canales	12
Jade Teachey	7
Diana Deisinger	6
Shannon Peitz	6
Joshua Redmon	6
Teresa Bonner	6
Rachel Deren	4
Joyce Rayburn	4
Sean Schenk	3
Kali Hill	3
Zack Wiener	3
Michelle Johnson	3
Anastacia Stoling	2
Andrea Hamel	2
Alicia Oldham	2
Marsha Tam	2
Emma Gillingham	2
Timothy Rittinger	2
Pamela Chapin	2
Kimberly Oldt	2
Mary Noe	1
Kelsey Rocheleau	1
Natalie Frensley	1
Rashera Coleman	1
Kirsten Foley	1
Joshua Ashley	1
Ian Arnold	1



Science, Technology & Cognitive Development



Not only do we get to help with food donations for our local community, we also get to see how much the food weighs when we take it to Food Gatherers.



Graphing is a great way for us to predict and analyze data.



Blowing bubbles in a dish is so fun! We like to predict and test our theories about how big we will make them. Rest assured that with just a little hole poked in the straw, it makes so the bubbles don't come into my mouth.



A light table can enhance literacy, math, and writing skills in fun and playful ways.



Memory game fun!





The Ann Arbor Symphony has a cool program called the Instrument Petting Zoo. They bring us these instruments and we get to explore them to see how they work.



How much do the stones weigh?
Do I need more or less of them?
What number am I trying to get to?
There are many activities I can use our scale for.



Sorting and classifying can be done a number of ways.





Gardening

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In our programs, we emphasize using real tools that actually do the work of gardening. Again, these items can often be found at garage sales or from second-hand sources. Old silverware can be a great fit for a young gardener's small hands.

If you have questions about gardening with children, feel free to talk with your child's teachers. We are proud to say that many of our staff have become accomplished gardeners as they've worked with children in our center gardens.

Lastly, don't judge your garden by the quality of the end product. A day spent in the dirt with your child is a success on its own. Happy Gardening!

~ Heidi McFadden





**“If children
feel safe,
they can
take risks,
ask questions,
make mistakes,
learn to trust,
share their
feelings,
and grow.”**

~ Alfie Kohn

Sunscreen and Insect Repellent

Gretchen's House provides both sunscreen and insect repellent. Based on advice from our consulting pediatrician, 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 will have a rating of 3 or better by the Environmental Working Group. A label with the sunscreen ingredients and rating will be posted in all of our centers.

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.

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Measles Action Plan

As you are probably aware, there has been a confirmed case of measles in Washtenaw County. We would like to assure all families that we are in contact with the Health Department and our consulting pediatrician, Dr. Andrew Hashikawa, to confirm we are responding appropriately to this situation.

In the event that a child or adult in our program is exposed to measles, we will notify the Health Department and families in our program. Children who have a measles waiver will be required to be immunized within 72 hours or be excluded from the program for 21 days. This is the standard recommendation from both Dr. Hashikawa and the Health Department.

As a reminder, Gretchen's House requires all staff members to be fully immunized (or have proof of immunity). All of our programs have a very high rate of child immunization, and we are fully compliant with the State's

requirements for reporting children's immunizations. We have very few children with waivers in our programs. We have communicated directly with families whose children have waivers, so they are aware of our protocol in case of exposure.

We understand that children's health and well-being is everyone's priority. We will continue to maintain the preventative health practices already in place, and to monitor children for signs of illness. We do ask that families notify the center in a timely manner if a family member is known to have been exposed to measles.

Details on this are available on the Washtenaw County Health Department's website: <https://www.washtenaw.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=513>

If you have questions, feel free to speak with your center Director.

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:

June 4

July 10

Staff News

Congratulations to our centers who were recently named as HighScope accredited programs: Stadium (Director, Sara Guoan), Mt. Vernon (Director, Chrissy McKiddie), and Oak Valley (Director, Karin Nowak). They join our WISD program, who has been HighScope accredited since 2016. To become HighScope accredited, a program must have a HighScope certified teacher in each classroom and meet administrative guidelines which research shows are best practices in an early childhood setting. We are on our way to having all our centers designated as HighScope accredited, which reflects the outstanding work of our teachers and center staff. Way to go!

Gretchen's House was well-represented at the annual Michigan AEYC Conference in Grand Rapids, this year. Ten GH staff presented workshops on a variety of topics, including problem-solving, outdoor learning environments, and small group time. Thanks to the following staff for sharing their experience and knowledge with professionals from across the state: Jade Teachey, Kelly Lessard, Rose Rittinger (Oak Valley), Joyce Westbrook (Chelsea), Danielle Weiner (Traver), Heidi Hochrein, Sara Guoan (Stadium), Brad Guoan (Mt. Pleasant), Erica Schrodtr, and Molly Davis (Dhu Varren). We're very proud to have you representing us!

Memorial Day

All Gretchen's House centers will be closed on Monday, May 27th, for Memorial Day. We hope you enjoy a safe and fun holiday weekend!

Looking ahead: All GH centers will be closed on Thursday and Friday, July 4th & 5th.



...because learning should be fun!

Congratulations!

Quinton, or famously known as "Q" was the recipient of the Brian White Leadership Scholarship for Men in Early Childhood Education. Quinton was honored at a reception at the MiAEYC conference in Grand Rapids and received his \$2000 award from the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children. Q is pursuing a Bachelor degree from The University of Michigan in Developmental Psychology and a separate Bachelor degree in Children and Family studies from The University of Michigan- Dearborn.

