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**February 2015**

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Hinsdale Community Preschool

A Parent CO-OP School Since 1942



**THE  
CIRCLE  
TIMES**

## Director's News



Happy February! Although the temperature is very cold outside the month of February always makes me feel warm inside. Here at HCP the month of February will be full of love, loving ourselves and loving others. We will also learn about keeping our hearts healthy, our teeth healthy and our bodies healthy. We will learn about those helpful people who assist us in our community. If any parent has a special job you would like to share with your child's class, please be sure to advise your child's teacher. We love to have parents come in and talk with us!

As a teacher I always loved to discuss random acts of kindness with my students especially at this time of year. What does it mean to be kind? How can you surprise someone by doing something kind for them? How does it make you feel to be kind to someone else? How do you think it makes them feel? Random acts of kindness do not have to be something big. It could be a hug, a helpful act such as getting daddy's boots for him, bringing mommy her hat etc., holding the door for a friend. Webster's describes a **random act of kindness** as a *selfless act performed by a person or persons wishing to either assist or cheer up an individual.*

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## Important Dates

February 5-- Parent Board Meeting, 7:00 pm Blue Room

February 5-- Parent Education Event – Kindergarten Parent Panel 8:00 pm Blue Room

February 12 --Sweetheart Night

February 16-- – No School –President's Day

February 23 – Final Enrichment Tuition Payment Due

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Have a discussion with your child about kindness and friendship, how we treat family and friends lovingly and how we can do random acts of kindness for our family and friends. Purposely thanking your child for their random act of kindness with a hug, a kiss or a smile will make them feel warm inside. Helping your child develop a sense of kindness will not only instill empathy for others but will help your child develop selflessness and heart which truly touch our soul.

*"No one has yet fully realized the wealth of sympathy, kindness and generosity hidden in the soul of a child. The effort of every true education should be to unlock that treasure."-Emma Goldman*

~ Ms. Ann Marie

## Preparing for Parent Teacher Conferences

Good parent-teacher conferences involve a lot of preparation on the teacher's part. However, the best conferences of all happen when parents take some time to prepare as well.

You have approximately fifteen minutes with your child's teacher. You want to make the best use of that time and get the most out of your conference.

***Here are a few ways you can prepare:***

- Take special note of comments your child makes about school. What does she/he seem interested in? Does he mention special friends? Is he/she eager to come to school?

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## Parent Education Event: *All I Need to Know Before my Child Starts Kindergarten*



Mark your calendars for an interactive Parent Ed. Event to be held on Feb. 5th at HCP. This parent education event will highlight a panel of HCP parents who have children who have completed kindergarten. They will be here at HCP, at your disposal, to answer any questions you might have about getting your child ready for kindergarten, from a parent's perspective. The presentation is open to all families, as our goal in bringing our children to preschool is to prepare them to succeed and thrive in elementary school.

You can never be too prepared for such an endeavor! A survey will go out to all families prior to the event to gather questions for the panel. Please join us at HCP on **February 5th at 8:00pm in the Blue room** for the Kindergarten Readiness Parent Panel. Please RSVP to Rosemarie Gianni at [rmspeech@yahoo.com](mailto:rmspeech@yahoo.com) or Ms. Ann Marie at [directorhcp@aol.com](mailto:directorhcp@aol.com)

**A quick reminder** that there are still open spots in our Monday Extended Day program and our Discovery Kids Preschool program. Also, if you have friends looking for an Enrichment class for their Kindergartener for the rest of the year we have spots available in our Wednesday BookWorms program!!

## New Friends!



The JR/SR PM class is excited to announce that the Huelster family welcomed a new baby this month. **Grace Elizabeth Huelster** was born on January 13th at 11:09 p.m. Congratulations to big sister Ella and her family!

## Reminder:

*February 5<sup>th</sup> at 7pm will be the next Parent Board meeting. All board members are expected to attend and parents are highly encouraged to attend.*



## Mother Goose and Friends! *Save the Date*

All HCP families are invited to register for "Mother Goose and Friends" **Sunday, April 26 at 2:00 at the Hinsdale Community Library.**

HCP and the Hinsdale Community Library have come together to welcome storyteller Mary Jane Haley as "Mother Goose" and her interactive puppet friends for an hour of nursery rhyme fun!

This is a wonderful opportunity for our young children and their families to celebrate April's National poetry month and embrace the classic rhymes that have been in our hearts and schools for years.

Attendance is free. Please register to attend through the Hinsdale Community Library, as spaces will be limited."

## HCP Sweetheart Night



**February 12, 2015 – SAVE the DATE**  
**6-7: 15 pm-**

Drop off your child for a fun night of baking in their pajamas! The children and teachers will bake, read a story and enjoy warm cookies and milk. Don't let your child miss this experience!

## Board News



*In looking back over past President's newsletters, I ran across an article written by Jennifer Zoch, current advisory board member and President in 2009. I feel that this article is worth repeating. Thank you to all of our parents that volunteer their time and continue to keep this parent co-op successful. Aline McGivern – HCP President 2014-15*

Being the only non-profit, non-secular, parent co-op in the area, our school provides a unique experience for our families. Every year during registration, the question we are asked the most is ***“What exactly is a parent co-op?”***

At the most basic and important level, a parent co-op allows parents to be actively involved in their child's education. Although there are a vast number of studies that support our philosophy, we see first-hand the wonderful effects parental involvement has on a child's first classroom experience. This positive connection between home and school is vital during the preschool years and well beyond!

Another important facet of a parent co-op is that the preschool is administered and maintained by the parents. Under the guidance of our director and teachers, our parent board works very hard to ensure that our children receive the best preschool experience available. Each member of our program brings unique expertise and experiences to our school. There are many different board positions for each parent to become involved. If you are interested in seeking a board position next year, or simply looking to become more involved, please let me know!

Lastly, the parent co-op provides a forum for parental education. Being closely involved with the school, classroom, and teachers, parents also learn and grow. They gain first-hand knowledge of their child's learning style and have the opportunity to learn about child development and behavior. Families in our community build life-long friendships, and the staff is always eager to educate and support our parents!

Thank you for your dedication to our wonderful school. All of our children benefit from your involvement in the classroom, on the board and in our community! - **Jennifer Zoch, HCP Advisory Board member and HCP President 2009**

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- If you have any questions or concerns, write them down and decide which of them you want to focus on in the conference. That way you can be sure to bring up the most important ones and keep the less important questions for another time.
- Plan to arrive at your conference a little early if you can. This will give you time to relax and collect your thoughts as you wait for the parent ahead of you to finish. Arriving late can delay other parent's conferences or cut short your own scheduled time.
- It is important to tell the teacher if there is anything happening at home that might affect how your child manages in school.
- Be sure to share your goals for your child/children. Ask what goals the teacher has in mind for your child/children and how you can work with her on them.
- Before you leave, review any plans you have made together and if needed, set a time to speak with your child's teacher again. Remember to fill out the Parent Conference Survey that your child's teacher will send to you prior to the conference. This will help both of you prepare for a successful parent-teacher conference!

- Ms. Ann Marie

## Ask the Director!



### Questions about our Jr/Sr PM class Answered!

**During registration many parents asked me about our Jr/Sr PM class. What is it all about? How is it different than a three's program or a four's program? Are there benefits to putting your child in a blended age class?**

Parents want to be sure that they are placing their child in the best environment where he/she will learn and develop. Teachers also want each child placed in the best possible classroom so we can assist them in their growth and development. Having taught in a blended age class for 9 years, I have seen the benefit of a blended age program. I have seen many three year olds benefit in their overall development while playing, socializing and learning alongside a more advanced peer. I have also seen many four year olds soar in their self-esteem while demonstrating an activity/ability to a less experienced peer. "I can show you" and "I will help you" become standard phrases in a blended age class. Older children develop a sense of social responsibility and leadership. Cooperation becomes essential in relationship building.

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It is well known that development occurs in predictable, orderly stages. However, there is a great amount of variation in children as to when a stage is attained. In a blended age class, children attain knowledge and respect, as well as leadership skills, while playing and working alongside more experienced peers and adults they trust. Emphasis is placed on process learning and the use of multiple resources.

The younger child is there to experience not to master. They will take what is useful to them and use it in their everyday lives. They will be exposed to educational concepts as well as social experiences as in a three-year old class.

The older child will begin to master concepts and skills to prepare for kindergarten. He/she will gain self-confidence in leadership abilities and nurturing skills. These skills will assist them throughout their lives.

At this point in the year the blended classroom community resembles a family unit where individuals of varying ages and abilities work together.

Take, for example, zipping a jacket. The older child, who has mastered this skill, will often help younger child in zipping their jacket. The older child has the opportunity to develop patience as well as the skills necessary to communicate the steps to the younger child. The younger child learns how to zip a jacket!

Our Jr/Sr PM class has been well received by the many families enrolled in the class. We currently have 20 students enrolled and hope to continue to fill the Jr/Sr PM class for next year. Many of our Jr/Sr PM parents are willing to speak to any parent who has more questions regarding the program. If anyone is interested in contacting a Jr/Sr PM class parent, please feel free to contact me and I will put you in contact. Spots are still available for the fall for any interested families.



Students in the Jr/Sr PM Class enjoying craft time



## Health and Safety News!



We have been experiencing a high level of absentee children due to upper respiratory symptoms as well as the stomach flu. If your child has a cold, a green runny nose, fever or a stomach ache, we recommend that they stay home until they are symptom free. **The following information is from the DuPage County Health Department.**

If you or your physician have any further questions, please contact the DuPage County Health Department at (630) 221-7553. More information on enterovirus D68 is available at: [www.idph.state.il.us/health/infect/enterovirus\\_D68.htm](http://www.idph.state.il.us/health/infect/enterovirus_D68.htm).

## Winter Work Parties a Huge Help



Thank you to all of the families that participated in our winter work party last month:

Bingham, Cowhey, Govostis, Hassaballa, Hoenig, Quirk, Sowers, Sparks, Wieher and Wolfe families

A Big Thank You to Eric Makstenieks for organizing, repairing and making sure all was well!

The rooms look wonderful and your hard work is greatly appreciated!

## You Can Help Protect Yourself and Your Child From Respiratory Illnesses By Following These Steps:

- *If you or your child are experiencing cold-like symptoms with wheezing or difficulty breathing, contact your physician immediately to arrange for appropriate testing and care.*
- *To prevent spread of respiratory illness due to enterovirus, influenza, and other infections in the school setting, we recommend that your child stay home from school if experiencing respiratory illness symptoms (such as fever, cough, sore throat, and wheezing).*
- *Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.*
- *Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.*
- *Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick.*
- *Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs and toys, especially if someone is sick.*
- *To protect against influenza, get your child and family vaccinated against seasonal flu.*
- *Vaccination is recommended yearly for everyone 6 months and older.*



*Music Note:*

### **Music Note from Miss Annie:**

I would like to start out by saying how much the children are amazing me as the weeks go by. Their enthusiasm to learn shows the minute I walk into the classroom. They are understanding the concept of matching their voices to the notes I play on the piano. In fact, at one point I looked over at Ms. Kathy when we were practicing our sol, mi, do's and she had the biggest smile on her face. The children sounded amazing!

I introduced do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do and the children were very engaged with learning the song (do a deer a female deer, re a drop of golden sun, etc.) We will continue to perfect our tone and lyrics.

Our "Tap Your Sticks" song has been a big hit and is keeping us on our toes when it comes to staying focused and listening. This song is a wonderful exercise to work on hand eye coordination!

We are learning the song "Fiddle De De" and using shakers to represent bees and bells to represent flies. Every time a fly or bee is mentioned in the song the children play the corresponding instrument.

Last week we did another improvisational story. We went to the "Winter Festival". We met Olaf the snowman there and we went skiing, skating, sledding, and had hot cocoa. I really enjoy seeing the children's imagination expand and they are becoming much more comfortable and creative acting out the stories.

Lastly, we have been working on a song "Wake Me, Shake Me" which teaches the children to clap at the rests in the song. They have grasped this concept quickly and I think this is one of their favorites!

Next week I am planning on introducing a new game that will work on building confidence and speaking in front of others. The "Shining Star" game will encourage the children to get up in front of their peers (when they are ready) to tell everyone their name and favorite color. We will work on speaking clearly and what it means to be confident.

I am enjoying every minute of this musical theater journey with the children and am so thankful for the opportunity! **-Miss Annie**