



Dartmouth College Child Care Center Newsletter

Winter 2024

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Office: Sunnie McPhetres,
Abby Plummer, Dawn
Cote, Karen Small

Floating Team

Liz Harrington, Brendita
Barnes, Ashley Young,
Calena Connor, Kira
Robinson

So-Long, Karen

Karen, the always friendly face that you see in the office as you walk through the door, will be moving on from DCCCC in early January.

We will miss all that she does, but mostly we will miss the positive, friendly, listening person that she is.

Karen is famous (infamous?) for writing poems for people so I thought that I might try to write a poem for her (not nearly as good as the poems that she writes).

You've answered the phones,
You've sorted the mail,
You get it done
All without fail.

The first thing we see
When we walk in the place
Is your amazing presence
With a big smile on your face.

Our files are in order,
Because of you,
With a gentle reminder,
You let us know things are due.

By planning our snacks,
You ensure we are fed,
I bet you are tired when
You get home to your bed!

To our Center you bring sparkle,
Magic and shine,
Your listening skills
Are a true lifeline.

So now we say Thank You,
For your nine years,
You will not be forgotten,
Please accept our good cheers!





From the Administrative Director

Sunnie McPhetres

This will be my last DCCCC Quarterly Newsletter! My mind is blown. I can remember the first time that I walked into the Panda Room (now half of the Owl Room). There were toys and tables and chairs that all came from yard sales and flea markets heaped in the middle of the classroom waiting for us to clean them and put them away to get ready for the first ever group of toddlers at the Dartmouth College Child Care Center. That was 1987. So much has happened over the years. DCCCC has grown and changed. The field of early childhood education has grown and changed. Dartmouth College has grown and changed. Some of the changes have been for the good and some changes leave me longing for *the good old days*. But change is constant and now as I leave my beloved program, I see this as a pivotal point moving into the future.

I am the last of the original staff members from the opening of this building in 1987 – unless you count Kirky, our landscaping contractor, she was one of the original teachers when we first opened. More than half of our staff were either extremely young infants or not born at all when I began working at DCCCC. I feel as though I have brought our program to a good place and now it is time to move on. Time for me to move on and time for DCCCC to move forward.

I have learned lessons over the years since I started working at DCCCC. The biggest lesson that I learned is that it is important to put the good of the children above everything else. I have worked with so many families, so many staff members, and oh so many children. I remember details about most of the children that I have worked with over the years because I cared deeply for them and about them. That is the most important lesson that I have learned. I want to leave you with one more “kid story” from the past.

A child named Anna taught me many lessons about caring for others and observing things that they say and being able to tell them how you feel about them. Anna was in my class for two years and gave me two Christmas presents.

Year One: she gave me a braided leather belt. Her mom seemed to think that it was an unusual gift for a 3-year-old to want to give to their teacher. Perhaps it was. But one day while I was helping Anna change from her outside clothes into her inside clothes, I noticed her leather braided belt and said, “I really like your belt, Anna. I wish I had one like that.” Anna made my wish happen.

Year Two: Anna chose a beautiful blue pottery bowl for me. Her mom asked her if she would like to put cookies or something into the bowl. Anna replied, “There’s no room for anything else because it is already full of love.” Yes, tears came to my eyes when her mom told me the story.

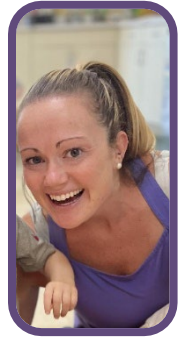
As we all move forward into the next chapter of DCCCC and the next book of my life, I wish us all someone who listens carefully to our wishes and works to make them come true and to having a bowl full of love that we can gaze upon whenever the need arises!

I wish you all well,

Sunnie

From The Interim Director

Abby Plummer-LaBombard



As we approach the New Year, I want to share some important staffing changes happening at the center. Here's a quick overview:

- **Farewell to Sunnie:** We are deeply grateful to Sunnie for guiding the center through some incredibly tough times over the past several years. Your advocacy, dedication, and leadership have been invaluable. Thank you for everything—you will always be missed!
- **Farewell to Karen:** On January 10th, Karen will be embarking on her next adventure. Karen has worked tirelessly behind the scenes, keeping everything organized and running smoothly. We wish you the very best of luck as you begin this exciting new chapter!
- **Farewell to Jannie:** Jannie will be moving closer to her son in New Jersey. We will miss your positivity, beautiful voice, and ever-present smile. Thank you for brightening our days, and we wish you all the best!
- **Farewell for Now to Mateo:** Mateo will be visiting New Zealand next trimester. We've been so fortunate to have him with us throughout the summer and fall, but it's time for him to return to being a Dartmouth student. We look forward to his return and wish him the best in his studies and travels!
- **Happy Moves:**
 - **Megan** will be moving into the Badger Room as their Lead Teacher.
 - **Ashley Young** will be transitioning into the Otter Classroom.
 - **Kira Robinson** will be joining the Black Bear Classroom.
- **Babies!** Two of our wonderful staff members will be welcoming babies in the New Year! We're excited for them and send our warmest congratulations.

Change can be challenging for everyone, especially children, who thrive on routine and predictability. To help your child feel more comfortable with upcoming changes, it's a good idea to start talking to them about any staff members who will be leaving or joining their classroom. This gives them time to process and adjust to the idea. If you have any concerns or questions about how routines will be changing in your child's classroom, please don't hesitate to reach out to the current teachers. They can offer insight into the transition and help make it as smooth as possible for your child.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support and dedication. Wishing you all a joyful holiday season and a smooth transition into the New Year!

Best,
Abby

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DCCCC Will Be Closed On The Following Days:

- Monday, December 23, 2024 - Winter Break
- Tuesday, December 24, 2024 - Day Before Christmas Day
- Wednesday, December 25, 2024 - Christmas Day
- Thursday, December 26, 2024 - Winter Break
- Friday, December 27, 2024 - Winter Break
- Monday, December 30, 2024 - Winter Break
- Tuesday, December 31, 2024 - Winter Break
- Wednesday, January 1, 2025 - New Year's Day
- Thursday, January 2, 2025 – Winter Break
- Friday, January 3, 2025 – Winter Break

Winter Pajama Party and Sing-a-Long

We would love to have you join us for our annual winter pajama party and sing-a-long in the big multi on Friday, December 20 at 4:00 pm hosted by our own Liz Harrington!

All children and teachers will be invited to wear pajamas to childcare (if they wish).

Each classroom will prepare a song to lead for everyone to sing.

Families are invited and more than welcome to attend, in pajamas or your everyday clothes and sing along with us!

Happy Holidays from Lebanon Opera House (LOH):
At LOH, we are wielding the transformative power of the arts to redefine what it means to serve our community, **including children and families**. At their best, the arts combat isolation, create a more empathetic community, and inspire self-expression.

With support from [Dartmouth Health](#) and [Alice Peck Day Memorial Hospital](#), we're proud to present *Come as You Are* — a FREE movie series designed to bring joy to our community.

This winter, drop your phone (or tablet) and check out these movies on our theater's BIG screen with a state-of-the-art sound system. Come by yourself or with colleagues. Bring family members or friends. However you choose to enjoy these flicks, we'll be ready to welcome you!

January 11 at 10 AM - Encanto
February 2 at 3 PM - E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial
February 13 at 7 PM - City Lights
March 20 at 7 PM - RENT

Search for the Next DCCCC Director is Underway

Listening sessions have been completed with both staff and families.

The position is open, and it is likely that interviews will begin in the new year.

Josh Keniston will give regular updates starting in mid-January.

News from the Chickadee Ones

Ashley Ricard
Lead Teacher

Margaret Fraser

Prajna Mohapatra

It's amazing how quickly the fall flew by! In the Chickadee classroom, we have been doing so many different fun activities related to the holidays, winter and beyond! Through the month of November, we made some turkey-themed crafts and did lots of playing outside. So far in December, we have explored different artic animals such as polar bears, penguins, and winter foxes. The older children have enjoyed crawling around and "roaring" like a polar bear. We read "Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?" so many times as well as other winter themed stories. We painted with red and green paint, made "polar bear" paintings and some cardinal keepsakes. We also made a Gingerbread House for The Family Place's Gingerbread Festival.

Even the youngest friends will often go outside during the day in the winter months, so please be sure your baby has the appropriate clothing to go outdoors in the winter while here at school. There is much to be explored and many learning opportunities even as infants while being outside and we want to include everyone in those experiences as often as possible.

We have started our fall/winter ASQ's! I will be sending out emails to families when we return from the winter break to start scheduling conferences. Please be thinking about any questions, comments or concerns you may have regarding your child's development.

It is that time of year again, when car seat safety and keeping children warm can be a challenge. As a reminder, children should not ever have bulky clothing on while in car seats. [Here is a link](#) for information regarding car seat safety. It is an excellent resource!

We wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season and hope you enjoy time with your families.

The Chickadee team

Ashley, Margaret and Prajna





News from the Chickadee Toos

Teresa Hahn
Lead Teacher

Michelle Ackerman

Amy Flaherty

Well, I am happy that we have some snow to play in, at least for the time being. I love to see the rosy cheeks after some time outside. Hoping you all get to enjoy some winter fun as well.

It always amazes me how much the Chickadees grow and change in just a few months. I think that is why I love this age group, there is never a dull moment.

Yofi is branching out in his play. He was mostly interested in vehicles for a while and does still enjoy them. He has started to really enjoy painting and coloring. He is testing his physical abilities by climbing everything he can. He loves to ride bikes and other riding toys. He likes to be read to and to look at books by himself. He is developing his vocabulary daily.

Pele was a bit shy when he first started but has really moved past that and is full of smiles and giggles. He likes to play with vehicles and read books about vehicles and has started to name all the ones in books and the vehicles that we have out to play with. He is talking a lot now and surprises us with new words. He likes to play outside and often doesn't want to come in when it is time. He loves to be read to, especially when he has your lap all to himself.

Nell loves to play with her friends. She is quick to join in when kids are playing in the kitchen or building with blocks. She likes to draw and paint and often doesn't want an activity to end. She loves her outside time, exploring on the playground and out in the community, although sometimes she tires of walking and would like to be carried. She likes books and her attention span for them is impressive.

Sophie is on the move. She has been sporting the three-point crawl for a while now, occasionally doing the four point, but recently she has started to take steps on her own. She loves books, especially ones that she can interact with, lifting flaps, opening doors and sliding tabs. She loves to paint and usually manages to get it on herself as well as the paper. She is quite tolerant of being cleaned up as well.

William just turned one last week. I think he thought I was crazy when I put the parfait with a lit candle in front of him. You should have seen the way he looked at me. He has started to stand independently and gives himself a round of applause when he does. I think he will be walking soon. He loves music and playing instruments. He really enjoys music class with Brooke. He enjoys stacking and knocking over blocks.

Imogen has really blossomed here. She was unsure of us at first, but now really enjoys her school days. She is up for any activity, and not afraid to get messy. She is cruising all over. She loves to go in the climber in the multi and go through the tunnel and peek out. She likes a helping hand when going down the slide. She crawls all over to explore her environment and check out what her peers are up to.

Emilia, the amazing rolling girl, has learned to crawl. She still likes to roll around and loves to go under tables and under the climber tunnel. She can often be seen on her back holding an object with her feet and exploring it with her hands. She has learned to roll a ball back and forth with her teachers. She may have had some help developing this skill from her siblings. She is not a fan of messy projects and not afraid to let us know that.

Ada has found her voice. She gurgles and babbles and makes her presence known. She is very smiley with her teachers and her peers. She is trying hard to move herself forward while on her tummy. She is sitting without assistance and loves to be in the exersaucer or the jumper so she can watch all her friends in action. She enjoys participating in all the artsy endeavors, but not the cleaning up part.

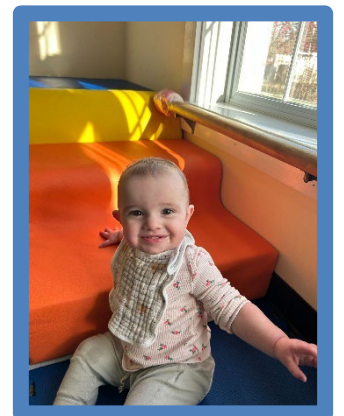
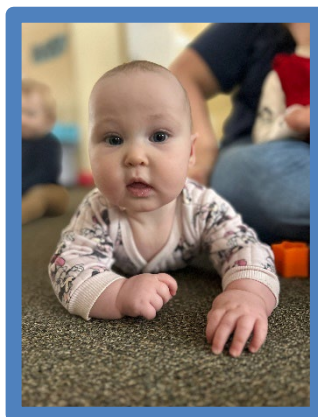
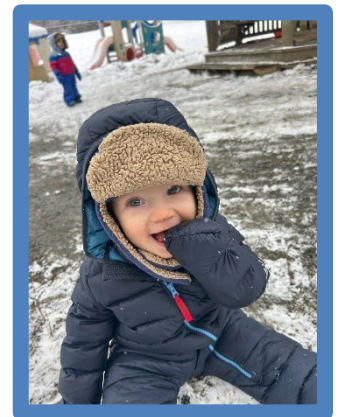
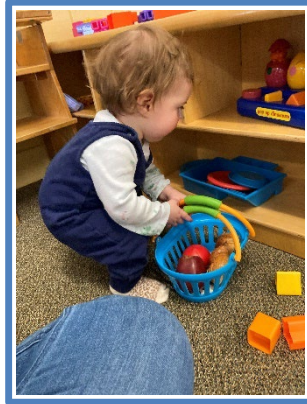
I thank all of you that participated in our staff feast. It was fabulous to try all the varieties of yummy food and goodies you provided us.

A reminder for those of you packing lunches for your kids, I cannot serve raw veggies, chips or pretzels to the Chickadees. Feel free to send a variety of cooked veg, fruits, sandwiches, pasta, soups and leftovers. We are not worried about food being too messy... that is how we roll.

I also encourage you to check out your child's cubby to make sure they have enough extra clothes that fit and outside gear to keep them warm. Thank you.

I hope you all have a relaxing winter break and get to spend time with family and friends.

Teresa for Chickadee Too



News from the Owls

Moya Stevens
Lead Teacher

Maya Lopez

Jyanna Vaughan

Greetings! Winter is approaching quickly, and the Owls go outside almost every day. The children like to shovel, eat snow and go for rides in the sleds. The Owl children have all been growing and developing so much since they began in our room. They have all learned our routine and like to play with all the toys that are provided. We have a great group of children! Most of the children know the names of all their friends and teachers. They are very friendly and give the teachers and their friends lots of hugs every day. It is so wonderful to see children at this age learning to express kindness to others! The Owl children are also beginning to develop friendships with each other and seek friends to play with during the day.

We hope that everyone has a fabulous winter break and holiday season!

Maya, Jyanna and Moya





News from the Hedgehogs

Michelle Joki
Lead Teacher

Jenn Boudro

Emily Courtemanche

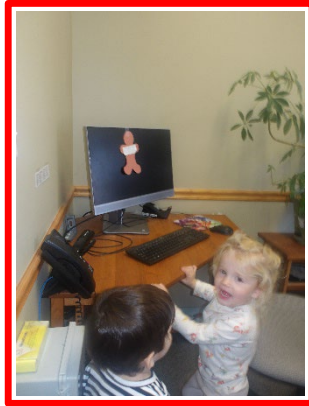
Hello from the Hedgehog Team! Snow has come to the Upper Valley but that has not stopped this group of Hedgehogs! They continue to get outside every day and trudge through the snow and climb snow mountains!

Watching this group of Hedgehogs develop into strong, independent Hedgehogs is one of our greatest pleasures. Another pleasure is watching their sense of creativity, awe, and magic ripen.

Music class is always a hit. The children especially enjoy being able to select instruments and find fascinating ways to make music. They watch their friends, teachers, and Miss Brooke and learn new ways of moving and creating music.



Chasing a gingerbread cookie around the center provided a great sense of wonder, imagination and magic. That gingerbread led us on a merry chase, but it got tired long before the Hedgehogs did!



And a true sign that Hedgehogs are moving out of toddlerhood: we were able to take a trip to the Hanover Terrace to sing songs for the residents. Who knew that the Grinch was going to get there before us? That Grinch sure was big but it listened to us sing our songs. The people who live there seemed to enjoy all of our fresh young faces! This is a great excursion that we take each year and it is always a highlight!



News from the Otters

Josie Byam
Lead Teacher

Megan Widli

Alejandra Gomez

Hey there, welcome to the Otter room! We have been quite busy this winter season with a multitude of themes and fun activities. Themes in red are ones we have completed thus far. Themes moving forward up to March are in black.

- Hibernation
- Turkeys
- Nutrition
- Family
- Winter animals
- Gingerbread
- Winter wonderland
- Artic animals
- Snowmen
- Winter activities
- Winter snacks
- Post office
- Friendship
- Transportation
- Dental
- Dr. Seuss
- Cooking
- Construction
- Trains

The Otters are a little under 2.5 to 3 years of age, it is typically around this age that they go and see the dentist for the first time. We find that talking about the dentist can help them tremendously. The Otters also start their letter recognition in the beginning of the new year. We come up with a list of words that start with the letter we are talking about that week and make them into flashcards. We then play scavenger hunt games with them around the classroom. Because we are so new to letters, we use the entire week to learn about it. The Otters will also begin to see what letters make up their names and start to spell their names to their peers at circle time. We add this to our circle time routine with our songs, shapes, colors, animal sounds, counting, and weather chart! I know all of this sounds like a busy day inside, but I can assure you the Otters see a lot out outside and big body time! We LOVE to go sledding; and have a wonderful big hill just to the right of our school!

Our center has a nice big play area we call the BIG MULTI!!! The Otters like to spend a lot of time running around, or jumping off towers onto our gymnastics mats. We recently discovered this group of Otters do not have a fear of heights and like to climb really high.

January brings a concoction of mixed emotions. Our associate teacher Megan is moving into a bigger role. She will be the Badger Room's new Lead Teacher! We will miss Megan dearly, but

we are excited for Ashley Young, one of our previous Associate Floats, to become an Associate Teacher in the Otters!!

February brings a few new adventures as well; one I have done for many years! STAR OF THE WEEK! Each week, Otters will take turns being The Star! They then share a poster about themselves with the class during circle time. They really enjoy telling all their friends about the adventures and fun activities they do at home with their family. Second, Oliver the Otter is introduced in February. This handsome little stuffed animal goes home with each Otter for one weekend with his journal. Each Otter friend then takes photos or creates a page about what they did with Oliver. He is then brought back to school on Monday or that Otter's return date and prepared to go with the next Otter friend. Once he has been with everyone, we put him and his journal out for everyone to enjoy! The last adventure is I (Ms. Josie) am having my first baby! He is due the 11th of February. The goal is to be here with the Otters as long as he allows. Ashley, and Alejandra will be here as usual, and we will be accompanied by the three remaining floats in the building for additional support.

Meet our awesome Otters 😊

Callen – This guy loves to dance! He's also a super snuggle! Tricks are a favorite of his and he loves to watch for trucks out the window because "his daddy, is the best truck driver in town!"
Charlotte – wild child Charlotte makes a fun filled day, every day. This high-spirited girl knows how to make any game or situation something fun to join. The more movement and the louder the activity the better for Charlotte.

Desmond – Desmond's biggest wish for the Otter room is to be in charge! This particular two-year-old is ready for the world to get on board with his brilliant ideas. Desmond is full of jokes and silly puns and the sweetest complements. He also loves to play games where you can banter back and forth.

Ethan – this big, strong, brave boy loves to show you his muscles! Ethan loves to play outside and drive the cars we have in the classroom as fast as he can across the floor. The big multi is also a fan favorite of Ethan's. However, if you ask him, he will tell you he really likes nap time because he is tired.

Freddie – Freddie is one of our twins! This energetic boy loves to watch the worker men outside! He likes to pretend blocks are chainsaws while he cuts various pieces of furniture in the classroom. A word of caution with Freddie, he will have you cracking up all day and you're doomed when his adorable belly laugh is in full effect!

Logan – Beautifully headstrong is our Lolo! This silly girl is a ball of energy waiting to be let loose! She loves anything to do with big body play. Climbing up her teachers or jumping off the multi mats like a free-falling sky diver is her favorite past time! Don't let all that energy fool you

though, Logan gives the biggest hugs, and grips you like a koala bear. One thing is for sure, with Logan, she will have you smiling with every interaction.

Otto – Another Otter twin. Otto loves to pretend to cut items in the classroom as well, but the LEAFBLOWER trumps all other tools! While the other peers cut the items, Otto follows and “cleans up” after them blowing all the sawdust away from us teachers so we don’t get it in our eyes! Otto loves to sit with us and read a good book or look at different farm animals that I (Josie) have at my house.

River – this high-spirited guy LOVES to dance. He often will ask for the Alexa to play various songs he has memorized! With another contagious laugh, River is the master at pretending to make an “angry” face or a “pout” face and then giggle hysterically once you make mirrored eye contact with him.

Sibyl – This sweet girl knows it all! Sibyl doesn’t miss a beat when it comes to the Otter daily routine. If you have a question about what comes next you can be sure Sib will steer you right. Sibyl is a great helper and a super silly storyteller at lunch time! Her favorite past time in the Otters is pretending to take notes or playing babies with her Otter peers.

Simon- The air guitar master! He’s even got the foot tap down to a science with each one of his favorite songs! Simon’s favorites throughout the day are playing outside, jumping in the multi, or pretending to cut items in the classroom. Simon also likes to tell us different stories about his sleep stuffy he brought that day! Some of their adventures are pretty intense!

Tesfay – this kind courageous kiddo loves art! Making pictures and projects for his mom and dad are one of his favorite past times. He enjoys skiing outside and playing on the climber with his friends when it’s open. Tesfay really likes to collect rocks! In the afternoon while playing outside you may want to make sure your belt is tight because your pockets will become quite heavy with his terrific rockhounding skills!

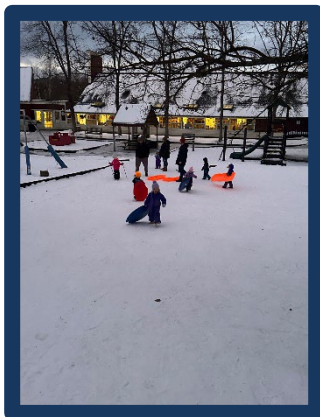
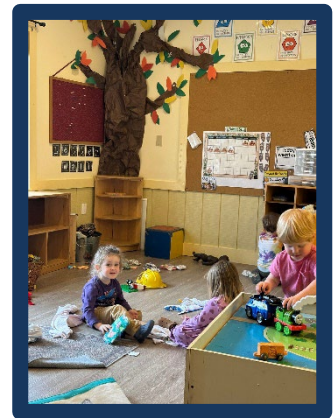
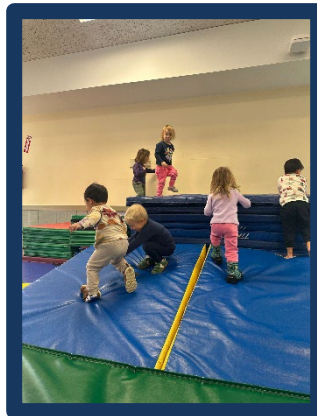
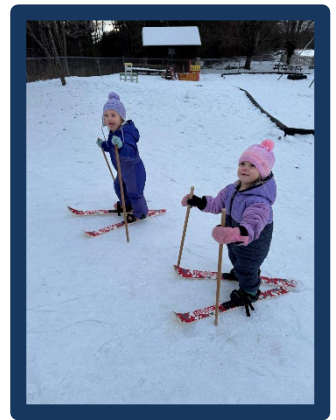
Vera – this girl is the definition of blossoming! She went from being one of the shyest to joining the rest of our outgoing group. She loves to make silly sounds while eating lunch with her Otter peers and tells us all of the things that she does here that she doesn’t do at home. She loves to tell stories about her baby brother and likes when we ask the Alexa to play thunderstorm sounds! We are all so excited to meet this new side of Vera!

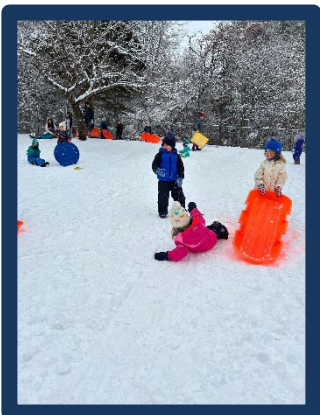
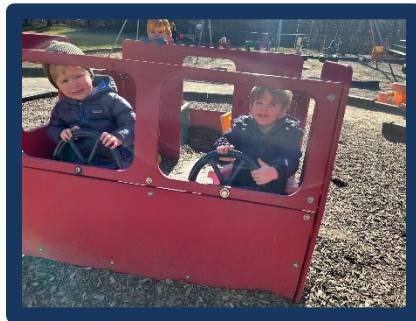
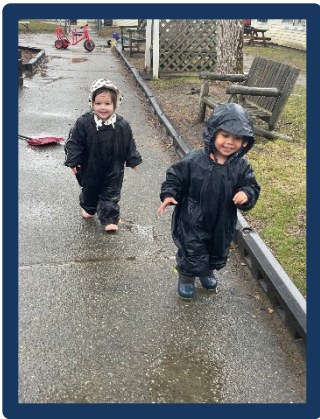
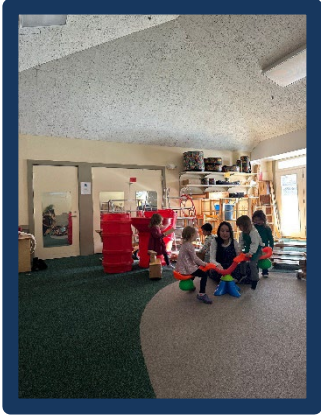
Violet – Violet is our social butterfly of the Otter room. She floats around the classroom including all of her peers! She loves to show off when her daddy gets her new clothes, or she has a new toy to bring into the classroom. Violet has another contagious laugh you can’t help but join in! Vi’s

favorite past times are swinging outside or playing with dolls. She is also a big fan of packing her baby bag, and carrying it around the classroom!

Have a great Winter,

The Otter Team





News from the Badgers

Elizabeth Darragh

Porsha Reynolds

Dear Badger Room Families,

As the year unfolds, we are thrilled to share the wonderful growth and learning moments your children have experienced over the past few months. The Badgers continue to explore, create, and thrive, and we couldn't be prouder of their accomplishments. Here are some highlights:

Social-Emotional Development: Mindfulness Week

One of the most impactful weeks was dedicated to mindfulness, where the Badgers practiced emotional regulation and self-awareness through several calming activities. They created "calming bubble snakes," focusing on deep breaths and slow movements to promote relaxation. We also explored animal yoga, where each Badger embodied different animals to help express their emotions physically and stretch their bodies. These activities encouraged the Badgers to become more in tune with their feelings, helping them build emotional resilience and mindfulness skills.

Gross Motor Skills: Winter Outdoor Adventures

December brought an abundance of opportunities for gross motor development. The Badgers enjoyed sledding down the hill, challenging their coordination and balance as they raced through the snow. Teamwork came into play when they worked together building snow pals, using their large muscles to roll and stack snowballs. The reindeer scavenger hunt had the Badgers running around the playground, developing speed and agility as they followed clues. Additionally, exploring the different snowy patches of ice and snow helped the children refine their balance and movement in varying conditions on the Badger walks!

Fine Motor Skills: Crafting and Creativity

In addition to outdoor fun, the Badgers honed their fine motor skills through a variety of creative indoor activities, using arts and crafts to express themselves and develop new skills. Whether it was crafting snowflakes, building snowy landscapes with snow and ice cubes, or molding fake snow, these hands-on projects helped develop hand-eye coordination, dexterity, and concentration. They also created their own clothespin migrating birds as part of a nature-themed craft, made voting signs to express their voices in a playful way. Through additional activities, the children were encouraged to design kindness hearts, reinforcing the importance of compassion and empathy. Throughout every project, children practiced writing their names by tracing and independently spelling out the letters, which not only enhanced their fine motor skills but also supported early literacy development. These creative moments allowed children to express their individuality, celebrate kindness, and gain confidence in both their artistic abilities and early writing skills.

Social Skills and Teamwork: Game Week

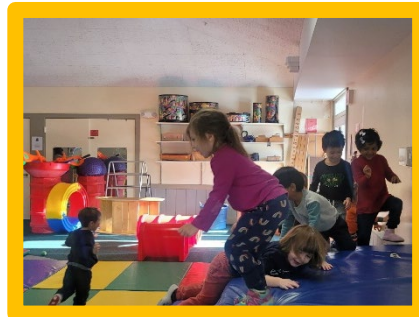
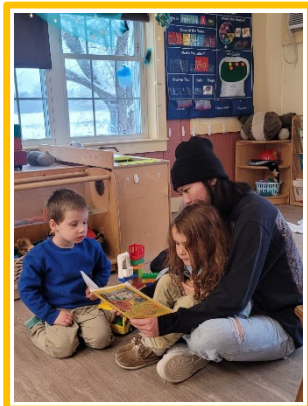
During **Game Week**, we focused on activities that strengthened social skills, teamwork, and taking turns. The **snowball toss** game was a big hit, where Badgers took turns throwing soft, "snowballs" (made of wrinkled paper) into large containers. This fun and interactive game encouraged sharing, turn-taking, and cheering on their peers, while also developing hand-eye coordination. The **parachute game** was another highlight, where the Badgers worked together to keep the parachute moving while learning how to communicate, cooperate, and share the task of keeping balloons on the parachute afloat!

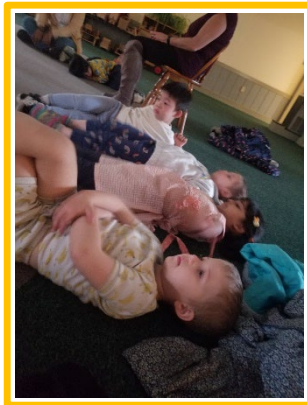
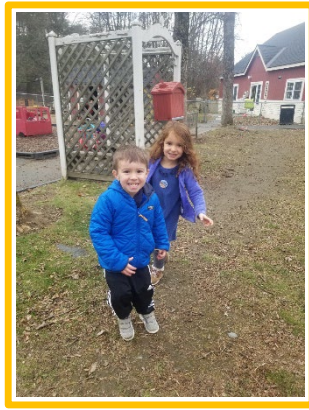
Diversity and Culture: The Three Sisters

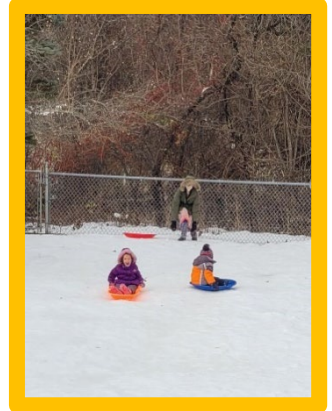
We also celebrated culture by learning about the **Three Sisters**—corn, beans, and squash—and their importance in Native American traditions. The Badgers created **Three Sisters mosaics** using seeds, beans, and dried corn, allowing them to explore the textures and colors of these natural materials. This hands-on project sparked conversations about food, farming, and family traditions, offering an opportunity for Badgers to learn about and appreciate Indigenous culture in a meaningful and engaging way.

Looking Ahead: As we move into the next quarter, we're excited to continue building on the milestones we've achieved and explore new themes and activities that will inspire curiosity, creativity, and growth. We are incredibly proud of how much the Badgers have learned and how they continue to develop in all areas. Thank you for your continued support in nurturing their journey—together, we're making this year one to remember!

Love,
The Badger Team!







News from the Black Bears

Viviana Rodriguez,
Lead Teacher

Hannah Rowland

Janny Gao

Hello Black Bear Families,

The last couple months have continued to be fun, exciting and filled with many interesting curriculum themes. We continue to explore as many smaller group times as we can fit into our schedule such as smaller group circle, smaller lunch groups, smaller multi groups, smaller cooking and experiment groups, etc. We truly value these smaller group settings because they allow for every child to be heard individually and not rushed and offers us teachers more one on one time with each child each day. We have seen many of our shying kids open up drastically and blossom socially through these smaller group activities and it's been so awesome getting to see that.

Writing workshop still seems to be a favorite time of the week along with share time of course! The kids continue to fine tune their pincer grasp and enjoy learning new words that start with each sound. Now that we have already

practiced each letter of the alphabet, the kids now get the ability to select which letters they want to revisit through letter identification/selection games. For example, during Australia week we did a kangaroo hop game and each kid hopped on their favorite letter in the bunch and then we wrote that letter together on our papers. Many of the kids don't even look to me to see how to write the letter now, many of them just try it on their own. The children continue to ask how to spell various words, primarily friends' names, favorite toys, food, etc. and remain very proud of their accomplishment, often showing off what they wrote to teachers, friends and parents.

The Black Bears still love their multi time although we haven't really used the multi itself but rather spent more time outside in the mornings and using multi equipment in the classroom in the afternoons when it's too cold or wet to be outside. We still venture off on hikes as much as we can, most recently hiking to the police/fire station during our community helpers week to see if we could spy any police or fire vehicles. The black bears have loved the switch from falling leaves to snow. We had many leaf parties in the fall where we raked leaves into piles to jump into, threw up leaf confetti and made leaf forts for animals to live in. Now we spend our time transporting snow in wheelbarrows, making snow cones, sledding, skiing and snowshoeing down the hill and of course snow construction (gotta keep those roads clear).

The Black Bears continue to enjoy our curriculum themes and are always asking what fun themes will come next. As many of you know, we do an emergent style curriculum that usually changes each week and the themes are determined by what we see the kids are most interested in or what holidays or things are happening out in the real world. Some of our recent popular themes have been- community helpers week in which we had many fun visitors (police and fire w/ their vehicles and equipment, Hannah's partner Kenny a medical student and Viviana's partner Carl and their dog Archie), Halloween week (including a costume contest, Halloween bash and trunk or

treat event), Rainforest week (focusing on many very unique animals that live in the rainforest and even learned a Hindi rain dance called Bhum Chuk Chuk), Australia week (in which we explored maps and the names of the continents and countries, animals, plants and instruments native to Australia and games, symbols and art native to Australia), Fantasy week (focusing on a variety of fantasy characters and acting like each character), and Thanksgiving week (in which we explored how the holiday is celebrated around the world and had our own Black Bear Thanksgiving feast where each child and teacher brought in their favorite holiday food to share with the class). Currently we are doing our happy holidays curriculum in which we explore other holidays celebrated around the world at this time, play Hanukkah and Kwanzaa games and even put on a Holiday concert for our families with the kids top 5 favorite Christmas songs. We even get to dress in holiday jammies, drink hot cocoa and decorate cookies during our concert event. We all look forward to these festivities and look forward to celebrating with our families too over the holiday break.

We have two more birthdays we celebrated this month- Amelia and Olive's! We look forward to lots more birthday celebrations to come. Lastly, here are a few words from the black bear kiddos:

Amelia- "I love share time the most!"

Antonia- "I love writing workshop!"

Bryson- "I enjoy being the caboose and love all the projects we do!"

Charlie- "I love sledding with all my friends in the snow!"

Frankie- "I love doing all the art projects- they're really fun!"

Julian- "I love being the line leader!"

Leo- "I love having snowball fights!"

Mattie- "I love writing workshop and playing outside!"

Olive- "I really enjoy share time it's my favorite!"

Palmer- "It's so much fun being a black bear!"

Rowan- "I love going sledding with my friends!"

Samuel- "I've loved sledding outside with my friends!"

Svea- "I love share time it's the best!"

Signy- "I love doing share day!"

Thalia- "Share time is my favorite!"

Timothy- "I love playing outside, especially racing on red bikes and playing on the round sleds."

Walter- "I love being outside!"

Thank you and we look forward to sharing with you again in the spring!

Love,

The Black Bear Team!





