



In the Center

From the Office

Congratulations everyone! A couple of days ago we passed 200 "feet" in books read! We are working on a celebration, which will happen in a few weeks. We'll keep you posted.

Is it SPRING? Everyone is so pleased that we have been able to finally get outside. Unfortunately, we are entering the dreaded mud season, so please continue to send in appropriate outdoor clothing and extra indoor clothes. A winter as cold as this one has been challenging for everyone—we've barely been able to go outdoors all winter—so we are taking advantage of the spring-like weather and will be getting wet and muddy for a few weeks.

We are working on enrollment for summer and fall and will be welcoming some new faces beginning in late June. Final summer program dates should be set in the next couple of weeks.

A couple of weeks ago we had a fire drill and several children had to go outside without shoes. Please send indoor shoes or slippers that your child can wear in the classroom. If possible, leaving a pair in your child's cubby would be great. During the fire drill we discovered many cold feet, but the kids were troopers. They have become very good at evacuating the building and going to their appropriate gathering spots. Does your family practice for an emergency in the home? It's always a good idea so that everyone knows what to do.

During our recent in-service day, teachers worked on classrooms, curriculum-building and spring assessments. We always have projects that need to be done, so if you want to take something home to repair or create that would be terrific. Let your classroom teacher or Ilana know.

Enjoy the longer days of sunshine we are now having!!



Sensory Snow-Play—and Eating—in Dawntreaders....

Mary Johnson
Children's Center

Spring 2015

Calendar Reminders

- **April 17**
Center CLOSSES at
1 pm for Inservice
- **May 8**
Center CLOSED for
Parent Conferences
- **May 25**
Center CLOSED for
Memorial Day

DAWNTREADERS ~ Andrea, Kristin & Anna

Although we're all looking forward to the spring thaw, the Dawntreaders have been far from hibernating during these chilly winter months! The children have been busily engaging in a variety of indoor projects, as well as getting out to enjoy the offerings of the outdoors when the weather has allowed it.

Ice-skating has been an incredibly exciting activity for the Dawntreaders. Each time we have gone to the rink, it is neat to see the children's body awareness and confidence on the ice grow as they negotiate the different ways of moving themselves around the slippery surface. Many of the children have had the opportunity to try switching out their boots for skates! The Dawntreaders all did an excellent job practicing their teachers' advice about what to do when you fall: get right back up! Outside, the Dawntreaders have also enjoyed sledding and trying snowshoes.



Sometimes when it's too cold to go out, the Dawntreaders like to bring the outside in! Through playing with snow in the sensory table, building with ice blocks and painting with colored ice, the children have gotten to explore many of the properties of ice and snow within the classroom. Many Dawntreaders would agree that the best thing to do with snow is eat it! (See Cover Photo.)

Dramatic play continues to be a favorite activity in the Dawn Treader classroom. At any given moment babies are being swaddled and rocked, and doctors—often three at a time—are attending to sick teachers. Other times there are super heroes on rescue missions, or construction workers in tutus making a house in the loft, all while the smell of pretend cookies wafts through the air!

The Dawntreaders continue to amaze their teachers by how easy going and cohesive they are as a large group! As the children get older and some start spending more time at school, we have begun working to identify some common emotions and how our bodies look and feel when we are experiencing happiness, sadness, anger, excitement and more. Many of the children's interest in emotions has stemmed from the book *Happy* by Miles Van Hout; a classroom favorite for its bright and expressive illustrations of fish and minimal text!

Several times a week the Dawntreaders have been splitting up into small groups to explore and create! Sometimes children are able to flow freely between activities or choose which group they would like to be in, and other times teachers decide. The small groups have been a fantastic way for the Dawntreaders to take ownership over their own interests and for teachers to help those interests grow and expand in new ways! Tea parties, baking, yoga, beading, and various forms of painting and printmaking have stemmed from these small groups! We are excited to see how some of these projects evolve and change as we move into spring!



NARNIA ~ Darcy, Lisa & Amanda



Another way that we have been expressing our creativity at Mary Johnson is through art. The children have been making very elaborate drawings and are able to talk about what is happening in their pictures. Teachers have been eager to learn about each piece of artwork that comes through the classroom and the Narnians have been more than excited to hold up their masterpieces and tell us about them. We have also been exploring beautiful stuff while down in the studio as well as exploring different art mediums such as clay, corks, birthday bows and feathers.

Have you ever read the book *Windblown?* It is a book about colorful and oddly shaped pieces of paper that get blown in the wind and in the end they create beautiful pictures of animals and other various things. For the past few weeks we have been experimenting with making our own Windblown pictures and putting creative stories behind them. Check them out in the hallway.



Happy March Narnian families! We have gotten through our winter months and are ready to welcome spring. With spring comes MUD. As long as the weather allows us, we will be heading outside more often during our day and we would like to take this time to remind all parents to frequently check to make sure your child has extra clothes here at the center as we will most likely be getting messy.

Speaking of messy, sensory play seems to be a big interest for a lot of the Narnians. In the past months we have made various sensory bottles, played in oobleck, explored whole corn kernels and then the children helped to grind the kernels up into cornmeal using our food mill to use for later sensory play. There has also been water play, and paintings using our feet. The Narnians have incorporated many of their favorite toys into the sensory play as well, and have sparked new ideas for their teachers to incorporate into the classroom. The Narnians have proved to be very creative!



Storytelling is becoming a very popular past time in the Narnian classroom. We have decorated the purple rocking chair in our book area and have named it "The Story Telling Chair". The children have told some big elaborate stories while sitting in that chair and we have documented them. We now have a binder labelled "Narnian Stories" floating around in our classroom that you are welcome to read and look at the pictures that go with the stories. Often times these stories are acted out in dramatic play.

Dramatic play is an ongoing interest in the classroom. In the past few months we have been princesses, firemen, sea creatures, dinosaurs, restaurant owners and of course families complete with babies and pets.

We have been enjoying all of the creative exploratory play happening inside the building. Check back in a few weeks to see where our learning has taken us!

THUNDERDRAGONS ~ Kristen, Sue & Wendy

We are welcoming the sunshine and warmth with open arms! While we've been cooped up inside, there has been no shortage of explorations in our free play and small groups. Here are some highlights:

We have been learning to count in German, with Leo's help. We look forward to learning greetings and counting in a variety of languages that are meaningful to the children in our group, like Portuguese and French.

Snowshoeing has been a fun challenge for us outside!

Our passion for stories is "ginormous"! The children have been telling their own stories. As we share them at meeting, their peers attend with great interest. Most of our drawing challenges are based on the abundance of great books and stories read aloud at meeting.



The children are now signing in, showing how they feel using picture cards of the weather. Using the weather is a meaningful and fun way to help children express their emotions. Try it at home!

The children have been exploring light and shadow play while using the light projector.

Wendy's group has continued to explore yoga and body movement. They have also explored their favorite animals through art and movement. This group has been baking often and making gifts to show appreciation for others!



Sue's group has also been baking often. Most notably, this group has been exploring sea creatures. They have researched information in books and through the internet. Owen is our go-to expert for sea creature information as well! This interest has spread throughout the entire group, as they read fact and fiction books, pretend to ride the sea in dramatic play, use sea animals in the water table, and create art inspired by the ocean and its many creatures.



Kristen's group has spent time experimenting with mixing colors in different ways. They have also been acting out favorite stories, as well as movement books into their work together. They recently worked to make a large tree for *Caps for Sale*, and have had a blast acting this favorite out. One day the entire group joined us in this favorite.

Thanks for all of your participation in the reading challenge. The children are so proud to hang their feet up and to tell others about the details and events in these books!



We gladly welcome Jeff Rowekamp to the classroom. Jeff will be temporarily filling in while we find a third classroom teacher. It is nice to have someone so familiar to the Caspians!

It certainly has been a busy couple of months upstairs in the classroom! The children are eagerly continuing their exploration of the Earth's oceans.

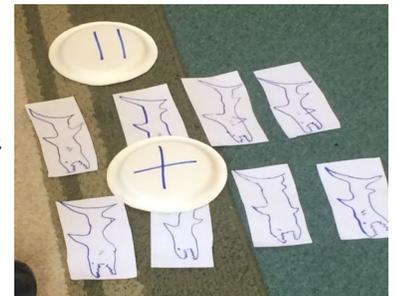
Using inspiration from many of our classroom books, all of the children have worked with Chris on creating a life-size whale shark. The process of creating this has inspired the children and teachers in our classroom to ask new, thought-provoking questions about oceans and the many creatures they contain.

It has also given the children opportunities to explore other key concepts that will guide them in their future learning, such as math (as they measure foot by foot), fine motor (as they paint the shark), early literacy (as they read more and more books about sharks), social studies (as they map out oceans on the earth) & science (as they learn life-cycles of sharks and other marine life).



We continue to collaborate as teachers to discuss the various ways we can bridge all of the ideas that are currently flowing throughout the classroom together.

Thankfully, the Caspians are never short of creativity and we know we can find a variety of connections within our ideas!



Matt (after observing a very successful tape/painting project done by Sara Mason) took inspiration from this idea and placed the same materials out for the children to use one morning. We were all very inspired to see how many of the Caspians took to this project and watched/assisted as they eagerly created various geometric shapes. He followed up with this down in the studio recently, where small groups got to use the same materials in a larger scale on easel paper. Although the experience was intended to provoke thinking/conversations about shapes, colors, etc., it was amazing to see the children's products. They truly were beautiful!

There are many other amazing things happening in our classroom right now and we look forward to talking more in depth with you all at parent conferences in May! Please watch for your child's progress report about a week before that. Until then we wish you all the best!

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES ~ Marcie Tierney

Monday Morning Coffee...

Don't forget—Monday mornings we have coffee and breakfast treats for all parents. We always look forward to seeing you—stop by and say "Hi"!

Answering your questions about child care...

If you have questions for Marcie, you may leave them in the suggestion box in the front foyer.

Welcome to Nolan!

Congratulations to Marcie & her family who welcomed a beautiful baby boy on February 16—Nolan! He is doing very well, and has made appearances at Mary Johnson already to check out Mommy's workplace and meet everyone. Marcie will return from maternity leave on April 6.

FYI — Addison County Readers & Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

What Is Dolly Parton's Imagination Library?

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is...FREE!

It sounds almost too simple to be true, but by reading regularly with your children during their preschool years, you are giving them the biggest boost toward a successful education they will ever get.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library will help you read with your child. There are many reasons parents do not read to their child, but we can eliminate one of them. Every child will have books of their very own, **at no cost to you**, thanks to **Addison County Readers, Inc.** and Dolly Parton.

Each month a new, carefully selected book will be mailed in your child's name directly to your home. He/she can look forward to new and exciting reading adventures from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library until he/she turns five years old as long as you remain a resident of **Addison County, VT**. Should the child move outside **Addison County, VT**, he/she automatically exits the program.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a **FREE GIFT** to our children! **All you have to do is read to your children.**

Who Is Eligible?

Preschool children (birth until their fifth birthday) **of Addison County, VT.**

What Are My Responsibilities?

1. Be a resident of **Addison County, VT.**
2. Submit an official registration form, completely filled out by parent or guardian (form must be approved and on file with **Addison County Readers, Inc.**).
3. Notify **Addison County Readers, Inc.** any time your address changes. Books are mailed to the address listed on the official registration form. **If the child's address changes, you must contact your friends at the address on this brochure in order to continue receiving books.**
4. Read with your child.

When Will I Receive Books?

Eight to ten weeks after your registration form has been received, books will begin arriving at your home and will continue until your child turns five or you move out of **Addison County, VT.**

How Can I Help?

Do you know a preschool child in **Addison County, VT** who is not receiving Dolly Parton's Imagination Library? Give their parents a brochure/registration form and encourage them to fill it out and mail it to the address below. Telling them about this **FREE program** can make a huge difference in their future and the future of our community.

If you know of a business, organization or individual who would like to donate funds to support this gift to your children, donations can be sent to:

United Way of Addison County/ Addison County Readers, Inc.

2 Court Street
P.O. Box 555
Middlebury, VT 05753
(802) 388-7189

Dolly Parton's IMAGINATION LIBRARY Official Registration Form (one per child required)

Privacy Statement: This information will not be used for any purpose other than the Imagination Library.

PLEASE PRINT

Preschool Child's FULL Name _____

Child's Date of Birth _____ / _____ / _____ Sex: M F Phone _____

Parent/Guardian's Name _____

Child's Home Address _____

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

Mailing Address (if different) _____

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

"This child is a resident of **Addison County, VT**" _____

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Date Received: _____ Group Code: _____

**Sign up your
child today!**

Simply fill out the above form and mail to:

**United Way of Addison County/
Addison County Readers, Inc.**

75 Main Street
Middlebury, VT 05753
(802) 388-4097

