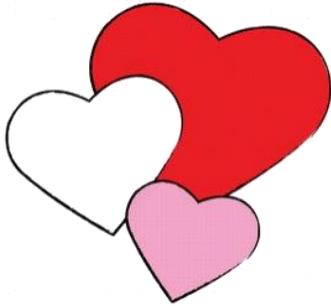


## A Year of Kindness February 2019 Newsletter



**Dear Parents,**

February marks the beginning of the Spring Semester. As we enter the second half of our school year, we welcome the new families that have recently joined us. We are very happy to have you here at GCC! We are also happy to see that daylight is longer now as the season change is coming! Let 2019 be a Year of Kindness! Please join us in this effort!

We hope you have signed up for the phone app that we use: [remind.com/gccpar](https://remind.com/gccpar) to get alerts and reminders from us! It has been very helpful with the inclement weather events that occurred last month.

### High Quality Early Childhood Education

How fast the year is passing! We are so proud of the efforts of all the faculty for the hard work that is done to ensure that GCC is delivering a high-quality early childhood care and education program. Our Re-accreditation Report from the National Association for the Education of Young Children was submitted last month. Accreditation by NAEYC is considered the "Gold Standard" in early childhood education and very few programs in our area volunteer to meet the standards. The staff is commended for all that they do, because their efforts and dedication are significant.

GCC is also licensed by the Office of Child Care and will have an unannounced inspection by the Licensing Specialist sometime soon, We have passed with 100% compliance for almost three decades. We also anticipate the annual Fire Marshall Inspection. These inspections help to ensure that regulations are met for health and safety. GCC participates in the Quality Rating and Improvement System, MD EXCELS, and our program is rated at Level 5, the highest mark of quality. We will always be working hard to keep up with best practices and continuous quality improvement. You can view information about MD EXCELS at [www.marylandexcels.org](http://www.marylandexcels.org).

**We have earned Achievement Badges for Asthma Friendly Childcare, Health & Wellness, Accredited Program, and High-Quality Administrative Practices, in addition to our Level 5 rating.** These achievements really matter as when we experienced an outbreak of the flu last year and reported with the Prince Georges County Health Department. They were surprised to learn that their recommendations were already in practice at GCC. We reported daily on new cases or updated information thanks to the cooperation of the affected families.



## February Activities:

Teachers have a full month of activities planned for your child, which may include units on **Black History, President's Day, Valentine's Day, Dental Health and more!**

**The Colgate Dental Van will be here on February 20th!** Children will watch a short educational video and participate in an interactive demonstration about dental hygiene and have a free dental screening by a dental hygienist. Reports will be given to GCC if a child is found to need further attention by their dentist.

We would really like to see all the children participate in this free activity, even if they have seen their own dentist. The educational component is very good and the children will all want to go see what is on the huge dental van. Parents will be required to complete a release form for your child and we are looking for volunteers to help us walk the children out to the dental van and back on that morning starting at 10:00 am. Please let us know if you or someone in your family is available to help volunteer on February 20th at 10 am.



Look for the sign-up sheet to contribute to the **Valentine's Day Event!** *This supports our Year of Kindness. We will have this on Thursday, February 14 at 11am.* Everyone is invited! Please sign up in your child's classroom. We encourage all children to make a Kindness Card for the friends that are in class with them. Children can also decorate a box or bag to collect their cards in. Families can volunteer to send in a healthy treat.

**Winter Weather:** GCC FOLLOWS THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SNOW OR EMERGENCY CLOSINGS. (IF SCHOOLS OPEN LATE, GCC WILL OPEN LATE ALSO!) Sometimes the public schools are closed when GCC is open, meaning no inclement weather announcement would be made by the school system. *If that happens,* we are using [www.remind.com/gccpar](http://www.remind.com/gccpar), Please sign up for text or email alerts and reminders from GCC! This is our best way to reach everyone quickly, especially if there is an emergency.

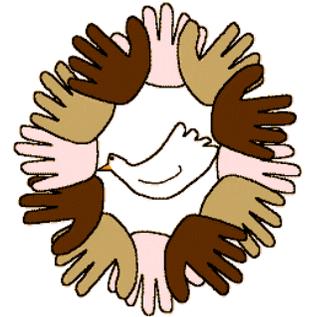
You can register for PG County School's email alerts at [www.pgcps.org](http://www.pgcps.org) and "friend" us on Facebook for the direct link to sign up for weather alerts on the PGCPs website and to get our Facebook messages.





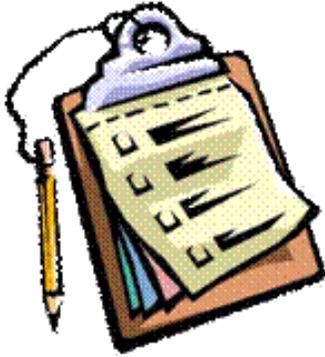
## Did you know?

- You agreed to read at least 10 books from the GCC Lending Library each month?
- GCC provides a monthly reward to each classroom if all the families in the class meet the 10 book Lending Library minimum
- February is African American History month and Children's Dental Health Month. The Colgate Dental Van will do free screenings for children on the 20th!
- Lesson plans and monthly menus are posted in your child's classroom on the Parent Information Bulletin Board. Be sure to stop and look at least once per week. **Classroom Art Folders** are considered "Parent Mailboxes". Be sure to check yours daily for important communications being sent home to you.
- Please make sure your child's shot record is up to date in the office! Remember to **update the office anytime your child receives boosters! (Especially for four or five year olds!)**
- Please remember to check the Parent Information Board in your child's classroom for specific details about **Show and Tell** each week. Parents' efforts with Show and Tell have been wonderful this school year! The Reminder board on the front door donated by a former family has been a great help!
- It's time to plan for the children's transitions for next school year. Some children will change classrooms in the fall: children turning four by September 1, 2019 will move to pre-kindergarten and may be eligible to move to Pre-k in **Room 1**, if your family resides in Prince Georges' County and meets other eligibility requirements needed. If you are an out of county resident, your child may join the Pre-k program in **Room 3**. Children turning five by that date will be eligible for **Kindergarten**. **We have decided to discontinue our Alternative Kindergarten program at GCC. Please be sure to register your child for kindergarten in the spring-usually April.**
- Children entering the public-school system need to be registered by April.
- GCC teachers will begin working on individualized transition plans which includes preparing information for each child and discussing upcoming changes with children so that they will be well prepared for school changes. We count on parents to share information, so we can do that. Look for Summer & Fall Intention Forms in April when we will need information from each family about your decision for the 2019-2020 school year.
- Everyone who comes to GCC to pick up a child is required to show a picture identification upon request. Please inform all family members and friends





- Everyone dropping off a child or picking up a child must sign in and out as well as record the first and last name of who will pick up and approximately what time.



## Annual Family Surveys

Every year we ask parents to please put an extra couple of minutes in your schedule to complete the **annual survey for the NAEYC maintenance of accreditation process**. We will be asking for parent volunteers to help hand out and collect the surveys so that parents are assured of anonymity and can answer candidly. At a previous Parent-Teacher Advisory Committee meeting it was suggested that the definitions for some items on the survey, be explained in our newsletter.

For example, the **term “child with special needs” can include a child with: a learning disability, a speech/language delay, a chronic condition such as diabetes or sickle cell anemia, a visual impairment requiring adaptive equipment (glasses), an orthopedic issue requiring braces, a food allergy requiring substitution of foods and/or medication in the event of emergency, asthma and many other issues including those involving administration of medication or caring for a child who is mildly ill, until the parent arrives.** So, if you are asked **if GCC accommodates children with special needs, we hope you will be able to answer YES that we certainly do!** Also, we ask every parent to share information with us about what language is spoken at home and what your child is interested in at home, because teachers use that information to plan for your child as an individual. We asked about your family's home language at your very first appointment with Mrs. Gee. Please remember these points when it is survey time!

*We care very deeply about our work here and our relationships with your child's first teacher-YOU!* Please know the surveys we do are markers of accountability for how successful we are implementing the best practices required for maintaining accreditation and improving our program and practices. Results of our surveys will be reported to parents, posted on class bulletin boards.

Parents of PG County Public Pre-k students will have an additional Parent Survey by the PGCPs Grant Evaluator as required in our grant.

## Absolute Necessities:

Every child needs an extra complete change of clothes at all times! Please check, today if possible, to see if your child has underwear and socks as well as an extra shirt and pants. Remember - your child really counts on you for this! (At least two changes are requested for the younger children.)

**Please send boots and mittens so that we can comfortably enjoy the outdoors whenever the weather allows. Please label each item brought from home with your child's name.**

Remember that you can view our Breakfast & Snack Menu, Newsletters and Calendars for each month of the school year on our website at [greenbeltchildrenscenter.com](http://greenbeltchildrenscenter.com). In addition, check out and like us on the Greenbelt Children's Center Face Book page.



## Birthdays are special



We are happy to share in your child's birthday celebration at GCC but please keep best practices in mind. Treats and goody-bags must only include safe, age appropriate and healthy items. Remember the Maryland regulation that prohibits any program from serving a **beverage** that has added sugar or caffeine, even if a parent sends it in. We are only allowed to serve 100% fruit or vegetable juice, water or 1% milk.

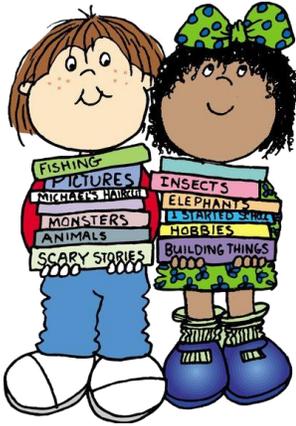
Special occasion treats should be commercially prepared or may be whole fresh fruits or vegetables, washed and cut appropriately. Foods brought to GCC may never contain any seafood or nut products, which may cause a severe allergic reaction in many young children. **Parents are encouraged to donate a new book to the GCC lending library in their child's honor to mark the event!**

## Portion Sizes

We would like to remind parents about **appropriate** portion sizes. Teachers sometimes see young children with enormous amounts being packed. When portion sizes are way too large, it overwhelms a young child. Appropriate serving sizes for pre-school children are  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup or 1-2 ounces, for most foods. Take a look at your containers and measure what they hold. We are encouraging smaller portions to prevent childhood obesity. **Another reminder is to pack servings of a fruit and vegetable in every lunch every day!** Most parents are doing an excellent job with packing good nutrition in daily lunches. It is recommended that "Lunchables" be avoided



due to the high fat and sodium contents. **Remember, GCC is nut free!** This is a life or death issue for some of our children and we thank you for being members of a caring community.



## Lending Library Continues:

**Have you been faithful about reading 10 books per month to your child? Thank you!!**

We need everyone's help in fulfilling goals for the grant partnership with the local school system.

We need you to **borrow, log and read 10 books every month to your child!!** We need you to **return the books** after your child is finished with them (this may be several days as children may want to hear a book again and again AND it is Ok to ask for repeat books that your child loves!). When you return the books, the staff will assist you in **getting new books** for your child. This is a three step process! Can we count on you? It's a very good thing for your child!

More and more research is showing that the children who love books are the children who succeed in school! We are offering an incentive to each classroom that has **100% family participation of ten books read to each child** by the end of each month! Every family must meet the goal or the class will not earn the incentive. Please make sure you are helping to meet this goal-**check out a book today!** Read 10 books each month to your child from our lending library! Help your child's class to meet the goal this and every month!

## Important Tax Information

When claiming child care on your income tax form, you will need to use the Center's **FEDERAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER** which is: **52-1689271**. End of year tax summaries were placed in Art folders in January for use in filing your income taxes. Lost forms needing a reprint will cost \$5.00.



## EARNED INCOME CREDIT

Also, for *any family* with an income of about \$33,692.00 or less, be sure to fill out "Schedule EIC" to see if you are eligible for **UP TO \$4900.00** of Earned Income Credit (this is a Federal Income Tax Form). This benefit is for both married and single parents. There is also a **Maryland EIC for your state taxes**.

**For more information about the Earned Income Credit and where you can get your taxes done for free, call First Call For Help at 1-800-492-0618 or the IRS toll free at 1-800-829-1040 or go to [www.irs.gov/individuals/topic](http://www.irs.gov/individuals/topic).**

## Welcome to Ms. Chikage, Japanese Intern!

We welcome Ms. Chikage from the Aichi Shukutoku University under Faculty of Global Culture and Communication, Pedro Faingnaert, Program Manager. GCC serves as an educational resource for the international exchange of cultures. Past years, parents may remember our intern from Japan in Room 2, Ms. Ayana who keeps in touch with us on the GCC Face Book page and enjoys seeing her former students as they grow and learn and the intern, Ms. Ayana who was assigned to Room 3 last year. We appreciate the GCC teachers who serve as mentors. We love how the children will learn about the culture, food, children and dress of Japanese citizens and the student from Japan learns about American families and education. What a great experience for everyone!

## Children's Advocacy Activities

Our director, Mrs. Gee participates as an advocate for early childhood care and education by joining many others from Maryland Family Network (MFN), MD State Child Care Association, Maryland Family Child Care Association, and the Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC) to visit legislators in Upper Marlboro, Annapolis and on Capitol Hill. She recently attended Children's Advocacy Evening in Annapolis, a yearly event attended by many providers who work in centers and family child care homes. She had lively discussions with Delegate Tawanna Gaines, Geraldine Valentino-Smith and Senator Douglas Peters. She is scheduled to write and give testimony on behalf of the MDAEYC at various public hearings in Prince Georges County and Annapolis this session, as she serves as Public Policy Chair for both the state and the local county chapter.

Please let Mrs. Gee know if you'd like to attend Public Policy Committee meetings, or the local early childhood council or committees and to be a part of important discussions about legislative issues or policies that affect children and families, this year.



Mrs. Gee is scheduled to attend the annual Public Policy Forum of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), visiting federal legislators on the Hill on February 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>, with the Public Policy Committee for the MDAEYC and continues in her appointment by Governor Hogan, to serve on the state's Early Childhood Advisory Council, for a second term.

## No Small Matter Film Screening

**February 20, 6:30 pm at the Prince George's Child Resource Center**

**9475 Lottsford Road, Largo, Md. (No child care available)**

No Small Matter explores the most overlooked, underestimated, and powerful force for social justice in America today: early childhood education. It lays out the overwhelming evidence for the importance of the first five years and reveals how our failure to act on that evidence has resulted in an everyday crisis for American families, and a slow-motion catastrophe for our country. Please mark your calendar to join Mrs. Gee, Director and Regional Officer for the Prince George's chapter of the Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children, other parents, educators and advocates to view the film and discuss what actions can be taken. There will be a second screening in the same location on March 6 at 9:30 am. All parents are invited. **Please RSVP to [sledbetter@pgcrc.org](mailto:sledbetter@pgcrc.org).**

## Wolf Trap Artist in Residency Program

The children will soon be enjoying activities with our Artist in Residency Program. Each classroom will be engaged in bringing language and literacy to life as they relate to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), through an innovative program. Children participate using the performing arts to act out stories, and learn skills such as perspective taking, character education, and values as they take on the roles of characters in the stories. They are now presenting this special program all over the country. We encourage you to pull up a chair watch this special program in action!



Wolf Trap Foundation has the results of a four-year study showing that Early Childhood STEM Learning Through the Arts program has a positive impact on students' math achievement and on teachers' practice. Early childhood is a critical time for learning, and educators, policymakers and parents are all looking for ways to measurably affect learning outcomes, so this is wonderful news for the early childhood and arts education fields, as well as for the Foundation. You can view a short video about the study, or read the full report, here: [www.wolftrap.org/stemartsstudy](http://www.wolftrap.org/stemartsstudy)

We will be holding two Wolf Trap Family Involvement Workshops. Both Wolf Trap Artists will work with parent & child to lead you through very FUN activities. You will get ideas to use in spending time with your child at home and it builds on your skills as your child's first teacher. Please sign up and join us! We think that your child will benefit very much from this enriching program and we are happy to be able to offer this at GCC.

## Social-Emotional Skills that Promote School Readiness:

- Being able to wait
- Controlling anger & impulses
- Expressing empathy with other's feelings
- Following rules, routines & directions
- Giving compliments
- Helping adults & peers
- Identifying feelings in oneself and others
- Learning how to calm down
- Learning how to recognize anger in oneself + others
- Problem solving
- Sharing toys and other materials
- Showing patience for others
- Suggesting play themes + activities to peers
- Taking turns
- Understanding appropriate ways to express anger
- Understanding how and when to apologize



By giving children the tools that they need to work well with others, and be flexible and responsive, we provide the foundations for healthy social-emotional development. Let's work together at home and at GCC, to teach, model and practice these important life skills for our children. Let's help our children have a high emotional IQ!



**Practice Random Acts of  
Kindness!**

*Happy Valentine's Day  
from your teachers at GCC!*