



NEWSLETTER: SPRING 2016

From the Director

Dear Parents,

It is wonderful to see the beginnings of spring; the lighter evenings, patches of grass and especially fewer clothes for our little ones to put on. Of course we now have to deal with all those puddles and wet socks but this year our yard seems to be drying out quite fast.

Over the next week we are welcoming eight new children to the BLC, six toddlers and two junior preschoolers. This means that we will be at capacity, with seventy six children attending BLC on any given day. By expanding our senior preschool to twenty four children, (and hiring Amanda Brighten as our extra teacher), we have been able to move up six toddlers who are now preschool age. Registration for September is well underway and the spaces are filling up quickly. Thank you for doing such a great PR job for us. Many of the new parents say they chose to send their children to BLC because of the recommendation of friends and neighbours.

The children had a lot of fun on Hop-a-thon Day. With their bunny ears and their pink noses, they hopped to 'Hop, hop, hop until you drop, drop, drop', 'Easter Parade', 'Happy', and 'Sleeping Bunnies'. Thanks to your generosity we raised \$1,181 for Muscular Dystrophy. I took some great videos of the children and hope to share them with you at our AGM in June.

Last week BLC hosted a town hall meeting to discuss the proposed changes to childcare. Thank you to parents Idzva Kotwas and Sylvia Robbins, and teachers Beth, Karen and Violeta for attending the meeting together with more than sixty other early childhood educators and interested parents from across Ottawa. The Ministry of Education has asked for feedback to their proposal which would have toddlers start at 12 months with a 1:4 ratio, and preschoolers start at 24 months with a 1:8 ratio. There is a lot of concern in the childcare community that these changes would have a negative impact on our children and staff. For example, in our junior preschool we would have two teachers with 16 children of 24 months, most of whom would not be toilet trained. There is also a great deal of concern about mixing non-walking babies with toddlers who like to run. We sincerely hope that the Ministry will reconsider their proposal. Violeta has set up a communication app called Basecamp which will enable early childhood educators across the City to keep in touch, ask questions and provide support to one another. I think it will be a very useful communication tool.

Thank you to those of you who have already dropped off donations for our annual Dinner Auction. Please keep them coming! Our

great ideas. Tickets for the auction will go on sale at the office on April 11th and will be \$35 each.

Finally I would like to thank all of you for your committee work which makes such a difference to the smooth operation of our centre. Whether you are washing toys, mending cot sheets, taking home recycling, making play dough or serving on the Board, we are very grateful for your valuable contribution.

Yours,

Jackie

IMPORTANT DATES 2016

Dinner Auction at Wabano: May 6th

Preschooler Photo Day: May 16th

Annual General Meeting: June 16th

Summer Fun Day: June 18th

Canada Day: July 1st (BLC will be closed)

Public Holiday: August 1st (BLC will be closed)

BLC closed for program changeover: September 2nd

Labour Day: September 5th (BLC will be closed)

CONTENTS

Important Dates.....	1
From the Director.....	1
From the Board.....	2
From the Social Committee.....	2
Junior Preschool.....	3
Nursery School and Middle Preschool....	3-4
Toddler Room.....	5
Senior Preschool.....	5-6



www.kindercare.org

From the Board Chair

I hope that you all had a wonderful Easter weekend! It seems that winter has come to an end and spring has arrived - the snow has mostly melted, leaving us with lots of muddy puddles (perfect for splashing in!). The geese are slowly making their return and just the other day I spotted my first robin! Although it wasn't necessarily a harsh winter, I am still glad that it is over. I love the freedom of being able to get outside without having to bundle up in snow pants, hats, mitts, etc.! I also love that the children will get to spend more and more time playing outside...we have such a big, beautiful outdoor play area and it's wonderful to take advantage of it (not to mention, I'm sure my washing machine is looking forward to the never ending supply of sand that seems to make its way home with my son)!

As you may already be aware, a BLC tradition is almost upon us – in just 5 weeks BLC will host its annual Dinner & Auction (silent and live) at the Wabano Centre on Montreal Road. This represents our biggest fundraiser of the year and it will take place on Friday, May 6th. Having attended this event the past few years, I can assure you that it promises to be a great “adults only” night out! Feel free to invite family and/or friends to join you – the more, the merrier! Be sure to book your babysitters early, as you don't want to miss out on this fantastic night! Our Beacon Hill-Cyrville City Councillor Tim Tierney has graciously offered to host yet again this year and we are grateful for his support. Please note that if you have any unused items that you would like to donate to the auction, you can see Jackie R. in the office.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for supporting this year's Hop-a-thon in support of Muscular Dystrophy. With your help, the BLC has exceeded its fundraising goal (118%)! I know that the children enjoyed decorating their bunny ears and hopping along to their favourite songs.

As always, if you have any questions about the Board or any of the activities underway at BLC, I would be happy to hear from you. In the meantime, I look forward to seeing you on May 6th!

Wishing you a safe & happy spring!

Caroline Paterson

Social Committee Director

Dear Parents,

Happy Spring from the social and fundraising committee! First, we would like to thank all the families who participated in the Winter Fun Day in February. A great time was had by all, and the kids are still talking about the special visit by Elsa! Our next big event is BLC's much anticipated annual Dinner & Auction on Friday May 6th, 2016! Hire a babysitter, invite your friends and family, and join fellow BLC parents and teachers for a fun night out. For the second year in a row, the fundraiser will take place at the Wabano Meeting & Events Centre-- a state-of-the-art cultural venue just 10 minutes west of Beacon Hill.

Date: Friday May 6th, 2016

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Wabano Centre, 299 Montreal Rd (parking map to follow)

Beacon Hill-Cyrville Councillor, Tim Tierney, will kindly host this important event. The evening will be filled with a variety of exciting highlights including:

- Door prizes
- Raffles
- A silent auction
- A live auction featuring Disney vacation rental & park passes,
- An *all-you-can-eat* fajita dinner made by Wabano's in-house Chef

Here are three ways you can help make this fundraiser our best yet. First, you can purchase tickets starting April 11th, 2016. Second, you can invite your neighbours, family and friends: let's fill the venue! Third, you can donate auction items. Check out the list of auction ideas on the BLC website and drop items off in Jackie's office over the next couple weeks. If you have any questions, please email Melissa at melissa.hammell@gmail.com

Thank you again for all your support!

Melissa Hammell

Junior Preschool

The Junior Preschool classroom is quite a busy place to be. It is truly amazing to see how much the children seem to grow both physically and socially over just a few months! New friendships are being formed and we are really pleased to see the children reach new levels of confidence. It is wonderful to listen and be a part of the children's interactions as they play together and learn to work around "problems" and come up with "solutions" for themselves. The children now encourage and work with each other as they build high towers with the blocks on the carpet, airplanes with clothes pins or take turns with sharing the ice cream cones in their play kitchen.

The 4th of April is our big *moving day*. Eight of our children (Alma, Sophie, Hannah, Ruby, Bella, Bree, Bea & Emery) will be moving to middle preschool. We will miss them dearly, and wish them all the very best. We will always remember the fun times we had learning and playing together. Thomas, Cole, Noah, Madina, Zoe and Ashley will be moving up from our toddler class while Matthew and Aiden are new to the BLC. We would like to extend a great big welcome to you all!

Our thanks go out to all the parents who shared their children's favourite stories with us during Literacy Week. Reading and sharing stories is so much fun and a great way for the children to increase their vocabulary, build their imagination and attention span. The children love listening to stories at the new listening station with their own headphones and also looking at the pictures displayed on the Literacy board we had in our classroom. The children have also enjoyed experimenting with different materials, colours and ideas to come up with their own lovely creations that were on display in our *Art Gallery* during the month of March. We hope that you took a minute to enjoy looking at them as well as pictures of our highlights of the week on our bulletin board.

Over the past couple of months we have explored themes such as *Winter Fun*, *Winter Birds*, *Valentine's Day*, *Families and Easter*. The children love pointing out the members of their family to their friends; now we are all one big community at junior preschool where everybody knows everybody! The winter theme was filled with delightful rhymes of snowmen and chickadees, while we played with snowdough and did science experiments with melting snow. The Valentine weeks were "love"ly and while we enjoyed exploring our feelings and emotions, we just had to end this fun theme with a party. The Easter Bunny peeked into our class for a split second and churned up a lot of excitement when he turned up with eggs for the children at the school. The children hop, hop, hopped at the Hop-a-thon and their Easter Party with their "bunny ear" hats. Snow seems to be popping in and out of our spring season this year, but we know that the warm spring weather will

soon be here, with green grass replacing that white fluffy stuff! We would be grateful if you could ensure that your child has the appropriate attire (splash pants and rubber boots) to enjoy those absolutely irresistible spring puddles, as we will take advantage of every opportunity we get to learn, play and grow in the fresh air outdoors.

On a final note, we are especially proud of our children as all of them can now dress on their own, and also use the potty!! Hurrah to all our big boys and girls! We look forward to more fun, learning and sharing at junior preschool in the months to come and wish all our families a Happy Spring!

Linda & Jackie E.



www.celebrations.com

Nursery School and Middle Preschool

The arrival of spring has greeted us with the much anticipated sounds of birds chirping, tricycles pedaling and children splashing in "muddy puddles". Just as we welcome spring with open arms, Nursery School is welcoming a new friend, Elizabeth. Change is in the air as Alma, Bella, Beatrice, Bree, Shopie, Hannah, Emery and Ruby move up from Junior Preschool to join Violeta and Becky in the Middle Preschool. We are so excited to get to know the new children and their families in the coming months!

We say "so long" to Grace, Sarah, Alec, Ray, Niki, Autumn, Jonah and Ethan as they move onto new adventures in the Senior Preschool room. We look forward to spending afternoons with these eight children just as we treasure the past seven months we've been able to spend with them.

Although snow will soon be a thing of the past this season, we did enjoy a winter full of snowy learning and fun. When we weren't outside playing in the snow – sledding, shoveling, painting or building – we brought the snow indoors and experimented with all our senses the concepts of ice, melting and colour mixing.

At the end of February the children discovered a woolly bear caterpillar hibernating in the snow. We brought the caterpillar indoors and together with the children recreated its habitat. This was a perfect launch pad for talking about metamorphosis and the children were able to observe the caterpillar change daily. We were curious and excited to see our fuzzy friend build a cocoon and we await its next transformation into a tiger moth.

We had a very special guest visit our classroom and help us plant the seeds that will begin an outdoor butterfly garden full of many species of flowering plants. Thank you to our Nursery School friend Thea's mom. She shared her green thumb and her seeds with us. The children took part in planting seeds in tiny bags which are currently outdoors freezing and thawing, preparing to sprout. They observe the seeds frequently when we are outside playing and we are all very excited to see sprouts, blossoms and blooms!

Maps have been an enormous source of interest and inquiry in our classroom. Simple maps begin to teach children how to find a location while using spatial terms like forward, backward, inside, next, behind, in front etc. in context.

As a group we are also beginning to understand some of the conventions of print. For example when children look at books, they may be "pretending" to read. Holding books the right way and making a mark on paper with pencils or markers are other examples of understanding print. Noticing the prevalence of letters and words that surround us every day helps to foster literacy, language and pre-writing.

Because of the various opportunities to learn thorough play in the classroom we are able to watch the children interact positively and respectfully both with their teachers and each other. Every day we see "bucket filling" in action though the many examples of helping, co-operation and empathy that continue to evolve in each and every child. Whether passing around the napkins at the lunch table, asking someone "are you ok?", or sharing a shovel these simple acts are important aspects of developing self-concept, language skills and social skills in children. It is so rewarding to see examples of this on a daily basis.

Water colours, car painting, scissor practice, cutting and pasting are just a few of the art activities children have been enjoying. Many thanks to those parents who have contributed to our "beautiful junk" collection. Children enjoy the freedom and creativity that using loose parts to make art gives them. Buttons, bits of felt, scraps of paper, stickers....the list goes on. If you have any beautiful junk at home, don't throw it out! Your extra "stuff" is our treasure!

Books, too, are treasures. We talk a lot about caring for books, like where to store them and how to treat them. Silly poems by Denis Lee (*Alligator Pie* and *Garbage Delight*) have become a quick favourite. *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Helen Oxenbury and Michael Rosen uses actions to tell a story. Books about outer space, butterflies and cars and trucks are of interest to the children as well.

We have seen so much growth in oral communication, as well as letter and number recognition. The children are quickly grasping the idea that letters can be put together to write and say words. The "Letter Box" brings exciting new words everyday as we concentrate on a letter each week. Ask your children *questions* about what "Q" words we will discover soon!

Congratulations to all our friends who have mastered the "flip-a-roo" with their winter jackets. They have all worked so hard this winter learning and perfecting these skills that spring dressing will come easy for them once raincoats, splash pants and rubber boots (labeled please!) start arriving from home.

We are always happy to hear how your children are doing at home and value your feedback. We look forward to the next few months together and are proud to say everyone is filling each other's "buckets" daily!

Becky and Violeta



msue.anr.msu.edu

Happy Spring from the Toddler Room!

We survived yet another long, cold winter marked by infrequent outdoor play and fighting germs. We welcome the arrival of spring and are looking forward to the warmer weather.

To deal with the increasingly wet, muddy yards, we would ask parents to bring lots of extra clothes, namely: socks, pants, mittens, splash pants, boots and hats. **Labelling** clothes is very important. It helps us ensure that mitts and socks and other items get returned properly as it is difficult for us to remember which clothes belong to whom. It is also a good opportunity for parents to go through their children's green bins and check if everything still fits. We all know how fast children grow!

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new Algonquin College ECE student, Sheena, who started on March 22nd. She will be with us for six weeks.

Over the winter, we had a few special events that the children enjoyed very much. During Literacy Week (January 25th to 29th) a few of the parents came in to read their children's favourite stories; it was a special time enjoyed by all. It was also nice to see a lot of our families join in the Winter Fun Day activities held on February 6th. On February 12th we celebrated Valentine's Day by wearing Valentine hats that we had made and eating a special, yummy snack. Recently we had our Hop-a-thon Day where the children had a great time wearing bunny ears and jumping to fun music. Our winter programming included winter stories, crafts, ice-cube painting and lots of sensory fun such as playing with goop, foam sand, coloured snow and corn meal.

As you may have noticed, we have changed our documentation wall theme from the children's balloons to a, "Did You Know..." theme. This is a fun way for us to document some of our observations for each child. This will be changed on a monthly basis. Next to this wall, you will also notice the cupboards with our learning stories. They will be posted there for parents to see before they are transferred into the children's red binders. In the hallway beside our program we have posted a webbing chart to demonstrate the ideas that we plan to implement. This chart is part of our *Emergent Curriculum Programming* where the children's interests can also be included. We will be posting the spring charts soon.

This is the time of year for some of our friends to move up to junior preschool. We would like to wish Cole, Madina, Noah, Thomas, Ashley and Zoe all the best in their new program. Now we welcome Yiyi, Naima, Henry M., Rayyan, Micah, Violet and their families to our program. We would also like to remind our families to check their children's art bins on a weekly basis as they get very full with their special art creations. We also wanted to let you know that the new water cups are working out very well.

Thank you!

Sandy, Saman, Karen, Cyndi and Lee



www.parents.com

Senior Preschool

We are all so happy to welcome the spring: the end of snowsuits, hats and mitts! With the changing season of course come some new challenges, mainly WET CHILDREN! Please be sure to keep a complete set of extra clothes at school for your child, especially socks and pants. We will be going outside, even on the wet days and puddles are so much fun!

Beginning in April, our class of 16 will be expanding to 24 when 8 children from middle preschool join us. With the addition of these children comes a new and most welcome teacher, Amanda. Amanda has worked at the centre for quite some time and all of the children know her well. Amanda will start with us on April 11. For the first week of the expanded class her position will be filled by Sandy, one of our toddler teachers.

There has been lots of learning and creative ideas happening within our classroom, much of which you have seen documented on our picture boards posted in the cubby area and the classroom. The children bring such enthusiasm and energy that extends into activities we never imagined. The transparent glasses and swizzle sticks intended for use on the light table, became glasses filled with "juice" of many flavours, and **The BLC Juice Bar** was open for business. It was so much fun to watch the children engaging in this play, learning to take turns, share ideas, listen to one another, count and sort as they served their customers. The juice bar activity continued for several days and eventually involved picnics and travel on trains and planes, while taking their specialty juices along.

Another popular activity was the bakery shop. Cookies, of many varieties (made of felt) were available along with other appropriate props for baking and cooking. The bake shop employed bakers, decorating experts and cashiers. Lots of counting, scooping, stirring and measuring were happening. Of course no bake shop can be successful without customers, fortunately, we had a lot of them. Looking to spring, we expect to engage the children in activities such as making fairy gardens, exploring the world of insects, observing caterpillars morphing into butterflies (for real), planting seeds and growing vegetables and sunflowers. We will be keeping our ears and eyes open to follow the lead of the children as they show an ever increasing interest in the world around them and excitement to explore new topics.

One of the most favourite and successful ideas in our classroom is the KINDNESS JAR. It has been filled and refilled a few times. The idea behind this, is that when teachers notice a child being kind, that child can then place a pompom in the jar. The children really seem to put a premium on this and all work together to watch the jar fill to the top. When the jar is full they can collectively decide on the reward. What has been especially rewarding for us, is that initially children would come and tell us when they had done something kind, however over recent weeks children have been coming to tell us when someone else has done something kind for them. Just wonderful! Once the nicer weather is here, there will be a much stronger focus on outdoor play and physical development. We are fortunate that we can use both the large yard and also can take advantage of the yard just outside our classroom. With the addition of 8 new children we will be creative in using this space to retain the advantages associated with a smaller group size. Some children will be taken outside while others remain inside for parts of the morning.

Lastly, please be sure to put your child's name in their clothing! The boots are especially challenging with lots of duplicates and similar sizes.

If you have any questions, please speak to us at any time.

Amanda, Beth, Becky, Cathy and Wendy



www.catster.com