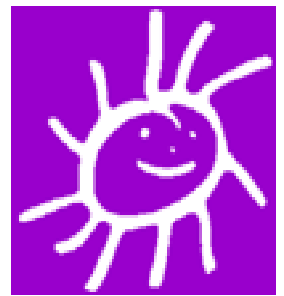


# The Children's Center at Caltech



February 2008

## From Susan's Desk

From the Director	1
From the Science Lab	1-2
Bunny Hopping	2
Dolphin Splash	2-3
Penguin Parade	3
Koala Korner	3-4
Raccoon Roundup	4
Beaver Tales	4
From the Editors	4-5
Parking Please	5

## Upcoming Activities

**Center Closed**  
**Monday, February 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**Presidents Day**

293 South Chester Avenue  
Pasadena, California 91106  
626.395.6860  
626.793.7308 fax  
[www.ccc.caltech.edu](http://www.ccc.caltech.edu)

I am sure that you have all seen me giving tours of the Center. Despite being told of our long waiting list many families take their chances and, if you are from the 'Community,' you pay \$50 for the privilege of waiting for years for a spot to open. I give tours for anyone who wants one because I think that it is important for families to compare and contrast different programs in order to find the right fit for their child.

Even the best quality programs have their own distinctive style and child care is not one size fits all. Our science-based curriculum does make us unique and needless to say I am very proud of the high quality care our teachers provide everyday. But when the following letter arrived it made all those days when the toilet is clogged, staff is sick, and the milk order is late, worth it.

Dear Susan,

I just wanted to thank you again for the tour Wednesday. As a secondary waitlist family, we accept that it may be a very long wait... and that indeed we may never be offered a spot, but it is important for me to share my impressions of your school with you, as I have exuberantly shared with almost everyone I've encountered in the last couple of days.

The Caltech Children's Center features the most inviting facilities, warmest staff and cohesive spirit of any school I've ever visited! It brings the

best of the educational philosophies of Montessori, Piaget, and Howard Gardner (etc.) into an environment that encourages play, empathy, creativity, and curiosity.

Thank you for showing me that all of this is possible and that the CCC embraces it.

I think I'll frame it.

**Fondly - Susan**

## From the Science Lab

This cold, wet weather is perfect for blowing bubbles because they actually last longer in high humidity. We have enjoyed seeing how big we can make



them and watching the breeze catch them and carry them away into the sky.

You can do this at home, too. Try making your own

bubble solution as follows:

- 500 milliliters distilled water
- 120 milliliters dishwashing detergent
- 30 milliliters glycerin

Mix and let sit overnight before using.

You can make your own bubble blowing tools as well. Try a coat hanger. Thread some yarn between two straws to make a rectangular bubble frame.

Accredited by NAEYC's  
National Academy  
of Early Childhood  
Programs



Punch a hole in the bottom of a sippy cup and blow through it. You'll be surprised at the result.

When making bubbles, you can ask your child if different sizes and shapes of bubble tools make different bubbles. Also, ask what makes the bubbles move in the air and what makes the colors in the bubbles.



## Bunny Hopping

*Greetings Bunny Families!*

The Bunnies looked at some Cause and Effect during the month of December. We looked at cause and effect in relation to things that fall. We watched the leaves fall down from the trees and bubbles fall down to the ground. Some of the older children tried to blow bubbles themselves with the bubble wands. The children had fun jumping in piles of leaves. We also did a lot of ball play. The children dropped balls into ball drops and looked to see where they went when they fell down. We also used ramps and tubes in which the children rolled balls down. The children had fun painting with leaves. We also painted with balls. The older bunny children had fun singing and participating in Ring-Around-The-Rosies with their friends. We also enjoyed singing other songs such as "I'm a Bubble," and "Show Me Your Jumping."



The Bunnies would like to say a sad farewell to our former Bunny **Neeku** and her family. Neeku has transitioned over to the Dolphin room. We miss her, but

we know that she is growing and learning many new things in her new environment. She has reunited with her good friend **Daria** who transitioned shortly before her to the Dolphin room.

The Bunnies would also like to say a sad farewell to **Gili** and her family who recently left Caltech. We would also like to say thank you to Ruth (Gili's mom) for being our room parent. She did a great job for the few short months that she was here.

The Bunnies would like to welcome



**Peter** and his family to the Bunny room. Peter and his family have just returned to Caltech after a leave of absence. His sister **Phoebe** who is now a Raccoon was a former Bunny.

The Bunnies say a sad farewell to **Monica Wood**. She is going to be working at the UCLA Child Development Center as an assistant lead. We wish her the best of luck in her new job pursuits.

**Sharon** will be stepping down from her position as lead teacher, but will remain in the Bunny Room as a Senior Teacher. The Bunnies would like to extend a warm welcome to the new Bunny Lead **Eunice Chaure**. The Bunny staff looks forward to working her.

The Bunnies would also like to say thank you and welcome to our two new room parents: **Collete (Molly A.'s mom)**, and **Meirov (Maayan's mom)**.

### Bunny Reminders:

1. Rest-Sitting Opportunities:  
Tuesdays from 1:30-2:30,

Thursdays from 1:30-2:30 and the third Wednesday of the month from 1:15-3:00. These are great opportunities to earn parent hours. If you are not able to rest-sit, but are looking for other ways to earn parent hours, then just ask a Bunny teacher for other parent hour opportunities.

2. Please label all of your child's things. This is to prevent things from getting lost or mixed up.
3. Please remember to sign in and out daily, and to fill out a daily sheet everyday.
4. Don't forget to take home your child's blanket on Friday's to wash it if they have one.

## Dolphin Splash



With the central concept being "Movement" we have been focusing on how leaves move and change. Some curriculum included the

following: making leaf cutouts out of play dough, going for a walk for leaf collection, water color painting with leaves as inspiration, string painting with leaves, leaf imprints, clay molding with leaves, and a leaf collage. The environment around us provided leaves with yellow, red, green, and orange in color.

The activity of the children bringing in a whole piece of their favorite fruit to make a classroom fruit salad for afternoon snack was a great success. With



the combination cognitive development vocabulary), literacy for reinforcement, and small/large motor activities this was an interesting area of planned possibilities for the children. The vocabulary within the classroom continues to grow.

It was previously stated that the next bulk of transitions would happen during the month of January, but this schedule has been changed because we have to confirm availability in the Penguin class and so forth throughout the center. Therefore the next projected date is by the end of March.

Do you need more parent hours to complete the required 20 by September 30<sup>th</sup>? You can earn an hour each time you rest sit during the weekly Dolphin staff meeting (Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30). In addition, earn more time by attending the monthly All-Center Meeting. On February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 to 3:00 the topic will be "Positive Discipline."

For the spring semester 2008 practicum students will be observing the Dolphin classroom. All student names and pictures will be posted for your reference.

Thanks for your continued support of the Dolphin classroom.

## Penguin Parade

The Penguins would like to welcome **Ian**, **Sasha**, and



**Anjali** along with their families to the Penguin class.

As we leave our Fall theme Patterns of Change we are embarking on a new theme, Form and Function. We are focusing on forms of transportation by observing the form and function of wheels in our environment.



In January we had our first Wheel Day. The Penguins rode their tricycles around the roses on the Caltech campus. We are looking forward to having another Wheel Day very soon!

Wheel Day Survey  
Did you like Wheel Day?

**Lilah:** "Yes"

**Dante:** "Yes"

**Sasha:** "Wheels" (shakes head yes)

**Ian:** "Yes"

**Amy:** "Yes"

**Anjali:** "Yes"

**Ryan:** "Yes"

**Samuel:** "Yes"

**Zohar:** "Yes"

**Rhea:** "Yes"

**Elaine:** "Yes"

**Asaf:** "Yes"

So with all of these yes votes we will definitely have another Wheel Day.

## Koala Korner

*Hello Koala Families!*

This past month we have continued our study on water. The

weather was very cooperative as we had a few days to observe and enjoy some rainy days.



There were a few days where the children predicted rain because they saw dark clouds in the sky, but the storms blew over us. When it finally did rain, we

dressed for the occasion and put on our raincoats, boots, and brought out the CCC yellow umbrellas. We had so much fun listening to the raindrops fall and jumping into puddles!

In the cold weather, we also found out that when we blow bubbles they float in the air longer than on warm days! We have also charted different aspects about weather in our classroom like, "What is your favorite weather?" and "What would you wear on a \_\_\_\_\_ day?" Look for your child's response on the bulletin boards.



In our dramatic play area, we have been pretending to be firefighters. The children love to play dress up and imagine they are putting out fires. We have added several new books on firefighters in our library from which many discussions during circle time have taken place. We've talked about the articles of clothing firefighters put on for protection. We've also

read about the necessary tools needed to put out fires. The children have also noted the colors that are seen in a fire such as red, orange, white, yellow, and black. In the yard they have pretended to put out fires by using the hose and spraying water. In



the next few days we will have a field trip to our local Fire Station #34.

The children have become fascinated with finding worms after the rain, and we plan to take our curriculum in that direction for next month.



This month we also welcome a new Koala to the classroom, **Dante Asimow**. He has been reunited with some of his old friends from the Penguin Room. We also have been having lots of

fun with our new teachers **Nancy** and **Manisha!** **Jasmin** has a few more weeks before she will be leaving on maternity. For now she will be working in the classroom in the mornings and doing office work in the afternoons.

## Raccoon Roundup

*Hello Everyone!*

Raccoon work Saturday was a success. Thank you all that came to scrub, wipe and wash the Raccoon room. We greatly appreciate it. Classroom work Saturday's are a great way to earn parent hours quickly. Keep your eyes out for other parent hour opportunities.



January was our final month investigating change. With the most recent storm, children

estimated how much rain would fall. Our range gage recorded over 5 inches of rain. The Raccoons were astonished to see how much rain fell. Our friends also used thermometers to explore the changes that occur with cold vs. warm water. On our campus walks we documented the trees that were changing; once blooming trees are now bare.

We kicked off gardening again. Our blue lupine flowers are finally in bloom. The Raccoons have



journalled their changes in the last few months. We have started turning over the soil to prepare for our next batch of vegetables. We have also started working on our wire work chandelier. It has been an exciting process.

Reminders:

1. Have your child arrive by 9:30 on our scheduled walks, or bike days
2. Earn parent hours rest sitting every third wed. of every month
3. Sign in and out daily.

## Beaver Tales

Although the month of January was quite short, we are delighted to see everyone again! We hope you have enjoyed the break and holiday season. The children are eager to get back into the routine of things and especially revisiting with friends.



We are returning to learning about scale and structure. The children are heavily involved in creating detailed structures with varied materials. We are trying to incorporate different activities to cultivate the creative minds of the children. Walks on campus, surveys, and working in small groups have all contributed to the ongoing curiosity of this month's curriculum.

Keep a look out for the new activities and art in our classroom. Once again, we are happy to start off with a fresh new year!



## From the Editors

Robert Fulghum was the wise man who wrote "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten." Great title, but personally, I could write the story, "What I really need to know about parenting I've learned on the basketball court."

I have worked at Caltech for nearly 10 years, but I've never really had much interaction with the students – until this school year when I became an assistant coach for the Caltech women's basketball team. Before the season began, I looked forward to being part of a team again and thought I had something to offer. What I didn't know was how much these kids would offer me and how it would affect my parenting.

For years Sam has told me that it is difficult to be angry with me because I'm so hard on myself. I always thought this was



a good trait because it showed that I took responsibility for my actions and wanted to be better. I never really understood what Sam meant until this season.

We have a kid on our team who is one of the most amazing athletes I've ever known. She can block shots, get rebounds, and steal the ball; however, when she misses a shot, there is no harsher critic than herself. There's another kid who gets perfect grades as a student at Caltech. I mean, PERFECT. Yet she is often about as mature as Anneliese. While on a team trip, she threw a tantrum: literally throwing her basketball shoes off of an elevator. I told her that I would never allow my 4-year-old to act like that and I wasn't going to accept such behavior from her either. I told her that she needed to fix it and move on.

Fix it and move on.

Last month I got up in the morning and started getting the girls ready for school. Lunch wasn't made yet, breakfast wasn't ready. I rushed around to get everything done. In the meantime, Sophie, our second-grader, was taking FOREVER to get ready. I kept pressuring her; frustrated that she wasn't moving quicker. I rushed her to the car and let her know on the way to school just how frustrated I was with her. And then on the drive back home to finish getting ready for work, I cried because I was, once again, too hard on my terrific daughter.

I was so mad at myself – just as the kid on the team gets mad at herself when she misses a shot. And everyday, I was repeating the same actions. When I got home that night, I looked in the

mirror, and suddenly it hit me. I needed to fix it and move on.

Fix it and move on.

That night before bedtime, I had both girls set clothes out for the next day, and made sure lunches AND breakfasts were made. The next morning instead of getting frustrated with Sophie, I tried to help her succeed. And I did again the next day. Later that week while driving Sophie to school I asked her how I was doing – if I was nicer in the mornings. Sophie replied, "Mama! You've been doing great!"

Trust me. I'm not perfect. I don't get lunches made every night, and there have been a couple too many granola-bar-and-a-piece-of-fruit breakfasts. But there has definitely been less frustration and a lot more kindness and success. I'm learning to fix it and move on. And more importantly, I'm learning that I can't expect myself to be a perfect parent all the time. That alone is such an important lesson.

~Erin

## The Go To Mom

*Susan has asked Licensed Child Therapist and founder of [www.TheGoToMom.TV](http://www.TheGoToMom.TV) Kimberley Clayton Blaine, MA, MFT to write articles for the CCC newsletter. Following is the first of these articles.*

### **Public Discipline**

You are in the market and your child throws the dreaded tantrum, or you are at a play date and your child is being pushy and bossy. If your intervention is done through kindness, then your corrective measure is probably fine in public.

### **Tips to Guide Your Child**

If you find yourself, angry, embarrassed and impatient, take your child aside out of the public view to discuss the situation and how to correct it.

Disciplining children in public can humiliate, embarrass and anger your child even more. Plus with an audience, she knows how vulnerable you both are.

Exerting too much control over your child and the situation will only bring on more defiance.

Take your child aside, get down at their eye level, and softly explain what you see.

Ask how you can help fix things. If your child is under three years old she probably won't be able to come up with something appropriate - offer empathy, encouragement and a plan.

If your child is four or older, she may be able to help with a plan. Always speak matter-of-factly and let her know you are willing to help.

Acknowledge her feelings, and set up a plan so everyone's needs are considered.

Remember, the more force and control you use, the more resistant and difficult your child will be. Children tend to be more cooperative when we set the expectation ahead of time. Preparation and prevention is the key to pleasant public outings with children.

*Here's a formula to remember:*

- Address Child's feelings first
- State expected behavior; and
- State how you will help

# *Evening Under the Stars*

*May 10, 2008*

## **YOUR DONATIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

---

We need auction items -- can you provide...

**Tickets** – to sporting events, concerts, performances...?

**Vacation Homes** – or cabins/getaways to locations far or near...?

**Gift Certificates** – from restaurants, movie theaters, hair salons...?

**Membership** – to gyms, amusement parks, museums...?

**Theme Items** for your class baskets...?

*Any donation is appreciated and helps us raise money that directly enriches your child's experience at the Caltech Children's Center*

### **PARENT WORK HOUR OPPORTUNITIES!**

Basket wrapping, set up, clean up  
If you are not able to attend this event, offering child care for those who would like to attend will earn YOU parent hours.