

Springfield Area Parent Child Center

Strong Communities, One Family at a Time

Early
Childhood
News
Summer/Fall
2014

A Note from Sherry.... our Executive Director

It's been nine months since officially taking over as the director and it is truly unbelievable how fast it has gone. Like the children in our preschool and child care, "growth and development" are keeping our days VERY full and VERY busy.

The leaves of the season remind us just how much "change" is a part of our lives and that is of course true for the staff at SAPCC. In August we reorganized our PlayWorks team and our early childhood educators are now settling in to different classrooms as well as meeting some new children for the first time. We are fortunate that the children in our care are familiar with all of our staff easing the "move up".



We've hosted quite a few tours this fall but none more exciting than the visit we had this week from former Governor Madeline Kunin. She graciously accepted our invitation to visit when she was in Springfield to give a talk to the OSHER group. In just a half an hour, she visited with our students in Learning Together (LTP), telling them about her childhood and her childhood and educational journey. She told them loud and clear "Don't give up hope!" Then she went on to our child care and truly lit up when talking to our preschoolers. She got her hands into the "floam" with a few of them and spoke to our staff

about their work. I know if she had had more time she would have loved to have stayed and played.

As we continued down the hall and she observed sleeping toddlers, and was happy to interact with a few of the babies that were awake. I reported to her with pride that our staff have over 200 years of experience collectively in the early childhood field and that our financial assistance team - the staff that help families determine eligibility for payment help as well as quality programs for their children - is one of the best in the state according to our state grant monitor.



Being able to say that "Madeline Kunin" thanked us for the work we are doing makes me very proud and to be able to consider her a "friend and supporter" of our work is amazing. We are so fortunate that she took the time to stop by and meet us.



The next few months will be busy with focus on our new LTP schedule of enhanced classes and community service requirements. We continue to offer a variety of parent education workshops at our center as well as in Windsor and Bellows Falls. Our Childrens Integrated Services (CIS) team is enhancing our playgroup which will be starting up in November, if you are interested in playgroup, check out the back page of this issue for more information.

As always, we invite you for a tour to see our programs in action and talk about our programs to address our mission of **"Strong Communities, One Family at a Time."**

~ Sherry

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Serving families and children in the communities of Andover, Ascutney, Baltimore, Bellows Falls, Brownsville, Cavendish, Chester, Grafton, Londonderry, Ludlow, Perkinsville, Plymouth, Proctorsville, Reading, Rockingham, Saxtons River, Springfield, Weathersfield, Weston, West Windsor, Windham, and Windsor since 1992.



Incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit agency in 1992, SAPCC is governed by a Board of Directors composed of voluntary members plus an Executive Director.

Executive Director
Sherry Hatt

Board Members:

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Learning Together and the Path of Life

On September 5, our Learning Together program participants embarked on a journey to the Path of Life Sculpture Garden in Windsor, VT. The Path of Life is a unique, artistic experience in which the story of life is symbolized through a series of outdoor sculptures. Representing *Adventure*, hemlock trees have been used to create a maze and *Creativity* is shown by the Garden's driftwood band. The band consists of five 25 foot tall musicians created entirely of Russian River driftwood.

Over the last three months, the students have been involved in a weekly team building class. Each week's lesson focused on one of the themes that they would encounter on their travels through the Path of Life. There were activities planned around such subjects as family, community, forgiveness and sorrow.



The temperature was approaching ninety without a single cloud in the sky as they made their way across the fields. They climbed the granite steps all the way to the Tree of Wisdom and sought refuge from the sun in the shade of Contemplation. At the end of their journey, within a small gathering of Birch trees, they sat down and shared reflections on, not only their day, but their lives. One of the students shared that she felt "more at peace" than she had at the beginning of the day.

Submitted by Stacey Sanderson and Nancy Warneke

Congratulations to our June Graduates in Learning Together

We're very proud of all three of you! From right to left: Amanda Rogers and Cassandra King graduating with Springfield High School Class of 2014 and Rhiannon Houghton, graduated with Fall Mountain High School Class of 2014. We wish you all well on your next endeavors!



Strong Communities, One Family at a Time

Vermont Life Captures Growth

~Submitted by Nichole Downing

If you were learning to swim, where would you best learn-in a swimming pool or a classroom? If you were learning to cook, shouldn't you be in the kitchen? Hands-on learning has immense benefits for learners. Students become engaged in their education leaving little room for passivity. Increased retention of material and student confidence are additional advantages of this approach to learning.

Locally, the evidence supported the theory in the Learning Together classroom. Hands-on learning was more effective for the young women of the intensive pre-vocational, educational, parent training program offered by the Springfield Area Parent Child Center known as **Learning Together**. These findings provided the rich soil needed for science teacher Betsy Owen and Staff member Jan Zona to join forces, combine science, nutrition and cooking, all fertilized with the support of a local grant enabled the Learning Together Garden and Kitchen project to emerge from the ground.

This season long course on gardening and cooking was begun in 2013 and has continued to flourish during the 2014 growing season. Zona comments, "In the Learning Together Garden and Kitchen we are serving many purposes with one class-everyday math, nutrition and science".

Thanks to the efforts of Jan Zona, Administrative Manager at SAPCC, the Learning Together Garden and Kitchen was the recipient of the Fanny Holt Ames and Edna Louise Holt fund. These funds were established by two Grafton women to target health education programs in Northern Windham and Southern Windsor counties. Last year, the grant funded the program's first three raised beds. This year the program was awarded a second year expanded grant in which additional beds were purchased as well as hoop houses. Jan Zona, the staff person who brings a great deal of passion and skills to this project including the grant writing states, "The hoop houses will also make expanding the growing season possible because plastic can be added to create mini greenhouses". The final phase of the project will be adding a potting shed.

Every Wednesday afternoon from Spring to Fall, Learning Together participants alongside Owen and Zona can be found planting, weeding, watering in the garden or inside in the kitchen turning the fruits of their labor into a nutritious meal. On the day I met with Zona, she had just come from the Learning Together Kitchen where students had made Sesame Green Beans, a simple recipe from Rachel Ray. The young mothers were headed home with the recipe, ingredients and tools, including a brand new wok so that they could replicate this nutritious meal for their families. Zona comments, "That's the goal-to not just provide healthy meals here at our center but to give participants the resources to bring healthy meals home for themselves and their children".

The hard work of Zona and the flourishing Learning Together Garden and Kitchen is getting some much deserved recognition. Recently, the course was chosen by *Vermont Life* to be spotlighted in an upcoming edition of the local magazine. In November of 2013 SAPCC was invited along with other area nonprofit organizations by the Springfield Chamber of Commerce and *Vermont Life* to pitch their story. Zona chose the Learning Together Garden and Kitchen with the back story being the full menu of services offered at the Parent Child Center. She presented to a panel from *Vermont Life* at the Great Hall in Springfield her passion for this project and the good work that was being done. "I really wasn't sure what would come of it" Zona reports, "but in June we were notified that *Vermont Life* selected SAPCC". Over the recent summer months a freelance writer and photographer from *Vermont Life* have visited SAPCC, working to capture the story from seedling to healthy plated meals. Zona reflects, "It was heartwarming to hear the mothers' answers to the question "What do you get out of being at Learning Together?" We really do make a difference". One of my most rewarding moments was when a young mom held a green pepper in her hand and said "I can't believe I planted this".

The Learning Together Feature will be published in Vermont Life during the Summer of 2015.

Learning Together
In her own words



Hello my name is Jackie. I am 21 years old. My daughter is 8 months old and her name is Harper.

When I first started here last year, pregnant for my daughter. I was scared and felt alone.

The ladies here at SAPCC have helped me realize its okay to be scared, but to know that I am not alone.

SAPCC has helped me in so many ways, from transportation, education and emotional support.

Most of all I am thankful for the education I am getting here! It also makes it very convenient that the daycare is right downstairs.

I will always recommend this program to young moms, or any mom as there are programs for everyone.

If it wasn't for this program I would be a stay at home mom going nowhere. Because of this program I will soon graduate high school and go on to bigger things!

No matter where I go in life, I will always carry SAPCC with me.



**SAPCC Welcomes
Megan Buchanan
to the Learning
Together
Teaching Staff!**



Megan Buchanan joins our Learning Together team as our head teacher. She comes to us with a diverse background in working with students with alternative learning styles and learning challenges. We have expanded our academic day and offerings to meet the expectations of our area high schools and enhance our students resumes as part of our program focus to help our participants "transition" to the future. Please join us in welcoming Megan to the Learning Together Team!

PlayWorks Transitions

It's that *Transition Time of Year*

~Submitted by Nichole Downing

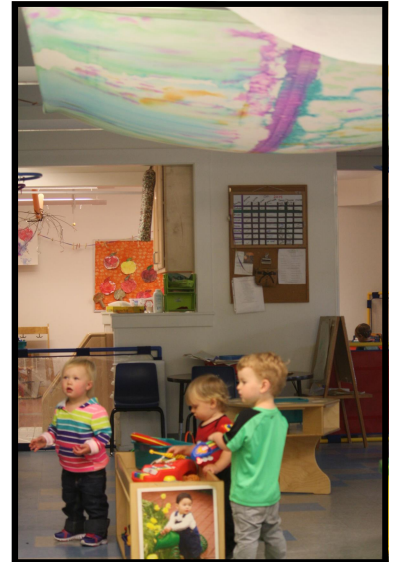
The beginning of the school year is one of the most anticipated times on the calendar for both children and adults. This year, at PlayWorks Child Center- a program of the Springfield Area Parent Child Center, excitement was in the air as preparations were made for the upcoming year. Prior to new children arriving, the program experienced a reorganization. Staff began the school year working in new classrooms with new age groups.

In the weeks and months prior to this reorganization, administration met individually with each teacher in order to better understand their strengths, interests and to solicit their feedback. Sherry Hatt, director of the Parent Child Center since January of 2014 reflected, "This was an exciting opportunity to look at the staff we have, their skills and passions and place them where they could provide the optimal learning environment".

One major change that took place as a result of the reorganization was in the staffing in the Four Square Room, serving our preschoolers. We have increased from two to three certified early childhood educators in this classroom. Hatt responds, "The rationale behind adding the third staff person in our preschool classroom was to assure kindergarten readiness for our four and five year olds".

The response to this change has been positive from both staff and parents. Parent, Jackie Lindamood reflected, "I think that Justin, Caroline and Megan make a fantastic team! I appreciate that they are working very hard to update the curriculum and provide a quality educational experience for my daughter". Justin Parrot, certified early childhood educator in the Four Square Room comments, "The reorganization has been very positive. I loved taking care of the babies but it's been good for me to get back to working with preschoolers because I enjoy working to prepare them for kindergarten".

The work that is done at PlayWorks Child Center is perhaps some of the most important work that the Parent Child Center does. The ability to impact the lives of nearly sixty children and their families on a daily basis is a privilege and an amazing charge the agency doesn't take lightly. Hatt acknowledges, "The most important thing to me is that every day the children at PlayWorks are happy, well cared for and that we provide an enriching environment for learning; it's one of the biggest responsibilities I have as director".



Strong Communities, One Family at a Time

Playground Dedication - Betty's Backyard

When our founding Executive Director Betty Kinsman retired in January of this past year, the Board of Directors announced that they wished to honor Betty's commitment to not only SAPCC but to her life-long dedication to early childhood development and family support. On Friday, September 19th Board Members, Staff, Children and Parents were on hand to dedicate the completion of Phase III and the naming of the PlayWorks Playground as Betty's Backyard in Betty's honor. Children in the 4 Square Room performed a song with masks that they made about buzzards, similar to those that perch in our tree, and Steve the Magician also delighted both young and the young at heart in attendance that day.

We were very pleased to have been able to add in the final touches to our natural playground this year. Plexi-glass and wood framed art easels were added in a creative play component. A Swing Arbor and hammocks were erected that will also serve as a children's garden component within the playground. And finally a Pergola for shade over the sand area, trimmed out in rough logs around the perimeter has completed our natural playground.

Many thanks to the volunteers and staff who made these improvements possible.



Smiles



from the



PlayWorks



Playground

Interested in a Parenting Class?

"It's never too early and never too late for parents to help their children develop the life skills that make for a productive and happy life. Join us Monday nights, November 10th-December 15th from 6-7:30pm for a six week discussion-based class. Child care will be available on a limited basis and class will take place at the Parent Child Center in North Springfield. Call the Springfield Area Parent Child Center at 886-5242 to register."



strengthening families™

A PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

In recent months, nearly a dozen childcare providers in our area participated in a seventeen hour training opportunity in order to provide additional support to the families they serve. Strengthening Families™ is a research-informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. It is based on engaging families, programs and communities in building five protective factors:

* **parental resilience**- the ability to manage and bounce back from all types of challenges that emerge in every family's life.

* **social connections** – reaching out to build positive relationships.

* **concrete support in times of need**: adequate services and supports need to be in place to provide stability, treatment and help for family members to get through the crisis.

* **knowledge of parenting and child development**:

Accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for children's behavior at every age help parents see their children and youth in a positive light and promote their healthy development.

* **social and emotional competence of children** :

A child or youth's ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior and effectively communicate their feelings

Using this approach has proven to produce positive results such as:

Parents feeling valued

Families feeling supported

Stronger social connections developed

Parents developing skills to parent effectively even under stress

This series has enriched our local childcare providers with strategies for increasing family strengths, enhancing child development and reducing child abuse and neglect.

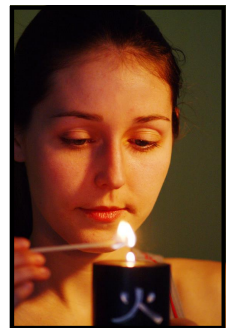
~Submitted by Kim Kiniry

SAPCC Awarded Wellness Grant

On September 5th, the Springfield Area Parent Child Center was awarded a Working Toward Wellness grant through the Vermont Department of Health. Across the state, the Dept of Health chose six organizations for this honor. The grant will enable the PCC to identify the needs of their employees and create a wellness program that is tailored to them. A Wellness Team will be formed to plan, implement and evaluate their efforts. We will be focusing on every type of wellness and offering a wide variety of activities and resources.

We are especially grateful for this opportunity, as all of our employees spend their time taking care of and helping families. In order to avoid burnout and continue providing amazing services, it is crucial they not forget to care for themselves. An established wellness program, that keeps in mind our agency's specific needs, will provide us with that added layer of support and care for our staff.

The grant period runs from October 1, 2014 – July 31, 2015. The Parent Child Center will be working closely with Eileen Katchen, from the Dept of Health.



~submitted by Stacey Sanderson

Visit us at www.sapcc-vt.org

A Governor's Visit Sparks an Appeal to our Community

Parent Child Centers in Vermont have been fortunate to have had strong support from our governors since their inception. Vermont was in fact the first state to sponsor Parent Child Centers, and PCC's received their first state funding under the leadership of Governor Madeline Kunin in 1988. Therefore we were thrilled to have a visit from Governor Kunin when she was in town recently to speak to members of OLLI. Springfield does hold a special place in her heart due to the work her brother Edgar May has done here. On her visit with us she spoke of the changes our region has gone through as well as the rest of state, and how the role of Parent Child Centers are more important than ever. While touring the center she spent some time in our Learning Together classroom talking to our participants about her journey to become the first female Governor in the state of Vermont and her continuing role in government. Her words of inspiration to the young woman in our program were to always have hope and that education is the key to success. As we continued on down to the PlayWorks Child Center, Governor Kunin was very happy to engage with the young children and teachers; you could see by the sparkle in her eye, how important to her the care of our youngest citizens continues to be.

Springfield Area Parent Child Center is proud to be one of 15 legislatively designated centers providing young children and their families with comprehensive, collaborative services focused on early child development and family support. Our center provides home visiting, onsite programs, playgroups, parent education and support, information and referrals as well as continuing education, parenting and life skills for young parents in our Learning Together Program.

For the past 20 plus years PCC's have been level funded through the state, and in fact our Learning Together Program, has been faced with a loss of the federal funding through budget cuts that previously helped support this program. These factors create increased challenges for us going forward, which is why we are expanding on our annual appeal to include a broader reach throughout all 16 of the communities we serve in North Windham and South Windsor counties for support. We wish to begin at the earliest moments in our children and young family's lives with support, education and prevention services that will provide a better quality of life at the start, rather just trying to fix problems later. To this end, we welcome collaboration and donations from individuals and businesses that wish to help us in our goals, and those that Governor Kunin worked to put in place over 20 years ago with the inception of the Vermont Parent Child Network. Please give us a call at 802-886-5242, we'd be happy to talk to you and or give you a tour. You can also visit us at <http://www.sapcc-vt.org/> and support us through a donation on our secure site.

Will you join us in our mission for Strong Communities, One Family at a Time?



Consider A Donation

As a non-profit, we are always looking for way to raise funds. We do have a few events that we run each year, but your kind donation can go a long way to help us continue to reach our goals and fulfill our mission statement:

Strong Communities, One Family at a Time!

If you would like to donate, you may do so by sending us a check or by donating online, via a secure server with your credit card.

Please visit us at www.sapcc-vt.org and click on the donate button on our home page.

Thanks for considering a tax deductible donation to SAPCC!



Strong Communities,
One Family at a Time

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Newsletter Editor and
Photographer ~ Jan Zona

Technically Speaking...

Funding for the SAPCC programs, including this newsletter is provided in part by Vermont's [Agency of Human Services](#), [Department of Children and Families](#) [Child Development Division](#) and private sources.

Submissions and announcements related to early childhood and intended for the general public and those who care about young children are always welcome.

Send submissions to: Early Childhood News @ SAPCC

6 Main St.
N. Springfield, VT 05150
sapcc2@vermontel.net

We reserve the right to deny or edit any submission. All submissions must have names of the person or agency submitting the info. Please call or e-mail with any questions.

New Playgroup to meet on Mondays in November!

PLAYGROUP!

Won't you come join us at 10am on Mondays?

Our new and improved playgroup will be starting up in November!

Take a break from the busy upcoming season and enjoy some time with your little ones in a playful and nurturing environment. Come share and interact with other parents, caregivers and children at this lightly structured playgroup with playful child friendly routines facilitated by Early Intervention.

The grand opening of our revamped playgroup space will be held on Monday, November 3rd from 9:30-11:00, with weekly playgroups being held on Mondays from 9:30-11 thereafter. We hope to see you there!



News from Myrtle's Closet - A Thrift Store

We are pleased to welcome back Michelle Stinson to SAPCC, Michelle had worked for us several years ago as a teaching director PlayWorks. Upon her return Michelle has taken over as Supervisor of Myrtles Closet as well as joining the teams that support PlayWorks and Learning Together.

Myrtle's hours have changed as we go into the fall and winter months. We will now be open Tuesday through Friday and for the time being, we will not be open on Saturdays. The new hours are as follows:

MYRTLES CLOSET—A THRIFT SHOP—NEW HOURS

TUES—WED 9am—12n

THUR—FRI 9am—3:30pm

Myrtles Closet is a training facility teaching work skills as part of SAPCC's Learning Together Program. Participants learn many aspects of the retail business as well as life skills, social skills and community interaction.

