The end of winter term is around the corner and there is a plethora of news to share with you! Our center is enjoying a record high enrollment this term and there have been several new babies born! The future of VOCDC looks to be very busy. Congratulations to the several parents who are celebrating a new baby in the family! Thank you also to all the families that came to celebrate Sarah Weiher’s wedding with us.

We have also had a record number of interns and volunteers this term who have added greatly to the dynamics of our classrooms. In addition, parents and staff have participated in several research projects which helps to promote our center’s ties to the greater university community. We continue to employ about 70 students who are very dedicated to your children and our program. They truly add to the quality of services that VOCDC provides.

As the end of winter term approaches, I want to remind you that we will be open the first 3 days of spring break: March 26, 27 and 28. We will be closed to children and families on the 29th and 30th for staff in-service. Also, our Parent Advisory Council will be contacting all parents to bring food for students during finals week: March 19 through the 23rd. We so appreciate our students coming to work during finals and they really appreciate have a good meal to eat when they are really stretched for time and energy! Thank you in advance for supporting our student staff who love and care for your children.

Papa’s Pizza Fundraiser for the Agate Alley Garden!

Where: W. 11th & Chambers Papa’ Pizza
When: All Day Monday, March 19th

Get flyers from our center and hand them out to your colleagues, friends and family. We will earn 50% of the food ordered that day!
All three of the university child-care centers (VOCDC, Moss St. Children’s Center, Spencer View Co-op) will be celebrating Earth Day on Wednesday, April 18th. Moss Street and Spencer View Co-op children will begin the event at the EMU Amphitheatre for some speeches and recognitions and then parade to the Many Nations Long House for an Earth Day concert! VOCDC children will join them there for the celebration. Rich Glauber will be providing the music and movement activities at this event. Parents are invited to watch and participate if they can. The schedule is:

10-10:30am: Youngers (2 years and under)
10:30-11:30am: Preschoolers, PreK and Kinders

Our Fundraising Project This Year: Agate Alley Garden

With the help of the Exterior Maintenance team in Campus Operations, we are very pleased to be expanding our “Agate Alley” garden space behind the Annex classrooms. In the past, the children have been able to walk to the garden and pick strawberries and blueberries. In the past two years, the weeds took over, choking out the strawberries and there wasn’t enough water to produce ample amounts of plump and juicy blueberries. During winter term, new sprinklers have been installed along with cinder block terracing. Soon, eleven planter boxes will be in place. Each classroom will have their own box as well as one box for raspberries and one for strawberries. In addition, two columnar apple trees will be planted along with additional blueberry bushes. This will be an area where all of our children can grow and harvest fruit and vegetables. We are so grateful for the collaboration that is making this possible. We need to raise about $800 between now and the end of the fiscal year (June 30th), to pay for planter box materials and labor. Thank you for your support of this worthwhile project!

Papa’s Pizza Fundraiser for the Agate Alley Garden

Papa’s will donate to VOCDC 50% of the value of food purchased when the flyer is presented on the day of your fundraiser. Flyers are available in your child’s class and the front desk. The fundraiser goes all day. NOTE: Delivery purchases are not included in the fundraiser.
Special Request from Office Staff

We would really appreciate your commitment and attention to not leaving the front doors or doors to the Commons propped open when you and your child pass through. The children like to prop them open, which is fine if you will be sure to “un-prop” them after you pass through. We are particularly concerned about other children running out, hurt fingers, as well as the escape of heat during the winter weather. Thank you for your attention to this request!

Builder’s Playground Renovation

Some of you will remember that about two years ago we did some renovation to our Dreamer playground by adding new concrete, soft tiles, and landscaping, resulting in a richer, more natural place for babies to experience the outdoors. This fall we began exploration of renovating the Builders playground to make it more age-appropriate for them. Two of our parents (Katie Lynch and Melissa Gustafson) along with lead teacher Sarah Weiher, Susan Schneider and I have been meeting and planning. Katie was able to get the Design Bridge students (Department of Landscape Architecture) to take on some projects that were selected. Danielle Bilot is the graduate student who is the lead on our project. She has spent a lot of time meeting with us, taking photos of the playground and watching children use the playground. She and her team members met with us mid-February to show us their plans and listen to our input on any modifications. They are in the process of constructing a bridge, a vertical garden space, a walkway that connects the concrete paths, a willow tunnel and more opportunities for children to climb. We are looking forward for the installation process to begin! Parents can check in with Carol about more detailed timelines.
April is the national month of the young child. Those of us who work every day with young children enjoy knowing that an increased awareness of children's rights and needs are being expressed in communities everywhere during this month. For several years now, the 3 early childhood centers serving the University of Oregon have discussed holding a children’s art show on campus. We are in the final stages of planning for this event to take place during the month of April. Our centers believe that children have the right to access art materials and processes that engage them in the creative languages of visual art, music and dramatic arts. It strengthens the brain’s ability to think critically and problem solve creatively. We believe that children have the right to use tools that support expressive languages and give voice to their emergent ideas.

We are working on finding places on campus to display the art work of children from all 3 centers. Included in the month long exhibit will be a reception to honor the works of our children, their families and the greater university community. Parents from our center will be hosting the reception and we welcome you to volunteer to help serve light refreshments, hand out information and greet our guests. Contact Carol Snead (snead@uoregon.edu) if you are interested in helping in any way. We’ll also need help getting art ready for display, setting up the exhibit, and moving it. We look forward to this event and trust that it will be the first of an annual children’s art exhibit.
VOCDC Web Page Redesign

Our administrative staff has begun training to use DRUPAL to redesign our web page. We have wanted to have a more updated and dynamic look for quite some time. The Parent Advisory Council will be providing input on content as well as the template layout. If you have experience in this area and would also like to help us, please let Carol Snead (snead@uoregon.edu) know of your interest. If you have ideas that you want us to be sure to consider incorporating, we would like you to communicate that as well. In the near future, you will be getting detailed information from us as we may want you to consider giving permission to use a photo of your child on our web site. If you know that you would never want your child’s photo on our website, please let Carol know as soon as possible. Thank you for your assistance!

The Hundred Languages of Children
by Loris Malaguzzi (founder of the Reggio Emilia Schools, Italy)

The child is made up of one hundred.
The child has a hundred languages
a hundred hands, a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking of playing, of speaking.

A hundred always a hundred ways of listening
of marveling, of loving
a hundred joys for singing and understanding
a hundred worlds to discover
a hundred worlds to invent
a hundred worlds to dream.

The child has a hundred languages
(and a hundred hundred hundred more)
but they steal ninety-nine.
The school and the culture separate the head from the body.

They tell the child:
to think without hands
to do without head
to listen and not to speak
to understand without joy
to love and to marvel
only at Easter and at Christmas.

They tell the child:
to discover the world already there
and of the hundred
they steal ninety-nine.

They tell the child:
that work and play
reality and fantasy
science and imagination
sky and earth
reason and dream
are things that do not belong together.

And thus they tell the child
that the hundred is not there.
The child says:
No way. The hundred is there.