

SOUTH HADLEY FAMILY CENTER CAREGIVER CONNECTION

December 2009

HIGHLIGHTS:

***Holiday & weather closings:** We follow the South Hadley school calendar... when they are closed - we are closed, when they are delayed - we are closed. We will be closed for holiday recess on Thursday, December 24 and re-open on Monday, January 4th.

*Please use the **dirty toy bin** and/ or use a bleach wipe immediately if a child dirties or sticks a toy in their mouth - please don't wait till clean up time! This will help to limit the spread of germs.

***Snack** - room 3 continues to be available as a snack space! Please don't hesitate to bring a snack for your child to enjoy and recharge with. Kristin or Dolores now announce snack time at 10:30 - so anyone interested in a snack won't be lonely!

*Thank you to **Heather L.** for volunteering to work on the Preschool Binder project!

*Our next PAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 10 at 10-11:30am. We've decided to alternate the day and evening meeting times to make it easier for folks who are interested to attend. Our goal is to be a bit briefer during the morning meetings too! Please note - children are always welcome.

DECEMBER OVERVIEW:

- * The schedule for visits with Child Development Specialist Debbie Roth-Howe is still pending - we'll send an another email once they are confirmed. Please also check the bulletin board for updates!
- * Ongoing craft and sensory activities are planned - pop in to room 3 to see what is new!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

* Buttery Brook Summer Concert Sub-Committee Needs YOU: Once again we plan to hold a series of Summer Children's Concerts at our local park in conjunction with the Friends of Buttery Brook Park. Bring your ideas and join us on Wednesday, December 9th at 10 AM at the Family Center. We'll be deciding on dates, choosing entertainers, thinking about possible sponsorships, and beginning to divvy up the volunteer tasks necessary to make these events happen next summer. There are many ways to help, so pick what fits your time and interest. What's so fun about this group is that by all putting in a little effort, it adds up to a great time with our kids this summer at the park!

* PAC Meeting: Thursday, December 10 from 10-11:30am - Each month the Parent Advisory Council, a governing volunteer team of parents/caregivers, meets to plan programs and discuss ways to make the SHFC the best it can be. We now alternate a morning meeting with an evening meeting every other month. As a volunteer driven

organization your involvement and ideas are key to our continued success. If you are interested in getting more involved (or just learning about how the Center operates) this is a great meeting to sit in on - all are welcome! For more information ask Kristin or any Parent Volunteer. Please sign up on the bulletin board so we have an idea of #s for seating and snacks!

- * Fund Raising Sub-Committee Forming: We will have a Fund Raising "Get Organized" sub-committee meeting on Tuesday, December 15 at 7pm. Are you familiar with the local service organizations? Have raffle ideas? Want to help merge and stuff the mailings? Kelly and Nicole will be there and we'd love company - and need the help! All are welcome!
- * Caregiver Clean-Up Night: Thursday, December 17, 2009 from 7-8pm - Come spend an hour with other parents and caregivers to make our space sparkle! Cleaning supply donations would be welcome - for example paper towels, sponges, clorox wipes, simple green, etc. Please sign up on the bulletin board to take your turn scrubbing!
- * We need folks to assist in promoting the Family Center and our special events! Would you like to draft calendar listings, make flyers, and write the occasional press release? Work at your own pace on your own or with others. A great resume opportunity! Please contact Kelly or Kristin.
- * We are looking for someone to help gather outreach contact information for our local media outlets, local faith communities, & flyer posting locations. If you have a computer and would be willing to briefly research/ explore and type up a reference list please contact Kelly or Kristin.
- * Starting in January we'll also be forming a Ziti Supper Committee - details to come! We'll be looking for help with the cake walk, silent auction/ basket raffles, and ideas for entertainment?!

FUNDRAISING UPDATE:

- * Donations as of 11/12: \$1846.69 (Goal for the year: \$6500) = we are 28% to goal!
- * There will be an annual solicit in February to all families, local service organizations, and businesses; however that will fall in 2010! If your family or business would like to make a gift so that it falls in the year 2009 that would be wonderful! Please mail it in or drop it in the donation jar and we'll be sure to get you a thank you note for your records! We are a recognized non-profit and as such are also able to accept matching gifts!

WISH LIST: *Would you like to make a donation of items we frequently use - in particular right now we are looking for...*

- * Clorox/bleach-type Wipes
- * Clorox Anywhere spray

- * Ream of White Copy/ Printer Paper
- * Books of Stamps
- * Boxes of #10 Envelopes
- * 2-Drawer File Cabinet

COMMUNITY RESOURCES/ EVENTS:

*Be sure to check out the attached "Fun Things To Do" Idea List compiled by Dolores! It is also available on our website under the "Additional Resources" link.

*The Friends of Buttery Brook in association with the SH DPW are proud to announce Santa's Land at Buttery Brook Park. Santa's Land will be held Thursday through Sunday on December 10-13th and December 17-20th from 5:30 until 8 PM. Santa will be on hand for pictures and Mrs. Claus and the elves will hand out hot chocolate and cookies. The event is free, donations appreciated.

*The Easthampton Family Center's annual Pancake Brrrrreakfast with Santa is scheduled for Saturday, December 5th from 9am - 11am at the Pulaski Club Hall - 79 Maple St. Easthampton. This is their biggest fundraiser of the year and money raised will help secure a new home in the Old Town Hall and allow them to make their space comfortable and welcoming for all families. More information and tickets are available at www.easthamptonfamilycenter.org.

*Friday, December 4 is the Holiday Stroll - kick off the holiday season with the lighting of the tree on the South Hadley Town Common and the arrival of Santa... escorted by the Marching Band! 4:30 - craft at Gaylord Library, 5:30 - music and festivities begin on the Common, 6 - tree lighting! Free pictures with Santa once he arrives!

*The Council on Aging is seeking names of South Hadley families who are on assistance programs such as fuel assistance, food stamps, WIC, etc. and who would like to receive food and a turkey to supplement their holiday meals. Baskets will be distributed on Saturday, December 12. To refer a family, or yourself, contact Marilyn Ishler at 536-7742.

*"For parents trying to pass on positive values to children in a commercialized culture, the December holidays pose an especially difficult challenge. Each year, holiday marketing begins earlier. And our children, targets for marketing all year round, face an ever-intensified onslaught of advertising designed to supplant the cultural, spiritual, social-political meaning of the holidays with materialistic values-celebrating acquisition instead of altruism, spending instead of spirituality, and getting instead of giving. There's no one size fits all method for getting through the holidays with your values intact. So the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood created the CCFC Guide to Commercial-Free Holidays to provide an array of suggestions. You can download your free copy of CCFC's Guide to Commercial-Free Holidays, as well as read and share CCFC member tips for surviving the annual advertising assault, at <http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org/holidayguide/home.htm>."

*Have something to share? Send it along and we'll include it in our next newsletter!

EVERYDAY REMINDERS:

- * We are open for the year: Monday-Thursday from 9:30-11:30am.
- * We follow the South Hadley school calendar... when they are closed - we are closed, when they are delayed - we are closed.
- * EVERYONE (including returning caregivers and families) is asked to complete a Caregiver Registration Form at their first visit. There is a sign-in sheet by the door. Please sign in each time you visit - all this information is used to support our grant funding. The registration form is attached for your convenience. Thank you for your support!
- * Tuesdays = Babies First Year Day... babies are welcome every day but Tuesdays are a wonderful opportunity to connect with other caregivers of infants and babies - all ages are also welcome!
- * Wednesdays = Provider Day... a great way to meet local childcare providers - all are also welcome!
- * The Monthly Calendar is posted in Room 1 and offers a look ahead to special events, fund raising activities, and upcoming field trips.
- * The state continues to recommend that all children and caregivers wash their hands BEFORE & AFTER playgroup. There are hand sanitizers at the check-in cart - and both bathrooms have stepstools available.
- * Please feel free to bring your own healthy snack & beverage to eat in room 3. Of special note - we are now a NUT-FREE zone! Our intention is to limit the risk to children with allergies - thank you for your cooperation! Kristin has a great handout of nut-free snack ideas....
- * The Center is a non-profit organization and a \$2 donation is suggested per visit. Monthly or annual contributions are also welcome - let us know if you would like a receipt for your records, all gifts are tax deductible to the full extent of the law! Any donation you, your family, or your business/ employer can make is needed and will be appreciated! (Please know that ALL are welcome and no one will be turned away if they are unable to make a donation.)

ATTACHMENTS:

- * Fun Things To Do Idea List