

January

2017

Unity School Newsletter

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PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Happy New Year! We hope that everyone enjoyed the holidays and spent some quality time with family and friends. Thank you for all of the wonderful 'Wish Tree' gifts- we really appreciate them! All of the classes are having a blast with the new items!

We want to take a moment and acknowledge the fabulous staff we have at Unity School! We have a tremendous team of teachers who are caring, creative, encouraging, supportive, and committed to your children and to Unity School. The staff has done a remarkable job learning and implementing more High/Scope aspects, utilizing our garden space, and doing both field trips and community service projects with their classes. We are really proud that we have such an awesome team to guide your children and make their learning experiences the best they can be. Take a moment and thank a staff member, letting them know how they've done a super job for you lately!

Thank you for your patience and flexibility during the snow/ice days. We know they are often an inconvenience, but worth it to keep all those involved safe! Even though we had to reschedule the Winter Celebration, we had a wonderful turn out! Thanks to all the families who came and spent the evening with us. What an amazing job the children did on their performances and what a fun sing-along! The yummy treats they made for the event were scrumptious.

We have a couple reminders we would like to bring to your attention. Remember, the pull-through driveway is a 5 min. drop off/pick up spot. If it takes a little longer than 5 min. for you and your child, please pull into a parking spot so we can keep traffic flowing. The other reminder is to provide lots of extra clothes for your child. During the fall and winter months, the weather is very unpredictable. It's helpful to have a good supply of warm items such as hats and gloves in your child's cubby. Unity encourages nonviolent attire, so please avoid weapons or superhero clothing. We also would like to encourage child-friendly clothes and avoid clothing that uses adult logos or wording.

Thanks for your help in this matter.

Here's to a wonderful year ahead!
Susanne & Jessica



PANDA CLASS

Hi Panda Families,

December was an interesting month for us!

We're so happy we could reschedule our holiday party, even though it was not exactly what we'd planned. It was so fun watching all of the children. We talked about and played with a lot of pretend food in

December. Two of our friends had birthdays, so we played with pretend birthday cakes and looked at books about birthdays. We did a lot of snowflake art, and holiday tree art. The pandas also made peppermint scented play dough for our friends in other classrooms.

Thank you so much to the families who purchased gifts from our wish tree, we love them and appreciate your generosity. We also appreciate you help with pet care!! Speaking of thanks, your generous donations to the Egan warming centers were wonderful. We all came together to help out those in need, what a lovely thing that is.

You have all been great about keeping your child's cubby stocked with hats, gloves, extra clothes and warm coats. Your children thank you.

Just a reminder to please take home nap items at the end of the week for washing, also take your child's art work home which is located in their art file.

Thanks,
Cherri. Celia & Briana

CATERPILLAR CLASS

Wow we've made another trip around the sun. The Caterpillars have had a wonderful end to 2016, and are excited for this next year. Our class wants to thank all the families that came and joined us for our winter celebration, it was so much fun to see all the children singing and having a great time.

The Caterpillars would also like to say a big thank you to the Potter family for donating hats and gloves for the whole school. That was incredibly kind and generous.



Our class has been learning about community helpers. If any family member would like to come and volunteer and teach us about what jobs they do or their family tradition we would love to have you.

A little reminder: we do not have a lot of space for children's personal items at school. So we would like to ask that backpacks stay at home.

Wishing you a great new year,

Jessica. Melissa

LADYBUG CLASS

Wow, happy New Year everyone!

We can't believe its already 2017 and the school year is moving so fast! We hope that all of our Unity families had a great holiday season and are ready for new and exciting things to happen.

First, we'd like to welcome our new Ladybug assistant, Olivia; the kids know her and have already begun including her in things. Make sure to seek her out and make her feel welcome.

In December, we experienced some icy weather and school closures, which seemed to confuse us and delay our fun a bit. But we got back on track and finished our projects and even our Winter Party turned out wonderfully. The Ladybugs learned a lot about snow and ice and the different stages of water (solid, liquid and vapor). We also got to hear different versions of the beloved Gingerbread story and make up our own alternate endings.

In January, we plan on discovering what a community is and different roles in our community that help us. If you have anything to demonstrate for the children (medical, emergency worker, grocer, farmer, dental, librarian, etc) please let teacher Dorothy know so we can set up a good time. Ideas for sharing are books, recipes, work attire, donating extra supplies connected to a service (letter head notepads, old scrubs, electronic equipment with cords cut off) and much more. Also, we hope to visit an eye doctor this month so watch for upcoming info.

Thank you to everyone who is taking home art and nap items each week, it helps keep our room clean. Love, your ladybug teachers!

BUTTERFLY CLASS

Happy New Year! We hope this note finds you all well, and that you and your families had a beautiful Holiday Season!

Thank you to all of the families who were able to join us at our Winter Celebration! It was a lot of fun and always lovely to see the families and staff gather together for an evening of celebration!



This month we will start heading into the more "academic" part of our Pre-K program! Michelle and I will be checking in with your children to see where they are, and what skills we need to work on to get them ready for the next big step....kindergarten! Yay!!!

One of the things that the children in the Butterfly class look forward to is our very special "100 Days of School" party! This will be coming up soon, so please keep an eye out for more information!

Gentle Reminders

- It is super important (especially throughout the cold and flu times) that rest time bedding is taken

home and washed EVERY WEEK!!! This helps keep those nasty germs at bay, and...it's so much more comfy when the children have clean, cozy blankets to rest with.

- With the winter weather in full force, please check to make sure your child has at least one FULL SET of spare clothes in their cubbies at all times. We go outside, even if it's raining, at it's much more comfy if your children have dry clothes to put on! Please remember to bring in new ones if we have to use them.
- As you all know, our room is VERY small, with VERY limited space under the cubbies. Please remember that backpacks and large bags just don't fit. Everything that comes to school (other than coats), have to fit in your child's cubby bin. Thank you so much for your help and support in this matter.
- Please remember that we do not do share day in our classroom. Books are ALWAYS welcome, however please have your child keep their toys at home. Small stuffed animals are fine for rest time, but they really do need to fit in the cubby. Thanks!

Well, that's it for this month! Enjoy our beautiful and cold winter weather!! As always, thank you for sharing your amazing, little gifts with us! We are so happy to have them in our class, learning with them every day!

Hugs and Smiles,
Pammie, Michelle and Kelly

SEA TURTLE CLASS

Welcome back Sea Turtle Families,

I hope everyone had a wonderful winter vacation and enjoyed some extra time with family. I sure missed all of the Sea Turtles. A special thank you for all the cards and gifts that were exchanged between the children and myself, and an extra special thank you for the most relaxing gift I have ever received. It really means a lot, thanks Sea Turtle Parents.

As we get back into our school routines' we will be starting with our letter of the week again. We will be doing some activates each week around the letter, reading stories that start with the letter and doing our mystery letter "box" of the week where we pull out objects that start with the letter.

We are also going to start collecting small loose materials. Please save the following items for us to use for projects at school. Milk & Juice caps, very small containers, packing peanuts, bubble wrap, Lids, beads, ribbon, buttons, and any small plastic or wooden pieces, and Cardboard.

Thank you,
Teacher Tara

Brrrrrrrr! ITS
COLD





OTTER CLASS

Hello from the Otters,

It's hard to believe this year has gone so quickly. It's been a fun and full year. We have welcomed lots of new friends to the Otter room this year. We also got to spend some time with classmates who are no longer with us on a regular basis; it's great to see them from time to time.

At the end of November we went to Alton Baker Park to release our salmon into their new home in the river. We also spent time playing games and having lunch surrounded by ducks and geese, though we didn't share our food, we just enjoyed their company.

We look forward to the rest of the year enjoying adventures and having fun.

Josh & Sarah



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Plastics & Plastic Toys

Health Concerns

Certain Plastics are known to contain toxic chemicals, which have negative impacts on human health. Children are particularly vulnerable to these toxic chemicals since their body systems and organs are still developing. Their bodies are small, so what may be a small dose for an adult may be a big dose with big effects for a child. Young children are also at greater risk since they often insert plastic objects into their mouths. Baby bottles, Sippy cups, teething rings, and toys are often made with phthalates and Bisphenol A (BPA). These two toxic ingredients in plastics are of particular concern, as research increasingly shows that these chemicals mimic or suppress hormones (e.g., estrogen and testosterone) and disrupt normal development growth.

Phthalates (pronounced THAL-ates)

Phthalates are a class of chemicals that are used to soften plastics, such as PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride), bind fragrances in products, and act as solvents and fixatives, such as nail polishes. Human exposure occurs through:

Inhalation - breathing in fragrances, or fumes from solvents and fixatives

Ingestion - chewing on a plastic toy creates small openings in the plastic, providing an avenue for leaching of chemicals from the toy into a child's mouth

Skin Absorption - lotion, perfumes, deodorants

Adverse health effects include hormone disruption, developmental and reproductive problems, asthma, preterm birth, low sperm count, undescended testes, genital malformations, premature puberty, and development of some cancers.

Bisphenol A (BPA)

Bisphenol A is a hormone disrupter that is used to make polycarbonate plastic (hard clear plastic). Bisphenol A can be found in baby bottles, water bottles, canned food liners, and Sippy cups. Human exposure occurs primarily through ingestion - diet and sucking/mouthing plastics - and skin contact.

Adverse health effects include prostate cancer, breast cancer, miscarriages, birth defects, early puberty, low sperm count, hyperactivity and aggressiveness. Traces of BPA can be found in more than 90% of the U.S. population.

Tips for Using Plastics More Safely

Avoid Plastics with Recycling Codes: #3, #6, and #7 (Recycling codes, shown below, typically are found on the bottom of the product.)

#3 - Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC)

PVC (soft vinyl plastic) often contains lead and Phthalates, and the production or destruction of PVC releases cancer-causing dioxins into the environment.

Products that likely contain PVC: Flexible plastic toys (rubber duckies, dolls, beach balls, infant bath books), bibs, rest mats,

inflatable swimming pools, garden hoses, rain coats, wall paneling and flooring, window blinds, cosmetics, shower curtains, crib bumpers, imitation leather, and food packaging.

PVC Health Concerns: Cancer, birth defects, reproductive and developmental disorders, low sperm count, undescended testes, premature puberty, and liver dysfunction.

#6 - Polystyrene (PS, commonly known as Styrofoam)



Toxic styrene can leach from polystyrene plastic.

Products that likely contain Styrofoam: Coffee cups, carry-out containers, packaging "peanuts", food trays, disposable cutlery, toys, and packaging for meats, cheeses, and fish.

Styrofoam Health Concerns: Suspected carcinogen and neurotoxin.

#7 - Other (usually polycarbonate)



Bisphenol A (BPA) can leach from polycarbonate plastic and act as a hormone disrupter. However, not all #7 plastics contain BPA. More and more #7 plastics are being made with compounds that are BPA-free. If so, they will be labeled "BPA-free" or something similar.

Products that likely contain BPA: Hard, clear baby bottles, water bottles, and Sippy cups; canned food liners.

BPA Health Concerns: Prostate cancer, breast cancer, miscarriages, birth defects, premature puberty, low sperm count, hyperactivity, and aggressiveness.

Ten Tips for Sager Use of Plastics:

1. Avoid plastics with recycling code #3, #6 and #7 (unless the #7 plastic is also labeled as BPA-free).
2. Purchase baby bottles and Sippy cups labeled "BPA-free" or glass options.
3. Never heat or microwave food or drink in any plastic containers, as leaching of toxic chemical from plastic to food or liquid may occur. Use a paper towel instead of plastic wrap to cover food in the microwave.
4. Never heat plastic baby bottles. When mixing formulas, beat the water before mixing. When warming breast milk, use a glass bottle.
5. Use PVC-free plastic wrap (buy plastic wrap and bags made with polyethylene).
6. Eat fresh produce - Minimize the use of canned foods and canned drinks as many are lined with BPA.
7. Only buy "new" plastic toys for infants and toddlers that are labeled "phthalate-free" or "PVC-free" due to their mouthing behaviors.
8. Purchase phthalate-free beauty products.
9. Ask your dentist for BPA-free sealants and composite fillings.
10. Discard all worn or scratched plastic food containers, especially baby bottles, Sippy cups and infant feeding plates and cups.

Plastic Resources

- EPA information for Parents and Providers about Plastics in Child-Care Settings
www2.epa.gov/childcare/information-parents-and-providers-about-plastics-child-care-settings
- Styrene
WWW.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tf.asp?id=420&tid=74
- Questions and Answers about Bisphenol A
www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/sya-bpa/index.cfm
- Smart Plastics Guide for Parents and Children
myplasticfreelife.com/plastics_guide.pdf
- Eco-Healthy FAQs on Phthalates/BPA; Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC)
www.cehn.org/ehcc/FAQ
- Picking Sager Plastics
www.oeconline.org/our-work/resources/publicationskitsandtipsarchive/saferplasticswalletcard

FOR MOR INFORMATION

Call: 202-543-4033, ext. 13

Email: info@ecohealthychildcare.org

Visit: www.cehn.org/ehcc

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Eco-Healthy Child Care®

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January 2017

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 Unity Closed	3	4	5 Tuition Due	6
9	10	11	12	13
16 Overuse Fees Due	17	18	19	20
23	24	25 Schedule Changes Due	26	27
30	31			