



**Request...**

... we will welcome any baskets, filler, stuffing, ribbon, etc. to help us prepare for the Family Night Basket Auction!

**Reminders...**

... there are still a few POGO Cards available in the office (expiration date Dec. 2008).

... dress your children appropriately for the weather and label your children's outerware (mittens, hats, coats, snowpants, etc.) – we want to make sure everyone's clothes go back home with them.

... We will **NOT** follow Lincoln Public School's Calendar, but most vacation days and **ALL EMERGENCY weather closings of LPS** announced on the radio **will be observed by our program. If LPS is not in session we will follow the Catholic School weather closing announcements.**

**Mark your calendars**

- Febr. 1...** Family Night
- March 6...** Open House
- March 20, 21, 24...** No School (Spring Break)
- April 2 & 3...** Parent/Teacher Conferences
- May 16...** Family Picnic
- May 26...** No School (Memorial Day)
- May 29...** Last day of Infant/Toddler and Preschool Session

Nature Explore<sup>™</sup> Classrooms are part of a national initiative involving the partnership of Dimensions and the Arbor Day Foundation.  
 Newsletters and Program information can be found on-line ...  
[www.dimensionsfoundation.org](http://www.dimensionsfoundation.org)  
 or [www.firstplymouth.org](http://www.firstplymouth.org)

# A New Year's Message

*By Nancy Rosenow, Executive Director*

Happy New Year to all of our families, and welcome back to our second semester sessions. I know that there is much to look forward to in the next few months. Here are a few highlights of what will be happening both here at our program in Lincoln, and elsewhere around the country:

## At Dimensions First-Plymouth Early Education Programs

### Family Night

Friday, February 1 will be an enjoyable night of good food, fun hands-on activities for all ages, and a basket auction featuring a variety of interesting items. We invite your family (and friends) to join us for a low-key but festive Family Night celebration. (See the attached flyer for information on dinner tickets and basket auction group plans.)

### Greenhouse Times

Children enjoy working in our greenhouse all throughout the year, even in wintertime. So much learning takes place when children are able to participate in the process of planting and caring for flowers and vegetables. Please watch for updates in future newsletters of the kinds of experiences children are having during greenhouse times.

### Language and Literacy Learning

In upcoming newsletters in 2008 we plan to supply you with lists of books children are enjoying each month. Teachers continually read and reflect about the best ways to support children's early literacy. It's important to help children develop a strong foundation that will encourage them to be life-long readers and writers. Pushing children too early into skill and drill activities can often be counter-productive. Children are encouraged daily to work on literacy activities that are right for their developmental level and that are motivating and interesting.

### Music and Movement Experiences Integrated with All Learning

Each month, Ann Watt and Tina Reeble work together (with input from the rest of the teaching staff) to develop a unified plan to support music and movement exploration, Small Group Time experiences, and children's own choice-making

during Work Time and Outdoor Time. We know how important it is that music and movement experiences are integrated throughout children's learning, and that all areas of children's development, including mathematical and visual-spatial thinking, reading and writing, and connections with nature, are supported in a comprehensive way. We hope you take a moment to read each newsletter for stories written by teachers that illustrate how this unified learning happens.

### Thank You to Families

I know that all the teaching and administrative staff would like me to send heartfelt thanks to families for the many acts of kindness you share throughout the year. Your support is absolutely invaluable. Please know that you are appreciated very much.

### Our Work Around the Country

The Dimensions Educational Research Foundation is working throughout the United States to help other organizations benefit from the research we have been engaged in since 1998. By presenting workshops to other educators, helping programs develop Nature Explore Classrooms at their sites, and providing field-tested resources for classrooms and homes, we are spreading the word about the importance of making nature an integral part of children's daily learning, and supporting all areas of development, including visual-spatial thinking (which often gets overlooked in traditional classrooms).

It is good to see the positive changes that are occurring in classrooms from New York to Minnesota, Missouri, California and all points in between. Through a partnership with the Nebraska Department of Education, the Nebraska Early Childhood Training Center, and the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children, we have also been able to provide workshops and design consultations to support the development of Nature Explore Classrooms for over 30 schools and early childhood programs throughout the state of Nebraska. It is gratifying to know that children are benefitting from their daily connections with nature as we hear reports of decreased behavior problems and increased academic success. Throughout 2008 we will be continuing to work with programs across the country, while at the same time bringing new and exciting ideas to the children right here in Lincoln.