

Spreading the Word about Learning with Nature

Executive Director's Message

by Nancy Rosenow

Landscape architect Jim Wike, from Memphis, Tennessee, visited our Nature Explore Classrooms in Lincoln and Nebraska City last week to discuss some innovative and interesting materials we can be adding to our outdoor spaces as we continue to look for new, effective ways to help children learn with nature. Watch for these new items as they appear in the next few weeks. I know that teachers

and children are also eager to begin planting in the outdoor gardens, and are enjoying working on projects in the greenhouse.

I have been speaking with groups from one end of the country to the other to spread the word about our research and field-testing activities focused on the benefits for children of using the natural world as an integral, daily part of their learning. The Dimensions Foundation recently hosted a workshop for landscape architects and architects focused on

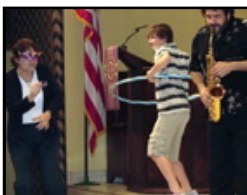
our field-tested principles for designing outdoor spaces that promote this kind of natural learning. It was heartening to hear this group of professionals discussing the need to give as much careful thought to the design of outdoor classrooms for children as they do to the design of indoor classrooms. We see evidence every day of how important well-planned, rich outdoor environments are in supporting children's healthy growth and development.

Hit It, Boys!

Thank you to Hayes Greenfield and friends Adam and Sony, Lincoln Action Program and the families and sponsors of Dimensions Early Education Programs for providing a fun filled evening of Jazz .

Hayes shared his wisdom as a Jazz musician with us stating, "Just as food is nourishment for your body and we all like different kinds of food, Jazz music is nourishment for your soul and creative spirit and there are all kinds of Jazz."

As children and adults were invited to join in with call and response, and scatting and clapping to the beat, the music led the audience through a lesson on jazz styles, improvisation



and the dynamics in music.

Earlier in the week, during an artist-in-residence visit with the Tuesday afternoon children, Hayes said, "We must be like the bamboo tree that the

reed on his saxophone comes from. We must be strong and flexible so when we have problems we can improvise to find solutions."

By sharing his passion of music and the arts with young children Hayes Greenfield shared in our inspiration and helped make the learning that we do every day come alive in the singing and moving bodies of our children.

Family Picnic & Farmer's Market

You are invited to our Family Picnic and Farmer's Market on our Outdoor Explore Classroom May 25, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

We will be providing drinks, but we are asking each family to bring:

- Your own plates and silverware
- A main dish to share
- A salad OR dessert to share

Let's celebrate our year together and enjoy each other's company. We'll have a fun Mini-Farmer's Market featuring plants and fresh, organic produce that Charuth and Kevin Loth are supplying from their Shadowbrook Farm.

Come rain or shine. If it rains we'll move indoors to our North and South classrooms! Stay for as long or as little as you desire. We always have lots of great potluck food, and a good time together. Let's celebrate together!

Parents, here are a couple of items that we always seem to be in need of for the Art Areas... Toilet Paper and Paper Towel Tubes (or other open-ended tubes like the ones that come from waxed paper, plastic wrap and foil), and Pizza Table Tents. One item that we no longer use in the Art Area is egg cartons. Thanks for recycling for us!

Donation Requests:

Preschool/Kindergarten

- ⊙ CD Player
- ⊙ Sidewalk Chalk
- ⊙ Hand Sanitizer
- ⊙ Small Paper Plates (9")
- ⊙ Masking Tape

Infant & Toddler

- ⊙ CD Player
- ⊙ Bounty Paper Towels
- ⊙ Sidewalk Chalk
- ⊙ Kleenex
- ⊙ Masking Tape

Staff Birthdays:

Shelley Moser.....April 8
Kris Van Laningham.....April 14
Suzan Haley.....April 18
Kathy Perry.....April 20

To learn more, visit...

www.childcareexchange.com

(Minnesotan Vicki Bohling-Philippi is a consultant for Dimensions and former resident of Crete, NE.)

The Power of Nature to Help Children Heal

By Vicki Bohling-Philippi

"There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrain of nature — the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter."

Rachel Carson, *A Sense of Wonder*

These words, written more than 40 years ago by well-known author and naturalist Rachel Carson in her book, *A Sense of Wonder*, continue to be important today — maybe even more so than when they were first written — because our classrooms and homes are often filled with children who are hurting in one way or another and need the healing influence that a close, personal connection with nature can provide.

(View all of this article at childcareexchange.com)

Thoughts and Dates for Parents

A Reminder about Summer Registrations

Summer sessions are filling quickly, so turn in your registration forms soon if you haven't already done so.

If you'd like to discuss a different payment plan (instead of paying a large part of the summer tuition up front), please speak with Linda Maack, our Financial Director, and she'll be happy to work with you.

Dates and themes for this summer:

About the Artist... June 11-15
From the Greenhouse to the Garden... June 18-22
Art Adventures... June 25-29
Let's Celebrate!... (closed July 4th) July 2-6
Imagine That!... July 9-13
Dream It, Construct It, Create It!... July 16-20
Nature Explore... July 23-27
Games Galore... August 6-10

Remember...

...On Thursday, April 19th, & Friday, April 20th, children who would like to participate in Pajama Days can wear their pajamas and slippers and bring along their favorite stuffed animal or blanket. Children who would rather not participate may dress as usual.

...Class Pictures will be taken April 26th and 27th.

Summer Volunteer Opportunities

Opportunities are available for young people (who have finished fifth grade) to volunteer in our classrooms during summer sessions. Volunteering is a great opportunity for youth to get many types of experiences which will be invaluable as they mature into young adults.

If you have questions or would like more information, please call Michelle Zimmer at 476-8304. You can also email her at michellez@dimensionsfoundation.org

Thanks to...

...everyone who helped make the "Jazz-A-Ma-Tazz" Concert and Children's Festival a lively and wonderful experience for all!



Mark Your Calendars...

Friday, May 25

Family Picnic and Farmer's Market on our Outdoor Explore Classroom

May 28

NO SCHOOL for Memorial Day

May 31

Last day of Infant/Toddler and Preschool Sessions

June 4-8

Limited Summer Sessions Infant/Toddler ONLY

June 6

Last Day of Kindergarten Discovery Days Sessions

June 11

First Day of Summer Sessions