**Director’s News**

Dear Parent,

The teachers and I thank all of you who attended Family Day on June 5. It was delightful to walk around the Center, inside and outside, and see the children playing with their parents and grandparents. Everyone appeared very happy and engaged.

In future planning, the teachers and I will strive to find opportunities for events that are focused on parents spending time with their child at school. Our hope is that the Center is welcoming to all families for these occasions.

Kudos to the teachers who planned great activities (all of teachers helped in planning) as well as to the teachers who juggled their schedules in order to work during Family Day!

**Connie**

**Pool Party for All!**

The Center will host a pool party for families on Sunday, July 15, from 5:30 to 7:30 PM at the Hanscom Park Pool. Families (including older siblings) are invited to enjoy an evening around the pool that is designed for young children. There will be only Center families present. This event is paid with funds from the Chili Luncheon and Silent Auction.

**Parents Please Help**

Please keep a change of clothing at the Center for your child for occasional accidents. Our supply of extra clothing is scant at the present time. Thank You!

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**Parents Welcome**

You are welcome to visit your child at the Center at any time. Some parents have a lighter summer schedule and can break from work for a visit more easily than at other times of the year. We do not need advance notice for a visit. However, if you plan to have lunch with your child please notify Connie or Jessica by 9 A.M. We want to make sure you feel welcome by having a place set for you and ample food for the meal. Just call 280-2460 or e-mail us at ccshonka@creighton.edu jessicathedore@creighton.edu

Infant and toddlers begin lunch at 10:55, Delois’ preschool group at 11:00, and Brandi’s group at 11:10.

**Nature Classroom**

Both Shanna and I visited the Nature Classroom at Arbor Day Farm in Nebraska City within the last month. Two people from Facilities went with me. Chris Casey and Jessica Heller will both be involved in the project.

At some point, we will want to involve parents in the planning of the classroom. Please contact me if you are interested. Those of you who have any interest and/or expertise in gardening would be great assets in planning. This should be a short-term project.

The proceeds from the November 2006 Luncheon and Silent Auction will help to pay for this improvement.

You can view photos of the Nature Classroom at arbordayfarm.org.
Infant Room News

The children, Lynn and I are looking forward to welcoming Gina back on July 3. Gina visited us this week. She looks wonderful and is ready to return after her medical leave.

Thank you to each parent who attended Family Day! It was such a joy to watch you plant a flower with your child and listen to stories with us. Many times our room does not participate in activities, but this was one that worked well for our group and I really enjoyed it. Lynn and Gina are looking forward to the experience next year!

Summer is here and we sure are looking forward to the activities during outdoor play, we took a big activity was a big hit! One morning we rolled it in butter and ate it. The toddlers delighted in peeling the husks from corn on the cob. They removed all of the silk and washed each ear in tubs of water. We cooked the corn for afternoon snack, and the toddlers used magnifying glasses and went in search of real insects. You’d be amazed at what they found!

One of the favorite themes, of late, was “Under the Sea.” Our little friends enjoyed listening to stories about creatures that live underwater. Be sure to check out the ocean art in our classroom. The toddlers painted over netting to give the seahorse his special look. We pretended to take a ride on a submarine, imagining all the things we would see and then had fun creating rainbow fish.

Family Day was a great success. Thank you to all who participated. The children were barely able to contain their excitement knowing that their parents would be joining them in activities at day’s end. It was a great way to celebrate families.

We have added a linear calendar to our daily schedule. Each day after singing “God Bless America” and reciting the purple hand pledge, we discuss if each day is a “school day” or “stay at home day.” We then count to see what date we are on. The children take turns putting up a token to mark the day. By introducing this calendar into our day, the children are learning order, left to right sequencing, and predictability.

All of us in the toddler room have been enjoying the beautiful weather this spring and early summer. Sand and water play have returned to our routine. It is a nice change of pace as long as Mother Nature cooperates.

It is hard to believe that we are halfway through the year already. As expected, the toddler room is a busy place. We are always trying to provide new and interesting experiences for your children. During our “Art” theme, Kevin and Deirdre Graham shared beautiful quilts, hand made by Daniel’s grandmother. The toddlers were quite responsive to the colors and textures in the very unique quilts.

One of our recent themes was “Pack a Picnic,” where our little friends delighted in peeling the husks from corn on the cob. They removed all of the silk and washed each ear in tubs of water. We cooked the corn for afternoon snack, and the toddlers rolled it in butter and ate it. The activity was a big hit! One morning during outdoor play, we took a big blanket out, set it in the grass, and had cinnamon graham crackers that were shaped like bugs. When we were finished with our picnic, the toddlers used magnifying glasses and went in search of real insects. You’d be amazed at what they found!

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Be sure to check our “picture window” every so often. We will be changing the photos so that you will be able to get a good look into your child’s day. As you can probably tell, there is plenty of fun going on and smiles all around.

Our room recently received many new pieces of equipment that we purchased from proceeds from the November Luncheon and Silent Auction. The children particularly enjoy the big box of pieces and bolts that they can make all kinds of things with.

~Du Rell and Laura

~Shanna
Love makes a Family
So many ways we can be
I want the whole world to see
That love makes a family!

The preschoolers and teachers had a great time learning about each other’s families. We learned that family members can be everyone and everything that they love from parents to grandparents, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, special friends, neighbors, and pets! Our first Family Day was a big hit! This was a special time for you and your children to participate in fun activities together. Thanks to everyone for your participation and hard work. Fun was had by all!

The farm is a great place to learn where most of our food comes from. The preschoolers recently took a trip to Gifford Farm. Some of the children were so amazed to realize that the milk they buy from Bakers or HyVee comes from a real cow! On the farm they saw horses, goats, cows, pigs, a pot bellied pig, lama, and chickens. They also saw a lot of farm equipment that the farmers use. The highlight of the farm trip was jumping in the hay loft and having a picnic. They also enjoyed the song and game of “The Farmer in the Dell.” A special thanks to Paul, our tour guide.

May was Preschool Graduation for some of our family and friends. It was a huge success and many people attended. The graduates sang several songs and recited fingerplays. The non-graduating children also sang a special farewell song to their graduating friends. The following children will be heading to kindergarten in the fall: Ryan Adkins, Leilani Dodson, Trevor Hanosh, Kate Joyce, Christopher Nubel, Jahnvi Salaria, Joshua Snyder, Jacob Sype, Ethan Torres, and Gabriel Winegard. Our friend Mrs. Jill Russell, who is the wife of the late James R. Russell for whom the Center is named, presented the certificates to the children. In addition to parents, grandparents, and friends, Mr. Jeff Branstetter, Executive Director of Human Resources, Bill Hill, and Amy Wall, who is the daughter of Jill and the late James R. Russell.

On behalf of the parents of the graduates, Tanya and Mike Winegard presented the center with several gifts, these including farm sets, tool box sets, walkie talkie sets, binoculars, and a mail center. The children and teachers really appreciated those thoughtful and very appropriate gifts.

We would like to welcome Anne Lynch, daughter of Pat and Jennifer Lynch, into our room from the toddler room. Anne’s big sister Grace is a 2004 graduate of the preschool room.

Thanks to Estelle McLaughlin’s grandmother and grandfather Amy and John Dempsey, for the books they donated to the preschoolers. They especially enjoy “Gladys Goes out to Lunch,” by Derek Anderson. The preschoolers have been cooking and making some fun things from that book. A special thanks to all the families who have donated books to the Center.

We have several field trips coming up this summer. Please watch our room board for these events.

Delois

Summer has arrived and along with it comes field trips, water play, and sand play. The children have attended several field trips already and the teachers have about three more planned. It is a wonderful experience to take the children to the farm and let them see, hear, and smell all the things that we talk and read about. They are so excited to see and smell the animals! The children often change their minds about which animals they like best after they have a real life experience with them. We have received many compliments about how well behaved the preschoolers have been on the field trips. Hearing compliments such as this from tour guides who deal with different aged groups on a regular basis is something that we are all able to take pride in.

Ms. Shari has been working with the children on a farm mural. This mural is another way for the children to remember what they saw on the farm.
Shari used many different art mediums to create this mural, such as: cutting out pictures from a magazine, coloring with crayons, painting, drawing animals, and fingerprints to make fish. Be sure and stop by and take a look at the preschool version of the farm. It is on the wall just outside the entry to our side of the room. I invite you to ask your child what their contribution to the farm mural was. They are sure to have a long detailed story ready to share, so be sure to listen!

Water play and sand play are a great opportunity for the preschoolers to work on independence, fine motor, and gross motor skills. We are scheduled to have water play and sand play each week. The children are strongly encouraged to put on their own swim suits and water shoes. You sometimes hear “I can’t do it!,” which I will respond with, “In preschool we say ‘I will try!’” I always want to give them the opportunity to be successful and independent. It is a feeling that each child needs to experience and feel good about. It is a priceless moment when they come up to me and say, “Look, Ms. Brandi, I did it!” and I will return with the enthusiasm with “You DID do it! You tried and you did it all by yourself! Way to go!” The same is true for putting on socks and shoes after sand play. Sometimes the socks are inside out and the shoes are on the wrong feet, but THEY did it all by themselves. It is a very important part of social development to feel independent and secure enough to attempt new things. There is no telling what your preschooler could do or be, with the positive attitude of “I Will Try!”

Brandi