The semester is quickly coming to a close; we know that all of you are busy trying to finish up with Fall semester obligations so we wish you good luck. We hope this has been a successful semester and we have helped you in some way.

It is hard to believe that after 26 years with CCC I am writing my last newsletter and approaching my last month as the director. What a long and amazing journey this has been! When I first started, Janene had just been hired a few months prior, as our ‘secretary’, and my first work computer was not even set up on my desk yet. What an exciting time—to no longer have to complete billing and payroll by hand!! And, our first parent pockets consisted of an old orange panty hose dispenser (I’m not kidding) until Janene made us real pockets out of fabric. ‘Back then’ we had 2 classrooms with 25 student workers and 3 teachers; we were housed in the south end of Gabel Hall (that is our old playground that you pass on the way to CCC). We now have 8 classrooms, 16 teachers and 60 students. I also remember being the most junior director (of 11) in Student Affairs, and I am now the senior director of 22 departments. And, my children were very young (my youngest was just 3 months old) when I started this job, and they are now both grown adults. Time has certainly flown by! I have been blessed over the years to work with so many staff who have given their hearts and souls to making this such a wonderful program. I have also known many parents and children over the years. So, I have many fond memories to draw from as I move on. And, what a great environment to work in. Where else can you get up from your desk to greet a buggy full of infants, wave to toddlers as they line up on their rings to go outside, read a book to a two-year-old, or help a preschooler zip their coat. Or, to have teachers burst into my office with a problem to be solved or a rash to diagnose. I will treasure all of the great moments (and there are many) that have happened over the years, and all the times we have been able to laugh together. Thanks to all for helping to make my time at CCC so memorable and fulfilling! I will miss you all!!

To those of you who will be here during the upcoming Interim, here is some information that will be helpful to you. This is a time when we combine classrooms due to low enrollment. And, because of the nature of the interim times, your child may not be in their regular classroom every day. The staffing will also rotate to allow teachers to have some time out of the classroom for cleaning, lesson planning, committee work, training, and vacation time. We will post a note up front to let you know which classroom they are using for that day or week. During these weeks, the rooms will be combined as follows: infants & toddlers; both 2/3’s rooms; Pre 1 & 3; and Pre 2 & 4.
We wish all of you the best of luck with finals and hope you are able to enjoy some rest and relaxation during the upcoming break. We will see some of you during Interim and others we will see next year! For those who are done at CCC, we wish you the best and will miss having you in our program.

Chris Kipp

**PRESCHOOL ROOM 1**

It’s hard to believe that the fall semester is coming quickly to an end! As I’m writing this we’re anticipating our first snowfall and the children are really excited, but I’m not sure I’m ready! I hope the end of the semester goes smoothly for you all and that you can enjoy the holiday season with your families!

Thank you for meeting with us for conferences. We really enjoy spending time with you, getting to know more about your child and your family. We are happy to share with you all that your child has been learning, and the ways in which they are growing! Having a partnership between home and school is really important to foster development and a positive approach to lifelong learning.

This past month we started an author of the month series. Our author for November was Mo Willems. He has written series such as *Don’t Let the Pigeon...*, *Knuffle Bunny*, *Elephant and Piggie*, and Bri found a few others such as *What’s Your Sound? Hound the Hound?* Reading books by the same author allows us to compare characters, see similarities between stories, and talk about the illustrations. Next, we will use the characters to create our own book.

We are working on our social/emotional development daily. We are learning about self-regulation, identifying feelings, working with our peers, and problem solving. We recently discovered a song on YouTube called “Belly Breathe”. There are a series of songs with *Sesame Street* characters and current artists. They use strong, dynamic movements to engage the children physically.

**REMINDERS**

- The last day of the semester is **Friday, Dec. 11**. Full-day child care is available during Interim (Dec. 14-23 and Jan. 4-15) for those who have requested care in advance.

- Please remember that you have been billed for your regular schedule during finals week. If you need additional hours of care, you will need to talk with Janene about scheduling ‘extra care’.

- Please stop by the front desk and sign your Contract for Spring semester. They must be returned to Janene by Dec. 4 to save your spot. If your plans change and you need to withdraw from spring semester, you must notify Janene by Dec. 18 or you will be billed for the first two weeks of Spring semester. And schedule changes are due by Jan. 4th.

- Spring semester starts on **Tuesday, January 19**. The center will be closed on Monday, Jan. 18 for MLK Day.

- All children who are well enough to be in attendance at the center will be taken outdoors on a daily basis. As the weather turns colder, please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play and walks.
positive messages with a fun beat to help teach children important messages. The "Belly Breathe" song talks about the monster inside of you which could be anger or frustration and how it wants to get out. When you belly breathe you help to tame that monster feeling! The other class favorite is a song called "What I am". It helps foster positive self-esteem and messages of being all that you can be. We are working on creating a book with pictures of the children and positive messages. For more information on Conscious Discipline and helping your child please visit [www.consciousdiscipline.com](http://www.consciousdiscipline.com), and check out the resources section.

Other highlights of the month – we have been busy with different cooking activities. We made pretzels from scratch! The children helped measure and mix the ingredients. We kneaded the dough and created our own pretzel shapes. Our other cooking activity was making pasta salad. Rika really wanted to use bowtie noodles to make something for lunch, and after researching recipes we decided on pasta salad. This allowed us to use noodles, peppers, broccoli, carrots, and cheese.

Science – We have been learning about reactions. This started last month as we created a lava lamp sensory bottle. We saw the Alka-seltzer react with the water and oil in the bottle. It created a flow of materials that looked like a lava lamp! We also experimented with baking soda and vinegar. We watched and listened as the two ingredients caused a reaction that bubbled and fizzed. We talked about the gases that were created in the reaction. We used Alka-seltzer again and combined it with water in a film canister. The reaction and creation of gas popped the top off! The children counted as they waited for the pop! And lastly, we combined baking soda and vinegar in a bottle with a balloon over the top. The gas that was created blew up the balloon! We experimented with different amounts to see if we could make the balloon bigger!

Jen Young and Brianna Wicker

**PRESCHOOL ROOM 2**

It’s hard to believe the end of 2015 is upon us! This Fall 2015 semester has been awesome in Pre 2. First of all, Emily and I would like to thank you all for joining us for our Parent Teacher Conferences. It’s such a nice opportunity to be able to meet with you all and share what we have been observing and learning about your child throughout the semester. Also, we would like to thank the parents who have joined our classroom and participated in learning activities and opportunities for us. If any of you would like to join our classroom to share a story with us, a cooking activity, or a unique interest of yours, we welcome you with open arms!
Throughout this month, the children have exhibited an interest in literacy. Not only are they intrigued by a teacher reading to them, but they are also excited to read to their friends and retell popular stories. Many of our friends are able to predict what will happen next in a story and discuss emotions and feelings of characters in the story. Emily and I have also introduced rhyming and pattern books to the children and they have excelled at their knowledge of both. Many are able to decide which words rhyme and what will come next within a simple pattern.

Science has also been a common theme within many of our activities. The children continue to be interested in activities in which we predict what materials will sink or float in a pool of water. The children love taking a guess at whether or not the object will sink or float and get very excited when their guess was correct. We have also participated in ‘erupting’ science experiments that involve baking soda and vinegar. The children are always amazed to see the chemical reaction between the two when the bubbling and fizzing begins!

We may have some future artists in our group! The friends in Pre 2 excel in their creative expression with artistic materials. As a group, we have participated in art activities such as painting seashells with glitter paint, making car tracks with matchbox cars and paint, and using a small swimming pool and rubber balls to create a large painting. Individually, the children have excelled at using new materials such as pipe cleaners and Popsicle sticks to create 3D pieces of art. Some of the children made shopping bags or large pockets with the pipe cleaners and paper. The chil-

**Subsidy Program**

Anyone who receives a subsidy from the state to help pay for child care will need to contact your local resource and referral agency and provide the following:

- Fall semester grades
- Spring semester class schedule
- Spring semester work schedule
- 2 current pay stubs

Please know that you will be responsible for paying the full child care rate if your subsidy case is incomplete or you are ineligible for any full or half-days in which you schedule child care. You may only schedule child care on days in which you work and/or have class. Also, your GPA must be 2.5 or above if you do not work. If it is between 2.0 and 2.5, you must be working at least 20 hours a week in addition to taking classes to remain eligible for the program. Please talk with Janene or Chris if you have any questions.
Children are able to explore their creativity while using open ended art materials.

Emily and I would like to wish everyone a happy end of the semester! It is always a busy time of the year but continue to work hard and excel in whatever you are facing! Good luck on finals and have a wonderful end of 2015!

Diane Mathison and Emily Stoll

**PRESCHOOL ROOM 3**

December already? How did that happen? This semester has gone by so quickly, but we are happy to have had great weather for as long as we did! This group of children love the outdoor time. A lot of them carry over their play from the classroom to outside, especially dramatic play. They love to pretend and being a smaller group, they have all become close, good friends.

Our “Be a Star” curriculum is really taking off! The children are finding all kinds of ways to be helpful and kind to one another. This program would be easy to do at home too. We cut out stars from construction paper and write each child’s name on the star and they get to place it on the bulletin board. At home you could use stickers, or rocks, or anything small to represent the star and use an old empty container to place the items into each time the child helps or does an act of kindness for someone.

Speaking of acts of kindness, we discussed real super heroes and took a vote on who we could do something special for—the children chose the local firefighters. Each child made an art picture and told the teacher what they wanted to say and I dropped them off at the #3 fire station here in town. The firefighters were so surprised and glad to have the special gifts. This helps us understand that even the simplest acts of kindness are greatly appreciated.

November was the month for birthdays in our class! Happy birthday to Stacy, Tavion, Jacob, Shalonge, and Imran. Four of which turned 5! With getting older comes the excitement of losing a first tooth! Jacob is already noticing that he has a loose tooth. This is a great opportunity to discuss eating healthy and brushing teeth! We are fortunate to have the NIU nursing students visit from time to time and do fun learning activities with the children. This month we had Amy who taught the children about the different food groups and the importance of eating lots of fruits and vegetables daily.
During classroom time, many of the children are commenting on the television/computer shows they watch. I researched the NAEYC site and found some interesting information that I want to share. According to research, on the content of TV and video programs watched by young children suggest that parents may want to pay more attention to what appears on the screens after all. A number of studies are finding links between children’s cognitive development and “adult directed television”. Children’s brains are trying to comprehend what is going on in these shows and the images go too fast for a child’s brain to keep up. This can lead to poor sleep patterns and poor “test scores”- (talking about adult content and violence on TV and video games). Even though you may not think that your child is paying attention to what is on the TV or computer, at this age their little brains are like sponges taking in so many things. Just keep this in mind when choosing shows to watch when children are around. Make sure they are appropriate for all to watch. Just something to think about!

Just because the weather gets colder doesn’t mean we don’t go outside daily. Please start sending hats and gloves with children. With cold weather comes chapped skin and lips. Feel free to bring in lip balm and lotion for us to apply to your child. We will label each one with child’s name.

This is the time of year to remind everyone that we celebrate the season, not holidays. Of course the children are talking about customs that are important to them and their family, and this is great. We celebrate each family and respect all differences! That’s what makes this place great!

Have a safe, relaxing and enjoyable winter break!!

April Kaiser

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**Myth: Cold Temperatures Zap Your Immune System**

**Truth: Cold weather might make you shiver, but it won't make you sick.**

In various studies, researchers have exposed volunteers to cold temperatures and cold viruses while the subjects stood around in wet hair, minimal clothing, and damp socks. On the whole, they were no more likely to get sick than people who were exposed to cold viruses while wearing dry, warm layers. Still, you should bundle up to prevent frostbite.

Greetings Families! Another month has flown by in Pre 4! After establishing our daily schedule we have been able to focus on learning new skills, such as building our shape vocabulary, introducing rhyming, and developing fine motor skills to encourage handwriting.

We have a very special mystery box in our classroom that contains various shapes. Each child gets to pull out one shape from the box and tell their peers what shape it is. The children have been working on taking turns while waiting for their friends to share what their shape is. To facilitate learning shapes outside of the classroom, encourage your child to find shapes in their environment! The children have also enjoyed learning about rhyming through songs, books, and picture clues. If you would like to learn some of our classroom rhyming songs, ask your child to sing for you!

We have noticed a lot of our friends showing a growing interest in writing. Some of our friends vary in skill level from controlled linear scribbling to accurate letters. We have encouraged the children to sound out the letters to demonstrate that each letter has a sound that is associated with it. We continue to strengthen their fine motor skills which will eventually develop their handwriting abilities.

A special thank you to parent Angela Martin for demonstrating an awesome science experiment about bubbles! Each child was able to see the chemical reaction that ensued while they mixed their colorful soapy water with baking soda and citric acid. There was a bit of a bubble overflow, however the smiles on each child’s face was priceless! We welcome any parent or family member to volunteer inside the classroom. If there is any project you would like to perform with the children, simply ask and we would LOVE to set a date!

We would personally like to thank Sherie for spending a week in our classroom! Her expertise and positive attitude helped us out tremendously while Christy was attending NAECY’s annual conference and expo in Orlando, Florida. We cannot wait for Christy to demonstrate the new skills and resources she learned on her trip!

Just a friendly reminder that as the weather begins to become colder with the likelihood of snow, please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for our outside time. Snow pants, boots, hats and mittens are highly recommended for building snowmen and making snow angels!

Have a happy and healthy December Pre 4 Families !!!

Hillary Rosher and Christy Pelikan