



Little Champ Times

March - April 2008

Mark Your Calendar

April 14-19

Week of the Young Child

April 22

Open PAC meeting, noon-1 p.m., UTCDC Conference Rm

The April Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meeting is open to all parents interested in learning more about the PAC and how it assists the administration.

April 19

Multicultural Festival, 9 a.m.-noon.

April 26

Playground Workday 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

May 9

Teacher appreciation event

Week of the Young Child

Established in 1971, the Week of the Young Child is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The goal of the event is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families, and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs — after all, it's the early childhood years (birth through age 8) that lay the foundation for children's success in school and later life.

This year's national theme is: *Bring Communities Together for Children — Children Bring Communities Together.*

The UTCDC has planned a host of activities — for children and parents. Each day features an activity that parents and children can engage in together, such as planting a flower or making a fruit loop necklace. And there's plenty of room for silliness with special days where kids can wear silly socks, hats, and crazy hair. There's even a backwards/inside out day!

Capping off the Week of the Young Child is the Multicultural Festival on April 19th. For a detailed schedule of activities, check out the San Jacinto Bulletin Board (aka Letter from Julie) on the UTCDC Web site: www.utexas.edu/childcenter.

Multicultural Festival

Dig out your passport, stow your carry-on items and put your seat in its upright position — you're about to embark on an international expedition.

The UTCDC Multicultural Festival takes place from 9 a.m. to noon, Saturday, April 19th at the Center.

This annual parent-organized event is designed to instill an appreciation for diverse cultures through a variety of family friendly activities. Past participants have traveled to Japan to make Japanese theater masks; many have crossed the border to Mexico where they learned how to make cascarones, maracas and flowers, as

well as how to play *lotería*, the Mexican game of chance; still others received henna tattoos, which span many cultures. Those with a culinary bent explored far-away lands by sampling exotic foods.

And have we mentioned the dancers representing Africa, China, Greece, India, Korea and the Philippines?

"We are fortunate to share so many different cultural backgrounds and nationalities, both in the families we serve and our staff," said Dr. Sandy Briley. "Each year, this special celebration highlights not only our differences, but our similarities. It's a great opportunity for families to get to know one another better."

We can't wait to see you there!

Kindergarten is around the corner — Are you giving your child the best start?

Did you know that the UTCDC pre-kindergarten curriculum helps lay the foundation for success in kindergarten and beyond by challenging children to a higher order of thinking and skill development in an environment centered around play?

The UTCDC pre-kindergarten program has a core curriculum focused on building skills in the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Some of the developmental goals for students include: instilling a sense of confidence and self worth, teaching responsibility for one's actions, teaching sharing and cooperation, teaching independent problem solving, creating an awareness of others and their feelings, and fostering a sense of curiosity about the world.

"Parents often come back to visit after their child has gone to kindergarten and tell us that their children were well prepared through their experiences in our Pre-K program," said Dr. Briley. "We love hearing their success stories."

Staff Appreciation and Support

Student Survival Kits

The Staff Appreciation and Support Committee will be putting together “survival kits” to help our wonderful student assistants through their final exam period. If you work in a place that provides give-aways — study supplies including pens, pencils and highlighters, or coupons for free edible treats — and would like to donate items for the survival kits, please e-mail Maria Arizpe-Sánchez (marizpe@utsystem.edu). Snack items (without nuts) also are welcome. We’d need 50 of any item. Supplies are needed by April 18.

Teacher Appreciation Event

Is it possible to show too much appreciation for your teachers? Absolutely not! On Friday, May 9, the Staff Appreciation and Support Committee will celebrate our teachers with a special luncheon. Dining on a catered lunch will be a special treat for our hardworking educators, but it’s the slide show that will be the showstopper.

Here’s where you come in: We’re seeking pictures of our UTCDC teachers in action — whether it’s Ms. Christy reading a story or Miss Leah planting a kiss on one of her wards. Hey, we saw you with that camera at the Halloween Party; you captured Ms. Edna dressed up in her pig costume, didn’t you?

Please send your photos to Jenifer Flaxbart (jflaxbart@gmail.com) by April 30. Photos will be used for this in-house event only.

The activities above are organized by the PAC Staff Appreciation and Support Committee, with financial assistance from the “One to Grow On” campaign.

One to Grow On Campaign

Are you thinking about ways to reduce next year’s tax bill? Consider making a tax deductible gift to the UTCDC’s “One



to Grow On Campaign,” which raises money to cover playground maintenance expenses, toys and books, classroom enhancements and staff appreciation activities.

This year’s fund raising goal of \$12,500 will enable the San Jacinto center to purchase an ice machine to help combat the Texas summer, and benches to provide a rest stop in front of the entrance where parents, children, teachers and visitors can take a load off. So far the combined efforts of the Comal and San Jacinto centers have raised \$9,300 — just \$3,200 short of our goal. We’ve already installed the benches, don’t they look handsome?

Finger Painters Wanted

Here’s an activity that will enable you to capture this stage of your child’s artistry on something more permanent than a piece of construction paper: purchase a six-inch tile or plate and help your child decorate it during the Multicultural Festival. We’ll provide all the materials you need at the festival. Afterward, your plate will be baked and returned to the center for you to take home. Painted tiles will be fired and installed on the playground wall to add cheer to UTCDC for years to come. Come visit the wall to see what others have done in previous years!

Tiles and plates must be prepaid in advance at the front desk since a very limited amount will be available for sale at the festival.

Tile and Plate Prices:

\$15 for one

\$25 for two

\$35 for three

Spring Cleaning

Spring has arrived and you know what that means. It’s time to fluff up the playground and refresh the building’s interior.

The next workday has been scheduled for Saturday, April 26, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. We need one or two parents from each classroom to lend a hand.

Specific projects include cleaning and painting some of the play

structures, fluffing the fall zone areas and minor repairs/sanding of the landscape timbers around the playground.

We also may be assisting the UT Interior Design Club, “Ampersand,” with their interior “refresh” work around the school (including interior painting).

Contact playground committee chairs Steve Rosen (srosen@utsystem.edu) and Jeremiah Palmer (jeremiahpalmer@gmail.com) to confirm your participation. Steve and Jeremiah will coordinate specific projects and shifts directly with the volunteers.

Super Champ Spotlight



Ella Quinlan

She’s as cool as a cucumber; she’s seen it all in her more than 25 years of childcare experience — 14 of which have been right here at the UTCDC. That’s one of the many reasons Ms. Ella Quinlan, lead teacher in the Rainbow Classroom, has been named Super Champ.

Parents report that their kiddos are excited about learning and can’t wait to describe all the exciting things they did with Ms. Ella that day.

“I believe Ms. Ella is one of the greatest teachers at the UTCDC,” says one mother. “My son has grown leaps and bounds emotionally. He even tells us when he did something wrong and how Ms. Ella responded; I really appreciate that she holds the children responsible for their actions.”

Ms. Ella has a knack for working with parents too, especially when it comes to keeping them informed. “She seems to know exactly what subjects you want to hear about,” says one mother.

Three cheers for Ms. Ella!