



Little Champ Times

Summer 2008

Mark Your Calendar

September 1

Labor Day, Center closed

September 1

Tuition increase of \$30 per child

September 3

New parent orientation, 5 p.m. in the conference room

September 4

New parent orientation, noon in the conference room

NAC Accreditation

The San Jacinto Center is in the final stages of earning accreditation from the National Accreditation Commission (NAC), which is sponsored by the National Association of Child Care Professionals (NACCP). After an extensive nine-month self-study, the center is awaiting a site visit, which is expected to lead to NAC accreditation.

“Earning NAC accreditation is an important process that reflects the continued quality of care and hard work provided by all of our teachers and staff,” said Julie Daugherty, San Jacinto site director.

NAC accreditation is a three-step process. The first step is an intensive 6-18-month self-study during which center staff identify areas for improvement, then undergo training and make modifications to meet NAC standards. Once a center feels it meets these standards, it can request a site visit by a NAC validator. Following the site visit, the NAC will make its decision.

“The NAC sets high standards for child care providers,” said Sandy Briley, director of the UTCDC. “As one of the leaders in early childhood education in Central Texas, we are a model for other programs in the community, so we feel it’s important to achieve endorsement from the NAC.”

The Comal Center earned its NAC accreditation last August. For more information about the NAC accreditation and the NACCP, visit www.naccp.org.

It Takes a Village

Do you ever fantasize about being a special events coordinator? Can you do wonders with a glue stick, construction paper and a little glitter? Are you organized? Do you remember birthdays? Do you want to create a sense of community in your child’s classroom?

If you answered “yes” to any of the above, please consider volunteering to be a Room Parent. It’s a great way to meet your child’s friends, learn more about what goes on in the

classroom, meet other parents and feel connected to the UTCDC community.

As we gear up for the new school year, each classroom will be looking for new Room Parents, which are an essential part of our program. Information sheets are available at the front desk and from your child’s teacher.

Some of the best UT staff work right here!

The secret’s out: Some of the most dedicated and talented educators on the University of Texas at Austin campus work right here at the San Jacinto Center!

Edna Hayes, lead teacher in the Dragonflies classroom, received the Sallie Beth Moore Award from the Austin Association for the Education of Young Children (AAEYC). The annual award singles Edna out as an example for teachers across Austin, and recognizes her level of involvement with children, as well as her excellence as an early childhood educator. She received the award in April at the annual AAEYC dinner. This is the second year in a row that a UTCDC teacher has won the award; **Wanda Davis-Watkins** an infant teacher at the Comal center, won last year.

Fati Ghanei, lead teacher in the Butterflies classroom, was one of only 30 people at the university to be honored with a Staff Excellence Award in recognition of the impact she has had on the university community and on all the young students’ lives she has touched.

Raquel Field, lead teacher in the Panda Bears classroom, was recently recognized with a 15-Year Service Award from the university. That’s a lot of young lives she’s touched (and a lot of diapers!).

Who’s That Bright Face?

Amanda Greechan is the new administrative assistant behind the front desk replacing the always-sunny **Ashley Koetter**. Amanda earned a BA in anthropology from UNC Chapel Hill. Please say hello as you walk by.

Staff Appreciation and Support

Gov. Perry Proclaims “Provider Appreciation Day”

On May 9, the PAC’s Staff Appreciation and Support Committee honored our teachers with a special luncheon featuring a heartwarming slideshow and an official proclamation from Governor Perry marking May 9, 2008 as “Provider Appreciation Day.”

Each teacher received a proclamation granting official recognition in honor of their dedicated service and commitment to early child education. It acknowledged the importance of early childhood and the role of child care providers in delivering “a nurturing environment, moral guidance and quality service.”

“This staff appreciation luncheon was declared the best ever by the staff,” said UTCDC Director Sandy Briley. “The slideshow, food, goody bags and kind words from parents were wonderful. The teachers especially appreciated the presence of Associate VP Marla Martinez who talked about how much the University values the work of teachers and staff at the Center. Several of the teachers were moved to tears by the heartfelt appreciation expressed by everyone involved.”

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



PAC Notes

The Parent Advisory Council welcomes four new members: **Leena Batra**, whose daughter is in the Butterflies Class; **Wade Classen**, whose son is in the Panda Bears Class; **Leslie Hay**, whose daughter is in the Ducklings Class; and **Kim Vincent**, whose son is in the Explorers Class.

When you see them, please thank the members cycling off the PAC: **Maria Arizpe-Sanchez**, **Yeo Jung Kim** and **Jeremiah Palmer**.

One to Grow On Campaign



Thanks, and bear hugs, to all of the families at the Comal and San Jacinto locations who contributed to the “One to Grow On” fundraising campaign. Since September, the campaign has raised \$12,232, including \$2,117 in in-kind contributions.

Both the Comal and San Jacinto Centers were able to purchase ice machines, benches for the front entrances and classroom supplies. San Jacinto funds were also used for classroom toys and curriculum material, and teacher and staff support, such as Provider Appreciation Day activities, finals week goody bags for assistant teachers, and the teacher and staff holiday breakfast

Parents, Students Team up on HGTV-style Makeover

On April 25 and 26, Ampersand, a University of Texas student organization devoted to interior design, unleashed a team of students to give the Center a makeover.

After an initial consultation with members of the PAC and staff at the Center, the group arrived Friday evening and worked through the night making over the conference room, the walls flanking the staircase, the music space where Mr. Craig performs, and the staff kitchen, workroom and meeting space.

The interior design students, along with a crew of parent volunteers, painted various areas of the facility and installed decorative accents throughout. Several companies made in-kind contributions toward the remodel including: IKEA, Breed and Co., Jerry’s Art-a-rama, Interface Carpet and Shaw Carpet.

A huge shout-out goes to the parents who spent most of their Saturday painting, hammering and sanding: **Kim Bracken**, **Kelsey Evans**, **Erin Geisler**, **Rebecca Neal**, **Jeremiah Palmer** and **Steve Rosen**. Special thanks to Center staff **Sandy Briley** and **Maria Perez** for rolling up

their sleeves and getting dirty with the crew.

Special thanks also go to **Arden Moore** and **Curtis Robillard** for spending the day in the heat fluffing the playground, making a softer landing for little ones.

Super Champ Spotlight



Maria Perez

Maria Perez, lead teacher in the Ositos classroom, is a SuperChamp in every aspect.

One of the longest-serving teachers at the UTCDC, Ms. Maria works hard to build a true community in her classroom. She hosts a potluck picnic at the beginning of the year to allow parents to get to know each other and she goes out of her way to introduce parents to each other at drop-off and pick-up. She also knows how to get parents involved in the classroom -- whether it’s recruiting room parents, asking a parent to volunteer for a classroom activity or suggesting items they can donate to the classroom.

Parents in the Ositos classroom know exactly what their child has been doing throughout the day. It’s not uncommon to arrive at your child’s cubby to find a detailed note about the day’s events or to check your e-mail to find a picture of your little one out on the playground.

Most importantly, Ms. Maria is an excellent communicator and she’s not afraid to give direct feedback or make tough decisions -- she has each child’s best interest in mind.

We are so grateful to have Ms. Maria Perez in our midst!