

CO-OP CAPERS

The Newsletter of the Williamsburg Parent Cooperative Preschool

On the Co-op continuum, there is a rich array of beloved teachers, each of whom has brought her own special gifts to a magic mix. Susie Powell and Kathleen Stewart are off into the wider world at the end of this school year, having helped countless children and their families travel that path before them.

We will miss Kathleen's twinkle, her ever-willing gentle spirit, generous heart, deep loyalty and mellifluous voice. She has sheltered the shy and the bumptious under the same warm wing.

And who but Susie could bring her combination of emotional engagement, quick wit, and loving focus to each child every day? Her researcher's discipline, curiosity, and playful spirit distill into a pure elixir of child empowerment.

We've cherished their time with us, and send them off on a cloud of well-wishes with heartfelt thanks and love.

Co-op and its teachers and families have been a source of joy, friendship, and inspiration for me for more than thirty years. With your love and encouragement, I've Scarlett O'Hara'd my way through this past year as transitional director, in gentle and genial partnership with Molly. But suddenly tomorrow IS today, and it is time to thank you all for so many pleasures and treasures shared.

I was overwhelmed and delighted by the beautifully orchestrated Carnival cake tributes. Then two heartbeats later, I found myself in Miles Hall, surrounded by a teacher-planned gala, full of wonderful friends and sweet surprises. And then there is the Scholarship Fund! What a humbling, uplifting, perfect gift to take Co-op into a healthy future. Who could easily leave such people—or such a place?

With grateful thanks and devoted love to all of you, from Susan

It's hard to believe that the Co-op year is coming to a close, but despite the rainy weather, it is May indeed, as carnival reminds us.

The weather did not dampen our spirits at Carnival 2009, however, when all present "toasted" Mrs. Axtell's 30 years of leadership, love, and dedication with two beautiful cakes made by Ivonne Luchs and with words of warmth from Lori Wright. The storms even let up briefly for the special moment. Huzzah to our Susan!

We are so appreciative of all of the time donated by our tireless carnival committee chaired by Jen Youngs and Cindy Kordek (who coordinated the spectacular raffle); supported by the hardworking team of Carey Youngs, Ivonne Luchs, Grace Anderson, Anne Nevins, Xiaoyan Song, and Erica Snow. A big thanks also to Amy Strawn, Sue Barton, Lori Wright, Emma McMillan, Gaye Moth, Lisa Stefanick, Erica Powell, and Lacey Wright who quietly pitched in where help was needed.

Though it is of course an emotional time when another school year draws to an end, especially as this year involves saying good-bye to several of our beloved teachers, it is also a sunny time when we can be excited about blissful summer days or contented retirements, with new friends and fine teachers to come. Thank you for sharing your preschool days with us at Co-op. I look forward to more merriment in the fall.

Crissie Klee, President of the Board

Good-bye to a dear Friend, Teacher and Director

Susan Axtell has been the heart and soul of Co-op for 30 years. Her unfailing support of the teachers and families has been evident throughout her tenure. Susan has always wanted parents to be happy and connected with one another. She has truly created a family-like atmosphere. Many times Susan has shown up at a home with a delicious meal for a family who has a newborn child. Susan's warm hugs and understanding demeanor have helped many a parent understand their active three year old's behavior. Susan's sense of humor and ability to work with three year olds as long as she has amazes me to this day! She accepts their liveliness, creativeness and awe of the world around them without hesitation. Her ability to calm misbehavior, distract and delight in a preschooler's viewpoint is the core of who Susan is.

Personally, I have enjoyed working with Susan for 20 years. Being the "greenest" teacher ever hired here, I don't know how she guided me to this point! Throughout the years, I have enjoyed her delightful laugh when a child says something completely out of the blue and have always marveled at her ability to say words that I have to look up in the dictionary at times! Wearing a robe with her hair down on pajama day, surrounded by precious three year olds, will be an image that will stay with me also. Susan's uncanny ability to use puppets, nursery rhymes and songs has been loved by the parents and children. Not many people can capture the spirit of a three year old and mold it into a capable four year old!

Susan, we will miss you terribly. Your kindness, generous spirit, and friendship will not be forgotten. We do hope that you visit us often to read to the children, help us with your delicious gingerbread cookies, or come by to give us a warm hug. Thank you for all your love and attention to Co-op. You will always have a special place in our hearts.

Love,

Lori Wright and the Co-op Teachers

30 Things We Love About Susan

1. She is always supportive of each individual's creativity and personal gifts.
2. She has always loved the Co-op families as if they were her own.
3. She has the amazing ability to recall the names of every parent, child, grandparent, aunt of a child, best friend's dad's mother, etc.!!!
4. Her mind is as sharp as a tack!
5. She has always been there for me... on a personal level when going through hard times at work if a class has been tough... she always "has your back" no matter what's going on in her life. If there is a book you need for a specific theme, Susan knows exactly which one to guide you to! She constantly shares her books, puppets, ideas and Playmobile. Generosity is what she is about. FROM HENRY! There is no such thing as a 5 minute call with Susan Axtell (with love and affection).
6. Her love for Playmobile (we wouldn't have the wonderful collection without her!)
7. Her great wardrobe (especially during the color themes) plus her beautiful long hair.
8. Her collection of preschool essentials (toilet rolls, plastic bowls, etc., etc!) We have all had to call her and ask her to bring something at the last minute!
9. Her genuine love and concern for people (especially children).
10. She can respond with positive words to every situation (even though it may be pretty bleak).
11. She loves and accepts me for who I am, which in turn makes me want to be a better person.
12. If I listen, I can learn something from her every time she talks to me.
13. She is a true artist—whose gift comes through personal style, cooking, words, writing, and art projects.
14. All the ways she takes the time to make me and Erika feel special, which is why Erika says Mrs. Axtell is like her cool grandma.
15. Susan smiles and laughs with the same delight as the children she teaches!!!
16. Her cookies.
17. Her rich vocabulary gives each of us a chance to learn and grow on a daily basis. (I admit to looking up several words in the dictionary after a day as a working parent in her class!)
18. Her generous, giving spirit. All of us have been recipients of her never-ending kindness.
19. Her splendid art projects.
20. She does a wonderful job with "presentation." She's got just the right basket, box, dish or item for all of the things she makes, bakes and gives.
21. Her ability to remember former Co-Op children from 'way back when'. I know that she touched my daughter Naomh's life tremendously. When Naomh started Co-Op in October 1988, she was in Nancy Tatum's afternoon class. Susan always made a point of complimenting her on her curly hair and hair bows. This was something that Naomh looked forward to hearing and was such a confidence booster to her. Susan makes children feel really special and instills in them a feeling of self worth.
22. I get such a kick out of listening to her laugh, especially when something really "tickles her fancy". She has that special unforgettable infectious laugh (with a hilarious rising high pitch to it!!).
23. Her circle time stories are hypnotizing. Children appear to be in a trance, waiting on every word. I can only imagine the memories children have of this. So many times I have wished that I could be one of her students!
24. Some years ago, while looking through my daughter's high school year book, I came upon a photograph of a large group of seniors from Jamestown High School. They were sending out a very special "thank you" to Mrs. Axtell at Co-Op. It doesn't get any better than that! What a tribute.
25. She has the remarkable ability to defuse a situation in the classroom with such grace. She does this in a very special, kind way that shows respect for the child. She lets the child know that no matter what happened, they are not bad and are loved very much. Wouldn't it be a better world if all children were treated this way?
26. She has a gentle and calm demeanor with the children.
27. Her love of children's books and how she lights up with each new book she buys.
28. Her diplomacy and ability to find just the right words for every situation.
29. Her sense of humor.
30. Her generosity in taking the time to share her knowledge and experiences with me this year.

With love from your Co-op teachers,
Lori (#1-5) Emma (#6-10)
Susie (#11-15) Sue (#16-20)
Kathleen (#21-25) and Lisa (#26-30)

From our Teachers

Susie Powell's 1 Day 2's

This is such a sweet and tender group of twos turning three. They have grown so much this year, and yet every Friday I am reminded of how tenderly they must be guided in growing. When they come into the playroom on Friday, many of them are still repeating the words of the good-bye ritual you have developed with them – saying “Mommy/Daddy will come back when I’m on the playground.” While the tears have ceased, the pouting lips and sad faces remind me that saying good-bye is not easy.

The sensory table is a favorite gathering spot. The children stand around it shoulder to shoulder and smile and scoop and talk and laugh. Many of the children have begun using the potty and when one announces in an urgent tone “I have to go potty!” several others will chime in “Me too!” It is one of those times when I wish I could crawl into their heads and see if they had to go all along but were just waiting for someone else to do it first to make sure it was ok.

The cars, blocks, marble run, rocking boat and puzzles are other group favorites in the playroom. They especially love to rock in the boat and hear songs sung about them. The children smile at the sound of their own name and smile and look at the friend we are singing about in the song. The spontaneity and joy of their laughter at these times is infectious.

The children have become such avid listeners and participators at circle time. They sit quietly as I read looking wide eyed waiting to see and hear what happens next in the story. Finger plays and songs are sung by all not so much in unison and sometimes it is more fun that way and oh so typically a hallmark of twos – we are doing it together, but in our own way. While they all stay at circle now, I am reminded by them not to make it

too long with questions like “Now can I play?” The children have all come to try and to enjoy making the art projects. While working on the project, their mind is on the receiver of the art (Mommy, Daddy, siblings, cousins, and even Shelby the family dog). We have been pretending together more and more. The princesses go through many dress changes, searching for the perfect look and fit. Everyone loves the dress-up shoes. Some children have a favorite pair like the sparkly ruby slippers and others like to coordinate shoes with their outfit. Even the boys like the princess shoes because they make the funny click-clack sound. In the kitchen the children prepare lavish feasts for each other. Some days the menu calls for dippy eggs for everyone; other days it is pizza and doughnuts; and on most days lettuce and bread sandwiches are popular picnic fare – Yum!!!!

Snack time has become more social and more fun. I don’t know if it is the menu (cupcakes) or the company or a combination of the two, but everyone is happy to eat and talk and I have to make them finish so we will have playground time. As we celebrate most of our birthdays and summer un-birthdays, we have been wowed by pink princess cupcakes and hungry caterpillar cupcakes. We sit and talk about who is three and our animals and our family. Thanks to Jackson’s mom we love to end snack singing *Sticky Bubble Gum*. It is fun to watch the anticipation on the faces of the children as they guess what body part the gum is going to get stuck to next.

On the playground the children run, swing, slide, dig and scoop, and ride around the figure eight. The girls and Jackson crowd four to six on the swing chatting and laughing with each other. They try to pull each other in the wagon, but still need our help to make it around the figure eight. The children dig alongside one another making sand cakes and castles. Of course the best part of playground time is the return of Mom or Dad. Their faces light up at the sight of you and they can’t wait for you to join them in play and to tell you about all they did today.

It has been a joy working with your children and alongside you. Thank you for your patience with me, with the children, and with all the nuances of Co-op. It has been rewarding to watch the children grow with our collective gentle guidance. It takes time, repetition, and consistency to help children grow, but the rewards are worth it. Just the other day when two children wanted to use the same toy and conflict was brewing I said, "You both want the toy— what can you do?" One child offered a solution saying, "I'll get him a different car and we can play together." Often it takes most of the school year to get to this point, but we do get here. Socially and emotionally the children have grown so much using their words and managing their strong feelings. It has been nice to see you parents look to each other for friendship and share parental frustrations and insights. That kinship is one of the great gifts that Co-op offers. Keep loving and nurturing your children and looking to your friends when you need added support. I am saddened that my leaving will deprive me of the opportunity to play at Co-op with this class' siblings. It would be great fun to share another round with all of you!!! Have a great summer and try to meet on a playground or two to keep in touch with one another.

Susie Powell's 2 Day 2's

Are you ready to play????!! Playground time is a busy time. The children bound onto the playground and head for a favorite activity. Some race to the cars and wagons and move around the figure eight. Others race to the toy bins and pull out a bucket and shovel or construction trucks and begin scooping and pouring the sand. While the children are playing, they look to the gate anxiously awaiting the arrival of a special friend or enough friends for critical mass. When enough friends arrive, their social play kicks into high gear. We run as a pack, fleeing the bad guy or chasing Ms. Powell. We squeeze six onto the tire swing, all the while

laughing and singing each other's names. We race to the top of the play set and race down the slides. We gather around the water table, splashing with our dinosaurs and boats. As they play together, they smile and eye each other, communicating so much without using any words and sometimes using many words. On one 90* afternoon, we had a fun pre-water play day. They stood and jumped in the tin tub together, laughing and squealing with abandon. The children scooped and poured water from bucket to tub and tub to bucket and just about anywhere else they could imagine. It was fun to watch the way they explored and discovered with water and it was fun to watch them delight in every simple thing they did with water. Children always provide the best reminders about delighting in simple pleasures.

Our social activities continue indoors. Circle time is truly social time. We sing our welcome song and sing our finger plays all on our own now thank you! Somehow our storybooks manage to generate conversations about our favorite colors, siblings, pets, and detailed descriptions of our most recent bout with illness. After I demonstrate that day's art project, each child likes to share a detail of how they are going to work on it.

Playing in the classroom is a time to play together and a time to play alone. They have grown so much in using their words to work through conflict with less and less verbal guidance from adults. Cars, planes, trains, and animals are still special favorites of the children. The children will start off playing airplane together walk-flying around the carpet and landing on the block case runway. They fly around together and then go solo to the art project, play dough table or to the kitchen. Everyone is bringing home art now. Sometimes it is so much, that you need a bag to carry all of it. The children love to converse while painting and creating. What a window into their thoughts. I've heard: "It is a horse waiting for me to ride it." "It is the sun and a circle." "I'm watching how the paint makes bubbles." "I like blue." "I can make a circle

people." I am always rewarded with insight, when I take the time to stop and listen to children.

At the end of clean-up time, we gather together for singing and dancing before we wash our hands. Our favorites this year have been: *Ring Around the Rosie*, *The Hokey Pokey*, *Five Little Monkeys*, and *Sticky Bubble Gum*. They delight in singing and dancing to silly songs over and over. Hopefully they have share these songs and rhymes with you.

What a great journey this school year has been for your children and me. They have such a great group dynamic. I have seen them grow so much. Do you remember when they weren't ready for you to say good-bye and now they say good-bye? Do you remember when they couldn't sit at circle and now they love to sit and talk at circle? Do you remember when they were in diapers and now so many of them are using the potty all by myself? Do you remember what it was like trying to get them to move as a line and now, well, sometimes they move as a line! While I go on and on about how they behave as a group, I am also keenly aware of who they are as individuals. And I have seen each and every one of them grow into a bigger little person. Thank you so much for sharing them with me. Thank you so much for working along side me in loving, nurturing, and guiding them in their growth and cleaning up after them day after day. They are all so ready to move on to the three-year-old classes. Enjoy your summer with your children and try to meet with friends from class at a park or playground so they can see their special friends.

Kathleen Stewart's 2 Day 3's

This is by far the hardest time of the school year. Your sweet children have been a part of my life for the past nine months. We have played, baked, painted, cut, glued, read stories, planted flowers, danced, paraded, 'jingled belled,' and sang 'til our hearts were content (our favorite song is 'Show us what

to do'). These are just some of the fun filled activities that became a part of our life at Co-Op.

Your children have brought me so much love and happiness, and their antics have kept me laughing! This has been a year to remember. One of my favorite projects is making Mother's Day cards. Each year I love to hear their response to "If I had a million dollars I would buy my Mom"..... I'm sure you enjoyed their answer as much as I did. To mention just a few.....'cottage cheese', 'medicine', 'a kite', 'a music box'.

It has been a wonderful year for me. I have encouraged the children to raise their hand at circle time, if there was anything that they wanted to share with the class. They loved this time, as it was their opportunity to talk of things that were important to them i.e. movies, toys, pets, brothers and sisters. It was a great experience and their confidence grew. It became one of their favorite things to do.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you, for the help and support that you have given me (and Co-Op) through out the school year. I could never have done this without you. This is what makes Co-Op so special. We became a support group for each other. I know that lasting friendships have blossomed, between children and parents (and teacher). I hope that you will arrange 'play dates' over the summer, I really believe the children will miss each other.

Thank you for bringing your precious little ones to me. It has been an honor. I will miss them so much and will always hold them close in my heart. We have come a long way since our first day of school back in September. It wasn't easy being in a new place with new people. We have learned valuable social skills, all of which are necessary tools in life, no matter how old we are.

My five years as a Co-Op parent began back in 1988. Sadly, after seven wonderful years as a teacher, this is my final year. I leave with wonderful memories, my life has been enriched in so many ways. The Co-Op class of 2008-2009 will be my last.

I would like to wish you all a safe and happy summer. Hopefully our paths will cross during this time. I will think of you often with love, and treasure the memories you have given me. Enjoy your summer together, I wish you happiness. And remember, don't sweat the small stuff. The beds might not be made, the dishes may be in the sink, but the time that you spend with your child is the best investment you will ever make.

My love always, Kathleen

Sue Barton's 2 Day 3's

As always, I'm stunned by how quickly the school year has flown by. It has been a joy to have each of your children in my class, and I am eternally grateful for your support throughout the year. These darling boys and girls will always hold a special place in my heart. As I think back on our time together, these are the things that I think many of us will remember: observing the interactions between Cinderella and her wicked stepmother and stepsisters as they prepare for the ball; watching the daily dumping of the entire contents of all four containers of vehicles and then the subsequent hiding of the items on the block shelves; sharing the excitement of children creating play dough masterpieces in the form of snowmen, bowls and appetizing treats; watching the inspiration of an impromptu puppet show; hearing "Stick to the Glue" and "Five Little Monkeys" sung with unbridled enthusiasm; watching an aspiring artist taking great care on a project and covering every square inch of the paper with paint at the easel; having a real live chicken spend the day in our classroom just before Spring Break. These memories will bring a smile to my face for a long time to come.

I am reminded of just how far we've come when I think back to September. Circle time and stories were shorter to keep pace with wandering attention spans. Now not only are the children able to sit and listen to longer tales, but they also take turns listen-

ing to their friends. They are also more competent at problem-solving and better at communicating than they were when the year began.

One of my greatest pleasures at Co-op is watching friendships develop – not only among the children but also among the adults. The adult camaraderie at the beginning and end of class is one of the many things that make us unique. When my boys attended Co-op, my family and I made lasting friendships with other Co-op families that continue to nourish us a decade later. I hope that your child has had a wonderful preschool experience this year. I hope too that Coop is for you what it was for me: a special place that nurtures both children and families.

Have a relaxing and enjoyable summer. With love from, Mrs. Barton

Molly Gareis' 3 Day 3's

Our spring has been filled with fun and exciting days! We have worked our way through all the colors of the rainbow right on into spring. We have painted with ice, balloons, blueberry juice, marbles, sponges, matchbox cars, fingers, brushes, Q-tips, bubble wrap, cling wrap, strings, cotton balls and more. We printed with lemons, limes, carrots, squash, orange and green peppers, bubbles, Duplos, and even a real flounder! We have planted grass and flowers, cooked muffins, cookies, and eggman bread. We have made Stone Soup, fresh-squeezed orange juice, teddy bear toast, and green eggs and ham. And why did we do all this? We did it to stretch our minds, imaginations, and creativity. We did it to help us test out our world and to form the basis for critical thinking. We did it for all these noble reasons, but mostly we did it for FUN! And fun we have had!

It has been such a pleasure to watch your children grow and develop this year. They are sustaining their play for much longer periods of time and engaging in more deliberate acts of play...that is just what we want to see at this point.

They have developed into such social little beings and are wonderful at using their words to have fun as well as to solve conflicts. It is heartening to hear them ask each other so nicely, "May I have the next turn?" Lucky for me, the answer is always, "Yes!" Friendships have really blossomed and the bonds are deep.

Story time continues to be my favorite part of our morning. It has been a pleasure to share so many wonderful books with your children. They are a great audience and seem to find such pleasure in our books. It warms my heart to see them go to the bookshelf on their own and "read" to their imaginary class... our dolls and stuffed animals. I see some talented future teachers here! And as for songs, we have learned so many this year and we have loved them all. It is great fun to have the children call out so many requests each day. At this point "Purple People Eater" would have to rank right up there as the most requested song...and, wow, is it fun to sing and dance to!

What an amazing year we have had in the 3 Day 3's! We have come so far since that first day in September and it has been quite a journey! It is hard for me to believe that our journey is coming to a close. Each and every one of your children have taught me so many things along the way and changed me in ways I will carry forever. It is my deep hope that I have been able to touch their lives in as positive a way as they have touched mine. I will miss you all dearly and I will never forget my first Co-op class! Thank you for sharing your children with me and for all you have done to make our year such a success! You are a very special group of Moms and Dads with very special children!

Lori Wright's 3 Day 3's

I can't believe we only have two more weeks of school! Co-op days flew by quickly after we got back from Spring break. The children have grown-up so much since our

early days in September. Throughout the year, wonderful friendships grew, the ability to negotiate and solve problems improved, and the children are now more than ready for Kindergarten! This has been a nice group of children to work with. I will miss them!

Our special friend, Mr. Harry, brought his school bus to Co-op in April. After watching a video on school bus safety, we had a delightful ride to Clara Byrd Baker and back. We enjoyed a fun "Freaky Friday" with Mrs. Old's class. The children came up with some creative ways to dress "silly"! Wearing a shirt backwards, underwear over shorts, red or pink sprayed hair and mismatched shoes and socks were some of the combinations we saw at Co-op that day!

We have tried three times to go to Massie's Construction site, but have been rained out each time! Hopefully, Wednesday, May 13th, will be our magic day of clear skies and warm weather. This field trip is always fun as the children climb a huge rock pile, dig with a child sized Jack L. Massie digger, and view various construction vehicles up close. Some of the wheels are taller than the pre-schoolers! It is a field trip they will remember for years to come.

Our final field trip to the Geology Department at Williams and Mary is planned for Friday, May 15th. Linda Morse, a past Co-op parent, has so kindly offered to have us touch and inspect many different kinds of fossils, bones and rocks. I know the class will enjoy their visit.

As we approach the last week of school, I feel a sense of sadness that this year is almost over. I know the children are excited and ready for their venture into Kindergarten, but I will miss their sweet personalities. They have been a joy to work with. I will miss you, the parents, also. Your patience, humor, time, and energy are very much appreciated. I could not do this job without your kindness and help. Thank you for sharing your beautiful children with me. Have a safe, fun and relaxing summer! Take care. Love, Lori

Lisa Old's 3 Day 3's

Dear parents, The year has really flown by. It seems like just a couple months ago we were beginning the year and getting to know each other. The children have made such closed friendships with each other this year, it's hard to recognize the quiet and shy personalities that started in September in the boisterous children running together on the playground!

These past couple months have been a whirlwind of activities. The field trips have been so varied. We are grateful to have visited the Norge Dental Center, Cook's Gardens, Massie's Construction and the William and Mary Geology Department. These trips have been a wonderful way to carry our weekly themes into worldwide experiences for the children.

We also spent a good deal of time making personal books about each of the students. I hope you enjoyed perusing them as much as your child did in making them. The idea of making a book really brought out the creative sides in even the most hesitant of artists!

The children seemed to enjoy the various themes we touched upon this second half of the year. From rain forests and insects to Mother's Day, dinosaurs and gardening, there was something to capture the attention of all the children.

As the year winds down and the children get ready for the next big adventure—kindergarten!—I can't help but feel torn between being excited for their continued growth while also feeling nostalgic for the beginning of the year. I want to thank you for entrusting me with your children. I am so honored to have been part of their lives a few afternoons a week all year and will miss them all very much. My sincere thanks, Lisa Old

Emma McMillan's 4 Day 4's and 5's

The four day fours and fives year is ending and our last month is filled with lots of memories, fun, joy, and a little sadness! We will celebrate summer un-birthdays, receive gold medals after our Olympic games, camp out in the play room, wear wacky clothes on "Wacky Wednesday," freeze our hands making ice cream, and enjoy visiting the past by opening the doors to the neighboring classroom and enjoying fun activities in Mrs. Garreis' class.

As I look at their faces at circle, I remember how they looked at me in September saying, "Wow, there are lots of rules!" However, they have all adapted and thrived. They are all ready to venture out from Co-op to a brand new school with great enthusiasm and eagerness to explore the unknown! The four-day fours and fives have grown throughout this year and have developed their own unique personalities, individual skills, and creativity. They have meshed to work cooperatively building a train with seat belts in the playroom. They have worked hard and independent on certain "secret" projects (holiday and Mother's Day gifts). Their creativity continues to emerge at the writing center by painting, cutting, stamping, stapling, and taping! They were thrilled to perform the puppet show that they wrote and performed!

The families of the Co-op are truly special, loving, and giving. This has been a interesting year for me with 14 very special little friends, and their moms and dads. The year will soon be over but your children are all confident, happy, and ready to face the world of KINDERGARTEN! In my culture, we never say good-bye; we say "HASTA LA VISTA Y VAYA CON DIOS."

Announcements

Thank you very much to Janelle Piscatelli for all of the great articles you sent every month!

--Loralee Clark, newsletter editor

Susan H. Axtell Scholarship Fund

Co-op would like to extend warm, heartfelt thanks to all of our families who have donated to the Susan H. Axtell Scholarship fund in honor of Mrs. Axtell's retirement. Thanks to your generosity, we have raised over \$9,000 that will go towards helping present and future Co-op families.

It is not too late to donate to the fund and no gift is too small. With your help, we are able to provide a wonderful preschool experience to many children who otherwise may not be able to come to Co-op. THANK YOU!

20 Years for Mrs. Wright!

Congratulations to Lori Wright who is finishing her 20th year at Co-op! Lori's wonderful sense of humor, sharp mind, creative energy, and magical way with preschoolers has had such a positive impact on the lives of so many children and families in Williamsburg. Lori has had a profound influence on shaping Co-op into the wonderful preschool it is today.

Thank you, Lori, for all the time, dedication, and love you have given us over the past 20 years! Who would have thought you would go from the "most green", as you like to say, to the most senior of us in such a short time! We love and appreciate you, Mrs. Wright!

PLEASE check to see if any of your precious items are in our lost and found. We will be taking all of these items to the Thrift Store soon. The bin is located in the hallway as you enter the Co-op in the back.

Welcome New Teachers!

We are excited to announce that we have three new teachers who will be joining our staff next year.

Heather Seltzer will be teaching the 2 Day PM 2's. She holds an MA in Education and is a licensed teacher with 4 years experience as a 5th grade teacher. Heather also has experience with infants and toddlers as a child-care worker & teacher in the Virginia Tech Lab School. In addition, Heather will be a Co-op mom with a child in Mrs. Old's class next year.

Martie Severin will be teaching the 2 Day AM 3's. She holds an MA in Early Childhood Education and has 25

years experience as a pre-school & kindergarten teacher. Martie was also a mom in a parent co-op preschool in Pennsylvania that her daughter attended as a young child.

Diane Lee will be teaching the 3 Day 3's. She holds an MA in Education and is a licensed teacher with 10 years experience as a 5th grade teacher. Two of Diane's four children attended Co-op where she was the Vice-President of the Board for two years.

These teachers bring with them a wealth of experience that we are certain will benefit Co-op and its families. We warmly welcome Heather, Martie, and Diane and we look forward to an exciting year with them!

CBB Kid's EXPO for Cancer

Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School

Saturday, May 16th, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Booths and Events to explore as well as an amazing Silent Auction featuring items from each exhibitor. The proceeds go to Clara Byrd Baker's Relay for Life team (the American Cancer Society).

For more info- contact Shirley Vermillion sjvermillion@cox.net or 564-0955

"Whimsies & What-Nots"- do an art project for a donation, personalized prints by your child

Jenny Pritchard –Funky folk artist, earring maker-make a pair of earrings & watch her paint a masterpiece

Jocelyn Oldham – Professional musician & director of Music Together music classes invites kids of all ages & adults to participate in a music circle

The Art of Cooking for Kids & "Creative Kitchen Helpers"—demonstration of kid's favorite Pampered Chef Tools, techniques & recipes.

Chris Lakics, children's author & illustrator— work on an illustration for a poem of Chris'

Bartlebaby- accessories& jewelry

Blue Yonder Designs – hand crafted accessories, children's clothing, book purses

Bada Monkeys- hand-crafted sock monkeys

Mary Lynn Wilding- quilted purses & accessories

Angie's Little Monsters

Lisa Taylor- School spirit jewelry, repurposed Denim purses

Hayes Cloninger –jewelry , design a card with Hayes

Puzzles Plus- intricate wooden puzzles

Alison Howell- design a scrapbook page, book a party

Jennifer Miller- create a Spring-themed stamped card here, book a stamping party

Leslie George– whimsical hair bows, bow holders

Capture this Moment Photography- artistic photography

Binverted- baby & children's stationary & gifts

Kelly Charles- Swim Lessons for your child

Little people Yoga class

Ford's Colony Model Railroad Club-see trains & purchase a card for benefit of Norge Depot's continued renovation

Various Dance Institutes

Baeplex-Tae Kwon Do

KinderhausToys- quality wooden toys, books, products & classes of many types

Virginia's Finest Chocolates– the perfect Birthday Party!

Camelot Bears– have King Arthur come to your child's birthday here!

Trey Harris- magician & juggler

The Parent Trap

Bubbles the Clown and Kolonial Klowns

Mr. Trubenbach's Train- great birthday party accompaniment! All Proceeds go to CHKD

Williamsburg Regional Library- summer Reading Program info, summer schedules of activities

Hunter Moncure– piano lessons for all ages of children & adults

Jon Wade, local drummer-drum lessons for kids

Michael & Scott Orland, local guitarist– kids' guitar lessons

Waller Mill Parks –children's classes, summer camps

Park's & Recreation's- information on classes

Ranger Rick's-batting cage information

WISC and REC Center and YMCA- summer camp & party information

Super Sitters

Stroller Walking

Drummond's Field Horse Farm– book a birthday party

Heritage Humane Society

Easy As PI Learning Center- tutoring business

Mathew Whaley's toy check-out program

This Century Art Gallery- information & display of kid's art programs

Colonial Williamsburg- kid's programs information

School of ART – children's art classes

Twice as Nice and Sugar & Spice

I like your Style consignment

School Crossing- quality educational products & toys

Chick Fil-A Mooretown- Meet the cow, do an activity

RITA'S Italian Ice

Virginia Living Museum-classes and camp information

Busch Garden's/Water Country

Jamestown Settlement- Information about programs

Chippokes Plantation- great games from years past!

Boy Scout Troop 102 –make a project

Girl Scouts- do a craft

Jumping Joey's

Replay Sports-used sports equipment

Watermen's Museum- year-round activities, Summer camps

Youth Lacrosse Team

W & M gifted program- Summer Enrichment Program

Uncle Dave's Kettle Corn

Co-op Preschool's Consignment for Cancer

"Miles for Mom's" Teen Relay for Life Team

CBB Kid's EXPO for Cancer

Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School

Saturday, May 16th, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Dear Artist, Author or Business Owner:

A fun-filled day of activities & networking is being planned for **Saturday May 16th** from **10am-3pm** at **Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School** and **you're invited to join in!** Organizers of the event hope to meet several goals with the event: to give children & their families a fun event to look forward to this spring; to encourage more support of local artisans, & businesspeople; to provide a venue for fundraising efforts of local Relay for Life (American Cancer Society) teams which takes place Friday night May 29th at Jamestown High School. Information about teams or the event can be found at www.RelayforLife.org/Williamsburg.

Participants wishing to be included in this event are asked to send their **\$20 non-refundable, registration fee** (to cover each approximate 10 x 10 space/ or area for 1 eight foot table) to **Shirley Vermillion, 106 Greenbrier, Williamsburg, VA 23185**. Checks can be made Payable to Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School. Advertising/printing fees will be covered & the remains will go to Clara Byrd Baker's Relay for Life team.

Exhibitors are asked to provide their own **tables, table coverings, any other display materials & chair**.

Each Exhibitor is asked to donate 1 item for a silent auction to benefit CBB's Relay for Life Team. (I'm Pleased to report that **Chick-Fil-A Mooretown** has already pledged a **Birthday Party for 10 & a goody basket**- so the great energy is already flowing over 2 months in advance!)

Set-up will begin at 7:30 a.m. and tear-down will begin at 3 p.m. unless prior agreement has been made. Spaces will be pre-assigned.

No Bake sale items, please: CBB & a few other teams will have Baked goods, drink, food sales at the event.

The **artists** to be invited to attend are truly **top quality**... others unknown to the organizers will be required to submit photos of their work before they're officially invited. **We know that you'll want to help us to provide a high quality event for the community by sharing the news about this event with very talented individuals!** Individuals providing **services, items, art or books related to children** are welcomed to **apply for admission.**)

There will be few local authors/artists in attendance who have books/items that would also appeal to older children & adults- but the emphasis is on children!

Several ads will placed in the local newspapers and calendar sections of various publications. All schools in James City County will receive flyers, Relay for Life will post the event on its website & team captains will be emailed with notification. Some of the artists & businesspeople have extensive (e)mailing lists, word will be passed via PTA members, teachers and staff as well. We'll have many signs (at least 20) out the day of and a day or so prior in order to direct local traffic to the event. Email flyers will be available for all participants to distribute as they see fit.

Questions or further information: please contact Shirley Vermillion (sjvermillion@cox.net or 564-0955), Mary Antol, Lisa Sams, Maria Slavin, Barbara Husted & an ever- growing team of Clara Byrd Baker Relay for Life team Members.

CBB Kid's EXPO for Cancer

Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School

Saturday, May 16th, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Number of spaces needed: _____ 10x10 @ \$20 each

Do you need access to electricity? _____ (if so- you'll need to bring your own extension cord)

Name of Participant: _____

Name of Business (if applicable): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Numbers): _____

EMAIL address: _____

Website if applicable: _____

While email is the preferred method of contact by the organizers, please indicate if that is not an option for you and which method you would like instead.

Description of business, service or talent- mention awards you've won, shows you've participated in:

Concise statement of business/service/talent for inclusion on a list of participants & in a BlogSpot showing the information of participants: _____

Description & Approximate value of item for Silent auction: _____

Make checks payable to **Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School, "Kid Expo" written in the memo section.** You may drop it at the school office (3131 Ironbound Rd.) or mail to Shirley Vermillion, 106 Greenbrier Williamsburg, VA 23185 **along with this sheet, business card and photos of work (if applicable) by April 10, 2009.** Latecomers may be allowed to participate but may not be included on the blog listing, announcement or PR in the paper, etc. Thanks for your interest and your support of such a wonderful cause! We look forward to working with you & welcoming your talent & business to our own circle of friends in Williamsburg!

CO-OP CALENDAR

May 1 (F)	May Tuition Payment Due
3 (Su)	Carnival
21-22 (R-F)	Last Days
25 (M)	Memorial Day
26 (T)	Teacher's Organize Clean-Up
27-28 (W-R)	End-of-Year Clean-Up



What are temper tantrums?

children.webmd.com

A temper tantrum is an unplanned, unintentional expression of anger, often with physical and verbal outbursts. It is not an act to get attention, as is commonly thought. During a temper tantrum, children typically cry, yell, and flail their arms and legs. Temper tantrums usually last 30 seconds to 2 minutes and are most intense at the start. Sometimes temper tantrums last longer and consist of more aggressive behavior, such as hitting, biting, and pinching. If this type of more aggressive behavior becomes common, a behavioral disorder or other health condition may be the cause. Temper tantrums are most common in children ages 1 to 4 years.

Is it normal for my child to have temper tantrums?

Temper tantrums are common, occurring in about 80% of children ages 1 to 4. About 20% of 2-year-olds and 10% of 4-year-olds have daily temper tantrums.

Why do children have temper tantrums?

A tantrum is a normal and expected response when something interferes with a young child's attempt to gain independence or to master a skill. For example, a temper tantrum may be triggered when a child becomes frustrated while trying to button a shirt or is told it is time for bed when he or she wants to stay up longer. Some children are more likely to have temper tantrums than other children. Factors that contribute to a child's tendency to have tantrums include fatigue, the child's age and stage of development, temperament, stress in the child's environment, and whether other behavioral, developmental, or health conditions are present (such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder [ADHD] or autism). Also, a child may be more likely to have temper tantrums if parents react too strongly to difficult behavior or give in to the child's demands.

How do I deal with temper tantrums?

Ignoring the tantrum behavior and helping a young child learn how to handle and express anger and frustration are usually effective ways to deal with the behavior. Also, paying attention to what triggers tantrums can help you act before a child's emotions escalate beyond the point where he or she can control them. If your child continues to have frequent temper tantrums after age 3, you may need to use time-outs. A time-out removes the child from the situation, allows him or her time to calm down, and teaches the child that having a temper tantrum is not acceptable behavior. Time-out works best for children who understand why it is being used.

Will my child grow out of having temper tantrums?

Most children gradually learn healthy ways to handle the strong emotions that can lead to temper tantrums. They also usually improve their ability to communicate, become increasingly independent, and recognize the benefits of having these skills. Children who continue to have tantrums after the age of 4 usually need outside help learning to deal with anger. Temper tantrums that continue or start during the school years may be a sign of other issues, including problems with learning or getting along with other children.

Talk with a doctor if:

- You have concerns about your child's temper tantrums.
- Your child older than 4 years continues to have frequent temper tantrums.
- Your child's temper tantrums escalate into violent behavior that endangers others or results in self-inflicted injuries.
- You have problems handling your child's behavior, especially if you are concerned that you might hurt your child.

Toxic toys (from the LA Dept. of Public Health)

Tests on 1,200 children's items revealed that **more than one-third** contained lead and other potentially dangerous chemicals such as mercury, cadmium and arsenic.

The study, directed by the Environmental Health Project of the Ecology Center in Michigan, also found that jewelry products were the most likely to contain high levels of lead.

Other items, such as bedroom slippers, bath toys and card-game cases were also tainted, some with as much as five times the standard safety level of lead. One Hannah Montana card-game case, for instance, had lead levels of 3,056 parts per million.

The study was conducted to spur government officials to take action against tainted toys. Millions of toys, most of them made in China, have already been recalled in 2007. Lead was supposedly banned for use in U.S. products marketed to children in 1978, but that doesn't stop U.S. companies from importing lead-laced toys and selling them with fervor. Up to 80 percent of toys sold in the United States are manufactured in China.

Meanwhile, there is a loophole in the ban that still allows lead to legally exist in your child's toys -- even those made here in the United States -- and that is plastic. The use of lead in plastics has not been banned. This may explain the high levels of lead found in children's jewelry.

As children are well known for putting anything and everything into their mouths, their toys simply must be pure. Children are more susceptible to lead absorption than adults, and even low levels of lead exposure have been linked to:

- Decreased intelligence
- Impaired neurobehavioral development
- Decreased stature and growth
- Impaired hearing acuity
- Yet, lead is not the only chemical that you need to worry about contaminating your children's toys.

Other toxins found in toys include:

Mercury: A known neurotoxin that can harm your child's developing brain.

Cadmium: A known carcinogenic. Long-term exposure to low levels of cadmium can contribute to kidney disease, lung damage and fragile bones, and animal studies also suggest that it may lead to liver disease, high blood pressure, and nerve or brain damage.

Arsenic: Long-term exposure to arsenic has been linked to cancer. Exposure to low levels of arsenic can cause nausea and vomiting, decreased production of red and white blood cells, abnormal heart rhythm, damage to blood vessels, and a sensation of "pins and needles" in hands and feet, and over the long term can cause darkening of the skin and the appearance of small "corns" or "warts" on the palms, soles, and torso.

Phthalates: Used in soft plastic toys and baby bottles, these chemicals can mimic or block sex hormones, causing disruption of your endocrine system and early puberty in children.

How to Find Safe Toys for Your Kids

The good thing about all of the media coverage on this issue is that many parents are becoming very choosy about the toys they buy. Here are some tips to help make sure the toys your children play with are safe.

- Seek out toy-making companies that still maintain quality and safety in their products. Be sure to ask questions about their toys, such as what types of chemicals are used in their production.
- Look for organic and "green" environmentally friendly toys that use beeswax-based coatings, natural vegetable dyes and organic, chemical-free fabrics and materials (wool, cotton and bamboo).
- Support companies that use third-party testing of their products for lead and other heavy metals.
- Toys that are painted should always be labeled as having "lead-free paint," but still avoid buying painted toys made outside of the United States or Europe.
- Get creative. Books, sports equipment, music, and even cardboard boxes that can be turned into forts make great, safe alternatives to traditional "toys."



GIVE YOUR CHILD A PIECE OF WHITE PAPER WITH A SMALL BUMBLE BEE STICKER IN THE CORNER (OR DRAW ONE). PLAY THE RECORDING OF "THE FLIGHT OF THE BUMBLEBEE" AND LET THE CHILD DRAW WITH A BLACK CRAYON, IMAGINING THAT THEIR CRAYON IS THE BEE FLYING ON THE PAPER.



ICE CREAM MAN

This simple paper craft is made with a piece of paper, some crayons (optional), scissors and glue/tape. Optional: red pom-pom, brass tacks. Use the template on the last page of the newsletter.

- Color and cut out the template pieces.
- Tape or glue the scoops of ice cream onto the cone in whichever order you like.
- Tape or glue the face pieces to the scoops.
- Tape, glue or use small brass tacks to attach the hands to the cone. If you use brass tacks, the hands and legs will be moveable
- Optional: glue a small red pom-pom to the top of the cone as a cherry.

—dltk-holidays.com

Egg Carton Butterfly

Cardboard egg carton	Pipe cleaners
Scissors	Construction paper
paints	Markers
Paintbrush	Stapler

Cut an egg carton in half lengthwise, then cut one of the halves in half again, lengthwise. Turn one of the halves upside down and paint. Attach pipe cleaners to the head for feelers. Cut wings from construction paper and decorate with paint or markers; staple to the side of the carton. Use your imagination to make variations; for example, use one cup of the carton to make a turtle or a ladybug, use three cups to make a bumblebee, or use a full half carton to make a caterpillar.

—FamilyEducation.com



FINGERPRINT HONEY BEES

1. Dip finger in yellow paint and dot on bee bodies all over paper.
2. Allow the painting to dry completely before using a black marker to draw in stripes, wings and eyes. You can draw a side view and overhead view.
3. Dot on the flight trails with black marker.

—crafts.kaboose.com



EARTH CORNER: *Trees*

Make a Tree Book

1. Share what you know about trees: what lives in trees? How do trees help people? How do trees help wildlife? What do trees need to survive?
2. Study trees outside while answering these questions.
3. Draw some favorite tree with crayons, then watercolor your pictures.
4. Bind the paintings and transcripts together to create a family book.

Create trees by using clay and twigs

Take books out of the library that show trees from other countries and learn about them (The baobab from Madagascar, for example).



Ideas for connecting with Nature everyday, ages 0-4

Even the youngest infant can experience nature from a stroller or bassinet. Try finding a spot under a tree where they can experience the wind, light, and shadows while taking in the sounds of birds, animals and insects.

As part of a bedtime routine say goodnight to the moon, the stars, or their favorite tree.

Take frequent walks with children when you can be leisurely, allowing them to follow their interests. Encourage them to explore every yard - all the bushes, flowers, trees, etc. Remind them to not harm the garden they are exploring.

Lie down with your child under a tree and look up through the branches. Encourage them to listen past the city sounds and hear the sounds of nature.

Lie down and look up at the night sky. Gently encourage conversation about the wonder and awe of so many stars.

Sit comfortably together and watch raindrops on the window. Trace the patterns the raindrops make with your fingers.

—www.hookedonnature.org

