



Building Bright Tomorrows...Today

Winter/Spring 2015



Outdoor Play is Not Just Fun and Games

Most adults remember a special time or place when they were engaged in outdoor activities. These are often cherished memories of learning something new or experiencing great joy—the day you successfully climbed a tree and found an endless horizon, when you sat so still a butterfly landed on your leg, or the smell of garden soil. These are times when you found confidence, problem solving skills, and stories to share with family and friends.

Are children missing out on those special

memories and experiences? Children are spending less time outdoors because of electronic media, unsafe neighborhoods, busy and tired families, and reduction or even elimination of recess in an effort to achieve higher academic standards (Johnson and Wardle, 2010).

Being outdoors promotes exploring, risk taking, physical skill development, and learning about the world in which we live. Nurturing a connection to nature and outdoor play are important to children's health and well-being.

– continued p. 3

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Straight from the Director

When I look out of my window, I see Starker Arts Park and the Dunawi Creek wetlands. Old Mill Center is blessed to sit in such an inspiring setting. Children in our Relief Nursery, Preschool and Intensive Day Treatment programs head for outdoor play and learning at least once each week. They always come back with new stories to tell, often bringing back leaves or other treasures.

In this newsletter, we highlight some of the power that lies in nature. It is a free tool in our work, and we hope to inspire children and families to continue their exploration of nature in their daily lives. Our facility sits in a wonderful location thanks to the generosity of our community and you, our supporters. Thank you for helping us to offer this gift to our clients.

– Bettina Schempf, Executive Director



BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR PLAY

Mental Health

Better cognitive function

Reduced anxiety and
improved mood

Improved independent
living skills and
functioning

More self-discipline
and self-control

Lower stress levels in
children and adults

Physical Health

Less obesity

Stronger lungs, hearts, muscles

Strengthened immune systems

Lower levels of blood glucose in diabetics

Social Skills

Increased creativity
and communication

Increased sense of
community connection

News and Updates

Volunteer Spotlight

Volunteers make an important contribution to Old Mill Center. Their energy and talent is critical to the continued success of our mission. In 2014, volunteers contributed 7,878 recorded hours to Old Mill Center in a variety of ways including internships, service groups, working on fundraising events, as support in each of our diverse program areas, and in administration.

Although we feel that all of our volunteers are priceless, statistics show that the average value of a volunteer's time in the State of Oregon is \$21.35 per hour. Using that calculation, volunteer time added to our staff impact by a value of \$168,195 in 2014. We were able to put that directly towards services to the families in our community.

Our goal is to increase that number by at least 10% in 2015. Please visit our website and sign up to volunteer today!



The staff from Good Earth Pest Company shop for gifts for Old Mill Center children. Says Richard Kesecker, owner: "This was a wonderful team-building event. We want to do it every year!"

A Heartfelt Thank You

This past holiday season, the need for support for families was greater than ever. When our call for help went out the community rose to the challenge, donating gifts of clothing and toys for 203 children in need. One of our youngest sponsors was having a birthday and instead of asking for gifts herself, this amazing 4-year-old asked friends and family to bring gifts to her birthday party for children in need. Helping those in need starts early in our community! **A heartfelt thanks goes out to the following community supporters:**

Businesses & Organizations

7th Gear Motorcycle Company, Aspire Design Salon, Barker-Uerlings Insurance, CoHo Ecovillage, Corvallis Country Club, Discovery Toys (Jan Montecucco), Good Earth Pest Company, Georgia-Pacific Foundation, Good Samaritan Ambulatory Services and Inpatient Pharmacy, Hayes & Associates, Holiday Inn Express, Performance Health Technology, Phi Delta Chi (OSU pharmacy fraternity), PEO Sisterhood Chapter AR, The Clothes Tree

Individual Sponsors

Drs. Jayne Ackerman & Mary Jane Gray, Ruth Anderson, Diane Bateman, Chris & Robert Gerding, Mary Ellen Glynn, Sandy & Ron Graham, Dr. Frank & Kayla Heresco, Steve & Jean Hubbs, Megan Irwin, Mary & Mark Johnson, Missy Kahl, Sara & Mike Kesecker, Susan Klinkhamer, Alicia Larson, Holly Lasley, Jeannie & Mark Lasley, Kristin Moser, Susan Moser, Rachel Murray, Ketti Pitot, Christine Snow, Shannon & Ryan Starwalt, Gretchen Thielman, Old Mill Center's Intensive Treatment Services team

Volunteer Hours by Activity

Library.....	68	Board of Directors.....	658
Day of Caring Team.....	83	Administration.....	833
Summer Camp Crew.....	205	Integrated Preschool.....	1,302
Healthy Families.....	218	Clinical Program.....	1,872
Annual Auction (Fundraising).....	609	Relief Nursery.....	2,032

2014 Total Volunteer Hours 7,878



Integrated Preschool

Spots Are Available

Current Openings:

1 Space: M-F

4 Spaces: T/TH

2 Spaces: M/W/F

In addition to classroom learning the Integrated Preschool uses outside learning stations that consist of science, art and cognitive & peer relations. Students take nature walks, watch seasons change, and learn about every part of the Dunawi Creek habitat.

Outdoor Play

– continued from p. 1

We all want our children or grandchildren to experience the benefits of the outdoors. But how do we create opportunities for being outdoors? The key is to make time away from daily routines and hurried life, to step outside and play.



Here are some tips for simple outdoor play activities:

1. Take a container (e.g. egg cartons, coffee cans) to collect objects from the yard or the park and display the collected treasures on your porch, in a bowl indoors, or in open shoe boxes
2. Walk instead of drive when possible
3. Let children choose a route or path and lead you on walks or hikes
4. Go on a bug hunt
5. Sit still in the grass as long as possible
6. Make/observe a bird or squirrel feeder
7. Jump in puddles!
8. Plant a garden of flowers or vegetables
9. Read books under a tree
10. Stack and balance rocks
11. Go on a “what do I hear, see, sense” walk
12. Take photos of your yard or neighborhood (a great way to engage kids hooked on electronics)

Three great resources for outdoor play ideas are The Children and Nature Network (www.childrenandnature.org), the National Wildlife Federation (www.nwf.org) and Nature Rocks (www.naturerocks.org).

– Jill Irwin, MS

Summiting the Leaf Pile

Adventure and exploration are innate in children. Every turn can be filled with wonder and excitement. This is true unless circumstances like hunger, violence, isolation, racism, and family rifts of the adult world trickle their inky stresses into the child’s world.

How do we combat this dark reality at Old Mill Center?

We give children living in families with high stress factors a safe, loving, and nurturing environment. The children I work with in the Relief Nursery’s therapeutic classroom have a natural sense of adventure and wonder, yet it has often been clouded. My teaching team (including volunteers and interns) gently blows some of those clouds away by giving the children opportunities they might not otherwise have.

Our most recent opportunity came through a Farm to Preschool grant from Ecotrust. Schools throughout Oregon were given this grant to pilot projects with the goal of connecting preschoolers with the rich, exciting world of seeds, dirt, and food! This allowed my classroom and the Intensive Day Treatment program to have grand adventures with our next-door neighbor—SAGE Garden. Our leader was Clara Baker, FoodCorps Service



Clara Baker

Member in Corvallis. Clara visited us on our garden days and facilitated dynamic, inspiring activities for these amazing little minds.

We picked a “rainbow” from the multitude of colors in the garden, discovered that beets grow under the ground, planted fava beans and watched them grow tall, tried kale

chips and picked cherry tomatoes.

On one of our visits to the garden, we discovered five large piles of tightly packed leaves—the biggest leaf piles I have ever witnessed! The preschoolers declared them mountains and began the ascent. I could see them engaged in problem solving as they focused and plotted the best route to the summit. They worked through frustration, regained their footing, helped a struggling friend, and jumped up and down with glee at the top!

What better way to teach adventure, wonder and friendship than to explore the garden world together?

D’Tomaso Family

The D’Tomasos came to Old Mill Center through the Department of Human Services; they were in crisis and needed parenting support for their two-year-old and newborn infant. They were also in major transition, needing help with attachment and bringing together their newly formed family constellation. Both the parents, Ignacio and Julia, as well as their toddler started receiving counseling through the Old Mill Center Child, Teen and Family Counseling program.

Additionally, through further work the family eventually began using the services of the Relief Nursery. The two-year-old is getting six hours a week in a therapeutic classroom and the infant is receiving quality care in the Old Mill Center nursery. Now Ignacio and Julia will get a respite and the family will receive monthly home visits.

Because Old Mill Center has diverse programs, a vulnerable family is able to be served in multiple ways and begin thriving again.



Thank you for supporting Old Mill Center!

Fireside Recital Series

Old Mill Center for Children and Families and the OSU Piano Program invite you to one of the most celebrated concert series in Corvallis—our Fireside Recital Series.

Two more spectacular afternoons of music and refreshments are planned. Join fellow music lovers, treasured friends, and the artists themselves on each of these special days.

Thanks to First Alternative Co-op!



Fireside Recital Series

Spring Soirée

Saturday, April 11

Talent Galore

Saturday, May 30

Piano & Chamber

Music Performed By
Rachelle McCabe
& Friends

4 PM

Old Mill Center
Ramsay Room

Reservations Required:

By phone 541.757.8068

Or online

www.OldMillCenter.org



Relief Nursery Van

With a generous \$12,500 donation from the Lamb Foundation, Old Mill Center is on its way to owning a van for transporting our students, clients and families. We need another donation to make it come true!

Help us make this a reality in 2015!

A core service for all Relief Nurseries is providing transportation for the therapeutic classrooms. Many of our families have no transportation, live outside of Corvallis and are therefore off the bus line, or have multiple children or situations that make it impossible to ride the bus back and forth. With a van, we will be able to provide necessary transportation services.



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