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 MS. TAMARA

# NEWSLETTER

## *From the Director's chair...*

Hello Stepping Stones families!

Happy Fall!

We had a great time at Drumlin Farm on Sunday, October 15<sup>th</sup>! We were so happy to see those of you who were able to make it! A special thanks to Audrey Williams (Sydney's big sister and Stepping Stones Alumni) for volunteering to be a mystery reader that day! If any families have any ideas or suggestions for future family events, please let us know! Same goes for those who are interested in organizing an event; we love family volunteers!

Our Warm Winter Coat Drive was a huge success! We appreciate all who were able and willing to donate. Cradles to Crayons helps provide warm winter clothing to over 32,500 children in the Boston area! This year, the Stepping Stones community collected five large trash bags of coats, snow pants, hats, gloves and other warm winter items to donate to the cause. Thank you!

This November, we will host our annual Canned Food Drive. We will collect dry and canned food to donate to the Watertown Food Pantry the week of November 6<sup>th</sup>.

It's time for our annual Art Auction! Each classroom has created a piece of artwork to auction! Bidding begins the week of November 13<sup>th</sup>. All proceeds will go towards preschool building improvements.



Issue 2.

Conference time is quickly approaching! Fall Conferences are scheduled for the week of November 27<sup>th</sup>! Please keep an eye out for sign-up sheets in your child's classroom.

In preparation for our annual Grateful Feast and to help our students learn more about gratitude, we plan to set up a large Grateful Tree in the front foyer of the preschool building during the Month of November. Please take the time to speak with your child(ren) (at home or at school) about the things they are grateful for! Please use those conversations and their responses to fill out a fall leaf (located on front table outside of the preschool office) and add it to the tree! Feel free to fill out as many leaves as you want!

- Elizabeth, Maggie and Tara

## *Important Reminders*

- Encourage your child to wash or sanitize their hands upon entering the building and before engaging in play. Adults and children are welcome to use the hand sanitizer at the main entrance or any classroom sink.
- Call or email Maggie if your child(ren) will arrive late or be out by 9:15 AM. You can call the preschool building directly: 617-744-5447. Planned student absences help us accommodate additional extra day requests from our families, as well as plan teacher vacation days.
- Medications that are not considered “Emergency Medication” are stored in the Preschool Office. See Maggie if your child(ren) require ANY medication(s) while attending our program.
- Flu shots are highly recommended by leading medical researches as well as our center. Let’s all try to stay healthy this season!
- Please check your child’s extra clothing bin to ensure they have weather appropriate clothing. Double check sizes in case your child has outgrown any clothing.
- It’s always hot season here at Stepping Stones. Please send your child with a sun AND warm hat every day.
- Check your family mailbox regularly.

## *Upcoming Dates and Events*

### Pizza Day

Every Friday!

### Annual Food Drive

Monday, November 6 –  
Thursday, November 9

### Veteran’s Day – Center Closed

Friday, November 10

### Day Light Savings – Don’t Forget to Turn Back the Clock!

Sunday, November 12

### Silent Art Auction

Monday, November 13 –  
Friday, November 17

### Grateful Feast

Wednesday, November 22

### Center Closes at 3:30 PM

Wednesday, November 22

### Center Closed

Thursday, November 23  
and Friday, November 24

### Parents’ Night Out

Saturday, November 18

### Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences

Monday, November 27 –  
Friday, December 1

## *Preschool Classrooms Wish List*

*Your generous donations and willingness to contribute to the classroom are so appreciated! Thank you!*

*We are currently on the lookout for:*

- Felt Board Stories!
- Dance Party and Nap Time CDs!
- Books on CD!
- Dress-Up Clothes for the Dramatic Play Area (Consider donating old Halloween costumes!)
- Recyclables! We'll take your toilet paper and paper towel rolls, egg cartons, shoe boxes, cardboard boxes, etc.!
- Plastic Bags!
- Scrap Paper!
- Beads!

## *This month in the Woodchuck classroom...*

Hi Woodchuck families!

Happy Fall! We had a great second month of the school!

The Woodchucks have officially adjusted to the preschool building! They love their friends; we see them play and interact with each other all day! They are one big family and love each other's company!

This month, the Woodchucks participated in a lot of hands-on activities. They had a blast going on a leaf hunt - they continued to talk about it for days! In the classroom, the Woodchucks pretended to pick real apples and leaves from trees! They all had opportunities to take turns picking apples, leaves and pinecones.

The Woodchucks participated in a variety of collaborative art projects and created many abstract pieces including collages, handprints, leaf paintings and leaf wreaths. The Woodchucks also made an apple tree paper craft, paper plate basket and apple coffee filter.

The Woodchucks also got messy this month! They made a fresh batch of play-doh with their teachers. They practiced rolling out the play-doh to create leaf prints!

The Woodchucks participated in an early science experience where they observed leaves changing color in the sensory table using watercolors! We talked about the process of how leaves change color in the Fall. Another science activity the Woodchucks really enjoyed was Fall leaf soup! This activity further developed their fine motor skills as they were required to use their hands to scoop and pour! The Woodchucks also made apple cloud dough; this dough included cinnamon sticks and apple leaves! The Woodchucks also participated in an apple tasting! It was so interesting to see how each Woodchuck reacted when they tasted a different colored apple!

The Woodchucks have come such a long way since September! We are so proud of the Woodchucks! They've really mastered walking on the white

line to and from the playground. We used song to teach the Woodchucks how to walk safely along the white line in September... It so funny to observe them singing on their own when we get outside. The song goes "We are walking, we are walking, on the white line, on the white line. We are walking, we are walking to the playground." They are such professionals. We just know it's going to be a fun and successful year!

Thank you for helping us grow and learn! If you need to contact us for any reason you can call the school or email us at [woodchucks@stepcare.net](mailto:woodchucks@stepcare.net).

Ms. Ama and Ms. Florenca

## *Parent Involvement*

*We love when family members volunteer their time in the classroom, but we know that's not always possible!*

*Here are some ways you can still participate:*

- Come in and read a book or participate in an art project! If you are interested, please let us know and we can let you know what dates and times work best for our schedule.
- Stop by the Public Library or bring a book from home about kindness or Fall to share with the Woodchucks!
- The Woodchucks love books on CD. Record your voice as you read your child their favorite book from home. You can bring in the recording or email it to the Woodchuck email. (Don't forget to bring in the book, too! We like to read along!)
- Bring in a batch of play-doh, silly putty, goop or slime! (We'll email you recipes! We also have recipe cards!) There is a sign-up sheet just outside of the classroom door.

## *Classroom Reminders*

- *Please remember to check your child's extra clothes bin!*
- *Please consider providing us with an updated family photo for the classroom family tree!*
- *Please send your child to school with both a sun and warm hat.*
- *Please encourage your child to wash or sanitize their hands before engaging in play! Make hygiene part of your morning routine!*

## *Next Month*

- *Acts of Kindness*
- *Abstract/Process Art*
- *Dramatic Play*
- *Fine and Gross Motor Development*
- *Music and Instruments*
- *Animals*

## *This month in the Squirrel classroom...*

Hello Squirrel families!

We started the month of October with a unit all about Music and Movement!

The Squirrels enjoyed learning how to hold and handle instruments responsibly in the classroom music center. They did a great job sharing and taking turns with the instruments as they explored the sound and learned the names of each one... The Squirrels especially enjoyed taking turns at the baby grand piano.

Each Squirrel created a xylophone using both a tape resist technique and recycled paper towel rolls. They each participated in an art project that involved music, emotions and feelings. The Squirrels took turns painting with watercolors at a small wood easel one-on-one with a teacher. We had the Squirrels listen to both a sad and a happy song while they painted. We documented anything they said as they created. We also noted the pace at which they painted as well as the colors they selected. It's so interesting to see how music can impact the outcome of art!

We also had the Squirrels paint with bell brushes (paint brushes with bells attached to the top). It was entertaining to watch the Squirrels paint while observing the bell! We noticed many of them attempting to increase the sound of the bell – resulting in longer and wider paint strokes! Many of their paintings show circular patterns from the Squirrels rotating their wrists in attempt to ring the bells!

During the Music and Movement unit, the Squirrels were introduced to a new song (and story) called “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt.” Through story, song and action, the Squirrels learned and practiced directional prepositions, including up/down, over/under and on/off, etc.

The Squirrels participated in a number of activities and games that involved music and movement. The Squirrels frequently request to play the Donut Shop Game, which requires the Squirrels to count and identify a variety of colors through song.

The Squirrels played a game similar to Bingo, but instead of numbers, they listened to a variety of sounds (such as “sounds from the farm” or “outdoor sounds”) and covered a picture of the sound they heard on their cards. (For example, if they heard quacking they would use a piece of paper – similar to a Bingo chip – to cover a picture of a duck.) The first Squirrel (or team of Squirrels as we sometimes paired them up for this game) to cover all the pictures on their card won!

The Squirrels did a great job using their sense of sound to play a matching game! The Squirrels were provided with a variety of plastic eggs with mystery objects inside... The Squirrels took turns shaking, listening and comparing the sounds the eggs made to find the two matching eggs. After the Squirrels matched all the eggs, we guessed what

would be inside... With the help of a teacher, we carefully opened the eggs to reveal what was inside, including small beads, small rocks, wood shapes, etc.

The Squirrels also participated in a science experiment! The Squirrels took turns gently drumming on a bowl covered with saran wrap with rice on top. They observed how drumming creates a sound wave that causes the rice to jump.

The Bean Bag Dance was also a huge hit during our Music and Movement unit! The Squirrels each participated in the Bean Bag Dance by Greg & Steve. The Bean Bag Dance is a music and movement challenge that builds body awareness, strength and coordination through locomotion activities, such as balancing the bean bag on different body parts while still dancing! The Squirrels also participated in parachute sing-song games in the gym that required the large muscles, including *I'm Getting Eaten by a Boaconstrictor* and *Baby Sharks*.

Other fun from our Music and Movement unit included poem and song literature, including Mother Goose alliteration tongue twisters such as *Peter Piper* and *She Sells Sea Shells*, clap and tap name syllables at circle time with pool noodles, music circles to learn new songs with new instruments, classic children's felt board stories and songs by Debbie and Friends and a high/low pitch games.

Mid-October, we began a two-week unit about all Space!

The Squirrels helped us create a fresh batch of blue moon slime (silly putty)! They had a blast stretching the moon slime and using the "Eyes Up" technique to take turns cutting the slime! We're really impressed with the Squirrels; they're really learning how to hold and handle scissors safety!

The Squirrels took turns wearing space helmets they out of recycled paper bags. It was SO entertaining to watch them dance and pretend to walk on the moon in the helmets... The Squirrels also enjoyed the classroom PVC pipe rocketship, command center and the moon exploration box. They continued to "catch falling stars" in the sensory table and used magnifying glasses to observe moon rocks (balls of tin foil). We took all the moon rocks out the table and looked at them comparatively – we sorted them into groups of small and large.

The Squirrels created jet packs using recycled paper towel rolls! We let them wear their jet packs in the gym so they could run and "blast off!" They also created telescopes out of recycled toilet paper rolls.

The Squirrels also learned about planets and what they are made of: solid, gas or liquid. The Squirrels helped their teachers fill up a number of balloons with either air, water or sand. The Squirrels took turns feeling each balloon over the sensory table to conceptualize just what it means when we say a planet is made out of solid, gas or liquid.

The Squirrels enjoyed sending balloon rockets across the classroom with their teachers using a balloon, straws, string and tape! We sent the rockets across the classroom over and over again while the Squirrels watched and laughed!

In the gym, the Squirrels played a game where they were required to hop and balance to different planets! This game also helped the Squirrels learn the names of each planet!

We wrapped up the month of October with a unit all about Dinosaurs!

The dino dig was a huge hit! We brought a kiddie pool into the classroom and covered it with a fitted sheet. We added sand, small plastic dinosaurs, plastic eggs and paint brushes. The Squirrels learned that paleontologists carefully sweep away the sand when searching for dinosaur bones – paleontologists don't want to break precious dinosaur bones or get sand in their friends' eyes! They all did a great job keeping the sand in the pool using gentle sweeping hands!

The Squirrels worked very hard on a stegosaurus clothespin letter recognition project that required a lot of painting! Once dry, the Squirrels took turns identifying the letters in their names (attached to clothespins) and matching them to the letters on the painted paper plate halves – creating a stegosaurus! This activity was so great for fine motor development! (See the curriculum for a visual!)

The Squirrels chose their favorite classroom dinosaurs to march through paint onto a large piece of paper – creating dinosaur paint tracks and abstract art!

The Squirrels enjoyed marching around the classroom in dinosaur tails while listening to *We Are the Dinosaurs* by The Laurie Berkner Band. (See the curriculum for the CD and lyrics!) We used the extra edges of the gym floor mats to create stegosaurus headband costumes!

Each Squirrel practiced rolling out and flattening a small piece of salt-dough in which they pressed their favorite classroom dinosaur – creating a fossil! We left our fossils on the drying rack to paint next week. They also observed (and waited patiently) for baby dinosaurs to hatch (melt) from their (ice) eggs in the sensory table!

Each Squirrel also created an abstract dinosaur, as well as the skeleton of a dinosaur using construction paper, q-tips and glue!

The Squirrels also painted a life-sized t-rex footprint – 3.5 feet long! Once dry, we took our shoes off, counted them and tried to fill up the space of the footprint. Guess how many Squirrel (and teacher!) shoes it took to fill up the space of just one t-rex foot? A LOT!

The Squirrels also participated in an activity we called: What Do Dinosaurs Eat For Lunch? With the help of their teachers, the Squirrels used the dinosaur literature available to them in the classroom library to research which dinosaur are herbivores or

carnivores. They used the classroom dinosaurs to identify and separate them into two groups: leaf eaters and meat eaters!

We also made a HUGE salt dough volcano using a recycled gallon milk jug, red paint, baking soda and vinegar!

We had a very busy, but very FUN, October!

In November, we're planning a Fall and Transportation unit!

Thank you for helping us grow and learn! If you need to contact us for any reason, please call the school or email us at [squirrels@stepcare.net](mailto:squirrels@stepcare.net).

Ms. Aby and Ms. Marie

## *Parent Involvement*

*We love when family members volunteer their time in the classroom, but we know that's not always possible!*

*Here are some ways you can still participate:*

- Come in and join our Circle Time or participate in an Art Project!
- Stop by the Public Library or bring a book from home about kindness or Fall to share with the Squirrels!
- The Squirrels are BIG on books on CD. Record your voice as you read your child their favorite book from home! You can bring in the recording or email it to the Squirrel email. Don't forget to bring in the book, too!
- Bring in a batch of play-doh, silly putty, gak, guk, goop or slime! (We'll email you the recipes! We also have recipe cards!)

## *Classroom Announcements*

*Congratulations to the McFarland family!*

*Benjamin is a big brother!*

*Welcome to the Stepping Stones family baby Sam!*

## *Classroom Reminders*

- *Please remember to check your child's extra clothes bin!*
- *Please consider providing us with an updated family photo for the classroom family tree!*
- *Please send your child to school with both a sun and warm hat.*
- *Please encourage your child to wash or sanitize their hands before engaging in play! Make hygiene part of your morning routine!*

## *Next Month*

- *Acts of Kindness*
  - *Fine Motor Development: Cutting, Taping and Hole Punching*
  - *Gross Motor Development: Obstacle Courses and Monkey Bar Challenges*
  - *Social/Emotional Development: Feelings and Emotions!*
- Collaboration, Sharing and Working Together!*

## *This month in the Spotted Owl classroom...*

Hello Spotted Owl families!

I am happy to say we had a very successful month! With the children falling into their new routines quite nicely, we have all been able to dive into some really cool projects that keep their brains working but also keeps them having fun! Here is a look into what the Spotted Owls have been up to this October.

We began our first week with a KWL chart about the heart (what we **K**now, what we **W**ant to know, what we **L**earned). It gave the children the opportunity to develop inquiry skills and feel comfortable enough to share their opinions in a safe space – feel free to have a look in our classroom! We were fortunate enough to be able to listen to our own heart beats thanks to Maureen Thiboutot who brought in a real stethoscope! Our week also consisted of pattern block designs that helped the kids work on identifying different shapes. The Spotted Owls worked so hard to create helicopters, dragonflies, etc. They didn't even realize how much they were learning about new shapes! We can't forget our dance parties; dance parties really allow the Spotted Owls to let loose, develop their gross motor skills and have fun! The Spotted Owls did an awesome group project with the Snowy Owls where they arranged themselves from tallest to shortest, practiced team work, patience, size and measurement skills and understanding ordinal skills. We were super proud of them but more importantly, they were proud of themselves. The two classes have joined together quite a few times for different activities such as focus drawing, "fish, fish, shark," beading, sea creature charades and some books on tape!

We started a new theme this month: sea creatures! The Spotted Owls practiced making their letters out of slime; this activity was super fun and helped with early letter recognition! We made our own life size dolphin art that you may have seen during drop-off and pick-up. We discussed the different lengths of dolphins and decided to make ours six feet long. The Spotted Owls used a tape measure to measure the distance of six feet. To get a better understanding of how long six feet actually is, the Spotted Owls

hoped from the dolphin's tale to its nose. We counted how many hops it took each child and then recorded it. This activity helped us with number recognition, number writing, measurement and counting skills. This activity also helped us to gain a better understanding of size, length and distance. We then painted the entire dolphin which further developed their fine motor skills and practice teamwork.

We talked a bit about veins this month, as well; and later, created our "Book of Veins." The Spotted Owls wrote down words that rhyme with vein and it is now on display in our classroom! We will soon put all the pages together to form a book, which will be available in the library for the Spotted Owls to look at. This activity allowed the children to practice writing and express themselves through art in decoration. Our project this week consisted of the Owls placing "veins" (pipe cleaners) on a human body drawn by me! They worked in teams of two and the tricky part was that they could not use their hands to place the "veins" on the body, only tongs! The tongs really help the kids develop their fine motor skills as well as patience. It was so much fun, they really enjoyed themselves! Our pumpkin observations were a hit, we discussed the pumpkins color, shape, size and texture. I later had them individually draw what they saw in the pumpkin. Overall, another great month in the books! I can't wait to see what November brings.

Thank you for helping us grow and learn! If you need to contact me for any reason you can call the school or email me at [spottedowls@stepcare.net](mailto:spottedowls@stepcare.net).

– Ms. Nikoleta

## *Parent Involvement*

*We love when family members volunteer their time in the classroom, but we know that's not always possible!*

*Here are some ways you can still participate:*

- Come in and read a book or participate in an art project! If you are interested, please let me know and I can provide you with some dates and times that work best for our busy schedule.
- Stop by the Public Library or bring in a favorite book from home to share with the Spotted Owls! We are looking for books about healthy bodies. You can volunteer your time and read to the class!
- Bring in a book on CD to share or a batch of play-doh, silly putty, goop or slime! (We can provide you with some of our favorite recipes!)

## *Classroom Announcements*

*A special thanks to Isla's parents, Lindsay and Jeremy, for providing us with foam blocks and toothpicks – the Spotted Owls loved using them to build!*

*A special thanks to Julia's mom, Christina, for sharing Julia's placemat from home – it taught us about all the different parts of the body!*

## *Classroom Reminders*

- *Please remember to check your child's extra clothes bin!*
- *Please consider providing us with an updated family photo for the classroom family tree!*
- *Please send your child to school with both a sun and warm hat.*
- *Please encourage your child to wash or sanitize their hands before engaging in play! Make hygiene part of your morning routine!*
- *Reminder: Spotted Owls may only bring one soft toy from home for nap time.*

## *Next Month*

- *Acts of Kindness*

## *This month in the Snowy Owl classroom...*

Hi Snowy Owl families!

I cannot believe how fast time is flying by! We are already in November! October has been a great month for us here in the Snowy Owl classroom. We started off the month of October with our Construction/Building unit! During this unit, we slightly transformed our Train Station into a Construction Site! In our Construction Site, we had tools, hard hats, dress up clothes, diggers, Lincoln logs and a large cardboard box to practice using our tools on. We even had a chance to practice using a real hammer using safety goggles!

In October, the Snowy Owls went on a Nature Walk led by Ms. Maggie! We had a blast! There was so much construction going on which aligned perfectly with our focus of the week and we got to talk to many of the construction workers and ask them questions about the tools they were using!

October was also the month for our annual scarecrow contest! Ms. Tara introduced the contest to the Owls in the beginning of the month the Owls brainstormed different ideas and voted for the type of scarecrow they wanted to make for the contest. Together, the Owls worked together to create a mermaid scarecrow and when finished, it was taken to the Watertown Mall. The Owls love coming to school and to share they voted with their family!

After our Construction/Building unit, the Snowy Owls voted and decided that they wanted to learn about the Ocean. I knew this would be an exciting focus based off the enthusiasm the Snowy Owls showed. To kick start the Ocean unit, we wanted to figure out a way to make part of the classroom feel more like the Ocean! Right away, we got started on our Ocean scene, which you can find hanging up in the Dramatic Play area; check it out! The Owls worked together to paint the ocean different shades of blue and then they added their favorite sea creatures to the water. The Snowy Owls worked so diligently! Together, they drew pictures, made maps and cut out

a bunch of seaweed as well as different sea creatures. I was fully confident that they would create a masterpiece because of all the great ideas they had when we were brainstorming. I supplied the materials and they went to work! They even helped me hang everything up. They are such great helpers; I love watching their creative-juices flow! Not only did this activity give us a chance to use our creativity but it also allowed us to gain more practice using scissors properly. This activity even helped us understand placement. For example, the Owls had to be strategic about where they placed the sun and the seaweed within our ocean. The sun could not be in the water and the seaweed could not be in the sky.

Thank you for helping us grow and learn! If you need to contact me for any reason you can call the school or email me at [owls@stepcare.net](mailto:owls@stepcare.net).

– Ms. Tamara

## *Parent Involvement*

*We love when family members volunteer their time in the classroom, but we know that's not always possible!*

*Here are some ways you can still participate:*

- Take a trip to the Public Library and bring in a book to share related to the unit we are learning about.
- Volunteer your time to read to the Snowy Owls or participate in an art project!

## *A Special Thanks to...*

- Sebastian! You are a wonderful friend to all the of Owls! We will miss you! We know you will have a great time at your new school and you will make a lot of new friends! Visit us soon!

- The Castelli family for making and donating a ghost felt story; it's a hit!

## *Classroom Reminders*

- Please make sure you are dropping off your child inside a classroom that has a teacher in it. We start in the Spotted Owl classroom in the morning and transition to the Snowy Owl classroom at 8:30. If there is not a teacher inside the Snowy Owl classroom, even if the shared doors are open, please walk your child into the Spotted Owl room where a teacher can see your child and mark them present for the day.

- We are working to build independence to prepare for kindergarten and we need your help. The Owls accumulate a lot of art work throughout the day. We are working to pack up all the art to go home either in cubbies or art mailboxes. Please help us keep the cubbies **clear of clutter** by taking home all artwork at the end of every day. Thank you.

## *Next Month*

- Acts of Kindness
- Lower Case Letter Identification
- Mystery Games
- Team Work Games
- Ocean Activities
- Felt Board Stories

## Upcoming Events

### Pizza Day

Every Friday!

### Annual Food Drive

Monday, November 6 – Thursday,  
November 9

### Veteran's Day – Center Closed

Friday, November 10

### Day Light Savings – Don't Forget to Turn

### Back the Clock!

Sunday, November 12

### Silent Art Auction

Monday, November 13 – Friday,  
November 17

### Grateful Feast

Wednesday, November 22

### Center Closes at 3:30 PM

Wednesday, November 22

### Center Closed

Thursday, November 23 and Friday,  
November 24

### Parents' Night Out

Saturday, November 18

### Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences

Monday, November 27 – Friday,  
December 1

## Parent Opportunities

- Laundry Volunteers! Any families interested in helping us wash some of our classroom materials (sheets, towels, pillow cases, etc.) can touch base with Maggie or Tara!

- Play-Doh Volunteers! We love to make (and toss) play-doh frequently! Those interested in making a batch at home to share with the classrooms can ask any teacher building for a recipe!

## Upcoming FREE Event

### “Touch the Truck” Event

*The Watertown Family Network is once again planning a FREE Touch the Trucks to be held (weather permitting) at the parking lot of 30 Common Street on Nov. 6 from 10 am to 11:30 a.m.*

*The Watertown Family Network is once again planning a FREE Touch the Trucks to be held (weather permitting) at the parking lot of 30 Common Street on Nov. 6 from 10 am to 11:30 a.m. The parking lot is accessible from Marshall Street. A school bus, ambulance, motorcycles, post office truck and many more will be available for children to explore. Kids of all ages will meet community helpers and discover how these folks help to keep Watertown up and running. This annual event is fun and FREE for all ages.*

*For more information please call 617-926-1661.*

## Around Town

### *Dad's 'N' Donuts* *Watertown Public Library*

Saturday, November 4 at 9:15 AM

*Skip the coffee shop and make the Children's Department part of your morning routine! Come to the library for some coffee, a donut hole, and to browse the newspaper while children explore books and color during our low-key morning program. Let's be clear: this program is open to all caregivers, not just dads. For families with children of all ages. No registration.*

### *3 and Up Story Time* *Watertown Public Library*

Monday, November 6, 13, 20, 27 at 10:15 AM

*This program presents stories, songs, and other activities in a fun environment. For ages 3 to 5. No registration.*

### *Matt Heaton Music* *Watertown Public Library*

Tuesday, November 14 at 10:15 AM

*Kid-friendly, original folk and surf-inspired songs with a few re-worked hits!*

### *Drop-In Craft* *Watertown Public Library*

Saturday, November 25 at 10:15 AM

*We will have assorted materials available for you to make and take home a fun and simple craft at your leisure. No registration.*

### *Launch Trampoline Park* 625 Pleasant Street in Watertown, MA

*Launch Trampoline Park is an indoor sports and family entertainment facility serving the Watertown area. With over 18,000 sq. feet of connected trampolines forming one GIANT jumping surface and angled trampoline walls to bounce off of, Launch will get your whole family off the couch and in the air in no time! No experience needed. Safety is their number one priority.*

### *KidSpace at Payson Park* *Church in Belmont, MA*

*KidSpace is a non-profit, parent-run, cooperative, indoor play space open to families with babies, toddlers and preschoolers. Visit [belmontkidspace.org](http://belmontkidspace.org) for more information.*

### *Inside Playground in* *Watertown, MA*

*Inside Playground creates its unique presence among other playgrounds by permitting the children to engage themselves in activities from morning to evening, seven days a week. This competence is provided for an affordable flat fee rather than subscribing a 1-hour weekly class that sometimes enforces restrictive regiment. All activities and equipment are kid-proof, and adhere to the strictest safety codes. The main aim of Inside Playground is to create a welcoming environment that will give each family the flexibility and comfort they need to learn and play within their own schedules at our four-season's indoor environment.*

*Celebrate your child's birthday or other special day, or just join us for a great day of playtime in the indoor comfort and safety of our Indoor Playground facility, open 7 days a week in Watertown, MA. Your children will enjoy both, Fine & Gross Motor activities such as: inflated bounce, play-cars, children's gym equipment, books, puzzles, Legos, miniature furniture, dolls, dress up, lights & magnets exploring, and games with friends and family, as well as weekly special activities led by professionally trained staff – we have a snack area for any foods brought in or purchased onsite from our snack, drink and ice cream vending machines. WIFI-accessible for parents' laptops, too! Shoes are not allowed on the premises, and parking is always FREE!*

## Good Reads

### ***How to Teach [Gratitude this Holiday Season]***

*Children model their parents in every way, so make sure you use "please" and "thank you" when you talk to them. ("Thanks for that hug -- it made me feel great!") Insist on their using the words, too.*

**Work gratitude into your daily conversation.** Lately, we've been trying to weave appreciation for mundane things into our everyday talk -- with A.J., his big sister, Mathilda, 10, and especially with our 2-year-old, Mary Elena. ("We're so lucky to have a good cat like Sam!" "Aren't the colors in the sunset amazing?" "I'm so happy when you listen!") When you reinforce an idea frequently, it's more likely to stick. One way to turn up the gratitude in your house is to pick a "thanking" part of the day. Two old-fashioned, tried-and-true ideas: Make saying what good things happened today part of the dinnertime conversation or make bedtime prayers part of your nightly routine.

**Have kids help.** It happens to all of us: You give your child a chore, but it's too agonizing watching him a) take forever to clear the table or b) make a huge mess mixing the pancake batter. The temptation is always to step in and do it yourself. But the more you do for them, the less they appreciate your efforts. (Don't you feel more empathy for people who work outside on cold days when you've just been out shoveling snow yourself?) By participating in simple household chores like feeding the dog or stacking dirty dishes on the counter, kids realize that all these things take effort.

**Find a goodwill project.** That doesn't mean you need to drag your toddler off to a soup kitchen every week, says Lewis. Instead, figure out some way he can actively participate in helping someone else, even if it's as simple as making cupcakes for a sick neighbor. "As you're stirring the batter or adding sprinkles," she says, "talk about how you're making them for a special person, and how happy the recipient will be."

**Encourage generosity.** "We frequently donate toys and clothes to less fortunate kids," says Hulya Migliorino, of Bloomingdale, New Jersey. "When my daughters see me giving to others, it inspires them to go through their own closets and give something special to those in need, as well."

**Insist on thank-you notes.** Paula Goodnight, of Maineville, Ohio, always makes her girls (Rachel, 10, Amelia, 6, and Isabella, 3) write thank-yous for gifts. "When they were toddlers, the cards were just scribbles with my own thank-you attached," she says. "As they grew, they became drawings, then longer letters." Younger children can even dictate the letter while you write, says Lewis. "Just the act of saying out loud why he loved the gift will make him feel more grateful," she says.

**Practice saying no.** Of course kids ask for toys, video games, and candy -- sometimes on an hourly basis. It's difficult, if not impossible, to feel grateful when your every whim is granted. Saying no a lot makes saying yes that much sweeter.

**Be patient.** You can't expect gratitude to develop overnight -- it requires weeks, months, even years of reinforcement. But trust me, you will be rewarded. Four years after the robotic dog fiasco, I can now report that A.J. is a grateful, cheerful boy who delights in making other people happy. Sure, he asked for lots of gifts this Christmas, but he was just as excited about requesting gifts for his sisters. "They've both been good girls and deserve something special," he wrote in his letter to Santa. Now I'm the one feeling grateful.

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