



Diamond Street Early Childhood Center

DSECC's ministry is to provide nurturing, safe, educational childcare that emphasizes the worth and uniqueness of each child, in a Christian environment consistent with the Anabaptist mission of Akron Mennonite Church.

Scholarships Help Families Afford Childcare at DSECC

A Blessing for Grandma

by June Hershberger

She rang the buzzer at the church entrance to the building. I happened to be nearby and walked her to my office. On the way through the foyer her words tumbled over each other urgently, "Can you help me? I have a 7-month-old grandbaby who was dropped off at my house last week. Her mother, my daughter, is 18 yrs. old and has left the state with her boyfriend." Grandma told me she herself has a job that she doesn't want to lose, but "babysitters are so expensive", so she had been staying home a lot.

As she talked, my mind was searching for a solution. I could sense that Grandma probably couldn't afford the \$200 a week for care in the baby room. Daycare costs a lot too. But her situation moved me and I felt this was a family with real needs for reliable childcare. I listened to more of the story and told Grandma I would call her back later in the day. After crunching some numbers, looking at the scholarship money remaining, and reviewing grandma's financial situation, I told her she qualified for a 75% scholarship, but that I only had enough money to get her through the summer. Even this was wonderful news to her. Grandma is in the process of getting legal custody and applying for state childcare assistance. I hope this happens before the end of the summer.

Grandma says often how much she appreciates having a good place to bring her beautiful granddaughter and

that it would never have been possible without the scholarship money. I was so thankful that we had scholarship money available. Without it, there would have been very little I could have done to serve this family.

\$\$ FOR SCHOLARSHIPS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

A Refugee Family

There is a significant number of Nepali refugees who have recently moved in to the Lancaster area. Some are sponsored by local churches and two families live in Akron. One of the families is sending their 3 year-old daughter to our pre-k program. Scholarship money helps fund her tuition. Assistant preschool teacher, Lynn Williamson, lived in Nepal and speaks some Nepali. Annie's* vocabulary and her ability to communicate are increasing as she plays with the other children and is involved in classroom activities. Next year, Annie will be in the full-day pre-k program. By the end of the year she will be ready for kindergarten and DSECC will have played an important role in helping Annie learn English and acclimate to life in the U.S. through the learning opportunities and social interactions that happen every day in our school.

*name changed

DSECC Goes Green

Our theme for this school year is "going green at DSECC". This has been fun and educational. We have:

- * Conserved electricity by turning off lights
- * Increased recycling efforts -thanks to Al Claassen who picks up our recycling weekly and delivers to Material Resource Center.
- * Started a "freecycle" board where parents and staff can seek or offer items they no longer need.
- * Started seedlings for our outdoor garden project this spring and summer.



June and Cathy wear frog T-shirts that say "It's Easy Being Green".

Photo Gallery



State Representative Scott Boyd (below) came to read to the children at DSECC. The Cardinals enjoyed the book, "What a Treasure". It is important for our legislators to visit DSECC to see what a difference quality care and education makes for children and working families.



Ms. Debbie did her student teaching in the Hummingbird room. One of her projects was making a cow out of a saw horse. J. is "milking" the cow (above). It's amazing what you can do with a tin can, a plastic glove with a hole in one finger, milk, and a bucket!!



L. models his "cow" t-shirt. (above)



The Hummingbirds studied different cultures of the world. Children make an African mud house. (above and left)





Aaron Groff from Ephrata National Bank, reads to his grandson's pre-school class. EPNB is one of the local businesses that contributes EITC scholarship dollars to DSECC. (left)



* In May, children made gifts for Mother's Day. In June, we focus on fathers. The Bluebirds (1's) painted clay pots for flowers for the moms. (above)



The 3-year-old preschool class enjoys time at the Akron park at the end of the school year. (above)



PEEK-A-BOO



DSECC parents and teachers meet to share ideas about teaching children to resolve conflict peacefully. (above)

DSECC serves children from two-months of age through 5th grade.

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June Hershberger: **Executive Director**
Cathy Stephens: **Asst. Director/Education Coordinator**

**DSECC Board members
2009-2010**

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Pre-K summer camps offered at DSECC —

- *Color Me Healthy*
- *Silly Science*
- *Butterflies and Moths*
- *It's a Multi-cultural World*
- *Wacky Water Week*

(Left) Orioles get active during "Color Me Healthy" camp.

DSECC Opens New Pre-K Classroom

DSECC is opening a full-day pre-k classroom this fall for 12 children at no cost to their parents. The program is modeled after the Pennsylvania funded Pre-K Counts classrooms, but funded with EITC (Educational Improvement Tax Credit) money. Families must meet income guidelines and children with special needs or who are English language learners were invited to apply.

Dede Zimmerman will be the Lead Teacher in the classroom. Chelle Montz will be the assistant teacher. The program includes a focus on involving families in the educational process and on a smooth transition to kindergarten. This is a wonderful opportunity for children in the Akron/Ephrata area.

This classroom is made possible by a generous EITC donation from Penn Embryo, Inc. Thank you Les and Cheryl Wagner!



The Robins water their seedlings.

DSECC children started seedlings in classrooms and then planted a garden and some flower beds outside the building. Teacher Valerie Showalter constructed the garden beds and is our resident gardener. We harvested our first zucchini last week.



 DSECC Family and Staff picnic 
 Akron Park/Fri. June 25 
 6:30—Picnic 
 7:30—Forgotten Friend Reptile 
 Show 
