From the Director’s Desk…

At the CDC, we have a dual mission: the first part of our mission is to provide high-quality care and education for the children of VCU faculty, staff, and student families; the second part of our mission is to serve as a learning lab for student pre-service experiences, faculty research, and community outreach. We are working on several projects over the course of the semester to support our work toward each part of our mission.

For our mission to provide high-quality care and education, we want to keep our practice fresh by participating in ongoing learning experiences for teachers and staff. This semester, we are participating in a series of evening workshops here at the Center with Marilyn Rice from VCU Training & Technical Assistance Center (T/TAC). These workshops focus on a teacher’s interactions with children in the classroom and allow us to reflect on our own practice to continue to provide engaging experiences for children in the classroom.

For our mission to serve the community as a learning lab, we have several events and connections this semester. To assist with student learning experiences, we will host over 100 students from the School of Education, Psychology, and other departments as they conduct observations and complete volunteer and service learning placements at the CDC. For community outreach, we are especially excited that the Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education (VAECE) conference is in Richmond this year and we were selected to host parts of the conference here at the CDC. Early Childhood Educators from all over the state will be coming to visit the Center and learn from our teachers; in addition, teachers will continue their own professional development by attending the conference. Please refer to your important dates calendar (distributed in September and at the end of each newsletter) to note the dates that the Center will be closed in March to support this activity.

Thank you for all of your support not only toward the high-quality care and education of your children, but also in supporting us in our other identity as a learning lab that is recognized as a leader in the state.

Dr. Alyson Williams, Director
VCU Child Development Center
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Happy New Year to our G1 family! We hope you all had a fantastic time off with your family and friends and received lots of rest to get you prepared for the fun activities that being planned for the New Year. First, we just want to remind parents to double check and make sure your child has appropriate clothing for the winter season. (Please make sure that clothing is labeled as well.) As we transition back to school, our classroom will explore “Winter Wear.” We will take a look at different articles of clothing that we wear during the cold season. Our children will have fun identifying clothing and associating it with where it goes on our bodies. We will also experiment making a snow-like substance by mixing cornstarch and oil to have an indoor winter-wonderland sensory table. After this lesson, we will continue with the cold theme and explore “Winter Animals.” We will look at animals that love the cold and explore their habitats. During this lesson, our children will continue having fun with the winter sensory table and add winter animals to the mix. We will transition into our “Mail Time” lesson by mid-February. We will explore one of our favorite community workers and even have fun mailing letters to our friends and family. We are excited for the days to come. As always stated, we welcome parents to volunteer in our class to hangout sometime. Our door is always opened!
VCU Student Intern Chanell Hudson Assists in G1
G2: Karen Turner & Caroline Kouretzos

Hello everyone and welcome to the start of a brand new year! Caroline and I would like to touch on a few of the themes we will be exploring with the children. These will include Winter, the Arctic, Things that are Red, Transportation, Rain and Spring, and of course, some favorite books: The Snow Day, And Red Galoshes, and My Bus. Related activities include making imitation snow, creating a polar bear using cotton balls and attempting to knit a hat.

101: Benita Thompson, assisted by Alison Dickerson

We would like to thank each and every one of you for sharing your children with us this past year. We enjoy all of our children and are so honored to work with such an AMAZING and SUPPORTIVE group of families. Thank You! We wish you and your families a safe and happy year to come.

Room 101 will be enjoying many activities pertaining to the season of winter. We will be learning about a variety of winter activities, as well as planning lots of fun for the children. Some of the activities will include sharing a number of books about winter, winter songs/finger plays, discussing cold temperatures outside, talking about things we need to wear to stay warm, and exploring objects that are cold and what happens to them when they become warm. We are also hopeful that we will be able to play with fresh snow on the playground in the coming weeks. For a change of pace, we will be having a "Sleep Under" where children may wear their favorite pajamas to school.

In February, we will explore love and friendship as we show how much we love and care for family and friends.

Joke of the Month: What did the snowman have for breakfast?

Answer: Frosted Flakes.
We had a wonderful fall in 102, and winter is shaping up nicely too! The children have enjoyed activities like making apple prints, going on a leaf hunt, sharing "All About Me" bags, jumping over Jack Be Nimble's candlestick, having a visit from the Teeny Tiny Farm and participating in the Costume Parade, making family trees, making and eating latkes, decorating Christmas cookies, and much, much more! We have really enjoyed taking and sharing all of our photos with you via Shutterfly, and encourage you to check it out if you haven't yet. We are currently doing a unit on the visual arts, and it has been awesome watching all these budding young artists express themselves artistically using a wide variety of mediums. (As a side note, much of the students' work from this unit will be offered for display at the Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education (VAECE) conference in March, to be viewed by early childhood educators from around the Commonwealth!) Upcoming themes will include Young Scientists, Love and Friendship, Dental Health, Dr. Seuss, Dance, Sports, Taking Care of Our Earth, Plants, Bugs, and Dinosaurs! After that, we'll put an emphasis on social studies as we learn about the countries of France, India, and Ukraine! (Did you know that we have students with family members from/in each of those countries?) We'll follow that with a unit on the United States leading up to the Fourth of July. It's going to be a busy spring, and we'd love to have you join us! As always, let us know if you'd like to come have lunch with us, lead an activity, or just hang out and play!

Happy New Year to our Star Families!

First of all, we hope that everyone had a safe and fun holiday and we are so glad to have you back! The class is so excited to have Ms. Sarah Robinson as the new teacher! We expect lots of great things this year in Room 201. The winter months hold a lot of great fun and learning for the Room 201 Stars. We learned all about winter and changing seasons this week and next week we will be learning all about the artists Wassily Kandinsky and Henri Matisse with Ms. Sarah! Future lesson plans this month include dinosaurs, math, science and language arts. We will also be focusing on a “Letter of the week” as well as basic phonetics with the children. As always, we would love to have our parents come in and share with the class. We encourage anyone to come in to read a book to the kids, complete an art project or do something more academic in nature. Again, we are so pleased to have you all in our class and this is going to be a great year!
Welcome back! 2015 is going to be a great year for the children and families of 202. We have a lot of things to look forward to this season. The children will get the opportunity to learn about Martin Luther King, Jr. as we celebrate his upcoming birthday. In February, we will be exploring African American History through historical persons like G.W. Carver and Dr. Charles Drew, among others. We are looking forward to what 2015 will bring to us here at the CDC! Thank you to the wonderful families that we get to work with everyday for being supportive and welcoming our staff transition with patience. Ms. Amirah and Ms. Brittany are officially a team and we are ready to prepare the children for a successful transition to Kindergarten.
New Roles at the CDC... Meet Us!

Amirah Bohler... New to 202... I am very excited to become apart of the CDC family. I received a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Howard University in Washington, D.C. I spent 2.5 years doing therapeutic day treatment counseling and intensive in-home counseling within the Richmond community once I graduated from Howard. Following that I transitioned into childcare, spending 3 years at Primrose teaching Pre-Kindergarten (ages 4-5yrs). I am currently a graduate student here at VCU and I am very excited about the learning experience through my studies and through my work here at the CDC!

Cati Howard... Center Coordinator... I began working at the VCU Child Development Center in April of 2014 as a part time substitute teacher. I quickly moved into the office where I helped with projects, assisted in basic receptionist duties throughout the afternoons, and helped out with special projects such as meetings, field trips, and special events at the Center. Recently, in November 2014, I was hired on full time as the CDC's Center Coordinator. I still help out in the classrooms from time to time, assist with various projects in the office, and complete the Center's daily schedule. Should a parent ever have a question or need help, they can find me in the office, at my desk next to the copier. I am very excited to begin my career path with VCU and look forward to this next semester at the Center.

Lori Do... Interim Administrative Assistant... I have been at VCU Child Development center for 20 years. I worked my first 7 years with the toddlers and the last 13 with preschoolers. I received my undergraduate degree at VCU in psychology and have taken other courses there over the years along with J Sergeant Reynolds. However, the best teaching I have received is here at the center working with the children, families and my co workers. I work with Miss Thompson in room 101. We have been “married” for the last 13 years and I have enjoyed every minute of it. She has been the best teacher for me of all. I say this because she is an important part of all the great things I have learned working with preschoolers, families and people. I am very proud of all the work we do together as a team.

Karen Turner... Family Liaison... I did not begin working with children but actually started out as an administrative assistant for VDOT after graduating high school in 1978, not attending college until 1991. I graduated from Longwood in 1995 with a B.S. in Speech-Language Pathology and worked as a speech therapist for Brunswick County. After working for this rural county for 4 years, I returned to Richmond and became employed with the VCU-CDC in 2000. I have had the privilege of working on all 3 floors of the Center having worked 4 years in Room 201, 11 years in G-2 and mentored an incoming teacher for 2 months in Room 102. I am looking forward to serving the VCU-CDC family in my new capacity as family liaison.
Fundraising

The CDC is funded primarily through tuition payments; however, those payments do not cover the entire cost of operating the program. We seek your help with our fundraising efforts, including those listed here and on our website.

Since 1997, schools, charities, churches, community groups, and clubs in the continental United States have collectively earned more than $26 million in cash and rewards through FundingFactory's 100% free fundraising-thru-recycling program. Together, FundingFactory and the CDC are making an impact on the environment by keeping cartridges and small electronics out of landfills.

The CDC will collect, pack, and ship used inkjet and toner cartridges, cell phones, MP3 players, digital cameras, and GPS devices to FundingFactory. The CDC can then choose to accumulate points and spend them in the rewards catalog or request a check payment. There is a box for collecting these items on top of the teacher mailboxes. If your office would like to participate, please contact Alyson.

Scholastic Corporation is the world’s largest publisher and distributor of children’s books and a leader in educational technology and children’s media. Scholastic creates quality educational and entertaining materials and products for use in school and at home, including children’s books, magazines, technology-based products, teacher materials, television programming, film, videos and toys.

The VCU Child Development Center earns a FREE $3 book coupon every time a parent places an order (of any value) and points are awarded towards additional books based on the total amount spent by CDC families. Orders are all online, using code HLZ46 (Teacher: Dr. Williams). Orders are due the 15th of each month and will be distributed on arrival.

Tax-deductible donations may be made to the CDC through the VCU Foundation. Our account number is 040577. Your donation ensures that the Center continues to provide high-quality care and education to the VCU community.
Every parent at the CDC is a member of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC works to provide special events for CDC children and families, as well as to work with Center administration as the voice of the CDC families. We hope you will be involved. Officers are elected each year.

Upcoming events are:

2/4 PAC Meeting 4:30-5:30
2/24 SCOR Soccer—Rescheduled from January
3/17 Itsy Bitsy Yoga

*If you have not already submitted your $50 annual fee to PAC, please do so as soon as possible. Your fees go to support special activities such as Soccer, Yoga, and picnics. Thank you!
Family Reminders and Information

Parent Manual Agreements: If you have not already, please return your parent manual agreement to the office. You can find the parent manual on our website.

Shutterfly Photos: We hope you are enjoying all the photos of your child’s day at school. The site is members only. If you would like to visit the site, please go to: https://vcuchilddevelopmentcenter.shutterfly.com/ and complete the registration / request to join.

Coming soon… Online Credit Card Payments! We are excited to soon roll out online credit card payments for tuition. Stay tuned!

Why are the halls so empty? We recently got a visit from the fire marshal, and were instructed that the artwork displayed in our hallways and stairwells was a violation of fire code. While we know our hallways look a little naked right now, we are glad to know that we are following the fire safety regulations that will allow us to stay as safe as possible in the case of emergency. Please feel free to visit your child’s classroom to peek at the current artwork on display!

CDC classrooms are cell-free zones. Please assist us in keeping everyone’s attention on the children by leaving your phones off or outside the classroom while visiting. Thank you!
VCU Child Development Center
Important Dates
2014-2015

VCU CDC follows the University calendar (http://academiccalendars.vcu.edu/) and is closed on the holidays and professional development days listed below. In addition to the dates below, the Center may be closed on other dates for further professional development.

3/12-13/15  CDC CLOSED for Professional Development
3/19-20/15  CDC CLOSED for VAECE Conference (Richmond)
4/29/15     Zoo Trip (VCU Reading Day)
5/25/15     CDC CLOSED for Memorial Day
6/5/14      CDC CLOSES @ NOON for Family-Teacher Conferences
7/3/14      CDC CLOSED for Independence Day
8/12-14/15  CDC CLOSED for Professional Development