

# Building a Foundation For the of Learning

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340 Harvey Lake Road, Highland, MI 48356



VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1

FALL 2013



## Executive Director's Letter



Dear Families and Friends,  
I can't believe we're at the beginning of another school season and into our **9th year** of welcoming children and families!

We know that teaching and learning in early childhood settings is a relationship-based processes. We study and cultivate relationships and listen to the children. Development is not possible without relationships.

As we begin this fall, I would like to make visible in this edition of our newsletter just a few of the many intentions and efforts directed towards the creation our "amiable school" through relationships that in turn create a sense of community.

At Building Blocks Preschool we go about building a sense of community and a sense of place for children, parents, and teachers such that teaching and learning achieve a higher level of results.

Here are several examples leading up to the start of the school year that enable us to achieve a sense of community and build relationships: parent tours and orientation meetings, indoor and outdoor environments that invite children to engage with materials, activities, and with one another, focusing on teacher's strengths, professional development experiences, documentation, learning stories, family photos, small group

work, and dialogue about the image of the child who seeks relationships and construct understandings. The list is long and purposeful. One element can become an opening to another, allowing us to access the system of relationships from many entry points.

Throughout this newsletter we highlight our special learning community. The time together combining social and professional experiences will, we believe, enhance the quality of our collaboration as a group of educators and deliver high quality Early Childhood Education.

I share all of this to give you insight into some of the "behind the scenes" relationship-building intentions and strategies that took place before the start of the school year. We packed in a lot of professional development and preparation in those weeks in August. And now, you and your children have arrived to complete the company of protagonists. As Ms. Jen commented just before the first day of school, "It is time, we are ready for the children to come."

We look forward to our collaboration with you and the children this school year. Being together we will create an "amiable school" where teaching and learning thrive in all of our spaces.

Warm wishes,



Tree Investigation Full-Day Preschool



Spider Investigation Half-Day Preschool

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Building Blocks Preschool.



**Learning Science Through Inquiry** - Children's curiosity leads them to ask questions, make observations, and investigate solutions much like a scientist does. "Children need the freedom to appreciate the infinite resources of their hands, their eyes and their ears, the resources of forms, materials, sounds and colors." Loris Malaguzzi, 1992

# Building the Foundation for a Love of Learning

## Our Staff

**Ms. Suzanne** - Owner / Executive Director, Since 2004

**Ms. Emily** - Director, Since 2006

**Ms. Jennifer** - Co-Lead Full-Day Preschool Teacher, Since 2008

**Ms. Jamie** - Co-Lead Full-Day Preschool Teacher, School Age, and Summer Camp Counselor, Since 2011

**Ms. Jen** - Co-Lead Half-Day Preschool Teacher, Since 2008

**Ms. Christine** - Co-Lead Half-Day Preschool Teacher, Since 2009

**Ms. Tracy** - Lead Toddler Teacher, Since 2013

**Ms. Wendy** - Lead Infant and Young Toddler Teacher, Since 2004

**Ms. JoAnne** - Infant and Toddler Teacher, Since 2011

**Ms. Heather** - Full-Day Preschool Assistant Teacher, Since 2013

**Ms. Chelsea** - Full Day Preschool Assistant Teacher, Since 2013

**“We see the child, every child, as a gifted child for whom there has to be a gifted teacher.” - Loris Malaguzzi Founder of the Municipal Preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy**



Building Blocks Preschool.

## Program Information

**Snack** menu's are posted and it is your responsibility to provide snack for your child's class. If snack is not provided during the month a \$10.00 snack fee will be charged to your account.



**Label** your child's items that you bring into our school. Jackets, boots, hats, gloves and lunch items with their first name or initials.

**Can you help us get the word out?** Please share out

our People's Choice award on Facebook. If you like something we are doing please share. The highest compliment our parents can pay us is the referral of family or friends for Early Childhood Education at Building Blocks Preschool. The trust and confidence that you place in us each and every day means a great deal.

We're proud to share our 2013 Parent Referral Policy which entitles you to \$150.00 TUITION CREDIT possibilities. Each time a child is enrolled in our **Full Day Program 3+**

**days a week**, as a result of your recommendation to other parents, you will receive a \$150.00 TUITION CREDIT. The credit will be received after the newly enrolled family has attended our school for a period of one month. Well, now is the time to refer us! It's our way of saying Thank YOU!



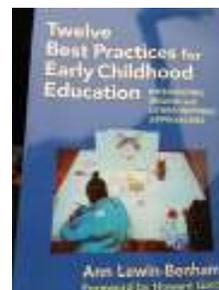
## Supporting Teachers in an Early Childhood Learning Community

In this section I would like to explain our purpose for supporting teacher relationships, professional development, and collaboration between teachers. Building Blocks Preschool is an active steering committee member of Michigan Inspirations. A group of Reggio Inspired educators here in Michigan. We are going into our third year and have created a professional learning community. In August, Building Blocks teachers partnered with the University of Michigan to form a collaborative



study of Reggio Inspired classrooms. Teachers from both schools observed and studied each others techniques, documentation and environments. Thank you to Jennifer and Jen for being the first to participating in the teacher swap.

Our goal this year is to create inspiring environments. This is visible in all our classrooms. In August, all our teachers met for our professional development day. Our Book Study for this



year is Twelve Best Practices for Early Childhood Education, by Ann Lewin-Benham.

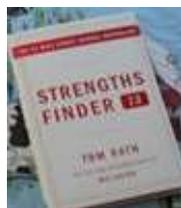
Our first step was to go into each of our classrooms and do an

EXCEL Self-Assessment. This is a tool for reflection on our practice.

We will be collaborating as a small group along with our Michigan Inspiration Collaborative over the next 10 months.

All our teachers have received the book

StrengthsFinder 2.0 by Tom Rath and took the Gardner assessment that in-



cluded a personalized strengths insight and we reviewed our teams strength summary report. We have a diverse set of strengths with a high majority in Relationships quadrant. This brings great value and insight that are embedded in our work with children and families.

## Classroom Communities - The Environment as the Third Teacher



### Finding Harmony

*“Life in a learning community is helped along by interests, ideas and support of others. Social life is not snuffed out; it is nurtured and used to advance learning in the best way possible. Caring and interest of others breathes purpose and life into learning. Learning is social.”*

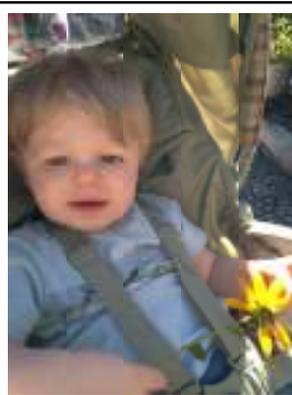
~ Ralph Peterson, *Life is a Crowded Place*

The first weeks of school are filled with freshness. Some children and

families are new to the school, spending their first days at Building Blocks Preschool. Groups of children are blended into classrooms for the first time, or move to a new classroom. As they come together, they create learning communities rich with possibility.

This fall classrooms were prepared to welcome children with inspired comfort and enthusiasm. Parents and siblings were invited to linger. Some children encountered their new classrooms with a full range of reactions: relief of finally meeting their teacher, seeing a familiar face amongst classmates, or noticing the similarities and differences in physical spaces.

As our new classroom communities begin to come together with rituals like singing songs, reading books, and wondering which materials will wake up stories waiting to be told. We look forward to sharing this wonder as our learning unfolds this school year.



*“I believe an outdoor play area is a must. The more the children play outdoors, the better they eat, sleep, and feel. There is plenty of natural stimulation outdoors with the sky, clouds, and earth. Even the youngest baby may watch the changing patterns of shade and light.”*

- Magda Gerber



### Fall Harvest Festival at Building Blocks - Friday, October 25 at 6:00 p.m.

Please join us on Friday, October 25 at 6:00 pm. for the Building Blocks Preschool Fall Harvest Family Festival! Children dress in costume and enjoy trick-or-treating with

their teachers. Activities, games and food for the whole family. Extended family and friends are invited to join us. Bring a dish to pass. We will also

collecting non-perishable food items and toiletries to donate to Community Sharing. Please bring items to the event.



# Building the Foundation for a Love of Learning

340 Harvey Lake Road  
Highland, MI 48356

Phone: 248-889-2727

Connect with us on line



## Important Dates

**Thursday, October 10 and Friday, October 11** - Muffins with Mom

**Tuesday, October 22** - Spicer Orchards Field Trip

**Friday, October 25** - Fall Harvest Festival at Building Blocks 6:00 pm

**Thursday, November 7 and Friday, November 8** - Donuts with Dad

**Tuesday, November 12 and Thursday, November 14** - Parent Teacher Conferences

**Tuesday, November 19** - School Picture Day

**Wednesday, November 28 and November 29** - Building Blocks CLOSED

**Thursday, December 12** - Holiday Fundraiser Night

**December 24, 25, 26, and 31** - Building Blocks CLOSED

### Building Blocks

#### Preschool Mission:

Building Blocks Preschool is passionate about the need to assist children in their early childhood development with a stable, enriching and loving environment. The overall goal of our approach is to instill a "love for learning" in each child.

### Building Blocks

#### Preschool Vision:

Become the Recognized Leader in Quality Early Childhood Education in the Huron Valley Community.



## Natural Playscape Outdoor Classroom Phase 2



A tree fort climber was installed on the playground. We still have a tire swing, hill slide, and toddler climber to be installed. It is a very exciting time to see a five year dream for the playground renovations to come true. Thank you to our Building Blocks Families for all your support.

*Your feed back is important. Please let us know what you think of our programming by emailing me at [suzanne@BuildingBlocksSchool.com](mailto:suzanne@BuildingBlocksSchool.com)*