



# The Center

The Newsletter of The Episcopal Center for Children

Summer Issue

July 2017

## Prevent the Summer Slide with Family Fun Time

It's been a very busy summer at the Center. Students have been very active with our summer swimming program, which teaches them life-saving safety and swimming skills, and also builds their self-confidence.

As students go home for a month, we encourage parents and guardians to help them continue learning at home. Keep supporting reading and math skills, so your student can avoid the "summer slide" and keep skills fresh.

Look for opportunities to practice in your daily surroundings. Count items on a walk. Look for new words and sound them out together. Pick out new books to read at the library or check out an audiobook. Talk about stories with your child.



Dodd L. White  
Executive Director

**Keep supporting reading and math skills.**

One of the easiest ways to keep math and reading alive for your child is to cook with him or her. Let your child help design the menu, read to you a recipe, and help you follow the directions in order. Draw pictures or write about what you cook together.

Take a field trip to a museum, zoo or local park with walking trails. Notice numbers. Count steps with a smartphone app or pedometer.

Log family activities in a journal. Take pictures together with a smartphone or camera and make a scrapbook of your summer break adventures.

There are lots of ways to learn and keep skills fresh while having fun. See you in September!

### **Book Fair to Benefit ECC on September 17**

Do you love to buy books and gifts for friends and family? On Sunday, September 17, shoppers at Politics and Prose (5015 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC) can let cashiers know that they are shopping to benefit the Episcopal Center for Children, and the store will donate 20 percent of their purchases to the Center. If you like, you can even purchase a book requested by ECC teachers. ECC Auxiliary Board members will be on-site all day to answer questions, give out information about the Center, and have available lists of books teachers have requested. If you plan to participate, RSVP for the event on our Facebook page.

### **Help the Center by Submitting a Review on Great Nonprofits**

Do you appreciate the work we do at the Center? Would you like to help share the good work we are doing? Then consider writing a review about the Center on Great Nonprofits. If we get ten positive reviews before October 31, 2017, the Center will be named a "top-rated nonprofit" for 2017. You can write your review at

<https://greatnonprofits.org/org/episcopal-center-for-children>

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## Simple Tips to Prepare for Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meetings

Erika White, IEP Coordinator

Your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) guides their education and treatment. So meetings about it are very important. The following are simple tips you can follow to help ensure the school provides your child with "a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet your child's unique needs and prepares her or him for further education, employment, and independent living."

**Confirm Meeting Attendance.** At least 10 days before a meeting, you should receive a letter of invitation. As soon as possible, RSVP for the meeting in writing. Inform the school if you will attend the meeting in person or by phone. If you are not available to attend the meeting at all, propose alternative dates and times, even locations. Also, you can decide that the team should hold a meeting without you (not recommended).

**Review Draft Documents.** At least 5 business days before the meeting, you should receive drafts of

the documents (e.g., IEP, Behavior Intervention Plan, evaluations) to be discussed during the IEP meeting. Take time to review these documents. Identify problems and develop strategies for the problems. Write questions/topics you want to discuss and proposed changes to the IEP, including information you would like to add.

**Invite Additional IEP Team Individuals.** Take the initiative to invite individuals who have knowledge or expertise regarding your child (such as, family members, coaches, community support workers, social workers, attorneys, advocates, etc.). These are people you choose to participate in the meeting. There is no need to invite the school team, they will be there. Let the school team know additional individual(s) will attend the meeting, as soon as possible.

**Build a Healthy Working Relationship with the School.** Developing healthy and professional relationships with the school is always a plus. Be open to discussing issues promptly, directly, honestly and courteously. Ask questions and listen carefully to answers. This will allow you to respond appropriately and avoid misunderstandings.

**BREATHE! FOCUS ON GETTING AN APPROPRIATE EDUCATION FOR YOUR CHILD!**

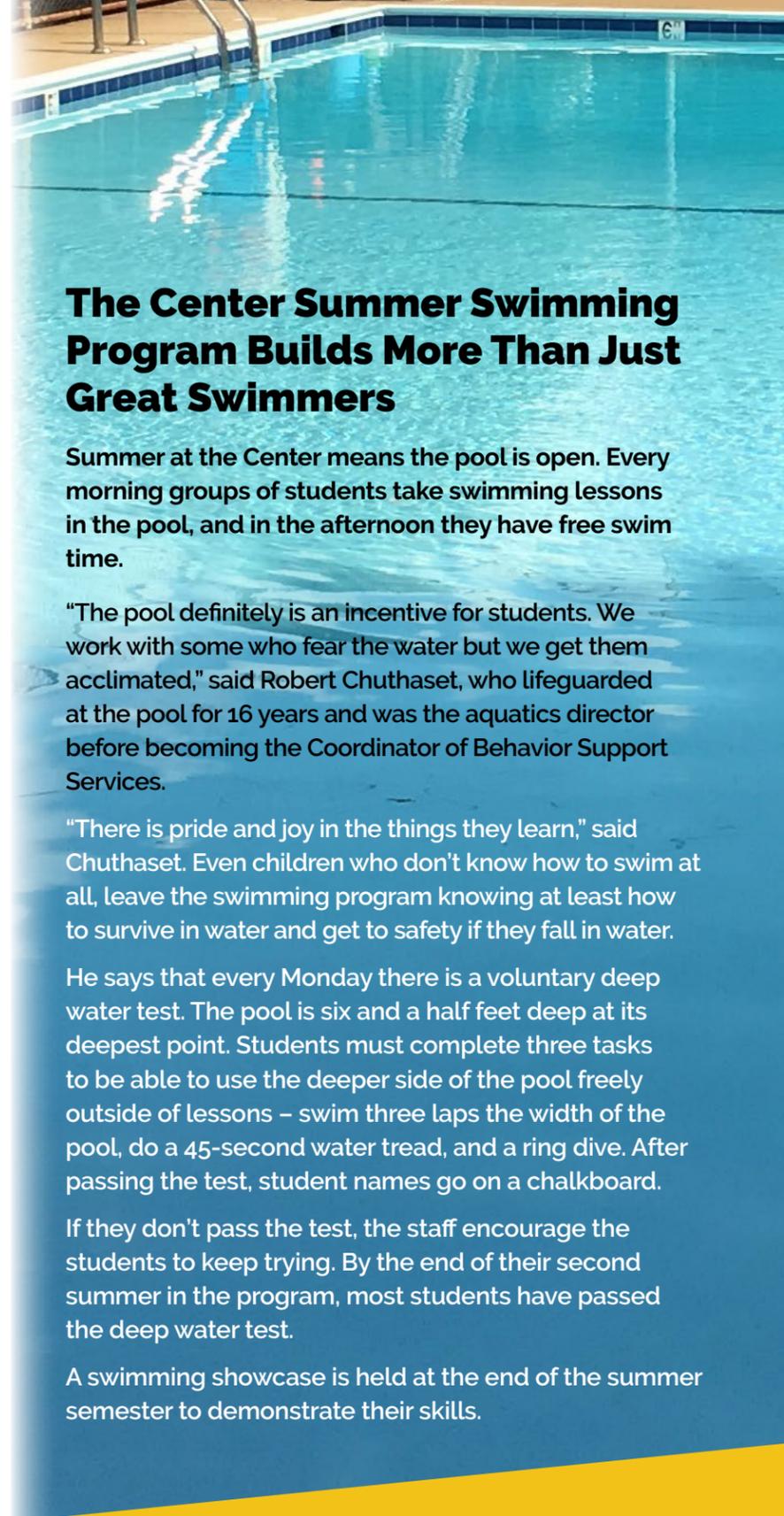
**Summer sun shines on our school garden and our green thumbs are working hard! This is the second year we have had a school garden. The garden is open to classroom teachers for lessons, to therapists for their time with students, and to students for recess!**

**Humans are not the only visitors to the garden! We have seen a fawn (a baby deer) rest and sleep inside the garden fence! It is a quiet and safe space. We can find bumblebees out there almost every day buzzing around the flowers. Birds visit the**

**small pond for a bath and some stay in the garden bird houses.**

**So far, we have gotten cucumbers and some lettuce from our garden! They sure were tasty in salads! We are hoping the tomatoes and peas will be ready soon!**

**The garden is a lot of work! Volunteers are always welcome to come to our garden to help out. If you would like to help, please reach out to Lee Gilliam at [lgilliam@eccofdc.org](mailto:lgilliam@eccofdc.org).**



## The Center Summer Swimming Program Builds More Than Just Great Swimmers

**Summer at the Center means the pool is open. Every morning groups of students take swimming lessons in the pool, and in the afternoon they have free swim time.**

**"The pool definitely is an incentive for students. We work with some who fear the water but we get them acclimated," said Robert Chuthaset, who lifeguarded at the pool for 16 years and was the aquatics director before becoming the Coordinator of Behavior Support Services.**

**"There is pride and joy in the things they learn," said Chuthaset. Even children who don't know how to swim at all, leave the swimming program knowing at least how to survive in water and get to safety if they fall in water.**

**He says that every Monday there is a voluntary deep water test. The pool is six and a half feet deep at its deepest point. Students must complete three tasks to be able to use the deeper side of the pool freely outside of lessons – swim three laps the width of the pool, do a 45-second water tread, and a ring dive. After passing the test, student names go on a chalkboard.**

**If they don't pass the test, the staff encourage the students to keep trying. By the end of their second summer in the program, most students have passed the deep water test.**

**A swimming showcase is held at the end of the summer semester to demonstrate their skills.**

**ECCofDC.ORG**

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## Summer Reading Tips

Public Libraries in D.C., Maryland and Virginia all have reading programs for kids. And some even have programs for adults! Each program has a way to log reading completed and offers prizes when certain reading goals are reached. D.C.'s public libraries base their goals and prizes on age. These programs can be used to motivate your student to read.

This summer concentrate on the story. Students can sometimes focus on the length of a book. Reading a long book can feel like a huge accomplishment. Acknowledge the page length if they do, but also ask about the story. What is the main character like? Where does the story take place? Is it funny?

Just because a book is short does not mean only younger kids will like it. Adults can love picture books, and middle schoolers can too. As long as you feel the book is appropriate let your student read the books that interest them. Graphic novels, joke

books, and books that have become movies are all books students seem to like.

If they are reading, and enjoying it- AWESOME. Listening to books can count

too! Whether it is an audiobook or someone

is reading the book out loud to them, interacting with a story is comprehension practice. This is a great option if a kid is interested in a book that is difficult to read independently.

## DoMore24 – Thank You!

Thanks to everyone who donated to our DoMore24 campaign in June, which raised \$5,174. Funds raised supported art, movement, occupational and recreational therapies. These therapies help our students express themselves, encourage them to develop motor skills, and help them see the world as it can be. Thank you to all our donors and please join us again for this 24 hour period of giving in June 2018!



## Field Day 2017

Field Day at the Center was a huge success. Our recreational therapist, Ms. Go and our P.E. teacher, Coach Dale, planned a morning packed with outdoor activities. There were seven stations students rotated between ranging from pool noodle baseball to a water balloon toss!

A favorite station among students was Pie a Teacher. Mr. White, Mr. Cowan, and other staff were all smiles and whipped cream at the station. The event ended with final races, and line dances to the Cha-Cha Slide and Electric Slide. We are all already looking forward to next year.

The activities that Ms. Go and Coach Dale organized can also be enjoyed at home or at a neighborhood park. The obstacle course, water balloon toss, water balloon race, and car wash relay only needed a couple of supplies.

### Car Wash Relay

#### Materials

4 buckets and 2 large sponges

#### How to Play

Split your group into 2 teams. Each team will take their sponge soaked in water, run down to the other bucket, and squeeze out the water and run back, putting the sponge back in the water bucket. The goal is to be the team with the most water in their bucket.

## Outdoor Math Games

Two Websites with outdoor math games our educational therapist recommends are:

<http://coffeecupsandcrayons.com/outdoor-math-games-for-kids/>

<http://dreambox.com/blog/outdoor-math-games>

## Chef Steve's Butter Chicken

Cooked in a fragrant, red-colored sauce, this chicken is a favorite for students and staff!

### Ingredients:

Tandoori chicken, cut into 8 pieces  
1 lb. tomatoes blended to a puree  
2 oz. salted butter  
2 tbsp. of ginger-garlic paste  
¼ cup cashews  
¼ tsp. degi mirch or paprika  
1 ¼ cups milk  
½ cup fresh cream  
½ tsp. garam masala  
salt to taste  
¼ tsp. sugar  
1 tsp. tandoori masala  
1 bay leaf

### Directions:

- Soak cashews in hot water for 15 minutes. Drain and grind to a very fine paste with a little water.
- Melt butter in nonstick pan. Add a bay leaf. Wait for a few seconds. Add ginger-garlic paste, cook until liquid evaporates, and the paste just changes color. Add freshly pureed tomatoes, cook until the puree turns absolutely dry and the fat separates.
- Add cashew paste, stir for a few seconds. Add 2 tbsp. cream. Add degi mirch or paprika to give red color. Cook on medium heat until fat separates.
- Remove from heat. Add milk and enough water (about 1 cup) to get a thick curry. Mix well. Return to heat. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Cover and simmer for 5-7 minutes until the gravy turns to a bright red color and the fat surfaces.
- Remove from heat and stir in the rest of the cream, stirring continuously. Add garam masala, tandoori masala, and sugar to taste.
- Add the chicken. Give one or two quick boils on low heat and heat through. Remove from heat. Garnish with 1 tbslp. fresh cream and slit green chiles. Serve hot with nan or paranthas.

