

Children's Center declares December mission: Spread as much Christmas joy as possible

WOLFEBORO — This December (and every December for that matter), The Children's Center in Wolfeboro has made it their official mission to spread as much Christmas Joy as possible to the children in their care. Creating traditions, holiday memories, and heartwarming moments monthlong is top priority and one the Center takes very seriously. Staff and board members alike strive to make the Christmas season a time of celebration full of laughs, friendship, and of course hot cocoa.

First on the Center's list of holiday

traditions for the children is the Wolfboro Festival of Trees hosted by The Wright Museum in Wolfboro. This charity benefit features more than sixty-five trees, uniquely decorated by area businesses and organizations and displayed at the museum. The Children's Center participates annually by decorating two trees with handmade ornaments crafted by the children in their individual classrooms. This year one of the trees was decorated by the Board of Directors to commemorate the Center's 45th birthday. The Center then organiz-

es field trips to the festival so that the children can see all the colorfully decorated trees including the tree with their very own ornaments.

Another December tradition at the Center is the annual reading of Chris Van Allsburg's "The Polar Express." All the children and staff are invited to wear their favorite pair of pajamas on this day. Everyone gathers in the Center's big community room while hot cocoa and cookies are served as morning snack. Once everyone settles in with their friends, one of the Center's most beloved

teachers, Bob Tuttle and lovingly known to the children as Bob-E-Bear, dons a Santa's cap as he reads the magical tale of a young boy on an extraordinary train ride to the North Pole. Children are snuggled and hands are held as everyone discovers that the wonder of life never fades for those who believe.

Christmas Eve is another time of creating holiday memories at the Center. Once again, the children dress in their favorite pajamas and join together to listen to a special reading of Clement Clark Moore's cherished holiday poem, "Twas The Night Before Christmas." Popcorn is popped and served as the children listen to one of the oldest and most treasured Christmas poems ever published.

While these school-wide events are part of the core that make Christmastime so special at the Center, some of the most meaningful and significant heartwarming moments happen in the children's respective classrooms. Jana Bush, coordinator for the pre-

school and school-age programs, reminisces about her previous years of teaching preschool. We had an open house event early one cold and snowy December. All families were invited to join us for dinner, decorating gingerbread houses and singing carols. I remember how much fun it was to watch families smile and laugh as they worked together to create a unique work of delicious art. It was a magical night when all seemed right in the world.

Tanya Mills, teacher for the Magic Moments Preschool program, fondly remembers making each of her classroom children a Christmas stocking out of fleece one Christmas. Bringing joy and seeing "the twinkle in the children's eyes during this magical time of year" is truly what it's all about as a teacher. This time of year can be too loud, too bright, and too fast sometimes. But amongst all the hustle and bustle the Children's Center remembers that Christmas Joy is silent. You don't hear it— you

feel it, you know it, you believe it. And the Center hopes to give the gift of Joy this December to all their little ones.

This year is the 45th anniversary of the opening of The Children's Center, which has been serving the needs of children from ages 6 weeks to 12 years old since 1974. Its mission is to enhance the well-being of families and the community by meeting the needs of children through comprehensive, affordable, high quality child and family services, and to collaborate with other agencies serving these needs. By working to provide each child and every family with the resources they need to thrive, The Children's Center remains a pillar in the community for past, present, and future generations.

To learn more about The Children's Center or how to support them in their pursuit to provide childcare services to the local community, visit The Center's website at thechildrenscenternh.org or call the Office at 569-1027.