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Paula Morrill retires from Children's Center

WOLFEBORO — Enter through the front door of The Children's Center building and walk straight forward into the upstairs hallway. Soon you'll discover the first classroom on the right and welcoming you will be a giant, friendly-looking, cardboard-cutout



(Left) Paula Morrill

brown bear. If it is autumn and apple-picking season, the bear will be donning a chef's hat with a freshly baked pie in his right paw and holding a basket of just-picked apples with his left. And if you look close enough, there will be a child's name tagged on each apple in the basket. If it is spring, the friendly bear will be holding a beautiful bouquet of flowers made from construction paper. Again, every flower will name a different child. As of recently, the bear has been wearing a mask over his bear nose and mouth while holding a sign that reads, "Spread love, not germs."

This brown bear is the official Gingerbears classroom mascot where Miss Paula Morrill has been the teacher since 1991. Once upon a time, Miss Paula's daughter, Maggie, was given a children's book

SEE MORRILL PAGE A18

MORRILL

FROM PAGE A1

named "The Gingerbears' First Christmas" which became the inspiration for the room name at The Children's Center in Wolfboro.

For decades now, "Miss Paula" has been a mentor for many of the Center's teachers and has touched the lives of countless children in her work. Along with her hallway Gingerbear, her room is also known for her beloved guinea pigs. She is also known for her creative weekly themes that inspire children daily. She is steadfast in her experience and has been known to zip past on a sled during winter play or be eye-level down on the floor with her three-year-olds investigating science. She runs her classroom by building community routine, yet always finds time to notice and encourage each child as an individual.

After announcing Morrill's retirement on the Center's Facebook page (facebook.com/thechildrenscenternh), it became very apparent just how far her love has reached within the community and how many lives she has touched. From current and alumni children and their families to current and former coworkers to family and friends alike, the messages of well wishes were endless.

Lindsey Kline,

mother of alumni children and former board member, writes, "Miss Paula is the best of the best! We love you and the Center is that much better for having your love and guidance help shape so many lives for so many years."

On Aug. 28, Miss Paula's last day of full-time employment at the Center, members of the board and staff came together to celebrate her. There were homemade cards and photo albums full of pictures and memories given to her. June Connors, Vice President of the Board of Directors, presented her with a round disc necklace inscribed with "The Children's Center" and a bear charm adornment. The day ended with a farewell drive-thru at the Center where children, families, and friends paraded by offering more homemade cards, flowers, well wishes, and many stopped to reminisce with Miss Paula about what an impact the Gingerbears classroom had on their lives.

Miss Paula has been an aide, teacher, and chief-caregiver since 1980 in the town of Wolfboro. When we asked her about one of her favorite memories, she said, "When a three-year-old asked me what I did for a living!" How sweet and innocent children can be but how telling of

Miss Paula and her passion for children. The more you love your job, the less it even looks like one.

Being an inspiration to many, we wondered what inspires Miss Paula.

Her answer was obvious: "The children. There is no one like a three-year-old! Everything is new and exciting, and they are so ready to learn!" The children inspiring Miss Paula and in turn Miss Paula inspiring the children is what we call full circle. And may it continue for generations to come.

For more information or to learn about The Children's Center, visit the Center's Web site at thechildrenscenternh.org or call the Office at 569-1027.

The Children's Center has been serving the needs of children from 6 weeks to 12 years old since 1974. Its mission is to enhance the well-being of families in our community by meeting their needs through comprehensive, affordable, high quality child care and early education, and to collaborate with other agencies serving the needs of children. 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.