

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Summer is finally here! Hands down, this is my favorite time of year... I love warm, sunny days! Some of my favorite memories of childhood summers were visiting my grandma in Colorado. My grandma worked as the secretary in an elementary school often working part of the summer. Frequently, she'd take my brother and me to school with her to "help" in the office. We loved it there. Because my grandma didn't like to drive we, walked everywhere with her. If it was too far to walk, we'd ride the bus. I remember getting cherry cokes at the drug store soda fountain, fishing at Sloan's Lake, trips to Elitch Garden Theme Park and, of course, trips to the mountains.

My grandma had a big yard and to my delight she had a vegetable garden and a rose garden. I loved to walk through the rows of roses smelling and picking them. We had a lot of fun preparing the fresh vegetables from her garden. The only thing I didn't really like was the Swiss chard, still not that crazy about it. Late in the afternoon, we'd make root beer floats and play games on the front porch. We seldom watched TV... there was too much else to do.

Many of the things we did were simple not expensive (we didn't have much money) and yet I have such great memories of those summers. I realize now why those summers were so special, not just because it was fun; it was also because we got to be with my grandma. We had her time and attention. She

took the time to be with us, we shared simple but meaningful experiences. Those summers created a special bond between my grandma and me, one that I will always cherish.

So, as you and your family enjoy summer, remember it isn't about what you do; it's about how available you are to each other. It's taking the time for each other, it is love and laughter shared together that creates memories that will last a life time.

I like to end each letter with a quote, something that ties the theme of the letter together. I didn't find anything that really worked, but I liked the one below, because it made me laugh. So here you go, what better way to usher in the summer than with a good laugh!

"A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken"

~James Dent

**Debbie Ham**  
Executive Director

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT - Innovative Services NW

### Innovative's Childcare Staff Increasing Their Professional Skills

Innovative Services NW Childcare is one of the few inclusive programs in Clark County that provides services to a significant number of children who are placed in the foster care system, are from low-income families, or are on Individualized Family Services Plans because of a developmental delay or diagnosed disability. Innovative's Childcare serves children, birth through age twelve, of all ability and income levels and, historically, 20% of the children enrolled in its childcare have special needs and 75% are from low income families. Many of the children served by Innovative's Childcare have been unsuccessful in other childcare settings due to their disability or behavioral concerns. It is part of the mission of Innovative Services NW to have the environment and staff to accommodate these children.

To address these challenges, Innovative's Childcare staff is receiving advanced training. Thanks to a Community Giving Funds Grant from The Community

Foundation for Southwest Washington, over the last year, teachers and teacher's assistants have received instruction based on a curriculum designed and provided by Master's and Doctoral level therapists and early educators from Innovative's Pediatric Therapy Program. They have also taken part in a number of trainings offered by the Washington Department of Early Learning's Quality Rating and Improvement (QRIS) program and attended a Positive Training and Responsive Care workshop co-taught by Michelle Mallory, Clark College Family Life and Early Childhood Education Instructor and Ella Fultz of QRIS.

In addition to these trainings, childcare staff are receiving supervision, consultation, and assistance in implementation in the classroom. Innovative Services NW is committed to ensure each child enrolled in services has access to and can participate fully in play and learning activities by providing appropriate individualized accommodations and supports.

## SPENDING TIME OUTDOORS WITH YOUR CHILD

*(reprinted from NAEYC)*

"Teaching children about the natural world should be seen as one of the most important events in their lives." Thomas Berry

With summer coming and the weather becoming more and more hospitable, it's time for us to get outside with children! We believe that almost anything children can do indoors can be an outdoor activity, too. Family time outdoors benefits children and parents.

### 1. Add a short walk to your evening routine

After dinner and dishes, hit the pavement. Look up at the stars, keep an ear out for sounds of the night, tell a story about when you were young, and listen while your child tells you about his or her day.

### 2. Plant, tend, and harvest flowers or vegetables

You can plant seeds or plants in a container (pot, window box, bucket or even a trash can) in your yard or a neighborhood garden plot. Your child will enjoy digging, weeding, and watching the plants flourish. You could grow salad-cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, and lettuce-or plant flowers that grow to different heights, like marigolds and sunflowers.

### 3. Enjoy all kinds of weather

Try to go outdoors, regardless of weather conditions. Plan short activities when it is very cold or hot; enjoy more outside time when the weather is fine. Children love walking in the rain; just be sure to wear waterproof boots and hooded raincoats. Layers are important on cold days-as you get warmer, you can take off a jacket, hat or mittens. In summertime be sure everyone wears a sun hat and sunscreen, and drinks plenty of water.

### 4. Play games

Share the games you played when you were a child, like hopscotch, jacks, Simon Says and charades. Play board games on a picnic table or blanket. Introduce skills children will use to play sports, such as kicking or dribbling a ball or hitting a foam ball back and forth using light rackets.

### 5. Enjoy the nature all around you

Whether they live on farms or in apartments, children need experiences in the natural world. Point out the nature all around you-new leaves on trees in the spring, bugs living under a rock or in a decaying tree stump, birds flying from bush to bush. Go berry or apple picking or visit a park, nature center or farmer's market. Bring along nature guides, paper, crayons, measuring tools, containers, a magnifying glass and binoculars so you can help your child become an enthusiastic nature investigator.

### For more information

**Website**  
NAEYC

### Books

Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv

The Nature Connection: An Outdoor Workbook for Kids, Families and Classrooms by Claire Walker Leslie

Sharing Nature with Children by Joseph Bharat Cornell

## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Children and teens can have fun and earn prizes while keeping their reading skills sharp with free summer reading programs at Fort Vancouver Regional Library District libraries and bookmobiles. The district's summer reading programs run June 1 through the end of August, with sign-ups beginning June 1 and ending August 15. All activities, events and prizes are free.

The 2012 theme for children's summer reading programs is "Dream Big -- READ!"

The 2012 theme for teens' summer reading program is "Own the Night"

Parents and caregivers can visit their local library to sign up their children from birth to age 11 for summer reading and receive a bookmark, a game board and a summer-fun calendar. Complete up to six game boards to exchange for prizes as well as for a chance to enter in a grand-prize drawing held at each library.

For teens 12-19 years old by August 31, the program offers a \$5 Barnes & Noble gift card for every 10 hours of reading recorded in a journal (limited to the first four journals), or entry into a drawing for a grand prize. The fifth and subsequent returned journals will all have a chance to enter into the grand-prize drawing.

**For more information** on events, rules and list of grand prizes, please visit the following pages:

Children's Summer Reading

Teen Summer Reading