



**Mt Lebanon
Extended Day
Administrative
Newsletter**

January 2024

ED Corner

Updates from Daryl Lucke, Executive Director

Happy New Year! I always love changing the calendar to a new year. It feels like a blank page; an opportunity for personal growth and development and setting new goals.

If your goal this year includes saving money, check out our benefit feature on our retirement plan. Remember that Fort Pitt Financial Group offers our employees free financial planning. This alone is a nice savings- getting financial advice for free.

The new year brought some changes to MLEDP as some staff made the decision to move on to new opportunities. We will miss Jamison Spinogatti, CD at Howe KC, Danielle Nuttridge, CD at Markham, and Ashley Seiler, CD at Lincoln- we wish them happiness and success in their new positions. Congratulations to Savannah Wilson who was promoted to CD at Markham. I appreciate all the efforts that staff are giving us to ensure consistency in programming and working additional hours while we recruit for vacancies.

Improving our communication is a new year agency goal. Whether it is within the center, with parents, with administration, or communication from the office. We will also be doing more frequent short staff surveys to access staff needs. Be on the look- out for the behavior survey within the next couple of days. Your responses will help us design the all-staff training on Feb. 19th to better meet staff needs.

Our center spotlight this month focuses on Washington's communication efforts and highlights their parent newsletter which may serve as a resource for other centers. Check it out for inspiration.

I appreciate each and every one of you and the dedication to our children and the agency.

Daryl,

Executive Director

Events



Survey Results

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our survey about staff activities. We heard from just over half of you! The results show the majority of you are interested in:

- In-person activities
- Events about once a quarter
- Team building activities and happy hours.

In addition, everyone loves the annual dinner and most of you feel that social events contribute to job satisfaction. We will use this info to help plan events in the future. Stay tuned!

January Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

Lisa Cushman 1/5

Jen Laux 1/13

Anniversaries

Jenna Stevey- 1/11 (1 year)

Debbie Molinari- 1/31 (13 years)

Janet Krajnak- 1/10 (12 years)



Birth Announcement!

Congrats to Chelsea, Center Director at Foster, on the birth of her daughter, Lily!



Congratulations!




Congrats to Katelynn Wanlielista on winning the first \$50 gift card! She won simply by posting in our Facebook group. It's a great way to share ideas and activities. Keep posting - we will draw the next winner at the staff training in February!

Join and Post in our Facebook Group!

Center Spotlight Washington Center

This month we spotlight, Center Director, **Peter Yohe** and the Washington team of **Courtney, Holly, John, Judy**. They do a phenomenal job at making communication a top priority for not only staff and children but parents as well. The Washington newsletter is a great example of how to share with parents the importance of what we do each day at the center while also highlighting specific programming successes. See example below.

Contact Us:
Washington: 412-344-6106 washington@mledp.org
MLEDP Main Office: 412-343-1661 kids@mledp.org



On Safari: Director's Note
As the year winds down, we take the time to reflect on all of the places and creatures that we have "seen" along our journey this year. From the savannas of Africa to the rainforests of South America, and the depths of the ocean, there are just so many amazing things in the world. It has been an absolute delight to see the looks on your children's faces when they see the things that each creature is capable of doing. Their curiosity is infectious and has led to many amazing discoveries already. We all look forward to continuing our journey and the wonders we'll see along the way. -Mr. Peter

Upcoming Safari Photo Ops:
Penguin
Polar Bear
Chameleon
Whales
Tapir
Tortoise
Monk Seal

Exploration:
As part of our mission to provide high quality programming, we have been discussing the traits of explorers that we can introduce and help to build with your children. The article below has inspired us and comes from modern day polar explorers. Our key concepts lately have been gratitude and kindness. We've worked on trying to instill these values in not just compliments and concerns but our everyday thoughts, words, and actions.
<https://shackleton.com/en-us/blogs/articles/explorer-qualities#~:text=Optimism%2C%20patience%2C%20idealism%20and%20courage,relates%20to%20modern%20day%20exploration.>

Washington MLEDP Staff
Center Director: Mr. Peter
AM: Ms. Judy
AM/PM: Ms. Courtney, Mr. John
PM: Ms. Holly

It is vital that you inform MLEDP staff and your child's teacher if your child's schedule should change for any reason. If your child will not be attending please leave a note in our parent area, call us at 412-344-6106 or email us at washington@mledp.org

Attention: PARKING!
The school has asked us to remind everyone not to park in the teacher lots next to Washington and Mellom during our morning hours and before 4:00PM. Parking is available on the street behind the school Roseclawn. You can park and then walk down the ramp to our door. We appreciate your consideration for their needs and concern. Thank you!

Crayon Painting
Crayons, Watercolors, Brushes
Activity courtesy of Mr. John.
Using famous Hawaiian artist, Jeffrey Robert as inspiration, you can create your own masterpieces with crayons and watercolors! Mr. Robert only uses Crayola Crayons in his works but here we adapt to whatever crayon medium is available. Draw your picture with thorough thick crayon lines and then paint over top with water colors. The wax of the crayon will keep the water from seeping in where you've done your lines!

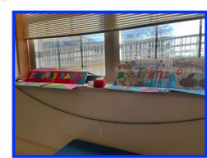
Washington Post Office
As part of our service learning project, we have opened a post office at the center. We will be writing letters to communicate with the other centers at MLEDP. In addition we are hoping to use this as part of our yearly service learning project. We are going to write to our current service members, and have placed a request with the Peace Corps to connect with a volunteer as well. All of this participation is optional, please let us know if you would prefer that your child or children not participate in these activities or exchanges.

Native American Heritage Month
November was Native American Heritage Month we encouraged students to engage with our biography cards highlighting famous Indigenous people, books featuring the cultures of various Indigenous tribes, and activities related to the tribes that lived near some of our animal photo ops!

National Pizza Month
October was National Pizza Month, celebrating one of America's favorite foods. Our favorite toppings at Washington: Cheese, Pepperoni, and (controversially) Pineapple.
Some interesting toppings from around the world:
Japan: Eel
Costa Rica: Coconut
China: Thousand Island Dressing
Germany: Egg
Australia: Shrimp

Kindness Olympics
For the month of December we are running our annual Kindness Olympics to encourage our "We before me" mindset. We look forward to updating you on the results!

National Gratitude Month:
November was National Gratitude Month, and we turned our humble birch tree into a gratitude one. Each leaf filled with some things we are grateful for.
The important:
Friends, Family, Pets, and Life.
The Clever:
Books, Fun, the World
The Hungry:
Tacos, Cookies, Pizza, Turkey



Manatee Week
Our students started writing and illustrating their own picture book concept with Ms. Courtney during our Manatee week. The story centered around a young manatee. The artwork at the right was done by Mimi H.



Manatee Week
Mr. John's collaborative Miami Street Mural project introduced the medium of oil pastels and has really brightened up our space!

Our stops on safari in the American rainforests to see poison dart frogs and Asian jungles to visit the fearsome tiger created the right environment for some inspired poetry! Paint swatches for poison dart frogs and paw prints for tigers inspired these creations.

Notes on Deep Blue by Ben S.
Wave
Blue-like Turtle
Alligator
Minecraft
Poison Dart Frog
Sea Star
River

Notes on Gray by Alia U.
Thunderstorm
Koala
Stone
Ghost
Miel
Rain
Clouds

Notes on Pink by Nina H.
Setting Sky
Flowers
Sweaters
Salmon
Bath Bomb
Fall Leaves
Pink Monkey

There was a cat
He was very old
and very bold and very cold
by Norri B.

Notes on Light Green by Patton
Clovers
Spearmint
Cucumber
Pickle
Turtle
Pine Tree

Notes on Green by Claire H.
Very White Green Moon
Eye Shadow
Mushroom
Swamp
Frog
Grass

Notes on Orange
by De-Jan
Redheadz
Garfield
Oranges
Oranges
A Cartoon Tent
Stars
Candle Light
Lemons

Notes on Purple by Abby K.
Snow
Book
Flowers
Flower Pots
Bath Bombs
Blankets
Pillows

Trying
Interesting
Grateful
Exotic
Rolling
by Olivia P.

To the Right: During Pueo (Hawaiian short-eared owl) week, shipwreck sensory jars were concocted.



Above: Using magnets, popsicle sticks, and paint some awesome tigers were created.



To the Left: A pirate treasure chest crafted during manatee week was created using found materials and restaurant take home containers

Staff Spotlight: Ms. Holly

Since joining our team at the end of last school year, Ms. Holly has gotten to know the kids and our program quite well. She has taken great care to plan interesting and engaging activities, a sample of which can be found to the left. Her even keel and dedication have been wonderful to have this year at MLEDP. We hope you have enjoyed seeing some of these projects make it home!

Big Kids Programming:

We know that for a lot of our big kids this could be their last go around with MLEDP. Therefore, we are highly encouraging them to let us know what it is they want to do before they graduate to middle school, move, or have other life changes. We want them to be able to enjoy their time here as much as possible!

Open Communication: We encourage all families to communicate with us on an ongoing basis. While many MLEDP staff come in contact with your child throughout the day, we are all happy to answer any questions you may have or put you in contact with the staff person most suited to address your concerns. You can also email us at washington@mlcdp.org

Upcoming Dates to Remember:
December 22nd: MLEDP Closed
January 2nd: MLEDP Reopens; Long Day Sign Ups out
January 15th: Long Day @ Hoover
January 22nd: Long Day @ Hoover
Save the Date! March 4-8th: MLEDP Family Week



washington-newsletter

↓ download

Benefit Spotlight



Retirement Plan

Do you have a New Year's Resolution to save money?

MLEDP's 401(k) Plan can help.

Taking advantage of this benefit comes with several perks. First of all, it is like giving your future self a high-five because you're setting yourself up for a more comfortable retirement. Plus, the contributions you make are tax-deferred, so you can save some money on your taxes now.

The agency offers a “cherry on top” by matching your contributions 100% on the first 3% of salary deferral- essentially giving you free money. And, let’s not forget the power of compound interest- your money can grow over time, making you feel like a financial wizard! Another generous aspect of the plan is that staff are fully vested after 3 years of employment (33.3% after one year and 66.7% after two years).

Eligible employees are automatically enrolled in the plan at a 1% contribution rate. Staff have their own retirement portal on the 401(k) website- my.vanguardplan.com. Here you can change your contributions, elect email notices, and participate in educational videos and blogs. On your portal, go to the Wellness Center to visit the online education library. Questions can be asked at 866-794-2145, M-F 8:00am-8:00pm.

Staff are also offered the benefit of FREE financial advice from our partners at Fort Pitt Capital- an investment management firm focusing on creating customized investment strategies for their customers. They can be reached at RPS@fortpittcapital.com or 412-921-1822.

Reminders



January Pay Periods:

The 1/12 pay covers hours worked from 12/11-12/31.

The 1/31 pay covers hours worked 1/1- 1/14

Long Days

Jan 15th and Jan 22nd are long days for the agency. Please make note of your schedule for the day.

Periodic Reviews

DHS requires parents to review their child's file every 6 months. For MLEDP that occurs in January- February. Bethany will inform parents to review the information and make any changes they want to make. The centers will receive a printout from each family that the review has been completed. You will also receive an updated copy of the child's file if changes were made. Both copies should go in the child's file. If changes were made to the emergency card, replace with the new version and shred the old.