

# Silks Farm Nursery School

*Setting the standards by which other nurseries follow!*

## NURSERY MATTERS

3rd Edition, Spring 2005

### Introduction

Aside from our regular topics, this edition of *Nursery Matters* covers the nursery's fund raising activities for Comic Relief and details of the launch of our new website. In addition, we have summarised the ways in which parents and carers can poten-

tially reduce their nursery costs through participation of some of the main government childcare schemes including Tax Credits. We believe that a majority of you could potentially save a significant amount of money!

### Events and Activities

Since our last newsletter, Silks Farm Nursery School has had a tremendous amount of success in raising a substantial amount of money for Comic Relief through a number of events, involving the staff, parents and children. These events included:

#### **Guess the number of sweets in the jar**

The winner of this draw held on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March was Ellessia Orfeo, who guessed the nearest with 299 sweets. The actual number was 295. Ellessia went away very happy claiming her jar of sweets.

#### **Guess teddy's name**

The winner of this draw was Alexandra Powell who guessed Barnaby as the teddy's correct name. Alexandra Pow-

ell's (William's sister) face lit up when she was presented with the large teddy.

#### **March '05 - Hamper draw**

Three large hampers were donated by staff and parents. The winners of these hampers were Simon Adams, Dounia Turner and Sarah Boon. Let's hope none of these people are on a diet!

#### **Early Years children's sponsored dance**

The aim was for the children to dance non-stop for 10 minutes. Each of the children took home sponsor forms as part of the nursery's campaign for raising money for charity. The support for this event from parents and friends has been tremendous, with

#### **In this issue.**

- New website launched.
- Fund raising events a great success!
- Ways to reduce the cost of childcare.
- £2,000 invested in educational mats.

## Events and Activities

almost £300 raised so far. A special thanks must go to the supporters of Anna Baird, for raising £104 to-date. Well done and thank you to everyone who took part and supported this event.

### Colour the red nose competition

At the end of February, the children of all ages were given a sheet of paper with a nose printed on it. Their task was to decorate this nose at home and bring it into the nursery for display. There were five categories for the nose displays. These were Baby and Toddler Rooms, Little Nursery, Big Nursery, Early Years Room and the 'Star Prize'. A representative from The Hunts Post judged the event and the following category winners were chosen:

Baby & Toddler - William Everest  
 Little Nursery - Tegan Turner  
 Big Nursery - Thomas Gammon  
 Early Years - Kira Chantler  
 Star Prize - Sophie Handscombe

All the winners received a 'goodie bag', and the winner of the 'Star Prize' received a large soft cuddly toy dog.

### 'Mad Hair Day'

'Mad Hair Day' was held on Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> March.

Staff and children alike attend nursery adorning the wackiest hairdo, and gave donations ranging from 50p to £2. This was a fun day and everyone who took part thoroughly enjoyed it.

### Cake stall

On Wednesday and Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> March, staff and parents brought in cakes which were displayed in the reception. Even some of the children had a hand at home in baking some of these yummys. By midday Thursday all the cakes had been sold - they must have been good!

### So how much did we raise?

So far, with the help of staff, parents, carers, friends and the children, we have raised almost £500 for Comic Relief. On behalf of everyone at Silks Farm Nursery School, a big thank you.

### French Times

Next term's 'French Times' programme for the 3+ year age groups runs for 10 weeks, starting on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> April and finishing on the 6<sup>th</sup> July, but will exclude 1<sup>st</sup> June (half term period). The fee rate will remain the same at £26.00 for the 10-week term. This programme is proving to be extremely popular, so please reserve your child's place as quickly as possible to avoid any disappointment.

## Nursery Developments

### Premises refurbishment

The internal refurbishment of the nursery is well underway with the completion of most of the children's rooms. The refurbishment of the main toilet area is now a high priority and we envisage commencing with this project in the next few months.

### Significant investment in educational mats.

Silks Farm Nursery School has invested in the

region of £2,000 in quality educational rugs, which were flown over from America. You will find these rugs located in the Toddler Room, Little Nursery, Big Nursery and Early Years rooms.

### New website - [www.silksfarm.co.uk](http://www.silksfarm.co.uk)

Launched on the 28<sup>th</sup> February, some of you may be aware that we are now 'on-line'. With a comprehensive child related resource information source, visiting this website is a must for people with young chil-

*Fund raising for Comic Relief was a great success.*

*Silks Farm Nursery School website launched!*

## Nursery Developments (continued)

dren. Our website provides parents/carers with up-to-date information on an array of topics, including 'information feeds' on child related matters from the national press, tips on parenting for new parents, comprehensive health files, details about product recalls and much more.

Our ask the doctor service is unique. By registering on our website, parent/carers can e-mail questions to the award winning health writer Dr Sarah Brewer, who will endeavour to respond within 3 days. This service is not designed to offer diagnosis of a child's symptoms, but to provide advice and guidance to help you deal with a particular issue.

Originally trained as a GP she now works in hospital medicine. She has a vast amount of experience in the field of paediatrics and child development, and has written over 25 books on health and child related topics. She writes regularly for a variety of publications, including The Daily Telegraph, Daily Record and Prima magazine.

She is the author of 'A Child's World', which accompanied the major Channel 4 television series on how children's minds develop and how they learn how to think. In addition, she has recently won the 'Health Journalist of the Year' award from the Healthcare Financial Management Association.

## Tax Matters

### Childcare Vouchers - savings on nursery fees has just got better!

As from 6<sup>th</sup> April '05 each parent/legal guardian can receive childcare vouchers (under 'salary sacrifice' arrangements), which are non-taxable and exempt from National Insurance up to £50 per week (equates to a maximum of £217 per month). Both parents/legal guardians are entitled to take advantage of this saving providing that each parent/legal guardian has entered into a childcare voucher arrangement with his or her own employer on a separate basis. Families with two working parents paying the higher rate of tax will be able to save up to £2,134 per year. So for example, the fees for a three year old child attending Silks Farm Nursery School on a full time basis could be as little as £248\*, equating to a massive savings of £317 per month!

*Full time childcare for as little as £248\*.*

*\* Calculation based upon our interpretation of the rules and the following:*

- (i) Assumes both parents are working and earn in excess of £34,000 per annum each.*
- (ii) Their child is eligible to receive the early years educational grant, which currently equates to £138.67 per month.*

Why not pursue this matter further and ask your employer about Childcare Vouchers? If your em-

ployer does not currently run a scheme, Silks Farm Nursery School will be pleased to provide you with details of scheme operators.

### Confused by Tax Credits? A simple explanation.

Separate to Childcare Vouchers, parents/legal guardians may be entitled to receive benefit payments (subject to earnings) from the Inland Revenue, for Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.

Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit support families with children and working people on lower incomes. Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit do not affect Child Benefit payments, which are paid separately.

### Child Tax Credit

Child Tax Credit supports families with children, and 16 to 18 year olds in full-time education (up to and including 'A' levels, NVQ level 3 or equivalent). The benefit is calculated based upon household income. You do not have to be working to claim Child Tax Credit.

### Working Tax Credit

Working Tax Credit supports working people

## Tax Matters (Continued)

(employed or self-employed) on low income by topping up earnings. It has several elements, and the amount paid will be based upon your circumstances. There are extra amounts for:

- working at least 20 hours a week,
- working people who have a disability, and
- the costs of 'registered' or 'approved' childcare, known as the 'childcare element'.

If you are responsible for a child or young person,

you can claim Working Tax Credit if you are aged 16 or over and work at least 16 hours a week.

*Did you know that, depending upon your circumstances, you could claim up to 70% of your childcare costs?*

For more information call the Tax Credit Help Line on Tel: 0845 300 3900.

Useful Inland Revenue publications include Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit guides WTC5 & WTC6.

## Staff Matters

### Supporting childcare students

Working in conjunction with Huntingdon Regional College, Silks Farm Nursery School is assisting Kimberly Jones with her Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education, by supporting her with a work experience place.

### Training

Stephanie Ball has been working very hard on her NVQ 2 in Early Years and Education, and hopes this will be completed by May '05. We wish her the best of luck.

Katie Wade has now finished her NVQ 2 in Early Years and Education, and is enthusiastic about embarking on her NVQ 3 in the very near future. Keep up the good work!

### Recent promotions & movers

Congratulations to Vickie Mayes who will be taking over as Early Years Room Teacher from April. Vickie is relishing her new challenge and with a BA in Early Childhood Studies, is more than qualified for this post teaching our pre-schoolers.

Sarah Boon has moved from the Baby Room to Little Nursery, she welcomes the change of working with a different age group.

### Starters

Sarah Sole joins the nursery on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May. She

has 8 years experience of working with children. She holds both an NVQ 2 & 3 in Childcare and Education, a First Aid and Child Protection certificate, and is qualified as a SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator).

Jennifer Edwards who holds an NVQ 2 in Childcare & Education joined the nursery a few months ago and is based in the Toddler Room.

We wish both Sarah and Jennifer well with their new posts and hope they will enjoy being part of the 'Silks Farm' team.

### Leavers

Caroline Brogan left the nursery on the 25<sup>th</sup> February to look after a very ill family member. Caroline says she will miss everyone at the nursery - both staff and children alike, and hope to be able to return sometime in the future.

After being at Silks Farm Nursery School for over 2 years, Gemma McAllister is looking forward to joining the NHS. 'Although I really enjoy working at Silks Farm, I feel that working for the NHS will be a good career move for me'.

**Don't forget to visit  
[www.silksfarm.co.uk](http://www.silksfarm.co.uk)  
A must for parents!**

## Final Notes

### Thanks!

Since our last newsletter we have many people to thank for their generous contributions made to the nursery. In no particular order, we would like to thank the following:

Sam Lenton's granddad for the donation of toys and crib,  
 Matthew Dack for the highchair,  
 Penny Orfeo for the Bissell,  
 Steve Ellis for the scrap paper,  
 Mr & Mrs Edgar & Mr & Mrs Handscombe for the large selection of toys for the Baby Room,  
 Steve Dighton for the coloured card,  
 and for all those people who donated blankets and cot sheets.

### 'Begging Corner'

Debbie Spenceley and team from Baby Room would be grateful for any unwanted/spare tee-shirts, trousers or shorts which would suit age group between 9 - 12 months.

Toddler Room and Little Nursery requests books and blankets, so if you believe you can help, please see either Tanya Young or Janice Merritt.

Finally, Big Nursery is currently on the look out for dressing up items including bags, wigs and masks. The children love getting dressed in different outfits.

The 'Treasure Basket' has proved to be a resounding success since it was introduced a few months ago. The children enjoy exploring and playing with an array of different items - so please keep on

bringing in your goodies. Big Nursery will advise you what is needed.

Is there anyone out there who can donate some of their time to help fix our poorly Canon photocopier? Your help would really be appreciated. Please see Selina in the office.

### Advance invoices — important note

For those parents who still pay in arrears, we would like to remind you that 'advance invoicing' will commence from 1<sup>st</sup> July. For those of you that would like to discuss this matter further, please see Selina.

### Sainsbury's and Tesco vouchers

If you do not have any other need for these vouchers, please collect them for us. The Tesco vouchers help towards the cost of computer equipment, whereas vouchers from Sainsbury's may be used towards the purchase of outdoor sports equipment.

### Polite note to parents/carers

As the building is now beginning to looking good due to the refurbishment programme, we kindly request that all parents/carers remove their shoes in the Reception Area prior to entering the nursery. We would like to keep the building as clean as possible, minimising the amount of dirt and germs spread around the children's rooms. We are sure that you will all agree that this is a good idea, and thank you for your co-operation.



St. Ives Road, Somersham  
 Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 3ET  
 Tel: 01487 843525