



VICCC

# The Messenger

Bringing the Community Together

Businesses • Donors • Faith Communities • Families • Teachers • Volunteers

Valley Interfaith Child Care Center • P.O. Box 926, Blacksburg, VA 24063

www.valleyinterfaithchildcarecenter.org

Summer 2009

## Board of Directors

Cathy Jacobs, Chair  
Jeremy Hart, Vice Chair  
Rochelle, Secretary  
Andrew Stanaland, Treasurer  
Jeanne Roper  
H. Gregory Campbell, Jr.  
Elizabeth Foster  
David Roper  
Ina Dunford  
Natalie Hart  
Mary Holliman  
Rhoda Myers

## Staff, Summer 2009

### Acting Executive Director

Shlomo Alkaher

### Site Director

Carrie Clapper

### Teachers

Donna Tabor  
Jerin Hendricks  
Shuzhen Wang

### Center Aide

Valerie Crowder

### Teacher's Aides

Andrew Huehn  
Natalie Aguirre  
Kimberly Fickes

### Professional Development

Cosby Rogers  
Karen Myers  
Janet Sawyers

### Volunteer Coordinator

Pat Boyle

### Community Advisors

Darrell Bosch  
Marie & Joe Paget, DDS  
T.O. Williams  
Connie Cummings  
Brenda Roberts

## VICCC Center Undergoes Major Changes

A new site director, new staff members, and an acting executive director to replace Katy St. Marie — these are the changes affecting the Valley Interfaith Child Care Center this spring. But VICCC's mission and our dedication to safe high-quality, affordable, educational, and nurturing care for very young children (ages 0-4) of income-eligible working families in the New River Valley has not changed and will not change. This issue of the newsletter focuses not on donors but on staff at the center.

During my recent visit, just after noon, most of the children were sound asleep, bedded down on mats, covered by blankets, undisturbed by the quiet movements and conversations of staff and visitors.

### "Old-timers" on VICCC's Staff —

The staff member with the longest service record at VICCC — three years — is **Shuzhen Wang**, the teacher in the Purple Room. With her husband and children, Shuzhen moved to the States from Shandong province, China, several years ago. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Yantai Normal University, where she majored in English literature. Before the move she taught college English for 11 years. Shuzhen's husband was a visiting scholar in chemistry at Virginia Tech; her children are Brittany, a junior at Blacksburg High, Ashley, and Jacob, who attend Gilbert Linkous. Shuzhen's hobbies include cooking and baking, reading about health issues, and movies. She is currently studying Practical Nursing at Radford High School.

**Donna Tabor**, a graduate of Blacksburg High School, where she took the Early Childhood education option for three years, is the teacher in the Yellow (Duck) Room, for the two-year-olds. She particularly enjoys doing art projects with the children (see photo) and hopes to go on to college in the early childhood education field. She says her kids "love being outside — anything to get dirty!" Even her hobby — baby-sitting — fits her job.

The aide in the Yellow Room is **Andrew Huehn**, also a graduate of Blacksburg High School and its Early Childhood option. Andrew is a student in English at Virginia Tech, having transferred from William and Mary. He says the atmosphere at VICCC is very different from that in the classroom at BHS, where Miss Putney

### A Message from Katy St. Marie

Every year about this time, people of all ages are graduating and moving on to new things. There is something about spring that insists on growth, regeneration, new life. The sap rises, the buds swell, the leaves curl out. Hibernating animals stir, and the sun spends more time warming the earth. All of nature echoes the cycles of life and death. Our lives resonate with endings that lead to new beginnings.

My time as Executive Director of VICCC has come to an end. The 1st of June marked the last official day of my tenure, and I have been acting as a consultant for the smooth transition of leadership. A lot has happened since VICCC signed up the first child in November 2004. In the time since I began in late 2004, oh, I have loved the children in our care. I have been grateful to the parents for sharing their children and this special time in their lives. I have been humbled by the

See VICCC's Staff, page 3

see Message, page 3



## Car Wash Provides Fun and Funds for VICCC

On Saturday June 6 VICCC staff along with Karen Gallagher and her family organized the car-washing teams that left some Blacksburg vehicles bright and shiny, and provided funds for VICCC's classrooms.

## Dear VICCC Friends:

For the past month I have been serving as Acting Executive Director of VICCC. This transition period has not been simple for the organization or for me. It has been a challenge.

The light I see in VICCC is the wonderful, dedicated staff we have been blessed with and our great children in the center. Carrie has stepped to her new position with good intention and willingness to succeed. The staff is doing its best for the children and for VICCC's success. The staff also initiated and implemented a fundraising event, a Car Wash and Bake Sale; all donations will go to purchase classroom supplies. I thank all the staff for this wonderful event, and also Karen Gallagher who came with her children to participate.

I am so happy that I had the chance to work with Katy the past 7 months. I came to VICCC as a volunteer last fall. After I met Katy, with her endless energy for the importance of the mission, I felt that she would be a great person to work with. I think that Katy did a great job in managing this important "Ship" and in exposing the important mission to encourage others to join.

I am thankful for the opportunity of working with Katy and, most important, to become her friend.

I wish Katy the best in her new way.

— Shlomo Alkaher

## Message from Katy, from page 1

amount of money that has gone into this program from the pocketbooks of so many. I have been in awe of the stamina and wisdom of the teachers and staff who I call the VICCC front line. They are the ones who show up every day and give the children all they've got. I have admired the vision of the Town of Blacksburg and the faith communities and individuals who have supported this project with dollars and space and skills and time.

Every day is a chance to begin anew. There are opportunities to plant, to nurture, and to reap. Every child represents a chance for the human race to do a better job of safety, loving, and learning. We have the opportunity now to plant the seeds of love, curiosity, meaning, and self worth in each small person. It's not easy work, but the investment in these early years will feed us all in due season.

Thank you to the wonderful staff, the tireless board of directors, and all the donors and volunteers who have worked side by side with me to make a healthy and happy place for the parents to proudly and confidently place their children for the hours they must work. VICCC helps children of low-income, working families get a Smart Beginning, a safe start, a chance to be successful in school and life, and an opportunity to practice positive social-emotional behavior while their parents are struggling to make ends meet. Please know that supporting this work is like watering your own garden. Every child will impact our lives in some way.

Let's put an end to children who are not ready for school and continue the beginning to a safer, saner future for us all. — Joy, Katy Irene St. Marie

### VICCC's Wish List

- Diapers and Wipes
- Baby Food
- Laptop
- Projector

DONATIONS to  
**Valley Interfaith  
Child Care Center**  
may be mailed to  
P.O. Box 926  
Blacksburg, VA 24063

VICCC's phone number: **540-558-8652**

**email address:** viccc2@verizon.net

Published by Valley Interfaith Child Care Center (VICCC)

Website: <www.valleyinterfaithchildcarecenter.org> • Phone: 540-558-8652

Editor: Mary Holliman • <mchollim@vt.edu>

# VICCC's Staff, 2009, from page 1



*Left: Infants and staff in the Blue Room.  
Right: Student art work in the Yellow Room.  
Lower right: playground during naptime.*



ruled and there were as many students as children to be cared for. Andrew's hobbies include playing the guitar with a group called Clockwork, books, movies, and soccer.

**Jerin Hendrick** is the teacher in the Green Room, for the 3-5 year olds. Christiansburg is her home town, though she graduated from Radford High School. She completed her Associate in Arts and Sciences degree with a major in education at New River Community College just this spring, and is continuing her studies on-line at Ashford University, Iowa. She has a one-year-old son, Jaden. Jerin's hobby is dance, especially ballet. She has performed at her church, First Baptist in Radford.

## New Staff in 2009

Site Director **Carrie Clapper** received her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Radford University in December 2008, and started working at VICCC the next month. A graduate of Gar-Field High School in northern Virginia, she says, "I always knew I wanted to work with children" — partly thanks to her nine nieces and nephews! Carrie's hobbies are cooking, especially trying new recipes, and walking and running with her two Dobermans.

The teachers' aide in the Green Room since January has been **Elisa (Natalie) Aguirre**, a graduate of Blacksburg High School, where she took Cosmetology. "Working here has

helped me think about my child's future," she says. Her son Michael Rooker, born last November, is in VICCC's Blue Room. She's taking classes before and after work hours, to become certified as an early childhood teacher. Her hobbies are hiking, fishing, and reading.

**Kimberly Fickes**, the teacher in the Blue Room (infants), moved to Blacksburg last August from Abilene, Texas. Her husband is in the military, and works with ROTC cadets at Virginia Tech. She worked at her mother's daycare in Abilene for four years, has completed a community college Child Development program, and is taking courses to become certified as an elementary school teacher. Her hobbies are scrapbooking and photography, and she's expecting her first child in February of next year.

Acting Executive Director **Shlomo Alkaher** worked at the VICCC center as a volunteer for several months, and in February began working as Katy St. Marie's assistant. Shlomo is from Israel, and is in Blacksburg with his family while his wife Iris works as a post-doctoral researcher in science education at Virginia Tech. Their three children have been attending Blacksburg schools: the twins will attend Blacksburg

Middle School in the fall, and the daughter is attending Blacksburg High School. Shlomo has degrees in economics and business; he worked in Israel as a CFO in a village of 200 special-needs adults, as a CEO in a small company, and as an inspector for cities with financial problems. Shlomo's hobbies are singing and playing the guitar, folk dancing, and reading.

The Center Aide is **Valerie Crowder**, who attended Blacksburg High, as did her parents and three brothers, and New River Community College. As Center Aid, Valerie prepares breakfast, lunch, and the afternoon snack, does the laundry, and general clean-up of the Center. As cook, she has to be aware of the children's allergies and other dietary requirements. Valerie's four children range in age from 20 to 3, and her hobbies are activities with the children, including camping, fishing, bowling, skating, and trips to the library.



---

## VICCC joins Head Start in EHS proposal

The VICCC board has approved our involvement in a proposal to provide the Early Head Start program for Montgomery and Giles counties.



Valley Interfaith Child Care Center  
 P. O. Box 926  
 Blacksburg, VA 24063

Prsrt. Std.  
 Non-Profit  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 Blacksburg, VA  
 Permit No. 310

## Partial List of Donors, Summer 2009

Theodore & Beatrice Ake	Ira & Irene Jacobs
Frank & Marjorie Akers	Beatrice Kalka
Phyllis Albritton	Carolyn Kroehler
Bruce & Elizabeth Allen	George Lally
Connie & Bruce Anderson	Lois & Jim Lang
Susan Anderson	Roberta & James Littlefield
Antoine J. Asselin	Richard & Cynthia Luke
Robert & Geessiena Beckman	Sara Mackie
Blacksburg Baptist Church	Paula T. Markham
Endowment	Margaret Michelsen
Blacksburg Church Women	Donald & June Mullins
United	Mary & David Nickerson
Blacksburg Jewish	Northside Presbyterian
Community Center	Church
Blacksburg Newcomers Club	Elizabeth Obenshain
Blacksburg Presbyterian	Jane Parker
Church	Cliff & Katherine Ragsdale
Blacksburg Presbyterian	Kerry & Barbara Redican
Women of the Church	Minnis Ridenour
Marvin Blecher	Rochelle
Barbara Boyd	Dave & Jeanne Roper
Christy Brown	Suzanne Sanford
Christ Episcopal Church	Abby J. & Charles Satchwell
Christiansburg Presbyterian	Josephine & James Shotts
Church	David Simmons
V. J. Cilimberg, Jr.	Judith & Arthur Snoko
Virginia Cox	Ini & Bob Stalcup
Billy & Neil Crawford	Forrest & Jannie Stanaland
"Jebbie" Crowe	Daisy Stewart
Benjamin & Carolyn Dixon	Shirley Summers
Frank L. Dupont	Kenneth & Roseann Szmagaj
Elizabeth Foster	R. Tamminen
Judith Milne Furr	Dorothea & Paul Torgersen
Joan M. Gallagher	United Universalist
Jeffrey & Sara Glesner	Congregation
Ina & Brian Graves	United Way of Montgomery,
Therese Grimes	Radford, & Floyd
William & Mary Lee	Sarah Windes & J. D. Stahl
Hendricks	
Daniel Holliman	
Mary & Charles Houska	
Sara Hummel	

## VICCC Named Best Overall Unit in Parade

A trophy for "Best Overall Unit" was presented to VICCC in the Blacksburg Fourth of July Parade, 2009. Exemplifying the parade title of "Great American Heroes", VICCC Board members created a float illustrating the idea that our American heroes were children once, and that VICCC is nurturing future American heroes. The creators designed images of children holding up signs naming famous American heroes including Rosa Parks, Benjamin Franklin, Arthur Ashe, Aaron Copeland, and Abe Lincoln..

### Recent Special Gifts to VICCC

#### In Honor of Mother

Mary Jean Brown — Christy Brown  
 Mrs. Robert L. Page — Virginia Cox

#### In Memory of Mother

Fanny Houtz — Judith and Arthur Snoko  
 Josephine D. Obenshain — Elizabeth Obenshain  
 Roberta Osborn — Rochelle

#### In Honor of Parents

Billy and Darlene Windes — Sara Windes and  
 J.D. Stahl

#### In Memory of Parents

Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Ake — Theodore and  
 Beatrice Ake  
 Edgar and Vivian Bloom and Daniel Holliman  
 Max and Irma Everett — Jane Parker

#### In Honor or Memory of Fathers and Mothers

Bruce and Connie Anderson  
 Mr. and Mrs. Harry Ruhf  
 Christine Wintersdorff

### VICCC's Vision:

Safety, Love, and Learning for the Very Young Children of Working Families