

Ossining Children's Center



OCC is 125 Years Old in 2020

Our hearts are young, but our philosophy is deeply rooted and well-practiced: empowered children are enthusiastic and confident learners and early childhood is the time to invest in people. With hands-on discovery, a focus on children and families, whole child education, and by engaging within the Westchester community, OCC's loving environment is dedicated to enhancing capabilities and opportunities over the lifetimes of our little learners.

The Spring Gala



A special thank you to those who contributed to the success of our Spring Gala themed "Our Children, Our Future" on May 19, 2019. The event raised over \$150,000 for child care scholarships.

Picture here is Howard Milbert, Executive Director, flanked by our honorees: Susan Midgley Komosa and Jasmine Bar.

These scholarships will assist many hardworking OCC families by easing the burden of child care costs.



OCC expands affordable child care for Ossining working families by 30 percent, celebrated at the July 24th, 2019 groundbreaking ceremony for the Rebecca and Arthur Samberg Building at 32 State Street.

Capital Campaign Update

Can you believe that OCC is now entering its 125th year? Amazing! Driven by the mission that was established then, we continue to create the foundations for learning, achievement, and the social and emotional well-being of our future community leaders. On the first week of October, we began construction of the **physical** foundation of our new building which, hopefully, will support our youngsters for the next 100+ years! We were able to reach this unbelievable milestone because of YOU and your incredible support. Because of you, and your love and support of our community, we have been able to raise \$14 million towards our goal of \$17.8 million. We are so close to our goal and hope that you can help us get there. Please donate to our Capital Campaign and make it happen!

Thank you so much.

Marilyn Wishnie

Capital Campaign Chair and OCC Board of Directors



Regeneron Volunteers Teach STEM at OCC



Thank you, Regeneron, for your responsible citizenship and for bringing your experience into the OCC classroom. In this amazing day of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), our neighbors took time out of their busy days to give back to their community and teach our children.

It felt like a day at the science and math museum without leaving our school. Activities included *Will it float or sink?* Students constructed boats and learned about how to make predictions and expect outcomes. Please come back and do it again. We would love to have you!



No Small Matter

Jacob Burns Film Center partnered with OCC for a screening and post-film discussion with leaders in child development.



The *No Small Matter* documentary makes an excellent case for bipartisan support of early childhood education. It examines the costs of *not* investing through the inspiring, real-life stories of teachers, parents and an unlikely candidate for school principal, who shares how early education broke the generations-long poverty in his family. The film offers interesting perspectives on the importance of early childhood education.

It's Important to PLAY

By Terry Becker, MSW, Dir. of Children's Services



This sweet moment of play characterizes the environment OCC students experience every day in our care. When we think about play, we understand that such activity engenders

simple joy. Now, we know through neuroscientific and clinical research, that child-driven play promotes brain development that is optimal for learning, for social and emotional growth, and for fine and gross motor development.

When children can immerse themselves in free play, important cognitive skills, like thinking and problem-solving, are developing. In group play, they learn such social skills like sharing, negotiating, and resolving conflict. Brain activity during play promotes a child's ability to manage strong emotions. All the while, the child's small and large muscles are gaining strength and dexterity. At OCC, we make sure that the many aspects of each child's development are flowering under our care. What could be more important than that?

OCC Means Family



“OCC means family” says Pamela Cabreja, OCC parent and long-time teaching assistant. Pam first came to OCC eleven years ago as a student teacher from our education partnership with the Early Childhood program at Westchester Community College.

After completing her required hours in the toddler room Pam fell in love and hasn't looked back. She fondly remembers Chase, a student in the toddler room, who was part of her project as a student at WCC. Every morning he plopped onto her lap as he prepared for the day ahead. She tracked his progress as he grew more curious, more like a detective every day – asking questions and wanting to explore.

OCC was impressed with her ability to connect with the children and hired Pam as a teacher's assistant in Lillian's Pre-Kindergarten classroom. Pam worked with Lillian for seven years learning and growing as a teacher and a person. Pam tried to model Lillian's ability to be firm, patient and compassionate all at

the same time. Pam's own patience and understanding elevated when her daughter, Catalina was born. Pam enrolled her in OCC infant care. She considered the infant head teacher, Olivia, a good friend and loved her passion and constant energy. Pam said she felt as if Catalina was with family.

A couple months after Catalina was born Pam needed her extended family more than ever. Catalina became ill with Respiratory Syncytial Virus and spent 22 days in the hospital, many in intensive care. Pam was terrified and relied on her support network at OCC to get her through. Lillian and many of the OCC teachers came to visit, offering hugs and encouraging words. Pam knew her job was secure, enabling her to focus exclusively on her daughter's recovery. When Catalina, at five months old, was healthy and ready to return to OCC, Pam was ready to go to work.

Over the last four years Catalina has flourished at OCC, forming deep bonds with her teachers and even begging to come to school on Saturday and Sunday mornings. She has a passion for art, spends hours creating splendid watercolors and cuts elaborate designs with her favorite pair of scissors. OCC has fostered her independent spirit while channeling her sometimes stubborn energy into a strong determination to tackle any problem placed in front of her.

This autumn, Catalina began the dual-language program at Park School. For Pam her departure down the street is bittersweet. Pam is extremely proud. Though she will miss having her baby right next door, she has a classroom of thirteen energetic preschoolers to occupy her in the extended family of Ossining Children's Center.



Early Ed Partners

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Contact Us

Ossining Children's Center

90-92 South Highland Avenue

Ossining, NY 10562

(914) 941-0230

www.ossiningchildrenscenter.org

Fall Festival

We painted faces and pumpkins, danced to the glorious tunes of Ossining Marching



Band, and had so much fun! This festival brought parents, teachers, students and neighbors together on a perfect autumn day of play!

Sharing Love for the Holidays Donate a New Toy

OCC's volunteer elf, **Stacey Winnick Pushkin**, launches a Holiday Toy Drive, Dec. 1st. Stacey needs partners to run drives at schools, scouts and houses of worship for new, unwrapped toys, new clothes, and decorated collection boxes. Visit Ossining Children's Center's page or message Stacey Winnick on Facebook for gift drive locations or if you would like to help!

Holiday Gifts for a Family in Need

Many of OCC's families earn subsistence-level wages and cannot afford holiday gifts. To "sponsor a family" for the holidays by providing gifts of toys and clothing for the entire family, please contact OCC's **Terry Becker** for a wish list and clothing sizes. Terry is reachable via the Main Office, 914-941-0230.



Project Greenway



On November 11, our school-age youngsters and staff participated in **Project Greenway**, a "re-fashion show", in which contestants create new garments using recycled materials. OCC had two first place winners, one second place, and Ivan won best in show with his red velvet

suit made from old drapes! Thank you to **the Scarborough Presbyterian Church, Patty Chapman and Connie Curran**, for always including us in this wonderful event.