FROM THE DIRECTOR’S DESK. . . Dr. Lea Maue

A big thanks to our families for allowing us to work with you and your children this school year! The children have developed and changed so much, and I am confident that their participation in Head Start will result in success in kindergarten and beyond. May 14th is the last day of school, and we will truly miss the 181 children making the transition to kindergarten.

To better prepare your child for either kindergarten or the next year of Head Start, you can do three easy things over the summer with him or her. First, read to your child every day, or as much as possible. Reading aloud to children has many benefits, but one that I feel is most valuable is that it presents books as sources of pleasant experiences. Second, engage your child in more educational activities and less screen time (television, computers, devices). Lastly, try to incorporate math into daily activities. For example, having children count items or classify toys by shape.

Our administrative offices are open Monday through Friday, 8 am-4:30 pm over the summer. If you have questions regarding enrollment, resources, or further educational opportunities for parents, please call 453-6448.

GET TO KNOW. . . . Ms. Wendi Funk

My name is Wendi Funk and I am the Center Director at the Marion Head Start center. I have been working with the Head Start program since 2010 and I have a Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education. I am currently part of Head Start’s cohort with several other Head Start employees working on getting a Master’s degree in Early Childhood. We have about one more year to go!

I have two children, ages 5 and 9. In our free time, we love to play outside. We like to take walks through the woods and play with our dogs. I am a volunteer coach for my daughter’s softball team as well as her volleyball team. My favorite past time is swimming, so I cannot wait for summer break! We spend most of our summer days at the pool or at the lake. My favorite part of my job is when I unload the buses, each child knows who I am and know they will be greeted with a smile, high five, or a round of hopscotch. I have one child who has told me “happy birthday” everyday since my birthday in November. I respond with “happy Tuesday!” and she giggles and heads to class. I enjoy having special moments with each of the children.

Summer Meals

Did you know that children under 18 years of age can receive free meals over the summer? To find a location that offers summer meals near you:

CALL: 1-800-359-2163
TEXT: FOODIL to 877877
VISIT: summerfeedingillinois.org/

If going to the website, click “Find Food” and then “Find Sites” at the top right hand corner of the map. Then, type in either your city or zip code to find the nearest location.

You can also call the Health and Nutrition Coordinator at SIU Carbondale Head Start for assistance at 618-453-0930.
END OF YEAR ACTIVITIES
Families are invited to attend our end of the year celebrations!

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<tr>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Lead Teacher</th>
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<th>Location</th>
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<td>Ms. Hope</td>
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<td>Ms. Breanna</td>
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*The rain location for all activities scheduled outdoors will be the classrooms.

OTHER COOL DATES TO REMEMBER!

For all Murphysboro children going to Kindergarten next year. Don’t forget to attend the bookcase ceremony on May 6th at the Elks in Murphysboro 2pm. Attending children receive a beautiful handmade bookcase with their name on it, a book, and a stuffed animal.

May 14th is the last day of school!
CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE IN THE HOME. . . .

All learning begins with connection! Connections on the outside (with other people) actually create and strengthen connections within the brain. *Eye contact, presence, touch* and a *playful setting* are the four critical elements required to truly connect with others. Learn how to provide all four essential elements (and why) with the helpful guide included in this newsletter.

Also, as the school year comes to a close and summer break is rapidly approaching, we wanted to share with you a free resource from Conscious Discipline that would be helpful at home. Visit www.consciousdiscipline.com and sign up for a FREE membership. All you need is an email address! It takes less than a minute to set up an account. Once you are signed up, you have access to resources to help with temper tantrums, biting, challenging behaviors, child development, difficult situations, special needs and so much more! There are free printables, songs and chants (these may sound familiar to your child from school), and tips and frequently asked questions on discipline.

“*Educating Children, Empowering Families, Strengthening Communities*”

ATTENTION: HFS MEDICAID AND ALL KIDS INSURANCE HOLDERS

You may have received an enrollment packet asking you to select from 1 of 5 health plans. If you did not enroll, then you were likely auto-assigned to a plan.

You are allowed to switch plans one time between April 1, 2018 and June 30, 2018.

Shawnee Health Care is contracted with all 5 plans.

Please be aware that many local hospitals and specialists, including Southern Illinois Healthcare (SIH) will no longer be accepting Harmony Health.

You can enroll in or switch plans:

Online at https://enrollhfs.illinois.gov/
Or by phone at 1-877-912-8880

If you need assistance completing this process, please call Shawnee Health Service at (618) 519-9200 to schedule an appointment with one of the Outreach & Enrollment Specialists. There is no cost for this service. Staff at local Illinois DHS offices cannot assist with enrolling or switching plans.

*Please note that Shawnee Health Service staff cannot make recommendations on which plan to select; they can only assist you with completing the enrollment process through Illinois Client Enrollment Services.
SUMMER FUN IDEAS FOR KIDS AND PARENTS

As summer break approaches, here is a list of fun and easy activities you can do with your child.

1. **Pick your own...whatever.** Find a farm with blueberries, strawberries, tomatoes, flowers, etc., and get picking.
2. **Play outside in the rain.** Smell the rain on the pavement; splash in puddles; make mud pies.
3. **Make your own rain.** Douse everyone with the hose or sprinkler.
4. **Cook out...frequently.** Go beyond the burgers. Try veggies or fish. The kids might like them more if they come off the grill!
5. **Make "smores."** Chocolate + marshmallow + graham cracker = summer
6. **Camp out.** First-timers, try backyard camping.
7. **Camp in.** Put the sleeping bags on the floor and have a family slumber party.
8. **Stargaze.** Invite friends and make a party of it.
9. **Catch lightning bugs.** And then watch them flicker away into the night.
10. **Rearrange the furniture.** Give the kid’s graph paper and have them draw out a plan first.
11. **Take family naps together.** Parents can snooze too!
12. **Make your own pizza.**
13. **Stop to smell the flowers.** Go to a botanical garden.
14. **Talk to the animals.** Go to the zoo.
15. **Get wet.** Go to a water park.
16. **Grow vegetables.** And then eat them.

*Source: https://www.verywellfamily.com/summer-fun-ideas-kids-and-parents-3542627*

BOOK OF THE MONTH: “Mouse’s First Summer” by Lauren Thompson

Read the book aloud or watch the story being read aloud on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrGzpvjeTQE

**Activity:** Using the provided summer calendar, work with your child to schedule summer activities. Use the activities in the book as a reference (eating watermelon, making lemonade, making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, roll in the grass, etc). Write activities on the calendar and put it on your refrigerator. You can also use the calendar to document important activities as you get ready for the next school year (doctor appointments, registration activities, the first day of school).

**School Readiness Goals Aligned To This Activity:**

- Children will express their thoughts and needs in clear and complete sentences using a varied and complex vocabulary.
- Children will use small muscles to manipulate materials with strength and coordination, including using art and writing tools to convey meaning through written symbols and letters.