

# Bright Horizons at Long Ridge News

## From the Director

Family involvement is essential to the Bright Horizon program. We believe the key to family involvement is giving families a variety of ways to be involved, if they are able, in the life of the center. Bright Horizon at Long Ridge forms a caring and learning community in which our families, teachers, and children can interact and grow.

Mr. Armah, one of our parents, volunteered to introduce the “Donno” drums as a part of African-American heritage to our children. During his visit, he described how the “Donno” drums are carved and used to accompany dances and songs. The children listened to the sounds of the drums and danced in response to the music. The children got to see, touch, shake, and play traditional African instruments such as “Talking Drums”, “Shekere”, and “Basket Caxixi”.



## Important Dates

Join us for our  
End of Summer Celebration  
Wednesday, August 24<sup>th</sup>

With Tom Weber

5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.

## Reasons to Celebrate

Happy Birthday!

### Children

Charlotte A 8/01

Natalie A 8/03

Jacob N 8/03

Claire B 8/14

Viraj G 8/25

Eric N 8/25

Laila B 8/27

### Teachers

Miss Nicole C 8/5

Miss Claire 8/7

Miss Ana 8/8

**Bright Horizons at Long Ridge**  
**Stamford, CT**



# CLASSROOM HIGHLIGHTS

## Infant

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Our youngest children explored a “please touch” environment which was set up to provide opportunities for outdoor water play. The children used buckets, and shovels in the sensory table to scoop and pour water and play in the sprinklers. As part of our “Garden Works” curriculum they spent time “working” in the garden. They used their sense to smell and touch the flower and dig in the dirt and felt the grassy surface under their feet.



## Toddler

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Toddlers created an imaginative and fun “camp” experience with tents, pillows, and flashlights. Each class pitched their tent and decorated their room like a campground. They created a faux campfire and pretended to roast marshmallows. The children enjoyed listening to stories and sang songs by the camp fire. As a special snack enjoyed some S’mores, what is a camping trip without S’mores!



## Preschool

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In Preschool, students explored different ways to express themselves through dance, theatre, and creating visual art. For our open-ended art project, the children added daily to their class mural, using various art materials including tempera sticks, oil and soft pastels, dot markers, foam, and fabric paint. For one stage of the project, the children explored mess-free painting as they blended fresh paint covered in plastic wrap as a group. As they explored the material, the children pretended their mural was a drum, for a full sensory experience.



## School Age

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Our campers combined action and painting to create expressive and unique work of art. We rolled out a large sheet of paper on the fence outside where they didn’t have to worry about paint splatters. They painted to music as well as listening to wind and birds singing while constructing their mural.



# READY FOR SCHOOL NEWS

## Outdoor Play

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A generation or two ago, children spent much of their time playing outdoors. Today, children spend as little as 30 minutes outdoors each day; and children have 50 percent less free time than they did 20 years ago, according to one study from the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research.

Yet children's needs haven't changed. Spending time outdoors improves physical health and reduces the risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes. Outdoor activity can also improve emotional well-being and cognitive function in children, even reducing the incidence of behavioral issues, such as Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder, according to a 2000 study published in *Environment and Behavior*. Perhaps most importantly, outdoor play is a source of joy and healing for children of all ages. Children who have regular experiences with nature are more likely to become conservation-minded adults. In this parent newsletter, we offer a few simple ideas for helping families rediscover outdoor play.

- **Schedule time.** Few parents would disagree that outdoor time is important, yet it often gets relegated to the low-priority list. Add at least one or two outdoor activities to your calendar each week to make sure they happen. These activities could be as simple as sitting on the front porch watching your children play in the evening or taking a walk to a nearby park. Outdoor activities will become a part of the routine if they're regularly scheduled.
- **Think outside the box.** Who says outdoor activities have to happen at certain times or places? Get creative. Pack a simple breakfast and go on a sunrise bike ride. Look for stars, bats, or fireflies at night. Eat meals outdoors during mild weather. Even playing board games or reading books outdoors is restorative.
- **Get prepared.** Outdoor adventures needn't be complicated or expensive, but it's a good idea to keep an "adventure pack" ready. Fill a backpack with the essentials – simple first-aid items, non-perishable snacks, sunscreen, insect repellent, and water. You could also add a lightweight pair of binoculars, a field guide and a compass. A quick internet search can help you find trails, hikes, and parks worth exploring in your area.

As you explore the outdoors, try to create a "yes" culture and think carefully about the rules you impose. Skinned knees and muddy clothes are a natural byproduct of healthy childhood play. Set boundaries for activities that could cause serious harm; otherwise, give your child ample freedom.

# BRIGHT HORIZONS NEWS

## Volunteering with Your Child

Raising children to be socially aware, community oriented, charitable-minded, and educated about their world is more vital than ever in today's global society. As a parent, you try to raise your child to become an active, compassionate member of society. One way to do this is through volunteering with your child – and summer can be a perfect time to do it!

The following suggested volunteer ideas, or “Brightening Lives Activities,” were created by the Bright Horizons Foundation for Children, and are a resource to encourage empathy, caring, and compassion.

### **Brightening Lives Activity: Make and Take Flowers to People in Nursing Homes**

**Here's How:** Decorate glass jars with small squares of tissue paper and water mixed with starch. Put flowers in the vases.

**Appropriate for Ages:** 4 - 7

**Variation:** Decorate small pots and put plants in them.

### **Brightening Lives Activity: Make Playdough for Children in Shelters**

**Here's How:** Combine 2 cups flour, 2 cups warm water, 1 cup salt, 2 tbsp vegetable oil, 1 tbsp. cream of tartar, food coloring. Teachers stir it over low heat. Divide it into individual bags.

**Appropriate for Ages:** 3 – 10

### **Brightening Lives Activity: Create a Library for Children in Shelters**

**Here's How:** Bring gently used books to class. Sort them by age group or fiction and non-fiction. Donate them to children in shelters.

**Appropriate for Ages:** 3 - 12

**Variation:** Collect gently used games or toys or children choose a favorite new book to donate on his/her birthday.

### **Brightening Lives Activity: Assemble Hygiene Kits for People in Shelters**

**Here's How:** Discuss what products people need for hygiene. Consider toothpaste, toothbrushes, dental floss, shampoo, soap, and deodorant. Parents and children together purchase a few extra items when buying supplies for our families. Sort items, and decorate and fill bags.

**Appropriate for Ages:** 3 – 12.



## CONNECT WITH BRIGHT HORIZONS

