April Showers Bring May... VEGGIES!

According to the National Gardening Association, exposing children to gardening cultivates a connection with the environment and promotes lifelong environmental stewardship. It also provides an opportunity for families to spend time together working towards a common goal and to share achievements at harvest time.

Even though we are a yardless community, there are ways to learn about and experience gardening around Victoria and close to home.

• Here at UVic, there is a community garden off of MacKenzie. It is a great place to get acquainted with fruit and vegetable plants. For information or to put your name on the waitlist for a plot, contact ccgarden@uvic.ca or visit http://web.uvic.ca/~ccgarden/.

• Visit Finnerty Gardens to witness the skill of master gardeners as the seasons change.

• Start a container garden. Container gardens can be productive in summer and winter. Cherry tomatoes, potatoes, strawberries, raspberries, mesclum lettuce mix, radishes, carrots, kale and chard are just some examples of what can be grown on balconies.

• Join SLUGS, or encourage your kids to. The Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre runs a workshop series for people between 13 and 30 called Sustainable Living and Urban Gardening Skills (SLUGS).

• Support local farmers and learn about the bounty Vancouver Island provides. Farmers markets will be in full swing soon. Another option is to get delivered groceries through companies like Share Organics or the Good Food Box.

• Help a good cause, volunteer with the Land Conservancy at Madrona Farm.

• Explore local parks. The Parks Department plants edible plants in some of Saanich’s Parks. Government House also has an impressive herb garden.
Drop-In Program Notice
There will be no morning drop-in on April 4th or 6th due to our No Foolin’ event and the statutory holiday.

What is a Family Resource Centre? By Laura Ouilette
The UVic Family Centre is a Family Resource Centre and as such it provides and promotes:

- Child development
  - The importance of play
  - Cognitive stimulation
  - Motor skill development
- Interdependence – recognizing that families can give and receive help
- Social Networking – building relationships and connections between people and community resources
- Family support - serves as a community hub for families
- Social Networking – building relationships and connections between people and community resources
- Parent support and education
  - Promote Parent/Child attachment
  - Parenting tools and techniques

The Family Centre staff and volunteers do their best to provide a strength based approach to families and relationships. Staff and volunteers work together with families in relationships based on equality and respect! The Family Centre views children and families holistically, understanding that the child does not stand alone, but it always within the context of the family, which is in turn in the context of the community, which makes up our society. The Family Centre is also a great place to relax and be among friends.

The Family Centre Celebrates Volunteers
Volunteers expand and enrich all that we do immeasurably! In recognition of National Volunteer Week, April 15th-21st, A Huge Thank You from Us All.

Dear Families,

My name is Ildikó Danis. I am very happy and excited to join the UVic Family Centre. I will be spending time with you at the centre on Wednesday and Friday mornings. I look forward to getting to know you and your child, and the lovely family of UVic Family Centre in the upcoming weeks.

I have enjoyed my previous experiences working with young children in a variety of centres and schools including Elementary Schools, Early Learning Centres and Church Kindergarten-Preschool in Atlanta GA, USA. I am originally from Hungary; my native language is Hungarian. I moved to Victoria last June with my 12 year old son and my husband who teaches at UVic.

I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, exploring beautiful Victoria and gorgeous Vancouver Island. I also like to workout, cook, and watch foreign movies. My other hobbies include writing children’s books, drawing and painting.

I look forward to meeting you and getting to know you and your children.

Sincerely, Ildikó Danis
Thinking and Being with Paint
By B. Denise Hodgins

Many of you saw the painting project that we engaged in this Fall at the Family Centre during the drop-in program on Wednesdays and Fridays. Several mornings before families arrived at 10:00 we laid out a large white tarp, taped paper on to the walls and floor, and placed pots of paint and paint brushes around the newly created “art space”. It was our hope to create an invitation for children to explore painting in a larger space, without many guidelines or expectations about what was to be painted. We were curious to see what would happen in this kind of an open exploration.

Each week that we included the painting project in the morning program we experienced something different. I imagine the children (and grownups) did as well. If you were there on one of those painting mornings you will have likely seen me with a camera recording moments of the painting exploration. These photos and video clips have allowed me and the Family Centre staff to revisit these painting mornings and talk together about the process of creating spaces for children and adults to explore. Through revisiting these project moments we have questioned ourselves around boundaries and challenged ourselves to think about how our actions can invite or stop movement and exploration. We have talked about materials and wondered about how they call differently to different children, act differently in different spaces, and turn into something new each time they connect with another material, a person, a space. These conversations have raised many questions for us and we have begun to wonder more about what would happen if . . .

I have also put together some of these moments into a slide show that we played during the drop in program one morning in March (which is available through the Family Centre’s office), as well as some displays of narrations that are now hanging up in the Family Centre. It is our hope that by sharing these documents, these narrations, we can continue conversations about encounters, spaces, practices, materials with the families at the Family Centre. What do you think about the exploration with paint? What do you see when you look at the photos, video and/or paintings from those explorations?

We will continue to document ordinary moments during the programs and share those moments among the staff and with the families at the centre. We will also continue to experiment with materials and activities in the morning programs. We are very excited about the possibilities of what we will learn together.

Don’t forget April 4th is the 9th Annual No Foolin’ Event, 4:30-6:30 outside the Family Centre.
Celebrating Families could not happen without the great support of so many many volunteers - facepainters - game players - icecream scoopers - fruit cutters - tent raisers - craft creators - song leaders - food supervisors - garbage pick-uppers and foodmakers.
Thank You’s to all who helped make this such fun!
With Great Appreciation to our Supporters:
Thrifty Foods - Peppers - Ali Baba Pizza - Pepsi - Old Dutch - Starbucks - Campus Security and Saanich Fire and Rescue.

Do you use cloth diapers?
On April 21st, join thousands of cloth diaper families WORLD WIDE in an attempt to break the Guinness World Record for most cloth diapers changed at one time! The Great Cloth Diaper Change is taking place at is at SJ Willis School between 9 and 12AM. For more information email Rachel or Charlotte at clothdiapersvictoria@yahoo.com.
**Programs and Events**

**Playgroups:**
On Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 10am-12pm, the Family Centre hosts fun and energetic playgroups. Kathleen's lively Music and Movement Playgroup meets on Tuesday mornings. On Wednesday and Friday mornings, the Family Centre hosts playgroups involving arts and crafts, free play, circle time, and snack. During the first two weeks of April our theme for all three morning drop-ins is 'The Farmyard' During the second half of the month we will be doing 'Water'.

**After School Club:**
Welcome spring time! And with spring finally here we have a great month planned for the After School Club. School Aged Kids (Grades 1-6) are invited to the After School Club at the Family Centre on Thursdays from 3:30 - 5:00 pm.

**April 5:** Brilliant Creative Crafts--come and have fun creating.

**April 12:** Build a garden-- we will be planting a small garden in front of the Family Centre.

**April 19:** Beach walk--we will be walking to the beach so come on time and bring appropriate clothing and footwear. (Weather dependant)

**April 26:** Bake time--a favourite day for most so come and do some baking with us!

**Make and Take:**
Need a night out? The Family Centre is open on Monday evenings from 7-9pm. Currently a group are working on knitting projects, but feel free to bring your own craft project along and work on it while getting to know other people in the community. Don't have a craft project? Can only make it for an hour? Come anyway! The kettle is always on and we'd love to see you!

**Breakfast Club:**
Come and stop by Tuesday mornings between 7:30 and 9:00am for a breakfast drop-in group. Pop by on your way to school, work, daycare...come share some food, meet new people or connect with friends. Each week will be a different breakfast food. We hope to see you there! **EVERYONE WELCOME! April 10th is Laura’s last day at the Breakfast Club. She has really enjoyed getting to know all the breakfast regulars and wishes you well.**

**Book Club:**
The Family Centre has a book club which meets once a month to discuss a novel chosen by the group. If you enjoy reading and would like to get together with others please come along. To find out more go to our Facebook page.

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**Community Events**

**Calling All Cottontails**
Central Library
**Wednesday April 4th, 10:30-11:30**
Hop, hop, hop on over to the library for stories and songs about bunnies, chicks and everything that makes spring so egg-citing. Make an egg-stravagant craft to take home. For ages 3-5. Register online or call the hosting branch for more information.

**Tartan Day**
Market Square
**Saturday April 7th, 12:00-4:00**
Highland dancers, Tartan weaving, highland dog show, VHGA Heavies, Gaelic choir, kilt making, musicians, vendors, Daisy the cow and a play area for the children.

**Fourth Annual Easter Egg Hunt**
Beckwith Park
**Sunday April 8th, 10:00-1:00**

**Giggles and Wiggles**
Nellie McClung Library
**Friday April 20, 10:30-10:50**
Wiggle your way to the library for a 20 minute storyline for little listeners with extra energy. Dance and giggle and learn new action stories and action rhymes chosen just for you. For young children and their families; children under 3 must be accompanied by an adult. No registration required.

**Earth Day Picnic Celebration**
Uplands Park
**Sunday April 22nd, 12:00-3:30**
Join the Friends of Uplands Park and the Community Association of Oak Bay at our annual Picnic. Dance with the Bald Eagles band. Learn about the Garry Oak Meadow from displays and strolling on Nature Walks with experts. Remove invasive plants in our stewardship project. Play with bubbles and enjoy other family activities.