

# POOH'S NEWS

www.HouseAtPoohCornerDaycare.com



Fall 2018

## THE FORTY-YEAR-OLD VERSION

We know, believe me, we know, we're having a hard time believing it ourselves but that doesn't make it any less so. Pooh Corner is already gearing up to celebrate its big four-oh next spring, so consider this an invitation, as well as ample time to start searching eBay to get yourself a pair of vintage Haband slacks and a Huckapoo shirt of the softest Quiana (the wildly popular polyamide faux-silk fabric). It's somewhat daunting to know that "lightly worn" originals can be purchased on-line for more than ten times their original cost. Had I even imagined the possibility, I'd be a millionaire today.

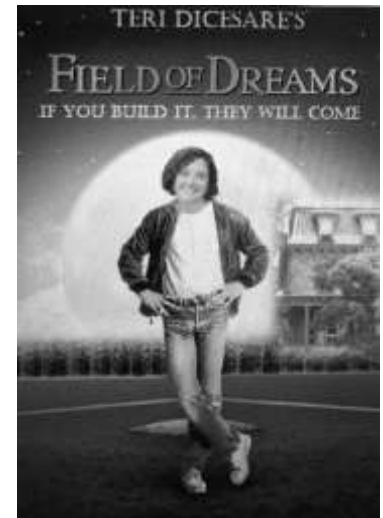
In all seriousness, the fact that we have continued to provide high-quality daycare in the same space, with several original cast members for nearly forty years really is an accomplishment worth celebrating.

Pooh Corner held fast to its ideals through the tenures of six and-a-half Presidents and some of the most life-altering changes of the centuries. The first "test tube

baby" (Louise Brown) and the first cellular phone were both born the same year as Pooh Corner, a year when a gallon of gas cost 63 cents, and a set of Star Wars Family pajamas could be had for under \$7.00. Sleep tight, little Ewoks - cause-these pajamas are the Endor and be all.



The house that houses House at Pooh Corner is not the only thing that's been on Walnut Lane for decades, the distinction is shared with our long-term staff members, Kim Selman, the newly appointed Director of the Center,



Halimah AbdulHaqq, Denise Heckstall, Melinda Roy, Loretta Stevenson, Rose O'Neill and yours truly are all "lifers", having spent anywhere from twelve to thirty plus years at Pooh. Talk about a run-on sentence!

Trust me, we didn't stay for the lavish daycare lifestyle, we stayed because, across the decades, Pooh Corner encouraged us to grow as teachers and as women, while touching the lives of over a thousand children, preparing them for successful childhoods and beyond. Our reunions let us reunite with the children we nurtured, and bask in personal pride for helping them become who they are.

None of us expected to find ourselves here decades later, our hair greying and knees creaking. We simply came and, somehow stayed. This holds true especially for Teri, who founded Pooh Corner hoping to solve a personal childcare dilemma, never imagining the Center would take on a life of its own, and stay too, solving the same dilemma for generations of families to come.

## POOH CORNER A MOTHER AND HER MUSE



Teri and Jessie: A benchmark in Pooh History

Forty years ago, Teri was sharing her home at 311 East Walnut Lane with her former husband and toddler daughter, Jessie, and simultaneously commuting daily to New Jersey where children who were not hers were reaping the benefits of her teaching degree.

The commute gave Teri plenty of time to worry about daycare for her daughter. Jessie was ready to socialize with other children, and Teri was committed to finding an environment to expand her daughter's world, a place where Jessie could be part of a diverse group of peers, stimulated daily, and feel happy and secure.

Safe, nurturing, educational, stimulating – these are the basic tenants of a quality daycare, or, at least they should be. Unfortunately, this isn't always the case, and, as we know from the horror stories told by parents hoping to enroll their children at Pooh Corner, “quality” and “safe” are standards to which many daycares don't even aspire.

Sadly, this was as much the case forty years ago as it is today, which brings us back to how Pooh Corner came to be.

Frustrated at the idea of leaving her daughter in limbo, and dismayed at being unable to find the environment she sought for Jessie, Teri experienced what I like to call a Dorothy moment. You know, that lightning bolt of clarity that brings with it the startling realization that there really is no place like home.

And so, clicking the heels of her espadrilles together three times, Teri made the inspired decision to leave her job and put her degree where her heart was. She rearranged her living space, moving her family and their belongings up to the top two floors of her home, and turning the first floor into what she had been unable to find anywhere else, a daycare which incorporated everything she wanted for her own daughter.

To paraphrase another movie quote, Teri followed her inspiration, towards her own Field of Dreams. She built it, and they came. And came, and came.

Word of mouth spread, and within a short time the handful of local children entering Teri's house every morning was joined by more children, from further away – Mount Airy, Chestnut Hill, and beyond. Teri took this in stride. Committed to keeping the daycare in the comfortable home setting provided by *her* home, she decided that, rather than move the daycare, she would once again move her family, this time consolidating them on the third floor, as the second floor was enveloped by daycare. As Pooh Corner continued to grow, it became obvious that Pooh Corner had taken on a life of its own, and it was time for her to move her family elsewhere, and give her home over to the daycare in its entirety.

Things have changed at 311 East Walnut Lane when it was Teri's home. The sense of security that enveloped Jessie as a child is still there, but now it swaddles Teri's grandsons, Luke and his baby brother, Noah. As it does your children, all of whom make up the third generation of “Pooh Corner Kids”. Proving the girl in blue jeans., there really is no place like home.



311 East Walnut Lane pre-Pooh Corner

## KIMSTAGRAM



Not long after there was Pooh Corner, there was Kim Selman, who started working here when she was just a teenager. Hearing that Teri was hiring staff for her new daycare, Kim applied, figuring working

with children, just for a little while, would be fun. That “little while” turned into almost thirty years, and the shy teenager turned into a strong, capable woman with a degree in Daycare Administration, who’s now taking responsibility for the whole shebang, as Pooh’s Director, while Teri continues as Owner/Operator on a part time basis.

Kim (in an early photo, above) has the rare distinction of being Matriarch to a prestigious Pooh Corner dynasty. Her son, Hamilton, was an original Pooh Corner Kid, who become a long-time Pooh teacher and the father of his own Pooh Corner Kid, Payton, known informally as “Kim’s grandbaby”.

Kim’s three daughters, Taylor, Ariana and Nia, are former Pooh Corner kids too, and now Taylor has followed in her mom’s footsteps gaining a degree in education and stepping into her shoes as Toddler head teacher.

With her long tenure at Pooh and her degree, Kim possesses unique qualifications: hands-on experience in every program, and matriarch to two generations of Pooh Corner kids. Kim’s looked at Pooh from all sides now, and as we can attest she really does know Pooh, and how!



**In the Beginning:  
L’il Kim and Toddler Taylor**

## TAYLOR MADE

Taylor, a natural-born teacher, essentially grew up here, moving from Pooh Corner Kid to unpaid helper and toddler wrangler, to college student, working towards a degree in Childhood Education (which will be hers next spring). So, it was only natural for Taylor to move seamlessly into an official teaching position here.

So seamlessly, in fact, that Taylor has been promoted to Head Teacher of the Infant/Toddler Group, ending up exactly where she has always wanted to Taylor will be receiving her degree in Early Childhood Education in the spring of 2019.

**Taylor, right, during a footprint art project when she was a Pooh Kid**



## PLANET ASIA



**Asia and Marie going a hundred smiles a minute**

Pooh Legacy Asia Lambert was little more than a toddler when she first came to the Corner with her mother, Marie, who had been hired as an assistant teacher.

Asia left to focus on kindergarten and elementary school, returning to Pooh, after high school to work as a floater. When Marie left a few years ago, Asia, by then an adult college student, remained, working part-time while pursuing her education. Now in her last semester of college, Asia has been promoted to Co-Head Teacher of the Pre-K Program, the same position her mother held for many years. Proof positive that history does repeat itself - and it’s a good thing it does.

## CLASS CLONES



**Pooh Corner Pre-K Class of 1996-1997**  
**Asia—middle row second from the right**

There must be something in the water filters here at Pooh Corner, because both Taylor Evans and Asia Lambert, look almost exactly the same today as they did in their Pooh Corner class photos twenty years (give-or-take) ago. I'll have what they're having, and make mine a double!



**Taylor, front row – second from the left**  
**Pooh Corner Pre-K Class of 1996-1997**

## LIFERS



**Halimah AbdulHaqq, Daphne Dennis, Denise Heckstall, Rose O'Neill, Melinda Roy and Loretta Stevenson** have all been at Pooh for over twelve years!



We've had a number of staff changes here recently, after all, not every hire proves to be a good fit for a place like Pooh, and most new hires get that pretty quickly, as they realize we really aren't like other daycares.

We have a lot of committed teachers who work hard to create a community – one that doesn't end simply because the last child has been picked up at the end of the day. Pooh Corner is an intimate environment, and that doesn't fit every personality, but when the chemistry's right, everyone knows it. Our successful new hires might not expect to be here for ten or twenty years, but we know better.

## THEY FLOAT OUR BOAT

Floaters have always been critical to keeping our aging joints well-oiled and creak-free. While many "regular" staff members joined Pooh as floaters prior to taking on additional responsibilities, other floaters continue

floating preferring the flexibility this allows.

Either way, without our floaters, we'd be up a creek without a paddle. Floaters fill in wherever and whenever necessary, providing support that keeps us all from going off the deep end. We'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you to the newest floaters at Pooh Corner, without whom we would surely be.

### **Allyson Emerson, Full-time Assistant Teacher**

Alyson has worked in childcare for several years, and has also done substitute teaching in several local charter schools. After only a few short months as a floater, Allyson has already moved into a regular assignment as Infant Group Assistant Teacher.



### **Tyra Jones-Blain, Part-time Floater**



A dance major at Temple University, Tyra has been teaching dance to young children for the past two years. She'll be at Pooh three afternoons a week after completing her morning classes at Temple.

### **Vishana Lee, Transition Program Assistant Teacher**

Vishana has been working in childcare for over twelve years, ten as an assistant teacher in Episcopal Community Services' educational outreach program, with children in homeless families. She also worked as an assistant for Easter Seals providing support for autistic children.



### **Benzei Phanord, Full-time Floater**



A graduate of Northeast High School, "Ben" spent the past two years at Philadelphia Community College, and is currently taking a break from his studies. Ben has been active in caring for his two younger siblings since their births.

### **Randy Scott-Carrol, Full-time Floater**

An early childhood major in high school (the equivalent of an associate's degree) Randy completed two years of college before leaving to freelance in audio and video projects. By floating at Pooh he'll get to experience the best of both worlds - four days a week working with children and time to pursue his freelance ventures



### **Rose Wilson, Afternoon Aide**



Rose has worked with children for a number of years, in a daycare and, most recently as cafeteria aide at Lingelbach Elementary School. Rose got her feet wet at Pooh last summer as a full-time floater.

## **SAMMY SAYS ADIEU TO YOU AND YOU AND YOU**

We never thought it could happen, we certainly never expected it would happen, and yet, Samantha Green, one of Pooh Corner's "lifers", left us and Philadelphia for the sunny climes of Las Vegas. Sammy had been at Pooh Corner for over twenty years, starting out in the Infant Program, then as Head Teacher of the Transition Group, and most recently as Head Teacher in the Preschool Group.

It was impossible not to know Samantha. With her colorful clothes and sparkling jewelry, a large flower in her fluffy afro as ever-present as her huge grin and hearty laugh, Samantha did it all for "her kids".

Her commitment to them was legendary, and the love she gave and got from her students past and present was on glorious display at her farewell party in August, when Pooh Corner's yard was filled with families, from today to as long as twenty years ago. There were tears galore, hundreds of hugs, countless memories and too many anecdotes and accolades to count.

Samantha is now settled in sunny Las Vegas, but we will think of her often. Especially when we're slogging through the snow and slush of Philadelphia this winter.



We bid a few other significant farewells this fall as well: **Tytiana Lamb**, and Assistant Teacher in the Preschool Program, left for less happy reasons. Mere weeks before the birth of their child, her fiancé was killed in a car accident. At such a tumultuous and painful time, Tytiana moved to Delaware, to be closer to her mother, for the solace she needed. Tytiana gave birth to a healthy baby boy, **Yantz**, in April. They are both doing well.

**Matt Davis**, who often served as a jungle gym for the children, left us for the irresistible opportunity to work as an au pair near Paris, and **Marcus Harris** moved to Greene Street Friends School, for the chance to work with older children.

And, rounding off our staff roundup, we've also made a few tweaks to some of our programs. Specifically,

**Denise Heckstall** is sporting a new title, and it's a mouthful: Infant/Toddler Program Manager. While continuing to work with the Toddler Group, Denise will also focus her organizational skills on scheduling and managing the two components of the Infant/Toddler Group – these being the Infants, led by Head Teacher **Rose O'Neill**, and the Toddlers, fronted by Head Teacher **Taylor Evans**.

**Loretta Stevenson** has been promoted to co-head teacher of Pre-K. Loretta has been an assistant in the group for about eight of her (lucky) thirteen years at Pooh Corner. She shares the head teacher position with Asia Lambert, and is currently working toward her degree in education at Ashford University.

**Halimah AbdulHaqq** moved up the steps to become the Preschool program's co-head teacher, with **Jasmine Ross**. Halimah has been a member of the Pooh Corner crew for twenty-one years. She also has taken on a new role as the Preschool/Pre-K Program Director. Her co-lead teacher, Jasmine, joined Pooh Corner in December of 2017, and, with her degree in biology, has become the program's science guru. Her daughter, Jaime, is in the Transition group.

Meanwhile, when **Veronica Boyd** returned from maternity leave, she joined the Transition Group in the spot previously held by **Kendra Dean**, who has moved to the Preschool Program.

Finally, **Katrice Roy**, formerly of the Infant/Toddler Group is now a full-time Floater.

## FALL DOTH BRING THE BABES OF SPRING

Fall and winter are particularly festive for our students who became big brothers and sisters during the spring and summer months, as their new siblings are finally old enough to join them at the Corner.

We always enjoy the watching the pride and joy that lights up the faces of siblings when they see each other in the yard, or at pick-up time after a busy day apart.

Please join us in congratulating the following families who now have two at Pooh.

### BIG SISTERS & BIG BROTHERS

Hilda to Oona Wharton, on June 27th (Cheng & Ben)  
Brody to Braden Hark on May 28th (Kim & Jeremy)  
Luke to Noah Cherian on June 29th (Jessie & Anoop)  
Gabe to Ezra Leber, on July 27<sup>th</sup> (Kelilah & Sean)

In addition to the new siblings above, here's a quick glance of the other brother and sister acts currently at Pooh Corner:

Kaya & Nico Autin \* Nuala & Malachy Egan \*  
Franny & Hattie Emerick \* Lucia & Antonio Fiorile \*  
Iris & Isaiah Gian-Grasso \* Casey & Daniel Hurford  
\* Dylan & Iona Johnston \* Anabel & August  
Kuperman \* Faye & Joni Systma

### ROMANCING THE STONES

Last spring, we decided to give Pooh Corner a full-frontal face lift, and chose Brian Ames of Wissahickon Landscaping to create the design, which offers a more accessible, larger area for the children's gardens and flagstone footpaths has become familiar territory in the last few months, and we consider that grounds for celebration!



“THE ONLY THING BETTER THAN  
SINGING IS MORE SINGING”  
ELLA FITZGERALD



At a recent staff meeting, we discussed the importance of singing with the children, and ended the meeting with a new rule. Everyone, in every classroom must sing more and more often with the children. All anyone has to do is see the joy on a baby’s face when a familiar song is played, or listen to a toddler’s glee when reaching a favorite refrain (such as, “No More Monkeys Jumping on the Bed”) to understand that music is not just a pleasure for children, it’s something much more profound, universal and fundamental.

There is a wealth of great research about why singing has been integral to our lives from time immemorial. Just as children draw before they write, and early humans made cave paintings before written language was developed, most experts theorize that prehistoric man sang before language developed, the analogy being that children sing before they speak.

Otto Harry Jespersen was a Danish linguist who specialized in the grammar. Not just the who vs. whom kind of grammar, but grammatical structure and syntax. Babies are born prepped for grammar before they learn to speak, and no matter what language they learn, it is the done on the framework of grammar. In his book, *Language, Its Nature, Development and Origin*, Otto Jespersen, theorizes that song that came before speech, to which anyone who has heard a pre-verbal toddler’s sing-singing can attest.

“When we say that speech originated in song, what we mean is merely that our comparatively monotonous spoken language and our highly developed vocal music are differentiations of primitive utterances, which had more in them of the latter than of the former. These utterances were, at first, like the singing of birds and the roaring of many animals and the crooning of babies, exclamative, not communicative—that is, they came forth from an inner craving of the individual without any thought of any fellow-creatures. Our remote ancestors had not the slightest notion that such a thing as communicating ideas and feelings to someone else was possible.

In other words, singing is so basic to humanness that it predates even the concept of language. The human voice is considered to have been the original musical instrument, and scientists support this with findings that every human culture, regardless of how remote or isolated they may be, sings. Regardless of spoken language, sophistication, societal structure, race or religion – no matter what, humans sing.

No one knows exactly when in human history singing, as a means of expressing communicative sounds, morphed into the creation of language as we know it, but many anthropologists believe it began with the development of a lowered larynx (important to articulate speech). Spoken language could have replaced singing, but it is a testament to the importance of singing for singing’s sake that it did not. And, as the human larynx is boneless, there is no forensic evidence to simulate the vocal abilities of prehistoric humans.

*Circle Time is one  
of our favorite  
times to share  
favorite and  
familiar songs,  
and to incorporate  
movement and  
dance*



## SING FOR SINGING'S SAKE

There are many important reasons to sing with children, for example, doing so:

- Supports emotional development.
- Encourages the positive expression of emotions
- Sharpens the ability to communicate
- Exercises lip and tongue movement
- Strengthens the use of the “memory muscle”
- Develops sound awareness skills critical for learning to read
- Encourages group participation
- Builds self-awareness and self-esteem
- Encourages positive group involvement
- Increases phonemic awareness
- Stimulates a sense of rhythm and timing

Singing with children is not only fun – it’s an integral part of their educational process. Songs contain words that are spoken as well as heard, so children can participate in singing whole-heartedly before they can read. Children’s songs in particular are jam-packed with rhymes, silly words, alliteration, and diverse sound patterns that help them become aware of sounds and words, and how these can be manipulated, played with, blended, emphasized or whispered. And that, folks, as science has proven is what language is all about.

This is the perfect time to build singing into your child’s daily routine, because this fall, like so many before it, we will be taking the older groups to Settlement Music School every week, where they will have the opportunity to explore music and musical instruments at one of the finest music schools in the country.

We sing many songs with your children, and – almost invariably – their favorites are songs in which involve specific, easy to learn and familiar movements, as well as a sense of the ridiculous.

The songs we choose often include both group and individual participation, such as “Old McDonald Had a Farm and “Down by the Bay”, these, and songs involving physical actions, like The Hokey Pokey” or

“The Farmer in the Dell” are particularly popular at the Corner.

For the fun of it, but also because we really, really wanted to know, we asked teachers to come to the afore-mentioned staff meeting prepared to share their group’s favorite song, and the winner may surprise you.

In case you aren’t familiar with it, we’ve printed the lyrics below, so that you can sing it with your children at home, too. There are several variations of the song, which research shows began (as so many classics do) as a camp song. So, enjoy, and who knows? “The Donut Song” may become your favorite song too!



*Well, I walked around the corner and I walked around the block and I walked right into the bakery shop.*

*And I picked up a donut and I wiped off the grease and I handed the lady a five-cent piece.*

*Well she looked at the nickel and she looked at me and she said, “Hey mister, can’t you plainly see? There’s a hole in the nickel, there’s a hole straight through”*

*And I said, “there’s a hole in the donut too!*

*Thanks for the donut. Good day!”*

*(Bum badda bum, bum – bum bum)*

