



The *Family Share* Program at Discovery Developmental Center

Dear Discovery Families,

Parent support and participation has and always will be a critical facet of Discovery's program. We recognize that parents are a child's first, and most important teacher, and a vital component to a successful early childhood experience. Parent participation has come in many shapes and forms over the years, from helping with field trips to organizing fundraisers; from annual building maintenance issues to serving on the board of Directors. Benefits from this volunteerism are many, both for the center's budget, and the children's self-esteem. Relationships between staff and families also become stronger as all work to create the best possible place for children to play and learn in.

Discovery Developmental Center's *Family Share* Program formalizes this volunteerism and gives all of our families the opportunity to become more fully involved in the life of the center and the care and education of their children. As you know, Discovery is a private non-profit organization. On average, tuition that families pay covers about 85% of operating costs. Fundraising and special project grants cover the rest. Rising operating costs as well as increasing wage and benefit costs place an ever larger percentage of our budget needing to be covered by these outside sources if we are to remain affordable to families in our community. Discovery's *Family Share* Program asks that each family fulfill a minimum of fifteen hours (15) of volunteer service each school year to help bridge this gap.

There are a wide variety of projects and opportunities throughout the year that can fit most schedules, skills, and interests. Specifics are included in this packet, and are updated annually. We are also very interested in ideas that we may not have thought of. These hours may be filled by you or any other family member. We also offer the option of paying \$20 per hour to fulfill your *Family Share* obligation. You may pay the \$300.00 up front if you wish, or we will bill you at year's end for the number of hours remaining. Families who attend Discovery year-round have the option of fulfilling some of their hours during the summer months as well.

We look forward to getting to know you and your family, and working together in a spirit of cooperation to the benefit of each member of our center's community.

Sincerely,

Collette Box, Director

The Family Share Program Hours Commitment

Discovery coordinates and offers a variety of opportunities for families to fulfill their yearly requirement of 15 volunteer hours. **All hours are self-recorded in the *Family Share Program Hours binder*** located in the Family Resources area. Statements are sent out two times during the year showing the total recorded hours or dollars donated year to date. Invoices for unfulfilled *Family Share* hours will be included with May tuition statements and/or with August statements as well, depending on family schedules. Tuition deposits will be used for unfilled hours.

Volunteer opportunities and special projects or events are communicated in several ways:

- An annual *Family Share* Program list of current and planned projects for the upcoming year (this document)
- Posted flyers and sign-up sheets
- Newsletters and/or email alerts
- Bulletin boards outside classroom doors

Discovery staff member Kathy Smith helps coordinate our *Family Share* program. Her role is to help connect family interests, skills, and time with organizational needs and help ensure that those families wanting to participate have the opportunity to do so. **Please complete the attached salmon form, sign it and return.** You will be contacted for confirmation and given more information shortly after your preferences form is received.

Each family's commitment to the *Family Share* Program and Discovery is crucial. The support given through this program has allowed us to achieve more with less financial output. Here's what was documented last year:

- **Programming** support, including 80+ hours of classroom support such as field trips, prep support, and special classroom guests.
- **Facilities and Maintenance** support, including 88 hours of outdoor tasks during work days and summer yard work season, and 103+ hours of indoor and outdoor maintenance projects like snow shoveling, painting, and light fixture upkeep.
- **Special projects support**, including 84+ hours for misc trike maintenance and repairs, sewing projects for the center, books on tape to iPod transfer project, children's library reorganization and upkeep, outdoor art easels built and installed, bird houses built for north yard, art classes, and a variety of other small building projects, recycling, and other support tasks. We had 3 family members serve on our Board of Directors.
- **Fundraising** support, including 21+ hours of ticket sales and on-site support for our Grapes, Barley, and Hops fundraiser.

To make a payment in lieu of committing to volunteer time, please make your \$300 check payable to Discovery and put into the Tuition envelope on Parent bulletin board. We will make sure you receive a donation acknowledgement for your personal taxes.

Family Share Program Hours Opportunities 2014 - 2015

We have divided up our opportunities for volunteering into **five** broad categories. Some of the tasks may be ongoing; others will be for one-time needs.

Programming

1. Volunteer to share a **special skill or talent** in the classroom with the children, or arrange a field trip at your place of employment for the children to gain some hands-on experiences in the community.
2. Help with **field trips**.
3. **Classroom prep** – teachers often have special projects to cut, color, laminate, etc. Projects can be done at home or here at the center, depending on needed supplies and/or schedules.
4. **Step in for 15-30 minutes** to help out during transition or other “busy” times during the day.

Facilities / Maintenance

1. **“Handy person” tasks** pop up through-out the year. They include one-time only tasks or on-going maintenance, and include such jobs as weatherization, light plumbing, HVAC system upkeep, and help with windows, blinds, cots, tables, chairs, and other facility maintenance chores.
2. **Annual work days** are scheduled once or twice a year to take care of indoor and outdoor maintenance tasks, and other improvement projects. They are usually held on Saturday mornings from 9:00 – 1:00. We offer child care and lunch as well! They can be fun family days.
3. **Routine lawn care** is needed every season (mowing, trimming, and raking) as well as help with **landscaping and gardening tasks**. Specific areas of the property will be assigned to interested families. Work can be done at your family’s convenience throughout the season.
4. Discovery contracts out for snow plowing in the winter, but help with **shoveling sidewalks** on snowy days is greatly appreciated. Not only is it helpful to have our entryway swept and/or shoveled, but we also need the boulevard sidewalk kept clear, and all Emergency Exits doors kept clear in the classrooms and north yard.
5. **Special classroom or center projects** show up on “wish-lists” throughout the year that require carpentry and/or construction needs. These are usually fairly simple designs, but add greatly to the center and classroom environments, both indoors and out.

Miscellaneous Ongoing Tasks

1. **Fish tank** monthly cleaning.
2. **Library maintenance** – variety of tasks, including data entry of new books, weekly sorting and re-shelving of books, and rotating books in the common areas.
3. **Recycling** – get cardboard, plastic, and paper down to recycling 2 – 3 times a month.

Fundraising

1. **Steering Committee participation** – Help plan an already established fundraiser or help us plan a new one.
2. **Other Committees** – support before, during, and after an event, marketing & promotion, solicitation

Special projects for 2014 / 2015

1. **Indoor flooring** – includes removing carpeting and hauling away.
2. **Complete Books on Tape to Mp3 project** – includes transferring cassette tapes to DDC external hard drive and then to 4 Mp3 players.
3. **Community Resource Library** – includes development of database and contacts and checkout system for books.
4. **North yard pergolas stained**
5. **Garden fence built** – includes hanging horizontal rails and gathering / cutting 2-3” diameter poles for vertical installation.
6. **Photo transfer project** – we have many years worth of slides to be transferred to a digital medium.