



December 6, 2017

Dear NCRC Community,

Since becoming Head of School in 2013, I have found every day at NCRC to be a gift — both professionally and personally. I have been able to work with an exceptional faculty and staff, the most supportive and engaged parents anyone could ask for, and a thoughtful and visionary Board of Trustees. At the end of this year, I will have completed four years with this wonderful institution and I couldn't be prouder of who we have become together. As much as I have loved and benefited from my years at NCRC, I feel that it is the right time for me to move onto the next season of my professional journey. So, it is with a great deal of mixed emotion that I share with you that this will be my last year at NCRC.

I came to NCRC with a strong foundation in and passion for early childhood education and how, if properly nurtured, it could unlock the potential of young children, regardless of their ability. NCRC's unfaltering commitment to all students seemed like the perfect fit. And I was right.

NCRC's unique mission of inclusion and the absolute devotion to this mission from every single person involved with this organization — faculty and staff, parents, caregivers, donors, community members, and the board — is nothing short of incredible. It permeates throughout everything we do here, from research on early childhood education to curriculum revision, from physical space to redesign — and more. At the very core of every single decision we make within these walls is the question, "How will this improve the education we provide to each and every student who comes through our doors?" This is heady, my friends. This is important work. I am honored to have walked this path with you.

The accomplishments that I can lay claim to in my tenure here simply could not have happened without your support and thoughtful consideration.

So, this is a mere sample of what we have accomplished for our children:

- We have reviewed our curriculum for the first time since the 1990s and found that while NCRC has remained relevant, we can and have made improvements based on what we have learned from sound research on early childhood education.
- We have successfully completed our AIMS accreditation and we remain the only stand-alone Washington DC area preschool to achieve this. I am confident we will also successfully complete our NAEYC accreditation this year.
- We started the farm-to-table initiative, using the gardens we created to teach children about food. Teachers have been trained to do this in interesting and engaging ways. This will allow our children to become the thought leaders of tomorrow, caretakers of a world only on loan to us.
- We created the five-day Bunny program to address the diverse needs of our young students, many of whom needed the boost and consistency that the additional days provided. The results clearly show this was a great move as both classes are doing very well.
- We created the Scholars Program, which provides tuition assistance to teachers who wish to earn a Master's degree. Through this, as well as our consistent emphasis on continuing education — whether formally through in-service programs or informally through our inspired casual conversations — we have created an atmosphere that not only allows such creativity and inquisitiveness about our chosen career path, it actually fosters it. And this makes me extraordinarily happy and confident that NCRC and its faculty and staff have both the theoretical and philosophical underpinning along with the excitement to learn that are critical in moving this organization forward. When I approached the board to propose this program they supported it

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unequivocally and helped find a way to fund it. This allows us to live up to the "Research" in National Child Research Center.

There are not enough words to express my thanks to NCRC staff and faculty. They are all dedicated, hardworking individuals who love what they do and hold the best interests of the entire community in trust. I will always be grateful to the students and parents who I have come to know and love. I have enjoyed watching you grow and having the opportunity to dream with you.

Thank you for trusting me with the future of our children. I have taken this trust seriously. It has been top of mind, top of spirit, top of heart every single day since I was honored to take this position. And I know, with absolute certainty, that a piece of it will remain with me for the rest of my days on this earth. And it will remind me of all that can be accomplished when we believe in the potential of all children. And it will warm me to my core.

During this time of transition, I am committed to ensuring that the mission and values that make NCRC unique continue to flourish. We have an incredible school year planned — a year filled with creativity, exploration, and adventure. And, as always, my door is open.

Yours sincerely,

Val
Valaida L. Wise, Ed.D.