



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. For families that are unable to volunteer, you have the option to pay \$10 per hour to fulfill your obligation to the center. You may pay the \$150 up front if you wish, or we will bill you at year's end for the number of hours your family falls short of the 15 hours required. 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 the May invoices and again with August invoices. Tuition deposits will be used for unfilled hours.

Family Share opportunities are communicated in several ways:

- An annual *Family Share* Program list of current and planned projects for the upcoming year
- Posted flyers and sign-up sheets on *Family Share* Bulletin Boards
- Bi-monthly newsletters
- Classroom bulletin boards outside classroom doors

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:

Building and set-up plan for Children's Pavilion was developed and followed through with; the lunchroom and pre-K classroom got painted; 3 new outdoor tables, a new structure for outdoor Country Kitchen sink, and rocker boards got made; two outdoor sheds for the preschool and pre-k classrooms were put together; we had party music at our year-end party! Other support we received – 19 hours of staff meeting support; 110+ hours of classroom support including field trips, prep support, and special classroom guests; 34 hours of breakfast and lunch support; 25+ hours of fundraiser support, plus a terrific venue for our Grapes, Barley, and Hops fundraiser, and several boat sponsorships and silent auction gifts for our annual regatta; 33 hours of tasks during work days; 72 hours of yard & snow maintenance; and 48 hours of other supports including recycling, computer/technology, library maintenance, trike tune-ups, and other miscellaneous tasks.

Each family is asked to select their preferences on the *Family Share* Program Hours Preferences Form. Please complete the attached form, sign it and return. You will be contacted for confirmation and given more contact information shortly after your preferences form is received.

To make a payment in lieu of committing to volunteer time, please make your \$150 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 2009 - 2010

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. Schedule a weekly or bimonthly time during **breakfast or lunch** to help facilitate pleasant eating times. Tasks include helping transition with hand-washing, sitting with children, helping with serving and pouring, and, should time allow, helping with clean-up afterwards. Breakfast help is appreciated between 8:00 and 9:00 am. Lunchtime help is appreciated between 12:00 and 1:00. Both tasks are best if done on a regular basis.
3. Volunteer to play with children from 4:30-6:00 on **staff meeting nights**. Three parents are needed each month. This also is best if done on a regular basis.
4. Help with **field trips**.

Facilities / Maintenance

1. **Handy person tasks and special classroom or center "projects"** always seems to come up. These requests will be posted on the *Family Share* bulletin boards, in newsletters, or by teacher request.
2. **Annual work days** are scheduled once or twice a year to take care of indoor and outdoor maintenance tasks, and other improvement projects. These 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**.
4. Discovery contracts out for snow plowing in the winter, but help with **shoveling sidewalks** on cold winter mornings is greatly appreciated.
5. **Routine vehicle maintenance** (checking oil, fluid levels, and tire pressure) is welcome spring, summer, and fall on Discovery's vans.

Miscellaneous Ongoing Tasks

1. **Fish tank** monthly cleaning.
2. **Library maintenance** – monthly data entry of new books, weekly sorting and reshelving of books, and a general reorganization of our library.
3. **Recycling** – get cardboard, plastic, and paper down to recycling 2 – 3 times a month.
4. **Outdoor tree and shrub maintenance** – helping keep the boulevard, shrubs, and yard trees weed-free.
5. **Ventilation filters** need to be cleaned on a monthly basis / ceiling ducts need to be vacuumed.

Fundraising

1. In March 2010, our 2nd Annual Grapes, Barley, and Hops beer and wine tasting event will take place. Components of the fundraiser include food, drink, and entertainment as well as set-up and clean-up tasks. Steering Committee members are always welcome.
2. In July 2010 the 7th **Annual Benefit Regatta**, *Sailing into the Future*, hosted by the North Flathead Yacht Club will take place. This is a large undertaking that needs plenty of support to be successful. Components of the fundraiser include food and entertainment, children's activities, and a silent auction, as well as coordination of the Regatta itself. Join the Steering Committee or take part in committee work.

Special projects for 2009 - 2010

1. **Indoor painting** – We continue our quest to get rooms in the center painted. Next up is the cubbie area and hallway. Masking could be done at any time; painting would need to be done on the weekend.
2. **Sandbox Structure Maintenance and bench making** – We are looking for a group to get the sand box structure oiled. We also want some benches designed into the structure, for practical AND aesthetic purposes.
3. **Outdoor Environment Committee** – We have an ongoing outdoor environment committee that has been developing plans for the north yard, and brainstorming ways to add to the south yard as well. Committee meetings are posted on the family share board. Look for news on upcoming projects to get involved with.