

The GRIT Program

Special points of interest:

- © ERC Presentation—"Including Samuel", video presentation & discussion—Monday, January 16
- © Understanding our Family's Value and Vision of Inclusion—GRIT Workshop—January 28 —offers opportunities for parents to further explore the meaning of "inclusion."

\$30,000 For 30 Years

Help Us

Reach Our

Goal—

Current total is \$1300!



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Inspiring Inclusive Futures

December 2011 & January 2012



Reflections on our Annual General Meeting (AGM)



submitted by Barb Reid

Thank you to all the parents and staff for joining us as GRIT hosted our AGM last month. The delicious Greek dinner, catered by Cosmos Greek Taverna always sets the tone for a relaxing evening. As we recognized GRIT's 30th Anniversary year, we were inspired by our special guests, alumni parent Kim Guay and 3 students from junior high school who shared about their friendship with her son Peter. Also, Dianne McConnell, Director of Special Education, shared Alberta Education's new and exciting framework for inclusive education.

On the financial side, time was taken to discuss the challenges GRIT is currently experiencing. At the core of these challenges is the reality that while significant time and energy has been invested in fundraising to "enhance our services", these profits have now become essential to balancing our budget.

The GRIT Board of Directors will explore creative funding opportunities through new grants, corporate sponsorship and private donations. We know a brighter financial future is critical if services to children and families are to remain the same for the 2012-2013 program year. We will keep you posted.

If you would like a copy of the AGM booklet, please contact the office or see our website at www.gritprogram.com.

To support our financial efforts, GRIT has launched a \$30,000 fundraising campaign to celebrate our 30th Anniversary Year! Please see information inside the newsletter for ways you can choose GRIT as one of your family's charities of choice!

Introducing....our NEW WEBSITE!



In honor of our 30th Anniversary Year and our new logo, we have a brand new look on our website! Check it out at www.gritprogram.com. Special thanks to GRIT staff **Leslie Dancause** and web designer **Roman Sokolowski** for making GRIT'S new vision come true!

Also be sure to check us out on Facebook!

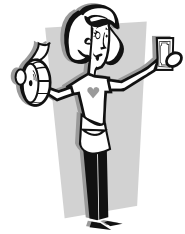


GRIT Updates

Volunteers Needed—Check your Calendar!!

Our list is growing, but more are needed to break our record of
120 volunteers ALL IN ONE WEEK!

MARCH 13 & 14 (Tuesday & Wednesday) - CASINO
MARCH 16 (Friday) - OILERS 50/50



Come meet new friends and have fun while supporting a great cause—GRIT!!
Contact Heather at 780.454.9910 or gritprog@gritprogram.com

Parent Workshop

Understanding our Family's Value and Vision of Inclusion

This action packed Saturday is designed based on information from alumni families who tell us how important it was for them to be clear on the meaning of "inclusion" and to speak to inclusion in their own words.



Saturday January 28, 2012

10:30 - 3:00 p.m. @ GRIT office

Lunch included *On site childcare provided*

Facilitators: Barb Reid, Executive Director and an Alumni GRIT Parent

As a value, inclusion is much more than an educational placement for a child. Inclusion touches all aspects of family life and decision making.

This workshop will provide an opportunity for parents to develop a written vision statement to serve as a tool to guide their priorities as they enter school. A vision statement has been known to open doors for creating a positive partnership between family and school, and ensures you move in the direction of your hopes and dreams.

Plan to attend this interactive session where parents will:

- Explore their personal value and meaning of "inclusion"
- Gain insight into how inclusion touches family, community and school experiences for your son or daughter.
- Reflect on informed parent decision making about your child's future
- Write a vision statement to guide your child's experience of inclusion for kindergarten and beyond



**For on-site childcare purposes please register by January 26
to the GRIT office, 780-454-9910.**

GRIT Updates—Cont'd

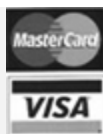
\$30,000 For 30 Years

This year, we are celebrating 30 years of growth with children, families and our communities! As the holiday season draws near we ask you to join us as we launch our new campaign.

Thanks to strong families with a vision, dedicated and caring staff, along with financial support from community partners and friends we can continue *inspiring inclusive futures!*



Give a gift to The GRIT Program in the name of a friend or family member, in celebration of a birthday, an anniversary, in memory, or other special holidays.



Make A Donation Today:

✓ on our website ✓ by phone ✓ by payroll deduction/matching
✓ by mail ✓ in person at our office.

We accept Visa, MasterCard, Cash & Cheques.



Web site donors will receive their tax receipt immediately by email. *GRIT's Charitable Tax Number 131527723 RR001

Reflections Of An Inclusive Journey

As an alumni GRIT family, I am pleased to share that our daughter Krystyna now attends Grade 7 at St. Thomas Moore Catholic School, included in the regular class. When I look back, I can say that my husband and I did not know anything about "inclusion" when we started our new lives with Krystyna. I remember the neurosurgeon's nurse telling me about GRIT, but as soon as she said it, it left my brain. After all, we were just told our daughter would be profoundly disabled for the rest of her life. The last thing we were thinking – or wanted quite frankly – was inclusion.

Then we found GRIT – or they found us, I'm not sure which. A lot of the decisions to be made about Krystyna fell to me because I was staying home with her. I embraced inclusion – sort of. Then we started pre-school.

The developmental specialist guided Krystyna through the activities of pre-school. She learned to crawl because she wanted to see what the other kids were doing. She learned to recognize faces because in the faces she saw her friends, three times a week.

As we got closer to going to school, kindergarten first, I became skeptical. Why should I "force" my child on the school system? Was it fair to the other kids? Was it fair to Krystyna?

Once in school, I did face a few challenges. I fought hard for what I felt she needed. Working with school staff is something I am not totally confident in my abilities yet, but we work them out gradually. With the help of GRIT, I had the bravado to keep my focus on the things that needed to happen to make sure Krystyna was supported. In time, I began to feel more confident in what inclusion did and could continue to do for Krystyna.

Outside of school, Krystyna is enrolled in ballet class. Krystyna is enrolled in art classes at the new Art Gallery downtown. She has more friends and acquaintances than I have had my whole life and she brings the biggest smile to everyone's face. Some days I think the entire City of Edmonton knows who Krystyna is.

Our life is good!

Bruce & Kelly Lautrup

GRIT Updates—Cont'd

ERC Edmonton Regional Coalition for Inclusive Education

"Including Samuel"

- video presentation and discussion

Monday, January 16th, 2012

7:00 - 9:00

At the Edmonton Down Syndrome Society office
9139 - 39 Avenue, Edmonton

"We are a collective and unified voice within the Edmonton region for inclusive education. Through education and advocacy, we promote access for students with special needs to receive the support they need to learn, academically and socially, as valued members of regular classrooms in their neighborhood schools or schools of choice."

Parent P.O.W.E.R.

Play Opportunities Within
Everyday Routines



Fridays 9:30—11:00 am

February 3rd to March 16th

Parent POWER is a six week play and learn group for you and your child. During this group, you will be guided through strategies you can use to enhance the quality of interactions you share and responses you experience with your child.

For more information or for a registration brochure, please talk to a consultant on your team.



Parent 2 Parent

Support has many definitions and many benefits to us as individuals. Having a child with a disability can sometimes be isolating and support can be difficult to find. The GRIT program wants to help connect parents together so they can support each other during their family's journey.

TOPICS FOR UPCOMING SESSIONS:

DECEMBER: PARENTING & BEHAVIORS

JANUARY: GRIEF & LOSS

FEBRUARY: SELF CARE

Monday Mornings

9:30—11:30 a.m.



GRIT Updates—Cont'd

DECEMBER STAFF LUNCHEON (in lieu of Community Learning Workshop series)

Tuesday, December 20, 2011

This year's luncheon will take place on Tuesday, **December 20** from 12:30 till 3:00 pm at the **Edmonton Petroleum Club at 11110—108 Street**. The luncheon provides an opportunity for team building and recognizes the contributions and work of our staff. Since the luncheon takes place in the afternoon, morning programs will progress as usual. The luncheon is paid by monthly contributions made by staff to the social fund. We look forward to seeing ALL staff. If for any reason you are NOT able to attend, please call 780-454-9910 by **December 16** to ensure we have accurate numbers for the caterer.

Self Care Raffle



In the spirit of self care, GRIT is fortunate to have some amazing support in putting together a self care raffle package for our staff. Tickets are \$5.00 each and can be purchased by seeing Heather at the office or at our luncheon. Watch for the basket to be on display in the prep room soon.

The winning ticket will be drawn at the staff luncheon at **2:30 pm** on **Tuesday, December 20th**. **You must be in attendance to win!** Proceeds will help purchase an IPAD for our children's resource library. *Don't miss your chance for some self care pampering!*

JANUARY WORKSHOP SERIES

****Check your workshop calendar for more information and registration.****

Tuesday, January 24—"Option"

Goal Setting (GRIT Staff only) (am)

Reflection (GRIT Staff only) (pm)

Wednesday, January 25—"Core"

Communicating with Pictures (am)

Observation & Assessment (pm)

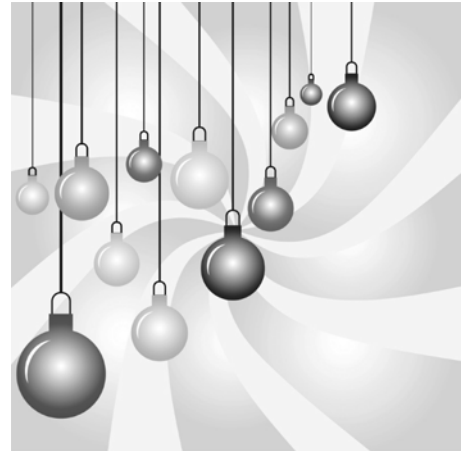


Upcoming Workshops:

****Saturday, February 11**

Sign Language—Next Words: Beyond Basic Signs

GRIT office from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. Using signing while speaking can encourage whole brain development, language and memory skills in children. Have fun, and take home new skills that build your child's use of language.



On Friday, November 4th, we had our **Fall Festival at the GRIT Office**. A special thank you to Gina for planning and organizing this wonderful day. Thank

you to all our families and staff who participated and made it a success! The children had so much fun petting, and holding the bunnies, chickens and Josephine the wallaby! It was a great opportunity to meet with other families. A good time was had by all!

GRIT Updates—Cont'd

Cold Weather Driving Policy

When road conditions are unsafe due to a **travel advisory warning** the child's safety is always first. Both the developmental specialist and parent must agree in order for the developmental specialist to **transport the child**. If **either** the developmental specialist or parent is not comfortable, the child's program can continue at home.

If the developmental specialist is unable to travel to the child's location due to road and weather conditions, i.e. rural, the developmental specialist may:



❄️ Come help or do prep in the GRIT office.

OR

❄️ Take a day without pay

Always inform the parent and the GRIT office of any absences, 780-454-9910 choose #1 for the health line. (Taken from the "Guide to Programming 2011/12" page 20.) Please refer to the guide for other common questions.

Staff Health Line

As per the *Guide to Programming*, Page 20 if developmental specialists are unable to come to work for any reason it is your responsibility to:



1. Call the parent and determine whether the parent wants a substitute if one is available.
2. Leave a message on the GRIT Health Line (voice mail box #1) when absent from work for **ANY** reason. Include a **confirmation of whether the parent wants a substitute for the day**.
3. **If a consultant is visiting on that program day**, the DS must call and leave a message for the consultant(s) in their personal voice mailbox.



All GRIT Staff



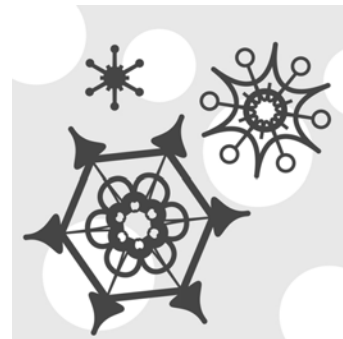
Please ensure that GRIT has your current mailing address on file; any T4 tax forms that we are unable to deliver in person will be mailed out to addresses currently on file with GRIT.



Reduce the spread—

We strongly encourage families and staff to follow the procedures below to reduce the risk in coming down with any illnesses:

- ☞ Cover your cough by coughing into your elbow or sleeve
- ☞ Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Hand sanitizers are also effective.
- ☞ We ask that staff be extremely cautious when they are sick. Stay at home rather than exposing the family and child you work with.



Kindergarten Christmas Concert

If the child you work with **requires** your assistance to participate in the Kindergarten Christmas concert outside of program hours, GRIT will provide up to 2 hours of flex time that can be taken back at a mutually agreed time with your family. Please include this information on your time sheet with an explanation in the comment section.



Creative Corner—A Very Sensory Holiday

By Gina Blank & Vicki Traub, Resource Coordinators



As Canadians, we are snow experts! Turns out, when it comes to creative play ideas with snow, we can be snow experts, too! As the fluffy flakes fall, here are some fun ideas when it comes to playing on a snowy day:

Snow painting – Fill a spray bottle with watered-down tempera paint, and add colour to your snowman, snow fort, or create an artful masterpiece out of the front lawn!

Make a snowman that will turn heads — get creative with his arms, face, and clothes. Duplo block buttons! Straws for spiky hair instead of a hat! A Spiderman mask face! Spatula arms! ...What can your child think of?

Bring the snow inside—fill a small bin and explore the cold, fluffy properties of snow together.

Children love to help! Did it *just* snow? Let your child help you shovel the sidewalk. Keep it fun—each of you start at one end and meet for a high-five in the middle; pile the shoveled snow in one spot to make a snow mountain; or shovel patterns in the snow (a zigzag line, for example).

A sweet treat - Heat some maple syrup, and pour a little onto *fresh* snow to make home-made toffee candy!



Two songs about snow for a musical moment:

Snowflakes Falling

To the tune of London Bridge

Snowflakes falling from the sky
From the sky, from the sky
Snowflakes falling from the sky
To the earth below

Watch them as they dance and
twirl
Dance and twirl, dance and twirl
Watch them as they dance and
twirl
Soft white winter snow

ACTIONS

Repeat the sign for snow:



Twirl around on the spot

Sign for snow.

I'm a Little Snowman

To the tune of I'm a Little Teapot

I'm a little snowman
Short and fat
Here are my buttons
Here is my hat

When the sun comes out
I cannot stay
I just slowly melt away!

ACTIONS

Bring palms together for "short."
Pull hands apart for "fat"
Point to chest in 3 spots up or down
for "buttons."
Pat head for "hat".

Hands over head in an arc for "sun".
Wiggle down to the floor to "melt"!

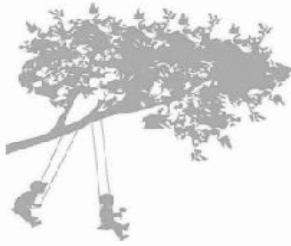
When the fun has been had outside, come inside, make some hot chocolate, and enjoy a good winter story under a warm blanket! We recommend:

Snowmen at Night by Carolyn Buehner, **That's Not My Penguin** (or Polar Bear) by Usborne Books, **It's Winter** by Jim Pickering, or **The Mitten** by Jan Brett.



Website of the Month—December 2011

By Gina Blank & Vicki Traub, Resource Coordinators



let the children play

inspiring early childhood education

<http://progressiveearlychildhoodeducation.blogspot.com/>

Background

- This blog was started by an Early Childhood Teacher with 20 years experience in daycares and preschools. Her goal is to share her experiences and connect with others who share her passion for:

- Play based learning
- Progressive education
- Outdoor play
- Nature play

Highlights

- Great posts that show ideas for play in a variety of settings. For each idea pictures are provided, information on the planning and preparation and feedback from those who tried it and their successes.
- Links to places to learn, share and connect with others who promote the importance of play in early childhood.
- Each week will feature an inspiring play idea.



Why we like it:

This blog is full of amazing ideas for play, and so it fits with GRIT's philosophy of Learning through Play. It provides an opportunity to learn how people in different countries are encouraging the value of learning through play in their own programs and challenges us to try something new.



December & January at a Glance



December 3	International Day of Persons w/Disabilities
December 5	Parent 2 Parent (am) Playgroup (am & pm)
December 7	Parent 2 Parent evening session
December 12	Parent 2 Parent (am) Playgroup (am & pm)
December 19	Parent 2 Parent (am) Playgroup (am & pm)
December 20	Staff Luncheon (pm)
December 24, 2011 —January 8, 2012 Christmas Recess	

January 9	Programming resumes
January 16	Parent 2 Parent (am) Playgroup (am & pm) ERC Presentation (evening)
January 23	Parent 2 Parent (am) Playgroup (am & pm)
January 24	Workshop Series—Option
January 25	Workshop Series—Core
January 28	Visioning Workshop
January 30	Parent 2 Parent (am) Playgroup (am & pm)





RDSP INFORMATION



IMPORTANT INFORMATION on RDSP's, CANADIAN DISABILITY SAVINGS GRANTS AND BONDS

Registered Disability Savings Plans - <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability/issues>

The RDSP is a long-term savings plan to help Canadians with disabilities and their families save for the future. The "beneficiary" of the RDSP is the person who will receive the money in the future. Anyone can contribute to an RDSP if they get the written permission of the RDSP holder (the person or organization that opens and manages the RDSP).

There is no annual contribution limit to the RDSP, but there is a lifetime contribution limit of \$200,000. The deadline for contributions each year to an RDSP is December 31 of that year.

To help you save, the Government pays a matching grant of up to \$3,500, depending on the amount contributed and your family income. The Government also pays a bond (see below) of up to \$1,000 a year into the RDSPs of low-income and modest-income Canadians. Grants and bonds are paid until the year the beneficiary turns 49.

Earnings accumulate tax-free, until money is taken out of the RDSP. To encourage savings, grants and bonds must remain in the RDSP for at least 10 years. There is no impact on federal benefits, such as the Canada Child Tax Benefit, the Goods and Services Tax Credit, Old Age Security, and Employment Insurance.

To open an RDSP and apply for the grant and bond or to get further information, contact your participating Financial Institution. Many banks offer information sessions on the RDSP to give families further information.

Canadian Disability Savings Grants- <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability/issues>

The Canada Disability Savings Grant is a matching grant that the Government will deposit into your Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) to help you save. The Government provides matching grants of up to 300%, depending on the amount contributed and the Beneficiary's Family Income. The maximum grant is \$3,500 each year, with a limit of \$70,000 over your lifetime. Grants are paid into the RDSP until the year you turn 49 years old.

The following are banking institutions that can give you further information:



BMO Bank of Montreal.	1-800-665-7700
Bank of Nova Scotia.	1-877-929-4499
CIBC Securities Inc.	1-800-465-3863
The RBC Royal Bank.	1-800-463-3863
The TD Waterhouse Canada Inc.	1-866-280-2022



***Information throughout the year is also available through PLAN Edmonton—you can contact them at:
#103, 18304-105 Ave ,Edmonton T5S 1R5, Tel: (780) 488-2422

Parent Information and Learning Opportunities

Please remember that GRIT will reimburse parents for learning opportunities outside of GRIT if it contributes to increasing their parenting skills. Please call or email Sherri for more information.



2011 Open House & Arbor Awards



December 8th, 2011
From 4 - 7pm with awards at 6pm
Come join us for an evening of recognition and celebration.

Gateway Association wants to recognize its members and other community leaders for their strength in making a difference, promoting the values of the community living movement.

The awards honour people in 5 areas:

- * Youth Leadership
 - * Family Strength
 - * Volunteerism
 - * Service Sector
 - * Community Leadership
- #104, 18304-105 Ave
Edmonton, AB T5S 0C6

For more information, please call 780-454-0701 ext. 101
info@gatewayassociation.ca



PARENT WORKSHOP SERIES

Extraordinary Parenting

Strategies for Parenting the Child who Learns Differently

These Saturday morning sessions are facilitated by **Mardi Bernard R.N.**, who has spent many years helping families and children who are struggling in school with their learning, emotions, social skills and routines. Join us for this popular 4 part parent workshop and **gain the confidence and skills to help your child live up to their full potential.**

Winter 2012 Workshop Information

Jan 21, Jan 28, Feb 4 & Feb 11

9:30 am - 12:30 pm

LD Edmonton Office

10310 - 56 Street

Members: \$80.00 Non-members: \$125.00

Individual Refresher Sessions

Individual session registration is available for past Extraordinary Parenting workshop participants only.

Members: \$25/session Non-members: \$40/session

Registration & Info: Contact Dina at 780-466-1011 or email at programs@LDEdmonton.ca

Getting to Know Your Community Fair

Join us in celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities in Edmonton

International Day of Persons With Disabilities

Time:

Friday December 2, 2011

11:00 am - 2:00 pm

Place:

Terwillegar Community
Recreation Centre
2051 Leger Road



"Nothing About Us Without Us"

All ages and skill levels are welcome! This event is completely free with refreshments and lunch provided.

Parent Information and Learning Opportunities—Cont'd



Join us! These workshops will provide opportunities for brothers and sisters of children with special health, mental health and developmental needs to obtain peer support and education within a recreational context.

6-8 year olds #432479	Saturday, January 21 Muttart Conservatory 9626 - 96 A St	1:00pm - 4:00pm \$26.75
9-12 year olds #432478	Saturday, March 3 Terwillegar Recreation Ctr 2051 Leger Road	11:00am - 3:00pm \$32.10
13-15 year olds #432477	Saturday, March 17 City Arts Centre 10943-84 Ave	10:00am - 2:00pm \$32.10

To Register call 311 or www.edmonton.ca/ereg



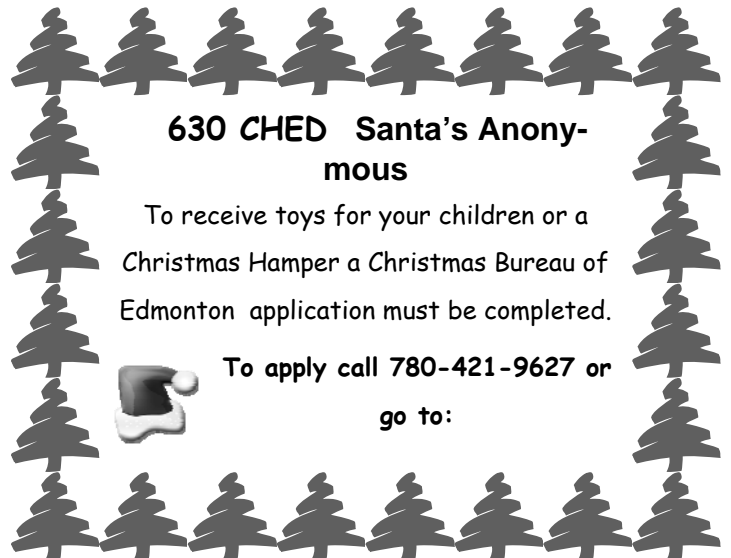
THE CITY OF
Edmonton COMMUNITY SERVICES



Development and human rights for all

December 3, 2011
International Day of
Persons with Disabilities

"Together for a better world for all"



630 CHED Santa's Anonymous

To receive toys for your children or a Christmas Hamper a Christmas Bureau of Edmonton application must be completed.

To apply call 780-421-9627 or go to:



CHILDREN'S
Autism Services
OF EDMONTON



5TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
JANUARY 19-21, 2012

You won't want to miss...

For more information
For the conference
Please go to:
www.childrensautism.ca
Or call 780-495-9235

The GRIT Program
14930 - 114 Avenue
Edmonton, AB

Phone: 780-454-9910
Fax: 780-455-1806
E-mail: gritprog@gritprogram.com
Website: www.gritprogram.com



inspiring inclusive futures

The GRIT Program's Mission Statement

To provide a family centered, early education program which will assist the child with special needs to be fully included in family life and community.

To provide the information and support necessary for the successful transition to and full inclusion in a community school.

To promote public education and public awareness in support of inclusion and inclusive communities.

Do you know how far your donations dollars to GRIT can go?

For example.....If you donate \$500 to GRIT, you receive a \$200 tax credit. That means your \$500 donation only costs you \$300! And GRIT can take that \$500 donation and have it matched by the Alberta Government (Culture & Community Spirit) to make \$1000!..... **In other words we turn \$300 into \$1000!!**

Please keep GRIT in mind for your 2011 tax donations by:

- ◆ designating GRIT as your charity of choice through United Way payroll deduction
- ◆ donating online at CanadaHelps.org* For more information, see our website at www.gritprogram.com
- ◆ monthly donating on your Visa or MasterCard
- ◆ GRIT Staff payroll deductions



For more information please call either Sue, ext. 202 or Heather, ext. 200.

All donations to GRIT support the children's growth and learning, and enhancement of GRIT's service to families. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Thank You

GRIT would like to thank the all the people for their kind donations.

