

Inside this issue:

GRIT Visioning Workshop	2
Spring Festival	2
Workshop Series	3
Grad & Posters	4
Toy Information	5
Good News!	6
Creative Corner	7
Website of the Month	8
Parent Corner	9
Learning Opportunities	10



\$30,000 For 30 Years

Help Us
Reach Our
Goal—
Our current
total
is
\$10,926.63!



February & March 2012

January 2012 marks the start of GRIT's 30th anniversary!

As we look back over the past three decades, we see significant change in our communities; we are reaping the reward of **inspiring inclusive futures!**

GRIT families have embraced the value of inclusion within their families and have been influential in their advocacy and leadership to influence values, practices and policies for inclusion within education, post-secondary experiences, volunteer positions and meaningful employment. For staff, we continue to be honored and privileged to learn and walk along with families on their inclusive journey. ***A celebration indeed!***

Join us as we celebrate and re-unite families and staff, through capturing of our learning journeys in simple ways. Here is how:

- ◆ Join us on Facebook at **The GRIT Program**. Take a few minutes to tell us why **"YOU love GRIT."** Share the impact GRIT has had on you or your family (a sentence or two from the heart would be great). We will also post some of these testimonials in upcoming newsletters.
- ◆ Send photos to create an **"inclusion wall"** at GRIT of our alumni' families' inclusive experiences. (for example: submit 3—photos: GRIT graduation/high school graduation/post secondary accomplishments.) Pictures to be a maximum of 5 x 7" each. For more information, see our website at www.gritprogram.com.



"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams"

- Henry David Thoreau-

PLATINUM SPONSORS



GRIT Updates

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.

**Don't miss
out—
register
Today!**

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 2012

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

Lunch included *On Site Childcare Provided*



Facilitators: Barb Reid, Executive Director and Carolyn Graves, 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 offer opportunities 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 childcare purposes please register by January 24 to the GRIT office, 780-454-9910

SPRING FESTIVAL!

Friday, March 2

9:30 am – 3:00 pm

- Who:** Everyone is invited to join the fun!
- What:** Fun for all ages—crafts, games, songs, face painting, and an inflatable playhouse!
- Where:** The GRIT office (14930-114 Avenue, Edmonton)



This event is also a potluck lunch!

Please bring enough snacks or pot-luck style luncheon item to share with six people.

Coffee and juice will be provided.



PLEASE NOTE: Due to severe allergies, please **AVOID** bringing anything containing nuts or fish/shellfish.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES IN WORKSHOPS AND WORKSHOP DATES:

Our annual **GRIT Conference** has been moved from **February** to **March**. Watch your email and/or our **GRIT website** (www.gritprogram.com) for more detailed information to come.

Workshops originally scheduled for **March** will now be held on **February 28 and 29**. See below for more information.

FEBRUARY WORKSHOP SERIES

Check your workshop calendar for more information and registration.

Tuesday, February 28—"Core"

Walls, Windows and Doors (am)

Making Friends: Basic Building Block of Inclusion (pm)

Wednesday, February 29—"Option"

Inclusion: After GRIT Who Else Do You Call? (am)

Children's Rights (pm)



Onsite Childcare for Workshop Series Days:

Childcare services will be available Workshop Days for February 28 & 29. PLEASE NOTE: Childcare will not be available for our March off site conference day, but will resume again in April.



- ➔ Take advantage of this opportunity—excellent care from past development specialists.
- ➔ Childcare will be provided to the GRIT child and sibling
- ➔ Childcare staff will be available from 8:45 am to 11:15 am and 12:45 pm to 3:15 pm
- ➔ Parents will be responsible for providing lunch for their children and administering of any medication

In order to ensure appropriate care of children, we ask that you phone to confirm your child's participation at least one week in advance.

WELCOME

Welcome back to Lisa Kohel, Speech Language Pathologist on the Purple Team returning from maternity leave.

Good bye and best of luck to Debbie Hubbard as she returns to her retirement plans!

GRIT Updates—Cont'd

Staff Health Line

As per the *Guide to Programming*, Page 19 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 scheduled to visit on that program day**, please ensure either the parent or DS calls the consultant's voice mailbox **by 8:15 am to cancel** as this is when our staff is checking for daily updates. A directory of staff is available by pressing 411.

Program Hours

A reminder to families and staff of the importance of respecting program start and end times agreed upon by both parties. Developmental Specialists are encouraged to complete their time sheet on a **daily basis** to reflect actual hours worked. The parent's signature is required and indicates agreement of program hours completed. Thanks to all for getting your timesheet into the office during Community Learning Workshop Days.



GRIT Posters

A reminder to parents and developmental specialists to begin collecting artwork and photos of the child with family and friends for the GRIT poster and memory book. We can't wait to see the new posters in the spring!



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, 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.,



Request for Graduation Photos

Every year at the GRIT year end picnic and graduation, we celebrate the children that are leaving GRIT and moving into grade one. A power point presentation of photos submitted by parents and staff captures some special memories. From experience, we know the results are wonderful but we need your help.

We require:

- ✿ A photo or two of your child at play with siblings and/or friends.
- ✿ Family photo.... (we know it can be hard to get small children together for the family photo so we are giving you lots of advance notice).

We appreciate photos that are in digital format. If this is not possible your photo can be scanned at the GRIT office.

Photos can be emailed to gritprog@gritprogram.com. Printed photos will be returned. **Deadline** for submitting photos is **April 25**.

NEW FAMILY APPLICATIONS



This is the time of year that the Intake process begins for children entering the program for next year. Many families and staff find their way to The GRIT Program by talking to current or former GRIT families and employees.

Thank you to all our program ambassadors!

Please direct families interested in applying for next year to Sherri at 780-454-9910, ext. 207 and any potential new hires to Christina at 780-454-9910, ext. 215.

On **March 22nd** there will be a drop in Open House for new families. This is a great opportunity for families to meet staff and tour the office.



Spread the word!!!

Playroom Clean-up:

Vicki and Danielle work very hard to ensure the playroom is neat, clean and welcoming at all times. **When leaving** (especially on non playgroup days), **please take a minute to ensure that the room looks the same as it did on your arrival** e.g. toys cleaned and put back in their proper places, craft table tidy, etc.

Thank you!



Peanut & Nut Allergies

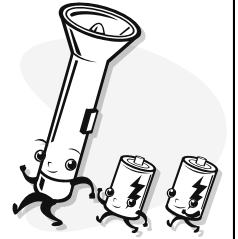
Please be advised GRIT is a **peanut and nut free environment**. We appreciate your understanding in ensuring the food brought into the office does not contain nuts or were made in a facility where there might have been exposure to nuts. Safe items manufactured in Canada are marked with a **safe to share** label. GRIT is a nut free environment to protect those children and staff that have allergies which can be life threatening. Your assistance will enable us to ensure the safety of all who come to GRIT.



Toy Room Reminders

BATTERY BLITZ !! - NEW PROCEDURE !!


Please ensure ALL batteries are removed from resource items and placed in the appropriate battery bin drawer by Barb's desk. Containing the batteries in one bin will ensure:



- * Less damage to resources due to corrosion.
- * Better battery usage.
- * Substantial cost savings.

Also remember to recycle any dead batteries (bin located on Barb's hutch)

TOYS: To keep our toys in tip-top shape for future loans

 toys are to be cleaned **BEFORE** returning to the GRIT office.

One DS has shared she cleans the toys at home, soaking those that can be in bleach for about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour and let air dry before putting in the bag. For those items that can not be soaked, she freezes them to eliminate any bugs.

BOOKS: When returning books, please place on the appropriate shelf matching the sticker on the back of the book.

NEW RESOURCES: As new resources come into the office and are processed, they are then displayed on the "New Resources" Shelf in the toy room across from Barb Round's desk. So that everyone can become familiar with our new resources we ask that items stay on the shelf for the month for all to see.

Wanting to reserve a new resource: Sign up on the reservation sheet on the clipboard (located in the toy room).



FREE RESOURCES:

Our libraries are constantly being purged to make room for new resources coming in. Check out the free items at the front of Barb's desk waiting to find new homes.



GOOD NEWS STORIES



GRIT SUPPORTERS—We are very fortunate to have wonderful benefactors supporting our day to day work of “Inspiring Inclusive Futures”. Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to:



The GRIT Program is honored and proud to be the recipients of a fundraiser “*Building a Better Future*” hosted by **CPI Construction Ltd.** in October 2011.

CPI Construction, a major general contractor in the Edmonton area, is the employer of a father of a 2nd year GRIT child. Our most sincere thanks and appreciation to **Jayson Barclay, Carl Semashkewich, Stan Colville** and the staff at CPI Construction for sharing their community spirit with The GRIT Program. In December CPI Construction presented the GRIT Program with a cheque in the amount of **\$17,500.00!!**

“Thank you to CPI, not only for your continued support to all children within the special needs community.”

Gateway Arbor Awards



In December two GRIT families were successful recipients of the **Carlie Morgan Family Fun Encouragement Award** which fosters family togetherness through activity.



Congratulations to the Lat and Cyre Family!



Volunteers Still Needed—Check your Calendar!!

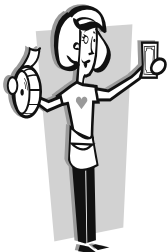
If you've been thinking of signing up—Now's the time!

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

Creative Corner—Let's Play!

By Gina Blank & Vicki Traub, Resource Coordinators

Play is one of the most important things that a child will do each day because play is learning. It should be spontaneous and it can happen anywhere and anytime you are with your child. Children need a lot of time to explore and play in a variety of ways in a variety of settings. Remember the most important thing is to have fun!

Sea in a sink



You can fill your sink or bathtub with blue water, shells, pebbles, colored stones, green pipe cleaners for seaweed, sea creatures and boats and any other things your child loves to play with. Explore the concepts of in & out, wet & dry, under & on top. You can sing songs such as "Slippery Fish", or make up your own song like: "The fish in the water

goes splash, splash splash (To the tune of Wheels on the Bus).

Set up a fort

The great thing about a fort is that it can be made anywhere with just about anything; blankets over chairs or couches, a big box that has been cut in two and placed like a tepee over an area, or a pop up tent. Forts are a great place to bring in a flashlight and make shadows, read stories, have a special snack or do all three. Let your child decide where to make the fort and how to put it together, encourage decision making and problem solving (Of course provide help as needed so



Art using salt



On a piece of card stock or construction paper have your child make an outline of something, e.g. a snowman. You can draw the circles on the paper and count "1, 2" or say "small circle, big circle" and then have your child try to squeeze the glue over the outline. Fill in the outline with glue, drawing with glue is great for strengthening hands. If squeezing glue out of a bottle is too difficult for your child try putting some in a container and let them spread it on with a stick. They can add various craft items, buttons, pom poms, to add some detail. Pour or sprinkle salt over the picture, shake off any excess and let it dry. Of course let your child make whatever kind of picture they like which is a great opportunity to ask question about size and shapes they make or encourage them to trace it with their fingers.

Singing and dancing

Music is a great way for kids to be able to express themselves. Provide some props to use when singing, such as, a decorated paper towel tube to use as a microphone, clothes to dress up in or instruments you have on hand or make yourself (a shaker made out of a plastic egg filled with rice). Songs like Blowing Bubbles (To the tune of Fere Jacques) is great for repetition of



Words

Blowing bubbles
Blowing bubbles
Blow, Blow, Blow
Blow, Blow, Blow
Pop them in the air
Pop them in the air
Blow, Blow, Blow

Actions

Blow bubbles as you sing and give your child a turn to blow the bubbles.
Make blowing actions with your mouth
Try to get your child to imitate you
Try popping the bubbles you blow
Make "pop, pop" sounds



Website of the Month—February/March 2012

By Gina Blank & Vicki Traub, Resource Coordinators

Website: Irresistible Ideas for Play-Based Learning

<http://www.playbasedlearning.com.au/>

Purpose: To provide early childhood educators and parents of young children play-based ideas for activities, crafts, and other projects.

Highlights:

- ☺ Provides ideas across a variety of categories in play and learning (e.g. literacy, dramatic play, arts and crafts, etc.).
- ☺ Showcases other playschools around Australia (and the world) who also have great ideas for play-based learning activities.
- ☺ Links to other blogs and early childhood websites.



Why We Like It: It is obvious that this website fits with our core value of Learning Through Play. The authors present ideas for activities that engage all children and cover a variety of categories, such as literacy, pretend play, outdoor play, and music.

Craft ideas often include the use of natural and recycled materials, like driftwood, fabric scraps, and beads and buttons for mosaics. There is also an emphasis on sensory play, including such things as Sand Playdough, mudpies, and Squishy Paint Bags. As Resource Coordinators, we have already utilized a few ideas in our own playgroup!

The website uses a reader-friendly blog format. There are photos in almost every post, allowing readers to clearly see the creative process going on in various preschool settings.

February & March at a Glance

February 6	Parent 2 Parent (am) Playgroup (am & pm)
February 8	Parent 2 Parent (Evening)
February 13	Parent 2 Parent (am) Playgroup (am & pm)
February 14	<i>Happy Valentine's Day!</i>
February 20	<i>Family Day Holiday</i>
February 27	Parent 2 Parent (am) Playgroup (am & pm)
February 28	Workshop Series—Core
February 29	Workshop Series—Option
February 28	Parent 2 Parent (am)

MARCH GRIT CONFERENCE—Watch your email for more information!

March 2	<i>Spring Festival</i> —(am & pm)
March 5	Parent 2 Parent (am) Playgroup (am & pm)
March 7	Parent 2 Parent (Evening)
March 12	Parent 2 Parent (am) Playgroup (am & pm)
March 13 & 14	GRIT Casino!
March 16	Oilers 50/50!
March 19	Parent 2 Parent (am) Playgroup (am & pm)

March 24—April 1 Spring Recess

Parent Corner

A FRESH NEW START...

THE NEW YEAR IS A TIME THAT ALWAYS INSPIRES US TO MAKE NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS AND CAN GIVE US A RENEWED ENERGY TO MAKE SOME POSITIVE CHANGES. HERE ARE SOME TIPS ON HOW WE CAN MAKE SOME SUBTLE INNER CHANGES THAT MAY HELP BALANCE OUR INNER 'SELF' WITH OUR 'OUTER' SELF.

LOVE YOURSELF and others around you without limitations. This is the ultimate focus of all our work, at the very centre of everything, if you can truly love and accept yourself, then your life experience has no limits.



Forgive Everyone and Release the Past

When we hold something un-forgiven inside, we are nurturing anger, hatred and resentment or maybe even guilt. These emotions lock us into the moment and drain mental and life energy. Holding such emotions inside long term will create sickness in the soul and in our body.

START LIVING CONSCIOUSLY Become aware of your actions, your thoughts and words. When you find yourself off principle or taking a negative perspective, stop yourself. Turn it around into something more positive and self nurturing. You will notice the change in the way people react to you because they will have noticed the change in you!



Be Honest with yourself and others



Without the ability to be honest with yourself and with others you will not be able to make progress with your changes. To succeed with change you must be prepared to face your truths and confront the fears that this exposes.

Start seeing the Positive side of everything!

A positive attitude not only boosts our natural immune system for better health but also by thinking positively, we boost our performance in nearly eve-



TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE - Recognize that you alone are responsible for it, no one else. You are where you are today through your choices. By taking responsibility for yourself, you are in a better place to start leading the life that YOU want and making choices that will lead you to the life you choose.

Start looking after yourself

To be effective in life, you need to be performing at your very best mentally, physically and spiritually. Acts of self care are acts of self-love and are essential to your wellbeing. Be kind to yourself and treat yourself with love.



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.



Mill Woods Family Resource Centre

Free Family Day Dinner

Join friends, neighbours and the Mill Woods Family Resource Centre as we host our annual Family Day Dinner on **Monday February 20th** (Family Day). Enjoy a no-cost, delicious dinner (including vegetarian choices) with games, activities and entertainment for the kids, and door prizes!



**Where: Leefield Community Hall
(7910 – 36 Avenue)
Time: 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm
Registration is MANDATORY.
Please call 780 413 4521.**

A Wonderful Way to Spend Family Day!

For more information about any of our programs, call 780 413 4521 or visit our website at www.mwfrc.org

Gateway Association's Annual Focus Event

March 9 & 10, 2012

"Assisting people with disabilities to effectively engage the world around them."



Facilitated by world-renowned Al Etmanski, this event will once again feature sessions designed specifically for the different stakeholders including: Families, Self-Advocates and people who work in Human Services.

Full details to follow early in the New Year



For More information please contact Gateway at 780-454-0701 ext. 101

or

visit our website: www.gatewayassociation.ca

LIFE WITHOUT LIMITS

TOGETHER WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE



The CPAA offers a unique range of services to persons with disabilities to assist their pursuit to play an active role in the communities they wish to join. Our programs are extremely flexible to provide unparalleled individualized services based on the desires and needs of each person.

They provide programs such as yoga, music therapy, computers, art, cooking, and ballet. Please contact them for more information or visit their website:



**Toll Free 1-888-477-8030
Phone 780-477-8030
www.cpalberta.com**



HEARTS IN ACTION YEAR ROUND DAY CAMPS

Our Hearts In Action Summer Camps were a great success and we would like to thank all the staff, volunteers, and families that participated throughout the summer. We know that the memories gained will continue to bring smiles of laughter and joy!

Mark your calendar and gear up for our exciting season of camps and activities:

**Winter Respite - December 26 - 30, 2011
Winter Camp - January 2 - 6, 2012
Teacher's Convention - March 1 and 2, 2012
Spring Break Camp - March 26 - 30, 2012
Summer Day Camps - July 2 - August 17, 2012**

Don't forget to call us for PD days/Exam days or other special drop in requests throughout the year!



Parent Information and Learning Opportunities—Cont'd

FREE 8 Week Parent Workshop



COPEing with Toddler Behaviour

Tuesday Evenings
March 6, 2012- April 24, 2012
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Jasper Place Child and Family Resource Centre-
West Edmonton Parent Link
16811- 88 Ave



What is COPEing with Toddler Behaviour?
An 8 week course for parents/caregivers of 12-36 month old children to meet other parents and learn about:

- o Different parenting styles
- o Why Toddlers behave the way they do - example, Why does my child tantrum?
- o What you can do to help your Toddler

How do I register?
Call (780) 489-2243
Please register early as space is limited

A certificate will be presented at the last session.



Workshops for siblings of children with special needs!

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.

Sibshops are lively, pedal-to-the-metal celebrations of the many contributions made by brothers and sisters of kids with special needs. Sibshops acknowledge that being the brother or sister of a person with special needs is for some a good thing, others a not-so-good thing and for many somewhere in between. They reflect a belief that brothers and sisters have much to offer one another, if they are given the chance.

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

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



AACL 20th Annual Family Conference

April 13 - 14, 2012

Fantasyland Hotel

For more information visit their website at:

www.aacl.org

Training in Core Social Skills

Corinne Eckert Child & Adolescent Psychology

Successful Communication (Feb. – April / 2012)

The goal is to enhance the communications skills for students who have difficulty with social interaction.

Emphasis will be on the following:

Conversations, offering and asking for help, asking questions, joining in, including others, expressing emotions and needs in an effective way, and understanding figurative speech.



Positive Peer Interaction (April – June / 2012)

This program is for students who would like to gain greater self-control within themselves in relation to emotions and handling difficult situations.

Emphasis will be on the following:

Dealing with feelings, understanding the feelings of others, recognizing stress signs and causes, self-monitoring stress levels, stress prevention, positive thinking, being assertive, accepting consequences, problem solving and conflict resolution, dealing with teasing, peer pressure and self-control.

Locations:

St. Albert – Leo Nickerson School - Wed. evenings
Edmonton – Glenora Community Hall – Monday evenings

For more information or registration please contact:

Corinne Eckert: ceckert@telus.net or call (780) 454-4634

RDSP Information Sessions

PLAN Edmonton offers a variety of information sessions throughout the year.



Registered Disability Savings Plan

Canada Disability Savings Grant (CDSG): A federal government grant that provides matching contributions of up to 300%.

Canada Disability Savings Bond (CDSB): From the federal government, is paid on an annual basis into the RDSPs of low-income families. No contributions are required to be eligible; it was created to assist families who may not have the resources to contribute. A tax-return must be filed to be eligible. Regular information session are held throughout the year by PLAN Edmonton. Please call for the date and time of the next session.

Contact information: 780-488-2422 or www.planedmonton.ca



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.

