

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Dear Friends,

I've often struggled with how to describe the work of Children's Beach House. This is because our work varies so widely from child to child. At our Margaret H. Rollins Child Development Center, for example, half of the children have speech and language delays while the other half have typical development. We intentionally mix the children because that's what's best for all of them! Similarly in our Youth Development Program, each child is assigned a Family Engagement Coordinator who works closely with each family to provide the family and child with a mix of services and support that meet their individual needs. Every child and family we work with gets special, individualized attention.

What it all boils down to, though, is this: Children's Beach House provides what all children need to thrive. We provide opportunities for young people to develop close and supportive relationships with peers and caring adult role models, so they feel safe, loved and at home in the world. We help them discover and develop their own unique strengths and interests, so they can become valued and contributing members of society.

Abraham Maslow developed a theory that organized basic human needs into five (in the simplified version) categories: 1) physiological needs; 2) the need for safety and security; 3) the need for love and belonging; 4) the need for esteem; 5) the need for self-actualization. CBH focuses on helping children and their families meet their needs for safety, love and belonging, and esteem so that they can be successful in their families, schools, and communities.

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## CBH's New Youth Development Program in Milton Takes Shape

Among Abraham Lincoln's many wise aphorisms was this gem: "Give me six hours to chop down a tree, and I will spend the first four sharpening the ax." His point was quite simple. Don't just run off and act; prepare to approach your task carefully.

That is exactly what Children's Beach House has been doing as we expand our Youth Development Program to Milton. At the outset of our work, after we had uncovered data during our strategic planning process that indicated that a good number of children in that town's schools might need a bit of additional support, we committed ourselves to better understand exactly who those children are and the nature of the challenges they face. As we have met with parents, children, school administrators, and teachers, we are seeing the people behind the numbers that initially piqued our concern. We are hearing their stories, better understanding their challenges, and implementing concrete programmatic responses to meet their needs. This is what we are learning:

Milton is a vibrant and multifaceted place. Perhaps more than any other town in the area, it has become a melting pot of diverse communities. There are "long-time Miltonians," black and white families with generational roots in the area's agricultural past or long-standing family businesses. There are increasing numbers of immigrant families for whom Spanish is the primary language spoken. And there are large numbers of retirees moving to Milton, many of whom have the desire, energy, and experience needed to provide valuable volunteer service to the community.

We've learned that, while we largely think the pandemic is behind us, COVID continues to resonate. There has been a great deal written about learning loss when school was suspended for periods of time and children were attending classes remotely, but we have also found that there are notable numbers of children who, because they had no access to the internet, could not attend classes online. For those children, the loss of learning is even more significant. For children from homes in which Spanish is spoken, the interruption of school during the pandemic also meant a loss of their English language skills. This has compounded their loss of learning. For educators who only speak English, it is very difficult to ascertain whether a child's struggles at school are because of language differences or because the child has more significant learning challenges.

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### CBH Mission Statement

The mission of Children's Beach House is to improve the lives of children, youth, families and communities by helping them to identify, understand and utilize their own strengths, talents and resources.

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We have also learned that families we meet are incredibly resourceful and resilient. As we have met with school administrators, teachers, families, and children, we have heard heartbreaking and harrowing immigration stories and descriptions of great financial hardships. We have heard about pandemic-caused losses of family members, livelihoods, and security. And we have heard people of all races, ethnicities, and lengths of residency in the area talk about their struggles with rising housing, fuel, and food prices. But, in the face of all these struggles, these families are showing up for their kids. Literally. When Children's Beach House hosted an information session to introduce our Youth Development Program for parents, many overcame the many scheduling, transportation, and linguistic hurdles and attended. They wanted the best for their children, and they wanted to learn how CBH might help them achieve that.

All of this learning, preparing, and feedback from parents and educators has helped CBH develop a program that we believe will be truly responsive to the needs of Milton's children and families. We have already hired

a dynamic Licensed Social Worker, Armina Domingue, to serve as a Family Engagement Coordinator in Milton. Armina has been central to the outreach efforts in Milton and is working with our Youth Development Program Director, Jacqueline Donaldson, to develop the program. Elisa Lopez De La Cruz, a bilingual (English/Spanish) Family Engagement Coordinator joined them as this newsletter was going to press. She will also be serving the families of Milton. Together they will offer a program that will be sensitive to the needs of Milton's diverse community and will engage volunteers and additional staff members who will represent and revel in the community of old-timers, newcomers, black, white, and Hispanic Miltonians.

The team is currently in the process of reviewing Milton a large number of referrals to the Youth Development Program from Milton Elementary School. Soon those children will be supported by the Milton-based Family Engagement Coordinators and attending weekend camp sessions at CBH's Lewes facility. When summer rolls around, the children will be attending day camp. And in the fall of 2023, along with other children in



Milton who may need the service, they will have the opportunity to participate in before- and after-school care.

All of us here at Children's Beach House are proud and delighted by the incredible work Jackie Donaldson and Armina Domingue have done to build out the new program in Milton. And we are grateful to the teachers, school administrators, learning specialists, parents, and children who have shared their expertise and stories to ensure that the new Milton program is truly responsive to the needs of the community. We look forward to continuing that journey together.

For more information about the Milton Youth Development Program, please contact [jdonaldson@cbhinc.org](mailto:jdonaldson@cbhinc.org) or [adomingue@cbhinc.org](mailto:adomingue@cbhinc.org).

## Margaret H. Rollins Center Teacher and Preschool Administrator Kenna Chanoux Is Named "Outdoor Learning Ambassador"



Congratulations to Kenna Chanoux for being named an "Outdoor Learning Ambassador" of the Delaware Institute for Excellence in Early Childhood (DIEEC) *Let's Go Outside* program

In 2021, the DIEEC launched a professional learning experience that immersed early childhood professionals in the benefits of outdoor classroom environments. Entitled *Let's Go Outside*,

this experience taught early childhood education professionals about the possibilities provided through outdoor learning. Already making use of CBH's outdoor spaces for learning (see related story), Kenna intuitively and experientially understood the power of outdoor learning. As an ambassador she is now sharing experiences with other early childhood education professionals. Congratulations, Kenna!

**charity GOLF EVENT**  
to benefit Children's Beach House  
**Monday May 22, 2023**  
HURRY! Space is limited!  
[www.cbhinc.org](http://www.cbhinc.org) just do it for our kids!  
The Peninsula on the Indian River Bay  
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# Not Just a Pretty Place

## Children at CBH's Margaret H. Rollins Child Development Center show there are lessons hidden everywhere if you take the time to look.

Visitors to the Margaret H. Rollins Child Development Center at Children's Beach House often comment on the beautiful views from the classrooms or the amazing playground made possible by the Linda K. Berdine Foundation. And they are right. The second-floor classrooms look out over a beautiful strip of sand dunes onto the waters of the Delaware Bay. The Berdine playground offers the kids a wide variety of activities, including swings, three slides (or sliding boards if you're from New York), climbing structures, a sand play area, a playhouse, tricycles, and scooters.

Under the guidance of the Rollins Center staff and encountered through the active and curious minds of the children, though, the waterfront and playground of the Children's Beach House don't just offer beautiful vistas or opportunities for fun; they're also extensions of the classrooms and windows onto a vast world open for exploration.

Just ask the four-year-olds in Miss Stephanie's classroom. The children are fascinated by the natural world and use every opportunity when outdoors to learn more about it. Their teachers at the Rollins Center are happy to clear the way for them and help unlock the many lessons they find as they explore. While recently poring through a cache of photos taken by assistant teacher, Barbi Tulowitzki-Hojnicki, showing a dazzling array of creatures and plants, one student told me about his many discoveries and what he had learned about each one. He knew the names of each creature or plant and explained how he and his classmates learn them. In some cases, when students find a new creature, they call over to one of the teachers or assistant teachers

who quickly snaps a photo. This, of course, usually results in an impromptu gathering of interested classmates who cluster around the new find. Together, they use various identification apps, which scan and analyze the images and deliver information about the creatures in question. In other cases, they rely on one student's encyclopedia of sea creatures, a gift from his parents. Thanks to their teachers at school and their thirst for knowledge, these intrepid four-year-old explorers already have an impressive knowledge of the natural world around them.

The students have discovered and learned about moths, birds' nests, sea grasses, minnows, a wolf spider with eggs, turtles, turtle eggs, crabs, spiny dogfish (that washed onto the CBH beach), mantis shrimps, and – the most remarkable find of all – a seahorse! Until that discovery, no one at CBH knew there is a species of seahorse – the lined seahorse, (*Hippocampus erectus*) – that is native to the area. The preschoolers aren't just teaching themselves; they're teaching us all.

That teaching isn't just restricted to individual species. It also extends to methods of exploration. I told one child that I spend a lot of time outdoors and don't uncover nearly as many creatures as they're able to find. What is their secret? He explained that one trick is to look under the mulch in the shady corners of the playground. The mulch there, he explained, remains moist and therefore decomposes more quickly. Insects tend to like those moist shady areas, as do the creatures that eat them.

There isn't a clear line between indoor learning and outdoor learning for the

preschoolers.

When they bring their discoveries indoors, they often incorporate them into other preschool activities. One boy uses Legos and other building toys to create structures to store his collections or imaginary habitats in which they might live. Another student brought a plush stuffed toy shark to school one day and created a Lego shark cage to keep it safe.

It's easy to watch the children in the Margaret H. Rollins Child Development Center race around and dig in the dirt and smile at how "oblivious" they are to the amazing view or the amenities they have. Perhaps that "adult" view is wrong. By forgoing the forest and looking at the trees – and the leaves, and roots, and insects, and worms in the ground beneath them – the children at The Rollins Center are uncovering even more amazing views of the world and countless lessons to use there.

Barry Goodinson is Director of Strategic Planning & External Relations. He may be reached at [bgoodinson@cbhinc.org](mailto:bgoodinson@cbhinc.org)



### *Executive Director, continued from page 1*

The ways that we do that have changed over the years and will most likely change as needs change. But the enduring mission remains – “to improve the lives of children, youth, families, and communities by helping them to identify, understand, and utilize their own strengths, talents, and resources.”

We are grateful to you for helping us make that happen and hope we can count on your continued support.

Sincerely,

Richard T. Garrett  
Executive Director

**CBH honors the memories of the following people whose families and friends made gifts to support our work in their names:**

Sincera T. Barba  
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**CBH gratefully acknowledges gifts to support our work made in honor of:**

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# Children's Beach House



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**2023**  
 Children's Beach House *Special Events!*  
 Children · Families · Communities

<b>MAY 22</b>	<b>charity GOLF EVENT</b> to benefit Children's Beach House	<b>Monday, May 22</b> The Peninsula on the Indian River Bay 26937 Bay Farm Road, Millsboro, DE 19966 The Peninsula on the Indian River Bay sets the stage for an exciting day on a scenic course to help some very special kids and their families.
<b>AUG 26</b>	<b>beach BBQ</b> to benefit Children's Beach House	<b>Saturday, August 26</b> Children's Beach House 1800 Bay Avenue, Lewes, DE 19958 New theme this year: "Totally 80's!" - You don't want to miss the feel-good party of the summer on our decks and beach, overlooking the Lewes Bay!
<b>OCT 14</b>	<b>Ashley Nicole Furio 5K RUN</b> to benefit Children's Beach House	<b>Saturday, October 14</b> Crooked Hammock Brewery 36707 Crooked Hammock Way, Lewes, DE 19958 Come for the race, stay for the celebration at the Crooked Hammock Brewery for a fun-filled family day. The 5K course is followed by an awesome post-race party with music, family friendly activities, food and brews.
<b>OCT 27</b>	<b>Plein Air Brandywine Valley</b> to benefit Children's Beach House	<b>Friday, October 27</b> Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library 5105 Kennett Pike, Wilmington, DE 19735 Known as one of the best Plein Air events in the country! The art competition, show & sale features artists from near and far as they showcase their artistic interpretations of the beautiful Brandywine Valley.
<b>DEC 1</b>	<b>winter WONDER</b> to benefit Children's Beach House	<b>Friday, December 1</b> Children's Beach House 1800 Bay Avenue, Lewes, DE 19958 Celebrate with us as you enjoy a gorgeous evening of music, food, drinks, entertainment, and surprises! You can even grab your holiday gifts as you browse the expansive silent auction or place your bids during the LIVE auction.

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 Visit [www.cbhinc.org](http://www.cbhinc.org) for more information!

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