

December 2019
DRE Report to the Board

Dear Board members,

For many kids, this really is the most wonderful time of the year. It's been a joy to be present to their joy this season.

It's been a real pleasure over the last few months to see some kids who are usually reserved beginning to loosen up in RE. We are truly in a beautiful rhythm with our opening circle particularly, when kids get to share things about their own lives. This month, we've heard a lot about the anticipation for the holidays. But we've also heard some very real concerns - fears about death, sadness to be separated from a parent, and other tremendously large and potent occurrences in the lives of our kids. It's an honor to be the witness to a child opening up about their life, but it's also an honor to help mastermind the container that makes this all possible.

Here's a few things we've been working on lately:

We've been working with members of the Safety team to test walkie talkies that will connect upstairs and downstairs (were there ever to be a security concern). While we have not fully ironed out all the bugs in our system, I've been impressed by the dedication with which these plans are being pursued. I'm grateful to have parts of this community thinking of things that I haven't or don't have the capacity to consider. This is how it should be!

An area that RE needs to improve in is providing more training for our volunteers. Particularly as we have shifted the emphasis in our program from keeping kids quiet/paying attention to a lesson to following their lead, a different kind of awareness in the classroom is needed. The first half of the year is so busy, I find it's particularly hard to schedule events. But the doldrums of winter are coming up and that's the perfect opportunity to spice things up with some volunteer training. We are planning to do a round-table training discussion in late January to check in with our current staff and volunteers. And after this, I want to prioritize meeting briefly after each RE morning to debrief and talk about how we approached various situations that arose, etc.

Also, as of last count, our Giving Tree has raised enough money to purchase a washer for our adopted family. Since we still have some time, I'm hopeful that we will reach our full goal and be able to purchase a dryer as well. What a life-changing gift for this family it will be!

Many thanks to each of you for how you have supported us, directly and indirectly. All of it matters!

With love,
Bethany