



The Sandbox

A newsletter for the families of Sandhills Children's Center
Exemplary - Early - Education

February 2021

Rockingham Campus -

Jennifer Decker, Program Director

Spring is upon us!! Hopefully, we will have more sunny days in our future. Please remember that all classrooms go outside each day. It is very important to send warm coats, hats, and gloves/mittens with your child(ren).

Thank you to everyone for helping us stay safe and healthy during this time of uncertainty. Anyone who has been diagnosed with Covid-19, symptoms of Covid-19, or who has been exposed to someone with Covid-19 should not attend childcare. In addition, you will need to communicate this with me as soon as possible, so appropriate steps can be taken. Symptoms include, but are not limited to: fever (100.4 or higher), chills, new cough, new loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

We are working closely with our Health Consultant and the Health Department to ensure that we are following the most up to date guidance.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by phone at 997-7160 or email me at:

jdecker@sandhillschildrenscenter.org.

Southern Pines Campus -

Erin Newcomb, Director of
Center Services

Yay! Spring is almost here. The sun will be a welcome change for all of us! I want to thank each of you for your support during this pandemic. We look forward to the day where you, as parents, can come in the building and see the amazing things that are happening inside each and every day!

A few reminders as we continue our safe practices. If your child or anyone in your home is being tested for COVID, your child (ren) must stay home until a negative test result is obtained. Please email me the negative result before returning to school. If you or someone in your home tests positive, please communicate this with me as soon as you receive it. I will then work with our Health Consultant and the Health Department regarding next steps. It has been our practice to inform families of impacted classrooms of any issues that pertain that specific room.

Thank you for your patience in our car line as we work to get children in and out safely. Please stay in the line and refrain from passing cars in front of you during drop off and pick up. This will ensure the safety of all of our staff and children. If you should ever have any questions, you are welcome to call me anytime at 692-3323 or email me at: enewcomb@sandhillschildrenscenter.org

I look forward to a great spring and a wonderful summer ahead!

Director of Events -

Jennifer Burns

The 2021 Kelly Cup Championship golf tournament took place on Monday February 22nd at Pinehurst No. 8. Despite having to suspend play after a few holes due to rain, it was great to see everyone come together and enjoy themselves. We are so grateful for the continued support of our community for the mission of Sandhills Children's Center.

A special thank you to Pinehurst Resort for hosting the tournament, our sponsors, Roast Farm to Table for providing the lunches and to Robin Duff for all of her hard work! Here's to a sunny warm day for the 2022 Kelly Cup Championship!

Billing -

A reminder to all military families at the Southern Pines campus who receive Child Care Aware, please keep in mind when your certificate is expiring so you may submit the necessary documents to them for renewal. One of the documents they are now requiring is the Provider Verification Form. When you receive your renewal packet please email the form to me and I will add the information and return to you.

Please email me with any questions at: kaltman@sandhillschildrenscenter.org

Administrative Directory



Melanie Gayle, CEO

The CEO reports to the Board of Directors and has overall strategic and operational responsibility for the staff, programs, expansion and execution of the Sandhills Children's Center mission. Two key responsibilities are personnel management of 100+ employees within two facility campuses, including supervision and evaluation of administrative staff, and preparation and management of a 4+ million annual operating budget. Other CEO responsibilities include the hiring and termination of employees and the development and implementation of fiscal, personnel and operational policies and procedures.

mcgayle@sandhillschildrenscenter.org



Jennifer Decker, Program Director, Rockingham

The primary purpose of the Program Director position is to work with the CEO to develop, establish, and maintain a comprehensive, high quality educational childcare program that meets the needs of the children served. The Program Director is the immediate supervisor of the teaching staff and coordinates with administration to provide for instruction and classroom needs.

jdecker@sandhillschildrenscenter.org



Erin Newcomb, Director of Center Services, Southern Pines

As the Program Director, I work to establish and maintain a high quality educational childcare program that meets the needs of each child served. I ensure compliance with all childcare rules as established by the DCDEE. I am the immediate supervisor of the teaching staff and I coordinate with administration to provide for instruction and classroom needs. I also serve as the case manager for children ages 3-5 receiving exceptional education services, including all IEP documentation.

enewcomb@sandhillschildrenscenter.org



Jennifer Burns, Director of Events and Community Relations

My main focus as the Director of Events and Community Relations is on our fundraising efforts through our annual events and our DreamMaker program. The donations that we receive are what keep us going and enable us to provide the best care possible for each child. I also work closely with the Community Relations Representative to ensure the success of our events and the marketing and communications for the Center.

jburns@sandhillsschildrenscenter.org



Cassie Staufenger, Auxiliary Services Manager

I manage all staffing needs from scheduling substitutes to ensuring that teachers get office time to plan their class curriculums. I also oversee the food program which includes monitoring menus, making sure meals and snacks meet state requirements and keeping track of attendance and meal count sheets.

cstaufenger@sandhillsschildrenscenter.org



Kerry Ritter, Business Manager

I act as payroll administrator and process the accounts payable. I help complete the budget and prepare financial statements. I manage all employee compensation and employee health care benefits.

kritter@sandhillsschildrenscenter.org



Cathy Pierce, Enrollment Coordinator/CBRS Provider

As enrollment coordinator, I seek to keep the center at capacity, manage the waitlist, provide tours for prospective families and intake new children. I also manage the state required paperwork including immunization records.

cpierce@sandhillsschildrenscenter.org



Kelly Altman, Reimbursement Services Manager

My job encompasses Accounts Receivable including the billing for childcare services as well as insurance billing for therapies provided. I also handle the paperwork and billing for the military Child Care Aware assistance program.

kaltman@sandhillsschildrenscenter.org



Faye Quick, Assistant Director, Rockingham

The Assistant Director fulfills all Smart Start grant responsibilities on a monthly and quarterly basis, completes all aspects of child care billing and reporting, assists with new hire onboarding of employees, schedules substitutes for classroom staff, and assists the Program Director in daily operations.

fquick@sandhillsschildrenscenter.org



Ashley Hildreth, Therapy Services Coordinator

Working with therapists at both the Southern Pines and Rockingham campuses, I schedule required assessments that are needed to obtain prior authorizations from insurance companies for our students that currently receive therapy.

ahildreth@sandhillsschildrenscenter.org



Marie Russell, Food Service Coordinator, Southern Pines

Part magician, part culinary master chef, Marie does wonders preparing breakfast, lunch, and snacks for 130+ children every weekday. She performs her duties under strict state guidelines finding new and creative ways to make each meal at Sandhills Children's Center a delight for the taste buds.

mrussell@sandhillsschildrenscenter.org



Patricia Herring, Food Service Coordinator, Rockingham

Pat plans the breakfasts, lunches, and snack for all the children at the Center, making sure they meet recommended state guidelines as well as being delicious!

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Terrie Ellerbe, Admin. Asst., Rockingham

As Administrative Assistant, I communicate with the families every day through telephone calls and drop off/pick up of the children. I file children's records and employee personnel documentation, collect child progress documentation from the teachers, and assist with Food Bank and general shopping trips. I love greeting the children and families and I truly enjoy working with my coworkers each day!

tellerbe@sandhillsschildrenscenter.org



Claudette Dowdy, Admin. Asst., Southern Pines

I wear (at least) two hats at Sandhills Children's Center. I greet visitors and answer phones in my role as receptionist, but also assist teachers and staff with administrative duties as needed.

cdowdy@sandhillsschildrenscenter.org



Robin Duff, Community Relations Representative

My job duties include (but are not limited to) working closely with the Director of Events planning and executing our fundraising events and promoting those events to the public and patrons. I spearhead the marketing and public relations communications for the Center, as well as update the website and social media pages. I seek out, write, and submit fundraising grants, along with write and layout our Centerpiece newsletter.

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