



May, 2020



We're Still Open!

Staying true to mission:

The gravity and impact of the COVID 19 pandemic took the childcare industry by storm. At Blossom Center, we quickly came to terms with the realization that life was rapidly changing. One by one, daycare centers in and around Oak Ridge shut their doors, as we waited for a very cautious, almost uncertain Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide a clear directive on what providers were to do. For Blossom Center this was a blessing. It enabled us to serve our community at a very crucial time, illuminating our mission and, underscoring the need to increase investment in Blossom Center's program. Let us see how this was done.

Yet, remaining open was not without its challenges, biggest among them being FEAR. To counter this fear, we obsessively followed available protocols. For one, we sprayed bleach water throughout the Center numerous times a day and lived to wash hands! We closely monitored for any signs of illness—took temperatures and sent a few people home to quarantine. Staff members wore masks and for the most part, still do. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and DHS guidelines were fully implemented.

To help the Blossom Center navigate the new set of challenges brought on by COVID 19 was strong community support. Parents and Blossom Center's Friends immediately stepped up to help. For example, Dr. Mary Palmer donated a nice digital thermometer to help Blossom Center staff check

temperature quickly and accurately. Many Friends donated gallons of bleach to the Center. Parents buying groceries for their homes frequently picked up items for Blossom Center too. Likewise, a group at the Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church (ORUUC) made masks for Blossom Center staff and children. Support like this, has helped the Center survive COVID 19.

If COVID 19 has taught me one thing at all, it is that we need to invest in Blossom Center, both in good and in bad times. We need a place to care for our children, during all hours of day; a place that is open the longest hours possible—so that if and when crises unfold, care for our community's children is assured. COVID 19 has rejuvenated my vision of a place like Blossom Center. Thank goodness we are here!

Creed Mushimbo

Note: The full text of this message from the Executive Director can be found on our website, http://blossom24-7.org/?page_id=1554.

Gentle Reminders to Parents

- Please remember to sign in and out on the sign in sheet. This is required by the state and keeps us apprised of our students
- Per the guidelines from the Department of Human Services and the CDC during the coronavirus pandemic, children should stay home if **either** parents or children are sick.
- Please take your child's blankets home at the end of the week to comply with CDC guidelines and the coronavirus.
- Please check the notes on the teacher's doors that identify needed supplies for classrooms. Any supplies you can donate would be greatly appreciated

What's Happening?

During spring break and during April friends prepared for spring by planting flowers and decorating the center with spring butterflies.

Through the literacy grant Blossom friends will be reading new books on ethnic history and age appropriate learning books. Each teacher prepared a list of various books to enlighten youth.



Blossom preschool 1 friends get surplus books as new books replenished from literacy grant



Friends learn social distancing and washing hands



Toddlers listening to rain and birds



Friends looking for spring and ready to plant flowers.

Free Breakfast and Lunch

The Oak Ridge Schools sent us this notice.

Dear Oak Ridge Community:

In an effort to ensure that all children 18 and younger continue to have access to receive healthy and nutritious breakfast and lunch meals, Oak Ridge Schools in partnership with Aramark, will be offering both breakfast, and lunch “to go” during week days starting on March 23rd free of charge.

The following locations will be distributing meals:

Breakfast Hours: 8:00am -9:30am

Lunch Hours: 10:30am – 1pm

School: Glenwood Elementary
Location: 125 Audubon Road, Drop-off Circle

School: Robertsville Middle
Location: 245 Robertsville Road Drop-off Circle

School: Oak Ridge High
Location: 1450 Oak Ridge Turnpike, Drop-off Circle on Turnpike Side

School: Oak Ridge Preschool
Location: 157 Carver Avenue, Drop-off Circle

Instructions:

All children must be present in order to receive meals.

Drive up, or walk-up to the designated distribution area. Both a table, and signage will be present in the distribution area.

Meals may be picked up from any of the listed distribution sites regardless of whether the child attends that particular school, or any of the Oak Ridge Schools or not.

No identification, names, or applications are required.

Reminder of Community Resources

During this period of the Coronavirus Disease, Blossom wants parents to be aware of Food Banks and Community Meals available in Anderson County. Please see information on the community board or ask administrative staff a copy of the booklet.