

# WINDY HILL LABORATORY SCHOOL



2015–2016  
IN REVIEW

C·S  
1837



## **A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL**

This year, a Windy Hill teacher and the associate director taught child development courses at Windy Hill, creating a direct and visible connection between the child development curriculum and activities for children. Understanding the importance of family engagement and home-to-school connections, one child development course (STEAM Education for Young Children) included two family events: Family Math Night and Family Science Night.

Last fall, Windy Hill participated in the Community Wellness Program via a mini-grant from New London Hospital. The grant's focus on healthy foods for children allowed for expanded use of our community garden as a sustainable, outdoor Windy Hill classroom.

Windy Hill teachers attended a viewing of the film "Raising New Hampshire," sponsored by Partners for Community Wellness and Dartmouth-Hitchcock in partnership with New London Hospital and Colby-Sawyer College. The film validated the importance of the high-quality experiences Windy Hill teachers provide to all age groups. Windy Hill Director Diane Edwards was on Raising New Hampshire's New London Committee, and her CH1102 class participated in the event.

## **A CAMPUS-WIDE EXPERIENCE**

Windy Hill students regularly visited the dance studio in Sawyer Center, the 100-Acre Wood, Hogan Center and Mercer Gym for physical activities. The children traveled to a local cornfield to pick corn and, after picking apples from the campus orchard, made cider with the help of Professors Nick Baer and Harvey Pine.

Children, including the youngest toddlers, enjoyed swimming and rock wall climbing on campus. There were trips to Boulder Forest to construct huge forts out of fallen limbs as well as outings spent quietly observing geese and other animals in their natural habitats. Thanks to the Yoga Club, each week Windy Hill children enjoyed learning relaxation and stretching techniques.

Cultural activities in which the children participated included learning about Abenaki culture (complete with regalia, dances and food) and reading books and learning songs in Portuguese, German and Spanish. Children attended on-campus activities such as Day of the Dead, a Diversity Fair and the dance show. Spanish lessons with visiting scholar Ana Fernández Ruda took place in all classrooms.

Science projects included hatching and releasing butterflies; studying nature with snow, mushrooms, worms and seeds; and visiting our organic gardens. There were many hikes to Susan's Swamp to observe geese, bugs, frog eggs, a beaver lodge and plant life. Additionally, as mentioned, there were Family Math and Science Nights, during which college students presented project-based learning activities.

Preschool and pre-k children expanded their experiences into the community. They collected and delivered food donations to the food pantry at the Baptist Church next door; visited the New London Fire Department; viewed art exhibits at the Sawyer Center; cleaned the frog habitat behind The Lodge; and became pen pals with a former student teacher's pre-k class in Oklahoma.

## **A LAB SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN AND STUDENTS**

In 2015-2016, quality early care and learning experiences were provided to approximately 45 children ages 13 months through pre-k. Staffing included seven full-time teachers (all with four-year degrees/certification, two with master's degrees), with an average of more than 10 years' experience at Windy Hill. Additional staffing included two part-time teachers, one director (faculty/doctorate) and one associate director (doctorate).

Windy Hill employed 30 work-study students from nine majors: biology, business administration, child development, English, exercise science, media and communication, psychology, public health and sociology.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Documentation of learning through photo journals and children's portfolios are facilitated by technology. Windy Hill School has a teachers' resource room/technology lab complete with computers, digital cameras, scanners, software and more. The resource room is used daily by teachers and students for planning, assessing and documenting experiences to share with parents. In the future, we hope to expand our use of technology outdoors to include a weather station.

## STUDENTS AS RESEARCHERS

Colby-Sawyer students are an integral part of the Windy Hill classroom. Windy Hill provides responsive and creative classrooms that offer a safe learning environment for children and a place where college students can blossom. Parents are offered a community to discuss their child's development in a nonjudgmental environment. Faculty, teachers, parents and students work together for the well-being of children and the enrichment of the college community.

Courses that involved a lab school component included:

- ♦ **CHI350: Math, Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics for Young Children** (17 students). Students designed five original science, math and/or technology activities that were implemented at Windy Hill School.
- ♦ **HI206: Family and Community Collaboration** (21 students). Students proposed critical thinking essay topics to determine what successful and developmentally appropriate out-of-home childcare is like. They observed at child care facilities in the area to report how their experiences/ observations compared to their reading and the theories. Seven of the 17 students observed at Windy Hill School.
- ♦ **CHI101: Child Growth and Development** (50 students total for fall and spring). Students had three mini-observations with the class and one larger observation assignment in which students connected developmental theories to classroom behaviors.
- ♦ **CHI321: Advanced Early and Middle Childhood Development** (30 students). Students observed one preschooler and analyzed development.
- ♦ **ENV227: Teaching In The Outdoors** (15 students). This course included a natural play space project at Windy Hill.
- ♦ **ESS204: Motor Development** (23 students). Students completed a motor development assignment at Windy Hill.
- ♦ **ESS211: Nutrition** (22 students). This course included cooking/nutritional assignments at Windy Hill.
- ♦ **HP420: Health Promotion Programming** (31 students). Faculty/students co-hosted a community event at Windy Hill with CHI105 Health Safety and Nutrition for Young Children.
- ♦ **CHI105 Health, Safety and Nutrition for Young Children** (23 students). Cooking activities, health promotion and playground safety checks were part of this course.

**STUDENT INTERNS WORKED with the children for their research in meeting course requirements. Research was conducted in the areas of cognitive development, self-regulation, art, teachers' relationships with children, the impact and importance of nature in children's learning, and the importance of parent and community involvement in the education of young children.**

**A communication and media studies major prepared the documentary "Playful Learning" on the benefits of Windy Hill as her Capstone project.**

**Seniors majoring in art, multidisciplinary studies, psychology and child development worked with children throughout the spring semester. They helped plan and develop Windy Hill School's annual art show, which highlights children's art and narrates each child's individual creative process. The show was hosted at Windy Hill School and was open to the college community and Windy Hill families.**



PHOTO: GREG DANILOWSKI

FOUNDED IN 1976, Windy Hill is an integral part of Colby-Sawyer College and offers quality early care and learning experiences for toddlers, preschoolers and pre-kindergarteners.

College students from multiple disciplines work alongside classroom teachers and collaborate on research initiatives. Windy Hill boasts child development faculty with doctoral degrees who integrate their curriculum with lab school experiences, as well as highly qualified, degreed classroom teachers credentialed by the N.H. Department of Education or N.H. Department of Health and Human Services Child Development Bureau.

In 2010, Windy Hill School moved to its current location, a \$2.4 million LEED-Silver Certified facility designed to be environmentally friendly while meeting the early care and learning needs of children. Windy Hill is licensed by N.H. Department of Health and Human Services to better prepare students who plan to work in state licensed childcare programs.

**Windy Hill School offers early care and learning experiences for toddlers, preschoolers and pre-kindergarteners from 7:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., with an optional three-hour extension.**



**Colby·Sawyer  
College**

Windy Hill School  
541 Main Street  
New London, NH 03257  
diane.edwards@colby-sawyer.edu  
603.526.3774