

► **Buccaneers,**  
*continued from page 11*

son, it is still going strong! The first two years it was a club team and there were between 15-24 girls involved. After two years at club status, cheer became a team with tryouts and strict guidelines for the participants. In an effort to build a base of girls that know something about cheer before they get to high school, Michele decided to try to build a cheer program to support the CSSU Buccaneer Football program. This Fall, ten girls from the CSSU district joined the inaugural team. They range from fifth eighth grade and represent every town in the district. We were thankful to have the support of the Buccaneer program not only through financial support to help us through our first year, but also their vocal support and compliments as the girls cheered on their team.

This Fall the team practiced three times a week and cheered at four games. In six

weeks, these girls learned 15 cheers, a short dance, and four stunts (like pyramids). They are runners, equestrians, gymnasts and ballerinas, and cheer incorporates parts of all these disciplines; agility, balance, strength, flexibility, and commitment. As two sixth graders lift a girl up by her feet to the height of their neck, then throw her up in the air and catch her, they will tell you "cheer is NOT easy!"

We hope to build this program next year in order to have a 5-6 team and a 7-8 team. We are looking for interested girls, boys and parents who would like to get involved and help. If we have enough interest next year, we will apply for grants to purchase uniforms. We currently have three coaches but would need a few more to help if the teams grows. Please contact me at jillgorman@gmavt.net for more information. For more information about Buccaneer Football, please visit [eteamz.com/csbuccaneers](http://eteamz.com/csbuccaneers)

## What Makes a Child Want to Learn?

By **AnDrea SAMBrook,**  
**Annette'S PLAy SCHool**

**H**ow does a parent know when their child is ready to learn new things? And what are the right things? As the child's first teacher, every parent tries to provide the best opportunities at each step of the way. It begins with knowing how the pitch of the first contented coo or giggle differs from a whine or cry, what signs indicate fatigue, what foods will comfort a sick child, and what is the song or silly game that is guaranteed to bring a smile when spirits are down or knees get skinned.

Children have simple but extremely important goals to achieve: to make meaning of their place in the world of objects and people (cognition), to develop safe and loving relationships (basic trust and language), get physical needs met (food, rest, shelter and exercise), and learn to cope when there is a delay in response (self-regulation). As they grow, a young child's social world widens, and meeting these goals becomes more complex and individualized. Research has confirmed that the brain becomes wired as a result of meaningful social interactions, motivating the child to respond to (or "return") each social invitation (or "serve") that they receive. Not unlike a friendly game of tennis! In turn, this is how sounds and words are practiced (over and over!) so that in the months and years that follow, more complex conversations develop, new problems get solved and new friends are made as a result of growing relationship skills.

While the influences of temperament, health, culture, school and caregiving all contribute in unique ways to a child's pattern of growth, there are established ages and stages of child behavior and development that all children mature through. Certain cognitive, physical, language and fine motor abilities emerge in sequence (and at times in tandem) with other capacities to create optimal windows of learning. While all children will have some abilities which precede others, (resulting in a unique profile at any point in time), all children develop through each stage sequentially. Knowing what to expect can help parents and early educators build shared expectations between home and school and support children in feeling "just right" in what they are learning and doing every day.

**P** sychologists have also found that optimal learning occurs when children are fully absorbed in and motivated to solve or master a problem, "I wonder if..." and "Why does this happen...?" all give a child a purpose for their inquiry, and a reason to want to try a myriad of outcomes. Vygotsky speaks of a zone of intense play where a child stretches him or herself cognitively because he or she is trying on a new role, relationship or unknown outcomes for

a new game or type of play. Vivian Paley has written many books about children's play, including one of my favorites, *Bad Guys Don't Have Birthdays*. She asks questions during the play despite the fact that it may not be logical to an adult, in order to help a child stretch their thinking skills to new levels. This intense play occurs when educators present experiences with just the right amount of difficulty, support and possibility for success. Mastery motivation is the term used when a child believes that he or she has the capacity to master a new challenge. Play is the natural place where children can believe in themselves. When a child believes in him or herself, then the natural motivation to succeed is exponentially increased!

The most important way to support a child's learning or readiness for new experiences is to provide opportunities that are in line with his or her developmental abilities. This enables a child to exhibit the motivation to master the next challenge because it is within their grasp. Early experiences that are too far beyond a child's capability (tracing letters and numbers for a 3 year old for example) may frustrate a young child whose visual perceptual skills cannot successfully navigate oblique lines (common in many English letters), regardless of how much practice is given. Research conducted by Gesell Institute of Child Development in 2010 has documented that a child's ability to draw a triangle is not a solid expectation for the majority of preschoolers until 5 1/2 years of age. Yet, many still believe that with enough practice, child younger than this can achieve this and possibly develop "better" or "faster".

What is important for parents to know is that there are many more important activities that promote "developmental literacy" on the road to reading and writing. In fact, in a study of the kindergarten readiness perspectives of nearly 650 Kindergarten teachers, the academic skills were trumped by social skills such as a child's self-help skills, ability to interact positively with peers and the ability to self-regulate when frustrated. These skills are the precursors to successful academic pursuits, not the result of them. So, our job as early educators and parents is to understand the typical stages of child development, providing the types of experiences that are not only appropriate to a child's developmental level, but are exciting, hands-on and inquiry based. A child's mastery motivation must be developed in the early years, so they will have it as an approach to life, a way to work with others to solve tough problems and tackle new experiences. It's the single most important contribution we can make to our future!



### Schip's Treasure

**Resale Shop**

Our Elves have been hard at work. They have something for EVERYONE on your list!

Wool and silk scarves • Cashmere and many more sweaters and jackets • Wide array of sterling and other jewelry  
Great gifts for home • books • games

**802-985-3595** Gift Certificates

5404 Shelburne Road, Shelburne, VT

A non-profit funding community grants. Find us on Facebook

## PLEASANT VALLEY, INC.

- Decks
- Siding
- Doors
- Roofing
- Painting
- Windows
- Trim Work

- Walks & Patios
- Stone Walls
- Lawn Care
- Clean Up
- Design
- Planting
- Excavation

(802) 425- 3737 | (802) 343 - 4820 | [PleasantValley@madriver.com](mailto:PleasantValley@madriver.com)

Have an ad? 482-2540 or  
[ads@hinesburgrecord.org](mailto:ads@hinesburgrecord.org)  
Have news? 482-2350 or  
[news@hinesburgrecord.org](mailto:news@hinesburgrecord.org)