Welcome to the Holly Pond School!

On behalf of the Darien YMCA administration and staff, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you and your family. Our first day of school will be Wednesday, September 7th.

I have included your child's class roster for the year. **Please review the list and make any corrections** to your listing. This information will be used to compile the School Directory. Please let me know the changes when you arrive at school or you can email them to me at agreene@darien-ymca.org.

As always I have had many requests for classes and staff. I unfortunately I cannot honor all of your specific requests. There can only be a certain number of students in each class and the girl/boy ratio is also a factor. There were also staff changes that made it impossible to honor some of your requests. For those returning students, I have spoken with your child's teacher from last year and asked for their input on assigning classes. I hope you all understand the process and will have a great school year.

Our Spanish Classes for the Four-Year-Old and Pre-K classes will be offered this school year again. The classes will be a half hour starting Monday, October 17th and continue thru May. The classes will be taught by Berlitz Kids.

Please read the **Holly Pond School Parent Handbook which is on the Parent Page of the Darien YMCA Website** **You MUST SIGN, DATE AND RETURN THE LAST PAGE OF THE HANDBOOK which states that you have read the Handbook in particular the Behavioral Management section.**

On the First Day of School, please bring:

- **A completed updated Medical Form**: **(On Parent Page)**

If you provided an updated form for camp and/or your child's physical is dated after **September 6, 2015** it will be on file at the Y. If not, please provide me with a medical form on or before the first day of school. You may mail or email this form back to me or drop it off at the Y on or before the first day of school. Most doctor offices also have medical forms available. Please remember that **your child can not attend school without a current completed medical form on file. This is a CT State Law. Please remember to include your flu shot information on your immunization forms. If your child receives a flu shot during the fall, please provide me with the immunization documentation.**

- If your child has any special medical needs such as allergies, etc. please let us know as soon as possible. **We are required by the State to use a specific Authorization for the Administration of Medication**. I have Authorization to Administer Medication Forms available in my office. **This form is also on the Parent Page**. Please have your Doctor fill out the REQUIRED form and sign the Parent section.
- Please review the Immunization Requirements found on the third page of the Medical Form. Children must be vaccinated with the current flu vaccine which is done annually in the fall. Flu vaccines that were given before June 2016 have expired. **To attend preschool, children must have received at least one dose of a flu vaccine administered between July 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016**. Flu season is October 2016 - May 2017. If you choose not to vaccinate your child you are required to fill out a religious exemption form which I have. If your child does not have the flu shot, you must keep your child home for the duration of any outbreak of flu, regardless of whether or not your child is sick.

- **Emergency Form** (**On Parent Page**)

- **Getting to Know Your Child Form** (**On Parent Page**); **please remember to put your child's name on the top of the form.**

Each Day, your child should bring to school:

- **Backpack:** Please label this with your child's name. Please remember to check your child's backpack daily.
- **Daily folder:** If your class has a travel folder, please remember to put it into their backpack every day. This folder travels with your child to and from school daily and contains flyers, schoolwork, notes, etc.
- **Appropriate Clothing:** Your child should come to school in play clothes that are easily handled in the bathroom. All sweaters, coats, boots, hats and mittens should be clearly labeled so that we can assist your child in finding his/her belongings. We go out to play in cold weather, so please send appropriate clothing. Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are best for our gym activities, both indoors and out. Please no dresses on gymnastics days. **For safety reasons we recommend you do not send your children to school wearing Crocs and Flip flops.**
- **Extra Set of Clothing:** At the beginning of the school year, an extra set of clothes should be left in your child's backpack in a Ziploc bag with your child's name clearly marked on the front, in the event of a bathroom accident or excessive "creative" mess.
- **A Bathing Suit and Towel** (**Applies only to three- and four-year-old students):** The items should be placed in a plastic bag inside the child's backpack to prevent wet items from damaging precious schoolwork. Please remember to label your child's towel. Girls with long hair need to have their hair pulled back in a ponytail on swimming days. Swimming for the Three-Year-Old, Four-Year-Old and Pre-K classes will begin on the week of September 7th.

Important Notes For School:

Toilet learning requirements vary by age group.

- **Two-year-old children** attending the Toddler Program may come in their diapers. The staff is specifically equipped to change diapers using disposable gloves, and changing pads. As each child learns to use the toilet, the teachers and staff support his/her transition. Please have extra diapers and wipes in your child's back pack.

- **Three and Four-year-old** children enrolled in the Holly Pond School **MUST** be toilet trained. This is defined as the child needs to able to manage, with little help, their own clothing, to wipe themselves, and to wash their hands. **Pull Ups and Swimmies are not permitted in our Three and Four Year Programs.** We do understand your child may have an accident while at school. Our staff will try to handle these expediently and quietly. Please provide your child with a change of clothes including underwear. The School will keep extra clothes including underwear on hand to be used in emergency situations. If your child has more than one bowel movement accident during school, we will ask that you pick them up early as they may be experiencing a stomach condition which may be contagious to the rest of the class. Should there be any medical condition which limits a child's ability in self-regulating, please have your physician note that on your child's health form

- For the safety of the children, and in the light of the tight parking constraints, please be diligent in helping us follow the drop-off and pick-up times and locations set below. These guidelines ensure the Holly Pond School starts safely and promptly and eases the flow of traffic to our facility.

We offer a **Drop Off Service** both in the morning and afternoon**. We encourage all parents of our three-year-old and four-year-old students use the drop-off service. There will, of course, be times when this is not possible, but we strongly encourage the use of this service. Drop off will take place in the circular drive in front of Holly Pond School**. **Please DO NOT Park your car in the drop off circle at any time.** We ask that your child be seated on the **passenger side** of the car, if possible. A member of the staff will remove your child from your car. The children will sit on the bench (weather permitting) and be delivered to their classrooms. If it is inclement weather, drop off will be at the door of the main entrance to the School

There **is no need for you to get out of your car. Two-year-old students can begin using the drop-off service as soon as the parents and the students feel comfortable.** The drop-off begins in the morning at 8:50 am, and will continue until 9:10 am. It runs in the afternoon from 12:00 to 12:10 for the Toddlers and 12:10 pm until 12:25 pm for three and four-year-old children. Please pick up your child from his/her classroom at the end of the school day.

- We are a **peanut free school**. We do not serve any snack that has peanuts in it, manufactured in a facility that may have peanuts or contains any form of peanuts

- **Lunch Bunch** is available for children ages **three through five**. Lunch Bunch begins on the first full day of school and is available daily from 11:45 am until 1:00 pm. The cost is $15 a day. If your child attends the afternoon program they are welcome to come to lunch bunch. They will be at Lunch Bunch from 11:45 to 12:15. The staff will take your child to their afternoon class. The cost will be $7.50 for the half hour. Please see the attached **NEW LUNCH BUNCH PROCEFDURES. (On Parent Page as well)**

    - Please remember we are a peanut free school. Children can **NOT** bring peanut butter sandwiches to lunch bunch. Soy Butter is allowed. Please label your child's sandwich with the type of butter to avoid confusion about peanut butter. Children must provide their own lunch and drink, which we will keep refrigerated. The lunches should be in a **brown paper bag or a large zip lock bag** (please no candy or soda). The "lunch bunchers" eat their lunch with selected staff and go outside or to the gym for supervised play. Children are dismissed from either the playground or the Lunch Bunch Room. Parents must come in to collect their children and sign them out.

- **The Holly Care Program** is available for children 3-5 years of age. All children attending must be fully potty trained. This program provides a structured environment in which children can participate in a scheduled activity for the day. Each day 's activities include supervised lunch time, outdoor play, story time, arts and crafts. In addition, children will participate in the special theme(s) of the day to help develop their motor and social skills. Children may attend the morning, afternoon, or full day sessions. You may register your child for the entire school year or use the Holly Care as a drop in program. Any questions please let me know or you can visit our website for further details.

- We will use both the main entrance to Holly Pond School and the front lobby entrances for arrivals and departures. Please and try and use the Holly Pond School entrance to the building if possible. Please note that there will be keypads located at the main entrance of Holly Pond School and also on the doors leading from the lobby into the school. The number to the keypad will be provided to each family attending the school. **Please do not share this number with your children, as it will compromise our security. Please read the Parent Safety Letter found on the Parent Page for the entrance codes.**

- Our snack policy is as follows: Apple or orange juice is provided by the school. Your child's room mother will post a monthly snack calendar and ask that parents take turns providing the snack for the class. Any allergies of any children in the class will be posted for each class to help parents decide which snacks they can bring. Each parent can sign up to bring snack for the week or to bring snack on a daily basis. We encourage bringing in healthy snacks. We will have crackers and

pretzels on hand if snack is forgotten. **The Holly Pond School is a nut-free school.** We do not serve or cook with nuts or nut-related products. There is a list of safe snacks available upon request.

Your next tuition payment is due by September 15, 2016. You will receive an invoice before giving you the amount due. We are happy to provide you with the ability to set up an automatic payment for this payment and the next payment which is due November 15, 2016, The Credit Card or EFT Authorization Form can be found on the **Parent Page** if you would like to use this service. If you have not filled out a form for 2016-2017 School Year please return the completed form by the Friday, September 9th.

- There will be a **Parent's Association Meeting** on Wednesday, September 14th at 9:15 in the Community Room. Everyone is welcome to attend.
- The **Room Mother's Meeting** is Wednesday, September 14th at 10:15 in the Community Room.
- There will be a **Parent Open House** on Tuesday September 20th at 7:30 pm in the Community Room. All parents are welcome to attend.

- If anyone is interested in being a Room Mother for your class, please call Shana Decsi, our Vice President of the Parent's Association, at 917-612-5254 or 203-656-2130 or email her at. Shana.decsi@gmail.com There will be a Room Mother's Coffee on Wednesday, September 14th at 10:15 .

- Take advantage of the volunteer opportunities for you as a parent, including: reading or baking with the class, being a room parent, attending class parties, assisting with auction art projects, being a swim helper or field trip chaperone, helping out on Family Fun Day, or reading to your child's class.

- **Save the dates**:
  - **Family Fun Day** Sunday, October 23rd 11:00am to 2:00pm
  - **Holly Pond School Fall Cocktail Party** Saturday, Nov. 19th
    More information to follow!

Your child's teacher will be contacting you before the start of school to introduce herself. Please feel free to ask any questions about your child's day at this time. **We will be having Open House to meet your teacher and see the classrooms on Tuesday, Sept. 6th.** Both you and your child should attend the Open House. Please see the attached schedule for the time your child's class is scheduled to come and visit.

Keeping informal lines of communications open is essential to making this year a success, so please feel free to email me, and I will do my best to respond promptly. Throughout the year, I will communicate with you through email. Please remember to include your email address(s) on your emergency form. If you would like to use more than one email, please provide the emails for me.

Please remember my door is always open. If you have any questions or concerns, please stop by and see me. I'm looking forward to a terrific year with you and your child!

Sincerely,

April L. F. Greene
Youth Services Director