

## **“A Very Happy 57 Years; Community Nursery School and Learning Center to Close”**

After nearly six decades of operation, The Community Nursery School and Learning Center (CNS) will cease operations with a final graduation ceremony this June. Known locally by its motto as “The Happiest Place in Town,” the school has been a Cold Spring institution since 1968, serving generations of Philipstown preschoolers and their families. Though secular in nature, the morning preschool resided at the First Presbyterian Church of Philipstown and was envisioned from the start as an important church mission, meant to assist local families and meet the needs of the greater community. Over the years, church and school leadership endeavored to run the school as an affordable alternative for parents, even providing scholarships to a few students through the kindness of generous donors.

According to a letter sent to parents late last week, several factors contributed to the decision to close. Enrollment has diminished as the number of full-day and full-year daycare and preschool alternatives have grown in the area. With the long-awaited and now imminent arrival of Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) scheduled to begin at Haldane this fall, it became clear that the school, serving both three- and four-year-olds, would not have the number of students needed to continue. The letter stated that while the morning preschool was no longer feasible, church leadership remains interested in working with the community on providing support in new ways yet to be determined. The church engages in a number of ongoing missions that serve the local and larger community, including the Philipstown Food Pantry which has operated out of the church for many years.

“We are grateful for the rich history of the school and the efforts made by students, teachers, parents, and church volunteers for helping the school to thrive for so long,” said Reverend Brian Merritt, church pastor. “Needs and situations evolve but change is always hard. This was a very tough and emotional decision for us. We have been fortunate to touch so many lives through the school, and thank the community for its gracious support.”

Remarkably, the school has had only four directors in its long history, the longest tenured being Cold Spring resident Rosemary Rodino whose forty years at CNS ended just two years ago. When asked to comment about the closing and what the school has meant to the community, Rodino said, “My CNS friends and I have shared millions of cherished little moments and unforgettable memories that will remain in our hearts forever.”

***The Sunday June 8<sup>th</sup> 10:30 AM church service will be a celebration of the school’s rich history and its past directors, teachers, parents, students, and advisors. All are invited.***