



Janet Yang M.Ed. '02 ~ Director, Sarah Ives Gore '56 Child Care Center

Education: B.S., Pennsylvania State University; M.Ed., College of William and Mary

Family: Husband Robert; Children Kylie, 20; Grayson, 19; Kacie, 17

When did you begin your job here? I started as director nine years ago. I'd been working as the manager of a local hospital-based child care center, and I loved the emphasis on parent involvement I saw here. It felt like a perfect fit for me.

How many children are at the Center? We can accommodate 75 children, from 6 weeks up to about 6 years. What sets our center apart are the very small class sizes. On average, we have a one-to-five staff/child ratio. Our classes are on the go quite a bit. Today we have a group going over to the Sunken Garden to join their parents for a bag lunch.

How do you interact with parents? We require all parents to volunteer here. There are so many different ways to be involved — from reading stories to mulching the playground. There's just tremendous value all around. It means so much to us, and parents get in the habit early on of being involved in their children's education.

How are students involved? We've hosted hundreds of students — from education, psychology, anthropology, linguistics — to complete

research projects or internships. Because most of our parents are faculty and staff, they welcome the involvement of academic programs at the center. We also have about 15 students working on staff. Many stay for several years and build strong relationships with families.

Do you have anything like a typical day? No, not at all! When you work with kids, you really don't know what's going to happen on any given day. If a child falls and gets hurt, for example, you literally have to drop everything you're doing. And we get surprise inspections all the time.

What's your favorite part of the job? Being able to spend time with the kids — just to see the joy on their faces when they take those little wobbling steps or write their name for the first time. They're so proud of their accomplishments: "Miss Janet, look at this awesome tower I built!" or "Look, I washed my hands and turned everything off the right way!" That's really why I do this job, and why I've stayed doing it for so long.

What do you do to relax outside the job? When I'm not driving my youngest daughter to field hockey games, I'm watching some kind of sporting event on TV. I'm a big fan of the Pittsburgh Steelers and Penguins — it's all sports for us all the time.

Interview by Sara Piccini