

# Little Leaders of KCK

Learning, Caring, Growing

## Parent Handbook 2021-2022

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Welcome to Little Leaders! We are so excited to be enrolling your child in our program. At Little Leaders, your child will have the opportunity to explore, create, and imagine while developing academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. These opportunities will take place in a safe, nurturing environment under the guidance of loving, experienced teachers who are professional, positive, and passionate about the care and education of young children and helping your child grow to become a leader in school and the community.

## Our Founders

Little Leaders is independently owned and operated by Christi Eaton and Kim Maples who have been working in Early Childhood Education since 2006 with the vision to help every child in their care not just be *ready* for kindergarten, but ready to *shine*. This vision has developed into a program that emphasizes literacy development and mathematic foundations while remembering that children learn best through fun and engaging activities. At every stage of development, from toddlers to pre-K, our teachers are dedicated to making sure each little leader is *Ready for Tomorrow™*.

Christi Eaton serves as our Executive Director and has been in the education profession for 23 years. She has worked with preschool children and school-age children through fifth grade. Christi graduated from the University of Missouri in 1998 with a dual degree in Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education. She also holds a Master's Degree in Teaching and Leadership as well as a Reading Specialist Certification. In addition, Christi received her National Board Certification in 2006. Christi is also a Professional Development Specialist. This allows her to positively influence the next generation of Early Childhood educators as they work to obtain their CDA.

Kim Maples serves as our Executive Operating Director and has been in education for 27 years. In that time, she has had the opportunity to teach preschool through fifth grade. She graduated from the University of Kansas in 1993 with a degree in elementary education and

completed the teacher certification program in 1994. Kim has a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction and received her Reading Specialist Certification from KU in 2000. Kim is also currently completing coursework to obtain an additional degree in Early Childhood Education.

Christi and Kim were Reading Specialists together at Starside Elementary in De Soto, Kansas and enjoyed helping students who were struggling to improve as readers. Through this experience, they learned what early skills children need before beginning kindergarten. They love teaching preschool and especially enjoy providing on-going training for their staff to ensure they are always guiding children through developmentally appropriate experiences that will prepare them for a successful start in elementary school.

### **Our Director**

Our Director, Mesha Klotz, is dedicated to the children, staff, and parents at Little Leaders. She holds a degree in Elementary Education from Kansas State University and has worked with children in early childhood for over 14 years. She has been a lead teacher, Assistant Director, and now Director. She has experience in all areas of our program and is committed to ensuring uncompromising quality in the care and education of every little leader.

### **Little Leaders' Operating Information and Program Descriptions**

Little Leaders is currently licensed to provide care for 80 children at one time. Child care will be available Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Our program is built on a **full day model** with half of the day focused on early academics and half of the day focused on arts/crafts, science/social studies and music/movement. Enrolling children all day ensures our students benefit from the full program. Five programs are offered at Little Leaders to ensure that all children are engaged in activities that are developmentally appropriate and specifically designed for them. Our "waddler" program is for children ages 12 months to 2 years and our toddler program is for children 2 to 3-years-old. Our transitional preschool program is for children 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 3  $\frac{1}{2}$  years. For our older children, we have two programs. Our preschool program is for 3 and 4-year-olds and our pre-K program is for 4 and 5-year-olds who will be going to kindergarten the following year. With these programs, we can find the perfect placement for your little leader. We offer a year-round program and operate an academic school year from August to the end of May and a summer session from June to August. These two sessions allow us to transition children to new classrooms in June and August as our older children graduate and go to kindergarten.

# Learning

## Waddlers:

Your little one will be loved and cared for within a classroom designed to meet the unique need for individualized care at this precious stage of development. Routines and schedules will be established and adjusted as our "waddlers" grow. With the research-based understanding that children are born ready to learn, our teachers will build a loving, trusting relationship with your child and provide one-on-one engagement to promote learning and physical development.

## Toddler and Transitional Preschool Programs:

Your child will be engaged in research-based curriculum that is developmentally appropriate. Within these programs, your child will be engaged in enriching activities related to the current theme. Your child will also have a special activity each day which will include one of the following: Arts/Crafts, Cooking, Science or Sensory Experiments, Social Skills, Sign Language, and Music and Movement. Children will have the opportunity for outside play daily when weather permits or they will participate in gross motor activities within the classroom, if inclement weather keeps them from going outside. Little Leaders will follow the health department's guidelines for excessive heat and cold temperatures for being outside.

## Preschool and Pre-K Programs:

Children attending preschool and pre-K will participate in our Academic and Learning Extensions Program. During the academic portion of the day, your child will be engaged in a research-based curriculum that is developmentally appropriate in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. With the Learning Extensions activities, your child will enjoy enriching activities related to the current theme. Your child will also have a special activity each day which will include one of the following: Arts/Crafts, Cooking, Science Experiments, Social Studies Exploration, and Music and Movement. This unique program will introduce children to historical places around the world as well as famous artists and composers. Children will have the opportunity for outside play daily when weather permits or they will participate in gross motor activities within the classroom, if inclement weather keeps them from going outside. Little Leaders will follow the health department's guidelines for excessive heat and cold temperatures for being outside.

The teachers in the preschool and pre-K classrooms will be focusing on academics to prepare our little leaders for a successful start in kindergarten. To be sure that our teachers can focus on

the curriculum and guide children through their learning, children enrolling in these classrooms will need to be independent in the restroom.

We understand at this age that children may need help cleaning up after using the restroom, but children will need to be wearing underwear and able to indicate his/her restroom needs before starting our academic year. Pull-ups during rest time are still acceptable, as we know some children have not yet learned to wake up if a restroom need arises.

### **Little Leaders Curriculum**

The curriculum at Little Leaders is based on science and social studies themes and has a strong academic focus on reading and math skills. Children will be engaged in activities that can best be described as "learning disguised as fun." The themes will capture children's interests and they will be invited to learn about their world through songs, games, stories, and creative play while developing the important cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills that they need before entering kindergarten. Since studies show that "leaders are readers," reading to children will be an integral part of each day.

Children will often participate in some very messy fun in the classroom and on the playground! While we will always encourage good hygiene and will clean up after our activities, children may occasionally get their clothes dirty despite our best efforts. Because of this, school may not be the best place for their best clothes.

**Holiday Celebrations:** Little Leaders will celebrate traditional holidays by reading books and making crafts, and special attention will be given to acknowledge and respect varying cultures and beliefs. We will have parties for Valentine's Day, Easter, Halloween, and Christmas. If you do not wish for your child to participate in these activities, please let a director know.

**Family Involvement:** Little Leaders welcomes parents to visit and observe our activities at any time. We offer family-fun activities four times a year as well as Curriculum Nights, Parent/Teacher Conferences, and Love & Logic parenting classes. Our family activities include an annual Carnival, Fall Fest with Trunk or Treat, Storyteller Night, and a children's music concert during Week of the Young Child. In addition, we offer child development and early literacy information and books to promote reading at home. These resources are available to parents in our library.

**Birthday Celebrations:** We enjoy celebrating birthdays at Little Leaders and know that it is a very special time for the children. Birthday celebrations will be kept short and will take place during snack time to not disrupt the regular routine. Parents are welcome to send birthday treats such as cookies or cupcakes to share with the class; however, we ask that parents not send goodie bags with toys. These types of toys often get lost during the day which can cause

hurt feelings. If sending treats, we ask that you not send hard candy, popcorn, or items containing peanuts or peanut butter.

**Birthday Invitations:** You are welcome to pass out invitations at school if you plan to invite the whole class. However, if you are not inviting everyone, we ask that you use the Little Leaders' Directory for contact information and share the invitations outside of Little Leaders.

**Breakfast, Snacks and Lunch:** Little Leaders will provide breakfast and one snack in the morning and one snack in the afternoon. A delicious and nutritious lunch will be served at 11:15 for our younger children and 11:40 for our older children. Because of allergies and the potential for severe allergic reactions if food is shared, we ask that children do not bring their own food for breakfast, snacks or lunches. Accommodations will be made for children who, due to medical reasons, need to bring their own food.



## **I Care Rules**

At Little Leaders, fun activities, games, songs, and puzzles from the Peace Education Foundation will be used to teach children the "I Care Rules" and important skills like listening, cooperating, and sharing. As children are guided through personal and social situations, they will develop important self-regulations skills that are the foundation for all other formal learning. Below you will find the five "I Care Rules" that the toddlers and preschool children will be learning:

1. We listen to each other.
2. Hands are for helping, not hurting.
3. We use I-Care-Language.
4. We care about each other's feelings.
5. We are responsible for what we say and do.

## **Problem Solving Technique (F.R.I.E.N.D.)**

**Face-to Face** (The teacher will face the children at eye level and speak in a calm and gentle manner.)

**Recognition** (The teacher states observation: "You look very angry.")

**Inquire** (The teacher asks each child to tell him/her what happened.)

**Echo** (The teacher will repeat each child's statement: John you are saying Chris took the tricycle from you. Chris you are saying that John doesn't want to share with you.)

**Negotiate** (John wants to let you ride the tricycle for 10 minutes and then he can ride it for 10 minutes. The teacher may have to help with negotiations in the beginning.)

**Down Time** (The teacher praises the children for solving the problem and then follows-up to make sure the problem has been solved.)

### **Love and Logic**

Little Leaders' staff will be trained in Love and Logic to ensure they are guiding children in a loving way to learn from their own decisions. This approach will emphasize offering choices throughout the day to empower children to know that they are capable and can be good decision makers and can also learn from the natural consequences of mistakes under the guidance of a caring adult. Love and Logic parenting classes will also be offered throughout the year to encourage consistency and a home-school partnership in the care and education of each little leader. These classes are free to parents and guardians and will be made available on-line for convenient, self-paced learning.

### **Rewards/Consequences**

Your child will be rewarded daily with smiles, hugs, and constant praise for good choices. Children may also earn trips to the "treasure box" for consistent, positive behavior. Children who need more positive encouragement may have a specific plan in place to guide them in making good choices.

**Waddlers/Toddlers:** When necessary the techniques listed below will be used to encourage children to follow the "I Care Rules." Consequences will be determined by the situation and by what is developmentally appropriate for each child. Corporal punishment will not be used at Little Leaders.

1. **Redirection:** Children will be redirected to another activity and encouraged to try again at another time.
2. **Natural or logical consequences** may be used to encourage positive behavior.
3. **Ignoring:** Behaviors that are not harmful may be ignored so that they are not reinforced with undue attention.

**Preschool and Pre-K:** When necessary the techniques listed below will be used to encourage children to follow the "I Care Rules." Consequences will be determined by the situation and by what is developmentally appropriate for each child. Corporal punishment will not be used at Little Leaders.

1. **Redirection:** Children will be redirected to another activity and encouraged to try again at another time.
2. **Natural or logical consequences** may be used to encourage positive behavior.
3. **Ignoring:** Behaviors that are not harmful may be ignored so that they are not reinforced with undue attention.

4. Conflict Resolution: When appropriate, children will be asked what "I Care Rule" is being broken and will be encouraged to think about positive choices and to solve problems with the "F.R.I.E.N.D." technique.
5. Peaceful Pause: A child who is having trouble regaining self-control or is being harmful to other children will be separated from the group. The child will be encouraged to rejoin the group when he/she is ready to show appropriate behavior. This pause from activity will not be used as a punishment but to provide the child with time to regain self-control and make good choices.

A private meeting with parents will be requested if a child's behavior is continuously inappropriate or dangerous. Parents are encouraged to schedule a time to meet if there is ever a concern about behavior or any other issue at Little Leaders.

### **Biting and Aggressive Behavior Policy**

Biting is a natural, developmental stage for many children. It usually does not last for an extended period of time if the appropriate action is taken to help reduce the occurrences. Children bite and are aggressive for a variety of reasons: frustration, anger, joy, overwhelmed, over-tired, (emotions they cannot yet express), teething, or just experimenting and testing limits. Our teachers will assess each incident to help better understand why a child is biting or showing aggressive behavior. This will help us respond to each individual child's needs. Below is a timeline of steps to be taken when a child bites or is aggressive.

#### Steps taken for Preschool and Pre-K Children:

For each occurrence, appropriate first aid and care for the child who was bitten will be applied and documentation of each incident with both sets of parents being notified.

1<sup>st</sup> incident: Peaceful Pause in the classroom (No biting, biting hurts), teacher will notify both sets of parents, assessment of why child might be biting and plan of action based on child's development.

2<sup>nd</sup> /3<sup>rd</sup> incident: Removed from classroom, assessment of why child might be biting and plan of action based on child's development (teacher will share plan of action with parents of child biting)

4<sup>th</sup>/-5<sup>th</sup> incident: One day suspension

6<sup>th</sup> incident: Action taken based on individual child's age, development, and severity of behavior.

#### Steps taken for Toddler Children:

1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> incident: The child biting/hurting will be redirected in classroom (The teacher will say No biting, biting hurts, or our hands/feet are for helping), the incident will be documented, the parents of the child biting/showing aggressive behavior will be notified in writing, an ouch note will be created for the parents of the child hurt if an injury has occurred.

3<sup>rd</sup> incident: The above procedures will be followed and the parents of the child biting/showing aggressive behavior will also receive a phone call to discuss the behavior. An assessment of why the child might be biting/showing aggressive behavior will be made and a plan of action based on the child's development will be created and shared with the parents of the child biting/showing aggressive behavior.



Additional Incidents: The above procedures will be followed, and the plan of action will be continued. Progress will be monitored and reviewed. Action taken based on individual child's development and severity of bites/aggressive behavior.

Since biting and some aggressive behavior is a natural developmental stage for many toddlers, the staff at Little Leaders will help guide children through this developmental stage with love and patience and the understanding that it takes time to unlearn a behavior. However, if a child is not showing progress after two months of intervention, it may be necessary for Little Leaders to dismiss the child for the safety and well being of the other children in the classroom.

Additional information on responding to biting and developmentally appropriate practices is available upon request.



### **Outdoor Learning**

Daily outdoor activities are an integral part of our program. Studies have shown that children who learn outdoors develop a sense of self, independence, confidence, creativity, decisionmaking and problem-solving skills, empathy towards others, motor skills, self-discipline and initiative. Your child will have the opportunity to benefit from being outdoors to move, explore, create, and (of course) play!

### **Community Garden**

Our little leaders will have a hand in creating an annual community garden. Your child will not only learn about working together, planting, and caring for what they've grown, but will also learn how their efforts can benefit the community as they share what they've grown with others.

**Non-Discriminatory Policy:** Children will not be discriminated against regarding their own or their parents'/guardians' race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, gender, or sexual orientation.

### **"Outside Babysitting" Waiver**

Little Leaders does not promote or sponsor private babysitting services for children outside of any services offered or approved by Little Leaders ("outside babysitting"). Parents will be asked to sign a waiver to acknowledge that Little Leaders is not a party to any outside babysitting agreement reached between any parent and/or legal guardian and any individual, including an individual who is currently employed by Little Leaders.

## Holidays

Little Leaders will be closed in recognition of the following paid holidays:

2 Days for New Year's	*Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Two Days in March (TBA)
Memorial Day	Fourth of July	*One Friday in August (TBA)
Labor Day	2 Days for Thanksgiving	3 Days for Christmas

If a holiday falls on a weekend, Little Leaders will announce which weekday(s) it will close in recognition of the holiday. An updated list will be provided each August with exact dates for holiday closings. \*These days will be used for staff development.

## Inclement Weather

Little Leaders will make every effort to be open during inclement weather. However, it may be necessary at times to close due to extreme ice and snow conditions. Under these circumstances, Little Leaders will either have a two-hour late start with a shortened day and open at 9:00 a.m. and close at 5:00 p.m. OR Little Leaders will close. This decision will be **emailed to parents through our Tadpoles® software by 6:00 a.m.** If you do not have access to the internet after 6:00 a.m., please feel free to call Christi at 913-484-4051 or Kim at 785766-3464.

Regular rates will apply on days when Little Leaders is closed due to inclement weather or any other unforeseen circumstance that would force the center to be closed. However, parents will receive credit for any day beyond the third unscheduled closing occurring within a school year (September through August).

## Sick Children and Accidents

The Health Department prohibits a contagious child in group care and provides guidance for when children should be kept at home due to illness. Little Leaders will follow the Health Department guidelines for determining attendance. Please notify Little Leaders if your child has a communicable disease or contagious illness (strep throat, flu, etc.) so that other parents can be notified to watch for symptoms in their children. If a child becomes ill while at Little Leaders, parents will be called and will need to pick up the child within one hour. If parents

cannot be reached, Little Leaders will contact the first person on the child's emergency contact list and work down the list until someone is reached who is able to take the child home.

Children with a fever of 101 degrees may not return to Little Leaders until they are fever free (without the aid of fever reducing medication) for 24 hours. Children with diarrhea, unexplainable rashes, head lice, eye infection, or vomiting should not be sent to Little Leaders. Children must be free of these symptoms for 24 hours before returning to Little Leaders. Children with head lice will need to be treated and nit free before returning to Little Leaders. This illness policy was created using the *Exclusion of Ill Children* form from the Health Department. This form is included in the Forms and Handouts and may be referred to for more information about when children should be kept out of group care. Little Leaders may request a doctor's note to confirm a child is well and able to be in child care after an illness.

For the health and safety of all and out of consideration for those who are too young to have yet received all their immunizations, Little Learners requires children in attendance to be current on (or on a catch-up schedule for) all the immunizations required by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

### Tuition Rates

Rates at Little Leaders are based on the room in which your child is enrolled and not on the age of your child. The difference in price is due to the ratio, as younger classrooms have lower teacher-to-child ratios than our older classrooms. Priority is given to full-time children and those enrolling MWF or TR. Classroom placement will be determined by Little Leaders and will be based on birthday and days of attendance. A \$10/week discount is offered for siblings. Students and Staff of Kansas City Kansas Community College will be eligible for a \$25/week discount, based on space available. Payment is due on the first day your child is scheduled to attend each week. Weekly electronic Direct Payments can be set up and are encourage. A \$10 charge per day will be assessed for late or incomplete payments. Returned checks will be assessed a \$35 service charge. Consistent failure to make timely payments may result in the requirement of Direct Payments or termination of services. Two returned checks will result in a cash only requirement or termination of services.

### Classroom Rates

Classroom	Ratio	Full Time Rate	Part Time/Daily Rate
Purple Diamonds ("Waddlers")	1:5 or 2:10	\$225 (12 months – 2 years)	\$48/day
Yellow Stars (Toddlers)	1:5 or 2:10 or 1:7 or 2:14 or 1:10	\$225(1 – 2 ½ years) or \$200 (2 - 3 ½ years)	\$48/day or \$42/day
Red Hearts (Transitional Preschool)	1:10 or 2:20	\$190 (2 ½ - 3 ½ years)	\$42/day
Greens (Preschool) Circles	1:12 or 2:24	\$160 (3 - 4 ½ years)	\$38/day
Blues (Pre-K) Rectangles	1:12 or 2:24	\$160 (4 – 6 years)	\$38/day

Super Kindergarten (after finishing Knd.)* (this program may or may not be available every year depending on need and space available)	1:14	\$220 (summer only)	\$45/day (summer only)
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Little Leaders will be open from 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Monday - Friday. We understand that there may be times when being late is unavoidable; however, in these situations please provide Little Leaders with a courtesy call. If early drop-offs and late pick-ups become a consistent problem, we will reserve the right to implement a late fee of \$1 per minute.

**Registration/Enrollment Fee**

A nonrefundable registration fee of \$75 will be due at the time of enrollment. This fee secures your child's placement and helps cover the cost of supplies, provides the use of a rest time pillow and cot, and holds your child's place until he/she begins attending Little Leaders. The enrollment fee will be waived for students of Kansas City Kansas Community College. A refundable deposit equal to one week's tuition is also required at the time of enrollment to secure your child's placement. This deposit is refundable *only* after attending and with a two week notice before your child's last day at Little Leaders. If you choose not to attend, the enrollment fee and deposit will not be refunded. A yearly continuing enrollment and activities fee will be assessed each year and will be due August 1<sup>st</sup> for the following academic school year. The annual fee is \$50/child. This covers the cost of replenishing supplies and activities throughout the year.

**Termination**

Little Leaders may ask that another provider be found if there are unresolved behavioral issues or issues involving noncompliance with stated policies. Whenever possible, parents will be given two weeks to find another placement. However, Little Leaders may terminate care without giving notice if a child's behavior is consistently inappropriate and/or dangerous or if timely payments are not made. Parents will also need to give a two-week notice when terminating child care. If a two-week notice is given, the deposit will be returned on the child's last scheduled day of care or may be applied to the final week of services. If a two-week notice is not given, the deposit will be forfeited.

**Communication**

Our teachers know that staying connected to your child's day is important. Through our Tadpoles® software, teachers are able to send parents pictures during the day as well as an email with detailed information about your child's daily activities. Parents are also able to download the Tadpoles® app, which will enable them to communicate easily with their child's teacher to report absences or share information.

*Thank you for considering Little Leaders. We look forward to having your child in our care. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call. We would be happy to visit with you more about the experiences your child will have at Little Leaders.*

## Enrollment

The documents listed below are included in the Forms and Handouts packet. Please take note of the forms that will need to be signed and returned. We ask that these forms be returned at least one week before your child's first day at Little Leaders. A signed agreement must be returned with the enrollment fee and deposit before an opening will be considered filled.

## Forms and Handouts Checklist










- Child Profile\*
- Parent-Provider Agreement\*
- Authorization for Emergency Medical Care\*  
Must be notarized—children cannot attend until this form is on file
- Medical Record and Health Assessment\*  
Must be signed by a doctor—children can not attend until this form is on file
- Permission to Administer External Non-Prescription Preparations Form\*
- Permission to Photograph Form\*
- Child Pick Up Form\*
- "Outside Babysitting" Waiver\*
- Direct Payment Authorization
- Checklist for items to be left at Little Leaders
- Guidelines for Exclusion of Children Who are Ill

\*must be signed and returned



## Little Leaders Sample Daily Routine

\* The times listed are based on our Pre-K program. Preschool and Toddler times will vary slightly in each classroom.

7:00-8:15		Breakfast	Children arriving after 8:15 a.m. should eat breakfast at home.
8:15-9:00		Free Play	Children will have time to play and explore while learning to share and interact with others.
30 minutes in the morning		Outside Play	Weather permitting, each morning children will play outside otherwise, we will play inside.
9:00-11:30	<b>Academic Activities</b> Children will participate in whole group, small group, and individual choice activities. Through songs, games, stories and creative play, children will learn the skills described below when appropriate to their development. Children will also have the opportunity for an outside play break during this time.		
	<b>Social Skills and Activities</b> Manners "I-Care" Rules Conflict Resolution Self Care (zip, snap, tie, button) Dramatic Play Singing Unstructured Play Time Outdoor Play Time Gardening Time	<b>Math Skills and Activities</b> Shape Recognition Patterning Number Recognition Basic Counting Skills Calendar Skills Spatial Awareness Comparing Math in the Environment	<b>Reading Readiness Skills and Activities</b> The Alphabet Letter Sounds Blending & Segmenting Sounds Rhyming Awareness Print Awareness Identifying Beginning Sounds Literature Appreciation
11:40 - 12:10		Lunch	A nutritious and balanced meal will be provided daily.
12:10-12:30		Read Aloud	A read aloud time will be used to share great stories and help children prepare for rest time.
12:30-2:00	<b>Nap/Rest Time</b> A rest mat will be provided for each child. They are also welcome to bring a special blanket or stuffed animal (please label). Children who aren't tired or have out grown naps may look at books or work on puzzles but will be asked to stay on their rest mats during this time. The length of nap/rest time will be based on the needs of the children. Please be sure to let your child's teacher know if you feel your child is getting too much or not enough time to rest.		
2:00-4:15		Learning Extensions	Children will enjoy a snack followed by a theme related craft, special of the day, a story, and unstructured play.
4:15-5:00		Outside Play	Weather permitting, each afternoon children will play outside otherwise, we will play inside.
4:00-5:30		Free Play	Children will have another opportunity to play and explore.

# Little Leaders of KCK

Learning, Caring, Growing

We promise you every day  
Your children will learn something.

Some days they'll bring it  
home in their hands.

Some days they'll bring it  
home in their heads.

And some days they'll bring it  
home in their hearts.

by Valerie Welk



