

WE'RE MOVING...

...across the street, that is. Our telephone, fax and email numbers will not change. But please make note of our new address:

Children, Youth & Family Consortium
201 Coffey Hall
1420 Eckles Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108



CONSORTIUM CONNECTIONS

In this issue

Supporting families and learning: partnership, respect, and shared responsibility

Marti Erickson, Director, CYFC

On June 25, 1997, over 1000 people gathered in Nashville, Tennessee for the 6th annual Family Reunion conference, moderated by Vice President Al Gore and sponsored by the U of M's Children, Youth & Family Consortium in partnership with the Child and Family Policy Center at Vanderbilt University. Always with "family" at the center, this year's Reunion focused on "Families and Learning." The message of Family Reunion 6 was clear: Of the many factors that account for school success and lifelong learning, none is more important than family involvement. From the first day of a baby's life, when parents begin to lay the foundation for learning, through each subsequent stage of development, families matter most.

Yet, as we heard over and over at the conference, as parents we often

underestimate our own importance. Or we're not quite sure HOW to do our part. Or we know what to do, but lack the time or the energy or the means. And sometimes — in fact too often, it seems — we have felt excluded by school policies, practices, environment, or attitudes.

And so, knowing that multiple challenges demand multiple solutions, we explored at Family Reunion 6 a wide range of approaches to support families and learning — from ways to engage new parents as effective first teachers, to innovative family-school-community partnerships, to new technologies, to strategies for system change. Throughout the personal stories, research findings, program descriptions, and policy discussion, we heard that solutions are about partnership, respect, and shared responsibility, with plenty for each of us to do.

Supporting families and learning—continued on page 2

Live and Learn: Creating conditions for responsible learning

There's a lot of finger-pointing going on. Parents point to schools and teachers as responsible for their children's education. Teachers and school administrators say they can't produce quality students and productive learners without parental support and help. Parents say their children's teachers don't want them meddling in their classrooms. Teachers say they welcome parent involvement in school. So, who IS to blame? Who IS responsible for quality educational outcomes in children?

The University of Minnesota through its Extension Service is engaging in a three-year statewide project called *Live and Learn*. The project is a collaborative effort between a variety of public and private agencies throughout the state. The project will develop a public awareness campaign to disseminate messages to teachers AND parents about what youth need, both in school and at home, to be responsible, productive learners.

The project is currently in its first year of development. At this point, a comprehensive literature review of empirical evidence has been conducted to identify family, school, and community influences on student academic achievement. Based on the review, many similarities between home and school influence have been identified. "We have found that how youth spend their time and the activities they are involved in are most influential in predicting their academic success," says Sandra Christenson, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Minnesota.

Dr. Christenson has been studying student achievement and motivation to learn, and has been speaking on the importance of family involvement in learning for several years. She serves as researcher on the *Live and Learn* program development team. From the empirical evidence, Dr. Christenson identified six factors as important to raising

Live and Learn—continued on page 2

Mission Statement

The Children, Youth & Family Consortium was established in fall 1991 in an effort to bring together the varied competencies of the University of Minnesota and the vital resources of Minnesota's communities to enhance the ability of individuals and organizations to address critical health, education, and social policy concerns in ways that improve the well-being of Minnesota children, youth, and families.

Volume 6, Number 3, Fall 1997

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

"The children's voices through the video is a piece that was very valuable ... the kids really do know 'what works' for them ... and why initiatives are successful."

— Mary Dooley Burns
St. Paul Public Schools

"... the dedication of the President, Vice President, Tipper Gore and Secretary Riley. Each year these busy, influential officials give of their time and expertise to work with field leaders to implement change and gain ideas."

— Mary Malone
Cherrywood Elementary School

Supporting families—*continued from cover*

Now, challenged and encouraged by what we learned at the conference, we offer you in this issue of Consortium Connections a sampling of observations and insights from Family Reunion 6, an overview of new national initiatives launched at the conference, and a discussion of some innovative programs right here at home that are drawing energy from the conference and its follow-up. And, in the spirit of the Consortium, we invite you to keep the conversation going through our Families and Learning website and to join us in carrying forward this important work. We each have much to learn — and much to give.

Live and Learn

—*continued from cover*

responsible learners. She says it is important that these factors are present both in school and at home in the lives of youth. The six factors are:

- Standards & Expectations
- Structure
- Opportunities to Learn
- Support
- Climate/Relationships
- Modeling

To validate information from the literature review, sixteen focus groups of students grades 4-12 were conducted during May and June of 1997. In reviewing the tapes of the focus group interviews, Dr. Christenson found student comments relating to each of the factors identified by the literature review.

In addition, students consistently said that 1) their families are important in their lives and they want them to be a part of their lives both in school and at home; 2) they want parents and teachers who will listen and spend time with them; 3) receiving recognition and reward for effort, from parents and teachers, is important; and 4) "hands-on" learning and variety in the classroom are important.

During the last few months of this first year of project development, more focus group interviews will be conducted. A group representing agencies throughout the state will be gathering on September 30th to review the information collected thus far and begin developing messages in the form of teaching guides, fact sheets, posters, table tents, calendars, and other formats. These messages will be disseminated by the project partners throughout the state.

Anyone interested in learning more about the project can contact the *Live and Learn* project coordinator:

Jackie Getting, Extension Educator
U of MN Extension Service -
Steele County
Phone: (507)444-7687
email: jgetting@mes.umn.edu

Live & Learn factors

Standards and Expectations:

refer to the level of expected performance for youth. These standards are set by youth and parents, and youth and school, with youth clearly understanding the consequences of not meeting the standards.

Structure:

includes the overall organization and management of a child's life (eating dinner together, completing homework) and directions for assignments and rules being posted at school.

Opportunities to Learn:

refers to the variety of learning options available to the student in the home, the school and in the community.

Support:

refers to the guidance provided by adults, the communication between adults, and the interest shown by adults to facilitate adequate student progress in school. It is **what** adults do on an on-going basis to help youth learn and achieve.

Climate and Relationships:

refer to the amount of warmth and friendliness, praise and recognition; and the degree to which the adult-youth relationship is positive and respectful. It is **HOW** adults in the home, in the school and in the community help youth.

Modeling:

refers to the way adults demonstrate desired behaviors and their commitment to and value of learning and working hard in their daily lives.

CONSORTIUM CONNECTIONS

Consortium Connections is published three times a year by the Children, Youth & Family Consortium: A University and Community Collaboration.

Publication staff: Judith Kahn, Amy Susman-Stillman



Children, Youth & Family Consortium
University of Minnesota
201 Coffey Hall, 1420 Eckles Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
612/626-1212 Fax 612/626-1210
email: cyfc@che2.che.umn.edu
www: http://www.cyfc.umn.edu

The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity employer and educator. This publication is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact us at the number above.

CONSORTIUM STAFF

Martha Farrell Erickson Director
Judith Kahn Associate Director
Michael Brott Community Partnership and Information Coordinator
Rebecca Cullen Associate Administrator
Rosa Garner Office Specialist
Peggy Kennedy Coordinator, Seeds of Promise Initiative
Amy Susman-Stillman Project Coordinator
Dwaine Simms Father to Father

CONSORTIUM ADVISORY COUNCIL

Sandra Beeman School of Social Work, U of M
Robert Blum, Past Chair Adolescent Health Program, U of M
Bill Bomash* U of MN Extension Service
Harry Boyte Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, U of M
Bonnie Braun College of Human Ecology, U of M
Norm Coleman Mayor, City of St. Paul
Mary Jo Czaplewski Nat'l Council on Family Relations
Ed Ehlinger Boynton Health Service, U of M
Roxie Foster Minnesota Parenting Association
Lynn Galle S. G. Moore Laboratory Nursery School, U of M
José Gonzáles Minneapolis Health Department
Hal Grotevant* Family Social Science, U of M
Bert Hirschhorn Minnesota Department of Health
Jan Hively College of Education and Human Development, U of M
Janice Hogan, Chair, Family Social Science, U of M
Hubert H. Humphrey III MN State Attorney General
Jim Kielsmeier National Youth Leadership Council
Jim Koppel Children's Defense Fund
Sue Kroeger Office of Students with Disabilities, U of M
Peggy Leppik Minnesota State Representative
Bill Malcolm Youth Advisory Board/Adolescent Health Program, U of M
Jeanne Markell U of M Extension Service
Scott McConnell Educational Psychology, U of M
Patricia McHugh Saint Paul Schools
Colleen Moriarty Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board
Mary Noble St. Louis Park Schools
Joan Patterson Maternal and Child Health, U of M
Maynard Reynolds U of M (retired)
Brian Rusche Joint Religious Legislative Coalition
Sharon Sayles Belton Mayor, City of Minneapolis
Jean Sazevich Sheltering Arms Foundation
Carol Shields 4-H Youth Development, U of M
Shirley Stone American Indian Health Center
Mary Treacy Metronet
Carol B. Truesdell Youth Trust
Kathleen Vallenga St. Paul/Ramsey Cty Children's Initiative
Sharon Vegoe Professional Development & Conference Services, U of M
Mark Vukelich Fairview Health System
David Walsh Fairview Hospitals
Peg Wangenstein Congregations Concerned for Children
Richard Weinberg* Institute of Child Development, U of M
Gretchen Wronka Hennepin Co. Library Assoc.
Blong Xiong Family Social Science, U of M
Mao Yang Ombudsperson for Asian Pacific Families

* emeritus

DEANS' POLICY COUNCIL

C. Eugene Allen Provost, Professional Studies
Mark Brenner VP for Research & Dean of Graduate School
Robert Bruininks Dean, College of Education and Human Development
Frank Cerra Provost, Academic Health Center
Sandra Edwardson Dean, School of Nursing
Katherine Fennelly Assoc. Dean & Director, MES
Mary Heltsley Dean, College of Human Ecology
Edith Leyasmeyer Dean, School of Public Health
Al Michael Dean, Medical School
E. Thomas Sullivan Dean, Law School
Dean, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs

“A Hero’s Journey...”

The Role Of Parents As First Teachers

One powerful topic discussed throughout Family Reunion 6 was that when a family becomes involved in their child’s education, it can be a transforming experience for the child, the family, the teachers, the school, the community, and hopefully, the entire system.

Those earliest experiences and interactions are the springboards for all future learning. The transformational process begins at home, with parents as first teachers. A panel of storytellers at the conference dramatized the formative role that parents play in the development and growth of their children. The panelists, from all walks of life, told personal stories about how their parents helped them overcome obstacles in their lives, such as poverty, war, and abandonment, and sparked their passion for learning and teaching.

In introducing the panelists, Vice President Gore spoke about the power of myth in our society, particularly the hero’s journey to a difficult place, and his or her return as a transformed individual. Gore noted that the panelists were present-day heroes who had survived their own difficult journeys and are now teaching others, thanks to the wisdom and perseverance of their parents.

Phon Malaikham, now a teacher at Carson Lane Academy in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, experienced the trauma of living in a refugee camp in Thailand, having been driven from her home in Laos during a protracted war. Her father, fearing she would lose valuable educational opportunities living in the camp, spent two years teaching her the fundamentals of math. “My family was my salvation and inspiration to learn,” she said.

Joe Jones Jr., who now directs a program in Baltimore City that encourages young men to be responsible fathers, spoke of the devastating loss he felt when his father left the family, but also how his father came back into his life and helped him overcome his 17 year heroin addiction. Jones has now committed his life to helping other young men avoid the mistakes he made in his youth.

Joe Jones Sr., who runs the Parenting Academy in Baltimore City, (and is the father of Joe Jr.) recalled how his father, a farm laborer who never got past the 8th grade, shared a deep love of reading with his nine children which enriched their lives and encouraged them to pursue lifelong learning.

Hodding Carter, professor and journalist at the University of Maryland, spoke about being raised in a life of wealth and privilege, but as the child of an outspoken newspaper editor in the South, was isolated in his community. He learned that heroes - in this case his father who fought against racial segregation - can raise fear in others “because they go out and do the right thing.”

Dr. James Comer, professor of Child Psychiatry at the Yale Child Study Center, talked about how his parents influenced his passion for learning. His mother was the daughter of a sharecropper in Mississippi, and his father was a steel mill laborer. But they were determined to raise well educated, disciplined children. Comer watched many of his peers go down hill, but because of the dogged determination of his parents to ensure their children received a quality education, he was “locked in a conspiracy of support” that included teachers, friends and neighbors, and he thrived. He became a Yale professor, and all of his siblings have advanced degrees. Comer noted that “having that kind of love and support is what real privilege is all about” - it’s now about having money or a large house.

Gayle Ross, a Cherokee story teller, spoke about the storytelling tradition of Native Americans. “Without my family stories, I would not know about my tribe or my heritage.” She underscored the value of storytelling as a powerful educational tool for teachers, saying it teaches “to the head, the heart, and the hands.” Every family has a story, and every child needs to hear that story. She urged Americans to become a nation of storytellers as a way of teaching lessons to their own children, as well as promoting cultural understanding in an increasingly diverse society.

Partners for Learning: Preparing teachers to involve families

How can teachers, principal, and other school professionals work more effectively with parents and families? On November 5, 1997, join a national discussion on how universities, colleges, schools, and communities can better prepare teachers to involve parents and families in the education of their children. Featured will be innovative programs and best practices from leading colleges of education, as well as school districts and communities from around the nation. The program is scheduled to be hosted by Vice President Al Gore and U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley.

Everyone is encouraged to convene a group to watch the satellite broadcast on Wednesday, November 5 at 2:00 p.m. Eastern, 1:00 p.m. Central time. If possible consider hosting a local discussion of the issues to be raised during the teleconference, before or after the broadcast.

The teleconference is free, but please register your participation. For more information or to register, call 1-800- USA LEARN.

“These conferences help us see how we can better incorporate learning in all aspects of our family life.”

— Marcie Brooke
Working Family Resource Center

“All of us must make it our journey — our nation’s journey — to re-connect America’s classrooms to America’s living rooms. There’s so much we can do to revitalize our schools, invigorate our students, and integrate parents into their children’s learning.”

— Vice President Al Gore

“We close down everything here in Vermont when it’s the first day of deer season; we should close down for the first day of school as well.”

— Terry Ehrich
Hemmings Motor News
Bennington, Vermont

“Pockets of excellence are okay because we can learn from them, but what about all the other schools?”

— Betty Webb
Minneapolis Public Schools

"The experience of parents working with other parents over a long period of time is very powerful."

— workshop participant

"The images of the video, and the contagious spirit of the panel and their stories, insights and commitment was affirming! As a worker in the field, but more so as a parent of a child in her early school years."

—Dwaine Simms, MELD

"Family Reunion 6 was the most important meeting yet held on the subject we now understand is critical to fulfilling the basic promises we make to our children: Families make the difference in the learning of our children throughout their lives. The conference made that clear to a nation that was listening as never before, and now appears ready to act."

— Bill Purcell, Director
Child and Family Policy Center
Vanderbilt University

New efforts to re-connect students, teachers and parents

Vice President Gore announced four efforts that aim to strengthen bonds among parents, teachers and students to revitalize learning in schools across the nation.

- A new multi-million dollar private sector fund to support public school reform. The fund, spearheaded by one of America's leading venture capitalists, John Doerr, along with several high-tech companies, will support the start-up, speed-up and turn-around of public schools across the nation.
- A cutting edge information tool, called the Dashboard, which will connect parents and teachers through the Internet. For example, parents will be able to track a child's math scores or learn more about their child's homework assignments. This tool was developed when several companies responded to a challenge from Vice President Gore to find a creative way to help parents get more involved in their children's learning.

The companies developing this new tool are Marimba, Netscape, Cybernautics, Yahoo!, Spectrum Holobyte, Inc. and NetSchools, in collaboration with a number of schools in San Francisco area.

- A new collaboration between the Department of Education's Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, which includes many national organizations representing families and educators, and four leading graduate schools of education (Vanderbilt University's Peabody School, the University of Minnesota's College of Education and Human Development, Bank Street College, and Columbia Teachers College). This initiative will seek better ways to train teachers about family involvement, beginning with a national teleconference held November 5 and led by the Vice President. (see page 3 for teleconference information).
- The release of a film called "Learn and Live," produced by the George Lucas Foundation. The film highlights schools that have succeeded in involving parents and that have used new technologies and other strategies to help prepare students for the 21st Century. The film is accompanied by a guidebook to help other schools learn from the experience of successful school improvement efforts around the nation. The foundation will make 100,000 copies of the video and guide book available to communities around the country.

The Vice President sees these steps as ways we can break down more barriers between parents, teachers and students. By working together, we can make collaboration between our parents and teachers less daunting and success for students more attainable.

Family Reunion 6: Families and Learning conference web site

The University of Minnesota's Children, Youth and Family Consortium has developed a web site for the Family Reunion 6 Conference. The site is part of the Consortium's Electronic Clearinghouse and can be found at <http://www.cyfc.umn.edu/Learn>

At this site you will find:

- speeches, initiatives, legislation, press releases, and other pivotal information related to families and learning
- the conference agenda and biographical information on presenters
- articles and research on family and learning issues
- data on innovative school, community, local, state, and national programs which promote families and learning

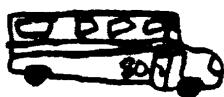
School-Community Partnerships, Strategies for Change, and New Technologies for Learning

- interactive listservs for active participation in the discussion begun at Family Reunion 6
- links to other web resources on families and learning.

The Consortium invites you to visit the web site, use the information provided and exchange ideas through the email discussion listserv. You are also encouraged to recommend material for the web site, including research, articles, editorials and program descriptions. These should be sent to: CEC Coordinator, Suite 201, 1420 Eckles Hall, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108. When possible, please provide an electronic copy (e.g. email to cycfcec@maroon.tc.umn.edu or mail a diskette with your hard copy).

If you have questions or suggestions regarding the web site, call Michael Brott at (612) 625-8285.

families and
learning



- information on the four crucial elements of families and learning: Parents as First Teachers, Family-

Conference releases parent survey on family involvement in education

At the conference, Vice President Gore presented the results of a survey conducted to develop a better understanding of family involvement in education. The survey was sponsored by the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, the GTE Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education.

Parents of elementary and middle school students were asked about many aspects of their involvement in children's education and about how their school keeps them involved. Key survey findings include:

- *Parents think schools see them as important partners in helping their children learn:* 88% of parents report that their children's schools treat them as important partners in encouraging their children to learn; 86.3% say teachers generally listened to what parents have to say; 66% say teachers give their child homework assignments that are designed for the family to do together at least once a month; and 62.3% of parents say teachers regularly communicate with them about their children's progress.
- *But, an overwhelming majority of parents believe that they and their children's teachers should learn more about how they can be effectively involved in their child's education:* 79% of parents report that they want to learn more about how to be involved in their children's learning; 77% believed teachers could learn more about involving them in their children's learning.
- *According to parents, elementary schools appear to do better in key aspects of family involvement than do middle schools.* Parents of elementary school students, compared to parents of middle school students, report schools do better in the following areas: explaining to parents what students should be able to know and do in each subject (62% of elementary school parents say the school did very well, as opposed to 45% in middle school); inviting parents to observe classes in session (41% of elementary school parents say they have been invited many times, as opposed to 27% in middle school); discussing with parents a summer reading list for children (57% of elementary school parents, as opposed to 41% in middle school); and inviting parents to participate on school committees or councils more than once or twice (61% of elementary school parents, as opposed to 46% in middle school).
- *For many, new technologies remain an untapped resource for schools to communicate with parents.* Only 12% of parents reported that the school uses its website on the internet to make information on school activities, homework assignments or student progress available; 11% said the school made information available through email, and 21% said the school made information available through voice mail.
- *Most parents are either not involved, or would like to be more involved, in decisions affecting the academic life of the school.* Only 13% of parents say they have a lot of input into what subjects are taught, 11% say they have a lot of input into how the school budget is spent, and less than 5% say they have a lot of input into teacher hiring and promotion.
- *A third of parents said they signed agreements with teachers about how each would support a child's learning:* 37% signed an agreement with teachers about supporting learning in the classroom; 32% signed an agreement about how to support learning at home.

"... the parents who have given up, these are the parents we need to reclaim if we really are going to change our schools and our communities."

— Sharon Darling
National Center for Family Literacy

"The key is to pull the child into an emotionally charged, affective interactive relationship that will help that child learn."

— Dr. Stanley Greenspan

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome public hearing dates, times and locations

10/8, 12:30 - 2:30p.m.
Crookston, U of MN - Crookston Campus
Ag. Research Center Auditorium

10/13, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Metro Area
Anoka/Ramsey Comm. College
Bess. Tech Bldg, Rm 235

10/15, 11:00 - 1:00 p.m.
Fergus Falls, Best Western
Frontier Room

10/15, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Willmar, Ridgewater College
Large Outreach Auditorium

10/20, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Metro Area, Anderson School
Freedom Room

10/23, 10:00 - 12:00 p.m.
Grand Rapids
Blandin Foundation, Auditorium

10/23, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Duluth, U of M - Duluth Campus
Auditorium

11/5, 11:00 - 1:00 p.m.
Mankato, Mankato State University
200 North Ballroom

11/5, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
Rochester, Mayo Medical Center
Leighton Auditorium

Public Input on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

The Governor's Task Force on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, chaired by First Lady Susan Carlson and Hennepin County Juvenile Court Judge Joan Lancaster, will be traveling across Minnesota to get public input on how the state should respond to the growing problem of alcohol-related birth defects.

All times and locations are subject to change. For more information about the task force or public hearings, call Audrey Cavender at the Minnesota Department of Health, (612) 623-5412.

Please see the right margin for a list of dates and locations of the public hearings to be held in October and November.

Consortium Calendar

October

October 9

SMART: Stimulate Minds At the Right Time. A community dialogue hosted by HealthPartners about the importance of supporting early childhood brain development. Minneapolis Convention Center, 7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. For more information call (612) 883-7660.

October 14

"Bottom Lines for Changing Time." Features educator Ted Bowman; interactive session on promoting resilient children. St. Paul Jewish Community Center, 7-9:00 p.m. \$10/JCC member, \$15/Non-member. To register or request scholarship call Judy Cavanaugh at (612) 698-0751.

October 15

University of MN Inauguration Community Event. 5-7 P.M., Raptor Center display, Inst. of Technology solar car, exhibits, food; 6-6:30 P.M., Marching Band Concert; 7-8 P.M., Physics Force, a wild program of demonstrations and experiments. For maps and more up-to-date information, see the Inauguration Web page at www.umn.edu/urelate/inaug

October 17-19

National Observance of Children's Sabbaths: "Seeking Shalom: Healthy Children, Healthy Nation." Children's Defense Fund-MN and Congregations Concerned for Children-Child Advocacy Network (CCC-CAN) are local coordinators. For Children's Sabbath materials, call CCC-CAN at (612) 870-3670 or (888) 870-1402, ext. 14.

October 21

Connecting Kids and Community: 6th Annual KIDS PLUS Conference. Workshops grouped into Youth Track, Adult Track and Intergenerational Track. Duluth Entertainment Convention Center; Duluth, MN. For more information contact conference coordinator at (218) 723-4040 or (800) 433-4045 or by email: info@northlandfdn.org

October 30

Celebration of the Publication of Spirited Minds: African American Books for Our Sons and Brothers. Special guest star, Walter Dean Myers. Cowles Auditorium, Hubert H. Humphrey Center. For more information, call (612) 624-8207.

October 30 - November 1

First Annual Healthy Communities•Health Youth Conference. A nationwide networking and learning opportunity hosted by Search Institute. Keynotes by Peter Benson with Search Institute and Karen Johnson Pittman of the International Youth Foundation in Baltimore. For more information, contact the conference coordinator at Search Institute (800) 888-7828

CONNECTION CORNER

Child Abuse Prevention Studies

The Child Abuse Prevention Studies (CAPS) Program is a graduate-level interactive television education opportunity for people throughout Minnesota. CAPS is designed to provide professional, specialized learning in the prevention of child maltreatment and the promotion of child well being.

The program's philosophy is one of understanding why abuse occurs, developing solutions, and taking action based on that knowledge.

The fall courses will be offered in Moorhead, Duluth, Anoka, and Rochester,

and are offered at convenient times in the early evenings on Wednesday and Thursday as well as on Saturday mornings. Highly regarded guest faculty bring additional expertise in research, teaching and practice. Beyond the value of the knowledge gained, students who complete the Level I and/or Level II courses receive an accredited certificate from the Uof M in Child Abuse Prevention Studies.

If you have questions about the program, please call Jessica Toft (Instructor) at (612) 624-6243 or Ann Ahlquist (Director) at (612) 625-2742.

Seeds of Promise

More than two years ago, the University of Minnesota, through the auspices of the Children, Youth, and Family Consortium, took up a challenge from the Danforth Foundation to bring together key stakeholders from across the University and our Twin Cities communities to give thoughtful consideration to the challenge of improving the learning outcomes of children and youth growing up in the Twin Cities.

Today the "Seeds of Promise" initiative is working to bring together the University community with the Minneapolis and St. Paul communities to implement an action plan which promises to strengthen families and children.

Seeds of Promise is being launched in two schools, Wilder Early Education Center in Minneapolis and the Jackson Magnet Preparatory School in St. Paul. Each school/community has formed a team consisting of the principal, a Family Liaison hired for the project, a faculty person from the University of MN, and the Seeds of Promise coordinator. The team also taps into the already existing formal and informal health, human service and education networks within and outside of the school to meet family needs.

Here are just a few examples of the exciting work happening in these two schools!

Jackson/Frog Town Community

- Frogtown Family Festival - Jan Hogan, Chair, Department of Family Social Science & 12 Family Social Science students joined local agencies in educating families on immunization, early childhood screening, parent education, nutrition & reading.
- Kindergarten Families - Family Liaison Robin Landowski connected with all incoming families to update immunization records and identify family needs to ensure school attendance and family involvement.
- Welcome Back To School Day - Nearly 70% of Jackson families attended to learn more about their child's school and ways they can help with their child's learning.
- After School Programs - A variety of academic and fun classes, including U of MN Extension's 4-H Jump Into Fitness nutrition program, will be offered to all children.
- Parent Education - Parent education classes will run parallel to the youth programs. U of MN's Positive Parenting Curriculum will be incorporated with plans to later connect the U of MN Hmong Family Education project.
- Home Visits - The most significant activity for reaching the highest risk families is through home visits by the Family Liaison. Robin teams up with other school staff to address families' needs that are creating barriers to school attendance.

Wilder Early Childhood Center

- Kindergarten Families - Family Liaison Christy Cook made contact with all incoming families to update records, help families connect with immunization clinics, and to meet other needs to ensure a positive first day of school.
- School Attendance - Christy has placed phone calls and made home visits to encourage children who do not show up at school or who are having attendance problems. Assessing family barriers and helping to connect families to appropriate community resources is critical to attendance issues.
- Back To School Family Event - A day and evening open house complete with a meal and door prizes reached over seventy families K-2.
- Parent Education & Support - A monthly Parent Network meeting has been organized to provide families with education & share information on school and community resources. The U of MN "Simply Good Eating" nutrition program and two other parent education classes are also being offered through the Andersen Family Resource Center.

CONSORTIUM UPDATE

Clearinghouse has new leadership!

On October 1, Michael Brott took the reigns of the Consortium Electronic Clearinghouse (CEC). Lori Bock, previous CEC coordinator, left at the end of June to accept a position in Wisconsin. Michael, who has worked for the Consortium for nearly three years as a community program specialist, will be combining his existing activities as a liaison with communities within and outside of the University with coordination of CEC. We are very excited to have Michael assume leadership of CEC; he brings tremendous knowledge and insight into the possibilities of this electronic medium. And, as his title implies, "Community Partnership and Information Coordinator", Michael will be seeking new partnerships and opportunities for the Consortium and for CEC. If you have any questions about or ideas for a partnership with CEC, do not hesitate to contact Michael at (612) 625-8285.

Food For Thought

Each year the Child Psychology Student Organization and the Children, Youth and Family Consortium sponsors a holiday book drive, *Food for Thought*. The event runs from November 15 through December 15. *Food for Thought* collects new and like new books to be distributed to non-profit health, education, and social service organizations throughout the Metro area.

Because of generous donations we have been able to distribute hundreds of books to kids who might not otherwise receive them. Once again we are asking for help in collecting books for the project. This could be a great service project for your school or organization. If you are interested in helping with this important project please contact Beckie Cullen at the Children, Youth & Family Consortium at (612) 625-7247 or fax us at (612) 626-1210.

Now we are six...

This November the Consortium will be celebrating its sixth birthday. This year we are holding our celebration in conjunction with St. David's symposium, "Through the Eyes of the Child." Come help us celebrate and join us for presentation of our annual award by attending the conference. See below for registration information.

New Consortium staff

In September Amy Susman-Stillman joined the Consortium staff as a Project Coordinator. Amy will split her time between coordinating the Harris Center (see page 8) and focusing on child development work with the Consortium. Amy will be writing for the Consortium Connections, working on sections of the Consortium Electronic Clearinghouse, contributing to grant writing and other content-specific publications, and serving as a community liaison around child development issues.

November

November 1

"Healthy Living Conference: Celebration for the Soul."

Conference designed for people with developmental disabilities and their families, caregivers, and professionals. Mall of America/ Days Inn, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. \$15/Arc members, \$25, non-members. To register call (612) 920-0855.

November 4-5

"Through the Eyes of the Child:"

The Sixth Annual Symposium for parents and those who work with children & families. See article and registration form below.

November 13

"The Intentional Family: How to Build Family Ties in Our Modern World" with William Doherty, Ph.D.,

Family Therapist and U of MN/ Family Social Science faculty. St. Paul Jewish Community Center, 7:30 p.m. \$3/JCC member, \$5/non-member. Call (612) 698-0751.

November 15

"At the Crossroads: Shifting Perspectives on Personal Growth and Communal Responsibility."

Sponsored by the MN Jung Association. United Church of Christ, Fireside room; 8:30 - 12:30. \$25/members, \$35/non-members. Some scholarships available. Call (612) 698-8533.

November 16

Millions and Billions and Trillions of Stories: A Family Day

Celebration of Wanda Gag. The Weisman Art Museum, 11 A.M. - 5 P.M. For more information, please call (612) 624-4576.

Through the Eyes of the Child

"Through the Eyes of the Child" will be the theme of a symposium featuring T. Berry Brazelton, M.D., world-renowned expert on children, at a lecture for parents November 4 and a workshop for professionals November 5.

Key issues from the child's perspective, including dealing with stress, grief and cultural diversity, will be addressed by leading experts at the workshop along with Brazelton's highly acclaimed Touchpoints model. Touchpoints provides an approach to supporting children and parents through the often difficult, yet predictable, phases of development. Brazelton provides insights into the reason behind children's behaviors and trains parents and professionals to work together to respond in a supportive, comforting manner for healthier, more productive outcomes.

"Through the Eyes of the Child" is the Sixth Annual Symposium for parents and professionals sponsored by St. David's School for Child Development and Family Services, Minnetonka. This year's effort is co-sponsored by Hennepin County Medical Center; the University of Minnesota's Children, Youth & Family Consortium; Minnesota Parent; and by The First Years, a national affiliate of Dr. Brazelton.

The November 4 lecture by Brazelton will be presented from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Northrop Auditorium, University of Minnesota (fee for lecture is \$6.50 plus \$2.50 transaction fee). Tickets can be purchased by calling the Northrop at 612/624-2345.

The November 5 workshop will be held at the Hyatt Regency, 1300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, from 7:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. (fee for workshop is \$95 — 15% discount for students and groups of five or more). Tickets can be purchased by calling St. David's School for Child Development and Family Services at 612/939-0396 ext. 500. CEU Credits are pending approval.

Registration Form:

Name _____
Organization _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Phone (H) _____ (W) _____
Cost: \$95 (students \$65, 15% discount for groups of five or more)
Please indicate any special accessibility, materials or dietary accommodations _____
Parking fees not included in the cost of workshops
Payment: Check (made payable to St. David's) Visa Mastercard
Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____
Name as it appears on card _____
Signature _____
Total Paid \$ _____

Mail registration and payment to:
St. David's School for Child Development and Family Services,
Attn. Symposium, 3395 Plymouth Road, Minnetonka, MN 55305

For more information call 612/939-0396. Ext. 500

Registration and payment must be received by October 24
(One person per form. Feel free to copy and distribute forms.)

The Irving B. Harris Center for Infant and Toddler Development

- Are you a day care professional wondering how the latest findings in brain development research relate to your everyday practice with infants?
- Know parents who are concerned about their toddler's language development?
- Looking to update your early childhood education curriculum with the most recent and accurate research information?
- Want to promote trusting relationships between infants and caregivers?
- Need to know what kinds of information are most useful when making decisions about programs and policies for infants and toddlers?

If you can answer "yes" to any of these questions, or you are interested in very young children, you'll be happy to know that this September, the Irving B. Harris Center for Infant and Toddler Development opened its doors. Endowed by a gift from noted philanthropist Irving B. Harris of Chicago, the Harris Center is co-directed by Drs. Richard Weinberg and Byron Egeland and coordinated by Dr. Amy Susman-Stillman at the Institute of Child Development at the University of Minnesota. The Harris Center has as its main focus promoting the healthy development and functioning of infants and toddlers and their families. Activities of the Harris Center will include: offering continuing education and quarterly training for professionals at all levels who work with very young children and their families; working with community groups that have a vested interest in children in the zero-to-three age group; and providing a variety of information to parents, early childhood educators and other professionals, child advocates, day care providers, the media, and state, federal, and local policymakers. A resource center with up-to-date training materials, curricula, and research publications and forums for networking with national experts is currently being organized. The Harris Center is also affiliated with a national professional development network

comprised of infant and toddler researchers and professionals; the network also is funded by Mr. Harris and coordinated by the Washington-based organization Zero-to-Three.

This fall, as part of its quarterly continuing education program, the Harris Center will offer two issues seminars for early childhood professionals. Led by Drs. Byron Egeland and Marti Erickson, both seminars are non-credit, informal and interactive, and free-of-charge (space is limited, however; calling to reserve your space is requested). One seminar is designed for supervisors, trainers, and administrators who work in programs that serve infants, toddlers, and their families. The format includes brief presentations of relevant research by U of MN faculty; examination of best practices and innovations in early intervention and program evaluation; and open discussion of practice and policy issues that participants confront in their workplace. The second seminar, designed for front-line workers who serve infants, toddlers, and their families, provides an opportunity to share resources and ideas; get updates on relevant research; and discuss practice issues in consultation with U of MN faculty. Participants will be encouraged to present case material for group discussion.

The fall issues seminars will be held in the afternoon of Tuesday, November 25th. Exact times and location are being determined. And mark your calendars for the winter and spring training seminars: Tuesday afternoons, January 13th and May, 1998. Plans for other activities are in the works; watch for new coursework and a Career Growth Fellowship Program!

The Harris Center is located at: University of Minnesota, Institute of Child Development, Room 196, Minneapolis, MN 55455-0345. For more information about the seminars, other upcoming programs, or the Center itself, please stop by the office or contact Amy Susman-Stillman at 624-4510 or via email at susma002@tc.umn.edu

Who's the Consortium?

Ann Casey is a faculty member of the University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development, a school psychologist with the Minneapolis Public Schools, and the lead faculty working on the Seeds of Promise initiative with Wilder Early Education Center.

Jackie Getting is an Extension Education with the University of Minnesota Extension Service in Steele County. Jackie coordinates the *Live and Learn* project, described on page 1.

Gertrude Barwick is the principal of Wilder Early Education Center in Minneapolis and has partnered with the University of Minnesota on the Seeds of Promise Initiative.

Louis Mariucci is the principal of Jackson Magnet Preparatory School in the Frogtown neighborhood of St. Paul and has partnered with the University of Minnesota on the Seeds of Promise Initiative.

And the Consortium is You!

Mark your calendar!

Harris Center fall issues seminars for professional and direct service providers of children birth to three will be held in the afternoon of Tuesday, November 25th (1:00 - 3:00; 3:00 - 5:00). Location is being determined.

And mark your calendars for the winter and spring training seminars: Tuesday afternoons, January 13th and May, 1998. Plans for other activities are in the works; watch for new coursework and a Career Growth Fellowship Program!

Call Amy Susman-Stillman for information (612) 624-4510.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Children, Youth & Family Consortium
201 Coffey Hall
1420 Eckles Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108



Non Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Minneapolis, MN
Permit No 155