



OUR SCHOOL

A Non-Profit Corporation Founded in 1973

756 Cherryvale Rd., Boulder, Colorado 80303 (303)494-4112

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From the Chair:

The Fundraiser was a great success, and it truly was a merry night! We exceeded our financial goal, it was a festive evening, and as I talked to many guests and alumni, all seemed relaxed and enjoying the company of others; whether bidding, dancing or talking. Even guests who also have fundraisers of their own were genuinely impressed. Who need thanks? All of the members -teachers and parents- came through with a great spirit of cooperation and good cheer. Of course, a

special thanks to wonderful Rebecca who organized it all. We are delighted by the generous donations to be used for renovating the playground equipment and other donated money for musical instruments, paint brushes, mathematics material...not to mention a very generous 'generic' donation. This demonstrates that people realize the importance of the variety of materials needed to build young children's growing competence. Could the school meet it's budget expenses and offer some tuition assistance without a good Fundraiser? Could the school obtain special equipment items without it? For those who understand quality preschool education financing, the answer is obvious. For those who know that diversity of population contributes to the quality of experience for young children, the answer is obvious. In addition, for those who believe (as we do from our own experience) that the Fundraiser contributes to lasting friendships through a

worthwhile commitment to children, the answer is clear. It is necessary. For those who witness an evening where people enjoy themselves and bid with great satisfaction, they, in turn, can feel very rewarded that this undertaking was really worthwhile. Is it perfect? We agree with John Dewey's statement about education: "We do not seek perfection in itself. We strive for perfection." This *is relevant* for our Fundraiser as well. So, give yourselves thanks and thanks to all!

Thanks:

- *To families that bring fruit and breads on and off as an addition to the school snacks, and little scrounged things. It is very much appreciated.
- *To James who checks up on our faucets and things one in a while.
- *To Lisa who has done a superb job on the newsletter.
- *To the co-ops and backers this particular school year: they have made the school

sessions very relaxed by their dependability and support. *As this year's Board of Directors is ready to retire (the new one starts in July) both the Treasurer and I, the Chair, would like to thank them all for their commitment, dependability, their intelligence and thoughtfulness in dealing with a variety of issues and making consensual decisions. They are the administrative 'cornerstone' that strengthens and continues to improve the various facets of the school's organization. The new Executive Board will be elected at our semi-annual meeting on the 18th of April 2001. This Executive Board will appoint new officers for the 2001-2 school year to replace individual officers retiring at the end of June.

Year's Reflections of Adult Program

By Jim and Yvonne

The teachers' responsibility does not stop at the contact hours with children. In addition, we make home visits and give private conferences. We also have open planning for the sessions, set up and clear up. What we are writing about here, however, is the activities that are tailored for parents information about the sessions their children are in and the seminars-workshops on topics of interest which

affect their own child's understanding at a deeper level and that of early childhood as well.

Each session, has it's own parents' meetings several times a year. (The last ones are coming soon; see calendar). The purpose is to inform you professionally about what has been happening in that session and discuss with you its significance. We have an agenda for items to cover and often parents come up with other items. Naturally, if they are relevant, they are included.

We have noticed that the participants in these session meetings subsequently become more acute observers when they co-op and their participation in that session is more tuned to a child's involvement, not just that of their own child. They become valuable assistants. They realize that their own expectations sometime need to be put aside, that the more they observe the more they understand that play is a fluid, complex and at the same time profound learning activity for a child. Through their own participation at those meetings not only are they intrigued by this, but it opens to them a vista of early childhood a long forgotten. They witness the variety of learning styles, interests,

abilities and strengths of each child. They can leave behind the notion of "my child is better, or not as good as...", or "my child should(not) be that way.." They may stop making judgment, transcend the single focus on their own child and, instead, enjoy the richness of the various competencies and intelligences of all those children. In doing so, it seems, parents potentially avoid the narrow pitfall of "*I know my child*," as they humbly discover that their own child is evolving many facets on her own, in her own time, in her own tempo, in her own way, with her own intelligence. Most of all, parents discover there is a difference between *molding* and *guiding* a child in raising children.

The session meetings are also very rewarding professionally for us, as teachers. We gain insight to various parenting styles and underlying assumptions. Parents help us reflect ever more sharply about early childhood curriculum. They stimulate us to present intelligently any subject matter that underlies children's play in a theoretical and practical fashion to explain how learning evolves. We are frequently reminded to stress the important influence of social dynamics in the learning process.

Seminars and workshops are designed for parents to *reflect* on particular issues affecting children. Topics are chosen from parent requests and our assessment of need. We research these topics extensively so we can accurately give parents information that is sound, appropriate and *not based* on ‘personal’ opinion, but rather based on professional literature and experience. At times, parents have brought information of their own that is also discussed to strengthen a stimulating exchange.

When the seminars have been more “workshop-oriented”, parents use the materials children use, so they gain insight about children’s thinking as they themselves ‘play.’ The subsequent discussions then become analyses of subject matter that parents have experienced through material.

Seminars usually start with an outline presentation of a broad topic, for instance, *discipline and children*. It may be followed by a focus on some specific areas derived from this general topic, such as *the means* to bring up self-disciplined children: which are effective, which are not and why. Specific foci depend on the response and interests of the participants.

We have noticed that in either instance parents are lively, humorous at times, serious at others. As for us, it is to the parents credit that all these meetings and workshops keep us professionally alert, as it should be.

Why does this seem so important? To quote Kant “love is not enough.” Let us listen to our mentors, David Hawkins, from his book, the *Informed Vision*, as quoted by Frances Pockman Hawkins in her recent book, *Journey with Children* (University Press of Colorado, 1997):

“The more magic gift is not love, but respect, for others as ends in themselves, as actual and potential artisans of their own learnings and doings, of their own lives; and thus uniquely contributing, in turn, to their learnings and doings...Respect resembles love in its implicit aim of furtherance, but love without respect can blind and bind. Love is private and unbidden, whereas respect is implicit in all moral relations with others.

To have respect for children is more than recognizing their potentialities in the

abstract, it is also to seek out and value their accomplishments - however small these may appear to the normal standards of adults.

...Adults and children, like adults with each other, can associate well only in worthy interests and pursuits, only through a community of subject matter and engagement that extend beyond the circle of their intimacy.”

The various educational activities we provide for parents are opportunities for even *more* profound understanding of young children, theoretically and practically. We strive to add to love that transcending quality of respect for children’s “learning’s and doings,” for each child has very unique intelligences.

Membership: We have 1 opening in the 2-morning session and 1 in the p.m. session. Tell your friends, acquaintances to call now!

Our needs are endless: Things like publisher end roll paper, doll and dress-up boys and girl clothes (around size 8), small size pillow (for resting), and pieces of hard wood for gluing sculptures. Any potentially discarded items? Check with us.

Calendar

April: 18th (Wednesday) Semi-annual Meeting, *required* – 7:00p.m.
21st (Saturday) Open House
24th (Tuesday) Board meeting, 7:00p.m.
30th (Wednesday) 3-a.m Session Meeting, 7:00p.m.

May: 5th, 19th (Saturdays) Open Houses
10th (Thursday) Orientation meeting for Families with New Children
14th (Monday) 4-p.m session meeting, 7:00 p.m.
21st (Monday) 2-a.m session meeting, 7:00 p.m.
28th Memorial Day, NO SCHOOL
29th (Tuesday) Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

June: 3rd (Saturday) End of the year School Picnic for all (including new families)
7th (Thursday) Last day of school year (2-day a.m. and 4-day p.m. session)
8th (Friday) Last day of school year (3-day a.m. session)



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