



# OUR SCHOOL

A Non-Profit Corporation Founded in 1973

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

December, 2000

Disclaimer: Views expressed in this newsletter are provided for informational purposes and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of Our School.

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## From the Chair:

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The fundraiser kick-off was a real treat! There was not much business to discuss which left more time for socializing and enjoying the pot luck this year (the food was more than “luck”: the quality and variety of dishes and beverages to tempt your palate was excellent). Most of all, Tina Aweida was a very fine hostess and Tina and Dan’s home was comfortable, accomodating everyone to move and socialize. From all, thanks, Tina and Dan!

The reason for small amount of fund raising business this year is that everyone had already signed for an auction committee, and everyone was eager to cooperatively participate. Thanks everyone, for making Rebecca’s job so much easier. She expects the same will happen when Our School members will attend their one training meeting for their auction committee. This means that on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March (on the day of Our School Auction) everything will run very smoothly. We can expect a splendid evening with a fine dinner, superb beverages, and fun dancing. Of course some of the

children’s accomplishments will be displayed in front of the stage.

Jim, Rebecca and I are expecting a record-breaking turnout with guests eager to bid, bid, bid, as well. **If you have any questions about that evening**, the dinner, selling tickets, or bidding items (Rebecca put a representative small list in your mailboxes for you to share with your guests) call Rebecca or talk to Jim and Yvonne

**Thank you:** to the families that bring treats of food, wood for children’s woodwork, bottle caps and corks, cloth, and the very useful stamp pad for the library.

**Membership:** Thank you for being prompt in bringing back next year’s applications. This will make the job easy for the Membership committee and it is appreciated by the prospective new parents who already have applied and are waiting for Our School acceptance. Goodbye to the LeBlanc family. Jude is being transferred to San Diego, and we will miss them.

**Any membership questions?** Talk to Judy Rosen, Kathryn Koltun, or Yvonne and Jim.

**Board news:** Just a reminder that the Our School Board meetings are open to the membership. The next board meeting is scheduled for December 19.

**The board discussed further developing the ShopOurSchool.com website. Currently, anyone can log on and shop; a percentage of each sale will be donated to the school. So if you shop on-line, make sure you do it through the website to generate dollars for Our School.** *Eventually, additional information added to the website could be pictures, a description of the children’s progression and learning, and dates of Open houses and seminars.*

**Finances:** The Treasurer **thanks you** for your prompt payments to Our School and your attention, in some instances, to your late fees paid when necessary. The school has therefore been able to respectively maintain a minimal balance in its bank accounts avoiding unnecessary fees and promptly paying the interest on the use of its line of credit. The school has demonstrated financial responsibility to First Bank. As a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation our actions of fiscal responsibility are especially important. In the future we hope

our successful financial history will facilitate future Our School financial decisions regarding the acquisition of increased lines of credit and eventually the purchase of the present building.

**Wintertime:** thank you for your cooperation on winter clothing. We want to minimize chills and accidents for your children. When they get out **of the car they need warm hats or hoods, and mittens on windy and cold days, and boots on wet or snowy days;** they need **coats that are snapped or zipped.** Or if the weather is fine when they come, put these in their bags, bag packs, or in plastic bags, in case the weather turns for the worse. At the end of the school day, we'll do the same. Remember, young children lose body heat very quickly, especially from extremities. Also, some shoes or sneakers have **slippery soles** and are not warm enough.

**Library:** Be adventurous! Check the new books the school has acquired. Remember, returned books go into the wooden box in the kitchen, **not back on the shelves:** the computer is fussy about that.

**Share-a-gift:** The large box in the parents' room is for you to give old (in clean condition and good repair) or new toys (infants to 14 years old) to children less fortunate than yours for the various holidays coming near. Read the red poster in that room for further information.

**Donation/scrounge list:** do still come with the corks, bottle caps, buttons: they are always welcome. Anybody with access to publishers' end rolls? Or small

pieces of hard or soft wood for woodwork or gluing? Tempera paints, white butcher paper, paint brushes, glitter, colored sand, i.e. art supplies are always in need as they go fast with our young artists; some (about 8 years-old size) dress up clothes; doll clothes that fit the school dolls. The school would also appreciate any \$ donation towards purchasing outside equipment, hollow blocks, manipulatives, musical instruments.

**Over the years parents have been giving the teachers gifts at holiday times. These have been thoughtful and certainly appreciated by them. We believe it was a way for parents to thank teachers for respecting and nurturing the human development of their children. Please, Yvonne and Jim say, if some of you intend to do so, give, instead, a donation that can benefit these year's and future years' children at Our School. Jim and Yvonne feel and believe this can be the best recognition of their work.**

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## LIMITS AND AUTONOMY WITH PRESCHOOLERS

*By Jim Heaney and Yvonne Mayer*

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*"Having children is like having a bowling alley installed in your brain."*

**-Martin Mull**

This is a vast social topic that interests all concerned with

children who gradually are moving towards adulthood. Who does not want to raise an adult who is socially responsible, mutually respectful of and sensitive to the diversity of personal, familial and cultural human experiences? Then it means developing qualities of self-direction and self-control, of unbiased reflection to acquire courageous principles of sound ethical social judgment. This encompasses developing genuine feelings of caring and empathy reflected in selfless actions in interpersonal and public relationships that transcend conventions. Having children use conventional polite language and manners is not negligible social learning: it's the social "grease" in encounters. However, to touch the core of one's being, **fundamental attitudes** that reflect positive human understanding need to be integrated in personality traits. That's where **models** come in.

Young children look up to family and teachers for their models in adopting their own attitudes and behaviors. They also look at various electronic media, and to some extent at books. So it's obvious that the models we consistently provide have a **great influence** in developing a social person. With **consistent patterns of interactions** and, to some extent, through **observations**, children select, register and interpret these experiences as "natural" social expectations. They do not absorb them as if they were "miniature" adults, but from their own evolving interplay between their present brain development and outside experience. Biology sets the

tempo of development, which is nourished by the environment.

“A concept of growth which sees it as a living, dynamic, functioning process seems essential if we are to give balanced consideration to the facts in both the biological and psychological areas. Growth can not be viewed merely as a biological process because of the very nature of the totality which characterizes the early reality of the child. But it is a biological process occurring within a framework of relationships and events which give meaning and direction to the emerging self of the child.” (Frederic Allen, *Psychotherapy with Children*)

As the baby gradually differentiates herself from others, that inner and outer sense of individuation then emerges. As Eleanor Roosevelt wrote, “you can never really live anyone else’s life. Not even your child’s. The influence you exert is through your own life, and what you have become yourself.”

Watson’s behavioral view that consistent and diligent environmental forces could mold a child exclusively doesn’t take into account the invisible interplay of internal biological factors of development:

“This emerging self is not a pawn moved around by external influences designed to restrict the primal instinctive forces; in that point of view there is little place for the real and spontaneous values of the self. These inner and outer forces are, instead, a totality, and the child acquires through their operation a feeling of what belongs to self and what belongs to the outer world in

which he experiences his capacities.” (Frederic Allen)  
It’s clear that **necessary** environmental prohibitions therefore, have to reflect a child’s developmental stage and acquired experience. After all, children want to be acceptable and feel that **limits** are fair, **firm** without harshness, **consistent** without rigidity and that they will be **followed through**. They want to sense that they are part of that social world in which social boundaries strengthen their abilities to positive social conduct. They want to be reassured that bonds of love and trust are still present even at times of misconduct. **The most difficult task for adults is to be honestly aware of their own weaknesses and positive strengths in their own upbringing.** The latter give them relaxed confidence in their interactions when things get tense with children. When it’s a reaction to one’s own unresolved interactions and issues which are carried into adulthood, adults react to children’s perceived misconduct like that long forgotten child because this is their comfort level. They are not confident and relaxed. They resort to past ineffective, but comfortable strategies: anger, intransigence that invite the learning child to submit or rebel, or children model strategies that manipulate adults. Unfortunately, these become habits of interactions that repeat the cycle of one’s childhood. Let’s take heed of Frederic Allen’s wisdom:

“But in the process of growth, in which some struggle is inevitable, the child gains awareness of his own separate

being and finds he can use this power assertively, but he also finds he can yield without surrendering his strength altogether and becoming the passive product of another’s desire.”

As children leave infancy behind and approach early childhood, their struggle for individuation and autonomy intensify. This is a normal course of biological development when confronted with the social environment. Conflict is at first expressed in temper tantrums and physical or verbal resistance as immediate or unwarranted gratification gets frustrated. How does this toddler find her own balance between self-centered satisfaction and social adjustment during these outbursts? Mostly by **adult silent interactions** which empathize; not cater to, nor condone, nor somehow excuse the behavior. Can punishments or rewards bring healthy results in the long run? Not very likely. How so? These approaches will turn into **habits** of mutual whining or manipulation, of more lengthy battles of will, of graver physical punishments, more intensive verbal screaming matches, or still ever more pricey rewards or bribes in early childhood which work their way into adolescence. Why? The child is not supported or guided in a **mature** fashion in her growth. The parents consistently turn into children themselves: it might be frustration and inadequacy spouting out powerful angry feelings projected onto the child. Or again, it might be fear – of rejection, loss of love, insecurity, so they exact conformity through manipulation of feelings or rewards. Deep down, adults know

this is not right, but it is comfortable because it's their own subconscious past experience.

For instance, demanding "good" manners and politeness may make us think that children will grow up considerate and respectful. However, we may guide children better if we model manners and politeness when children are present, rather than condemning them when they don't perform. We may guide children better if we refrain from name calling, demeaning language, and show others

respect not just through language but mostly through our actions. This is not hard to do. It helps change or curtail our "bad" habits by reflecting on our expectations wherever these come from (family, society, childhood, electronic media, etc.) and filtering them according to what is pertinent to this particular child's development. Let's avoid being stuck in child-adult destructive interactions and we'll avoid stunting or distorting positive social growth. Let's give substantial good models for

them to emulate and keep our worse part of our childhood in check. Parents in particular do not need a Ph.D. in child development. They need to be introspective, keeping in mind what is mentioned above, to be curious about children as children, to be loving and nurturing. In final analysis, Anne Frank has the last word:

**"Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right paths, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands."**

**Calendar:**

**Open House: Dec. 9, 10 a.m. to noon**

**Board meeting: Dec.19, at 7.00 p.m.**

**Check on your own Organizational Training Committee meeting – Fundraiser**

**Recess: Dec. 25 to Jan. 8, 2001**



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