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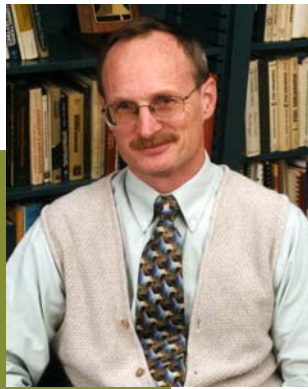
PLAY IS TIMELESS...



Celebrating 50 Years of Primary Project

Over 50 years ago, there was a convergence of ideas and expertise which would soon become the cornerstone of Children's Institute. Lou Izzo (Rochester City School District, School Psychologist), Mary Anne Trost (Rochester City School District, School Social Worker), and Emory Cowen (University of Rochester, Professor) joined forces to find a way to meet the needs of children who were having difficulty adjusting to school. They wondered what would happen if they paired caring adults with children showing emerging difficulties. They developed a program called Primary Project... for children in primary school.

A Note from Our Director



Take a look back 50 years to when Dwight D. Eisenhower was president of the United States. Those of us who are old enough might remember the Russian launch of Sputnik I into space, the “Little Rock Nine” integration of an Arkansas high school and paying just three cents to mail a letter.

The same online almanacs that tout these events and stats from 1957 make no mention of another, albeit lesser known, important event that year – the introduction of Primary Mental Health Project, which marked the beginning of Children’s Institute and has changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of children for the better ever since.

This year we join our partners in school districts around the country to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Primary Project. From our humble beginnings with one partner, the Rochester City School District, and one site, Primary Project remains a cornerstone of our organization. This one program set the stage for the continued growth of Children’s Institute.

Today our interdisciplinary staff works with an equally diverse network of partners to address the social and emotional health of children in the face of many emerging issues, like violence, abuse, poverty, hunger and access to quality health care and childcare. Highlights of some of these efforts are in this issue of *News & Views*.

Fifty years ago, our founders broke new ground with their belief that prevention was the way to help young children grow to become happy, healthy adults. Regardless of the changes we have seen since then, it is clear that their foresight has withstood the test of time. I am grateful to all who have helped us write the first half-century of our story, and look forward to the new exciting chapters that lie ahead.

–A. Dirk Hightower, Ph.D.
Executive Director

New Members Join Board of Directors

Sarah Amering is the Director of Community Development Initiatives for Wegmans Food Markets, responsible for New York education and workforce development reform. Her career highlights include human resource training, motivation and management, as well as time in the classroom teaching Kindergarten and Grades 2 and 3. Ms. Amering serves as a board member of Center for Governmental Research, is a member of Monroe County School-Business Partnership and Rochester Business Alliance, co-chair of United Way Kids on Track, and chair of Monroe County/Rochester Youth Council.

Larry D. Perkins, M.B.A., Ph.D., is a Strategic Business Process Manager for Xerox Corporation. He brings a track record of leveraging operational excellence as well as broad business expertise to translate corporate vision into revenue growth and operational success.

Joy Ryen Plotnik, Esq. is an attorney in private practice concentrating in the areas of estate planning and administration and elder law. She serves as a trustee of Strong National Museum of Play, co-coordinator for the parent council at The Harley School (lower school), and is a member of the Foundation for the Jewish Community Professional Advisory Committee and Temple Beth El Education Committee. Ms. Ryen Plotnik is a past recipient of the Jewish Community Federation Young Leadership Award.

Moira Ann Szilagyi, M.D., Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Rochester and an American Academy of Pediatrics fellow. Addressing the issues of child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, adoption, foster care and early childhood at local, state and national levels form the core of her volunteer work. She founded and directed Strong Memorial Hospital’s REACH program, the regional referral center for medical evaluation of suspected child abuse and neglect, and has worked in private practice and for the Monroe County Health Department.

Transitions

Congratulations to Emma Forbes-Jones and McKenzie Keenan as they leave Children’s Institute for new positions...

Emma Forbes-Jones, Ph.D., is now a Senior Instructor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Rochester Medical Center, where she is conducting research, participating in teaching and training of interns and postdoctoral fellows and practicing clinical work with children and adolescents.

McKenzie Keenan, M.B.A., CFRE, is now Executive Director of Young Audiences of Rochester, the oldest and largest provider of arts in education programming and services to the greater Rochester area and surrounding 18 counties. Young Audiences of Rochester is one of 32 self-sustaining chapters in a national Young Audiences network that promotes “learning how to learn” through dance, music, visual arts, theatre and literary pursuits. McKenzie will be combining the mission of improving the lives of children and her own experiences in, and passion for, the arts.

New Roles...

Larry M. Broser, M.B.A., Deputy Director of Finance & Administration

Lauri S. Brugger, M.S., Deputy Director of Community Partnerships

Sharon DeVita, M.B.A., Director of Finance & Administration

Bohdan S. Lotyczewski, Director of Research & Evaluation

Guillermo Montes, Ph.D., Director of Research & Evaluation

Lori VanAuken, M.P.A., Director of Community Partnerships & Resource Development

Evaluation Team Interviews Community

ACCESS
EVALUATION

In September 2005, Children's Institute was awarded a \$1.2 million evaluation contract for six years through the Monroe County Office of Mental Health. The Achieving Culturally Competent Effective Services and Supports (ACCESS) grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) supports activities to transform systems of care for seriously emotional disturbed youth and their families. This grant allows Children's Institute to evaluate a systems transformation that focuses on strengthening children's social and emotional health.

Input from all segments of the community to all parts of the project is critical to systems of care transformation. In fact, the core values of systems of care are that the work is family-driven, youth-guided, and culturally and linguistically competent. Every part of the project from planning to evaluation to sustainability must include the voices of caregivers, parents, youth, providers and anyone else who has a stake in the system transformation. Part of the job of the evaluation team is to document progress in the community toward achieving the core values.

The evaluation of ACCESS is happening at national and local levels. ACCESS is part of a national evaluation of systems of care to chart outcomes for families and youth. Data is collected through interviews that assess caregiver and youth perceptions of the care they receive including their thoughts, feelings, attitudes, knowledge and behavior. This data is collected at six-month intervals by a team of trained

interviewers/consultants from Children's Institute. The interviewers themselves reflect the population of focus so the team is culturally and linguistically diverse and team members have had experience with seriously emotionally disturbed youth.

ACCESS is also conducting an evaluation at the local level. The fidelity of evidence-based practices will be assessed, including the Child

and Family Team process that facilitates access to and use of services for the families. The evaluation of the systems transformation will reveal how clinical practice, organizations and the child-serving service systems are becoming family-driven, youth-guided and culturally and linguistically competent.

To learn more about this work, contact either Rusti Berent or Steve Fielding at Children's Institute.

Children's Film Festival
Through the eyes of a child

Thursday, April 12, 2:00 p.m.
Dryden Theatre

Admission: \$2 per person
\$6 family maximum

THE RED BALLOON
(Albert Lamorisse, France 1956, 34 min.)
In this bittersweet classic, a lonely youngster finds his ideal playmate in a lively inflated toy. Filmed on location in Paris entirely without dialogue. A must-see for all ages!

THE AWFUL TOOTH
(Nate Watt, US 1958, 9 min.)
A timeless *Our Gang* Adventure. Hoping to earn money to buy baseball gear, the kids elect to have all their teeth pulled for the Tooth Fairy.

From the High Falls Film Festival Children's Program archive:

OPEN A DOOR: SOUTH AFRICA
(Wendy Hardie, UK/South Africa 2003, 5 min.)
When Yolanda knocks over her neighbor's eggs, she must find a way to set things straight.

THE DOG WHO WAS A CAT INSIDE
(Siri Melchior, UK 2002, 3:22 min.)
When you're a cat inside a dog's body, things can be complicated. A lesson in...teamwork!

DANCE ELI DANCE!
(Ava Hess, age 15, US 2005, 3:25 min.)
Eli dances her way through city streets, making her mark on the urban landscape.

LIGHT STAINS
(Sandra Cheng, US, 2:36 min.)
In this mind-bending animation based on a true story, an astronomer recalls how she started out as the maid of a Harvard professor. Don't forget to put on your 3-D glasses!
(3-D glasses will be provided for this film)

COLORFORMS
(Eva Saks, US 2003, 8 min.)
A multi-award-winning film about a little girl who likes to paint her dalmatian, decorate the bathroom mirror with toothpaste...well, you get the picture!

Facilitated by **children's institute**

FILMS

Film Info Line: 271-4090 • 900 East Avenue
Visit us online at dryden.eastmanhouse.org

Children's Institute led the second annual **Children's Film Festival** in partnership with High Falls Film Festival, the George Eastman House and the Little Theatre during April, the Month of the Young Child. Based on the need for appropriate entertainment for young children, and the importance of alerting parents to the adverse effects of violence in the media, quality films were shown throughout the community accompanied by trainings and packets of information printed for the event by the Rochester City School District. Funding was provided by the Dr. and Mrs. James W. Sayre Charitable Checking AccountSM, Rochester Association for the Education of Young Children, Rochester Childfirst Network Satellites of Greater Rochester, the Child Care Council and the Early Childhood Education Quality Council.

Celebrating 50 Years

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE



The name would be changed to Primary Mental Health Project, the name that was central in a series of articles spearheaded by Emory Cowen and later became the name of the organization Primary Mental Health Project, Inc. Evolution continued and the program has reverted to its original name, Primary Project, while the organization is called Children's Institute in recognition of its ever broadening scope.



Honoring Our Past...Embracing our Future.

In developing a theme for the 50th Anniversary of Primary Project, we felt it was important to recognize and understand what led to our present day work, to be responsive to changing dynamics of the schools and communities we serve and to look toward the future with confidence. We learned so much during those early years of Primary Project. We learned even more during the years of dissemination, with major program development in

Connecticut, California, Hawaii and Washington. Now we are discovering that Primary Project becomes part of a broader continuum of care with school and behavioral health partners, such as what has developed in Arkansas, Florida, Maryland, Minnesota, Michigan and Louisiana. Primary Project flourishes in Maine, New Jersey and Texas as well. However, it is in New York State,

the home of Primary Project, that we continue to work together to learn more about children and how Primary Project works most effectively.

The needs of children remain much the same today as they were fifty years ago. What has changed is the increase of stress and demands on the world of the young child. Our ever changing society and fast-paced world of academic expectations make successful adjustment to school an even greater stress.

- It is no wonder that young children display significantly increased anxiety.

- It is no wonder that behavioral control becomes an issue when children who haven't been guided or taught basic coping skills become frustrated.

- It is no wonder that peer social skills are a concern in a world of computer and video interaction.

- It is no wonder that attention to task is difficult for some children who find themselves not developmentally ready for fast-paced curricula and adult expectations beyond their years.

Children's developmental needs remain the same. They need responsive, nurturing relationships with their parents and other caregivers. They need attention, approval and time to play. Play contributes to physically, emotionally and socially healthy children. Primary Project offers unique play opportunities with a school adult who understands how powerful one-to-one relationships are to young children and who knows that the world of communication for children is the world of expressive play.

Through these halls of the University of Rochester, Primary Mental Health Project, Inc., and Children's Institute, many leaders in the field of prevention have traveled and been mentored. We just need to go to the Emory L. Cowen Prevention Library to see the listing of dissertations of researchers who have been touched by the leadership and vision of Lou, Mary Anne and Emory. We continue to hold to your core values: work with young children, consider them all for support, use alternative staffing models and geometrically expand the reach of clinical staff. We are grateful to you for your vision and desire to develop a program for children to meet their needs early and to give them a solid start in school. On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of children who have benefited, we thank you.

Guest Perspective



I am excited about being a part of the Primary Project 50th anniversary celebration. Primary Project's training and utilization of paraprofessionals as therapeutic agents in children's lives through the medium of structured special play times is a creative way to meet the pressing needs of children.

There are over 4,000 languages communicated throughout the world, and although play is not listed anywhere as one of these languages, it should be. Children from all parts of the world use play to express themselves. Verbal words are sometimes used in addition to the child's play, but are not necessary for the child's communication to be complete. As I have pointed out in my book, *Play Therapy: The Art of the Relationship*, children may have considerable difficulty in trying to tell what they feel or how they have been affected by what they have experienced; but if permitted, in the presence of a caring, sensitive, and empathic paraprofessional, they will show what they feel through the toys and materials they choose, what they do with and to the materials, and the story acted out.

Children's play is meaningful and significant to them, for through their play they extend themselves into areas they have difficulty entering verbally. Children are able to use toys to say what they cannot say, do things they would feel uncomfortable doing, and express feelings they might be reprimanded for verbalizing. In these wonderfully unique special play times with a paraprofessional, toys are like the child's words and play is the child's language. The paraprofessional creates an accepting relationship in which the child feels completely safe to express himself just as he is—fears, likes, dislikes, wishes, anger, loneliness, joy, feelings of failure—through his play.

These special play times and the developing relationship between the paraprofessional and the child are the safest place in the world for the child because there are never any reprimands, no put downs, no evaluations, no requirements to draw pictures a certain way, no judgments about the child or his play as being good or bad, right or wrong so the child feels safe enough to play out his fears, anger, or whatever the child has been struggling with. In the process of playing out experiences and feelings about those experiences, the child experiences a feeling of inner relief as though a burden has been removed and the child is then free to discover new ways of feeling, new attitudes, new inner strengths, and to develop a more positive self-concept.

—Garry Landreth, Ed.D.
Regents Professor of Counseling,
Development and Higher Education
University of North Texas

Children's Institute Welcomes...

Marc Charbonneau has been hired as a full time employee in the role of Systems Analyst & Developer. Marc has been working in the software development field for the past three years, and is currently finishing a degree in Computer Science at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Bertha Farrell joins Children's Institute both as a Behavioral Health Advocate, and as a mentor with our Early Educator Professional Development (EPPD) program. Bert previously worked with Children's Institute as a mentor for Rochester Safe Start. Bert brings over 25 years experience working with children in the Rochester area.

Gail Ferguson, Ph.D., has joined as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the research and clinical areas. She received her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Bowling Green State University in Ohio, and completed her predoctoral clinical internship at the University of Rochester Medical Center with a child and adolescent specialty. Her research focuses on factors influencing psychological, behavioral, and academic well-being in understudied populations, particularly, Caribbean youth.

Arlen Moller joined as a graduate research assistant. He is a sixth-year graduate student in the Social and Personality Psychology program and currently teaches as an adjunct professor at the University of Rochester. He will be leaving Children's Institute in June to pursue a faculty position at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania. His research focuses on human motivation and emotion.

Michael Teisl has joined as a graduate assistant in the research department, but will work as a behavioral health consultant in Head Start programs. Michael is in the Ph.D. program in Clinical Psychology at the University of Rochester and has strong interests in providing clinical support to children and families.



Children's Institute welcomes (left to right) Arlen Moller, Marc Charbonneau, Bertha Farrell, Gail Ferguson and Michael Teisl.

News & Views

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children's
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News

Research & Evaluation

Psychological Functioning and Coping Among Mothers of Children With Autism: A Population-Based Study, authored by **Guillermo Montes**, Ph.D., and **Jill S. Halterman**, M.D., M.P.H., was published in the May 5, 2007 edition of PEDIATRICS, the official journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

American Psychological Association presidential appointee **JoAnne Pedro-Carroll**, Ph.D., is collaborating with the American Bar Association to develop best practice programs, policies and standards for psychological and legal interventions for parents, children, families and courts for national dissemination.

Pedro-Carroll also conducted a continuing education program for the Monroe County Bar Association, "ACT-For the Children: How legal professionals and the judiciary can promote children's best interests and reduce the negative impact of a break-up," in conjunction with State Supreme Court Justice Evelyn Frazee.

Shira May Peterson, Ph.D., recently presented papers at the American Educational Research Association annual meeting: *The impact of early educator mentoring on child care quality and children's school readiness*, and *Science in the preschool classroom: Using children's fascination with the everyday world to foster cognitive development, language development, and early literacy skills*. She also presented *Talking science with preschoolers: Developing vocabulary, inquiry skills, and causal understanding* at the Society for Research in Child Development biennial meeting, and *"Is this solid?" The role of visual, auditory, and haptic cues in constructing an academic discourse genre in preschool science lessons* paper at the National Council of Teachers of English Assembly for Research conference.

National Services

Primary Project—Celebrate 50 years of Primary Project at our national conference and reception, November 15-16. Project is now in New Orleans and Los Angeles. In New York, nine proposals for new sites and six applications from schools interested in model program status are in review.

NEW! Summer Play Therapy Institute—Learn about it at our website.

Working With National Partners—National Services continues its work with PATHS trainers, most recently in Arizona, St. Croix, New York and in Nova Scotia this summer.

Training Institute in Preventive Services—The launch of web-based training expands our reach, and on-site trainings around the country continue.

Marketing and Sales—Beta testing technology as a means to administer and score the T-CRS and PACE took place this spring in an effort to ensure a quality product backed by solid support.

Community Partnerships

RECAP Expands—The Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Partnership has expanded to 41 early childhood classrooms throughout Chemung County. Our new partners include the Elmira City School District, Chemung County Child Care Council, Elmira Heights School District, Horseheads City School District and Equal Opportunity Program Head Start. Over sixty early care and education teachers and administrators have completed training.

Safe Start Poster Wins Award—Congratulations to Dawn Pozzi who took second place in a poster session at the University of Rochester's conference on Domestic Violence. The poster featured research on the Social and Academic Correlates of Childhood Exposure to Violence and included findings on the correlations between exposure status and several health factors, demographics and parent factors.

Center-wide Coaching Project is Underway—Five urban childcare centers are receiving mentoring through this United Way supported project. Children's Institute "coaches" work with center staff to improve overall quality of the childcare centers.

Childcare Dollar\$—Project has helped 288 children in Monroe County. Now in its second year, Childcare Dollar\$ continues to connect working families in Monroe County with childcare by providing childcare subsidies to families. Childcare Dollar\$ is one of three facilitated enrollment projects across New York State.