

The Berkley Buzz

April/May

Volume 28

Upcoming Events

April 2009

National Month of the Young Child click here to view Berkley's calendar of events for the month <http://education.umkc.edu/Berkley/>

4/8 4:30 - 5:30 FIP Meeting

4/10 PDD Berkley Closed

4/25 Yard Work Day

**4/29 FIP Educational Seminar:
Parent/child Yoga, 5:00 pm in Berkley's
Union Station**

May 2009

5/7 3:30 - 5:30 Berkley Open House

5/15 PDD (Third Friday in May)

Something to Think About

Every child has a story to tell, and within that story is the secret of reaching her or him as a learner. Children's stories are windows into their uniqueness and clues on how to connect the child and the curriculum.

By: Herb Kohl, Essays on Children's Literature and the Power of stories

Program Enrichment Campaign

\$15,000 for 15 years

Total Raised as of March 15, 2009

\$5,740.04

Thank you

to everyone who came to our annual pancake breakfast. We had a net profit of 1,330.00 and served 295 people!

A Note from Polly:

April is National Month of the Young Child and a time to recognize the importance of early learning for children. All young children need and deserve high-quality early learning experiences that will prepare them for life, and UMKC-Berkley has a great opportunity to do our part to help young children. To celebrate early learning, Berkley's **Family Involvement Program** organized a calendar of events that includes visits from our local legislators, teacher appreciation, language and literacy, family involvement and health and nutrition. Micah Hobbs (mother of two Berkley children) is the chair of the committee and responsible for planning many of the events. Month of the Young Child, sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is an opportunity for early childhood programs across the country to hold activities to bring awareness to the needs of young children.

Young children and their families depend on high-quality early education and care, which helps children get a great start in life, and brings lasting benefits to our community. Month of the Young Child is a time to recognize the importance of early learning and early literacy, and to celebrate the teachers and policies that bring early childhood education to young children.

A specific way that Berkley supports and promotes high quality early learning is by participating in the state's Pilot Project for a Quality Rating System (QRS). Missouri's QRS is a method to assess and continually improve the quality of early childhood and school-age/after-school programs. Berkley has participated in the pilot project for the past five years. In fact our QRS classroom observations will take place April 20-May 4th. The goals for this project are to improve the quality of early childhood programs, raise public understanding about high quality programs, and allow subsidy-receiving children access to higher quality programs. Key quality areas assessed are:

- Administrative practices / leadership
- Business Practices
- Teaching Practices
- Learning Environments
- Family Involvement

As part of the project Berkley has a school portfolio which outlines each area. If you are interested in seeing it I would be thrilled to show it to you. I hope you enjoy this issue of the Berkley Buzz, other featured articles include Curriculum Night, Staff Spotlight on Melanie Davison, Spotlight on the Fountain room, Berkley's community involvement for professional development and an update from FIP on Berkley nutrition and Shatto milk.

Yours for Children,

Polly



Staff Spotlight Melanie Davison

Please help us welcome Melanie Davison to Berkley and the Westport room. Melanie received a Bachelor of Science in Child and Family Development, with an emphasis in Child Life, from Missouri State University. She has been at Berkley since February 2008

Below are some tidbits about Melanie we thought you would be interested in.

“I have six younger siblings and have worked with children in some capacity my whole life. The unique way each individual develops presents a new learning experience that I enjoy and grow from as well!”

Who is your favorite author/book?

Favorite children’s authors: Kevin Henkes and Steven Kellogg.

Favorite books for myself: Harry Potter and any mystery novels.

If you could tell children and pass along one thing for them to remember, what would it be?

Enjoy every moment of childhood and take advantage of all of life’s opportunities.

Tell your favorite story about child/children?

Last summer I volunteered at Camp Quality Kansas, a week-long camp for children who were battling cancer or were in remission. It was amazing to witness the children supporting each other with understanding and friendship and such a great testament to the adult volunteers about the power of children’s innocence and their ability to have hope and persevere.

What are your hobbies?

I love singing, reading, volunteering, swimming, exercising, learning to cook, and spending time with family and friends.

Berkley’s Second Annual Curriculum Night a Success!

Many families toured all of the Berkley classrooms at our 2nd annual Curriculum Night held the evening of Thursday, March 12th. If you missed attending or did not get a chance to pick up our handout “A snapshot of each classroom” click here to view it on our website <http://education.umkc.edu/Berkley/>

Families also had the opportunity to tour the art studio, meet Charlie, meet the entire Berkley faculty and enjoy some yummy snacks. Also available was a table full of information about Project Construct the curriculum framework used at Berkley.

Project Construct is an approach to **teaching** in the preschool, primary, and elementary grades that is based on what we know about **learning**. The project, begun by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MDESE) in 1986, and incorporates theory-based curricula that are linked to state and national curriculum frameworks and standards.

Project Construct is derived from constructivism—the theoretical view that learners construct knowledge through interaction with the physical and social environments. Through "hands-on, minds-on" experiences, students in Project Construct classrooms attain deep understandings in the core content areas, while they also learn to work collaboratively with adults and peers and to be lifelong problem solvers.



What are we learning in the Fountain Room?

As the weather warms up, we're really focusing on getting outdoors and around our community. Children learn best when they are exposed to a wide variety of stimuli on which they can base ever-increasing knowledge. Still, infants rely on a level of certainty and security when they are exploring in new settings. An infant teacher must strive to balance the familiar with the novel to encourage individual children to explore, as well as find a way to make the whole group feel comfortable enough to do so. With this in mind, we decided to balance some familiarity—our community, secure adults, and the safety of the buggies—with something new—exploring the Rockhurst campus. We walked there on March 16 and observed the children to see how each reacted.

Some of the children practically leapt from the buggies to feel the new surfaces under their feet and point out the new sights to their teachers. Other children decided they felt best watching the goings on from one place, whether that be a certain chair or even from the buggy itself.

Infants learn by taking in sensory information, and this experience had it all. They developed their sight as they looked at statues, plants, budding flowers, and construction equipment. They listened to traffic, students talking to them, and their feet pounding the concrete as they ran around a flowerbed. They touched a stone wall, sticks, and a golf-cart-like vehicle. They smelled grass, mulch, and coffee wafting from the Student Union. They even tasted familiar Goldfish and water as they rested on chairs, on the ground, or in the buggy. To tie the experience all together, we photographed many of the sites, as well as the children experiencing them, so we can post the images in our room for the children to revisit whenever they like.

Written by: Kathleen Cross



Family Involvement Program Nutrition Update

Shatto Milk is coming to Berkley for April, our Month of the Young Child!!

Of the respondents to last fall's food survey, 46% ranked offering hormone free and/or organic milk in the top half of the changes they would like to see made in the food offerings. Berkley sourced delivered organic milk and found it would be prohibitively expensive. We seemed to have hit a dead end when one of our parents went on a tour at Shatto Dairy and approached the Shatto family about delivering milk directly to Berkley. As a result, Shatto Milk has agreed to deliver whole and 2% milk to Berkley at their standard wholesale price!! This is a tremendous savings as compared to retail pricing and further, provides the same delivery convenience Berkley has with their current vendor. We have arranged for a trial run for the Month of the Young Child and if the logistics go well, Berkley would like to continue to have Shatto provide all dairy milk.

There are a number of reasons for making this change:

Shatto Milk's products are artificial growth hormone free (no rbST, rbGH);
Shatto Milk's cows are fed alfalfa hay from their own fields and non-GMO corn;
Shatto Milk treats their cows with antibiotics only when medically necessary and the cow is pulled from the milking herd during treatment;
Shatto Milk is a local company, located less than one hour from KC in Osborn, MO;
Shatto Milk is pasteurized, not ultra-pasteurized;
Shatto Milk packages in glass, which is reused many, many times (even better than recycling);
Shatto Milk tastes really good!!

Numbers have been crunched, and making this a permanent change would require a parent subsidy, which would be included in next fiscal

year's tuition (beginning July 1, 2009). Moving to Shatto Milk would require \$44/year/child, roughly \$0.85/week/child. We are hopeful that most parents will welcome this change and that the financial difference won't be problematic.

If you have any comments, questions or concerns, please speak directly with Polly. Everyone's opinion will be weighed before making a permanent change.

Berkley Provides Professional Development for the Early Childhood Community

Part of Berkley's mission is to provide professional development to the field of early childhood. Several of our staff members presented this winter / spring the conference and sessions are listed below.

Mid-America Association for the Education of Young Children Conference held February 21, 2009.

Megan McPherson and Kristina Brown presented "Learning Activities for Infant and Toddlers".

Megan McPherson presented on assessment "Using the Ounce Scale for Infants and Toddlers."

Becky West presented "Why Won't Anybody Play with Me; Play and the rejected and ignored child".

Danica Love and Cindy Dover presented the "Social Moral Classroom; Building a Community of Learners."

Missouri Department of Education, Conference on the Young Years held March 12-14, 2009.

Polly Prendergast presented "Positive Guidance; Moving from Patience to Understanding in a Preschool Classroom."