

# The Berkley Buzz

November / December

Volume 19

## Upcoming Events

### December 2006

12 / 1 FIP meeting 4:00 Berkley lounge:  
Everyone is welcome.

12 / 6 Cookie Dough is in!

12 / 8-Closed for PDD

12 /11 Watch for Holiday Reservation forms

12 / 19 or 20<sup>th</sup> FIP hosting a Cookie Exchange:  
Watch for details!

12 / 22 Berkley Closes at 4:00 for Holiday  
Weekend

12 / 25 Berkley closed

December 26-29 Reservations are needed to  
attend Berkley.

January 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 Berkley Closed

### **Something to Think About**

*Observing the joy and learning in ordinary moments.*

As people committed to inquiry, we strive to pay attention to the everyday, ordinary moments of each day. These ordinary moments are the fabric of children's lives: they offer glimpses into the children's hearts and minds. When we pay attention to ordinary moments, we begin to know the children deeply. Listening, watching, taking notes: observation is the beginning of inquiry.  
Ann Pelo, October 13, 2006

### **A Note from Polly:**

During the October PDD Ann Pelo, an instructor from the Seattle Institute for Early Childhood Development and Curriculum Specialist at Hilltop Early Childhood Program, facilitated a presentation titled "Looking Closely, Listening with Care: the Curriculum of Pedagogical Documentation. Ann encouraged us to take a close look at how we grow curriculum around children's themes and theories. She asked us to think about the stories that happen in everyday moments and how we are using these stories to create a culture of inquiry.

As constructivists we believe children actively construct their knowledge and values as a result of interactions with the physical and social worlds. As the children construct their knowledge and make sense of the world around them, they tell us their stories. Just think of the possibilities we can uncover when we truly respect and listen to what the children are thinking. Infants and toddlers tell us their stories through their facial expressions, movements, and reactions to the world around them. Then as the children turn two and their vocabulary expands and develops, their stories become strings of words. With each passing stage there is so much for us to learn and share with one another.

When we record specific details and direct quotes from children we provide opportunities for families and teachers to reflect on the documentation and plan more extensively for the materials we have in our classrooms. More importantly, it allows us to immerse ourselves deeply in the children's play. Paying close attention to the children's work, their gestures, their expressions, and capturing the details of their play will help us know them intimately. This in turn helps us to be more reflective of our program objectives. Ann asked us, "What do we want children to know when they leave Berkley?" The teacher's thoughts are posted next to the Power of Kind Words on the glass wall behind the front desk. They are truly inspiring and express the values of Berkley's philosophy. I encourage you to stop by and read them as well as share your thoughts with us.



## The Buzz about F-I-P ~

### ***Happy Fall and Welcome Back to our Berkley Community!***

We're well on our way to another fun-filled year and appreciate all your support, participation and ideas.

Hoping you all had an opportunity to read our recent e-mail update on FIP. It's a 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation serving the Berkley Community to fundraise, educate and provide community activities for all.

### ***College is just around the Corner....***

We had a wonderful College Savings Seminar on Thursday, October 26, 2006, presented at Berkley by Kevin Stone from American Century Investments. The handouts provided and answered many questions. If you're interested in which College Savings account to choose, their various features, and how much you'll really need to save to send your offspring off to college, pick up copies of the handout at the front desk.

### ***Fall Festival***

Saturday, October 28, 2006, at Meadowlark Park was another successful fall picnic day. Families from all the rooms participated in the play, eating, leaf collecting, and community sharing. We were thrilled to see so many of you come out to enjoy the last gasp of warm weather. Great suggestions were also shared, and we look forward to a better event next year. ***Share the Dough!*** Yes it is time to get out and sell Cookie Dough. If you're interested, we have an Excel spreadsheet to help you tabulate and calculate your sales. There are prizes for big sellers, including extra tubs of dough free for each 15 sold! Remember this sale supports purchases for Berkley CFDC as well as educational seminars, Music Teacher stipends, etc. So please support your local sale and get involved. The dough really does sell itself, and it's good to eat, too. Remember friends, co-workers, staff, neighbors, mail carriers, etc. and share the dough. Email any comments, questions, or ideas to [BerkleyFIP@umkc.edu](mailto:BerkleyFIP@umkc.edu) .

## **The Future in Their Hands...**

Becky West, Classroom Instructional Specialist

Every once in a while, I come across an article in a professional journal that makes such an impact on me, I find myself wishing I could share it with parents because I know, as a parent myself, how deep our concerns for our children's futures are. I found one of those articles this morning in the November issue of *Young Children*, the professional journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Ann Mitchell, this year's NAEYC president, writes about *Our Future, Our Children's Future* in a very thoughtful article. I would like to excerpt just a little of what she has to say as a challenge to you to think about your child, education, and the future in a slightly different light.

*"We are living in the midst of a social transformation as significant as the Industrial Revolution that took us from an agrarian to an industrial society over the course of a century. The current revolution, one of technology and communication, is creating a global economy in the span of decades and has enormous consequences..."*

*The global economy will change the nature of work. ... jobs that can be taken apart and reassembled via technology, such as designing a building or writing computer software, can be done anywhere. And many new kinds of jobs will be created that will require skills like cross-cultural collaboration, synthesis of information, and the ability to explain complex concepts in simple ways. The most important skills our children will need to thrive in the future are*  
***knowing how to learn***  
***passion and curiosity***  
***people skills***  
***creativity***

*(As early educators) we know better than anyone that these skills emerge and develop in the early years of life. Babies are born wired to learn; they are naturally curious... The job of adults is to make sure this natural curiosity is supported and not squashed.*

*Curiosity cannot be directly taught and doesn't have to be; it emerges and can be nurtured...*

*Creativity is a combination of motivation, openness/flexibility, curiosity, and autonomy as well as divergent thinking...*

*People skills are based in cooperation and empathy...getting along with others is one of the major developmental tasks in early childhood” (2006 Mitchell, A.).*

If the last half of this sounds familiar, it should! Our constructivist philosophy encompasses these very skills and mindsets, and I hope you've not only *heard* it at Berkley, but *seen* it happening in your children. As parents, you and I want our children to be prepared for the future, the future created in the midst of that revolution of technology and communication...a future which will require ongoing learning, curiosity and passion, people skills, and creativity. My thanks to Anne Mitchell for the reminder.

***In late October Becky West and Susan Weinrich attended the 100 Languages of Children Conference in Toronto, Canada. We hope you enjoy reading Becky's journal outlining the experience.***

Reggio in Toronto: A Journal by Becky West

Friday morning, 4:15 a.m.: This better be a great conference—it got me out of bed at 3:00 AM! Susan and I are ready to go, notebooks in hand, tickets, passports, no liquids in the carry-ons! We are lined up to board when a tap on the window wall catches my eye—my son in his Northwest Air Link uniform waves on his way to catch his flight—but he'll be in a pilot's seat today! More about that later....

Friday evening, 7:00 p.m.: After only a little getting lost—look at it as a walking tour of downtown

Toronto—we are finally there. The *100 Languages of Children* Exhibit is spread out before us, as beautiful as we have heard for years. Beautiful artwork, beautiful presentation, but so much more! The incredible insight and understanding of children and their work represented in this exhibit inspires us. The poetic descriptions of the

children's learning give us pause to think, but there is still so much more! Respect....that's it....respect for the child, respect for the thought process of the child,

respect for the efforts of the child, respect for the very process through which the child learns...permeates this exhibit. It overwhelms us and both Susan and I are quiet on the *ride* back to the hotel... we decide we've walked enough.

Saturday morning, 8:00 a.m.: This is a morning for words as teachers who have grown through Reggio's forty years share their experiences with us. They encourage us to think about "*the dance*" between parent and child, teacher and child, child and child. They show us pictures of classrooms filled with natural materials, but often cluttered and messy with the work of learning. They encourage us to listen with our eyes, to give value to the time it takes to listen to a child. They remind us that children are born ready, that it is we who must learn to pause, to ask the pertinent question. And in the end....what is the child's image of the teacher? Do we decree the answers or pose the questions? And if we propose the questions and leave the answers for the child to discover....what is the child's image of truth...and self?

Saturday evening, 7:00 a.m.: A wonderful dinner in a quiet country French café in the Lexington district revives our spinning brains. A walk through the shops of Lexington leaves us anticipating another visit to the exhibit and eager to look at it through today's better understanding of those who created it.

Sunday morning, 8:00 a.m.: Fortified with Canadian tea and croissants we tackle the exhibit again. Today it grows easier to sort through the myriad images of color and light and energy. We begin to "listen with our eyes," and the many languages through which children communicate begin to sound more clearly. We "hear" the many hours it takes to truly explore the work of water against a wheel or the way shadows move and grow, then shrink away to nothing. In their many languages, children tell us how they view this world. We can "hear" children's representations—drawings, paintings, clay models—as they speak to us of hopes and dreams. And in the maze of artwork and documentation, we "hear" one message clearly. When children work together to resolve important questions, the conceptual leap of one child who begins to resolve a problem is contagious.

Sunday evening, 6:00 p.m.: A trip to the theatre provides some much needed down time, but even as we enjoy the show, I catch myself listening with my eyes—and hearing so much more.

Monday morning, 11:00 a.m.: Off to the airport, customs, and finally, we climb aboard a Northwest Airlink plane for a flight to Minneapolis, first leg of our journey home. I glance in the cockpit and the young First Officer reminds me of another young FO. I close my eyes; and see, not the dignified young adult in a new uniform with new wings on his chest, but a small boy. Kneeling in a kitchen chair, tongue stuck out of the corner of his mouth, he is hard at work on a drawing of trees and hills. “You and me are artists, aren’t we Casey?” he asks the buddy seated across from him. “Yeah!” replies Casey, “But only on weekends, ‘cause we gotta be cowboys on our ranch on school days.” A cow begins to take shape on Casey’s picture. “But on weekdays we gotta be pilots!” The first child sounds concerned. As something begins to take shape in the upper corner of his paper, I peek over his shoulder. This is the airplane image I will see a thousand times in coming years—fuselage, wings, landing gear, cockpit. He points to the faces in the cockpit window, “That’s you and that’s me! We have to be pilots on school days! I know! On school days we’ll fly airplanes; and on Saturday, we’ll be cowboys; and on Sunday, we can be artists!” “OK,” agrees Casey, “But today we’re artists.” “Yeah, we’re artists today,” agrees my son.

Monday evening, 7:45: My cell phone rings as I leave the airport. I answer it as I drive. It’s my pilot son. “Mom! I can’t get dad, tell him to meet me at the farm next weekend. Gotta go—my next flight leaves in 30 minutes.” I smile and hang up...I saw these hopes and dreams 19 years ago—I just wasn’t listening with my eyes then!

### Vanessa's Corner

Some families have asked to see the recipes for some of the lunches Vanessa cooks for us. So in each Berkley Buzz we will spotlight one lunch recipe. This month we bring to you one of the children's favorite **Spaghetti**. **Remember, Vanessa cooks for over 90 people!**

Cook 10 lbs of ground turkey in a large skillet. Drain excess grease off. Bring 8 quarts of water to a boil in a large pot. Add 3lbs of spaghetti pasta to water. In a large pot add 2 cans of tomato sauce, diced tomato, basil, onion, and oregano. Drain spaghetti and add to sauce. Remove some spaghetti for vegetarian students, and then add ground turkey.

### It's That Time of Year Again!



The cold and flu season is here and it has already hit us pretty hard. You may review Berkley’s illness policy at: <http://education.umkc.edu/Berkley/parentb.html>

Remember, we ask everyone to keep their children home for 24 hours if they have a fever of 100 or above, vomiting or diarrhea.

### Staff Spotlights

#### **Melinda Stroda, Assistant Clinical Instructor, River Room**

1. What is your position at Berkley?  
Infant teacher in the River Room.
2. Where are you from?  
Chapman, KS
3. Tell a little about your previous experiences?  
Why did you choose this profession?

I was a nanny for two years, and I worked for one year at K-State’s Early Childhood Lab School, Stone House.

4. What is your favorite thing about young children?  
How quickly they learn and their smile :o)

5. What is your favorite children's book?  
*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*

6. If you could give advice to children, what would you say?  
Read lots of books, and have lots of fun. Use your imagination for as long as you can.

7. What is your favorite childhood memory?  
Christmas and snow days.

8. Share a favorite story about young children.  
At my old center at K-State, there were two little boys playing. One little boy's diaper was showing out of the top of his pants, and his friend said, "I see your booty." The other boy said, "No, I see your booty." The friend replied, "I am gonna' kiss your booty." It was so funny, but I quickly redirected their attention to something else.

9. What are your hobbies?  
I am in grad school full time, and I work full time. I *wish* I had time for hobbies! I do like to travel, snow ski, and shop when I have vacation.

**Susan Myers, Assistant Clinical Instructor, River Room**

1. What is your position at Berkley?  
Teacher in the River Room (Infant/Toddler)

2. Where are you from?  
Mission, KS

3. Tell a little about your previous experiences? Why did you choose this profession?

I graduated from UMKC in May '06 with my BA in Early Childhood. Prior to working at Berkley, I worked as a preschool teacher at Asbury Children's Center for 6 ½ years. Asbury was my reasoning for entering this profession.

4. What is your favorite thing about young children?  
Their eagerness to explore the world and how their curiosity drives them

5. What is your favorite children's book?

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *Where the Wild Things Are*

6. If you could give advice to children, what would you say?  
"Remember to love, laugh, and play every day!"

7. What is your favorite childhood memory?  
My dog Sandy and field trips while in elementary school.

8. Share a favorite story about young children.  
A four-year-old child once told me that black cows give chocolate milk and spotted cows give white milk. She asked where were the pink cows that gave us strawberry milk. (I love the way children view the world.)

9. What are your hobbies?  
Watching movies, taking my two spoiled dogs for walks, and reading romance novels.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Music Program**

Please help us welcome our new music teacher Jennifer Adams.

A lifelong Kansas City girl, Jennifer is excited about teaching music for the wonderful children of Berkley! While teaching, Jennifer is also pursuing her degree at the UMKC Conservatory in Music Education, Choral Emphasis. As a teacher and someone who has been in music for longer than she can remember, Jennifer brings a lot of enthusiasm and vitality to the program, drawing upon her many experiences as a choral and instrumental musician as well as her dance background. Jennifer also is a licensed Kindermusik® Educator, teaching at the Academy of Music and Dance at the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance.

