

CONSORTIUM CONNECTIONS

In this issue

We are delighted to bring you this issue on children's human rights, a deep and abiding theme that runs through much of the work of the Consortium. The individuals and

organizations that have contributed to this issue represent a small sample of the efforts to advance the quality of life for children and families in Minnesota and around the world.

Honoring Children and Youth

Amy Susman-Stillman, Program Coordinator

November 20, 1989 was an historic date for children around the world: it was the day the United Nations ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC is the first international human rights treaty specifically developed for children. It is a comprehensive document that focuses on the "whole child." Provisions for all aspects of human rights are included: social, economic, political, cultural, and civil. Internationally, it has been well received; currently 191 of the 193 member nations of the United Nations have ratified it. In fact, the UNCRC has been ratified more rapidly than any other human rights treaty in history. Somalia, which currently lacks a stable government, and the United States are the only member nations that have not yet ratified the treaty.

Three guiding principles characterize the treaty: the best interest of the child, the evolving capacities of the child, and the human dignity of the child. The treaty forces us to consider whether the decisions made for children are truly in their best interest; how we recognize, support and shape children's changing abilities; and how we demonstrate respect for them. The rights discussed in the treaty can be grouped into three categories known as the "3Ps": protection, provision, and participation. Protection rights, also called nurturance rights, include the need to be protected, cared for, and loved. Provision rights represent the need for children to develop their abilities to the fullest in order to become happy, healthy, competent adults. Participation rights, which generate the most controversy from opponents of the treaty, focus on children's right to express opinions in matters that affect them.

Ten main principles are incorporated in the treaty, ranging from the right to food and medical care to a child's right to grow up in peace. The UNCRC emphasizes the importance of growing up in a loving family and places faith in parents to make the right decisions for their children.

Why has the international community taken action to protect the human rights of children? The local, national and international statistics are staggering and provide a simple answer. In 1995, the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect estimated that approximately 20% of children live in poverty, 14% do not have health insurance, and 3 million were reported as abused and neglected. Around the world, 20% of children of primary school age are not attending school because they are child laborers. Children in large number do not have enough to eat, do not receive medical treatment, and do not have contact with loving, caring adults.

Why is there opposition to U.S. ratification of the treaty? Some of the most significant objections come from those who worry that giving children a voice will pit parents' rights against children's rights. Others believe that parents have the right to raise their children in the way they see fit, without the interference of the U.S. government or the United Nations. Still others take issue with the messenger—the United Nations—which obscures their ability to focus on the message of the UNCRC. And there are legitimate conflicts with U.S. law around some issues such as corporal punishment, prosecution of juvenile criminals, and participation of youth in armed conflict. With open debate and discussion, however, many of these objections could be resolved.

Despite the fact that the UNCRC may not become part of US law, the UNCRC is a useful guide to improving the quality of children's lives. Its principles can be used by

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Mission Statement

The Children, Youth & Family Consortium was established in fall 1991 in an effort to bring together the varied competencies of the University of Minnesota and the vital resources of Minnesota's communities to enhance the ability of individuals and organizations to address critical health, education, and social policy concerns in ways that improve the well-being of Minnesota children, youth, and families.

Young People Speak Out

Craig Kielburger recently spoke at the Westminister Forum in Minneapolis, and his words were so resounding that it was impossible to miss their message. But if you did, the title of the human rights organization he founded as a twelve-year old—Free the Children—leaves little doubt. It is now also the title of his memoir, published this month by Harper Collins. The memoir chronicles how Craig convinced the Canadian government to take a stand on children's rights and set forth on a worldwide crusade against child sweatshops and forced labor.



"When children hear of the problems and injustices that exist in this world, they want to help. We can either grow up being bystanders, simply closing our eyes and becoming immune to the suffering of the people around us, or we can be taught that we do have a voice and that we have the power to change the world."

"If children are not given a voice, not given the opportunity to become involved, not challenged to be citizens of the world...they cannot develop to their full potential."

—Craig Kielburger, 16, Canada

Craig, now 16, explained why he has spent the last four years working for children's rights: "Do we believe that all children have the same rights, that all young people are created equal? If injustice, if poverty, if exploitation is wrong for middle class kids in North America, then why should it be any different for a girl in Thailand, a boy in Brazil, or any child?"

Becky Jarvis, a senior at Saint Paul Academy and the co-chair of the Minnesota Alliance with Youth, is passionate about children's human rights. And it shows. In April 1997 she traveled to Philadelphia to attend the Presidents' Summit as a delegate for the National Youth Leadership Council and as a youth reporter for the Summit Action Youth Website. The Summit, which was hosted by five U.S. presidents and General Colin Powell, turned the national spotlight on the needs of youth. Since then, Becky and other young people have worked tirelessly to bring the messages of the Summit back to their communities. The MN Alliance with Youth has coordinated many of these activities, and it serves as a clearinghouse for information about youth and mentoring programs and opportunities for youth to get involved.

When asked about what motivates her, Becky had this to say:

"For me, working to support youth makes life worth living. If I only live once, I want to do as many things as I can. The fact that adults listen to me and say, if you have this passion we're going to give you the opportunity... that's a powerful thing. I see it in my school work when I speak confidently in class, or in my writing. This work changes the way people see the world and their relationship to it."

For more information about youth opportunities, contact the MN Alliance with Youth at 651-296-4738.

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Children's Rights Across Continents and Cultures

Jean Jorissen Kucera, University of Minnesota

Few would disagree with the observation that voices of children are missing when children's policies are being drafted. The age-old adage that "children should be seen and not heard," in part, explains their absence. More troubling, however, is the fact that there is little consensus about what constitutes the "best interests" of children. Disturbing trends continue worldwide but are brought into sharp focus by these United States statistics: a child is born into poverty every 18 seconds in the U.S., infant mortality rates are higher than in any other Western industrialized nation, and a fragmentary child advocacy system remains the status quo. Supporters of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child believe the document can help address child poverty and welfare, and at the same time find a place for children's voices.

Few nations have a coherent national policy for children. Scandinavian countries are the exception with comprehensive policies in place, while Canada is moving toward a national policy capable of being applied across the diverse provinces. In fact, Sweden and Canada spend two to three times more public money on families and children than does the United States. Framing children's needs in terms of children's rights has been a successful strategy in those countries that have achieved or are working toward a national policy for families and children.

How does the United States stack up? The U.S. has signed but not yet ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and there is no evidence that it will be introduced in the coming U.S. Congress. Public policies for children are mostly limited to a safety-net approach that provides social services to the very needy. The fractured picture of children's rights in the U.S. is compounded by the fact that no single office deals with the interests of

children, such as the former Children's Bureau. On the other hand, many conferences and symposia continue to explore the potential effect the treaty would have on U.S. law and the political climate for children's rights.

Meanwhile, Canada, after ratifying the treaty in 1991, established Children's Commissioners and Advocates among the provinces. These independent offices of the legislature are responsible for getting young people's issues on the legislative agenda, strengthening child and youth advocacy, and addressing long-standing problems of fragmentation among child-serving ministries. Canadian officials recognized that given the size and diversity of Canada, progress on children's needs and rights would require commitment and imagination.

Scandinavia's philosophy extends children's rights into all political areas. Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were among the first to adopt the treaty and establish mechanisms to ensure that children's needs were being met. Norway appointed the world's first Ombudsman for Children, Malfrid Grude Flekkoy. According to Flekkoy, "As a 'watchdog' guarding children's rights, the Ombudsman [is] to keep an eye on all aspects of society, signal any development that may prove harmful to children's interests, and propose changes designed to improve their condition."

With rights, of course, come responsibilities. Young people everywhere seem poised to become active participants in their communities. They have much to say and much to contribute. Along with fostering health and well being of children comes the obligation to extend human rights to every child. And that means paying attention to their many voices.

"With a good education there is no telling where today's kids will take us. With minds of our own... we will be able to be confident in our own beliefs and we will be less biased."

—Gara Scanlon, age 15, USA



"We need to change the ways the world is thinking ... if enough people speak out, miracles can happen."

—Kathleen Diga, age 17, Canada

Honoring Children and Youth —continued from cover

anyone who cares about, interacts with, or makes decisions regarding children. Practitioners can use the UNCRC to design and evaluate their practice or the programs they run for children. Researchers can use it to study children's moral development. Parents can use it to think about the lessons they are teaching their children. Policymakers can use it to think through funding mechanisms for children, youth and family programs. In many other ways, the UNCRC is a powerful tool for giving children a voice and an opportunity to make a difference in the world.

The Consortium is making a concerted effort to educate the public about the UNCRC and about strategies for applying its principles. Last spring, we sponsored a forum entitled "Multidisciplinary Perspectives on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child." We are currently developing a section of our web site that will focus on research on and implementation of the UNCRC. Marti Erickson, Consortium Director, is working with an international coalition of scholars and government officials to develop educational materials on children's human rights. Along with colleague Stuart Hart at the Indiana-Purdue University, she has edited a special issue of the international journal, *Prospects*. The issue includes articles from the 1997 International Conference on Children's Rights in Education at which Marti served as one of four rapporteurs. And we have devoted this newsletter to featuring the ways in which the University and our Minnesota communities are working to honor the human rights of children and youth.

Bringing Human Rights Home to Minnesota

Marna Anderson, the Partners in Human Rights Education Director & Kristi Rudelius-Palmer, University of Minnesota Human Rights Center, Co-Director



Every year, more immigrants and refugees call Minnesota home. According to the State Demographer's office, more than 7,000 immigrants and refugees moved to the state last year. The Minneapolis Star Tribune reported that in 1997, international in-migration to Minnesota surpassed domestic in-migration for the first time in the 1990s. The U.S. Census Bureau expects this trend will continue through 2020. Recently, large numbers of Ethiopians, Somalis, and Sudanese have settled here, as well as individuals and families from the West African countries of Cameroon, Liberia and

Sierra Leone. In fact, the largest community of Somalis in the U.S. is in Minnesota, with an estimated 20,000 Somalis living in the Twin Cities alone. Earlier waves of immigrants from Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Africa had, until the last decade, traditionally settled in urban areas of Minnesota. Today, however, these newcomers are also making their home in the region's smaller towns and rural areas.

According to Women's Voices - Minnesota, a report published by the Minnesota Women's Foundation in January 1998, Minnesota's residents are becoming more racially and ethnically diverse; however, we are also becoming more segregated. There is evidence that Minnesotans live in greater fear than they did a decade ago. Not only do people live in fear for their personal safety; they live in economic insecurity. The income gap between the rich and the poor is widening. The report concludes, "In Minneapolis, the increase in violence among young people has led public health authorities to identify violence as the most important public health problem facing youth." But these are not solely urban concerns: reports of racial violence have also shocked the once homogeneous communities of Rochester, Worthington, Willmar, and Marshall.

In 1992, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights and the Human Rights Center at the University of Minnesota joined hands to train students and community members to identify community problems as human rights concerns and work together to create solutions guaranteeing human rights for all. This initiative, Partners in Human Rights Education ("Partners Program"), is designed to educate pre-K-12 youth on human rights and responsibilities, and it draws upon the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Community members join classroom teachers to teach students about human rights, to connect human rights issues to students' lives, and to enable students to

apply their human rights understanding to community needs. The Partners Program focuses students' attention on human rights issues at home and around the world and empowers them to take action. As students become informed and learn to organize, they become more productive and self-sufficient community members.

Over the past six years, the Partners Program has trained more than 900 teachers, lawyers, and community members to educate more than 25,000 students about human rights and responsibilities. The Partners Program has reached not only Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin, but three distant communities — Atlanta, St. Louis, and San Antonio.

Teachers report dramatic changes in students' behaviors and attitudes as a result of this human rights program. One teacher described a student as "a tough bully" at the beginning of the year and by mid-year witnessed this same student comforting a younger child who had been pushed to the ground. A recent study of fifth and sixth graders in a Minneapolis school measured students' attitude and behavior changes using pre- and post-tests, teachers' observations, and video interviews with students. The students who had received the human rights education were more apt to believe their actions could make life better for others. And they were more willing to speak up when they saw an inequity. One teacher echoed the responses of many when she wrote, "Human rights education is the most powerful discipline technique I've found. I've worked through mediation and conflict resolution programs, but human rights education is the crucial foundation. Human rights education provides students a values framework, which they can carry with them and use throughout their whole life."

Inspired by the Partners Program, some students go on to organize their own educational initiatives and community action projects. Fourth, fifth and sixth graders at St. Paul's Expo Elementary School formed a group called Project H.O.P.E. (Helping Out People Everywhere). Last year the group wrote and produced a play on child labor, created art pieces depicting their views on the death penalty, coordinated a letter writing campaign on the International Landmine Treaty, and organized a student volunteer day at the Dorothy Day Center in St. Paul. These students may sound extraordinary, but they are regular children who, with the help of caring adults, have been engaged intellectually and emotionally to work for social justice. Human rights education can be a powerful tool in unraveling racism, anti-immigrant sentiment, bigotry, and intolerance.

Landmarks in Children's Rights

- 1889 - Cruelty to children became a criminal offense in Britain.
- 1913 - Birth of the idea of an international association for the protection of children.
- 1923 - Save the Children International Union drafted and approved the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which stated that children were entitled to special protection and care. One year later, it was approved by the League of Nations in Geneva.
- 1948 - UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted; rights and liberties of children were implicitly included in this document.
- 1952 - UN adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Children; children were entitled to adequate nutrition, free education, and medical care, and were given the right not to be exploited or discriminated against.
- 1978 - Poland suggested that the UN adopt a children's rights convention as a means of celebrating the 1979 International Year of the Child. A working group began to draft the treaty; it would take 10 years to complete its work.
- 1989 - The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the U.N. Assembly, and the treaty was sent out to member nations for ratification.
- 1995 - U.S. Ambassador Madeline Albright signed the Convention on behalf of President Clinton and sent it to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for ratification.
- 1998 - 191 of the 193 member nations have signed the treaty. To date, the United States and Somalia are the only members that have not ratified the treaty.

Parents as Teachers of Children's Rights

Annette Gagliardi, Early Childhood & Family Education, Sabathani Community Center

When I first read the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, I knew it was destined to become part of our Early Childhood & Family Education (ECFE) curriculum at Sabathani Community Center in urban Minneapolis. What better place to teach human rights and human dignity than in the family unit? And ECFE is a perfect vehicle for modeling the lessons of tolerance and understanding at the heart of the Convention. Families and children are gathered together in a safe and enriched environment in order to learn and grow together. But how to begin?

We began very simply by writing letters to President Clinton. It was 1995, shortly after Ambassador Madeline Albright had signed the Convention intent for the United States. The children decorated a big card with their handprints and "signatures," and we documented the event with a group photograph. When a return package arrived from the Presidential Office thanking us for our interest in children's rights, the parents and children were amazed. Our journey had begun.

When Kristi Rudelius-Palmer of the University of Minnesota's Partners in Human Rights Education asked us to write three lessons based around the tenets in the Convention, we jumped at the chance. But as we looked more deeply at the document, we knew that three lessons could not contain all we wanted to teach.

Before attempting to write our curriculum, we knew we had to educate ourselves. Along with my two other ECFE colleagues, Lori Dupont and Joanne Foley, we researched education for democracy, education for citizenship, and Paulo Freire's "pedagogy of liberation." We read about teaching for critical thinking skills and social competence. We studied each article of the Convention, and grappled with what we wanted the curriculum to accomplish.

We set very high goals. We wanted the curriculum to foster social competence, critical consciousness, and a sense of ownership in what happens in the world. We wanted to help the children and parents develop habits of caring and supportive relationships, set high expectations for themselves, and participate in civic and community work. Teaching tools for social competence does not mean chaos or, as some may fear, cause children to rise up and rule over their parents. On the contrary, it means teaching children to respect every person's rights and to take responsibility for the whole.

Two years later, we were on our fourth draft of the curriculum and ready for the field test. The director allowed us to offer the human rights class, but for one quarter only, in order to gauge the community's response. The families that signed up for the class were diverse, but had one thing in common: they wanted to make a better world for their children. Attendance was exceptionally high, and parents in two-parent families both came to almost every class. The parent discussions were intense, searching, and thought-provoking. Many families developed action steps to further their learning, and one family even shared the lessons with the children and parents in their home day-care business. Moreover, these families bonded in a way that is not often seen in ECFE classes.

This fall, after polishing a final draft, we were lucky enough to find a publisher that thinks like we do. *Roots, Rights & Responsibilities* will be printed any day now. Unlike a conventional curriculum that is meant to be followed step-by-step, this one invites readers to include human rights education in any and all kinds of teaching. Our journey continues as we help parents teach their children, and themselves, about the rights and responsibilities of being part of the human family.

(for information about the publication, contact Growing Communities for Peace at 612/433-4303.)



"So many times, I've seen restrictions against kids because we'd 'mess up' everything and then the adults mess it up worse. I know that I am capable of self control ... I know that there are many 8 year olds who are intelligent enough to make responsible decisions and many adults who aren't. Thank you for listening."

—Josh Gensler, age 13, USA

Children's Human Rights Coalition in Minnesota

An exciting effort to use the UNCRC to shape a new framework for children's advocacy is underway, the result of a joint project of the Kellogg International Leadership Program and the Minnesota State Bar Association-Children and the Law Section. In his tenure as a Kellogg International Leadership Program Fellow, Mark Fiddler, local attorney and former director of the Indian Child Welfare Office in Minnesota, and Jean Kucera, a researcher at the University of Minnesota, conducted a survey of legislators, child advocates, and state and

local administrators. The survey showed that the children's advocacy community is not well-coordinated and that children's advocacy efforts are not guided by a clear framework. Survey results also indicated that the children's advocacy community strongly supported the formation of a children's human rights advocacy coalition. The coalition is now looking for an administrative home that will help it garner support and extend its reach. For a copy of the report or for more information, contact Mark Fiddler at fidd@aol.com.

"In order to protect children's rights the children have to understand their rights and learn how to use them to their advantage without abusing them."

—Jolene, age 12, USA

"I think we should try to educate others around the world about the UN Convention. People in Grenada didn't know much about it before we got involved in our Paradise Project. When we introduced it, we saw other students in our class begin to act their age."

—Donally Francis, age 16, Grenada

"Protecting our children, I believe, is the true test of our humanity. For if not protecting and taking care of our children, what value or legacy will carry us into the new millennium?"

"It takes a village to raise a child. Well ... it also takes children to help raise a village."

—Craig Kielburger, 16, Canada

Teaching Children About Human Rights

David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson, Department of Educational Psychology

For over thirty years we have been conducting a program of theory, research, and practice that teaches children, adolescents, and young adults to value human rights. To learn about human rights, children and adolescents must live and learn within a school culture that encourages and respects human rights. Such schools are built on the Three Cs Program: Establishing a cooperative community, resolving conflicts constructively, and internalizing civic values.

The first C is establishing a cooperative community. Human rights depend on believing there are common goals that unite all humans. The first step in establishing human rights, therefore, is teaching students how to work together to achieve mutual goals. Doing so has many benefits. Working cooperatively results in higher achievement, more caring and supportive relationships, and greater psychological health (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). In one school, teachers were recorded as saying, "Ask the person next to you to give an example of what it means to be a good sport," "Make sure your neighbor understands the directions," "Ask if anyone at your table needs help," "Turn to your neighbor and find out what he or she predicts." Cooperation among students is structured through learning groups, and cooperation among teachers is structured through teaching teams and study groups.

The second C is ensuring conflicts are managed constructively. A constructive conflict results in an agreement that maximizes joint gain, improves the relationship, and improves disputants' ability to resolve future conflicts. Teaching students how to resolve their conflicts increases achievement, creativity, higher-level reasoning, empathy and perspective-taking, commitment to social justice, and many other outcomes. At a school we were studying, a student commented: "We just don't fight or hit at this school. For me, the (negotiation) steps are fool-proof. It's kind of fun to use them to solve a conflict. Sometimes it makes people who never were friends, friends." A key to long-term human rights is the constructive management of conflict.

The third C is teaching students civic values. Civic values include commitment to the common good and to the well being of others, a sense of responsibility to contribute one's fair share of the work, respect for the efforts of others, behaving with integrity, compassion when others are in need, and appreciation of diversity. A teacher described the following class activity. "Students are sitting in a circle on the carpet. A class meeting is in progress. Today the issue is respect. One of the students risked telling her classmates that she felt hurt during recess the day before because she was trying to tell kids the rules to a new game, but nobody would listen. So began a discussion on what it means to be respectful, why that is important, and the sharing of everyone's personal experiences of times they felt respected versus not respected." For a community to exist and be sustained members must share common goals and values aimed at increasing the quality of life within the community.

In Ramsey County, All Children Excel

Judith Kahn, Konopka Institute for Best Practices in Adolescent Health

Rather than fishing our youth out of troubled waters, Project ACE 'All Children Excel' a juvenile crime prevention project of Ramsey County is heading upstream by reaching out to children as young as 8 years old before they enter into violence.

One of the key predictors of chronic juvenile violence is an early age of onset. Among children who begin committing violent or delinquent acts at age 10 or younger, between 30% and 62% are likely to become chronic offenders during adolescence. These same studies confirm earlier research showing that no single risk factor is responsible for serious delinquency and violence. Chronic offenders have multiple risk factors in their backgrounds, including deficits in family, school, peer and neighborhood environments as well as poor communication skills and academic

achievement. These risk factors are typically compounded by an absence of protective factors, such as close relationships with adults.

These research findings have prompted the development of intensive early intervention projects designed to address the multiple risk factors encountered by children at extremely high risk of juvenile delinquency. Two years ago, Hennepin County implemented such a project. Now, Ramsey County Commissioners have started Project ACE. Ramsey County is working with the Konopka Institute for Best Practices in Adolescent Health to evaluate the project.

For more information about the project or about youth violence, please contact Judith Kahn, director of the Konopka Institute, at (612) 625-7137 or jkahn@tc.umn.edu.

CONSORTIUM UPDATE

Welcome to Wendi and Jane. Wendi Schirvar has joined the Consortium staff as a part-time program coordinator, taking leadership for the Consortium's public policy initiatives. A Ph.D. candidate in Educational Psychology with a focus on school-community partnerships, Wendi has conducted research on intervention strategies for parents, led evaluation studies, and worked in a variety of community settings providing services to children and families. Jane Viste is the newest addition to the Consortium. A graduate student in the School of Public Health, Jane brings many years of experience in health care and communications to her position as part-time research assistant for the Consortium's Family Re-Union project.

Congratulations to Professor Esther Wattenberg. On October 13, the Consortium honored Professor Wattenberg with its annual award acknowledging her lifelong commitment to children, youth, and families. Director of the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare and Professor in the School of Social Work, Esther has served on numerous boards of directors and task forces, including the Children's Law Center of Minnesota and the Minnesota Supreme Court Task Force on Foster Care and Adoption. Her research interests include child welfare, children in long-term foster care, kinship placement, teenage pregnancy, paternity issues, single-parent families, and family policy. She received the award during the Consortium's public policy forum on "Safe Havens for Children: Balancing Family Preservation with Child Protection."

Food for Thought. The Consortium's annual holiday book drive, held in conjunction with the University of Minnesota's Child Psychology student organization, collected close to a thousand new and gently used books for area shelters and service agencies. The Food for Thought campaign coordinator, Wendi Schirvar, thanks all those who donated books, set up collection sites, and coordinated this university-community effort. We'll see you next year!

Just in Time. "Just in time Research: Children, Youth & Families," a publication produced by the U of MN Extension Service and the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, with assistance from the Children, Youth & Family Consortium, is now available. The publication features ten interdisciplinary research projects covering a range of issues in child and family public policy. For copies of the publication, contact Judith Keena, Public Relations, U of MN Extension, 612/625-7047

CONNECTION CORNER

Irving B. Harris Training Center for Infant and Toddler Development

The Harris Center is pleased to announce that Dr. Kyle Pruett, Professor at the Yale Child Study Center and President of the Board of Directors of Zero to Three, will be the 1999 Harris Visiting Scholar. Dr. Pruett, whose areas of expertise include father-child relationships and early intervention with children at-risk, will be at the Harris Center April 28-30. A number of events featuring Dr. Pruett, including a public presentation at the Minnesota History Center on April 28, are currently being planned. Mark your calendars now!

Building Resiliency in Young Adults

Since 1993, the University of Minnesota Extension Service has been partnering with the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the Minnesota Attorney General's office, and several other state and local agencies and schools in the development and implementation of Dads Make A Difference (DMAD), a youth teaching youth curriculum focusing on the importance of fathers in their children's lives.

DMAD has now developed a companion curriculum for older teens and young adults, called "The R Factor: Building Resiliency in Young Adults." The R

In conjunction with the Center for Early Education and Development (CEED), the Harris Center is also continuing its work with the Brain Trust, a group of community-based trainers and front-line workers who are developing training materials on infant and toddler brain development. After a year of education on the new brain science, the Brain Trust is now formalizing its curriculum and will be hosting a train-the-trainers session soon. For more information, please call 612-624-5886.

Factor encourages students to think purposefully about their future partners and examine the impact of parenting on their lives. Designed to be used in schools, the R Factor curriculum includes a complete performance package and lesson plans built around the "People and Cultures" graduation standard. Trainings for teachers are scheduled for January, February, March and June 1999. For more information on The R Factor trainings or DMAD materials, contact Gary Greenfield, coordinator, at (612)704-2060, or by e-mail at ggreenfield@extension.umn.edu.

Consortium Calendar

January

January 26-27

"Coming Together for Children, Youth & Families: Building on All of Our Strengths," Fifth Annual Collaborative Conference for Interagency Efforts including Transition, Early Childhood, Children's Mental Health, and Family Services, to be held at St. Cloud Civic Center. For more information, call Pathfinder Resources at 651/647-6905.

January 27-29

"Today's Youth: Knowing Their World," the annual Juvenile Officers Institute, a multidisciplinary conference sponsored by University College and Minnesota Juvenile Officers Association, held at Arrowwood Radisson Resort, Alexandria. To register call 612/ 626-7196.

February

February 11

"Violence in Media/Violence in Schools," Arlington High School, 1495 Rice St., St. Paul. Media violence expert David Grossman will discuss the influence of media violence on adolescents. For more information, call World Citizen, Inc. 612/699-7446

February 26

"The Power of Partnerships: Linking Education to the 21st Century," Minnesota Association of Partners in Education's annual conference will be held at the Thunderbird Hotel in Bloomington. Keynote speaker is James Campbell, Executive Vice President of the Banking Group of Wells Fargo and '98 United Way Chairman.

April

April 20-21

"School Success for All," a Children's Mental Health Conference sponsored by the MN Department of Human Services and held at Cragun's in Brainerd. To register, call 651/ 646-5060.

April 26-27

"Linking the Past, Creating the Future," the 8th Annual MN Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting Conference, held at Earle Brown Heritage Center, Brooklyn Center, MN. Contact MOAPP 612/ 644-1447

April 28-30

The Harris Center's Visiting Scholar program welcomes Kyle Pruett, Professor at the Yale Child Study Center and President of Zero to Three. Dr. Pruett, a researcher and child clinician, is known for his work on father involvement with young children and youth. For more information, call the Harris center at 612/ 624-4510.

ON LINE

Michael J. Brott, Community Partnership and Information Coordinator

The World Wide Web provides significant information about the rights of children across the globe. From understanding the tenants of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to personal stories of children around the world, the web serves as a valuable tool to increase knowledge and practice on children's rights. We have chosen five select sites that can assist both beginners and those well versed in this subject.

Child Rights Information Network www.crin.ch

CRIN is a global network of children's rights organizations seeking to support the effective exchange of information about children and their rights. It is supported by nine international organizations. The network has three main aims, which it seeks to meet through specific project activities and an information service. The network exists to support and promote the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; serve the information needs of organizations and individuals working with and for children's rights; and help organizations gather, produce and disseminate child rights information through training, capacity building and the development of electronic and non-electronic tools.

Save the Children www.oneworld.org/scf

Save the Children is the UK's leading international children's charity. In a world which continues to deny children their basic human rights, Save the Children champions the right of all children to a happy, healthy and secure childhood. Save the Children places the reality of children's lives at the heart of everything it does and it strives to build a better world for present and future generations.

UNICEF www.unicef.org

Founded in 1946, UNICEF advocates and works for the protection of children's rights, and helps young people meet their basic needs and expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. The UNICEF Executive Board reaffirmed this mandate in January 1996, when it adopted a statement on the mission of UNICEF saying that UNICEF "is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behavior towards children."

American Child Rights www.boes.org/un/ameun-b.html

This site is a non-profit engagement for Children's Rights, an IT-investment based on nine years experience with Children's Rights. The organization's ambition is to provide the full text of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, in a large number of languages, to other seriously engaged organizations - universities, high schools and colleges - all over the world, through mutual Internet links.

Human Rights Library www.umn.edu/humanrts

The University of Minnesota Human Rights Library, created by the University of Minnesota Human Rights Center, features numerous resources on human rights and children's rights, including curricula and opportunities to help youth get involved with human rights issues.

Who's the Consortium?

Jean Jorissen Kucera recently completed an award-winning masters thesis on cross-cultural child advocacy systems and is currently working with local lawyers and advocates to establish the new organization, Minnesota Children's Human Rights Coalition. Jean works in the Dean's Office at the University of Minnesota's College of Agricultural, Food, and Environmental Sciences.

Mark Fiddler is a new member of the Consortium's Advisory Council. A local attorney in private practice and former Director of Indian Child Welfare Office, he has recently founded the Minnesota Children's Human Rights Coalition to work for passage of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and for a coherent framework to guide child advocacy efforts in the state.

David Parker, an occupational health physician in Minneapolis, has traveled in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mexico, and the United States to photograph and document the lives of working children. A frequent speaker on children's human rights, David's photographs have been exhibited widely and are collected in his recent book, *Stolen Dreams*. He graciously permitted us to use his photographs in this newsletter.

Kristi Rudelius-Palmer co-directs Partners in Human Rights Education, a project jointly funded by the University of Minnesota Law School and Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. Kristi is an active advocate for children's human rights, and in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights, was instrumental in putting together a report documenting the state of Minnesota's children.

And the Consortium is YOU!

Join the Consortium Listserv

To sign up, email your name and email address to cycf@tc.umn.edu.

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