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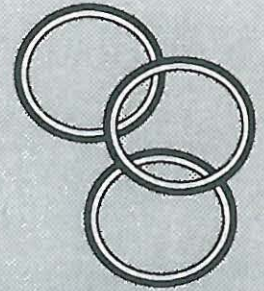
# Consortium Connections

A quarterly update of activities of the All  
University-Community Consortium on  
Children, Youth, & Families

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Spring 1992

## "ELECTRONIC ROLODEX" UPDATE

Even though the Consortium is still in its infancy, the activity level of its many workgroups is impressive. In this brief report, I would like to provide an update on the activities of a task force whose goal has been to conceptualize and create an "electronic rolodex" of resources related to children, youth, and families. The resources are located both within the University of Minnesota and within the larger communities of the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota. Because of this state's longstanding commitment to its families and children, many exemplary programs have been developed and many tireless individuals have important expertise. The concept guiding our task force is that information about these resources should be easily accessible to people throughout the state, through a combination of direct computer links and a toll-free number connected to an information specialist who could access the computerized data bases.

We began with a rather modest concept, have fantasized about grandiose ideas (indexing everything relevant in Minnesota!), and are now closing in on a middle-ground project that will be appropriately useful but neither reinvents the wheel nor is so expensive as not to be feasible.

One of the most gratifying aspects of this task force's work has been the truly collaborative efforts of university and community professionals. Our last meeting held in the Centennial Building near the state capitol, brought together members of the community (Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Planning, Action for Children Commission) and the university (Minnesota Extension Service, Research and Technology Administration, Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement) to discuss existing data base efforts and the possibility for collaboration. The spirited discussions were exciting! Several data base efforts are already in the planning stages, and the meetings' participants clearly wanted to collaborate in order to develop a comprehensive and useful system. This workgroup epitomizes the Consortium's mission and strength: to marshal collective expertise for the benefit of the state's children, youth, and families. At our next meeting, we will each discuss the expertise and resources we can contribute to this important collaborative effort. If you have interest or expertise in this area and would like to participate in this working group, feel free to call me at 612/624-3756.

Hal Grotevant, Executive Committee

## CALENDAR OF RECENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 21, 1992:** Professor Margaret Beale Spencer, Division of Educational Studies at Emory University, gave the 14th Annual Gisela Konopka Lectureship, *The Violence of Poverty and the Abuse of Power: Implications for Scholarship and Stewardship*. The event was sponsored by the Division of General Pediatrics and Adolescent Health, The Center for Youth Development and Research, and the Consortium.

**June 19, 1992:** The Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) and the Institute on Community Integration (ICI) present the 1992 Round Table, *A Blueprint for the 21st Century: The Education of Young Children*. The Round Table will be held at the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center from 9:30 - 4:30. Contact CEED for more information, 612/624-5780.

**June 22, 1992:** The Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPP) is sponsoring its first annual program sharing conference, *Successful Program Strategies: Pregnancy Prevention, Pregnancy Care, and Parenting Support*. (See page 3 for more details).

**October 1, 1992:** District Juvenile Court Judge Isabel Gomez will be the featured speaker at an afternoon colloquium. See the Fall newsletter for more details.

**October 9, 1992:** The Minnesota Psychological Association and the Consortium will co-sponsor a symposium featuring Dr. Alicia Lieberman of the University of California, San Francisco, an expert on parent child relationships and the implications of attachment theory for practice.

**November 13, 1992:** The Consortium and the College of Education will be co-sponsoring a conference featuring Jeff Howard, Efficacy Institute, Boston. The topic of the conference will be business/education partnerships for addressing the needs of today's youth. See the Fall issue of *Consortium Connections* for more details. ■



## Consortium Supports Book Fair

At the West Riverpoint Convention Center, on a snowy Saturday in March, Jack & Jill of America, Inc., Minneapolis Chapter hosted an African American Book Fair—"BOOK TO THE FUTURE." The All University-Community Consortium on Children, Youth, and Families co-sponsored this event along with the Grand Metropolitan Food Sector (Pillsbury). Hundreds of wide-eyed children listened to Mattie Clark narrate wondrous stories as their parents browsed and bought books to read to them later. Parents marvelled at the array of books available to them; others wondered why this had not been done before.

When they were not listening to stories children of all ages gleefully followed Goldie Gopher or the Pillsbury Doughboy, pulling Goldie's tail and poking the Doughboy. The book fair was designed to bring awareness to the Twin Cities about the need for children of color to be exposed to books and artifacts that affirm their identity. As part of community service efforts by Jack & Jill, books will be donated to child care centers, clinics, and other appropriate places. The University's co-sponsorship via the Consortium was very much appreciated and certainly contributed to the Fair's success. One energetic little girl told Goldie Gopher "See you next year!"

*Geraldine Kears Brookins*

### WELCOME TO NEW CONSORTIUM STAFF!

Lynn Marrs joined the Consortium office in April. She is handling secretarial duties for the Consortium. Recently, Lynn graduated with a bachelor's degree in human relationships. She has been accepted in the graduate program at the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota and will begin her studies in the Fall. Lynn is working for the Consortium half-time.

Amy Susman will join the Consortium staff in June. A second year graduate student in Child Development, Amy will play a key role during July and August while Marti is on leave. Amy has been involved in the Consortium since the Consortium's Kick Off in October, so comes onboard with first hand knowledge of the Consortium's goals and activities.

## Collaboration with the Children's Museum

The Minnesota Children's Museum and the University of Minnesota are collaborating in developing a proposal to the National Science Foundation Informal Science Education Program. The Children's Museum is nationally renown for informal educational programs for young children. Educational staff from the Museum are working together with faculty and students from the University department of Kinesiology (Allen Burton and Robert Rausch) and the Institute of Child Development (Herbert Pick and Marian Heinrichs) with seed money provided by the Consortium.

The focus of the proposal will be on the *patterns of exploration* demonstrated by children visiting the Children's Museum. Why exploration? Historically, at least since the renaissance, observation and exploration have been the initiation point of the scientific enterprise. A large part of scientific education involves teaching how to systematize one's exploration and observation. Exploration of our world can range from the very casual and often passive observation that we engage in when we first go to a new place to the very systematic and active manipulation and observation usually involved in scientific experiments.

Little is known about patterns of children's exploration when confronted with cognitively rich new experiences. What are the relative gains from different kinds of exploration? One of the major differences between formal and informal educational experiences is the freedom of exploration afforded by informal settings. Children's natural curiosity can be probably best expressed in informal educational settings, and many think it is that natural curiosity which underlies the creativity desired as an outcome of both informal and formal education. There are huge individual differences in curiosity, expressed most readily in the patterns of exploration manifest in informal settings. What are these patterns? How can they be enhanced so as to increase curiosity, exploration, and creativity in formal education?

This project will examine the patterns of exploration manifested by 1 to 8 year old children in two kinds of exhibits: a physical environment for younger children which affords opportunities for crawling, climbing, and walking to provide access to attractive locations; and exhibits for older children, involving a complex manually operated remote control device. On the basis of normative patterns of exploration observed, it will be possible to introduce and evaluate the effects of various kinds of experimental manipulation. The project is designed to lead to recommendations for development of museum exhibits for children and suggestions for teachers who use museum visits as part of their curricular activities will be elaborated.

*Herbert Pick*

## CONNECTION CORNER

*Connection Corner is a regular feature of this newsletter. If you want to make a special connection, call 612/626-9582 or send your announcement to N645 Elliott Hall, 75 East River Road, Minneapolis, MN 55455.*

### Volunteer Opportunities at Parent Warmline

Parent Warmline is embarking on its sixth year of service. Support, information, practical advice and resource referral is provided to parents and community professionals who have concerns related to child development, behavior, and parental stress. The Warmline (612/863-6336) is available year round so please inform your clients or group participants about this program to help them "survive" the summer months.

To date, over 50 individuals from fields such as parent education, child development, social work, nursing and psychology have volunteered their time to this service and many have chosen to remain with the program for 4-5 years! Warmline's annual volunteer orientation is scheduled for June 15-17, 1992. This orientation, offered free of charge, is comprised of a three day workshop which addresses topics of child development, parent education and telephone consultation. The seminars are presented by Minneapolis Children's Medical Center physicians and mental health staff, veteran volunteers and community professionals. Past participants have commented that the orientation was "stimulating, invigorating and highly informative." The orientation provides 12 1/2 hours of contact hours for continuing education and is an excellent opportunity for personal and professional growth.

Volunteers are requested to commit to the program for one year, four hours per week; however the current average is 2-3 hours per week. The time commitment includes telephone consultation with parents as well as attendance at a regularly scheduled meeting. Telephone consultation is conducted from the volunteer's home. Preferably, each volunteer will have a bachelor's degree in a child development or a related field and will have had practical experience with parents and young children. *Call 612/863-6816 to receive an application. Interviews will be conducted prior to the orientation.*

### Minnesota American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (MAPSAC)

These are exciting and difficult times for those who work in the area of child abuse. Recognizing this and the need to share expertise and troubles, a Minnesota chapter of APSAC (American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children) was recently formed. MAPSAC is committed to a multidisciplinary approach to common issues for individuals working in the area of child abuse. For information on this new organization, please contact Ann Ahlquist, MAPSAC President Elect, at 612/872-6225.

### Success By 6 Parent Tip Cards

United Way's Success by 6 is a vision of helping all children succeed for life. Success by 6 is working to remove barriers that prevent children from developing the physical, social, emotional, intellectual and imaginative skills needed for fulfilling their potential. One identified barrier is a lack of understanding of quality early child development activities. As part of their public awareness effort, Success By 6 has developed 9 new activity cards describing age appropriate early childhood development activities. The cards were developed for community organizations and companies to use; they may be distributed individually or as a group to parents and may be reprinted in newsletters or flyers. The titles are: *Relating to a Child, Helping Prevent Child Abuse, Saying Goodbye, Making Choices, Helping Children Listen, Learning to Relax, Our Multicultural Neighborhood, Fun While Shopping, and Breakfast Boosters.* Your organization may order 100 of each of the activity cards free of charge. To order the cards, contact Kelly Ramberg at 612/340-7666.

### MOAPP

The Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting (MOAPPP) is a new non-profit membership service for individuals and organizations involved with adolescent pregnancy prevention, pregnancy care and parenting programs in Minnesota. Affiliated with the National Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting (NOAPP), MOAPPP receives support from the Dayton-Hudson Foundation on behalf of Dayton's and Target Stores, Northwest Area Foundation, Bush Foundation and members. The organization supports a variety of diverse and culturally appropriate methods for approaching adolescent pregnancy issues. MOAPPP is holding its first annual Program Sharing Conference on June 22, 1992. The title is *Successful Program Strategies: Pregnancy Prevention, Pregnancy Care, and Parenting Support.* For more information on the conference or how to join MOAPPP, call 612/296-2571 or write to P.O. Box 40392, St. Paul, MN 55104.

### Minnesota Infant Mental Health Association

The Minnesota Infant Mental Health Association is seeking members. Membership includes a relationship with the International Association as well as a subscription to their journal, an excellent resource for the latest research and programming in infant development and parent-infant attachment. If you want more information on the Minnesota Association, please contact Joann O'Leary, 612/863-4427.



## *Tune In to "Families Today"*

Listen to your Consortium colleagues on "Families Today," 1820 AM on your radio dial, the last Thursday of each month, 8-9 p.m. Thanks to Janet Macy, participant in the Consortium's Outreach Workgroup, the Consortium now has a regular monthly slot on this weekly program hosted by "P.J." (Pam) Gudmundson on Radio AAHS. The first program on April 30 featured Diane Wiese-Bjornstal, Kinesiology & Leisure Studies, and Jay Lotthammer, Brooklyn Park Department of Parks & Recreation, speaking on kids and sports.

The May 28 program will feature guests from the Minnesota Department of Health discussing issues of child safety. A special Father's Day program is scheduled for June 18th, when Ron Pitzer, Minnesota Extension Service, and Neil Tift, Director of the Father's Resource Center in Minneapolis, will discuss issues related to fathering. On June 25 Betty Cutting of the St. Paul Work Family Spectrum will focus on conflict resolution and feature. And on July 30, Rose Allen, Minnesota Extension Service-Ramsey County, will speak with children about how they treat each other and explore ways parents can model good manners for their children.

If you have suggestions for future guests and topics, please contact Janet Macy, Family Social Science, 282 McNeal Hall, St. Paul, MN 55108, 612/625-8106.

## *Summer Courses*

*The University of Minnesota is offering many courses this summer that may be of interest to Consortium members. Following is just a sample of some of the special offerings related to children, youth and families:*

**Special Topics: Interracial Family Life (FSoS 5240)** An overview of research, legal, mental health, discrimination and identity issues facing interracial families. Instructors: Charles Willie, Professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education, and Vivian Jenkins Nelson, President, International Institute for Interracial Interaction, Inc. at Augsburg College. Special Term: M-F July 6-10, 9:00-4:00. Call 625-1900.

**Special Topics: Medical Family Therapy (FSoS 5240)** An overview of the emerging specialty of medical family therapy, which deals with families facing chronic illness, disability, and health lifestyle problems. Special Term: Fri. July 24, 31, Aug. 7, 8:30-5:30. Call 625-1900.

**Special Topics in Parent and Family Education: Home and School Collaboration (HEEd 5406)** Study of issues and current literature focused on emerging topics relevant to parent and family education. June 29-July 10, 8:30-11:15. Call 624-3555.

**Special Topics: Cultural Perspectives on Family Stress, 1992 Summer Study in Southeast Asia (FSoS 5240)** A comparison of how families in different cultures cope with stress events, normative (birth, death, maturation of children) and catastrophic (war, flood, unemployment). Participants visit Thailand, Singapore, Java and Bali. Housing in hotels and campus dormitories. Local guides supplement U of M faculty. Call 625-1900.

**Leadership for Career Development: Programs, Skills, Resources (EPsy 5400)** Designed for counselors, teachers, and other human service professionals interested in developing skills to create and implement career development programs in schools, colleges, and agencies. Focus on working with students and their parents in creating career programs for the next decade. Special Term: July 6-10, M-Th 8-4:30, Fri 8-1. Call 626-1302.

**Topics in Child Psychology: Early Adolescent Development, Perspectives from Current Research (CPsy 5310)** For parents, teachers, and others who work with adolescents, this course will focus on psychological development during the transition from childhood to adolescence. On the final day, a conference will be held for class members and anyone else who would like an overview of the changing information on early adolescence. June 16-26, 9:15-12:25, except for June 26, 8-5. Call 624-3555.

**Introduction to Developmental Psychopathology: Understanding Behavioral Problems of School Children (CPsy 5311)** Theories and research strategies to investigate origins and course of disordered behavior in childhood and adults, with a focus on child and adolescent problems confronting classroom teachers. July 23-Aug. 12, 9:15-12:00, exam Aug. 17. Call 624-3555.

**City Schools: Strategies for Survival (EdPa 5128)** An overview of the condition of urban education in the 1990's, with topics including politics and governance, demography, changing family structures, and health and social welfare of children and youth. June 15-26, 9:30-12:00. Call 624-3555. ■

### ***Mission Statement:***

The 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.

## A Celebration of Popular Culture and Multicultural Youth Development

On March 5, 1992, the University hosted a major celebration of popular culture and multicultural youth development. The all day event in the St. Paul Student Center Theater drew over 300 enthusiastic audience members from the University and Twin Cities community for a series of performances, discussions, and lectures illustrating cultural diversity and exploring its role, particularly via the arts, throughout the University. The celebration was sponsored by a collection of University-based organizations including the Consortium.

First to take the stage was the Central High School Touring Theater, performing "Colors of Creation through the Web of Dreams." Directed by Jan Mandell, this multicultural troupe of high school students presented their original play dealing with the most important issues in their lives.

Following the touring Theater, the Heart of the Earth Drum and Dance Club presented an intense, colorful performance of Native American dances, narrated by Johnny Smith, Cultural Instructor at the Heart of the Earth Survival School. Students from grades 2-12 demonstrated a variety of traditional and fancy dances, wearing traditional costumes: jingle dresses and elaborate headdresses from quills of porcupines.

Next, Mila Llauger, Director of COMPAS Cultural Arts Assemblies and Puerto Rican singer, dancer, and choreographer, took us all on a whirlwind tour of Caribbean music. Together with three percussionists and a dance partner, Mila demonstrated a variety of Latin dance styles.

The day's performances concluded with Robert "Eddie" Robinson and 50 members of the Minneapolis Community College Gospel Choir. This choir comprises members of all ages and races. What makes them unique is the authenticity they bring to the singing of gospel, despite the fact that most members had never sung gospel before joining this group. The music and message of this choir served as an inspiring climax to the day's performances.

Audience members and performers met in discussion groups over dinner to process the day's culturally diverse experiences. Two dominant reactions echoed from table to table. First, cultural involvement and sharing constitute crucial elements of any serious effort toward promoting respect and tolerance across racial and ethnic barriers. Second, even in the intellectual environment of a major University, the arts are essential in teaching the kinds of lessons that people learn instantly and carry with them forever. We must take these reactions to heart, both as we reflect on what we do inside the University, and also as we consider how to promote optimal development among children, youth, and families.

*Helen Kivnick*

## Children of the State-Children in Minnesota's Child Welfare System

Children who come to the attention of the child welfare system reflect the enormous difficulty some families face in trying to meet the child's needs for a safe, nurturing environment. Contrary to common perceptions, neglect and abandonment, not physical abuse, are the major problems that bring children to the attention of county social services. Reports of neglect and maltreatment have increased 53% from 1986 to 1990. Following are some statistics about Children in the Minnesota Child Welfare System.

Of more than 9,000 children with substantiated cases of maltreatment in 1990:

- 45% were victims of neglect and abandonment
- 35% were victims of physical abuse
- 14% were victims of sexual abuse
- 10% were victims of emotional abuse

Over 15,000 children were in out-of-home care for some period of time in 1990, at a cost of 100 million dollars. Eight thousand children are in foster family homes at any one time in a calendar year. Presently, there are 4,555 licensed foster homes throughout the state. The largest portion of children entering care in 1990 were adolescents, ages 13-17. On average, almost 47% of all children entering care were teenagers. State-wide, the share of adolescents in the population has dropped by 26% (1990 Census) and 23% in the metropolitan area.

In 1990, 68% of children after one year or less were either reunited with birth families or placed with a relative. Eighty-three percent were reunited with families or relatives after 2 years or less. (These percentages are well above nation-wide figures, which report 40% of children returned home after one year or less and 76% returned after 2 years.) Ten percent of children, 1,663, have remained in care for three years or more; a portion of these children are in stable and continuous arrangements.

White adolescents were reunified with birth families more often than their counterparts with minority heritage. Reunification rates for American Indian children with birth parents were particularly low. While children of minority heritage are 9.8% of the total child population, 33% of children in out-of-home care are children of color. In 1989, when compared to their proportion in the population, minority children were over-represented in foster care placement by a 7 to 1 ratio. In Minnesota and nation-wide, the upsurge of minority children in the child welfare system is generally attributed to the deepening effects of the recession on poor families and the widespread availability of crack/cocaine.

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One of the chief barriers to reunifying children with their parents after separation is the lack of affordable, clean, safe housing. Little information is available on how children thrive once they are returned home. Nation-wide, some studies suggest that children do not do well in either educational achievement or in general well-being. These studies suggest that there is premature discontinuance of services to reunified families. For example, a support system, respite care, and basic income, which are generally available to foster parents, is often lacking to birth parents whose children are returned.

*Excerpted from a report by  
Esther Wattenberg and Donald W. Cassidy*

**All University-Community Consortium on  
Children, Youth, and Families  
Steering Committee  
1991-1992**

Robert W. Blum, Professor and Director, Adolescent Health Program, University of Minnesota

\*Geraldine Kearsse Brookins, Gamble-Skogmo Land Grant Professor of Child Welfare and Youth Policy, University of Minnesota

Robert H. Bruininks, Dean, College of Education, University of Minnesota

Richard Byrne, Assistant Director, Minnesota Extension Service, 4-H Youth Development

Paul Carrizales, Director of Advocacy, Family Service of Greater St. Paul, and Chicanos, Latinos, Unidos en Servicio (CLUES)

Donald Fraser, Mayor, City of Minneapolis

\*Harold D. Grotevant, Professor and Head, Department of Family Social Science, University of Minnesota

Marilyn Larson, Executive Director, Action for Children Commission, St. Paul

\*Lee Luebke, Consultant and Member, Minnesota State Extension Advisory Committee, Winona

Jeanne Markell, Associate to Vice President of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics, University of Minnesota

\*Richard Weinberg, Chair, Professor and Director, Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota

*(Members with \* also serve on the Consortium's Executive Committee)*

Martha Farrell Erickson, Consortium Coordinator

## **Leave No Child Behind**

*Leave No Child Behind* is the theme of a national, nonpartisan campaign to educate voters and candidates about the need to make children's concerns a priority in the 1992 election. In Minnesota the *Leave No Child Behind* campaign is being led by the Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota, Congregations Concerned for Children and the Junior League. Representatives from over 50 state and local organizations concerned with meeting the needs of children are carrying out the work of this campaign. Campaign activities will include: offering precinct caucus training; providing candidates with briefing materials; surveying legislative candidates; encouraging groups to hold candidates' meetings on children's needs; developing an educational curriculum for schools; and initiating voter awareness at county fairs and the State Fair.

The goal of *Leave No Child Behind* is for every child to have a Healthy Start, Head Start and a Fair Start. The campaign will be specifically concerned with these issues:

### **A Healthy Start**

- ★ Nutrition-The funding and availability of WIC, the food stamp program, and school breakfast and lunch programs.
- ★ Health Care Access-full medicaid for all poor children; health care coverage and access for all children through a national children's health care plan.
- ★ Abuse & Neglect Prevention-prevent child abuse and neglect through increases in the Children's Trust Fund; and support of Home Visitor programs.
- ★ Affordable Housing-support for transitional housing programs; support for the Housing Trust Fund and efforts to provide housing for homeless children.

### **A Head Start**

- ★ Head Start-full funding of the Head Start program for all eligible children.
- ★ Child Care-availability of subsidies for low income working parents.

### **A Fair Start**

- ★ Tax credits to parents-expansion of Earned Income Tax at national level, support of the Working Family Tax Credit in Minnesota and a children's tax credit.
- ★ Child Support Enforcement-support of a child support insurance fund to insure income to families with an absent parent and establish enforceable paternity guidelines.

## Improving Student Well-Being: Cooperative School Based Approaches

The April 8 conference, "Improving Student Well-Being: Cooperative School Based Approaches," was attended by approximately 100 individuals representing K-12 school buildings, higher education, and community agencies. The day-long conference focused on collaborative school-based strategies to improve school communities and facilitate the development of youth and families. Seven school teams, representing urban, suburban, and rural districts, presented student well-being programs that they implemented during this past school year. The programs were developed during a 1991 interdisciplinary summer institute, directed by John Romano, Educational Psychology. Featured speakers at the conference included Judy McCleery from Roseville Schools and Cheryl Perry and Jim Rothenberger from the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. John Romano, Educational Psychology, Robert Bruininks, College of Education Dean, and Kathy Marshall, Midwest Regional Center for Drug-Free Schools and communities, also addressed the audience. The All University-Community Consortium on Children, Youth, & Families and the Midwest Regional Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities assisted with the conference and distributed materials to participants. The summer institute will be repeated again this summer from June 16 - July 2 (8 a.m. - 12 noon daily). Attendees received 3 credits and a \$100 stipend. Teams of educators (professionals and paraprofessionals) from the same building or district are given preference. Space is limited. Contact Elisabeth Nealy (612/624-6827) for an application form.

*John Romano*

### **Now Available: Audio Recording of Community Forum featuring Barry Zuckerman**

A Consortium sponsored Community Forum on March 31st featured Dr. Barry Zuckerman, a member of the National Commission on Children discussing the work of the Commission and the interface between poverty and child health. Marilyn Larson, Executive Director of Action for Children Commission and Ronald James, Vice President and CEO-MN U S West Communications, Inc. provided a local perspective. Dr. Anne Petersen, Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Minnesota, moderated the forum. Audio tapes of the forum are available for the price of duplication. Call 612/626-9582.

## CITYSONGS: A Demonstration Youth Project

CitySongs is a program designed for inner-city children and youth, with the goal of promoting the robust psychosocial foundation that is essential to a healthy, productive, satisfying life. CitySongs uses singing, music and performance as the medium. Based at the Hallie Q. Brown-Martin Luther King Community Center, the pilot program will sponsor two popular music youth choirs, one for 8-12 year olds and one for 13-18's. Choirs will practice twice a week throughout the year and, when ready, will do public performing.

The CitySongs project will teach music and performance skills that are part of existing youth culture and, at Hallie Q., part of African-American culture. In so doing, young people's sense of self-esteem and cultural identity will be validated.

Choir directors will be local pop musicians who have experience working with kids. The choirs will be staffed by a Youth Coordinator, a community social worker, and a university faculty member. In this way, we'll provide at least four different adults with whom our young singers will have an opportunity to develop and sustain regular, ongoing relationships. Mentorship and internship programs will provide additional opportunities for relationships with adults. Visiting experts will be brought in to teach songwriting, music literacy, movement and choreography, and many genres of music that are outside the expertise of individual choir directors.

Choirs will explicitly build bridges between the learning and problem-solving that children are doing in CitySongs and the kinds of learning and problem-solving that are called for elsewhere in their lives. In particular, we will work to help young people connect CitySongs achievement with the world of school in one direction, and the world of work in another.

CitySongs will provide opportunities for young people to work together with adults to cooperate, support one another, and to teach and learn from one another. These experiences are integral to psychosocial themes of intimacy and friendship and of independence in balance with accepting help and following instructions.

Most important, the participants will develop a crucial sense of competence. Prior musical experience or training will not be required. Neither will an unprepared child be permitted to perform onstage. The message will be straightforward: "We expect you to work hard. Whatever encouragement and extra support you may need will be provided. If you work hard, you will succeed."

*Helen Kivnick*



## WHO IS THE CONSORTIUM?

The Consortium is...

**Dana Fox**, Program Director at Washburn Child Guidance Center, who initiated, and is facilitating, a workgroup exploring how to build better bridges between community organizations and University researchers.

**Jean Neuman**, Principal of Seward School, who brings a fresh community perspective to the Teaching Workgroup.

**Roger Strand**, Public Policy Planner, Minnesota Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities, who provides inspiration and encouragement as facilitator of the Advocacy Workgroup.

**Janet Macy**, Associate Professor, Family Social Science, who as a member of the Outreach Workgroup has put the Consortium "on the air" via KUOM and Radio AAHS. (See page 5 for details.)

**Andrew Collins**, Professor, Institute of Child Development, who is helping to harness the energy and creative ideas of the lively Teaching Workgroup. (So many ideas, so little time!)

**Susan Phipps Yonas**, psychologist in private practice, who provides a comfortable "home" (free and easy parking included!) for the Advocacy Workgroup.

**Rose Allen**, Minnesota Extension Service, who is helping to create a clear vision of how the Consortium might support and enhance the work of the various advocacy groups who work on behalf of children and families.

And the Consortium is **YOU!** ■

All University-Community Consortium  
on Children, Youth, & Families  
N645 Elliott Hall  
University of Minnesota  
75 E River Road  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
612/626-9582

## HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED?

- ☆ Attend the special events listed in our calendar.
- ☆ Send in your interest form and volunteer to serve on a workgroup.
- ☆ Enter your name - or your program's name - in our data base, indicating that you are willing to be a resource to others around the state.
- ☆ Access our database to find the resources you need in order to better serve the children and families in your care.
- ☆ Let us know of other interdisciplinary coalitions or collaborations that already exist. We want to support and complement what is already happening in Minnesota for children, youth and families.
- ☆ Initiate a collaborative project that we can support and facilitate with you. ■

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