Barbara Baskin, Founding Board Member Retires

The Board of Directors of The Parent-Child Home Program is pleased to honor Barbara H. Baskin for her decades of dedicated, invaluable service to the organization and congratulate her on becoming a Board Member Emeritus.

In 1979, Barbara H. Baskin was a founding member of The Parent-Child Home Program, Inc.’s (then the Verbal Interaction Project, Inc.) Board of Directors, serving as Vice President and Treasurer. She then served as President of the Board of Directors from 1984-2002. She retired from the board in 2012.

Her dedication and the length and breadth of her service to the organization are unprecedented and The Parent-Child Home Program would not be the organization it has grown into today without her belief in the Program and her fierce determination to ensure that all children and families in need have access to its valuable services.

Barbara has played a vital role in growing and strengthening all aspects of the organization. Under her tutelage, the Board expanded significantly. She worked closely with founder, Phyllis Levenstein, to establish and grow the national center and to exponentially increase the number...
Spring is a wonderful time of year for Parent-Child Home Program staff and families. The annual conference provides a great opportunity to reflect on the year, hear inspiring family success stories, and learn about new ways to enhance our work with families in the coming year. It is a time to celebrate Parent-Child Home Program graduates who are the stars of their kindergartens, make the honor roll in elementary school, and graduate from high school, college, and graduate school. It is a time to celebrate parents who are getting their GEDs and being hired as home visitors; and home visitors who are building communities, starting native-language story times at local libraries, graduating from college, and becoming site coordinators.

One of the hallmarks of the Program is the learning and growing that occurs for all those who are engaged in it and by it. Another hallmark is its remarkable longevity. This spring we celebrate the 40th anniversaries of three local sites—Cambridge Public Schools (MA), Great Neck/Manhasset Schools (NY), and Westchester Jewish Community Services (NY). The success of these sites is due to the fidelity, creativity, and tenacity of those who have overseen them over the past 40 years. We cannot thank our local partner agencies and their wonderful staff enough for the amazing work they do year in and year out.

We are delighted to welcome two new people to The Parent-Child Home Program team—Blake Hallinan, Managing Director, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, has just joined our Board of Directors and we are so pleased to have his strategic skills and enthusiasm for the Program’s mission supporting PCHP. We are also pleased that Katie Zapata has joined us as Director of Development and Communications. Katie brings a strong mix of experience in the not-for-profit and for-profit sectors and a background in strategic marketing. She will be particularly focused on increasing PCHP’s visibility and reaching out to new audiences.

Finally, we are proud to announce that PCHP has been named a “Program that Works” by Rand’s Promising Practices Network. A link to the Promising Practices Network and the many other independent evaluations that have found the Program to be valuable and effective can be found on our website www.parent-child.org.

Have a wonderful summer,

Sarah E. Walzer, CEO

Congratulations to Sites Celebrating Their Landmark Anniversaries

5 years:
- Carole Robertson Center Chicago, IL
- Gads Hill Center Chicago, IL
- Community Action of Franklin, Hampshire, North Quabbin Regions Greenfield, MA
- PACE, Inc. New Bedford, MA
- Shirley Public Schools Shirley, MA
- Collaborative for Educational Services Ware, MA
- Worcester Public Schools Worcester, MA
- National College of Ireland Dublin, Ireland

10 years:
- King Urban Life Center Buffalo, NY
- East Ramapo Vision Chestnut Ridge, NY
- Nanuet School District Nanuet, NY
- Neary Elementary School North Rockland, NY
- Child Advocates of Blair County Altoona, PA
- ARIN Intermediate Unit 28 Armstrong County, PA
- Family Connection of Easton, Inc. Easton, PA
- Tuscarora Intermediate Unit Lewiston Career Link Fulton/Juniata/Mifflin Counties, PA
- Horry County Schools Conway, SC
- Florence School District #5 Johnsonville, SC

40 years:
- Cambridge Public Schools Cambridge, MA
- Great Neck/Manhasset Nassau BOCES Great Neck, NY
- Westchester Jewish Community Services Hartsdale, NY
first started a Parent-Child Home Program site in 2010, they already had an idea of the unique set of challenges they would face with their target families. Founded in 2003 as a faith-based agency that grew out of a family practice, Jericho Road Ministries has been providing the local refugee population in the West Side of Buffalo with a myriad of social services ranging from a drop-in center to maternal and infant health programs. About 1,000 refugees a year—90% of all refugees in Erie County—settle in Buffalo, and 80% of Jericho Road Ministries’ clients are refugees.

The Home Visitors at the Jericho Road Ministries Parent-Child Home Program must be skilled in sensitivity, patience, and flexibility, as many refugees come from very traumatic backgrounds. Co-Coordinator Ashley Dietrick commented that “We have to understand if there is some level of distrust or skepticism.”

In utilizing the Program’s individualized relationships to meet the needs of their population, part of the Home Visitors’ role is making their families more comfortable with the new environment they are living in, including getting acquainted with American customs. Home Visitors might bring a book that explains an American holiday but, at the same time, they make a conscious effort to learn about their families’ own cultures.

The families who resettle in Buffalo come from many different countries in East Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Within the individual countries, such as Burma, there are many different ethnic groups. Layered on top of the refugee experience, Home Visitors must learn to respond appropriately to cultural differences as well, which vary from family to family. Concepts like adhering to a schedule or the value of education are not always universal. But as Dietrick put it, “We also have to distinguish between attributing things to culture or the individual person, which is sometimes really hard.”

Jericho Road Ministries is working hard to achieve the PCHP goal of “culture-matched” home visiting, in which Home Visitors come from the same cultural background as their families, something that is often difficult to achieve at a site serving families from so many different countries. In fact, 3 of their 7 Home Visitors are refugees. Dietrick describes the journey of one of these Home Visitors, “She was a mom in our program, and this is her 2nd year visiting families. She’s very compassionate and understanding. It is incredible to see her grow and to see her children apply for private school. The ownership she sees in herself and over her family’s life is just incredible.”

While moving towards this culture-matched model, the Program continues providing their Home Visitors with the comprehensive training needed for them to build their own unique culture with their families. Although true for any Parent-Child Home Program site, Jericho Road Ministries has found relationship building especially key to addressing the multiple barriers facing their refugee families. It is essential for building the common ground on which they can work together towards school success and, ultimately, self-sufficiency.
Parent-Child Home Program Activities

Crafting Books and Memories With Your Child

By: Benjamin Gross, PCHP Conference Workshop Presenter

One night I was putting my two-year old son, Zach, to bed and began reading him a story when a bus got stuck in the snow on the street outside his window. Soon came a tow truck with blinking lights, but it got stuck too. Then the police arrived in cars with sirens and more blinking lights. Then a snowplow had to come with, yet again, more blinking lights. My son was nowhere near going to sleep but, rather than annoyed, he was delighted. He thought that this was all being staged for his entertainment. The next night he did not want me to read him a story from one of his books; he wanted me to tell him the story about the “stuck bus.” I agreed, and after a few more weeks of retelling the same story every night, I was getting pretty bored. We decided to write a book about it that he could read anytime he wanted. And so was born Stuck Bus, written by Zach Gross.

What started as a way to relieve myself from retelling the same story over and over again grew into a family project and ongoing tradition with long lasting benefits. While Zach was still two years old, he wrote Trains. By this time he was intimate with the feel and smell of books, knew book orientation, the difference between author and illustrator, a good amount of alphabet knowledge and some phonemic awareness. When Zach’s sister, Amelia, was born, she became the bestselling author and illustrator of Kitties, A Bear Followed Me Home, and Happiness is My Puppy. Needless to say, Zach (now 13) and Amelia (now 11) are reading far above grade level.

My experiences with my children have shown me that creating original books is an engaging and motivating way to develop early literacy and comprehension skills while growing a child’s creativity and creating memories. Here are some tips on how to do that:

Books that are Personal and Relevant

- Give your child the opportunity to express their unique world-view by creating books using personal, familiar images with text from their experiences or imagination
- Incorporate characters who share the same environment, language, culture, or customs to create books that are relatable but may not be available in popular media

Early Comprehension and Literacy Skills

- Create books about different themes or topics
- Let your child take the lead to encourage their creativity and help see themselves as writers
- Develop critical thinking skills by encouraging your child to reflect on the clarity and sequencing of the story
- Encourage your child to read or explain their book back to you to promote dialogue

Materials and Process

- Strengthen bonds by involving the whole family in the book-making process
- Have your child create a book plan that organizes the cover design and page layout for the story
- Showcase the end product of your child’s work in a durable, familiar and exciting format. Use sturdy materials such as cardboard or oak tag for the blank book and creative materials such as crayons, colored pencils, photos, construction paper, or tissue paper to write and decorate with.

Benjamin Gross is the founder of Everyday Press, which produces Blank Slate™ Board Book kits for children, families, and classes to create their own books together. He presented an interactive workshop at the 2012 Parent-Child Home Program National Conference focused on using board books to develop comprehension in children. For more information, visit www.blankslatebooks.com

The next time you shop at Amazon.com, please consider supporting The Parent-Child Home Program by clicking the Amazon.com link on our website, http://www.parent-child.org. Your purchases will benefit The Parent-Child Home Program.
Coordinators and Home Visitors explore first-hand the benefits of multi-sensory, process-oriented art.

On May 21-22, 2012 The Parent-Child Home Program held its annual national conference in Uniondale, New York. With 150 people in attendance, the conference featured informative speakers, engaging discussions, insightful stories, and workshops that ran the gamut from early brain development to essential school readiness skills to hands-on art activities that promote early literacy. Keynote Speakers Dipesh Navsaria and Diane Levin opened and concluded the conference with engaging speeches that inspired the crowd. For more information on this year’s conference, visit www.parent-child.org.

Sarah Walzer recognizes Westchester Jewish Community Center for 40 years of partnering with The Parent-Child Home Program.

Thank You To Our Recent Supporters

Thank you to all those who have supported The Parent-Child Home Program's national center. Your support enables the Program to reach out to new families in new communities, as we strive to ensure that all children have the opportunity to enter school ready to learn.
The Parent-Child Home Program is closing the achievement gap by giving low-income parents the tools and skills to prepare their preschoolers to be successful students. Trained home visitors model reading, play, conversation, and positive parent-child interaction using books and educational toys that are gifts to the family. Research proves that the Program increases participants school readiness, improves school performance, and increases high school graduation rates by 30% – to the same level as their middle class peers.

Barbara Baskin (continued from page 1) of families served. She has always believed deeply that spreading the word about the value of the Program is the most powerful way to ensure that it is able to grow and reach those in need. If you are sitting next to Barbara on an airplane or standing next to her on line in the grocery store, you will learn all about The Parent-Child Home Program and the need to help it grow.

As Barbara said when she stepped down as President of the Board, “Because of the impact of our curriculum and delivery system which prepares children to be successful learners, young children now in The Parent-Child Home Program will someday enjoy the pleasure that reading has given to me. Our research indicates that children in our program will succeed in school. The Parent-Child Home Program will reduce illiteracy in this country. I take a lot of pride in such efforts.”

The Board of Directors of The Parent-Child Home Program takes pride in honoring Barbara H. Baskin for her deep and abiding commitment to the Program, a commitment which has kept the Program going in challenging times, enabled it to grow and thrive and ensured that it stayed true to its research-proven, highly effective design. We cannot thank Barbara enough for all she has done for The Parent-Child Home Program and we are delighted that she will continue to be associated with the organization as a Board Member Emeritus.