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CEASE NEWS Vol. 33: Spring 2012

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RELATIONSHIPS



“There is no development without relationships”

Doctor Jack P. Shonkoff

CEASE Session at NAEYC Orlando Conference 2011

A panel of members from CEASE/Violence in the Lives of Children and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Interest Forums of NAEYC collaborated to present: "How Can Preschools Help Before Bullying Begins Towards Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Children? A Teacher's role in empowering adults and children to change the future." With 80 plus in attendance the presenters: Lucy Stroock, Steve Shuman, Brian Silveira, Sharon Davisson, and Irene Lipshin sparked thoughtful discussions. Their stories and questions introduced topics for groups of participants to consider such as:

1. What are some of the assumptions we may have about gender?
2. How do we compassionately educate and support teachers, parents, and children about how children express themselves?
3. What are your thoughts and feelings about presenting positive, anti-bias messages, especially messages pertaining to those living lives with LGBT identities or in LGBT families?
4. How would you respond to gender slurs or language like "gay" or "fag" used negatively at the early elementary school level?
5. How do we get beyond responding to children by just saying "we don't say that?" or "Where do we go from "no"?"

During the discussions one story was shared about a preschool girl who was told by a classmate that she did not have a "family" because she didn't have a mommy and daddy. She had two moms. Another story was told about a boy who dressed up in girl's clothing and was called "gay". The discussion of gender stereotypes and socialization of boys included such specific activities: as climbing, jumping, chasing, playing with trucks, dressing boys in blue clothing, etc. while for girls examples included passively sitting, listening, playing with dolls, dressing girls in pink clothing, etc. That said, simply knowing about stereotypes and socialization doesn't provide protection for those who are endangered and who feel unsafe in the classroom or outside in the public domain. Many inspiring and touching suggestions were given to help teachers, parents, and children address LGBT issues and to take preemptive action. They included:

1. Sharing information about how bias can affect Child Development for 3,4,5 year olds with teachers and parents. See: *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*, by Julie Olsen Edwards and Louise Derman-Sparks, 2010..



2. Developing a "mission statement" within the classroom and/or school to address LGBT issues. What are the class rules and agreements for behaviors to address conflict?
3. Providing information about Federal and State laws about discrimination to teachers, administrators, and parents.
4. Sharing lists of children's and adult books, DVDs about LGBT lives that are available at the library or by ordering for use in the classroom. See bibliography prepared for this session on our website www.peaceeducators.org
5. Exploring professional curriculum and other resources that provide training for early childhood educators about LGBT issues and provide for a peaceful and safe classroom: Parents Services Project, "Making Room in the Circle: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Families in Early Childhood Settings", "Stop Bullying Now!", Video Toolkit U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and by sponsoring workshops for teachers and parents in your school. Show the film: "It's Elementary" <http://groundspark.org/our-films-and-campaigns/elementary>.
6. Involving children in peaceful and appropriate activities. Using puppets and "persona dolls" to explain LGBT lessons.

One final question: What will you do to help educate your community about LGBT issues? Who will you invite to continue this discussion?

We thank Steve Shuman, member of the LGBT Interest Forum, and Cease member, Sharon Davisson, for their contribution of articles initiating this panel discussion in the Spring 2011 CEASE News. You can find these articles: "Preventing Challenging Behaviors Targeting LGBT Children and their Families" and "The Peaceable Classroom: A 'Support the Child' rather than an 'Anti-Bullying' Perspective" on our website www.peaceeducators.org

Look for a continuation of this important topic at NAEYC 2012 in Atlanta where our Interest Forums plan another collaboration.

Editorial

It is difficult for us as early childhood educators to work to change the world. When we became teachers, we thought we might have an impact on the future. We might have felt a little naïve but the possibility was open to us. We learned quickly that we have so much to deal with. As an infant/toddler teacher and supervisor, I have to help set up the room, change diapers, serve breakfast, mix the formula, head off a conflict over a toy, clean the table (first soapy water, then bleach- opps! I got some on my clothes!) There is the attendance, welcoming parents, getting down and greeting children. “Where did that scratch come from?” Oh, I’m behind with my observations. I have to meet with that parent. NAEYC Accreditation, QRIS, ITERS, state regulations....

It is almost too much. I sometimes forget there is a major War in Afghanistan, a pending war in Iran, the housing crises (which affect almost all the families I work with). Nuclear war is always close by. I am so lucky to have this job (or any job in this economy). Lucky, also, that I belong to CEASE, a network of people working with young children who share my concerns about the world and look for alternatives. This newsletter is about teacher acting on their vision for the future. Sunny Wallick, one of the early CEASE members, highlights this in our new History Corner. She speaks about first encountering Peggy Schirmer as she spoke out at an NAEYC conference over 30 years ago. Newly retired teacher, Karel Kilimaick, from Philadelphia describes participating in the Occupy demonstration at her school administration offices; Pat Dorman of Sacramento reports on the CEASE collaborative seminar with the LBGT Interest Forum at the 2011 NAEYC Conference in Orlando. Two school librarians, Lani Gerson and Karen Kosko, review books we may want to read to children, and Ed Miller from Alliance for Childhood introduces a new CEASE related group, Defend the early Years, that he, Diane Levin and Nancy Carlsson-Paige have organized to stop the debilitating push for standardization of early childhood. John Surr of Bethesda, Maryland updates us on the Campaign for the U.S. Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and gives us an action for the President..

This newsletter is dedicated to Frank Petrosino, who helped write the CEASE Statement of Purpose with his wife Heidi Smith (former editor of this newsletter). Frank is fighting ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease) and is now in a wheelchair. We admire his courage. His struggle and the struggle of all teachers is why we have CEASE- to highlight the problems and work for solutions especially among young children. We will change the world.

Craig Simpson, Somerville MA

2012 CEASE News is dedicated to Frank Petrosino



Heidi, Tristam, Frank and Talon

Hello CEASE Friends,

We are hanging in here trying to appreciate every day. Frank continues to deteriorate physically, he now uses a feeding tube to consume most of his calories and he is in a wheel chair much of the time. His spirits are quite high most of the time, especially when friends stop by to visit. He still has the same quirky sense of humor and twinkle in his eye.

The boys are pretty incredible as well, we have had some difficult conversations about “Dad not getting better”. We talk about ways they can help take care of him and about some activities that we can still do as a family - these are mostly board games and movies.

One of the things that has helped sustain me through all of this, is my efforts to raise funds for the ALS Association. Last year I organized a team of 105 people to do The Spartan Race in Killington and we raised over \$15,000. This year we hope to make it bigger, one day I hope it will become as popular as the Dana Farber Team running the Boston marathon.

We have decided to make a documentary to tell our story of how we are living with ALS and how we motivated people to participate in the Spartan Race. We want to educate people about ALS and the devastating effects it has on families as well as inspire people to move beyond their comfort zones to face challenges that will benefit a worthy cause. We really want to find a cure for this horrific disease. There is something incredible about people using their physical strength to help those whose muscles are weakening.

I am open to suggestions on how to make a documentary and other possible funding sources as I have never done anything like this before.

Thank you for all your well wishes and support - they mean a lot to us. If you feel like coming to VT we love visitors! Travel has become too difficult for Frank so we are almost always home these days.

Much love,
Heidi

Occupy for School Nurses in Philadelphia

Activists in the Middle East and North Africa surprised and inspired people around the world with the power of people's resistance and nonviolent tactics challenging the powers that be. This movement showed up in Wisconsin at the State House last spring and later in Washington DC in protest against the Keystone XL pipeline for tar sands oil. But it really took hold in early September when a group squatted in a small park in lower Manhattan and created the movement named Occupy Wall Street. Suddenly all over the country the movement spread first to major cities then to small. The economy and jobs was the major focus, but soon many other groups joined. At the time of this writing many of the original Occupy sites have disappeared, but the energy for these issues has never disappeared. Many groups, including teachers, have found their way into this movement. Karel Kilmnik, CEASE member and recently retired Philadelphia kindergarten teacher, has joined.. She states, "My last year of 'teaching' kindergarten was more like torturing children because of the totally inappropriate demands being made of them". Here are some of her experiences with the Occupy movement in Philadelphia. It is called "Occupy 440" because it takes place at 440 North Broad Street, the address of the Philadelphia School District Offices.

On Wednesday, **December 28**, I went down to Occupy 440. Laid-off nurses held forth on the steps of 440 to express their outrage and fears for children in the School District who are left without a regular nurse. Nurses received their layoff notices the Friday before Winter Break. To cope with this massive layoff there has been an incredible rearranging of nurses. They may now cover up to three or four schools. Several nurses took the microphone to tell their stories and to express not only their outrage but their concern for students in their care... all of them, not just the medically fragile children. Each person emphasized the relationship she builds with students. Many children just need some reassurance to go along with easing their headaches or stomachs. They talked about their fears that calling 9-1-1 would take the place of nurses in the schools. Overall they sense that maybe the District is looking to sell off nursing services to a for-profit service like Bayada or another nursing temp agency. All of this ties to the national trend of seeking to destroy public education. The nurses want to come every Wednesday to Occupy 440. There were well over 100 people on short notice.

On Jan. 16, MLK Day- I, along with 500 others, crowded into the District Council 33's headquarters at 30th and Walnut to hear a wonderfully diverse group of speakers from throughout the union movement in the area. Stories were told through speeches, video and poetry all focused

on the Legacy of Dr King as a leader who led a movement to defeat poverty and the Vietnam War and who today, if he was alive, would be out there with Occupy leading the way. I'm going to try to go down to Occupy 440 and go to some School Reform Commission (SRC) meetings where nary a teacher is present on their various committees.

Jan. 18- Well I just came back from freezing outside with Occupy 440. I joined 75 others to let everyone know that laying-off nurses is 'disgusting' (as a speaker at the MLK Celebration stated) as well as unsafe. 88,000 children were just kicked off Medicaid, their school nurses have just been shuffled around like a deck of playing cards and the flu season starts with everything else. Occupy 440 is brief and to the point. We gather at 4PM. There are some people speaking and we disperse by 4:45. Anyone who wants to share their experience is welcome to do so. Several nurses spoke of having up to 7 schools to cover with up to 1900 students to care for. This brought to you by a governor who is happy to not fund an entire school district (Chester-Upland) and to strip the neediest districts of millions of dollars in funding. Oh yes, and he wants to increase charter schools and add a state voucher program.

Jan. 25- Braving the harsh winter weather 100 people turned out to hear nurses express outrage and concern. Outrage over the no-notice layoffs leaving them without health benefits and greatly reduced income. They reiterated their earlier concerns about 9-1-1. And they are clear that this is part of the move to privatize public education turning to private companies for nursing services. They are also clear that this is a move to destroy unions by chipping away at union membership (Philadelphia is unionized through the American Federation of Teachers). Oh, yes and just last week the School Reform Commission (appointed by the state 10 years ago to run the school district) miraculously found \$150,000 to hire a businessman as a consultant for the next five months to act as Superintendent and 'fix' the system.

Feb. 1- Here I am again out in front of the School District Headquarters knowing full well that I stand for everyone who wants to come but cannot. Today there are many more people including representatives from NOW, CLUW (Coalition of Labor Women), Occupy Temple (University), Philaposh (Philadelphia Area Project on Safety and Health), Occupy Philly, Granny Peace Brigade, Vets for Peace, retired teachers and nurses, unemployed school nurses and overworked school nurses sprinkled with a few children. People are again telling their stories. Unfortunately the stories are chilling. One nurse said a principal at one of her schools emailed her a picture of a child's rash. Another spoke of a classroom assistant who was taking her place and acting as the school nurse while also doing her own job and having a shorter work day.

Occupy For School Nurses continued on page 5

Announcing: Defend the Early Years

CEASE is partnering with a new project, “Defend the Early Years” (DEY), launched this January by Edward Miller, Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Diane Levin. They describe their intentions with this statement on their website www.DEYproject.org

Our principal concern is defending children’s right to play, grow, and learn in an era of so-called standards and accountability. For years we have worked with organizations like the Alliance for Childhood, Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children’s Entertainment (TRUCE), the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, Concerned Educators Allied for a Safe Environment (CEASE), and others to promote play-based early education and common-sense policymaking. In 2010 we joined hundreds of other educators in issuing a joint statement of concern about the Common Core Standards for the early grades (see http://www.edweek.org/media/joint_statement_on_core_standards.pdf.)

Now we are seeing a new wave of standards and testing about to wash over preschool. Though it has become fashionable to give lip service to the importance of children’s play, the reality is that play continues to disappear in many schools, even for the youngest children.

Enough is enough. Defending the Early Years was launched to pursue these goals:

- to track the real effects of these new preschool standards;
- to promote appropriate guidelines for early childhood educators;
- to mobilize the early childhood community to speak out with well-reasoned arguments against inappropriate standards, assessments, and classroom practices.

We are collecting evidence from across the country and will be surveying teachers, program directors, and child development experts, publishing our findings, and doing everything we can to make our collective voices heard. Let us hear from you. Tell us what is happening in your classroom, in your school, in your community.

Occupy for School Nurses

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Another nurse told of a parent who brought in a new inhaler for his daughter and had to give the treatment. He didn’t follow the directions and gave an incorrect dosage. A young student from Occupy Temple (University) got up and spoke about being in school and hoping to become a teacher. He said there is going to be a citywide walkout organized for March 1. Several petitions were circulating. One is online and lists 10 criteria for the new superintendent

The Time is Now! Ratify Universal Children’s Rights!

The Campaign for US Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), in which CEASE is an active participant, is urging interested grassroots supporters to visit our website: www.childrightscampaign.org and sign our petition urging President Obama to submit the CRC to the Senate by Universal Children’s Day, November 20, 2012.

The United States played a pivotal role in drafting the CRC in the 1980’s before its adoption by the UN General Assembly on 20 November 1989. Both the Reagan and George H.W. Bush Administrations actively contributed to negotiating the CRC. Under these two Republican presidencies, the United States made recommendations for 38 of the 40 substantive articles for the CRC. Specifically, the US helped shape the CRC articles that establish a child’s right to family reunification, freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of association and assembly, privacy, protection from abuse and periodic review of treatment. And the right to play!

Starting on February 6 (Ronald Regan’s birthday) and continuing through February 21 (Presidents Day) and beyond, the Campaign for US Ratification of the CRC invites you to sign our petition urging President Obama to submit the CRC to the Senate by Universal Children’s Day, November 20, 2012. By doing so, we honor the leadership role of U.S. Presidents who helped to create this extraordinary treaty and encourage our country to join the global community to ensure universal rights for children.

U.S. ratification of the CRC will bolster the efforts of the world community in safeguarding our most valuable resource – our children. It is way past time for the U.S. to ratify the CRC.

John Surr, Bethesda MD



dent to be hired for Philadelphia, the other is censuring Governor Corbett for his ceaseless attacks on public education by refusing to fund public schools.

Karel Kilimnik, Philadelphia PA

Thank you, Karel, for this on-going account. Actions like this are taking place around the country many supporting teachers and public workers.

Book Reviews

Welcoming Newcomer Children

Judith A. Colbert PhD, A Fairmeadow Publication, 2010, Canada

The title of this book grabbed me. This resource transforms the language and images of immigration. It examines values and beliefs from a Non-Western point of view. It is comprehensive – it suggests new strategies for working with children, supports teachers, and analyzes mainstream benchmarks. It is fully referenced with a bibliography and indexed.

Here is unqualified respect for children. Here is a must handbook for every childhood teacher training program. Here children are honored - not seen as “problems”. The problems are ours. Adults have much to learn.

Janet Gonzalez-Mena writes: “I think we can reach a world where oppression is a thing of the past and equity flourishes. We can begin to reach such a world by working on ourselves and our relationships so that we provide outstanding models for children of how people can honor each other’s differences and get along.”

Highly recommended.

Sunny Wallick, Redlands CA

An Awesome Book of Thanks!

Dallas Clayton, Amazon Encore, 2011

Don’t miss this awesome book. If there is such a thing as a “coffee table book” for kids, this is it. A truly feel-good book by Dallas Clayton. You soon realize that his clever book is not just for kids. Yet it is an enchanting picture book which is a wonderful read-aloud wherever you open it within the 84 pages.

You learn about what it means to actually be thankful and that we should always be thankful, even for the basic things. It covers the concept of gratitude, offers very interesting perspectives about our world, and teaches about the importance of saying “thank you” for the simple things of life.

The very colorful pictures are quirky with a dash of whimsy and the text is a bit like a Dr. Seuss book. Even the art tries to demonstrate to the readers a few reasons we should be thankful. Near the end the text reads - “because **Thank you’s** are what make this whole world keep spinning”...a positive message for the times we live in.

This is one of the first books published by the new imprint called Amazon Encore and if you have time- check out the author’s entertaining website.

www.Veryawesomeworld.com

Karen Kosko, Cambridge MA

People of the First Light, Wisdom of a Mashpee Elder

Joan Tavares Avant (Granny Squannit)

To get a copy of this book, send a check for \$20 to Joan Tavares Avant, 300 Ellis Hwy #30, Mashpee MA 02649

This wonderful little book by Joan Tavares Avant (Granny Squannit) gives a wide variety of information on the Wampanoag tribe and all indigenous people. I met Granny Squannit (who is actually an elder but close to my age!) at the Mashpee Pow- Wow last year. She worked 26 years with the Mashpee Public Schools. Her book gives poetry, letters, old photographs, and memories of growing up in Mashpee, Massachusetts on Cape Cod- Wampanoag country. She has memories of fishing, powwows, games, Wampanoag recipes, and the use of cranberries.

Many of these stories and games can be integrated well into an anti-bias curriculum in preschool and elementary classrooms. Infants and toddlers would enjoy the Indian pudding which I have yet to try. Check out this book. It is exciting to have such a rich resource.

Craig Simpson, Somerville, MA

Environmental Themes in Books by Jeannie Baker

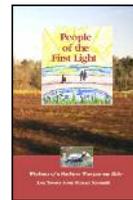
Jeannie Baker, Greenwillow Books, 1988

It is an exciting moment when young students gather around Jeannie Baker’s picture books, poring over the brilliant illustrations, “reading” and interpreting their wordless messages.

Jeannie Baker, an English born Australian artist creates unusual and lovely picture books with environmental themes. Many of her books are wordless and yet they speak volumes to young children. Baker uses many natural materials in her collage constructions; sand, earth, clay, vegetation; adding bits of fabric, knitting, paper, paints, wool, tin and plastic. The natural materials are preserved and colored, and then photographed and reproduced in books.

There are many ways to introduce Baker’s books as springboards for discussion, and to illustrate environmental concerns in a simple, direct manner. Children also like studying the materials in the collages and then creating their own natural collage constructions, illustrating their own stories.

For years I have been sharing Baker’s books with 2nd and 3rd graders as a part of environmental units. *Where the Forest Meets the Sea* (1988) was the first of her books to find its way to my school library. In this book a young boy



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Book Reviews

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visits the tropical rain forest in North Queensland, Australia and learns of its long history and fragile environment. After several lessons on the causes of the disappearance of living species, I examine with students several picture books that illustrate the nature of habitat destruction and its effects on wildlife. The faint outline of future seaside resorts at the end of the *Where the Forest Meets the Sea*, answers the question asked by the young boy in the book, "but will the forest still be here when we come back?"

When second grade students study seed dispersal, there is another Jeannie Baker book to share: *The Story of Rosy*

Dock. While this book is primarily concerned with the environmental impact of a non-native species introduced into the arid outback of Australia, it also illustrates the vitality of seeds that lie dormant during the dry season and then burst with life when the rains come, carpeting the land with red blooms.

Lani Gerson, Watertown MA

Editor's note: Lani Gerson continues this review with three more intriguing books by Jeanie Baker. To read the complete review, please go to Book Reviews on our website www.peaceeducators.org



Statement of purpose

This revised Statement of Purpose was adopted at the CEASE Annual Meeting November 21, 1996.

CEASE is a network of parents, teachers and other concerned individuals who are dedicated to creating a safe world for our children. We seek to end the violence that permeates our society to an ever increasing degree and to remove the root causes of this violence by advocating for peace, justice and economic opportunity.

We are committed to:

- Raising public awareness about both the origins of violence and the disastrous effects violence and injustice have upon children, families and communities.
- Eliminating the acceptance of violence which is created by mass media conditioning.
- Ensuring the abolition of nuclear weaponry, and other weapons of mass destruction, and an end to the proliferation of conventional weapons.
- Putting a stop to the dangerous degradation of our natural environment by supporting the development and use of reusable, non-polluting resources that protect the health and safety of future generations.

Central to the solution of these problems is the redirection of national priorities and funding from the military and corporate interests to human services and environmental preservation.

We work towards these goals through the following activities:

- Providing a supportive network for teachers and parents who share our concerns.
- Educating the early childhood community through the publication of **CEASE NEWS**, creating periodical informational fliers, giving workshops and developing peace education materials.
- Advocating for a government that is committed to improving and expanding quality child care and child development programs.
- **Fostering a society that focuses on the well being of young children and their families through all our work.**

YES, I WANT TO JOIN THE CEASE NETWORK

Date _____

- Enclosed is my \$15 subscription. new subscription renewal
- Enclosed is my \$5 student subscription. Here is an additional gift to help defray expenses.
- Enclosed is a gift membership for:

Name _____ Phone number () _____

Address _____

_____ e-mail _____

Place of work _____ position _____

NAEYC Member How did you learn about CEASE? _____

For tax deductible contributions over \$50 make check payable to Survival Education Fund

Return to CEASE, c/o Lucy Stroock, 55 Frost Street, Cambridge, MA 02140

E-mail: info@peaceeducators.org

Sunny Wallick

I called Sunny Wallick to get her impression of her first encounter with CEASE. Sunny was a teacher for many years at the Claire Cherry School. She was the 1997 recipient of the CEASE peace award and she continues into retirement working with the Veterans for Peace and other groups in Redlands California planning a regular peace and justice film series.

I asked Sunny if she remembered the first time she encountered CEASE and our co-founder Peggy Schirmer. "It was at the NAEYC conference in the early '80s. I was at the Membership Expression of Opinion. It was a place for members to voice their concerns to the NAEYC Board." This opportunity for members to speak-out was ended years ago because it became a focal point for activists who brought issues in early childhood education to the Board and pressed for action by NAEYC. These meetings were always

packed. "I remember this older grey-haired woman with her back straight walking to the microphone. Her long braid was wrapped around her head. The room grew quiet as she walked up to speak. She talked quietly and clearly. She was talking about things I was concerned about. She was strong and her voice didn't waver. She talked about the dangers of nuclear war and its effects on children. She was talking truth to power. Here was this tiny woman and the NAEYC board in front of her. She was taking stands on things I believed in. She was a catalyst and a nudge. I saw her like John Holt, a strong catalyst for change."

Thank you Sunny for describing what the early days of CEASE were like 30 years ago. There are many CEASE and NAEYC members with similar memories. I hope we can write more about these memories.

Craig Simpson, Somerville MA



Spread the Word: Have you visited us on Facebook and the Web?

On Facebook you can find us by searching for an individual named Peace Educators. Make sure to add us as a friend. We hope to help CEASE become more active in this digital age. Let's be part of the Facebook "revolutions" happening around the world. Post your news and advocacy activities so others can join you and take action.

And don't forget to go to www.peaceeducators.org Our website gets richer and richer with resources, actions, links and more!

Remember, you are free to copy all materials for CEASE and distribute them to colleagues, parents, students and friends.