

DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE CHILDREN'S CENTERS DBCC NEWS

DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE CHILD CARE, Inc.
Park Avenue Center, 806 Park Ave., Baltimore, MD 21201-4807 • 410-669-1010
University Center, 237 Arch Street, Baltimore, MD 21201-1526 • 410-659-0515

May 2008

DBCC - TWENTY FIVE YEARS OLD!

On September 12, 1983, Downtown Baltimore Child Care, Inc. opened its doors to a small group of children. The inspiration originated with Stephanie Reich, a city planner who was looking for child care for her two-year-old son, near her workplace and who was encouraged by the City Council President (Walter Orlinsky) and Mayor Wm. Donald Schaeffer's office to pursue the idea. With the help of a small volunteer Board of Directors led by Mary McClung

(1st National Bank), Yvonne Moten (BGE), Barbara Dent (City of Baltimore), Chase Solomon and Paul Bekman (Young Lawyers Assoc.), Stephanie managed to raise \$100,000 for start up but it took two years to find a suitable building. She enlisted the aid of Struever Bros. Eccles and Rouse for renovation of the Park Avenue building and in June of 1983, on Mary McClung's wedding day and dressed in her wedding gown, Mary signed the lease for First & Franklin Street's church building minutes before her wedding!

A telephone was installed and Nancy Kramer, then employed as a consultant to the board, was on site every day to supervise the construction and to give tours to prospective parents. These parents only had Nancy's descriptions to go by as to how the place would look on opening day. In August, Nancy was officially hired as Director! She immediately hired Susan Sandstrom and Bonnie Bain to be the teachers in the school and Pat Hillers Slantis as the Administrative Assistant. Getting ready to open was a hectic time! Robert Bradley and Susan built a loft in

the first classroom (now called Room 2).

We ordered supplies, Nancy Kramer's son, Scott, built shelving, we

(Continued on page 2)



Margo Sipes

Susan Sandstrom

Nancy Kramer



Evelyn Owens

Edith Garrett

Barbara Harris

Denise Miller



Gina Robertson

Sheila Coates

Phyllia Cohen

Mary Speights

Pat Slantis

Bonnie Bain

DBCC'S ANNUAL AUCTION GOES ON LINE!
BEGINNING MAY 4, 2008 See back page for details!

(Cont'd. from page 1) **DBCC - TWENTY FIVE YEARS OLD!**

painted, cleaned, organized and designed for weeks. Slowly children started enrolling. Labor Day weekend found Board members, Nancy, Pat, Susan, Bonnie, friends and family unpacking equipment and setting up one classroom and the office. We opened on September 12, 1983 with five children and two teachers, with Pat and Nancy Kramer in the office.

What faith was demonstrated on everyone's part, especially the parents who brought their children on that first day! Those first few weeks were very exciting. Bonnie and Susan were all ready seasoned teachers but they had a hard time getting the children beyond the amoeba stage. Susan would open the water table and all of the children would flock to her. Bonnie brought out a game and all the children would run to her. Susan would open the paints and all of the children would run to her. Eventually there were enough children to run the classroom effectively!

By February 1984, we had enough children enrolled to open a new classroom for two year olds and two months later we were able to open a third classroom. Gwen Chesley came to the center as an early childhood student from one of the local colleges. She was hired in March 1985 and is now a teacher in Room 2. In November of 1985 Evelyn Owens was hired to work with the three year olds.

In 1985 it was time to renovate the second floor. Thanks to the fundraising efforts of Dixon Harvey, Yvonne Moten and Anita Prentice and the generosity of Johns Hopkins Hospital, School of Medicine and the Department of Pediatrics the second floor was renovated and by September of 1986, the DBCC Park Avenue Center reached its licensed capacity. Margo Sipes became the new three year old teacher in September 1986 and Edith Garrett signed on as the new two year old teacher in October of the same year. In 1988 Gina Robertson joined DBCC as a part time assistant in the two-year-old classroom. Gina is now a teacher at University Center in Room 4.

Anita Prentice began her years as president of the DBCC Board by planning for the growth of our organization – the size of the board doubled, committees were put in place and the Annual Giving campaign was instituted. In 1988 the University of Maryland Baltimore approached DBCC with a proposition of opening a second center on their campus (Angela Fowler-Young, then a DBCC parent, had been advocating for child care at UMB for years).

Knowing how difficult it was to find 8000 square feet with adjoining outdoor playground space, Nancy Kramer was

undaunted by the sight of the dark and dingy maintenance garage on Arch Street. The ground breaking was attended by 16 four year olds from Park Avenue, Kurt Schmoke, then Mayor of Baltimore, and other dignitaries. The children were given plastic hard hats and shovels and instructed by Mayor Schmoke to toss the dirt. The surprised Mayor received 16 shovel-fulls of dirt in his face and all over his clothes. He was a very good sport about it and gave the children each a bookmark. He probably learned a lesson about how literally four year olds listen!

With the help of UMMS, UMB, a DBED day care financing loan, BGE, the City of Baltimore, local foundations, Governor Schaefer, Willard Hackerman, the architectural design of DBCC parent Joe Ellis and construction coordination of Dixon Harvey and carpentry efforts of Robert Bradley and Susan Sandstrom (Susan built 32 shelving units on the sidewalk in front of her rowhouse), University Center opened in September 1989. The same year Anthony Wilkins became the University Center custodian and in 1990, his brother Gregory Wilkins became the custodian of Park Avenue.

In March 2001, Nancy Kramer retired and the Board of Directors hired Margo Sipes as the new Executive Director. Edith Garret became Director of University Center, Evelyn Owens became Director of Park Avenue and Susan Sandstrom was Education Director. DBCC has been fortunate to have some wonderful teachers who have stayed with DBCC for years. Barbara Harris started at DBCC in 1990. Mary Speights started at DBCC in 1991. Angela White came to DBCC in 1995. Denise Miller came to DBCC in 1998 and Mary Savage has been at DBCC since 1999. In September 2007 we hit a milestone –former student Krystle Beckett joined our staff!

Now, DBCC is setting its sights on expanding the University Center location to include more infant and toddler spaces. We lost our Park Avenue lease and after considering many other options decided to consolidate at one site. We are planning to expand our building into the infant/toddler play area and reconfigure the playground to meet the needs of the ever growing demands for infants/toddler spaces. As we progress in this project we will keep you updated! We anticipate the next 25 years at DBCC to be as dynamic as the first 25 as we continue to provide an outstanding model for early care and education!

Susan Sandstrom and Nancy Kramer

25 YEARS OF VOLUNTEER BOARD PRESIDENTS

Mary Verona McClung

Yvonne Hurtt Moten

R. Dixon H. Harvey, Jr.

Anita R. Prentice

Lewis Goldman

Sharon Grinnell

Tricia Rubacky

Steve Sakamoto-Wengel

Tina DiFranco

Peg McCarthy

Sky Woodward

Claudia Wilson Randall



BECOMING CARING PEOPLE

“Recent research on the impact of violence on children in their early years should prompt a call to action for all citizens.” This stirring charge came from Kevin J. Swick and Nancy K. Freeman in their article, “Nurturing Peaceful Children to Create a Caring World: The Role of Families and Communities,” in **Childhood Education** (Fall 2004; www.acei.org/cehp.htm). In this article, the authors talk about how adults serve as important role models on how to love, how to care. They share four elements identified by Pearl Oliner in children’s early relations that enhance their growth toward becoming caring persons...

- “Bonding: forming positive connections and a sense of communion with others.
- “Empathizing: understanding others ‘ feelings and emotions, sometimes even feeling what they feel.
- “Learning caring norms: acquiring rules and values, learning to recognize caring for what it is, and respond to care with care.
- “Practicing care and assuming personal responsibility: participating in activities and developing a sense of personal obligation for doing so.”

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😊 IT'S A GIRL! 😊 IT'S A BOY!

😊 Amina is a big sister! **Maren Irizarry** was born on January 27, 2008 and weighed 7 lbs. 4 oz.

Congratulations to Alex, Raphael and Amina!

😊 Former staffer Jamilla Williams had a baby girl!

Janiyah Kai Karimah Wise was born on January 29, 2008 and weighed 7 lbs. 3 oz. Congratulations to Jamilla, Jelani, Jalen and Jelani, Jr.

😊 Ben is a big brother! **Eli Samuel Bluestone** was born on March 3, 2008 and weighed 7 lb. 12 oz.

Congratulations to Julia, Keith and Ben!

😊 Teacher Gladys Roland is a grandmother!

Alonah Gabrielle Crockett was born on April 3, 2008 and weighed 5 lbs. 6 oz. Congratulations to Grandma, Ebony and Crockett!

😊 Sienna is a big sister! **Naome Grace Klein** was born on April 12, 2008 and weighed 7 lbs. 8 oz.

Congratulations to Nicole, Dennis and Sienna!



*Tooth fairy
by Lindsey Brown, age 5*



*Man
by Patrick Okolo, age 5*



Face, by Felix Bookhart, age 3



MILESTONES



❖ It is hard to imagine Park Ave. without **Doris Brown** as its cook. Doris worked at DBCC for 23 years. Until DBCC was forced to eliminate the lunch program, Doris cooked delicious child-friendly food every day and many a child (including my niece, Kate) thought Doris' food was the best in the world. Doris retired in November 2007 and not long afterwards was diagnosed with advanced lung cancer despite the fact that Doris was a non-smoker and made frequent trips to the doctor. She died on January 18, 2008. She was 65 years old.

While I was a teacher, Doris was a frequent visitor to my classroom. She loved our pet iguana, Stewart, and came in for a visit every day. She was always curious about the goings on in the classroom. Doris kept a huge aquarium in her own house and she loved to exchange fish tales!

Doris also loved the children. She was interested in them and she enjoyed talking to them when they came into the kitchen for their lunch cart or came in looking for something for their classroom. Doris also filled in for absent teachers from time to time.

Doris was very excited when she had the chance to adopt two little girls, Yolanda and Shannell. She had a welcome party for them at her house and she was thrilled to have them in her life. She was devoted to her daughters. Both daughters grew up beautifully and Yolanda recently had a baby named Makiya. Doris was a very proud grandmother! Doris also had two other daughters, Rochelle and another daughter in North Carolina. Family and friends mourn the loss of such a wonderful woman! Doris was very involved in her church and was a member of the choir. She was a hard worker and proud of her work! She was always kind and considerate and a good friend to all. We all miss her!

❖ DBCC lost a good friend, **Bob Lambert**, age 93, on February 21, 2008. Bob was a faithful volunteer at DBCC for years. He was in his 80's when he started volunteering and he had the skills to do just about anything. He never knew what to expect when he arrived at the center and I think he liked it that way. He created the ingenious doorstops on the classroom doors so we no longer have holes in the wall; he mounted the extremely heavy piece of slate on the wall at Park Avenue; he remodeled lofts; repaired furniture and dug a trench around the University playground to keep out the rodents. He created a "French drain" outside of Room 3 at University Center and the classroom hasn't flooded since. He also made us all nervous as he climbed the 8' ladder to change the light bulbs in the ceiling. We would draw a picture of an expensive piece of equipment and Bob was able to build it himself. He made us two drum painters and two plexiglass easels just by looking at pictures in a catalog!

Bob's talents were only part of his appeal. Bob's unwavering good nature and friendliness made him a valuable part of the center. Teachers and children were drawn to him and always had a kind word for everyone. He had fun at DBCC and we so appreciated the time and energy he gave us. He will be missed!



❖ Our condolences to teacher Mary Speights on the passing of her son, **George**, on February 2, 2008, after a long illness. He was 54 years old. Our love and best wishes to Mary and her family.



Ask Aliceanna...

Dear Aliceanna,

Children can be so mean. We've been at the center a few years and in every classroom there are children who are just mean. They say mean things, they push or hit and I am aghast at their behavior. I see teachers intervene to smooth over the situation but I worry that they are a bad influence on my child.

Signed, Worried Dad

Dear Dad,

It is so easy to observe the behavior of young children and make judgments - but don't be fooled. Young children are supposed to try out different behaviors as part of the growing up process. Frankly, I worry about a child who takes no risks and who behaves perfectly all the time. So, sometimes a child will observe someone hitting, kicking, screaming, pushing, etc. and try out the behavior herself. This doesn't mean that this is a bad influence. This is your child becoming well rounded! In every classroom from now until your child is out of school, there will be children who you may feel will be a bad influence. Unless your child lives in a bubble, s/he will be exposed to all sorts of behavior - good and bad. Children love to find out what happens when they try out this behavior or that behavior. Children usually drop those behaviors that don't get the response they want and continue with those behaviors that are effective. That's how it works! It is not necessary to shelter your child from children's behavior. In fact, if your child is old enough, other children's behavior becomes a wonderful topic for discussion if it comes up - not in a judgmental way but more like, *I wonder why that happened? How do you think he was feeling?*

Now, the other thing to remember is that young children are very ego-centric. They really don't understand anyone else's perspective but their own. They don't understand that everyone has the same feelings, wants or needs as they do - and telling them doesn't change anything. That's why they don't share well and are often rude. They only care about #1. Don't worry, though, this changes as they grow and are surrounded by generous people.

A child who arrives in the morning and who says something cruel to every child who approaches him needs time to adjust to his transition to school. He is putting up a force field of protection in the only way he knows how. That's why teachers will intervene and say, "Tell her you want to be alone." Again, this child has no clue what emotional effect

his words have on others. He just knows that this tactic works to keep people away when he needs space.

Some toddlers and twos will walk up to another child and push them. It is may be inappropriate behavior but it developmentally appropriate. That is what toddlers and twos do. It could mean *I want to play with you or I notice you are here or I wonder what happens if I push you.*

So, please be aware that young children are working very hard to figure out how to navigate the world and it changes depending on where they are - school, home, grandma's, etc - so it is complicated. They need a lot of understanding and patience and support, not criticism!

[You can email Aliceanna your questions to uc@dbcckids.org and put Aliceanna in the subject line. She loves to hear from you!]



Parent **Kirk Seese** painted a beautiful mural in the University Center central area. Easels were set up for the children so they could paint along with Kirk. Check out his web site: www.bbmurals.com



*Little people
by Merriwether King, age 3*

ALUMNI NEWS

*We recently received an email from **Joe Ellis**. Joe's daughters, **Lindsey** and **Amanda** attended DBCC years ago. In fact, Lindsey was one of the first DBCC children! So good to hear from him!*

I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed running across the DBCC Web Page. I don't know if you remember but both of my daughters attended DBCC and have such great memories of their experience. Lindsey (Ellis) was there from I believe 1983 through 1986. She is currently living in Scottsdale AZ. Lindsey graduated from ASU and works for Scottsdale Memorial Hospital in the Cardiac Care Unit as a nurse. She and her husband Brent have a one year old girl named Ema.

Amanda who attended from 1989 through 1992 is currently attending Cal State San Francisco majoring in International Relations. While not in school she is usually off traveling the world, seems there might have been some influence there by the both of you. I did not see mention of Nancy in the newsletter, I hope she and Bob are doing well. I remember many an afternoon spent with Nancy planning the design and construction for both gym renovation upstairs and new center at the University. Please pass on my greetings to her and Bob.

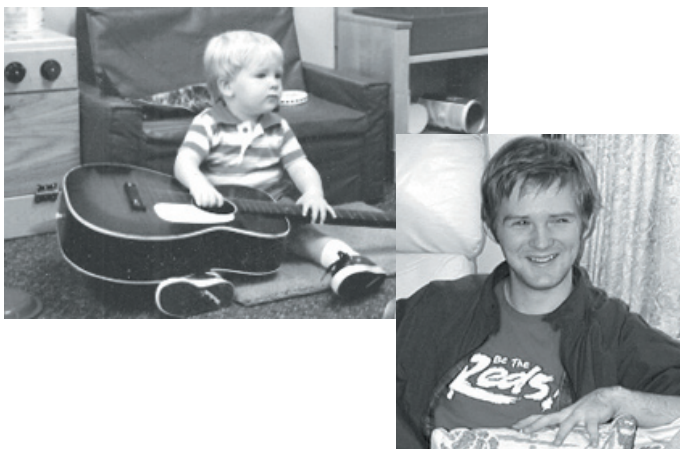
Debbie who as you may remember ran the kitchen at the University Center for a while is currently living in Huntington Beach CA. We were divorced several years ago and both remarried. I am currently living in Scottsdale AZ also and of all things have a two year old son. I was on the internet looking at daycare centers which lead me to DBCC.

I am glad to see that the school is doing well, as mentioned we all have great memories.

Joe Ellis



Spencer Casey was in the first infant class at the University Center location. This photo was taken when he was in the toddler room. He is now a sophomore at New York University majoring in music technology. Early experiences do influence the future!



*From former DBCC Board member **Jean Schroeder***

Susan and Margo, I'm glad you both enjoyed the NPR piece. I listened and thought, with gratitude, about the terrific start in the world that Grace and Helen got at DBCC. They both continue to reap the benefits. And we think of DBCC all the time - Scot is sharing lab space with a woman whose twins and older son are there now. We also enjoy the newsletter and periodically get together with Peg and her family.

Grace is a young (14 in April) high school freshman with a perfect 4.0 average, a demanding load of "GT" courses, and a great deal of self-confidence. She ran on the cross country team in the fall and will do outdoor track in the spring. She also swims twice a week on a low-key non-competitive winter team. She has a nice group of friends and participates in activities with them but generally doesn't initiate such social things on her own unless I encourage her to do so. She loves to read and consumes 1-2 novels every week even with all the school work and she enjoys baking and creating artwork. She is easy to parent and a pleasure to be around.

Helen is a fourth grader and appears really bored with much of school. Despite this, her teachers love her saying that she is on task, makes meaningful contributions, and doesn't cause any trouble. She escapes into books for hours at a time. She is playing clarinet in the school band program but it isn't clear to me that she actually likes playing. She definitely likes the idea of playing and enjoys the band group and she seems to have some talent for the instrument. Her interest in the piano, which she has been doing for two years, is dropping off fast since the clarinet came along. Helen doesn't seem to compare herself to Grace nearly as much as she used to (until she was about 7-years old!) and I think this change coupled with her pleasure in reading makes her happier. She plays very well with other children and has many friends but no one single close friend. She loves to play games but is also quite good at entertaining herself in very creative ways. She can do wonders with a bit of string or yarn or paper and scissors -- must come from all the open-ended and unstructured play time at DBCC!

All the best,
Jean



We had a nice surprise when **Quatanna Mosby** and her son, **Quinton** came by for a visit. Quatanna used to work at University Center and Quinton also attended the center. We decided to catch up on what Quinton was doing these days. Quinton is 12 years old and in 6th Grade at Furman Elementary School. His favorite subject is “basketball” but he likes math, too. Next year he will attend Bluford Dru Jemison Middle school which is a science/math/engineering academy. His favorite books are the Goosebumps series.

“When I grow up I want to be a pro basketball player or be an engineer and design cars.

I like hanging out with friends

I like candy and pizza and babies

I like teaching people new things

and I like being taught new things.

I like working with people

I like the drums and I play them at my church.

I like talking to people on the phone.

I like fireworks and holidays and

I like DBCC.”



CHILDSPEAK

• **Jack Webb**, age 5, was watching the progress of the mural at University Center. He cautioned the painter, “Did you ask Edith (the center director) if it was okay to draw on the walls?”

• **Teresa Finegold-Swift**, age 3, was sitting on her teacher’s lap touching her round earrings. “Why do you have blueberries in your ears?”

• **Emmet Neff-McGready**, age 3, approached a parent and asked why her daughter had missed school. “She had a little of the bug that’s going around,” said the parent.

Emmet said, “When I get home I’m gonna get on my ladder and catch that bug!”

• “I believe in God but sometimes I don’t care about him because he makes me get hiccups!” –

Patrick Okolo, age 5

• A group of boys were talking about Transformers.

Ann Bethell, age 4 said, “Please, please boys, can you talk about something more interesting?”

• The children were playing house and **Patrick Okolo**, age 5, told the group, “Please give the husband and wife some private time!”

• **Jun Chang**, age 5, has beautiful thick hair.

His teacher asked him for some of his hair and Jun said, “No, I can’t give it to you because God made it for me.”

How to Reduce Bisphenol-A Exposure

Bisphenol-A is a hormone-disrupting chemical considered to be potentially harmful to human health and the environment. It has been known that scratched and worn polycarbonate feeding bottles will leach this chemical into liquids.

<http://www.bisphenolafree.org/>

Avoid using plastic containers to heat food in microwave ovens; use ceramic, glass or other microwave-safe dishware instead. Because it is so pervasive, avoiding BPA completely is all but impossible. But experts say there are ways to decrease exposure:

- Canned foods are a key source of BPA exposure.

According to a study by the Environmental Working Group of 97 name-brand cans, beverages appear to contain less BPA residues, while canned pasta and soups contain the highest levels.

- Use powdered infant formulas packaged in non-steel cans. Steel cans for powdered formulas likely have a BPA lining.

- Leaching from plastics appears to occur at a much lower level than from can linings. Polycarbonate plastic food containers marked on the bottom with the recycling label No. 7 often contain BPA. Rigid and transparent plastic containers for food and drink, and toddler sippy cups, may contain BPA. Some polycarbonate water bottles are marketed as ‘non-leaching,’ but BPA may still migrate from these containers, particularly if used to hold hot liquids, which cause increased leaching.

- Avoid using old and scratched plastic bottles, which leach more.

- Plastics with the recycling labels No. 1, No. 2 and No. 4 on the bottom do not contain BPA.

- When possible, use glass bottles, or those made from the safer plastics polypropylene and polyethylene. Soft or cloudy-colored plastic does not contain BPA. Bottles used to pump and store expressed breast milk by the brand Medela are also labeled BHA-free.

- Many metal water bottles are lined with a plastic coating that contains BPA. Look for stainless steel bottles that do not have a plastic liner.

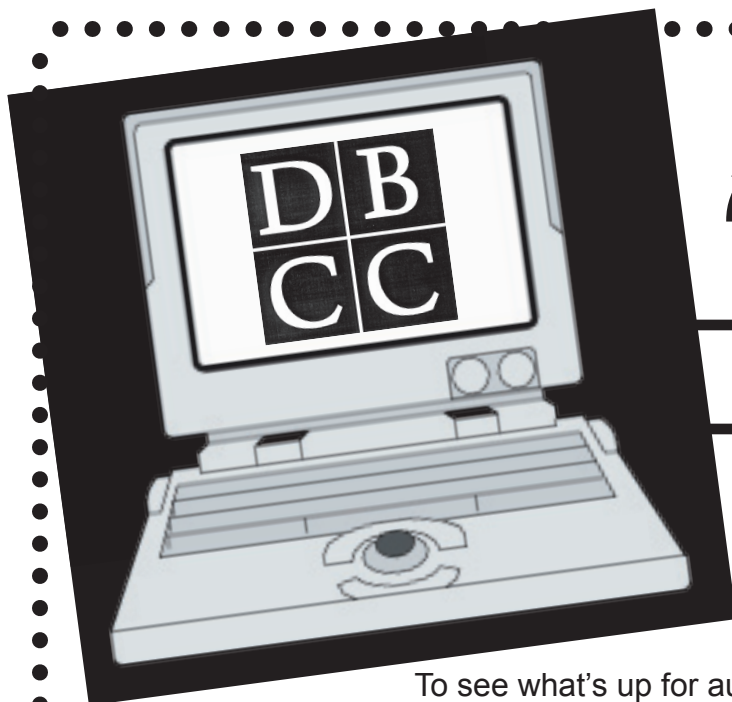
- While the level of BPA leaching from hard plastics is generally low, we recommend avoiding plastic containers to heat food in microwaves. Use ceramic, glass, and other microwaveable dishware.

- In the past, some plastic wraps may have contained BPA. Some brands, such as Saran, do not contain BPA.

(Source: Environmental Working Group)



ow L by
Micah Neff-McGready,
age 5



DBCC'S ANNUAL AUCTION GOES ON LINE!

BEGINNING MAY 4, 2008

*Here's your chance to bid on an
exciting array of wonderful items, all
from the comfort of your own home!
It's easy...and FUN!*

To see what's up for auction, go to
http://www.missionfish.org/NPMMFF/nphomepage.jsp?NP_ID=24244

The auction ends May 18, but check back often for new postings.

Have something to donate? Contact Susan Sandstrom (susans@dbcckids.org) for details.

Selling your own stuff on ebay? **Any time you sell, you can donate some or all of the profits**



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*Childhood should be
a journey, not a race.*