

★ Building Bright Tomorrows... Today ★



Our Mission

Old Mill Center for Children and Families is a community-based, family-oriented center helping children of diverse backgrounds maximize their potential through specially designed education and therapy programs.

Spring 2007

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**OLD MILL
CENTER**

For Children and Families

A Message From the Director

...Bev Larson, PhD

"There is No Excuse For Child Abuse" is the Benton County slogan for the month of April's Child Abuse Prevention activities.

Old Mill Center and a number of committed community partners are unfolding a new program to prevent child maltreatment in April here at Old Mill. I have been participating in an eight month project at the PREVENT Child Abuse Maltreatment Institute through University of North Carolina with JoAnn Miller, Director of Benton County Commission on Children and Families, Sandy Chase, Coordinator of Benton County Child Welfare, and Beth Hogeland, Dean of LBCC Family Resources. We spent these eight months attending trainings and consulting with UNC staff with the goal of moving our long held vision of a Crisis Relief Nursery in Benton County from talk into action. In order to position Benton County for state Relief Nursery funding, we are redesigning and realigning existing services. LBCC, Early Intervention, Benton County Health Department, Corvallis Public Library, Commission on Children and Families, Kidco Headstart, Parent Enhancement Program, and Child Welfare are all stepping forward to strengthen the network of parent education, counseling, support, and classroom services to high risk families where the potential for child maltreatment is the greatest. Rally Around Families Together (RAFT) is preparing to launch.

Currently there are no classroom services for children, birth to 3. This, of course, is the most critical time to provide services to families who are experiencing multiple stressors such as poverty, addiction, mental health problems, developmental disabilities, domestic violence, and isolation. The first few years of parenting will set the tone for long term parenting and for the safe, healthy development of children. The goal of RAFT is to provide comprehensive, long term services at one site for these families.

We all know that child maltreatment DOES exist in Benton County. As providers who care about our children, Old Mill Center and our partner agencies are working hard to prevent such maltreatment. We will need all of our community friends and donors to be in the raft with us..... ALL working together in the belief that indeed "There is No Excuse For Child Abuse."

(There is much more to say about RAFT. We will provide more details in the next newsletter and in our local newspaper. For more information please call me or Annmarie O'Daniel at OMC - 757-8068.)

Sincerely,
Bev Larson, PhD
Executive Director



2 Old Mill Center...
"The finest place for all children"

Announcements

OSU's Best & Brightest

Through a series of connections, coincidences and just plain good fortune, Old Mill Center had a phenomenal opportunity to work with 80 of OSU's brightest students from the BA 352 Organizational Behavior classes. Instructor Sandy Neubaum's intention was to expose her business students to service learning which integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities. Below and right are the descriptions of the two projects in the students own words.

Art from the Heart Project:

Teams:
 BOMAC, ACE, CEM, Moxie, Dearra, Foreign Policy

Project Description/Goals:

We were charged with designing, creating, and marketing items for the "Art from the Heart" section of the auction. The class was split into six teams, with students taking on the roles of Project Operations Managers, Marketing Project Managers, and Technical Support Managers. We applied lessons from the classroom on increasing motivation, performance improvement, and conflict management; and collaborated with Old Mill to work towards the goal of raising at least \$1,200. Through the power of networking we procured a plethora of items. Creativity flourished as we worked side by side with the children to create items in "Art from the Heart". We also found that this project transcended from just a graded assignment to an opportunity to get hands-on experience while benefiting the children of Old Mill.

Playground Project:

Teams:
 The Big Kids, The Hulksters, Plaiground Pyuhnears, Project Play, Progress Image, Rainbows & Smiles



"Our greatest natural resource is the minds of our children"

-Walt Disney

It is our duty and responsibility to care for the children in our community. Under the direction of Sandy Neubaum, our class, in collaboration with Old Mill, had the privilege of putting the "play" back in playground for the children attending this non-profit educational center.

Our Objectives:

- Designing a state of the art playground that is safe and handicap accessible for both children and volunteering adults.
- Aiding in fundraising for this project
- Providing fun and excitement to the children.

Overdue United Way Payments Stress Budget

Old Mill was counting on United Way payments of \$26,000 in the 06-07 budget year to support mental health services to children and families, including preschool education, parent education, sex abuse treatment, and home visiting to high risk families where children are at risk for abuse, school failure, social problems, and more. Part of the \$26,000 due to Old Mill is from 2005 allocations.

The inability of United Way to make these payments has created a budget shortfall and generated the need to attempt to find other funding resources to provide all necessary services.

Old Mill is grateful that the United Way Board of Directors and the new Executive Director, Jennifer Moore, are making plans to honor the funding commitment in the coming year. This is vitally important to Old Mill's children and families needing the services funded by United Way resources, as well as to the future of United Way of Benton County.

Notice Board



April 28, 2007
 Call 541-753-1550 or 541-602-1049 to register

Fireside Recital

Saturday, May 19th

The Russians are Coming!!! Alexander Tutunov, Katerina Zaitsova and Nikita Fitenko, three fabulous concert pianists. An evening of Russian passions and pyrotechnics! 6:30 PM at the home of Judy and Pete Freeman, 3342 NW Roosevelt.

Final concert. \$50 per person. Call 757-8068 for reservations.



A Parent's Perspective... Kids Unplugged

...Heather Gerding

Almost one year ago we stopped letting our two preschool aged daughters watch television on a regular basis. This choice has by far been the best thing we could have done for them developmentally. Don't get me wrong, this was not an easy routine to change and it took every ounce of my will power to stick to it. Amazingly after only a few weeks without television they stopped asking for it and today it is not a part of our entertainment regimen. My oldest daughter Sophie quickly went from speaking two to three word utterances to an average of seven word sentences. She began asking questions and her imaginative play skills soared. We have been committed to speech and occupational therapies to address some of her language and sensory differences for years, yet unplugging her from the television produced cognitive progress that no one could have foreseen. Perhaps it is a coincidence but I have to believe it is more than that.

When Sophie watches television it is with intense concentration. Actually concentration is not the right word, she truly seems catatonic. She is completely over stimulated and sucked into the images. At this stage of her development she does not have the self-regulation and attention shifting skills to interact with the world around her when the TV is on. When she was younger, I worked full time outside our home and we struggled with feeding issues, I used the television as a distracter to shovel some nutritious food into her. That didn't last very long, feeding her in front of the screen felt so wrong in every fiber of my body. With the television on there was no interest in the food, no talking, no eye contact, and no movement except occasionally she might sing along with a musical show.

When I first set out on this mission to unplug my children, I fibbed and told them the TV was broken (I unplugged it). This was a big topic of conversation. "Who will fix the TV," Ava my two year old exclaimed. Soon Sophie was asking, "Why TV broke." This in itself is a victory, as she had never asked a "why" question before. Now in the mornings without television, Sophie is watching me cook, she cracks the egg and stirs, picks out her cup and pours her drink. She asks question after question of our routines. With the television on she was oblivious to these routines and missing out on learning some important life skills. Now she is learning about the world around her. **She is a happier and smarter child.**

The first thing I did after convincing them the TV was broken is I cleaned out a large closet in my house and made a really fun play area. I filled a storage container with confetti rice to play in. I made orange play dough and the girls played with this in their "new house" as they called the closet. The rice eventually got put away as it ended up from one end of my house to the other but the amount of time they played in the sensory rice without my help was worth the clean up experience. The imaginative play has increased dramatically, on any given day our couch may be a boat, car or bicycle. **Our kids have learned how to entertain themselves.** They ask for music and we all dance together often. Both children use their imaginations



Strong Families Groups

3

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

A social skills group for children ages 6-9

Mondays, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

At Old Mill Center (8 weeks)

Beginning April 9, 2007

INCREDIBLE YEARS

In collaboration with Linn-Benton Community College

For parents with children ages 3-8

Wednesdays, 5:30-7:30 p.m. (10 weeks)

Dinner and childcare provided at Old Mill Center

Beginning April 4, 2007

Class Fee \$10

***ALL GROUPS ARE FREE OF CHARGE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED**

For more information or to enroll, contact Annmarie O'Daniel @ 757-8068 ex. 222

RAFT Project Wish List

- Rocking Chair
- Couch
- Crib (pref. Port-o-crib)
- Changing station
- Toddler Potty Chair
- Board Books/Sensory Books
- Stacking toys
- Shape sorter toys
- Simple wooden puzzles
- Music (Baby Einstein)
- Basic Skill boards
- Balls (all sizes and textures)
- Mobiles
- Peg Puzzles
- Large cushy cube blocks
- Big Pillows
- Bubble making toys
- Soft building blocks
- Cause & Effect toys
- Rattles
- Teething Rings
- Diapers
- Wet Wipes
- Colorful wall hangings (i.e. pictures of children, quilts, brightly colored paintings)
- Books for parent lending library



Old Mill Center...

"We're here for you"

Old Mill Staff List

Olga Alvarez	BS, Healthy Start FSW/FAW
Cindy Bond	MS, Early Education Coordinator
Eveliina Calder	Office Specialist
Donna Carpenter	Office Specialist
Brenda Coleman	MA, Family Support & Connections Coordinator
Erica Crimp	MA, Outpatient Therapist
Leslie Dobkins	OTR/L, SIPT-C, Occupational Therapist
Chris Elgin	MA, LPC, Outpatient Therapist
Julia Fisher	MS, Strong Families Therapist
Heather Fredericks	Classroom Aide
Elsie Grimler	MS, LPC, Outpatient Therapist
Lee Harrington	MD, Medical Consultant
Cherry Hartman	LCSW, Clinical Supervisor
Jill Irwin	MS, ITS Lead Teacher
Josh James	Computer Network Support
Art Koebel	Facilities Maintenance Tech
Donna Kreilich	BS, Preschool Teacher
Angee Langevin	BS, Healthy Start FSW/FAW
Bev Larson	PhD, Executive Director
Skinny Larson	Bookkeeper
Deb Lyman	MSW, Outpatient Therapist
Angela Meyer	AA, Billing Specialist
Marcy Monasky	MS, Preschool Teacher
Katie Moore	BS, Preschool Teacher
Melissa Moser	MS, LPC, Asst. Director for Programs
Dulcy Neeley	BS, Healthy Start Coordinator
Annamarie O'Daniel	MS, LPC, Strong Families Program Coordinator
Lisa Rae Penter	Support Services Coordinator
Nate Perry	BA, ITS Program Assistant
DeAnna Roberts	MS, Outpatient Therapist
Amy Rowland	MS, ITS Child & Family Therapist
Rebecca Sario	BS, Development Coordinator
Pamela Swafford	MA, Outpatient Therapist
Medora Tuck	MS, Healthy Start FSW/FAW
Kirk Vonderheit	JD, Asst. Director for Operations
Jian Wang	BA, Accounting Tech

A Parent's Perspective...

(continued from page 3)

and creativity to find fun things to do; I merely referee from time to time. The conversations I am now privy to overhearing are worth more than gold and an hour watching Oprah.

Preschoolers may learn from some of the nonviolent educational shows, but I believe they learn much more from interacting with real people, real life objects, toys and ultimately learning to entertain themselves. I was recently at a baby shower and one of the mothers asked the host to turn on a movie for the kids, the host agreed but one mom chimed in suggesting that we wait, let all the kids play and see what happens, the mom who thought they needed TV asked "well what are they supposed to do?" It turns out without the TV on they built a train set, ate food, partook in some of the games we were playing and best of all they played with each other. Sure there were a few incidents that required adult intervention but that's our jobs as parents and it's their job to play and learn from each other and responsible adults not from Elmo or a Power Ranger.

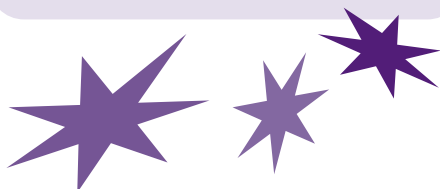
We worked very hard and went through some really tough times weaning the kids off the television. When our daughters were watching too much TV they fought all the time. After turning it off the fighting briefly increased, but now they rarely fight and when they do they seem to forgive and forget much faster. We try and stay busy taking part in community activities, I check out new books and music from the library all the time and we go outside to play often. **Sure my house is messy, the laundry piles are growing and there are stickers, glue and chalk all over my kitchen table but my kids seem so much happier.** I find the responsibility of having this much influence over two other human beings overwhelming at times, yet it is my greatest role in life. I want to say I've given it my best shot and our family's decision to have very limited screen time is a big step in the right direction that may sharpen their minds later in life.

I believe too much screen time is detrimental to social and visual development. Before television, computers and video games children spent far more time outdoors. They used their eyes for a variety of tasks, many of which involved distant viewing and watching moving targets. Sedentary screen based activities are less challenging visually because they do not require the eyes to shift frequently from near to far vision. Vision skills require practice in order to develop. **The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages any amount of screen time for children less than two years of age.** There are some wonderful articles at www.mothering.com on kids and television.

The television is no longer broken in our home. It is housed in a media cabinet with doors that the children do not open. It has been very helpful not having the TV as the focal point of the family room. Sophie and Ava rarely ask for TV now and that happened after about two weeks without it. They occasionally watch sports with my husband, which does not really hold their interests. Once every couple weeks we may watch a children's show now and I watch with them to encourage conversations during the show and try to discuss what we learned when the show is over. I usually take this time to fold laundry or pay bills too. We have a family movie night from time to time

with popcorn, lots of pillows and so much love. I urge parents to turn the TV, computers and video games off, however I realize that little to no TV may not work with every family situation.

Significantly cutting back on screen time has been a blessing in our home and I felt compelled to share this in the hopes others may experience the joy of more family time for themselves.



What's All the Fuss about Early Literacy?

...Dana Campbell

According to the National Academy of Education **"The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children."** Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they learn to read and write and you can never start too early. What you share with your baby today is the foundation upon which all other reading skills are built tomorrow.

There are six basic elements of early literacy: print motivation, phonological awareness, vocabulary building, narrative skills, print awareness, and letter knowledge. In plain English, **these are developing a love of books, learning sounds of words through songs and rhymes, learning the names of things, following a story line and predicting what next, noticing print throughout the child's world on signs, lists and in their name, learning the letters of the alphabet and learning that letters make sounds.**

As a parent there are many things you can do in your everyday life to help your child develop strong early literacy skills. Get into the reading habit early, when your child is a newborn. **Talk with your child about their world.** Ask questions? Build conversations upon what they say. Let your children enjoy books. It's amazing how quickly children learn how to hold a book right side up and how to turn a page. This is early literacy! **Be willing to read a certain book again and again and again.** It won't be long before you can ask the child to tell the story to you or they can recite it word for word. **Have fun!** Don't be afraid to sing songs with your child or to recite nursery rhymes in public. **Play!** This is a great way for children to learn sounds and language. Reading, singing, and talking provides a great opportunity for you, as a parent, to bond with your child. You will be amazed at how quickly your child moves from a very short attention span to wanting to sit in your lap to hear a story. **Make reading with your child a part of your everyday life.** Be sure your home provides opportunities for early literacy. Children enjoy playing with blocks and letters; have lots of books to read and songs to sing. **Read the mail or recipes aloud.** Don't forget to have a few books with you in your bag at all times. You never know when you might want to have some books available to pass the time while waiting. Parents, be sure your children sees you reading! You are your child's most important role-model.



Your public library is a great resource for early literacy information, books, music, board books for the very young, and storytime sessions. The Youth Services staff is happy to help you find age appropriate materials for your child and is there to help you. Lists of books featured at storytime and favorite subjects are also available with much other information at the library's web site: www.thebestlibrary.net. Just click on Kids' Page.

Be watching for a new Early Literacy webpage coming soon.

Story times at the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library are

Monday	7 p.m.	Family Story Time	
Tuesday	10 a.m.	Toddler Story Time	Ages 24-36 months
Wednesday	10 a.m.	Infant Story Time	Ages 0-12 months
Thursday	10 a.m.	Preschool Story Time	Ages 3-5 years
Friday	10 a.m.	Wobblers Story Time	Ages 12-24 months

Submitted by Dana Campbell,
Youth Services Librarian
Corvallis-Benton County Public Library

Outpatient Counseling Schedule

Old Mill Center offers a variety of counseling programs to support children and their families. For registration, fees, and further information, call 757-8068 or the program coordinator listed (below). Most insurance is accepted; sliding fee scale and scholarships are available for families in need. Groups begin when filled:

Girls Group:

A support group for girls ages 8 - 11 focusing on assertiveness, building healthy relationships, and communication skills. Beginning on Thursday, April 19 from 4:00 to 5:00 pm. For more information, contact Pamela Swafford @ 757-8068 x213.

Teen Girls Group:

A support group for girls, ages 12 and up promoting self-confidence, group discussions on teen topics, and stress management. Beginning Wednesday, April 18 from 4:00 pm-5:00 pm. For more information, call Pamela Swafford @ 757-8068 x213.

Jelly Beans:

Fun activities for boys 10-11 years old. Begins Wednesday, April 10 @ 3:00 every other week. An experiential group to encourage friendship and social skill development. For more information, call Chris Elgin @ 757-8068 x206

Scouts:

Fun activities designed for adolescent boys ages 12 - 14 to encourage camaraderie and appropriate socialization with other young men. Beginning Tuesdays, April 24 @ 4:30. Every other week. For further information, contact Chris Elgin @ 757-8068 x206.

ChildSafe:

Free ongoing group counseling for child victims of sexual assault and their non-offending family members. Childcare available. For further information, contact Katy Trautman @ 757-2027.

Kinship Care:

A free ongoing information and support group to assist grandparents and other family relatives in their role as primary caretakers. For further information contact Katy Trautman @ 757-2027.

Children's Grief Program:

A group focusing on healing from grief and loss through art, stories, and friendship. For further information, contact Cherry Hartman @ 757-8068 x 217.

Sundaws:

A support group for boys, ages 9-11. Participate in activities that will be down right fun. Begins March 20th @ 4pm. every other week. For more information, contact Chris Elgin @ 75708068 x206.



Holiday Donor Thank You's

(Look for Auction Donor Thank You's in our next issue)

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Summer Escape Program for Teens and Pre-Teens

An Experiential Emotional Growth and Confidence Building Group for Adolescents

This week-long Experiential Program will use hands-on activities to promote positive self-esteem, improve peer communication, strengthen social skills, increase problem solving abilities, and provide adolescents an opportunity to get out of the house and have fun with peers. Activities will include active games, hiking, art/crafts, forest exploration, and a trip to the OSU Challenge Course on the last day. Snacks Provided. Please Bring a Sack Lunch each day. Open to the Community. Not necessary to be an Old Mill Client.



Call DeAnna Roberts with questions at 757 8068 x 210. Call

Donna Carpenter to register at 757 8068.

Minimum 5 participants, maximum 12 participants.

\$225 for the week.

Pre-Teens: (9 to 12 years old)

July 16 to 20

Register by July 9th

Pre-Teens: (9 to 12 years old)

August 6 to 10

Register by July 30th

Teens: (12 to 15 years old)

August 20 to 24

Register by August 13th

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily.

Special Thanks



Special thanks to everyone in these work crews who devoted hours of hard physical labor in sometimes ugly weather to make us look good!

The Canopy Crew

Harry Lorz
Art Koebel
Jack Ross
Bob Stebbins
Dave Thomas
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Brian Riley

Adam Westcott
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Nicole Jones
Ashley Rogers
Andrea Land
Bill Poeschl
Andrew Beisley
Lloyd Wright



Video Viewing Night Coming Soon....

Parenting the Explosive Child The Collaborative Problem Solving Approach

Featuring Dr. Ross W. Greene and Dr. Stuart Ablon

Date and time to be announced.

" In this video program, Dr. Ross Greene and Dr. Stuart Ablon help parents understand the specific cognitive skill deficits that can impair a child's capacities for flexibility and frustration tolerance and provide step-by-step guidance on their Collaborative Problem Solving approach for teaching these skills. Features live interviews with parents of behaviorally challenging children." - From the Collaborative Problem Solving Website

Come and watch sections of this approach and discuss with other parents. Childcare and dinner will be provide.

Call DeAnna at 757 8068 x 210 for more details.



parenting the explosive child

2006-2007 Board of Directors

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*"Being a child is a hard job," said Joey, age 4.
"I don't know how to do it."*



Please take this opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child like Joey ...to help make being a child a little easier.

- Yes! I will help make a difference.
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