

she

Shines™

FALL 2008 ● FREE

celebrating the aspirations and accomplishments of women

*raising healthy children*

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
ywca

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smile

**perspectives from pediatricians**

interviews with Dr. Beata Nelken and Dr. Patricia Flanagan

**helping parents and kids communicate**

Can We Talk? Rhode Island

**linking health and academic achievement**

Thrive - Strong minds. Strong bodies. Strong schools.

**special insert**

ywca fall programs

published by YWCA Northern Rhode Island ● volume 4, number 3 ● [www.sheshines.org](http://www.sheshines.org)





# she Shines calendar.....

Karen Lambe reads to Fyodor Nicholas, age 6, by a cave in the Providence Children's Museum. See articles on pages 14 and 15.

share it



## august

Events are listed on the calendar as space allows. Submissions may be e-mailed to sheshines@mac.com, faxed to 401-769-7454, or mailed to *She Shines*, c/o YWCA Northern Rhode Island, 514 Blackstone Street, Woonsocket, RI 02895.

- **August 12, TECH NITE:** From 4 to 8pm at New England Institute of Technology in Warwick. For details call 401-467-7744 or visit [www.neit.edu](http://www.neit.edu).
- **August 15, 6th Annual Gail Badessa Memorial Fund for Cultural Experiences:** From 6:30 to 11:30pm at The Alpine Country Club, 251 Pippin Orchard Road in Cranston. Call Spurwink RI, 401-781-4380 x130.
- **August 22, 23, and 24, Hot Wheels Summer Smash:** Toys, racing, give-a-ways, special guests, and dinner at The Crowne Plaza, Warwick. For details call Make-A-Wish at 401-781-9474. [www.summersmashri.com](http://www.summersmashri.com)
- **August 23, Play Spaces:** From 1 to 3pm at Providence Children's Museum, 100 South Street in Providence. Kids build a playscape of their own using a variety of interesting materials. [www.childrenmuseum.org](http://www.childrenmuseum.org)
- **August 27, Teen Dating Violence Workshop:** From 2 to 4pm at RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 422 Post Road in Warwick. Instructor: Eleanor C. McSwain,

## september

MSW. Fee: \$20. Register: 401-467-9940.

- **Sept. 7, Just Zoo It - Healthy Kids, Healthy Families:** Bring the family to Roger Williams Park Zoo at 1000 Elmwood Avenue in Providence. Find out fun ways to live a healthy lifestyle with demonstrations and displays on outdoor activities and sport. Sample kid friendly healthy snacks. Activities run from 11am to 3pm and are free with regular zoo admission. [www.rogerwilliamsparkzoo.org](http://www.rogerwilliamsparkzoo.org)
- **Sept. 7, Sunday Rides on the Blackstone River Bikeway:** A themed bike ride. Rides start at the I-295 Visitor Center in Lincoln at 10am. Call 401-765-3275.
- **Sept. 8, International Literacy Day**
- **Sept. 13 - 14, Hopkinton Colonial Crafts Festival:** Hand-crafted items and farm products, entertainment, children's activities, horse drawn wagon rides, and food vendors. From 10am to 4pm at Crandall Field on Main Street in Ashaway. Call for details, 401-377-7795.
- **Sept. 17, YWCA 4th Annual Tools of the Trade Luncheon:** Honoring the 2008 Women of Achievement Award Winners, visit [www.womenofachievementri.org](http://www.womenofachievementri.org) or call Lisa Piscatelli at 401-769-7450. Opportunities are available for tickets and underwriting. It will be held at Kirkbrae Country Club in Lincoln from 11:30am to 1:30pm. Theme: the economic empowerment of women.

- **Sept. 17, Woonsocket Data in Your Backyard:** Rhode Island KIDS COUNT will present data from the 2008 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook and Census 2000 to highlight the status of children in Woonsocket. For details and/or to RSVP call Leidy Alves at 401-351-9400 x18.
- **Sept. 20, Fall Family Festival:** Scarecrow building, kids' crafts, storytelling, local produce, artisans, a Dutch Bulb sale, and live music highlight the Fall Family Festival. From 10am to 5pm at Green Animals Topiary Garden, 380 Cory's Lane in Portsmouth. [www.newportmansions.org](http://www.newportmansions.org)
- **Sept. 27, Scituate Farmers Market:** Products from the New England Area. A variety of fruits, vegetables, eggs, breads, plants, honey, preserves, pottery, flowers, pies, hummus, bath/body, pastries, hand-made crafts, pasta, and wool. From 9am to 12pm at North Scituate Village on West Greenville Road in Scituate. For details call 401-647-5110.
- **Sept. 27 - Oct 31, Halloween Hayrides and Pumpkin Hunts:** Family-oriented. Held on weekends from 10am to 4:30pm, weekdays and nights by reservation. Pachet Brook Tree Farm at 4484 Main Road in Tiverton. [www.pachetbrook.com](http://www.pachetbrook.com)

breast health awareness month

## october

- **Oct. 2, The Fund for Community Progress Annual Roast Fundraiser:** At Radisson Airport Hotel in Warwick beginning at 5:30pm. For details call 401-941-7100.
- **Oct. 4, 2nd Annual Duck Race:** Family fun from 10am to 1pm. Call Thundermist Health Center for details, 401-235-6887.
- **Oct. 5, Providence Ronald McDonald House Women's Classic:** Women's event starts at 9:30am and kids races starts at 8:45am. [www.prmhclassic.org](http://www.prmhclassic.org).
- **Oct. 6, Investing in Our Children Luncheon:** At Rhode Island Convention Center from noon to 1:30pm. Contact Amanda Ball at Children's Friend and Service, 401-276-4344.
- **Oct. 18, 20th Annual ShelterWalk:** Begins at 9am at 40 S. Main Street, Woonsocket. Call Josie Byrd at Family Resources Community Action, 401-766-0900. [www.famresri.org](http://www.famresri.org)
- **Oct. 19, Making Strides Against Breast Cancer:** At Roger Williams Park in Providence. Registration begins at 7am. [www.cancer.org/stridesonline](http://www.cancer.org/stridesonline)
- **Oct. 24, Getting to Zero, Eliminating Childhood Lead Poisoning in RI Conference:** From 8am to 3pm at the Radisson Hotel in Warwick. [www.leadsafekids.org](http://www.leadsafekids.org)

## meeting all your childcare needs

**YWCA Northern Rhode Island**  
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**publisher**  
Deborah L. Perry



**editor**  
Lisa Piscatelli



**website administrator**  
Meaghan Lamarre

**contributors:**

*writers*

Kalyana Champlain, Megan Fischer, Jane Hudson, Deborah Meiklejohn, Natalie Myers, Rosemary Reilly-Chammat, Midge Sabatini, Betsy Streeter, Donna Williams, and Barbara Wong

*photographer*

Agapao Productions

*cover artist*

¡CityArts!

*She Shines*

514 Blackstone Street  
Woonsocket, RI 02895

p 401 769 7450, f 401 769 7454  
sheshines.org, info@sheshines.org

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**how to** . . . . .

**contribute.** *She Shines* welcomes letters to the editor, articles, poetry, stories, graphics, photos and calendar events. Contact us if you have an inspiring story to tell or have a suggestion of someone to be featured. Only original contributions will be considered and may be edited due to space limitations. Include contact information including name, e-mail, address and phone number. Images provided electronically must be high-resolution.

**submit cover art.** The cover is reserved as a gallery of art in keeping with the theme of *She Shines*. For consideration, send in a photo by e-mail attachment or mail. This is a wonderful opportunity for local artists to show their work. A biography is published in conjunction with the "Artist Canvas" section of *She Shines*.

**advertise.** Visit sheshines.org to view the advertising media kit. *She Shines* reserves the right to refuse to sell space for any advertisement the staff deems inappropriate for the publication.

**receive the magazine.** *She Shines* is a free publication mailed to members and friends of YWCA Northern Rhode Island. To be added to the mailing list, a subscription form is available on page 5 and on the website sheshines.org. The magazine is also available at YWCA Northern Rhode Island and at various special events.

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**special insert:**

ywca fall programs

*artist*  
**canvas**



**eat, sleep, and dream art**  
urban youth use ¡CityArts! as a vehicle for expression

**S**tarted in 1991, ¡CityArts! has provided free access to arts learning experience to thousands of Providence's youth ages 8 to 14 each year. The programs take place in the newly renovated Broad Street Community Arts Center with six multi-disciplinary arts studios, a gallery, and performance spaces. Youth engage in programs and public service including neighborhood improvement projects, public exhibitions, and performances. To learn more, visit [www.providencycastlearts.org](http://www.providencycastlearts.org).

"The arts are important in the development of youth, and in our everyday lives. At ¡CityArts!, youth are connected to the arts as a vehicle for self expression and communication, and at the same time are able to develop important life skills that ultimately will help them make healthy decisions for themselves for the future." - *Barbara Wong, executive director at ¡CityArts!*



Above: This edition of *She Shines* features the ¡CityArts! afterschool digital photography class from the spring session, supported by the Providence After School Alliance. The students, from left to right, include Francelly Brito, age 12; Monica Almonte, age 12; Yeimy Luna, age 13; Daijah Geter, age 12; and at bottom Danisha Lora, age 11. With instruction from Nina Maxwell, these artists explored light, expression, composition and techniques in digital technology. photo courtesy of ¡CityArts!

Left: Students from the summer painting and drawing class are creating identity pillows. photo by Agapao Productions

## from the editor . . . . .



Lisa Piscatelli tries on armor at James Fort on a family vacation in Virginia. Daughter Karina, age 7, grinds corn at Powhatan Indian Village and son Aaron, age 13, hauls water in Colonial Williamsburg.

## focus on family health

**C**hildren have a wonderful ability to make us laugh, a natural stress reducer. This edition connects the importance of play on child development and links health to student achievement. We are reminded of the value of preparing nutritious meals and of participating in physical activities, thus raising healthy children also addresses our own wellness.

We interviewed two pediatricians for guidance on the baby days and for insight on the adolescent years. We also interviewed two behavioral specialists for information on the signs of a child being bullied with solution suggestions.

How do we talk with our children about self esteem, avoiding drugs and alcohol, internet safety, and healthy relationships? Some great local resources are included.

While life has changed since the 17th-century, our basic needs are really the same: sustenance, safety, wellness, and family. E-mail [sheshines@mac.com](mailto:sheshines@mac.com), your feedback is welcome. And good luck with getting your kids ready for back to school. Take care. *Lisa*



## express yourself

The theme for the upcoming special issue of *She Shines* is women's economic empowerment. It coincides with the 4th Annual Tools of the Trade Luncheon celebrating YWCA Women of Achievement 2008. Underwriting opportunities are available. Visit [www.womenofachievementri.org](http://www.womenofachievementri.org) for details and a participation form. Or contact Lisa Piscatelli at 401-769-7450.

## subscription form

*She Shines* is a free publication in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts. For a subscription, fill in the form below:

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Optional Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Donations are appreciated and help support this local magazine of women's issues. Payable to YWCA Northern Rhode Island. Thank you!



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## Drugs Are Not Only Available On The Streets



## New Name, Broader Vision, Same Commitment



Beata Nelken, M.D., attended the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. With residency at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University completed in 2004, international health experience, bilingual capabilities, and a history of volunteerism, she now houses herself at Thundermist Health Center.  
photo by Deborah L. Perry



## healthy beginnings with pediatrician Dr. Beata Nelken

### her role as the family advocate

by Kalyana Champlain

**A**t first glance you may just see another pediatrician. However, if you go a little deeper you realize that Dr. Beata Nelken is not just your average pediatrician, but one whose humanism, not desire for title or stature, drove her into the field in which she now excels. Previously a teacher, Nelken was motivated to become a pediatrician, "I knew I wanted to work with kids, in inner cities in particular, and health is the most basic need of any community . . . and kids being the most vulnerable of any population it is where you can have the most impact. I wanted to bring resources to the community that might otherwise not be there."

With that said, Nelken opens the door to understanding that a pediatrician is not just the shot giver, but the family advocate. What many do not realize is that the role of the pediatrician expands over several areas, many of which are under-utilized. These areas include being an advocate for not just health care, but overall adjustment (including social/behavioral issues) and personal development, as well as counseling offered (especially as the child hits teen years and may find it awkward to talk about certain issues with parents).

Pediatricians also help the parents through crises, and even provide assistance with English as second language learning and language development, and are the prime point for connecting parents to important and needed resources both inside and outside of the medical field.

Nelken says the best means for searching out a good pediatrician is to first assess exactly what your needs are. Do you have a child with special needs? What are your values, and which are the most important for a pediatrician to share with you? Even

things like vicinity and cost must be considered. However, when it comes to cost, Nelken believes that a parent should not let a deficiency in insurance or income convince or sway them to think that they cannot find a good pediatrician. As she has exemplified through her work and presence at Thundermist, a facility geared toward low income families, good health care can be found anywhere - you just have to look.

When asked about the basics of getting children off to good health, Nelken points out that the most important thing children can be given is "time with the parents. Just interacting with them - not just sitting them in front of the TV or dropping them off at the babysitter. [But taking time] for reading, singing, physical activity and nutrition . . . That one on one is invaluable, there is nothing that can replace that - in terms of social development and the kids feeling very nurtured and balanced as they go off into the bigger world."

On a more basic note, yet sharing the same sentiment, Nelken says we live in a society that is moving further and further away from breast feeding, she disagrees and discourages such. She says that not only does breast milk provide needed nutrients, but it also is a time where the mother creates a lasting bond with the child.

Nelken explains that the average visitation for children to their pediatrician happens in a fixed cluster toward infancy (first 2 - 3 days, 1 week, one month, 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, one year, 1 1/2 years, 2 years, 2 1/2 years) and then yearly after 3 years of age and a healthy track has been established.

What role should a pediatrician have in the

event of a serious accident? Nelken says the pediatrician should see the child first unless the situation is life threatening. This way the doctor can be the family's escort to the hospital, and can also be the caretaker during their stay. Pediatricians may also be in touch by phone, also providing the emotional support needed during this time. It should be noted that the pediatrician is at a greater advantage to deal with the situation because they have a history with the child, both physically as well as emotionally.

While parents should make sure that the basics are covered, such as regular checkups and baby proofing the house, Nelken stresses that it is equally important to make sure that as the children grow older they also have good role models and stable social structures. Perhaps it is this holistic approach that makes her so valuable.

So what has the most rewarding part of her work been? "What makes it rewarding is the connections that I have made with families. I feel that any pediatrician can give shots at the right time . . . what makes my experience good for me is the connection with the families - nurturing them along, right there with them when a crises should arise to take them through that moment." ❖❖❖



Kalyana Champlain is a writer and spoken word artist as well as a recent graduate of URI - B.A. in communication studies. With a completed thesis entitled *Hip Hop is Dead? The Rhetoric of Hip Hop*, she is pursuing her Masters Degree at URI, in communication studies with a focus in public discourse. To reach her, e-mail kbe9877@yahoo.com. photo courtesy of Champlain.

## sense ability

...so today, we'll be vaccinating Jenny against measles, mumps and child-targeted television commercials.



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Visit Brainwaves at [www.betsystreeter.com](http://www.betsystreeter.com).

## a quote from herstory



“Make every mother and child count . . . Too often, the health of mothers and children does not count. In too many parts of the world, they are forgotten.” - *Liya Kebede*

In 2005, The World Health Organization appointed Ethiopian fashion model Liya Kebede as Goodwill Ambassador for maternal, newborn, and child health. The World Health Report 2008, the reinvigoration of primary health care, is scheduled for publication in mid-October. [www.who.int/whr/en/](http://www.who.int/whr/en/). photo courtesy of WHO/Jean-Marc Ferré

Visit [www.theliyakebedefoundation.org](http://www.theliyakebedefoundation.org), for information on Kebede's humanitarian work. The mission of her foundation is to reduce maternal, newborn, and child mortality and to improve the health and well being of mothers and children around the world. ☼☼☼

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## powerful positive force for teen mothers

Dr. Patricia Flanagan hopes to break cycle of poverty

by Natalie Myers

**D**r. Patricia Flanagan was born in Rhode Island, but she grew up in Buffalo, New York. She hadn't thought of moving back to the Ocean State until she met Dr. Sue Riggs, who started the Teens with Tots program at Hasbro Children's Hospital in 1986.

Flanagan, a fellow at the hospital at the time, found the thought of helping launch a program around adolescent development fascinating. She had worked with many teen mothers during her residency in pediatrics at Children's Hospital in Buffalo, therefore she knew some of the major challenges they face in development and was anxious to learn more.

Since her fellowship, Flanagan has become director of the Teens with Tots program. Among many other accomplishments, she is also medical director of outpatient services at Hasbro and an associate professor of pediatrics at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University.

As a pediatrician and director of Teens with Tots for 22 years now, Flanagan has become an expert in adolescent parenting issues. She knows, for example, that the needs of teenage mothers aged 16 and younger are very different from the needs of 18- and 19-year-old moms.

Younger mothers tend to come from poverty stricken single parent families. They are more likely to be the victims of sexual abuse and/or violence. Many are not succeeding in education before the pregnancy. And, in many cases, their pregnancies are not random events. Their pregnancies are planned.

What young moms need is to continue going to school while pregnant, Flanagan said. Yet many public schools either subtly or not so subtly convince them they are better off staying at home until the baby is born. That's why Teens with Tots has a lawyer on staff, to protect the girls' educational rights.

"They need to still be teens, to continue their development and explore who they are, and what they want to do in the world," Flanagan said.

More often than not young teenage mothers are treated like adults and expected to think like adults because they are carrying a child, but that's not how it works.

Flanagan found it fascinating that when studying the way teenage mothers play with their babies, her team discovered that the moms were not talking to their babies during "play" time because in their minds the babies can't understand what they are saying, so they don't understand the point of talking to them.

That's why the Teens with Tots program does

Patricia Flanagan, M.D. is an assistant professor of pediatrics at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University and director of the Teens with Tots program at Hasbro Hospital. Her areas of expertise include pregnant/parenting adolescents and children of adolescents. Flanagan sees about 60 - 70 new infants in her practice each year.

photo of Flanagan  
by Agapao Productions

photo of Myers  
by Reza Corinne Clifton

much more than provide primary care to the teen moms and their children until the children are in second grade. The program also provides very explicit parenting skills and advice.

Flanagan and her team must be very concrete in their explanations to the young moms, she said. They go over information such as how to make formula, how often to feed the baby, how to walk into a room and examine every corner to see if there's something the baby could get into that would harm the baby. These things, many of which are natural thought processes in adult moms, don't occur to a 14- or 15-year-old mom.

There are about 500 families enrolled in the Teens with Tots program in Rhode Island and only about 200 of them are very active. The rest come two or three times per year, Flanagan said.

The program hasn't noticed any substantial increase in teen pregnancies due to the state's economic recession. From 1991 to 2001 teen pregnancy dropped about 20% in Rhode Island. Since then it's remained steady at about 1,100 newborns born to teenage mothers per year.

But for Flanagan, who knows of several ways teen pregnancy could be prevented; even that number is too great. When asked what her hopes were for the future of the program, she said, her hope is that it wouldn't be needed anymore.

"This is a tiny state," she said. "You could do things in Rhode Island that you couldn't do anywhere else, but so many people are too busy moralizing the situation and not taking action."

With only 1,100 new births per year, we should know who the moms are, Flanagan said. We should know their first and last names, where they live, what services they need. If there were a statewide intensive intervention program for teen moms, if there were some way to provide wrap around services and shepherd them through the entire process, then there's a good chance the state could break the cycle of poverty plus single parent equals young teenage pregnancy equals more poverty, more single parents, more young teenagers with babies, she said.

A more simple prevention solution would be to provide better access to contraception in schools, in the community and in the home. There also needs to be more comprehensive sex education in schools, in the community and in the homes.

When asked about the reality of such a compre-



hensive intervention program, especially in a state economy where extra social services funds are non-existent, Flanagan said, she understands the upfront costs could be hefty, but if you looked at it with a forward thinking mind, you would see that most of the women on welfare started as teenage mothers. You would see that teenage motherhood is a driver of poverty. And if you break the cycle you could save thousands, perhaps millions of dollars on the back end.

Still, teenage pregnancy isn't a dead end for all the young mothers that Flanagan treats, she said. "Some of the best mothers I've worked with are the youngest mothers," she said.

For them, motherhood is a powerful positive force in their lives. It pushes them to achieve better grades in school. It makes them more responsible. This happens for a very small minority of moms in the program.

For Flanagan, those little victories do provide a sense of fulfillment. When she sees the program working, it makes everything worthwhile. ✨

Natalie Myers is a reporter for MarketingSherpa in Warren, where she writes best practice case studies and how to's for marketers. She formerly worked at



Providence Business News for two years where she covered small business and the creative economy. She has won two awards, one for a Small Business Journalist of the Year award from the local Small Business Administration, and the other a Michael P. Metcalf Media award for a series on Latino entrepreneurs.



## healthy relationships

preventing domestic violence  
with youth outreach and education

Teen dating violence runs across race, gender, and socioeconomic lines. Both males and females are victims, but boys and girls are abusive in different ways:

- Girls are more likely to yell, threaten to hurt themselves, pinch, slap, scratch, or kick.
- Boys injure girls more severely and frequently.
- Some teen victims experience violence occasionally.
- Others are abused more often, sometimes daily.

These facts go unnoticed at times and they may even be put off as “puppy love”. That’s the wrong message we send to our youth today. The clear and loud message is be aware of red flags, get help, and know it was not your fault.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. For information, education, events, or to get help, contact Sojourner House at 401-861-6191, 401-658-4334 (24-hour helpline), or [info@sojournerRI.org](mailto:info@sojournerRI.org). See teen dating violence workshop listed on page 2, calendar.

### Healthy Relationship Indicators

- You feel safe and comfortable with each other. You play, laugh, and have fun.
- Communication is open and spontaneous - you listen to each other and feel that you are heard. You decide things together.
- You express your feelings without fearing your partner’s reactions. You talk about conflict directly, and resolve it with win-win outcomes.
- Rules and boundaries are clear and defined, yet allow for flexibility if you desire change. Both of you feel free to express your needs.
- Feelings and needs are expressed, appreciated, and represented by both.
- You can be together as a couple without losing your sense of yourself.
- Your lives outside the relationship make your relationship stronger. Other meaningful relationships and interests exist for both partners.
- You each take responsibility for your own behaviors and happiness.
- Your partner does not try to change or control you when you disagree.
- You can say “no” without feeling guilty about it.
- You really trust each other. You feel trust and you have reason to trust. You each work hard to be trustworthy for the other.
- There is a balance of giving and receiving in your relationship. Equality is both affirmed and celebrated.
- Each person can enjoy being alone, and requests for privacy are respected.
- Both people recognize that any violence is unacceptable.

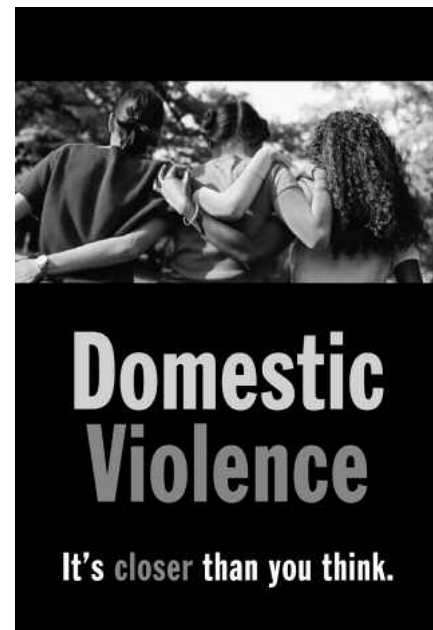


illustration courtesy of RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence

An average of one in four teens has experienced dating violence.

On any given day in Rhode Island, 46 people call a domestic violence hotline, 59 women and children spend the night in a domestic violence shelter, and 28 people seek community-based domestic violence services.

- Donna Williams, Sojourner House  
[www.sojournerri.org](http://www.sojournerri.org)

- Sheila French, RI Coalition  
Against Domestic Violence, [www.ricadv.org](http://www.ricadv.org)

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Cranston, RI

arms back bikini breast chin ears eyebrows legs neck nose shoulders toes underarms unibrow upper lip

Nutrition and physical activity promotes learning and academic achievement. Studies have shown that:

- Certain nutrients in healthy foods help cognitive performance.
- Children who do not get enough food tend to have academic, social, and discipline problems in school.
- Missing breakfast is linked to lower performance in school.
- Participating in school breakfast programs is linked to increased learning and academic achievement, improved attention, and decreased behavioral problems.
- Physical activity promotes self-esteem and alertness, which are related to improved academic performance.
- Exercise increases blood flow to the brain.
- Learning complex movements can stimulate parts of the brain used to solve problems.
- Students who engage in more moderate or vigorous physical activity perform better in school and on tests in core subject areas.

# thrive

strong minds, strong bodies, strong schools

by Rosemary Reilly-Chammat and Midge Sabatini

“Lifelong health habits are developed during childhood and adolescence, we owe it to our mothers, sisters, daughters, friends and ourselves to support each other early on in adopting healthful habits. Nurturance begins within each of us.”



**A**s partners in Thrive, the Rhode Island Departments of Education and Health work to build supportive systems among state, school, and community partners to help create safe, healthy, and nurturing schools that reduce barriers to learning. School success and academic achievement are built on a strong foundation of healthy students learning in safe and caring school environments. Thrive is Rhode Island’s Coordinated School Health Program, a nine-component program developed in 1994 with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Aligned with current education and public health efforts, Thrive makes the connection between health and student achievement. Over the years, our health and education partnership has been successful in effecting legislative and regulatory changes, in developing and implementing policy as well as standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and in designing and providing professional development opportunities for school administrators, policy-makers, teachers, parents, students, and community organizations.

Schools districts in Rhode Island play an active

role in connecting health practices and student achievement. Through the work of District Wellness Subcommittees, school districts have adopted policies, strategies, and plans to enhance the health and wellness of the school community. These plans address how schools can help address health and wellness of students and staff as part of their overall school improvement efforts. Local efforts to date have focused on improving healthy eating and physical activity.

Healthy eating and physical activity are key to overall health and wellness. Healthy eating provides the nutrients and energy needed for growth and development. Regular physical activity helps control weight and strengthens muscles, bones, and joints. According to the CDC, inactivity is more common among females (14%) than males (7%) and among black females (21%) than white females (12%). Physical activity is also related to higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of anxiety and stress among youth. Adopting these health practices can prevent many health problems, such as anemia, heart disease, hypertension, obesity, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and stroke.

While there has been much success, data from the Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey illustrate that there is still much work to be done. For instance, from 2001 to 2007 the proportion of students who ate five plus servings of fruits or vegetables per day declines significantly (27% to 19%), as did the proportion who drank three plus glasses of milk per day (23% to 16%). Additionally, the proportion of students

From left: Rosemary Reilly-Chammat, Ed.D. has over twenty years experience in adolescent health and school health education/promotion programs. She leads Rhode Island Department of Health efforts to enhance the health of school-aged children and manages the Thrive partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Education.

Right: Midge Sabatini, Ed.D. manager of the Coordinated School Health Program Thrive at the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, brings over 25 years experience in health and prevention education, school health policy, and program and curriculum development.

photo by Agapao Productions  
illustration courtesy of Thrive



who were overweight increased slightly each year from 14% in 2001 to 16% in 2007. The proportions that were obese declined slightly between 2005-2007 from 13% to 11%. The proportion of students who described themselves as slightly or very overweight also declined between 2005 and 2007 to 29%.

Data from the 2007 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey reveal a more dramatic concern among females. Thirty four percent (34%) high school females, and 25% of middle school females described themselves as slightly or very overweight, just less than half of both middle school and high school females said that they were trying to lose weight. Some good news is that 68.9% of high school females and 71% of middle school females exercised to try to lose weight.

Additionally, among Rhode Island high school females, 13.8% reported going without eating for 24 hours or more to lose weight or keep from gaining weight; 73% drink a can, bottle, or glass of soda such as Coke, Pepsi or Sprite; 33.4% said they were physically active for 60 minutes per day at least 5 to 7 days in the last week; and 21.4% reported that in an average week in school they do not attend physical education class. Among Rhode Island middle school females, 47.3% said they were physically active for 60 minutes per day on at least 5 to 7 days; 36.4% reported not playing on any sports team.

The Thrive website, [www.thriveri.org](http://www.thriveri.org), has information and resources on physical activity, nutrition and other health issues including tobacco, HIV/AIDS and sexuality, food safety, and mental health.



eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**

YEARS OF EXCELLENCE  
1923-2008

**85**

fall session 2008 northern rhode island



For an appointment or more details on child care, pre-preschool, preschool, or preschool vacation camps, call Mary Anne Deslauriers, Director of Early Childhood Learning Center, at 769-7450.

## CHILD CARE

### INFANT/TODDLER

Our philosophy is to provide a developmentally appropriate program for children 8 weeks (6 weeks with pediatrician consent) to 3 years that focuses on a child's individual needs. We provide a safe and nurturing program, which parents can rely upon throughout the year. The Early Childhood Learning Center encourages healthy social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

### REGISTER FOR 2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR

pre-preschool  
preschool  
youth enrichment

## PRE-PRESCHOOL

### LITTLE LEARNERS

Pre-preschool for children 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 years of age. With a consistent daily schedule modeled after our existing preschool program, children will be offered opportunities for socialization, creativity, and toilet training. Daily schedule includes circle time, songs, storytime, snack, play, and creative projects. 9am-noon. Two, three, or five day options available. Early Birds and Lunch Bunch available. Child care option also available for the afternoon.

## PRESCHOOL

### PRESCHOOL

The YWCA preschool is a developmental program for children age 3 to 5. Our philosophy is reflected in a "hands on" approach to learning through interactive experiences with peers, the environment, and adults. Our most important function at the YWCA preschool is to ensure that each child's first school experience is safe, joyful, and enriching. Two, three, and five-day programs with morning, afternoon, or full day options available. Licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Education.

### STEPPING STONES

A unique transitional program for children whose parents are postponing Kindergarten entrance. YWCA Stepping Stones is a developmentally appropriate setting where children participate in a program designed to enhance growth and development socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically. Small class size (maximum 15) allows for much individual attention and teacher/peer involvement. This program meets Mon.-Fri., 1-4pm. Licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Education.

### EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS:

The YWCA offers several extended day programs to help accommodate a parent or guardians' schedule.

**EARLY BIRDS** Children enjoy morning activities in a classroom environment from 8-9am and then are escorted to their respective classrooms. \$6/day

**LUNCH BUNCH** Children eat lunch in a social environment then are offered center activities to enjoy from noon-1pm. Lunches are brought from home. \$6/day

**AFTER PRESCHOOL CARE** Children are engaged in age-appropriate activities including gross motor play in playground. 4-6pm. \$6/hour/day.

## YOUTH ENRICHMENT

Our philosophy is to provide a developmentally appropriate program for children in Kindergarten to age 15. The program focuses on a youth's individual needs. We provide a safe, nurturing, and enriching program, which parents can rely upon throughout the year, especially after school, school vacations, and during the summer. Program encourages healthy social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Licensed by Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families.

For more details or an appointment, call Nathan Smith, Youth Enrichment Program Director, at 769-7450.

### AFTER SCHOOL

For students attending any Woonsocket elementary school (public or Catholic) and the Woonsocket Middle School. This program is offered Mon. to Fri., 2-6:30pm (3 day minimum) for \$17/day. Children are bussed to YWCA from their schools, enjoy a free snack, participate in fun activities, offered homework help and special events. **APPLE is an after school program for children.** It builds on the strengths and values of youth by providing them with a supportive, safe, and culturally diverse environment in which they can develop positive qualities for school success and a productive future. **Curriculum includes Academics, Physical education/recreation, Prevention,**

**Leadership, and Empowerment.** Activities are geared towards fostering individual creativity and imagination and the ability to implement the child's own original ideas.

## PARENTING

16 to 21 years old

### PARENTING IN PROGRESS

An alternative education program housed at YWCA in collaboration with Woonsocket Education Department, Project RIRAL, BVCAP, and Connecting for Children and Families. Eligible applicants must live in Woonsocket and be a pregnant or parenting young woman under 21 years old. Class meets Mon.-Fri., 9am to 1pm.

For more details, call Deb Smith, Parenting in Progress Site Coordinator, at 769-7450.

## OTHER PROGRAMS see inside:

Art  
Physical Education  
Gymnastics  
Health  
Volleyball  
Special Interest  
Women's Clubs

## NEW ACTIVITIES see inside:

Nutrition Workshops

## RETURNING CLASSES see inside:

Bellydancing  
Yoga

## BROCHURE ONLINE [www.sheshines.org](http://www.sheshines.org)

YWCA Northern Rhode Island's  
Fall Session 2008

Registration for all classes begins on August 17. Classes begin the week of August 31 and end the week of October 26. No classes held on September 1 and October 13. \* Revised program brochure reflecting nine week session and two Monday holidays.

## SPECIAL INTEREST PROGRAMS

### RHODE ISLAND CLOTHESLINE PROJECT

A visual exhibit which bears witness to the victims and survivors of acts of violence against women. The Rhode Island Clothesline Project is currently housed at YWCA Northern Rhode Island.

### SHE SHINES™

Published by YWCA Northern Rhode Island, She Shines is a magazine celebrating the aspirations and accomplishments of women. Call 769-7450 to receive a free subscription or visit [www.sheshines.org](http://www.sheshines.org) to view the online version.

### SILENT WITNESSES OF RHODE ISLAND

A traveling memorial honoring women and children of Rhode Island who were murdered in acts of domestic violence. Visit [www.silentwitness.net](http://www.silentwitness.net), to learn more.

### ART CLASSES

New and returning students welcome; every session covers new artists/projects.

#### 5 to 7 years old

#### ART FOR CHILDREN

If you love drawing then this class is for you. Learn the basics of art through drawing, painting, sculpting and creativity games. Please bring a smock or junky t-shirt and a smile. An art material fee is included in the session fee.

Missie St. Sauveur  
Fri. 5-6:30pm \$81/9wks

#### 8 to 14 years old

#### MODERN ART FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

We will cover "modern art" from the 20th century. Students will learn about some of the most famous names in art. Learn how art can be about more than just painting a house that looks like a house. Educational and very fun projects. An art material fee is included in the session fee.

Missie St. Sauveur  
\$81/9wks

Note: Day and time to be determined. If inter-

ested give contact information to the front desk, 769-7450.

#### 13 to 18 years old

#### ART FOR TEENS: THE IMPRESSIONISTS

Particularly appropriate for those who have taken Modern Art for Young People, but all students are welcome. We will delve into more advanced techniques as we learn about the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. We'll also explore exciting new media, including oil pastel and gouache. An art material fee is included in the session fee.

Missie St. Sauveur  
Mon. 5-6:30pm \$63/7wks

#### Adults and teens\*

#### FEARLESS ART FOR ADULT BEGINNERS

Have you always itched to try your hand at painting, sketching, or sculpting, but don't know where to start? Wish you knew the difference between Manet and Monet? In this class, adults can get an introduction to art-making, as well as a little art history along the way, in a relaxed, non-judgmental atmos-

phere. No talent or experience required. Come have fun with us. You may be surprised by what you can create. An art material fee is included in the session fee.

\* Teens welcome if attending with adult.

Missie St. Sauveur  
Mon. 7-8:30pm \$63/7wks

### GYM PROGRAMS

All physical education classes are under the direction of Debbie Fay.

#### DESIGN YOUR OWN CLASS!

Any age group. Want to learn T-ball, floor hockey, golf, tennis, etc? Call Debbie Fay, Physical Education Director, 769-7450. Subject to time and space availability. Prices set by usage.

#### BIRTHDAY PARTIES DURING THE WEEK

Let Debbie Fay set up and run a party for your child. Themes: gymnastics, soccer, golf, etc. Call Debbie Fay to schedule, 769-7450. Subject to time and space availability. Prices set by usage.

#### Walking to 3 years old

#### JUMPING BEANS

Gymnastics play with parent.  
Tues. 9-10am \$54/9wks  
Thurs. 10-11am \$54/9wks

#### JUMPING BEANS GETS MESSY

One hour of gymnastics play with parent followed by a 1/2 hour messy activity of crafts or cooking  
Fri. 9-10:30am \$81/9wks

#### 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 years old

Independent classes for your child (do not have to be toilet trained).

#### IDDY BIDDY SPORTY CRAFTY CHEFS

Combination of Small World, crafts, gymnastics, games, and cooking your own lunch. Come jump and crack some eggs. Non stop action.  
Wed. 9-noon \$90/9wks

#### SMALL WORLD I, II, III

Children offered opportunities for socialization, creativity and toilet training. Daily schedule includes storytime, songs, crafts, playtime, and snack.

#### SMALL WORLD I

Deb Nault  
Thurs. 9-10am \$27/9wks

#### SMALL WORLD II

Deb Nault  
Thurs. 10am-noon \$54/9wks

#### SMALL WORLD III

Deb Nault  
Mon. 9am-noon \$63/7wks  
Tues. 9am-noon \$81/9wks  
Fri. 9am-noon \$81/9wks

#### LITTLE LEARNERS

Pre-preschool for children 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 years of age. Two, three, four or five days available. See brochure page 1 for details.



#### 3 to 5 years old

#### BREAKFAST SPECIAL

Come play soccer, tennis, golf, and more. Then scramble/crack some eggs, mix up pancakes, and enjoy a full breakfast.  
Mon. 9-11am \$70/7wks

#### SPORTSTASTIC

A new sport every week, socialization, and lunch making for your child.  
Wed. noon-2pm \$90/9wks

#### INSIDE/OUTSIDE ADVENTURES

Nice weather we will spend time outside on playground collecting bugs, bird watching, and more. Bad weather we will play games in the gym. All activities followed by lunch.  
Mon. noon-2pm \$70/7wks

#### TUMBLING CRAFTY COOKS

Beginner gymnastics skills training combined w/cooking and eating.  
Thurs. noon-2pm \$90/9wks

#### GYMNASTIC FANTASTIC

Fantastic activity packed class. An hour of gymnastics followed by lunch, craft, and playtime.  
Fri. noon-2:30pm \$113/9wks

#### MOM'S TIME OUT

Drop off your children for 3 1/2 hours of non stop fun. We will play a game of alligator pit, polar bear, do some gymnastics, play soccer, t-ball, golf, make an obstacle course plus make a full lunch and have craft and playtime. Mom, you go have a massage, shop alone, or take a nap. It's your time out without feeling guilty, your children are having a blast.  
Tues. noon-3:30pm \$142/9wks

#### 4 to 6 years old

#### CHEERLEADING AND TUMBLING

Learn some cheers and tumbling skills used in cheerleading. Give me a Y, give me a W, give me a C, and give me an A.  
Mon. 3-4pm \$42/7wks

#### 6 to 9 years old

#### CHEERLEADING AND TUMBLING

Learn some cheers and tumbling skills used in cheerleading. Give me a Y, give me a W, give me a C, and give me an A.  
Mon. 4-5pm \$42/7wks

#### 9 to 12 years old

#### CHEERLEADING AND TUMBLING

Learn some cheers and tumbling skills used in cheerleading. Give me a Y, give me a W, give me a C, and give me an A.  
Mon. 5-6pm \$42/7wks





## GYMNASTICS - BASIC

3 1/2 to 5 years old

### BEGINNER GYMNASTICS FOR GIRLS AND BOYS

A great all around introductory gymnastics program. Preschoolers have the opportunity to advance to higher levels.  
Fri. 3:30-4:30pm \$54/9wk

5 1/2 to 12 years old

### BEGINNER GYMNASTICS FOR GIRLS AND BOYS

A great all around introductory gymnastics program. Students have the opportunity to advance to higher levels.  
Mon. 3:45-5pm \$53/7wk  
Sat. 10:15-11:30am \$68/9wk

10 to 18 years old

### PRE-TEEN GYMNASTICS TEEN GYMNASTICS & CONDITIONING

Students get to work at their own individual gymnastic level.  
Sat. 11:30am-12:45pm \$68/9wk



## GYMNASTICS - CONTINUING

All classes listed below require permission from instructor for participation. Please call Jennie Graham or Debbie Fay at 769-7450.

4 to 7 years old

### ADVANCED PEE WEE GYMNASTICS-LEVEL I & II

Thurs. 3:45-4:45pm \$54/9wks

5 to 12 years old

### INTERMEDIATE GYMNASTICS

Wed. 3:45-5pm \$68/9wks  
Sat. 9-10:15am \$68/9wks

### ADVANCED GYMNASTICS

Tues. 3:45-5pm \$68/9wks

### PRE TEAM

Sat. 11am-12:30pm \$81/9wks

## COMPETITIVE TEAM

Monthly fee for all competitive teams:  
One day a week \$44/month  
Two days a week \$86/month  
Three days a week \$100/month  
Jennie Graham, Head Coach  
Breonna Gentes, Assistant Coach

### HOT SHOTS 4 to 9 years old

Sat. 9-11am

### TEAM A 8 to 16 years old

Sat. 11am-1pm

### TEAM B 8 to 16 years old

Thurs. 4:30-6:30pm  
Sat. 1-4pm

### TEAM C 8 to 16 years old

Tues. 4-6:30pm  
Sat. 1-4pm

### TEAM D 9 to 18 years old

Tues. 4-6:30pm  
Fri. 4:30-6:30pm  
Sat. 1-4pm

## HEALTH

### ENCOREplus®

ENCOREplus® is a systematic approach to women's health promotion, in particular, breast and cervical cancer education. The YWCA offers community outreach, breast and cervical health education, linkage to clinical screening services and assistance in accessing and navigating diagnostic treatment services when necessary. The YWCA also offers support during diagnosis and treatment.

If you are over the age of 40 and have no health insurance, or your insurance does not cover breast and cervical screenings every year, you may qualify for free services. The Rhode Island Department of Health Women's Cancer Screening Program provides a women's health exam including clinical breast and pelvic exams, Pap smear, mammogram, and follow-up services.

For more information about ENCOREplus®, call Joyce Dolbec, YWCA Health Consultant, at 769-7450. If hearing/speech impaired call 1-800-745-5555 for more information on the Cancer Screening Program.

### SMOKING CESSATION

Supportive and educational one hour meeting weekly for 8 weeks held at YWCA Northern Rhode Island. Free nicotine replacement therapy during the 8 week program. Facilitated by tobacco treatment specialists trained by University of Massachusetts Medical School. Open to those with or without insurance or on Medicaid.

Call YWCA Health Office to register, 769-7450. Free with YWCA membership.

## WALKING CLUB

Supportive and educational resources to begin walking club in your area or from YWCA Northern Rhode Island. Choose your best time frame: morning, afternoon, or early evening. Clubs beginning in fall.

Call YWCA Health Office to register, 769-7450. Free with YWCA membership.

16+ years old

### AEROBIC DANCE

Fees reflect member rates, nonmembers pay an additional \$20.

Colette Doura  
Mon./Wed., 7:15-8:15pm \$53/8wks

### YOGA

Flexibility and stress reduction are crucial for dealing with day-to-day life. Take time to learn an art of movement that will promote wellness and well being.

Kathy Hopkins  
Thurs., 7-8:30pm \$81/9wks

### BELLYDANCING

Bellydancing as a form of exercise, expression, and female freedom. Various moves will be taught including hip drops, figure eights, shoulder shimmy and rolls, hip shimmies, undulations, turns, spins, chest isolations, footwork, and combinations.

Donia  
Tues., 7-8pm \$54/9wks

17+ years old

### WOMEN'S WORKOUT ROOM

Enjoy the privacy of a women's only facility with: a four stack universal machine, bikes, free weights, treadmills and showers. You must pay a \$20 instruction/processing fee and attend an introductory session in order to be eligible to use the room. A YWCA adult female membership is required.

## VOLLEYBALL

### ADULT VOLLEYBALL LEAGUES

League Director: Debbie Fay

If you play in more than one volleyball league you receive a discount for 2nd or 3rd league. Sign up for two or more leagues today. Volleyball teams picked by draft. Come prepared to play on organizational nights. Dates are subject to change due to weather or other uncontrollable circumstances. To verify times/dates, call Debbie Fay, Physical Education Director, at 769-7450.

### INTERMEDIATE MIXED CO-ED

Sundays  
Organization night will be held November 2 from 6-8pm. League play begins November 9. If you have a team or wish to join, contact Debbie Fay ASAP, 769-7450. \$112/20 wks & playoffs/plus membership fee.

Sunday League only: Bring in your own team. If you don't have a team, please contact Debbie Fay ASAP, 769-7450 and we will try to help you make a team. 20 wk league plus playoffs. Pay in two installments.

### POWER CO-ED JOHN PIETROPAOLI LEAGUE

Tuesdays  
Advanced players. Organizational night will be held September 9 from 6:45-8:30pm. League play begins September 16. Teams formed by draft. \$56/10 wks & playoffs/plus membership fee.

### INTERMEDIATE CO-ED

Wednesdays  
Intermediate or above players only. Organizational night will be held September 10 from 6:30-8pm. League play begins September 17. Teams formed by draft. \$56/10 wks & playoffs/plus membership fee.

### VOLLEYBALL PICK-UP GAMES

For YWCA members. Call Debbie Fay for details and to register, 769-7450. \$5 each week you attend starting Sept. 7 - Oct. 26. Games played on Sundays from 6-8pm.

## WOMEN'S CLUBS

Contact YWCA for details, 769-7450

### APRES-MIDI

This club provides opportunities for both single and married women to share activities, information, and to gain new friendships. Activities include guest speakers, outings, restaurant tours, luncheons, and demonstrations. Membership is open to women 30 years of age and over. Meetings are held on alternate Thursdays at 1:30pm from September through June.

### Y WIVES & GIRLS

The purpose of this club is to build a fellowship of women devoted to the task of enriching each member's life by building a program around education, services for others, and recreation. Activities include outings, special events, and service projects. Membership is open to women 30 years of age and over. Meetings are held on alternate Tuesdays at 1:30pm from September through June.



## YWCA NORTHERN RHODE ISLAND

### CONTACT US

514 Blackstone Street  
Woonsocket, RI 02895  
T: 401-769-7450, F: 401-769-7454  
www.sheshines.org

### STRONG ALONE FEARLESS TOGETHER

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

6 to 16 years \$12.00  
17 to 64 years \$22.00  
65 and over \$17.00

*Children under 6 must be covered by a parent or guardian membership. Membership fees are not refundable or deductible as a charitable contribution. Reduced rates are available in some classes for members 65 and over. All classes and activities are open to both sexes unless otherwise indicated in the class description. A member may use the membership card at all other YWCAs in the USA.*

YWCA membership, paid yearly, is required for participation in all programming except as otherwise indicated. Special non-member fees are available for some adult programs.

As a YWCA member, you have access to:

- low cost, innovative programs
- special membership events
- volunteer opportunities
- membership in the oldest, largest women's movement in the nation (*men and boys are welcome as associates*)
- use of YWCA facilities nationwide

### HOURS

Monday to Thursday, 9am-9pm  
Friday, 9am-6:30pm  
Saturday, 9am-4:30pm

### STORM POLICY

Please listen to radio stations WOON 1240AM or WNRI 1380AM for YWCA cancellations, or watch Channel 10 & 12 closing announcements. School system delays, early dismissals, and professional days do not apply to YWCA schedule.

### SCHEDULE

Classes run in consecutive sessions during the school year. A new schedule for the summer.

### ROOM RENTALS

Room rentals are available. Contact YWCA for details, 769-7450.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kim Garneau, President  
Cathy Brien, Vice President  
Susan Gershkoff, Esq., Treasurer  
Marissa Trinquet, Secretary  
Rosemary Brite  
Alessandra Borges  
Lisa Carcifero  
Gail Davis  
Susan Donahue, DC  
Vivian Godin  
Jeanne Lynch  
Stella Nared  
Deborah L. Perry, Executive Director

### CALENDAR/EVENTS

- **August 25, YWCA Monday Night Golf League Celebration:** At Melody Hills Country Club at 4:30pm. A 6 Hole Scramble Golf Tournament followed by food, fun, prizes, and raffle.
- **August 26, Women's Equality Day**
- **September 2 and 4, Preschool Begins**
- **September, Fall Candle Fundraiser Begins**
- **September, Women of Achievement Month:** For details about the 4th Annual Tools of the Trade Luncheon honoring the 2008 women of achievement award winners, visit [www.womenofachievementri.org](http://www.womenofachievementri.org) or call Lisa Piscatelli at 769-7450. Opportunities are available for tickets and underwriting. The event will be held at Kirkbrae Country Club in Lincoln from 11:30am to 1:30pm.
- **October 19 - 25, YWCA Week Without Violence**

### NOTABLE

- Deborah L. Perry, executive director at YWCA Northern Rhode Island, selected as a 2008 Women's Fund Fellow.
- Joyce Dolbec, health consultant at YWCA Northern Rhode Island, selected as a Woman of the Year for 2008 by the Rhode Island Commission on Women.
- The YWCA Northern Rhode Island Hudson Room has been remodeled. This multi-purpose room is used for in-house gatherings, community meetings, and as classroom space for the Parenting in Progress program. It is also available for community rental.

### SHE SHINES™

Published by YWCA Northern Rhode Island, *She Shines* is a magazine celebrating the aspirations and accomplishments of women. A mailed publication, the circulation is 8,000+.

Call 401-769-7450 to receive a free subscription or to view the online version, visit [www.sheshines.org](http://www.sheshines.org).

The upcoming theme is the economic empowerment of women. It is a special issue of *She Shines* celebrating the 2008 YWCA Women of Achievement.

For ad rates or to reserve ad space, contact Lisa Piscatelli at 401-769-7450.

Visit [www.womenofachievementri.org](http://www.womenofachievementri.org), for details on the 4th Annual Tools of the Trade Luncheon including options for tickets and underwriting.

Individual luncheon tickets are \$50. Underwriting levels include luncheon tickets and ads (1/8, 1/4, 1/3, 1/2, and full page). Note: Deadline to purchase tickets is September 10. Deadline for underwriting is September 3.

Join YWCA Northern Rhode Island at the 4th Annual Tools of the Trade Luncheon. This event will be held at Kirkbrae Country Club in Lincoln on Wednesday, September 17 from 11:30am to 1:30pm.

## FALL SESSION 2008



### YWCA MISSION

The YWCA is a women's membership movement nourished by roots in the Christian faith and sustained by the richness of many beliefs and values. Strengthened by diversity, the Association draws together members who strive to create opportunities for women's growth, leadership, and power in order to attain a common vision: peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all people. The Association will thrust its collective power toward the elimination of racism wherever it exists and by any means necessary.

## ADVOCACY

### health and nutrition activities



The URI Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program is partnering with YWCA Northern Rhode Island to offer a variety of health and nutrition services. Beginning this fall, URI will be working with YWCA staff to offer nutrition workshops and food demonstrations featuring low-cost, healthy recipes to help stretch the dollar, prepare tasty family meals, and achieve a healthy lifestyle. Planned programs include workshops for parents and families, teen moms, as well as individuals.

Although major activities begin this fall, you can take advantage of this partnership today. If you have questions about healthy eating for you or your family, the URI nutrition hotline is available toll-free at 1-877-Food-URI for free recipes, information and personalized help.

Also, be on the lookout for the URI program's RIPTA promotion now appearing statewide. The eye-catching poster advertises the 1-877-Food-URI hotline for free tips on stretching the food dollar, low-cost recipes, coupons, and locations to get food assistance.

Whether you are already participating in programs or are new to the YWCA, we'd like to hear what you'd like to see in this upcoming partnership. Contact Joyce Dolbec at the YWCA at 401-769-7450 or [jdolbec@verizonmail.com](mailto:jdolbec@verizonmail.com) or Lorraine Keeney at the URI Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program at 401-277-5234 or [lkeeney@uri.edu](mailto:lkeeney@uri.edu).





Margaret Paccione-Dyszlewski, Ph.D., clinical assistant professor, Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, is the director of training, Department of Behavioral Education, Bradley Hospital.

photo courtesy of Bradley Hospital

# breaking the silence

## bullying in a modern age

by Kalyana Champlain

**W**hen I was young I was bullied: physically, verbally, and emotionally. This experience helped exacerbate my already harbored feelings of insecurity and low self worth. I have only touched upon it a few times in my adult years, but never let it “get too deep.” Upon beginning my interview, I shared a piece of my story with Margaret Paccione-Dyszlewski, Ph.D., and Steve Barreto, Ph.D., clinical assistant professors, Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. At the end of the interview, Paccione-Dyszlewski, also director of training of the Department of Behavioral Education, Bradley Hospital, thanked me for breaking the silence. It is my hope that this is what this article will do for you; whether you have been through it, have someone who is going through it now, or may go through it in the future - may we begin to break the silence.

**So how would you describe “bullying”?** Paccione-Dyszlewski: Aggressive behavior that has intentionality and involves some kind of imbalance of power. Barreto: Physical or verbal aggression - including spreading rumors [and] can take the form of threats. Now with cyber-space, Internet, text messaging, there are [more] opportunities for threats to emerge. Paccione-Dyszlewski: It is usually called cyber-bullying . . . some nonverbal, nonphysical, but has a definite presence or there are several bullies and one victim.

**How prevalent is bullying these days?** Barreto: Statistics show that nationally up to 17% of teens are harassed by bullies. Paccione-Dyszlewski: That is what I have in front of me - average is 15 to 25% so Barreto has it right on the money.

**Is there an age that it first emerges or peaks?** Barreto: Bullying becomes more prominent in grade school and extends through high school. However even in pre-school, children can form groups that exclude other children. For example, a girl who insists that her playmates can only be [with] certain other girls in the class. Fortunately in the early years it is much easier for child-care providers to get directly involved and instruct children immediately about the best way to make and keep friends. Also, before grade school children generally have not developed the complexity in peer relationships that can lead to more lasting problems in self-esteem. Paccione-Dyszlewski: And there is also a fair amount of information that shows children with special needs get targeted more often . . . they are considered easy targets. Barreto: Right . . . and that is what I was getting at earlier . . . and that is true for kids younger than second grade . . . and those not necessarily grouped together. Paccione-Dyszlewski: There’s . . . some evidence that

there are some [gender issues], boys are more likely than girls to bully, and girls report being bullied by both boys and girls - when boys are most often bullied by boys.

**So is all fighting considered bullying?** Barreto: Well we would have to go back to the power imbalance of this . . . It could be a child significantly older, with social influence, power of numbers . . . age, ranks, gender. Paccione-Dyszlewski: And on a gender issue, boys are more likely to be bullied physically by their peers, while girls are more likely to report that they’re targets of rumors and sexual comments. Girls are also more likely to bully each other in a social area like social exclusion.

**So when we ask that question what we really need to say is it depends on the power structure that is taking place?** Paccione-Dyszlewski: Yes. I think that’s a fair statement.

**Do we notice a typical pattern with bullies?** Paccione-Dyszlewski: There is the physical and the verbal, but also the emotional. When they are excluded from a particular group. In middle school and adolescence the main developmental task is to become independent from caretakers and move closer to peer groups - if the peer group is not accepting, it can be particularly painful . . . This stands across the board but is particularly true for middle school and high school. Do you see the connection there? The developmental task and the types of bullying that takes place there - it is not by accident because bullying is centered on what is most important to the child. Barreto: Bullies are all shapes and sizes. Bullying behavior can be motivated by insecurity or poor self-esteem. The bully may be seeking positive attention or status with their peer group by ridiculing another child. It is also important to remember that both popular and unpopular kids can bully. Paccione-Dyszlewski: There is another piece to the element to the developmental task that we are forgetting . . . comments about sexual identity is a form of bullying that is pretty prevalent. Kids are trying to figure out their sexual identity so comments about sexual identity become very powerful . . . it is particularly hurtful when a child is trying to figure out their sexual identity. Does that make sense?

**Now do children learn to bully?** Paccione-Dyszlewski: I may make the case that a child had to experience it somewhere . . . home, peers, television. No infant is born knowing how to be a bully. Barreto: There are some studies that similar characteristics are hyperactive, more difficulty concentrating . . . other than that, no. I think there are a wide variety of types of people that engage in bullying.

**What are some of the warning signs that a child is being bullied?** Paccione-Dyszlewski: Depends on the type of bullying. Barreto: If physical aggression: torn damaged or missing clothing or belongings, unexplained injuries. Paccione-Dyszlewski: For emotional kinds . . . fearful about going to school, getting on the school bus, a

downward change in school performance, mood shifts, and all of the kinds of trauma - nervousness, loss of appetite, mood swings, headaches . . . Barreto and I were talking about the difference of the bullying now compared to when our parents . . . it is more evasive and subtle, and greater. So if parents respond of letting the kids handle it themselves it can be very dangerous. Parents need to bond with the school system . . . create partnerships. Barreto: And at extreme forms - it can become very dangerous behavior that needs to be acted on quickly.

**So the key is in creating these partnerships and climates for kids to feel safe to talk about it?** Paccione-Dyszlewski: Yes and parents also need places. The same way there is strength in numbers with children, it is the same with parents. Barreto: The good news is that there are many more resources available. Paccione-Dyszlewski: If a child has been a victim of bullying, the way that a child can move from the victim to the survivor - which is a more empowering place - would be to seek mental health services. There is a lot of emotional wear and tear on a child that has been bullied.

**What are these effects and can they last and be true for a person who is now an adult but were bullied in the past?** Paccione-Dyszlewski: Yes. Children who are bullied are more likely to be depressed, isolated - bullying has impact on self image and esteem, can cause self loathing and can have physical manifestation. In some cases the child becomes suicidal. It depends on the personal characteristics and resiliency of the child and what else is going on in the child’s life.

**Other suggestions to help a child being bullied?** Barreto: Increase the child’s peer network. Parents can help kids by helping them to develop groups of friends both in and outside of the school setting . . . to help them feel secure and more positive about themselves. Paccione-Dyszlewski: And parents can teach their children how to become good friends so they have a buddy with them at all times.

**Dr. Barreto I know that you have done an extensive amount of work in this field, is there anything that has stood out for you that people should be aware of?** Barreto: The first thing is to be wary of quick solutions, there are none - and the second thing is that silence makes the problem worse . . . Dr. Paccione discussed how kids get anxious . . . it is here that parents, teachers, and afterschool providers need to be alert to the signs of bullying . . . and create an environment where kids are free to talk. Paccione-Dyszlewski: I agree. Silence is the friend of the bully.

**RESOURCES:** Mental health services, online such as [www.stopbullying.org](http://www.stopbullying.org), libraries, community centers, and the school system. ❄❄❄

# keeping children healthy and safe

## help for talking about the tough issues

by Jane Hudson

All of us, young and old, are living in a very "wired" and interconnected world, thanks to the Internet. Parents today did not grow up with everyday use of the Internet. Most parents grew up writing and receiving letters and telephone calls. And there weren't hundreds of channels on 24/7 all selling products and promoting sex, drug use, and violence. It goes without saying that the Internet has changed the way we all live and work - and has changed the way parents raise their children. What's vital is for parents to know how best to protect their children and turn the Internet into a resource for education and healthy communication.

The topic of Internet Safety is just one in a series of six critical health safety issues addressed by Can We Talk? Rhode Island, a parent education program funded by the Rhode Island Department of Health, Office of HIV/AIDS & Viral Hepatitis, and being coordinated statewide by Capital City Community Centers, a non-profit agency in Providence. Dominic Cappello, consultant to Can We Talk? Rhode Island, is the creator and co-author (with Susan Duron, PhD) of the National Education Association's Can We Talk? program.

Can We Talk? Rhode Island is a program designed to help parents keep their children ages 8 to 14 healthy and safe by learning when and how to talk with their kids about risks and prevention, which is one of the most important responsibilities a parent has. Can We Talk? Rhode Island parent-child communication workshops help parents talk with their children about all the "tough issues."

It is designed as a month long intervention for parents and their pre-teens. There are two face-to-face workshops for parents, in addition to six web-based courses, in which they are introduced to six key topic areas:

- Bullying, Conflict, and Violence
- Puberty, Sexuality & Health

- Internet Safety and Media Messages
- Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs
- Self-Esteem and Emotional Health
- Pressures, Stress, and Success

The goal of the Can We Talk? Rhode Island program is to give parents and guardians the resources and support they need to talk with their children about keeping healthy and safe. Children and teens face serious challenges - related to drug use, alcohol, sexual relationships, Internet safety, bullying, violence, and emotional health. And these challenges impact the success students will have in school and later in life.

Can We Talk? Rhode Island is designed to give young people the skills to communicate their concerns and to problem solve. The course is also designed to help parents and children understand the legal aspects of health and safety and how the law protects people - illustrating both rights and responsibilities.

All the workshops are currently available online as e-courses for parents to view and participate in with their children ages 8 to 14 on-line at [www.canwetalkri.org](http://www.canwetalkri.org).

Each online course is a virtual parent-child communication workshop, including a brief animated video designed as a whimsical conversation starter that provides an opening for parents to discuss the topic issue with their child. For instance, in the Internet Safety and Media Messages video, the kids tell their mom that they are not brainwashed by what they see on TV. Then they see a commercial selling jeans and immediately want to own those jeans. This leads to the following suggested questions for the discussion between the participating parent and child:

- Does advertising really make people want to buy things?
- What kind of advertising do you find on the

Jane Hudson is prevention program manager at Providence's Capital City Community Centers. For the last eleven years Jane has worked in the prevention field, focusing on both mental health promotion and substance abuse prevention. She is currently a member of the Rhode Island Injury Community Planning Group and chair of its Suicide Prevention Subcommittee.

photo courtesy of Hudson  
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Internet?

- If someone were bothering you in a chat room, what would you do?
- How can you tell the difference between e-mails that are from friends and those that are from people trying to trick you or sell you things you don't want?
- How many minutes a day do you think it's healthy for people to be staring at a computer or TV screen?

The questions are designed to get people thinking about the issues, potential problems and possible solutions that are right for their family. Parents can groom their responses based on their own values and family rules.

Another workshop activity includes questions and answers designed to give parents key information related to health and safety. Again, the goal of this activity is to generate conversation. The questions are as important as answers, and answers may change based on a parent's values.

Jane Hudson, Can We Talk? Rhode Island coordinator, is working to set up trainings throughout the state to create a cadre of facilitators who introduce parents to the workshop series and on-line courses. Ideally, parents can choose from workshops in the workplace, in the community, and/or in schools. Can We Talk? Rhode Island creates a learning system that works for parents, giving them updated, medically and legally accurate information about health and safety issues specific to Rhode Island and our diverse communities.

A one and one half day training for facilitators will be conducted twice this coming fall through Project Reach RI. This training is offered free of charge, however, potential facilitators are expected to both identify a sponsor for and facilitate the two-part workshop series within three months after completing the course. The dates for these training opportunities are September 15th and 16th, as well as October 20th and 21st. Contact Jane Hudson at 455-3880 x230 or [jhudson@capcities.org](mailto:jhudson@capcities.org) for further information regarding the Can We Talk? Rhode Island program and/or future parent workshops.





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photo by Deborah L. Perry

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## a star player educator Karen Lambe

by Megan Fischer



"Mrs. Lambe, what's that stuff coming out of the worm's tail?" asks Chloe. The adults in the classroom stifle their giggles as Mrs. Lambe gives Chloe her full attention and answers her question.

Early childhood development specialist Karen Lambe retires from Providence Children's Museum in August after 23 years of service to children, families and teachers. The beloved educator came to the museum in 1985 after 11 years as a public school art teacher. In 1987 she introduced Preschool Friday, a popular program series that encourages the creativity and curiosity of hundreds of young children like Chloe each year. Lambe was the visionary behind Littlewoods, a whimsical woodland environment for young children created when the museum relocated to Providence in 1997 and redesigned this summer. Over the past 11 years, she cultivated a partnership between the museum and Providence Head Start and guided AmeriCorps members serving over 1,200 Head Start children and teachers annually. Lambe has helped open the museum's doors to thousands of children and welcome them to a place of wonder and delight.

Parents, teachers and colleagues remark on the enthusiasm, passion, knowledge, and joy Lambe brings to her work. Her genuine interest in and respect for all people and her ability to make connections and build relationships have immeasurably enhanced the museum's resources. Above all, Lambe is known for the magic she brings to her teaching. She would protest that it's simple, really: she listens to children. She truly hears them, honors their ideas, takes their questions seriously and makes space for the unexpected comments that

indicate what's most important to them.

Lambe has helped shape what the Providence Children's Museum is today: an engaging hands-on environment that inspires active discovery and exploration by providing children with fun and meaningful learning experiences. She and a team of educators and designers create thoughtful, welcoming environments that allow children to move freely from one place to another, access materials, indulge their curiosities. Lambe has embraced the unique opportunity to work with parents and children together and share important ideas: "Young children need to make choices, to have grown-ups support and not take over. It's thrilling to witness them gain the confidence that comes from making their own choices and practicing their developing skills."

Museum staff have long recognized the impact of freely chosen, open-ended play on children's healthy development, an idea that is now garnering national attention. The American Academy of Pediatrics issued a clinical report in January 2007 noting that "... play is essential to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth" and "allows children to create and explore a world they can master."

Lambe has given countless children opportunities to make choices as they explore their world. And as she's influenced their development, they've left their mark on her. "I feel absolute wonder when I'm in the company of children," said Lambe. "That parents have trusted me to play a small part in their children's lives has been an extraordinary blessing." Fortunately for thousands of children who visit the museum each year, Lambe's legacy will live on through the new generation of educators she's nurtured and the rich programs and exhibits she and her colleagues have created together. ❖❖❖

Imagine, explore, invent, build and experiment! Play Power, a new exhibit celebrating the power of children's play, will open at Providence Children's Museum in late October. This learning environment will engage kids and grown-ups in creative activities that vividly illustrate the importance of open-ended play. photo by Agapao Productions

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Please visit our website at [www.adoptionri.org](http://www.adoptionri.org) for more details on these and all ways you can help.

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# sharing what is fun

at the Providence  
Children's Museum



Megan Fischer, above, is the marketing and public relations manager at Providence Children's Museum and has worked with and learned from Karen Lambe for more than four years. Fischer chatted with sisters Rachel and Emily Haviland and Valerie Louis on July 1, 2008 at the museum.  
photos by Agapao Productions



**What do you like to do for fun?**

Rachel Haviland  
age 9, 5th grade (top photo left)  
"I like playing soccer."

Emily Haviland  
age 7, 2nd grade (top photo right)  
"I like being outside and playing lacrosse. Sometimes we go on our swing set or play where construction people are working on our house."



**What do you like to do at the Providence Children's Museum?**

Valerie Louis, age 8, 3rd grade (bottom photo)  
"This is my second time at the museum. This room [Fefa's Market, a 1960s Dominican bodega] is my favorite because you can play with a lot of food, cook, use the cash register, and be with your friends. I also love Water Ways!"



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article and photos by Lisa Piscatelli



**L**earning Express is owned by Mary Beth Kreger. Her toy stores have been in business now for over six years at 74 Frenchtown Road in North Kingstown and 184 County Road in Barrington.

As a parent, she has first hand knowledge about toys and kids. With husband Chris, they have four daughters and a son. At times she feels compelled to remind customers "to hug their babies . . . that time is so fleeting".

"Children are like blank slates . . . our job is to guide these children . . . empower them," Kreger says. And she remembers her mother's

advice, "You cannot let them grow like weeds. Trim them like the roses they are. You need to tend your garden."

Kreger's essential piece to life is to be sweet and kind. She tries to be a good example to her own kids and to her employees.

She researches toys looking for coordination, dexterity, practical learning, and sharing opportunities. Kreger points out collaborative features like with the jump rocket, also energy and cause/effect. Kreger recognizes that toys are able to foster developmental growth and encourage

learning through play and creativity. She offers unique toys with lots of play value. And she always makes certain some selections are made in America.

Mary Beth and Chris Kreger are in the stores daily. Seeing customer service as important, Learning Express offers personalization and gift wrapping. A toy problem solver, they deliver and assemble. Other services include a VIP program, a birthday wish list registry, and in-store events. Ask about birthday parties, stuffin' party fundraisers, and story hours with community readers.

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## CLASSES ENROLLING NOW



## parents are a child's first teacher

learning, growing, and developing your child's potential

by Deborah Meiklejohn

**A**s new parents, we are always aware of our child's important "firsts". We can usually remember the age at which our child smiled, walked, got their first tooth, and said their first word. Once these major milestones are reached, the rest become a little fuzzy. However, as our children approach school age, there are other milestones equally important to a child's school success. Parents can start to look for these milestones during the preschool years.

Milestones are often measured within four domains of learning: language, intellectual, social/emotional, and gross/fine motor. Parents should always keep in mind that children develop at their own pace, and milestones are general guides for development. If a child has not mastered a skill, it should not cause panic, but merely encourage a parent to give their child opportunities to learn and acquire that skill.

Between the ages of 3 and 4 years old, parents start to see the emergence of school related skills. Early language should become more sophisticated, with children using 4 to 6 words in a sentence. Their speech should be 90% understandable, remembering that some sounds, especially blends like sh, take a while to master. Children should begin to show an interest in rhymes, and should be able to recite a favorite rhyme like Humpty Dumpty. This is an important reading readiness skill. A child should also be able to sing phrases from a favorite song. To encourage all of these things, parents should expose their children to nursery rhymes, especially the traditional ones. By using books, CD's, and just reciting them for fun, parents will encourage their child to learn the rhymes. This can also in turn help with their language development as they learn new words, not normally in our daily vocabulary.

Intellectual development at this age usually focuses on early mathematic skills. Children should be able to sort objects by category (animals, toys, food, etc) and they should also be able to sort by color and shape. They should be able to name simple shapes, like square, circle, triangle and name at least 4 colors. Children should be able to complete an 8 piece interlocking puzzle, which is different than fitting 8 pieces into separate spaces. They also should be able to count 3 items out loud. Again, this is different than being able to count to 3. Many children at a young age learn to say the numbers, but they have no meaning. True counting is being able to touch items, one by one, and count them accu-

rately. Parents can help these skills develop by making a game out of sorting items, even the laundry. Have a child sort their belongings into categories like toys or books. When giving a child a snack, have them count their goldfish crackers, or apple slices. Ask a child which color fruit pop they want, or which color shirt they would like to wear. All of these give a child practical application for these skills, which leads to more learning than quizzing a child.

Social/emotional skills develop as a child becomes aware of themselves as a person, learns to interact with others, and learns self care. A 3 to 4 year old should be able to tell you their first and last name. They should be able to dress and undress, with the exception of some tricky fasteners, and should be able to blow their nose, and brush their teeth. They should also be able to play cooperatively with a group of two or more children, and begin to share. Parents should encourage their child to take more responsibility for their own care. Children often enter preschool at 3 or 4 years old, and it is important for a child's self esteem to feel capable. The more children can do for themselves, the more confident they feel. That confidence leads a child to be able and willing to try new tasks.

Gross motor skills also become refined at this age. Children are usually able to catch a large ball and balance on each leg for more than 5 seconds. They should be able to jump forward with two feet together. Parents can help children practice this by having them jump over something, like a magazine. Children should also be able to walk down stairs, alternating their feet, without holding on. Often children are unable to do this, just because of a lack of opportunity. If a parent is fearful, worried their child may fall, start small. Try just a few steps at a time.

Fine motor skills are extremely important for school readiness. Once a child enters school, it is expected that they have acquired certain skills, including some cutting, pasting, and writing skills.

**"Between the ages of 3 and 4 years old . . . children should begin to show an interest in rhymes, and should be able to recite a favorite rhyme like Humpty Dumpty. This is an important reading readiness skill."**

*- Deborah Meiklejohn*



Deborah Meiklejohn is the state leader for the Rhode Island Parents as Teachers programs and has also coordinated the Warwick Parents as Teachers program for 15 years. Parents as Teachers is an international early learning program whose mission is to provide the information, support, and encouragement parents need to help their children develop optimally during the crucial early years of life. There are currently 20 programs in Rhode Island. photo by Agapao Productions

Children at this age should be able to cut on a 6 inch line, straight or curved, build a tower of more than 9 blocks, and draw a person with at least 2 to 4 body parts. Children who need help with cutting skills can practice first with cutting play dough snakes or stiff paper. This helps because the child can focus on manipulating the scissor, without worrying about a flimsy piece of paper moving around. Misting plants with a trigger style plant mister is another way to develop the cutting motion, as it is the same motion needed to open and close a scissor. Parents should also provide children lots of opportunity for writing. Children love to play with paper, envelopes, and stickers. Making a post office play set with junk mail and old stationery is a great way for a child to have fun with writing. Providing different kinds of writing tools of different thicknesses also helps as it take a different touch to write with a thin pencil, a fat crayon or even sidewalk chalk.

The most important thing to remember is that children at this age learn more effectively through doing and not through direct instruction, so keep it fun. Everything can be turned into a game, and a child will learn through play. To get more information on developmental milestones and for parenting tips, visit the parent section of the Parents as Teachers website, [www.patnc.org](http://www.patnc.org).

on the rhode .....

# in our own backyard

This summer over 200 children and youth participated in YWCA Northern Rhode Island programs. The YWCA is licensed by the State of Rhode Island Department of Education and Department of Children, Youth, and Families. Hailey Hurteau, right, listens to Deb Fay, director of physical education. Below Busy Bee teacher Anne Hoyle, helps Ethan Labossiere dry off after a swim.



Ethan Lessard, top right, and Carrie Chase participate in a gym class with instructor Lauren Selemi. The YWCA offers over forty individual classes for children age 8 weeks (6 weeks with pediatrician consent) to adulthood including art, physical fitness, computers, competitive gymnastics and much more. Housed in an 18,000 square foot facility on 4.2 acres of land the association has been providing services to the community for 85 years.



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Pictured far left, from left to right are Kiara Trusty, Tanaysia Sanders, Alexia Crotty, and Giselle Crotty, participants in Adventure Camp. Bottom left, Lundy Deslauriers, front, cools off in a kiddie pool with Zachary Henry. Marianely Medina, left and Ciara Cleary, dance to a Nintendo video game. Below, Xaxier Labrecque, dunks the ball during a basketball game.

photos by Deborah L. Perry



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# shining

with Jacqueline L. Dowdy

Jackie Dowdy is the member advocate/ombudsmen at Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island. She acts as a bridge between its members and the health plan.

Dowdy delivered the keynote address at YWCA Northern Rhode Island's 24th Annual Parenting in Progress Graduation and Awards Ceremony on June 17, 2008. Parenting in Progress is a program that includes GED test preparation, job training, childcare, parenting skills, case management, life skills training, and violence prevention.

**What is happening regarding healthcare for children in Rhode Island?** "Rhode Island was a leader in children's health care . . . we slipped to around 11 or 12. I'm well aware . . . that the state is in a really bad budgetary position . . . as a result of that, some kids who had been covered in the past have recently lost their coverage . . . what we are facing now unfortunately is inequality in health care."

**What changes would you like to see?** "I am a strong proponent of health care for all."

**What inspires your work?** "It sounds so cliché, but kids are our future we need to keep them healthy we need to keep them educated. Those are the folks we are going to be depending upon to take care of us."

**Tell me about your family.** "I have been a foster mom for 9 years." *Growing up Dowdy had five brothers and two sisters.*

**What do children teach adults?** "I think children teach adults how to play fair. Children love unconditionally."

**What lessons should we share with children?** "For me its family . . . we definitely have to be responsible for each other . . . we can't live in this world and just me me me. That's why I became a foster parent. That is why I enjoy my job so much. It gives me the opportunity to help other people."

**What do you do for fun?**

"Hanging out with these guys, my nieces and nephews."

Jackie Dowdy, right, at her Woonsocket home with her five year old niece, Amaya Dowdy.



Jackie Dowdy is the president of the Board of Directors of the Rhode Island Foster Parents Association. "I can honestly think of no greater champion for the health care needs of our most vulnerable citizens, and in particular, children and families in our state." - Lisa Guillette, executive director of the Rhode Island Foster Parents Association

**Growing up who influenced you most?** "One is my grandmother and the other one is my mother. The reason I say the two of them is because they're really very dedicated family women who literally worked sun up to sun down to ensure that their kids had what they needed . . . it was to make sure that people around them too were treated good . . . It wasn't just about well my family is all set so everything is good. It was the next family too."

**I know you had obstacles on your path to success.**

**Do you want to describe your journey?** "I have shared this information with folks in the past . . . I'm a firm believer in that everything that I went through I had to go through to get to the other side . . . I did have a difficult time in my life with substance abuse and I think going through that taught me a lot . . . I'm sure there were times when people would look at me and say that I would never do this or never do that. And those days are gone."

*Dowdy dropped out of school, yet returned to get a GED at age 26. She received a Master's Degree in Social Work from Yeshiva University in New York, NY in 1996.*

**What advice do you have for parents to assist their children in choosing a positive path?** "They have got to be patient with them and they have got to love them unconditionally. I face obstacles every day with the two boys that I have. I think what makes it easier for all of us is that I listen to them.

I allow them to express their opinions. Right or wrong, say how they are feeling and lets talk about it. Allow them that time."

**If you could go back and speak to yourself as a youth, what piece of wisdom would you share?** "I think if I had understood earlier that education was going to be the key and that listening to my parents was going to be the key. That was going to be the thing to keep me out of trouble, and then I would have done it." *Dowdy is 43 years old.*

**What are your personal goals?** "One of my goals has always been to open up a home to care for children."

**What are your professional goals?** "I have a goal to see that every Rhode Islander has healthcare and health insurance. It is not something that I can achieve on my own I am well aware of that. But to be able to work towards making that happen, I would be involved in that for as long as it takes."

**Anything else you wish to include?** "When you talk about values and family I just think that's so important . . . it is not necessarily about biological family. It is about the people in our lives that matter and make a difference."

interview and photo by Lisa Piscatelli

**"Stay in school. Listen to your parents. If your parents can't be there for you then find a positive role model . . . believe in yourself." - Jackie Dowdy**

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