



Fall 2010 Newsletter

Rochester Childfirst Network

SERVING CHILDREN SINCE 1857

941 South Avenue
Rochester, New York 14620



THE GENEROSITY OF OUR FRIENDS

We will be forever grateful for the generosity of the Monroe Golf Club Women's Association, who are dedicated to supporting those in need. The event was their Annual Fall Fashion Show. These philanthropists chose RCN as the recipient of event proceeds, which totaled \$6,000. The picture depicts Renu Singh, the Event Coordinator and Marsha Dumka, RCN Executive Director. **Thank you from RCN and our children!**



RCN's NEW WEBSITE IS LAUNCHED!

Incorporates Children's Book Illustrations by Donna Farrell

Consistent with RCN's values: dedicated, knowledgeable, nurturing, inclusive, and playful; RCN has utilized the artwork of its children's book in its New Website. Please check it out at www.rcn4kids.org

Thank you to Andrea Zuegel, RCN Board Chair, for her dedication to this project. Of course there is still a lot of work to do, and we always welcome your feedback!



RCN's Children's book "Here's a Cheer for Our Childfirst Day" by author, Marsha Hayles, makes a great gift. It's on **SALE** until Dec. 31st for \$10 (originally \$14.99) plus \$2 shipping! To order call the Development Office at (585) 473-2858.



SAVE THE DATE! Sunday November 21st

RCN presents this year's **Mad Hatter's Tea Party and Holiday Fashion Show** at the Country Club of Rochester, 2935 East Avenue. Join us for a luncheon and fashion show featuring Jane Morgan's Little House clothing. Great raffle prizes and a wonderful Silent Auction are planned. Please call Wanda Snow at (585)473-2858 extension 230 for reservations and information.



Sponsors to date: Cobblestone Capital Advisors, Keybank, Lawley Service Insurance, Forte Capital, Titan Insurance, The Bonadio Group. And many generous donations from Rochester's business community. THANK YOU!



Please join us for a fundraiser and holiday party with Giuseppe Scungili and the Screamin' Seagull Revue, December 5th.

All proceeds benefit *The Children's Fund at RCN*.
Cover \$10 includes great music and free food. 4pm – 8pm.

McGuinness Pub • 1635 Penfield Road
(In front of Panorama Plaza). Appropriate for ages 21 and over.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP OUTLOOK: FALL PERSPECTIVES

A CHILD WHO STARTS BEHIND, STAYS BEHIND...

By Marsha Dumka, Executive Director and Andrea Zuegel, Board Chair



Education is not only the key to future success in life, it is also the cornerstone of our democracy. Children, who learn to be thoughtful, confident adults, will be able to better evaluate the role of their government. RCN's mission embraces the belief that every child has the right to the best education available. As supporters of RCN, you know that with this comes the strongest guarantee for success that a child has.



That said, the Rochester community has a high percentage of children living in poverty, which directly affects their chance for good education. We know that if a child starts behind, they stay behind:

500-1,100 words: The difference in the size of a three year old's vocabulary, between a child living in poverty and low literacy versus a child living in middle class with high literacy.

700: The number of new neural connections that should be forming every second in a young child's brain. These connections are the foundation for all future learning, behavior and health.

200%: The jump in a child's likelihood of attending college, when he or she attends a quality early care program such as RCN's.

RCN continues to close the achievement gap for disadvantaged children as our classrooms consistently score in the highest range of classroom assessments. As a community, we need well-educated problem solvers, who can read between the lines of a book, on the internet and in daily conversation. These future leaders will make the best decisions for themselves and their communities. As we emerge from election season, with many tough choices facing us daily, it becomes even more apparent that our children need to develop the skills to become a voice for themselves and of those around them. Your support for RCN helps to build a stronger community, and give every child the opportunity to not be left behind. Thank you for engaging with us in being a voice for positive change.



TIME TO SMILE 😊

September was back to school time! For some children this is their first experience away from home. It's a new place with new people, toys and routines. Many children are excited but also a little bit unsure.

In the SMILE Program (Special Education preschool) we held a Meet the Teacher Night the week before school started. We had a wonderful turnout and it was nice for children to see their classroom and meet their teachers before the first day of school. Teachers and therapists were on hand to answer any questions that parents might have.



On the first day of school it was exciting to greet all of our new friends when they arrived on the bus. What a thrilling new experience for many of them! In our integrated classrooms, there were a few tears of course, children and parents! Overall, children got right to work exploring, playing and making new friends. Our staff is always ready with hugs for those who need a little bit of extra comfort and reassurance. As one child reflected, "How come so many people love me here?"



Pet therapy dogs from Lollypop Farm will visit 2 classrooms once a month. Fieldtrips to a pumpkin farm, toy resource center and many other destinations in our Rochester community are being planned. The Children's Program Director and the SMILE Director are presenting another successful Incredible Years Parenting Program. We look forward to a fantastic year.

INCREDIBLE YEARS PARENTING SERIES

RCN makes it easy for parents to affirm and strengthen their skills

Incredible Years is a 14-session parenting series designed to enhance parenting skills, while providing sound strategies and approaches that truly make a difference. This educational series offered at RCN runs from October through February and has something for everyone, even dinner and child care!

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Do you know someone who would be interested in helping out in our new **Lloyd Library** for children? It's a magical setting! Please call Paul Berezney at (585) 473-2858 if interested. We will work with your schedule.

A big thank you to two of our volunteers **Bette Middelker** and **Jeanne Koschak**. Bette sewed beautiful pillows for our Honeybee class for nap time and Jeanne knitted colorful scarfs and hats for those cold days soon to come. We can't thank them enough for their thoughtfulness.

WISH LIST

We welcome donations of gently used clothing for children 18 months – 12 years old. Boots, gloves, scarves, coats, pants, shirts, shoes...are always needed as extra clothes in our classrooms.



RCN IS INCLUSIVE



One of RCN's values is inclusiveness. Did you know that for over 20 years many early education professionals have incorporated an anti-biased component to the development of their curriculum?

"All children develop at different rates. Some children have delays or special needs that are significant enough for them to be eligible for additional help from professionals. Inclusion is supporting all children, regardless of their needs, in their natural environment with their peers." (Including All Children in Your Program, 2007).

The following is an excerpt from a book published by National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) titled, Anti-Bias Curriculum, Tools for Empowering Young Children by Louise Derman-Sparks and the Anti-Bias Curriculum Task Force.

Why an anti-bias curriculum? Because children develop biases against people of color and cultures other than their own, and against people with abilities different from their own when they are very young. At an early age children have ideas about what boys are "supposed" to do and what girls "can't" do. Most of us are uncomfortable seeing these biases develop.

It's not enough to teach tolerance. Pretending not to have heard a hurtful remark one child makes to another just isn't enough. Adults must make it clear that it is not okay for a child to say or do unkind things to another person and that, if this happens, the adult will firmly step in. As teachers and parents, we inadvertently teach our own biases. It's important for each of us to examine our possible biases and learn how they may influence children – and how to reduce, handle, or even eliminate them.



A past RCN parent and current volunteer noted, "...my daughter...knew that it was normal for others to have different needs from their own. RCN uses an inclusion model that allows children with special needs to be an equal part of the classroom."

At RCN, we believe that the early years are the foundation of all later learning. We believe that all children are unique and special, and all of our programs are in alignment with that belief. You will hear RCN staff say that we are a play-based program. This in no way means that children's learning is left to chance. Each of our programs have curriculum that foster learning using play as the tool.

Children are naturally curious and explore materials, experiment, and ask questions. A play-focused program requires teachers to create an environment filled with interesting materials, always staying close to the children, ready to enhance their experiences and extend their learning.



Young children develop social skills, emotional expression, cognitive skills, physical skills, and language skills. Learning in an environment that is supportive, safe, and playful allows children to be active in their own learning. At RCN, we are a committed partner in children's learning and development.

Generous Donors

03.06.10 ~ 10.11.10

Thank you for your support of our endeavors to provide quality services to children & families from all walks of life! Every effort has been made to include all of our donors since our last newsletter. If an error has been made, please let us know.

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Verizon

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In Honor of Sandy Lloyd

Ms. Kay Burnett

In Honor of Jean Williams

Ms. Elizabeth Steinberg

FUNDRAISING FUN

The Annual Children's Fund Campaign

By now everyone should have received RCN's mailing requesting your support of the Children's Fund. This fund is vital to the life of RCN. Please consider making a generous gift to RCN's mission. If you visit our new website you will see a giving tab that allows you to make a secured gift online visit www.rcn4kids.org or call Paul Berezney, Director of Development at (585) 473-2858 extension 246 for information.

The 1st Annual Ice Cream Social

This year the development team sponsored an Ice Cream Social for staff. It was RCN's way of saying thank you for the passion felt here every day. It also thanks those who have given to the Children's Fund in the past and kicked-off the annual campaign. Staff enjoyed free Abbott's Frozen Custard sundaes. Hope you tried the pumpkin!



Huge Garage Sale

This year's Garage Sale was a huge success. With Gay Abbey's leadership and Wanda Snow's superb event coordination skills, we raised over \$9,000! It took many volunteers to produce this event, so a HUGE thanks to everyone who donated items and who volunteered their time.

Hurray to Garage Sale business sponsors, Wegmans and Subway!





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www.RCN4Kids.org

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