

Co-op Community News

September 2009



From the Parent Advisory Council of the
North Seattle Community College
Cooperative Preschool Program

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Fall Calendar

October

12 PAC Meeting

November

9 PAC Meeting

11 Veteran's Day
(no school)

26-27 Thanksgiving
holiday (no school)

December

12 Parent Coordinator
Training

14 PAC Meeting

21-
Jan 1 Winter Break
(no school)

**Open Registration is
March 20, 2010**

Notes from the Chair

The Parent Advisory Council would like to welcome all of our families to the 2009-2010 school year and to the NSCC Cooperative Preschool Program! Joining a co-op preschool system is an amazing way for parents to become an integral part of their children's learning and education, and it is the willingness of each and every parent to participate on one of the many boards and committees that helps makes the co-op system work so successfully. One of these boards is the Parent Advisory Council, or PAC.

The purpose of PAC is to increase the quality of your co-op experience and education. Some of our main objectives are to: Promote quality education for parents and children; unify the co-op preschools by providing a communication network for voicing needs and sharing ideas; and to make co-ops available to all socioeconomic groups. PAC also raises funds to provide scholarships, offers free outstanding lectures, promotes awareness of the NSCC co-op system, and provides information to help prepare for kindergarten.

Whether this is your first year in the NSCC co-op system or you are a returning family, we hope your co-op experience this year is everything you hope for and expect, and we encourage you to take advantage of the many resources that PAC has to offer your family.

Have a fantastic school year!

*Sarah Karis
Chair, Parent Advisory Council*

Stay Healthy This Flu Season!

Adapted from The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) literature

H1N1: What is it?

The flu (influenza) is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs caused by influenza viruses. Novel H1N1 flu is a new and very different influenza virus. It was called “swine flu” at first because it has pieces of flu viruses found in pigs in the past. However, novel H1N1 virus has not been detected in U.S. pigs. This flu season, the new virus may cause a lot more people to get sick than during a regular flu season.

H1N1 symptoms are the same as seasonal flu symptoms, including fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headaches, chills, and fatigue. Some people may also have vomiting or diarrhea.

How does H1N1 spread?

Both novel H1N1 flu and seasonal flu are thought to spread mostly from person to person through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with influenza. People also may get sick by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.



People infected with either type of flu may be able to infect others from 1 day *before* getting sick to 5-7 days after getting sick. This can be longer in some people, especially children and people with weakened immune systems.

How can I protect my child against flu?

Here are some everyday steps you can take to prevent the spread of all flu viruses:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw it in the trash after use. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands. Teach your children to do the same.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for as long as it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice, especially after you cough or sneeze. Use alcohol-based hand cleaners if soap or water is not available. Teach your child to do the same, but use careful supervision with alcohol-based cleaners and store them out of reach, as they are toxic to children if consumed.
- Stay home if you or your child is sick for at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- Keep surfaces and toys clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label. Sanitizing instructions for co-op preschools can be found in the Risk Management Manual (<http://coops.northseattle.edu/forms/forms.html>).

The CDC also recommends a seasonal flu vaccine for yourself and your child. A vaccine against novel H1N1 flu is being produced and will be available in the coming months. More information about the new H1N1 flu vaccine and the seasonal flu vaccine is available on the CDC Web site: www.cdc.gov.

There's Nothing Crazy About That

By Tom Hobson, Teacher, Woodland Park Pre-3s and 3-5s

One of my college courses included learning about various models of early childhood education. My classmates were mostly public school teachers earning continuing education credits. For several classes running we listened as guest speakers detailed the theory and practice of such approaches as Waldorf, Montessori, Reggio Emilia, and Hi/Scope. When it came time to learn about the cooperative model we heard from our own Val Donato (director of the North Seattle Community College Parent Education Department).

Val explained how the parents in a co-op own and operate the school at every level from the executive to the janitorial, with the teacher being the sole paid employee. We learned that every parent spends one day a week serving as an assistant teacher, bringing the adult to child ratio up to the incredible 1:2 or 1:3 category. She taught us about the benefits of teachers and parents working so closely together, both inside and outside the classroom, to create a unique learning experience for each child.

There was the usual polite applause when Val wrapped up, but the moment she left the classroom, there was an audible gasp.

"I could never do that!" said one teacher.

"It would be like having 20 bosses!" said another.

There was general agreement that the whole idea was crazy.

At this point, I'd only experienced co-op as a parent, although I'd already signed my contract to teach at Woodland Park the following year. Needless to say, I was cowed into a doubtful silence. Twenty bosses did kind of sound like a nightmare.

I've now spent the last decade in cooperative preschool classrooms, both as a parent and teacher. I've never once felt like I had 20 bosses. Instead, I've always felt like I had 20 colleagues in the

***Traditional institutions are about people doing things to and for other people.
Cooperative institutions are about people doing things with each other.***

form of dedicated assistant teachers. And these are not just any teachers; these are teachers bringing mountains of love into the classroom.

Of course, at one level it's true that I have 20 bosses. It's the entire parent community that hires and fires. It's the entire parent community that judges, evaluates, and compensates. And it's the entire parent community that observes and participates in every activity that takes place within the four walls of the school. (And while I hope it's not true, it's just possible that I'm a better teacher because of all those parent eyes on me all the time!)

On a day-to-day basis, however, these same "bosses" work in the



Teacher Tom writes a blog about "teaching and learning with preschoolers": teachertombsblog.blogspot.com

classroom under my supervision. They are in the trenches with me, so to speak, sharing the work, rewards and challenges. These are not just the parents of my students; they are my colleagues, allies and friends.

It's the kind of dynamic that can only be found in organizations that operate on cooperative principles.

The best thing about a cooperative is what it does to our relationship to institutions and the people we find there. Traditional institutions are about people doing things *to* and *for* other people. Cooperative institutions are about people doing things *with* each other.

I understand the reaction of those public school teachers. They are providing education *to* children and *for* parents. In their lives a parent's request to "talk" is all too

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How About an Evening Co-op?

By Chris David, North Seattle Community College Parent Educator and Teacher, Latona 3-5's Cooperative Preschool



There is a well-kept secret in the North Seattle Co-op System. We have three preschools that have evening sessions. Northgate Toddlers and Northgate Multi-age, both located on campus at North Seattle Community College (NSCC), meeting Wednesday nights from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The third option is Meadowbrook Pre-3's meeting Tuesday nights, 6:00 to 8:00 and Friday mornings, 9:30

to 11:30 in the lower level of the Lake City Christian Church.

The Northgate groups meet in beautiful classrooms designed specifically for young children. The Multi-age classroom has child size toilets and low sinks for hand washing. A covered outside play area adjacent to the classroom is another big plus. On those light early fall and spring evenings children play on the newly landscaped playground. The Toddler class-

room is spacious, recently remodeled and filled with materials perfect for this age group. Aldona Mitchell is the teacher for the Northgate Multi Age and Monica Harris is the teacher for Northgate Toddlers.

The Meadowbrook Pre-3's classroom has a great new location on the corner of NE 125TH and 20 Ave. NE. It is a large light and airy

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There's Nothing Crazy About That

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often a cause for dread. Who doesn't feel anxious about being called into their boss's office? As a co-op teacher, on the other hand, I talk *with* my colleague-bosses every day, work *with* them, supervise them, and get supervised by them. But it's much more than that. I also goof around *with* them. I share joys and sorrows *with* them. We're friends and colleagues. We're a real community in a way that other ECE models make much more difficult.

I love our Woodland Park Cooperative Preschool and I know I'm not the only one. Families return year-after-year, child-after-child, choosing time and again to be part of what I only half-jokingly refer to as our little communist society.

I probably don't want a cooperative making my televisions or washing machines and I'm not deaf to the argument that competition and the prospects of great

wealth can lead a certain type of high-achiever to innovation and economic growth. On the other hand, I've seen how cooperation within the context of a committed, loving preschool community consistently "turns a profit" in the coin of confident, well-prepared kindergartners. That's what we come together to do.

And there's nothing crazy about that.

NSCC Parent Education Program Celebrates Our Work with Child Care Programs

By NSCC Parent Education Instructors, Becky Callahan and Betty Williams

Did you know that our Parent Education Instructors work with 17 child care and early education programs in the Seattle area? On June 6, 2009, the instructors working with these programs held a luncheon celebration and training session for the directors of the child care centers we contract with.

This event was a gathering of child care and early education professionals who have been in the field for 30 years to those that are just starting this year. It was filled with much laughter and also concerns for children, families, the child care community, and the early childhood profession. They came from centers all over the city and included the following:

- Pike Place Market Child Care and Preschool
- Green Tree Early Childhood Center
- North Queen Anne
- Kidspace
- Pinehurst Child Care Center
- Learning Tree Montessori Childcare
- New Beginnings Child Care
- Stroum Jewish Community Center Early Childhood Education School
- University Baptist Children's Center
- University Temple Children's School



Val Donato, left, prepares to hand out certificates of recognition to the directors. Also pictured: Shanti Connors, Cesily Crowser, and some of the directors in attendance.

- UUC Child Learning and Care Center
- Phinney Ridge Lutheran Child Development Center
- Agape
- Small Faces Child Development Center
- Interlake Childcare and Learning Center
- Wallingford Child Care Center

We had a delicious lunch of barbecue ribs from Parent Education Instructor Cesily Crowser's family restaurant, The Jones, and then supplemented with contributions of salads, drinks, and desserts from our parent education committee. The room was truly trans-

formed into a welcoming and relaxing place for those directors who work so many hours in child care for families. The tables were set with table cloths, candles, flowers and chocolate, thanks to the efforts of Instructor Mary Ann Abbott, with assistance in setting up from other instructors who work with child care programs, including Shanti Connors, Kate Kincaid and Chris David! It was an enjoyable way to show our appreciation for the time the directors spend working with our instructors as we support their programs, teachers, and families in their sites.

After lunch we heard from Noris Daniel, ECE Program Coordinator, who presented information re-

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NSCC Co-op Preschool Openings for 2009-10

	Co-op	Contact
Infant	North Seattle Infant Co-op (begins January 2010)	Irene Wagner, 524-9346
Toddler	Northgate Evening Toddler Class	Ron Motto, 547-1887, rlmotto@hotmail.com
Pre-3's	Ingraham Meadowbrook Pre-3 Class	Krista Place, pre3parent@comcast.net Johanna Dokken, meadowbrookpre3@gmail.com
3-5's	Victory Heights 3-5's PM	Britta Hirsch, 434-6683, brittalynh@gmail.com
4-5's	Wallingford 4-5's PM	Tama Leahy, 524-3474, tama@mikemedia.com
Multi-Age	Northgate Evening Multi-Age Class	Michelle Ponsler, 418-8133 misshellyp@comcast.net

NSCC Parent Education Program Celebrates Our Work with Child Care Programs *(Continued from page 5)*

garding the offerings at NSCC in the Early Childhood Education Program. Parent Education Program Coordinator Val Donato had each parent educator share a few successes they had during the year at their sites in parent education and with the child care programs.

Then we went in to small group discussions on things that are working well with a parent education component, the challenges of parents in child care, and then general questions, concerns, and strategies. We ended by asking the directors to share what they would bring back to their programs from today's discussion and training/luncheon (a certificate of training was given to each participant).

The event accomplishments and follow up goals directors mentioned included:

- Establishing a network with other child care directors
- Providing parent education during regular program hours instead of after hours in the evening
- Building a sense of community with the teachers
- Providing classroom/age specific discussion with teachers and parent educator
- Invite staff members to support and/or team with the parent education instructor at parent education workshops
- Ideas on how to get parents involved in parent education events
- Build a parent education library and resource lending program
- How to support resiliency and stress reduction with families
- Met a neighbor director who is only 2 blocks away
- Adding the parent educator to the staff roster and their pictures to staff displays
- Providing infant and toddler workshops for parents
- Share a STARS training with other child care sites
- I want my families to know how important this parent education program is for us
- Have the instructor do observational write up in the classrooms
- Learn about all the new people in the profession
- Put parent education resources on the Web site

The luncheon certainly felt like a great success and was an important extension of our regular parent education program.

Help Us Save the PAC Scholarship Fund!



The PAC Scholarship Fund was established to help increase diversity in our co-op preschools by providing financial assistance to those who would not otherwise be able to participate. It has grown from \$9,000 awarded in the year 2000-2001 to the same amount quarterly in recent years.

Unfortunately, the current economic crisis has affected our co-op membership. Scholarship requests have increased drastically during the last year, resulting in all awards being reduced from previous levels.

The PAC Scholarship Committee anticipates continued high numbers of requests for this school year. The committee gave out \$33,000 last year, but only has \$28,000 available for this year. To be able to keep awards at the level given out last year, additional donations are urgently needed.

Co-ops and individuals are being asked to consider giving or pledging donations for this year by **September 29** for the committee's consideration of Fall awards for the 2009-10 year. Co-ops are being asked to consider giving from extra funds they may have, increasing

fundraising efforts, or some other activity to make donations so that scholarships can be available at or close to previous award levels.

Tax deductible donations can be mailed to:

PAC Scholarship Fund
Attention PAC Treasurer
NSCC Parent Education Program
9600 College Way North
Seattle, WA 98103

Please e-mail Betty Williams, PAC Faculty Advisor, with pledges of additional donations by September 29 at bwilli@sccd.ctc.edu

How About an Evening Co-op? (Continued from page 4)

room with large windows. Outside there is a giant sandbox, a barked hillside under evergreens and a large flat area for riding toys. Lisa Behrens is the new, young and enthusiast teacher for the Meadowbrook Pre-3's. Lisa is a parent of two children who have been through the coop system.

Evening co-ops are very similar to their daytime counter parts; parents work in the classroom and attend parent education classes. They are ideal for working couples, the single parent and very busy stay-at-home parent. More than one parent has said, "I wanted to do a day co-op, but with a baby at

home I didn't know how I could handle it. The evening group is just the answer.

A Meadowbrook parent said, "My spouse stays home with the baby and I get on-on-one time with my older child." Or, as another par-

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How About an Evening Co-op? *(Continued from page 7)*

ent said, “My partner comes to class on Tuesday night; I have the night free and Friday mornings, too!”

The Northgate groups, both parent and children, meet once a week. One week the parent stays on the floor as an assistant teacher in the classroom. The next week the parent attends a parent education discussion group with a parent instructor from the college. During discussion time parents get to know each other, share current issues going on in their children’s lives and discuss child development. There is much relief when adults realize that their child’s behavior is normal development. People share what works for their child and we all learn from each other. Because many couples participate together, some discussion sessions are focused on couples’ issues. Parents look forward to parent education every other week.

The Northgate Multi-age Class includes a wide age range, ages two



up to five, so often siblings come to class together. There is a family feel to the evening groups. One family commented on the great activities provided for their child and how their child looks forward to coming each week. Adults felt relaxed because they know the space is safe for their child play. They can sit back and watch their child explore, discover and learn. With a smile, Dad said, “It is such a nice place to be.”

The evening groups have a larger number of fathers attending which is wonderful for the children. As a parent educator, it is exciting to see the fathers play and relate with the children. As one Dad said, “This is my time to be with my daughter. I wouldn’t give it up.”

A teacher for the Northgate Toddler group, commented, “One evening we had mostly dads. We

marched to a song, ringing our bells. Here were scientists, lawyers and construction workers still in their work clothes marching around together, being role models for their children. What a priceless gift!”

“Isn’t it too late for the children?” This question is often asked about the evening groups. Once in a while a child will fall asleep in the car on the way to school, but not too often. Their children really look forward to school. Parents are very ingenious about the late hour. I have seen parents put their children in sleepers at school and brush their teeth before leaving class. That way they move their sleeping child from the car into bed.

So if you hear a parent say, “I would love to do co-op with my child, but I just don’t have the time.” You can respond: “Have you heard about the three evening co-ops offered through North Seattle Community College? It just may be the right co-op for you.” If your partner wants to enjoy the same experience you are having in the day co-op but can’t come during the day, think about your partner enrolling in the evening groups on campus. [A family can be enrolled in the evening groups on campus as well as a day group.](#) Think about it and check them out on the Web site: <http://coops.northseattle.edu>

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