

## New Teacher in Town

by Sally Skelding

I remember as a child reading about children who were "new in town" and feeling sorry for them. After having experienced this forlorn state myself, I came to have sympathy for anyone "new." As I grew older and experienced or observed the trials new teachers were forced to endure, I felt the need to communicate my feelings by formulating a set of guidelines on the "care and keeping" of new teachers!

*Never say, "Last year we did it this way!"* This indicates immediate condemnation of the new teacher's methods and sets up barriers to effective communication. And try very hard not to make verbal comparisons about your new teacher and her predecessor to other parents who did not know her. They have no accurate observations on which to base their feelings. Much damage can be done by too often repeating: "Mrs. So and So always did it this way!"

*Whispers-whispers-whispers.* Don't let them echo up and down your halls. They break many a heart. Don't kid yourself they aren't heard! The body speaks boldly as you whisper to your friend. Your eyes, your shoulders, your expression all communicate displeasure to the new teacher who observes such acts. You may not even be talking about her, but the sense of insecurity that seeps into the first few weeks may cause misunderstandings.

*As children grow with praise, so do teachers!* All teachers, new or old, need a pat. Have you ever tried working for what is the equivalent of 36 bosses? Tell the teacher directly what you like: you think her art projects are creative; you enjoy listening to her read; you marvel at the way she handles assertive children; and on and on. A good teacher gets better as she glows from your praise. Acceptance makes us relax, and lack of tension brings

out the best in us.

*Operate on the basis that you want to keep this teacher.* Schools who keep teachers for several years or more are more stable than those that show a change in teachers every year. If you question something your teacher has done, inquire about the matter gently and in private. If you are really displeased with one or two areas, communicate your feelings to your president. Then there are at least two alternative actions available to you:

1. If no one else feels that way, don't cause trouble; either accept that no program and no teacher can meet all your expectations, or change schools.
2. If the president finds that many parents feel the same way, then the teacher should be apprised of the situation in private. Allow a teacher the opportunity to explain why she may follow a procedure foreign to you, or give her a chance to change and meet the requirements of a parent group.

*Remember that methods and practices of dealing with children change.* You have to allow that what is being done may be acceptable in light of new studies. Allow your new teacher a chance to grow and change. Don't pigeonhole her teaching style to maintain the style of her predecessor.



*Allow for physical changes in the room.* Acknowledge that she has the right to make the room(s) reflect her style. If her predecessor used many subject bulletin boards and she uses examples of the children's work to decorate the room, look for the positive in the new approach.

*Please don't stand and stare at the new teacher.* Develop subtle ways of observing. Give her a chance to learn all your names. Don't be personally offended if she remembers Mavis', Evelyn's, and Bonnie's names, but not yours! There are few of us who don't blank out at times or need a few days or weeks to sort out

all the moms, children's parents and siblings' names.

*Remember, most people have a sense of humor!* Capitalize on sharing humorous events with the teacher. Laughter breaks down many barriers. I recall that after a month of snacks at 10:35, I commented to the board that on Saturday and Sunday at 10:35 I was getting hungry! The following Friday I found a bag of Winchell's doughnuts marked "Saturday Treat" placed anonymously on my table.

*And lastly, remember that your new teacher interviewed for this job.* She wants to be part of you. She is not part of the anger of an inner-school fight that left a teaching vacancy; she is not responsible for a teacher's retirement; it was not her decision to find a new teacher. It was the school that made the decision to hire her, and for that its members have an obligation. They have the obligation to stand back and give the new teacher breathing space. Remember: do unto others as you would have them do unto you!

*Sally Skelding is a former co-op preschool teacher and early childhood education instructor at Mt. Hood Community College.*



## Learning to Eat (and Like!) Vegetables

by Sanna Delmonico, MS, RD

I think about vegetables, and how and why children learn to like them, constantly. Parents ask me all the time. The first thing I tell them is that young children have a natural aversion to bitter flavors, so most vegetables (like Brussels sprouts and kale) naturally don't top their list of favorite foods. Because parents want kids to eat them, they tend to

push vegetables on kids, which actually makes kids *less* likely to eat them.

In all my years working with families I've only had one parent tell me she was worried that her child ate too many vegetables, but parents worried that their kids eat too much bread or drink too much milk are everywhere. The other parents in the group looked at the vegetable eater's mother with amazement

and envy as she described how much spinach her son could consume.

Some kids do like vegetables better than fruit. But most children get along just fine with fruit, beans, an occasional carrot stick, and after a while really do learn to like vegetables. I love to tell the story about my 10-year-old daughter who recently came to the table, looked at what was for dinner, and declared "Yum!! Chard!!" And meant it. It took 10 years, I tell parents, but it actually happened.

You can tell a child hand-washing is good but that doesn't stop him from coming to the table with dirt under his nails night after night. Tell him carrots are good for him and he mutters, "Whatever." Tell him carrots are delicious, on the other hand, and he just may try them. Children eat food, including vegetables, because it tastes good. It is that simple. Adults are the same way, but when they face aging or diabetes or a heart attack, convincing them to eat vegetables gets a bit easier.

So serve your family the vegetables you like and make them taste good. Maybe I just remember it this way, but the vegetables of my childhood were bleak. Steamed, limp, plain, bitter. No salt. No cheese. No oil and vinegar. No onions or garlic. Once in a while melted butter with artichokes. I hated them. It seems to me that vegetables are not served so austere in other countries. I've visited Mexico and Italy and France and the Netherlands (okay, let's leave out England) and eaten vegetables marinated, shredded, stewed, sauced up and celebrated. Do we serve vegetables plain in this country because we think anything good for us should be uncomfortable, like church or flossing?

Perhaps my mom and dad struggled,  
(Continued on page 2)

### Save the Dates!

PCPO Teachers' Crawl: TBD  
PCPO Contract Support Meeting:  
January 24, 2012  
PCPO Conference: March 3, 2012  
PCPO New Officers' Workshop:  
May 15, 2012

## Just Sing!

by Kristine Parker, DMA, NCTM

I love to teach music to children from birth to 5 years old. When I share this with others, I often receive a skeptical look. The unspoken question on the tip of their tongue is, "Isn't it just a waste of money?" Actually, early childhood music education is more critical from zero to 3 years than at any other time during a child's development.

*Why teach a child so young?* One reason to expose young children to a rich music environment as soon as possible is to increase their music aptitude. Music aptitude is a measure of a child's potential to learn music. A test determining aptitude measures a child's ability to hear similarities and differences in music. Children are born with an innate music aptitude; however, it is affected either positively or negatively by their environment over time. A child who receives a rich musical environment when 6 months old will have a higher music aptitude than a child who is exposed to the same environment starting at 18 months. Music aptitude continues to change until it stabilizes at age 9.

Music aptitude isn't the same thing as the skill required to play an instrument. Skills can be acquired by hard work

over time. A child with a higher music aptitude will find it easier to understand and create music and will likely enjoy the music learning experience more.

Another reason to introduce young children to music instruction at an early age is to lay the ground work for music audiation. *Audiation* is a word created by Edwin Gordon to describe the ability to understand, think and create musically in the mind without sound being present. The steps necessary to do this are very similar to the steps a child takes to speak their mother tongue. Infants listen before they vocalize. Next they imitate syllables and words. Short phrases are soon followed by sentences. After a few years of language exploration, a child starts to notice writing on a page and the reading process begins. Once reading, the next goal is learning to think articulately and write. The same process happens as children learn to sing in tune and feel rhythm. The goal is the ability to think and create musically.

*How do you teach young children music?* In my classes, I sit on the floor of a room without furniture or distractions with students and their "grown-up" and start by singing a "hello song." As the class  
(Continued on page 4)

## LET'S GET COOKIN'

## A Fall Favorite: Farm-Fresh Corn on the Cob

by Cathy Vause

Snack time ... we all do it a bit differently, but the goal is the same: provide a time in the day when children sit down and get nourished and re-fueled by eating a healthy snack.

At our school, a portion of each family's registration fee goes into a snack fund. From this fund, I am given \$115 each month along with a \$90 start-up check in August to purchase the necessary groceries for snack. Quick computation tells you that I have about \$7 to spend each day for snack. Yes, it is a challenge to keep within the budget, but with careful planning, buying in bulk, and watching store sales, I'm able to make it all work.

Typically, the children are given three snack choices each day and hopefully the more "selective eaters" will have at least one thing that they will eat. Daily offerings include fruits or vegetables, a grain or bread and some type of protein. Chilled water is our drink of choice. We are fortunate to have a small kitchen attached to our classroom. The kitchen's close proximity to our classroom is conducive to a wide variety of hands-on cooking experiences for our children.

Every year, we are faced with a few children with dietary limitations and we accommodate each child as best as we can. Implementing a "no nut" policy a few years ago caused us to broaden our protein options. These now include: cottage cheese, yogurt, vegetarian chili, sliced cheeses and lunch meats,

black beans, sunflower butter and the favorite — hard-cooked eggs. We serve a lot of cooked grains including: brown rice, quinoa, and grande whole grains. Various pastas and couscous are favorites as well. We take advantage of seasonal produce and eat it fresh, steamed or dried. We encourage families to share extras from their garden bounty.

Fall snack time always includes home grown tomatoes and cucumbers, fresh-dug potatoes, juicy Bartlett pears and Brooks plums, snapped green beans and one of my favorites: sweet corn from Koch Family Farm (visit [www.tricountyfarm.org/farms/koch-family-farm](http://www.tricountyfarm.org/farms/koch-family-farm) for more information on Koch Family Farm).

**Farm Fresh Corn on the Cob**

*Cooking instructions from Betty Crocker's Cookbook*

**Needed supplies:**

- Fresh picked corn — an ear (or half, depending on the size) for each child
- Large blanket or sheet
- Dutch oven
- Sugar
- Lemon juice
- Popsicle sticks

Gather small groups of children at a time on a blanket and have them help shuck the ears of corn. They love to peel away the layers of husks and remove the strands of corn silk to reveal the golden jewels of corn.

Usually a worm or two will be found, which always adds to the excitement.

Place the ears of corn in a Dutch oven with enough unsalted water (salt toughens the corn) to cover the corn. Add a tablespoon of sugar and a tablespoon of lemon juice to each gallon of water. Heat to boiling; boil uncovered for two minutes. Remove from heat; let stand for 10 minutes before serving. A Popsicle stick inserted in one end of the cob is a great handle for small hands. Hold the butter, and enjoy the pure taste of this fall favorite!



*Cathy Vause teaches at West Linn Community Preschool and loves to cook with preschool children. In the next issue, she will share her "Homemade Pumpkin Pie Experience" with Connection readers.*

## From the Editor

Thank you for reading the *Connection*! My name is Erin Skaggs and it's a privilege to be editor this year. There is so much expertise in our co-op community. What can be more satisfying than facilitating the sharing of information with parents and teachers?!

Fall is always an exciting time for me and my family. It's a time of new beginnings — new classmates and teachers, perhaps a new school — and looking forward to all the experiences (and fun!) we'll have in the months to come. As we journey together through the year, I hope you find support, guidance, inspiration, or even just a voice of understanding in these pages.

This newsletter is yours! If there is a topic you'd like to read about in a future *Connection* issue or if you're interested in writing an article, sharing an event at your school, or a moment as a parent or teacher, please let me know: [wickpick4@yahoo.com](mailto:wickpick4@yahoo.com).

I look forward to a wonderful year together!

— Erin Skaggs

## PCPO Employee Spotlight

## Welcome, Shamaine Coffee!

Sit in the same room with her for five seconds and you know—this woman is exuberance and industriousness all rolled into one! Filled with great ideas and enthusiasm, PCPO is excited to introduce Shamaine Coffee to you as conference coordinator. Yes, that's the person in charge of putting together PCPO's Early Childhood Education and Parenting Conference in early March.

A natural salesperson, Shamaine enjoys planning big events. But it makes the job doubly fun when you find something you're passionate about, and she's a big believer in the PCPO philosophy. Shamaine is no



stranger to co-op preschools. This will be her family's fourth year at Cathedral Park Preschool, where her children Michael (now in first grade) and Samiah have enjoyed their preschool years. Her parent jobs have included fundraising coordinator and auction chair. This year she's taking on the job of president.

"I like meeting more people in the community, and I find friends in the most random places." She'll be at quite a few PCPO meetings—look for her winning smile at presidents' council meetings, select general meetings and the CRAWL. Please let her know if you have suggestions for speakers or topics you'd like to see at the conference, or if you're interested in volunteering. Of course, feel free to e-mail her at [conference@pcpo.info](mailto:conference@pcpo.info).

## Learning to Eat Vegetables

(Continued from page 1)

as so many parents I work with do, with nutrition versus flavor, thinking they are mutually exclusive. Parents ask me, "Isn't plain steamed cauliflower better for kids than cauliflower with cheese sauce?" And I say "Maybe, but not if they don't eat plain cauliflower." I tell parents to think of seasonings and sauces on vegetables are like training wheels on bicycles. They give us a taste for the real thing, but make it so much easier to take.

Chefs know that bitterness in vegetables is softened by salty, sour and sweet flavors. No wonder cauliflower tastes better with cheese and Brussels sprouts are improved by a tangy-sweet orange sauce. When my daughter was younger, she wouldn't touch broccoli most of the ways I cooked it. But when it was stir-fried in a garlicky, salty sauce, she always devoured it. Plain carrots no, glazed carrots yes. Plain turnips, thumbs down. Turnips in minestrone soup, thumbs up. When I asked the mother whose son ate so much spinach how she prepared it, wouldn't you know it was an incredibly delicious recipe that didn't skimp on sesame oil and soy sauce. Fat not only adds flavor to vegetables, it actually enhances the absorption of some vitamins. So butter your carrots unapologetically. Roast potatoes with olive oil (and garlic and rosemary!). Plus, if your salad includes avocados or nuts or the dressing contains olive or canola or walnut oil, you are eating some of the healthiest fats around.

Liking vegetables can take time. My favorite way to cook chard is to sauté it with garlic, olive oil, salt, pepper and red pepper flakes. Once in a while I throw in olives, or pine nuts and raisins. I have cooked it that way since my daughter was a baby. Through the years she has tried bites so small they were almost invisible to the naked eye. Then one day the planets aligned and she said "Yum!"

Liking vegetables depends on who else in your

child's life likes them. Watching their parents enjoy vegetables makes a lasting impression, and sets kids up with the expectation that, while they may not like them now, they will eventually grow up and eat them. They want to grow up and do the things you do. They expect to do all kinds of things in the future, like work, and cut the lawn, and fall in love, even though the thought of kissing someone on the lips is totally revolting right now.

As a child I used to watch my mother smile as she boiled beets. She loves them. I cringed at the murky, smelly water and the grotesque stains on her hands when she peeled them. She said they tasted like the dirt they were grown in. I agreed. She never made me eat those beets, she just let me watch and learn. Now I can't get enough of them. Blood red, steamed, roasted, grated, or tossed with vinaigrette and cheese. Their flavor is genuine and earthy, like my mother, and I am reminded of her each time I eat them.

Helping children learn to like vegetables takes patience, like most things parents do. You say, "Get your finger out of your nose" a few thousand times and one day you wake up and realize you don't have to say it anymore. It also takes resisting the urge to force your children to eat vegetables, which only backfires and creates power struggles. It takes cooking vegetables the way you like to eat them so your kids can catch you eating and enjoying them. It takes cooking vegetables to taste really good, with fat and seasonings and all the "training wheels" you want. It isn't difficult, and it will be delicious.

*Sanna Delmonico, MS, RD, is a pediatric nutritionist, a mother, an avid cook and vegetable gardener. She is the owner of Tiny Tummys, a children's nutrition consulting company, and teaches classes about feeding families to parent and professional groups. She also led a session at the CCPPNS Convention in 2007. Her website is [www.tinytummys.com](http://www.tinytummys.com).*

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The opinions expressed by individuals and advertisers in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of PCPO as an organization. Response to any article is welcomed; it may be sent in writing to the *Connection* staff.

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# Take Your Child to a Live Performance

Many dance, music, and theater companies offer shows specifically geared to young children and their families. These performances offer a wonderful introduction to the performing arts. Attending high school or college music and drama productions is another way to introduce young children to live performance. Many early childhood programs use the following tips to help children prepare for visits to performance venues. You can try them before your family goes to a show.

#### Before your visit

- **Call the theater in advance** and ask what age chil-

dren will enjoy the performance and how long the performance will last.

- **Explain what you will see and hear during the performance.** You can talk with your child about the characters, tell the story, or listen to other music in the same style. If the performance is based on a storybook, read it with your child.
- **Review appropriate audience manners.** Remind your child of how to behave among large groups, out in public, and during quiet times. Explain when applause is appropriate and how to be courteous to other people attending the performance.

#### On the day of the visit

- **Arrive early** so there is plenty of time to explore the theater. You might take a close-up look at the stage or peer into the orchestra pit. An early arrival also leaves plenty of time to use the restroom and find your seats.
- **Recognize that it is okay to leave before the end of the performance.** Preschoolers may find even a half-hour event too long. One adult can take the child who has reached his or her limits to the lobby or outdoors to play a game or read a story.



#### After the performance

- **Talk about what you just saw and heard.** Ask, "What did you think?" "What did you like best?" and "Which characters were your favorites?"
- **Read a related book or do an art, music, or dance project.** Provide dress-up clothes, puppets, props, and other materials so your child can reenact the performance.

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"Message in a Backpack" is a regular feature of the magazine Teaching Young Children, NAEYC's magazine for preschool educator. To learn more about the magazine, or to access other Messages for teachers to distribute to families, visit [www.naeyc.org/tyc](http://www.naeyc.org/tyc).

## 2011-2012 Live Performances in the Portland Metro Area

**Christian Youth Theater;** [www.cytvanport.org](http://www.cytvanport.org);  
360-750-8550:

*The Jungle Book:* Nov. 17-20 (Beaverton)  
*Oliver:* Oct. 28-Nov. 5 (Portland Eastside)  
*Willy Wonka: The Musical:* Nov. 4-13 (Vancouver)  
*My Son Pinocchio: Geppetto's Musical Tale:* Dec. 2-11 (Vancouver East)

**Northwest Childrens Theater and School;** [nwcts.org](http://nwcts.org);  
503-222-2190

*Junie B. in Jingle Bells, Batman Smells!:* Oct. 8-30  
*Willy Wonka:* Dec. 9-Jan. 1  
*Rapunzel—Uncut!:* Jan. 27-Feb. 19  
*Richard Scarry's Busytown:* March 17-April 1  
*El Zorrillo: The Legend of the Boy Zorro:* May 4-27

**Oregon Ballet Theatre: Children's Series;** [www.obt.org/subscriptions\\_childrens\\_series.html](http://www.obt.org/subscriptions_childrens_series.html); 503-222-5538

*George Balanchine's The Nutcracker:* Dec. 11-24  
*Giselle:* March 3  
*Carnival of the Animals:* April 26, 29

**Oregon Children's Theatre;** [www.octc.org/](http://www.octc.org/);  
503-228-9571

*Pinkalicious: The Musical:* Oct. 22-Nov. 20  
*The Magic School Bus Live: The Climate Challenge:* Jan. 22-Feb. 19  
*Locomotion:* Feb. 25-March 18  
*The Storm in the Barn:* April 28-May 20  
*If You Give a Mouse a Cookie:* May 12-June 3

**Oregon Symphony: Kids Series;** [www.orsymphony.org](http://www.orsymphony.org);  
503-228-1353

*Peter and the Wolf:* Oct. 16  
*Happy Holidays:* Dec. 18  
*Castles and Wizards:* Feb. 26

**Portland Columbia Symphony Orchestra;**

[www.columbiasymphony.org](http://www.columbiasymphony.org); 503-234-4077  
*Symphonic Safari:* Sept. 24 (free family concert)  
*A Holiday Gift of Music:* Dec. 4

**Portland Youth Philharmonic;** [www.portlandyouthphil.org/](http://www.portlandyouthphil.org/); 503-223-5939

Cushion Concert: March 4

**Tears of Joy Theatre;** [www.tojt.org/](http://www.tojt.org/); 503-248-0557

*Pinocchio:* Nov. 11-20  
*Ride the Red Mare:* Dec. 16-18  
*Baba Yaga:* Feb. 3-12  
*Stellaluna:* April 13-22

During the summer, check out Broadway Rose Theatre Company's children's theater performances. [www.broadwayrose.org](http://www.broadwayrose.org); 503-620-5262. And don't forget the Portland Parks & Recreation summer Concerts in the Park program. Please check event details by calling or visiting the Web site of the venue or host organization.

### Co-opted

By Joan Bigwood

322 pp. BookSurge Publishing  
\$15.99, available at Amazon.com

Reviewed by Kathy Ems

We all have a list of much loved stories; mine include *Rebecca* by Daphne Du Maurier, *Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett, and *The Last Leaf* by O. Henry. A fourth book has now joined the ranks of my favorites: *Co-opted* by Joan Bigwood.

You absolutely must read this novel if you are a co-op mom — at least that's my opinion. You'll wish Francesca were your best friend as you watch her grow into the roles life tosses her way. It's a most enjoyable visit exploring the ups and downs of Francesca's relationships with her husband, children, parents, girlfriends, and her own dreams.

I laughed so many times as I read *Co-opted*, always laughs of recognition and truth. Joan Bigwood has captured the frustrations and rewards of having your



## BOOK REVIEW

life turn in directions you didn't want to embrace. But Francesca perseveres through trials large and small, and with the boost she gets from her co-op community, she finds a life her entire family can live to the fullest.

So order this book, curl up, and share Francesca's life as a co-op parent. You'll have a new favorite book too. This book would also make a great gift for any co-op teacher or parent.

Kathy Ems has been involved with cooperative preschools for 25 years. She is current president of Parent Cooperative Preschools International (PCPI) and past president and conference chair of PCPO.

PCPO would like to extend a warm welcome to our new member school:  
**Tahoma Cooperative Preschool**  
Maple Valley, WA

We look forward to a great 2011-2012 school year with all of our wonderful schools!

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<http://about.schoolauction.net/pcpo> or call Roger at (503) 913-4407

## Sally Skelding

Early Childhood Specialist

I am available as an International Reader for Frederick Warne to read *Peter Rabbit* to groups. Youngsters will get a book mark or a Peter Rabbit tie-tack style pin. From the Oregon Beatrix Potter Group, schools will receive a free 8x10 library edition of *Peter Rabbit* for their library. Schools will also receive a pattern suitable for duplication for children to make a finger puppet show of Peter Rabbit.

Call 503-285-7356

<http://livingwithyoungchildren.blogspot.com>  
[www.SallySkelding.com](http://www.SallySkelding.com)

## School Pictures for Preschoolers



## Beaumont Photographers

### The Smile Bus

What other PCPO schools are saying ...

- The children love the bus, and the photographer is great with the children!  
—Sharon, Calvary Co-Op Preschool
- Being able to go on the Smile Bus is an adventure, something the kids look forward to.  
—Lajeana, Metzger Preschool



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A CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL  
FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN  
2-6 YEARS OLD

**FREE ADMISSION**

Traditional Irish music from 11am - 1pm by  
Johnny Connolly and Cary Novotny, face  
painting, crafts, bean bag toss, fairy houses,  
nature hikes, local food and more!!  
Located in the parking lot of St. Bartholomew's  
church, 11265 Southwest Cabot Street, Beaver-  
ton, Oregon. (Overflow parking at Arts and  
Communication Magnet Academy)

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR NEW OUTDOOR KINDERGARTEN!

## Spotlight on ...

## Calvary Cooperative Preschool: Celebrating 25 Years!

by Gina Ware

Calvary Cooperative Preschool, located in Northeast Portland, will be celebrating its 25th anniversary this school year! This is very exciting for the families, teachers, and administrators (past and present) involved with the preschool. Founded in 1987, Calvary began as one of the ministries of the Calvary Presbyterian Church. Since then, we have worked very hard to facilitate a kind, considerate, and creative environment that emphasizes the social, emotional, and intellectual development of each child. We would like to acknowledge and say "thank you" for the hard work, dedication, and commitment of all of our Calvary families. Without you and your support, we wouldn't be possible!

Throughout the years, there have been several long-standing traditions at Calvary. In the fall, we celebrate Harvest Day, which includes a morning of pumpkin-carving and corn-shucking contests involving the friends and families of the preschool. We are also particularly proud of the Spaghetti Dinner that we host each February. We provide a delicious, homemade spaghetti dinner for members of the

church, community, and preschool. It's a wonderful evening filled with laughter, joy and fundraising and a tradition that we honor with pride and appreciation. In the spring, we gather old and new items for our neighborhood rummage sale. We find that when we gather our inner community to connect with the greater community, we create priceless and enduring moments that we cherish forever with our little ones (even if your husband loses the corn shucking contest!).

After 25 years of experience we are still thinking about new ways to connect our families with one another as well as with our community. This year, we hosted our very first annual Meet & Greet Picnic at a neighborhood park. It was a great success! Even though our preschool has been around for what most people would consider a long time, we realize that it is essential to evolve over time; we must move forward and grow with our ever-changing preschool population. With this in mind, we would like to mention that we have recently engaged the help of PCPO staff and their resources to help guide us through a small period of adjustment. I believe that the success of a

cooperative preschool lies within the group effort, and thankfully our "group effort" extends beyond our preschool.

As a parent of a preschooler (by the way, where does the time go?!), I find that the cooperative preschool experience has truly been the right fit for me and my family. I am ever so grateful that I have the opportunity to walk a few blocks away and drop my child off at a preschool that has been a positive, reliable organization in our community for 25 years. We are very proud of our history and look forward to serving many more children and their families in the future!

*Gina Ware resides in Northeast Portland with her family, who include her very spunky, almost-four-year-old daughter, her one-year-old son (who is mostly referred to as Bam Bam), her loving husband, her fat black pug, and her two untidy cats. She serves on the board at Calvary Cooperative Preschool as treasurer, and she also serves on the PCPO board as the general meetings chair.*

*Calvary Cooperative Preschool currently has openings in both the Preschool and Pre-K classes. Please visit their Web site at <http://www.calvarycoopreschool.com> for more information.*

## Just Sing! (Continued from page 1)

progresses some activities are similar from week to week while others vary. The first activity after "hello" is always a flow activity. I sing a short song (usually no longer than about 20 seconds) in an unusual tonality and demonstrate a flowing movement with my arms while remaining seated. I sing the same song many times while pausing between repetitions. In those pauses, I am listening for musical responses from class members and catching their attention. I am very still until I start singing again. The flowing movement of my arms uses all the space around me, above, behind, to the sides and in front of my body. I invite the grown-ups to follow me. It has been researched that young children are more likely to imitate a caregiver's example than mine.

Children will follow in their own way. Infants are not always obvious in their attempts to move in flow. They may move their arms in a seemingly uncontrollable manner. I have observed children less than a year old moving purposefully in flow with their arms moving all around them. Two- and 3-year-old children may not participate directly, but they watch. Classes for children 0 to 3 years are an informal learning environment. Sometimes students seem to pay attention and participate and sometimes they don't. Just like a child will repeat something they heard you say when you did not think they were paying attention, the same is observed in this environment as well. Some children will leave my class not having participated at all and re-experience the class alone in their room at home.

Infants may not participate in a traditional way, but they do listen and watch. I often hear them crying or

cooing on a relevant pitch to the song being sung in class. I have seen them move their hands or breathe in rhythm with me in class. Infants exposed to this environment are more likely to either sing and or chant rhythms accurately much earlier than students starting these activities after 18 months.

As people have come to my classes, they have been surprised that more than 90% of the music in class does not have text and that relatively few props (instruments) are used. As children in early stages of life are very focused on language acquisition, using music with text will distract them from hearing the tonal and rhythmic elements of the song. Many props used in early childhood music programs encourage beat movement. While I do use them occasionally, it has been researched that children will learn to feel and internalize beat faster if they move in flow.

*How do I create a rich music environment in my home?* Variety is the most important thing. In our popular music culture, unfortunately, music diversity is largely missing. From the standpoint of a music theorist, a vast majority of the songs around us use major tonality with beats that can be subdivided by two. When looking to provide a spectrum of music tonalities, look for music that doesn't quite sound the same as what is largely found around us. When speaking of music in different tonalities, it is easiest to imagine a keyboard. A major scale is all the white keys between C and C. A minor scale can be played with all the white keys between A and A. Major and minor tonalities are most commonly used. The Dorian mode or scale uses the white keys between D and D. Other modes can be created between E and E or F and F, etc. Each has a name and its own unique sound.

Rhythmic variety is introduced when songs either have a beat that is subdivided by three or beats that alternate with subdivisions of two and three (unusual meters). This can be a challenge to discern, but a good place to start is to try to define a large pulse. Once you are rocking to that pulse see if you can figure out how that beat is subdivided. If you are considering a song in an unusual meter, the big beat will feel uneven.

Other characteristics of variety in music are timbre, texture and genre. *Timbre* is the way the tone is produced. An oboe sounds different from a violin. Their

## Music Source Suggestions

Music in different tonalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Folk music ("Scarborough Fair" uses Dorian mode); GIA Publications has several CDs with close to 100 short folk songs performed by all the instruments of the orchestra</li> <li>World music</li> </ul>
Music in different meters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Latin dance music—a rumba, for example</li> <li>Some jazz music; "Take Five" by Dave Brubeck—the title track is in an unusual meter</li> </ul>
Music with different timbres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GIA Publications has several CDs with close to 100 short folk songs performed by all the instruments of the orchestra</li> </ul>

timbres are different. Sometimes new timbres are created when two instruments play simultaneously. *Texture* is how many instruments are playing at the same time. Texture is thin when describing a solo instrument performing (not the piano necessarily) and thick when describing a Mahler Symphony. *Genre* is a musician's term for music categories. Baroque, Classical, Romantic, 20th Century, Impressionistic, Jazz, New Age, Popular, and World Music are a few genres you may recognize. Many more exist and are easily researched. The more variety you find in these areas, the more musically rich your environment will be. Pre-recorded music is a great source (see **Music Source Suggestions**). Dancing with scarves or streamers in your home is a great way to bring flowing movement while broadening musical horizons.

Another very important aspect of providing a rich music environment is to sing to your child. When encouraging a child to sing, they will imitate your voice much easier than an instrument (such as a piano or guitar). Children will also tend to echo a live singer over a pre-recorded one. It doesn't matter if you don't sing in tune or sound like Audra MacDonald, your voice is the most important voice to your child. It can be singing in the car, at bedtime or when it's time to clean up the house. It can be simple and short. It makes no difference if your voice is "in tune" or not. Just sing to your children.

My passion for early childhood music education is partly because I love being around children exploring music. At the same time, music has enriched my life in so many ways. I hope to pass the torch of music appreciation, enjoyment and literacy to this generation. Even if children never learn to play an instrument, they can always feel confident as they sing "Happy Birthday" to a family member.

*Dr. Parker is specially certified through the Gordon Institute of Music Learning to teach early childhood music. She is director of the Allegro Music Academy in Beaverton, Ore., where she teaches several classes a week. She also has a record label, Locrydian Records, publishing music for young children.*

## Recommended Reading

Gordon, Edwin E. *A Music Learning Theory for Newborn and Young Children*. GIA Publications, Inc., 2003.

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Leave No Child Inside, based on the work of Richard Louv, is free to PCPO schools in the metropolitan tri-county area.

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