

### Spotlight on a Board Member Maria Cuadra



Partnership Board Member Maria Cuadra was recently appointed to the New York State Eastern Citizens Review Panel on Child Protective Services. This panel is comprised of citizen volunteers who are authorized by law to examine the policies, procedures, and practices of the State and social services districts and, where appropriate, specific cases. It takes into consideration such matters as child abuse and neglect, protection of the children involved, rights of the parents, and assessing how cases are handled. Maria's appointment to work on such important and weighty issues shows the esteem in which she is held by her peers and the community.

Maria Cuadra is the executive director of COPAY, a bilingual substance abuse treatment and prevention agency. COPAY empowers families to overcome addiction to alcohol and other drugs so they can lead healthier, more productive lives and promotes self-esteem and leadership in all children to effectively break the cycle of addiction. She is also the chairman of the Long Island Hispanic Coalition and first vice president of the National Association of Hispanic Social Workers.

#### THE GREAT NECK/MANHASSET COMMUNITY CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP, INC.

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## MISSION

The Great Neck/Manhasset Community Child Care Partnership, Inc. is a nonprofit networking organization. Our mission is to promote the healthy growth and development of children and families by addressing early education, child care, and parenting issues.



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#### THE GREAT NECK/MANHASSET COMMUNITY CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP, INC.

### PARTNERS

The following organizations support the goals of the GN/MCCCP, Inc.

- Adventures in Learning
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- Supervisor Jon Kaiman, Town of North Hempstead
- The Early Years Institute
- Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock
- United Parent-Teacher Council-Great Neck
- Womenspace in Great Neck

## We've Come A Long Way, Baby!!! (And Preschoolers)

By Debbie Shichtman, Ed.D.

Almost 20 years ago a few women sat around a table talking about how to make child care better. Our first project was a small brochure listing local preschool programs. Slowly we grew in supporters, board members, partners, and community agencies who sat on our board. We incorporated and widened our vision to focus on the healthy growth and development of children and families, hired an Executive Director, initiated a Family Support Program, and established a number of yearly programs including preschool showcases and guides, scholarships for child care, education for providers and parents, and a Directors Circle for preschool directors.

As I look around today, low and behold, I find that the world is beginning to catch up with our vision!! The articles you will read in this newsletter illustrate recognition in the wider community of the importance of early childhood education.

The Universal Pre-K movement is gaining traction in New York State and on Long Island. The Great Neck School district is leading the way by offering four-year-old pre-K to any family who wants it. Next year nearly 180 four-year-olds will be attending the Parkville School at no cost to their families. New York State Regent Roger Tillis spoke at the Child Care Council Symposium and Luncheon of the State's commitment to Universal Pre-K and expanding its horizons to

encompass birth through college care and education for all New York's students.

The Early Years Institute, funded by five major Long Island foundations, hopes to stimulate the public will to increase investments in young children through community development, research, and coalition building. The Partnership is proud to be a member of this organization that aims to make Long Island a national leader in communities that value children.

The Harlem Children's Zone is a model project designed to enhance the quality of life for children living in one of the most devastated neighborhoods in New York City. Recognizing the importance of early care and education, one of its programs, The Baby College, works with parents from the time their children are born. Harlem Gems, a universal pre-K program, is also a key part of a broad, all-encompassing effort to work with children from the time they are born until they enter college or the workforce.

Building on the previous accomplishments of the Partnership and inspired by the increasing awareness of the importance of early childhood education, the passionate, hard-working members of our Board continue to look for new ways to carry out our mission to promote the healthy growth and development of children and families by addressing early education, child care and parenting issues.

Underwritten by the Dana and Jesse Lehman Foundation

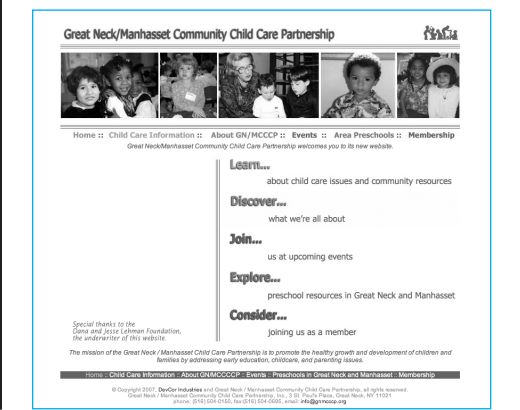
### Our Appreciation... To those who have provided significant support for the Partnership

- The Annette and Anthony Albanese Foundation
- Marilyn and Russell Albanese
- The Sandra Atlas Bass/Edythe & Sol G. Atlas Fund
- Ellen and Marc Blumencranz
- Judi and Jay Bosworth
- Dee and Kevin Conway
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- The Dana and Jesse Lehman Foundation
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- The Schnurmacher Foundation
- The Tilles Family Foundation
- Kim Tilley and Peter Scher
- One Anonymous Donor

### Visit the Partnership's website at www.GNMCCCP.com

There you will find articles of interest about parenting and early childhood education, a calendar of events for the Partnership and our member organizations, our Board of Directors, and our Great Neck and Manhasset Preschool Guides.

With links to other organizations who share our mission and goals, the Partnership website is another way we network and educate about the importance of early childhood education and family support. ■



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### Invest in Children and Families — Join Us

#### APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

- Yes, I would like to assure the availability of quality child care by contributing to the efforts of the Great Neck/Manhasset Community Child Care Partnership, Inc.  
Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution.
- Friend.....\$35  
 Supporter.....\$50  
 Business.....\$75
- Sponsor.....\$100 - \$499  
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Make check payable to GN/MCCCP, Inc. — 3 St. Paul's Place, Great Neck, NY 11021

## LETTER from the CHAIRS

by Jodi Adler, Rosemarie Ennis, and Kitty Poons

Under the leadership of our new Executive Director, Debbie Naclerio, this year has been one of broadening the horizons of the Partnership. We concentrated on reaching more people with our message in every possible way. We added new board members. We increased our membership and our supporters. We provided even more scholarships so that families could afford quality child care. We invited more schools from areas surrounding Great Neck and Manhasset to participate in our Preschool Showcases and added a parent education component by including guest speaker, Julie Cohen, LSW. We reached out to new organizations to partner with us. The Manhasset Community Coalition Against Substance Abuse (CASA) co-sponsored a second "Educational Evening" for childcare professionals this spring in addition to our fall evening, co-sponsored by the Department of Public and Professional Health Education of the North/Shore LIJ Health System. Over 70 schools were invited to participate in these educational events.

We met with the Port Washington Child Care Partnership to discuss mutual concerns and plan to continue our relationship next year with a joint project. We served on the Luncheon/Symposium Committee of the

## Legislative Report

By Nassau County Legislator Judi Bosworth



In my previous role as trustee of the Great Neck Board of Education, I was intimately involved in the everyday decisions affecting school children of all ages. In my new role as legislator, I have new opportunities to see how "thinking outside the box" can benefit children.

For example, at the CLASP Annual Dinner in May, the Nassau County Foster Grandparent Program was honored along with two volunteer grandparents. Under the auspices of the County's Department of Senior Citizen Affairs, this program provides seniors with the joy and satisfaction of working with children, and more importantly, children with the dotting attention that only grandparents can give. What a great way for little ones to feel the love of an extended family in their childcare setting!

On a visit to St. Mary's Healthcare System for Children—a county-supported facility dedicated to providing intensive rehabilitation and specialized care for children with special needs and life-limiting conditions—I discovered they have nursery school classes for patients and the non-special needs children of the hospital's staff, thereby creating an integrated learning environment. I remember so well the first corporate onsite childcare center that Lilo and Gerry Leeds established for CMP Publications. It is great to see this model continue in a non-traditional setting.

Child Care Council of Nassau and joined the advisory board of The Early Years Institute, a coalition of many Long Island organizations dedicated to stimulating the public will to invest in young children. Our commitment to address early education, childcare, and parenting issues requires a total community effort. Schools, businesses, government, community organizations, providers — all



Of course, I am most proud of the way the Great Neck School District has responded to New York State's mandate for Universal Pre-K. Next year Great Neck is offering Pre-K to every family who wants it. No school district on Long Island is doing more!!

Nassau County is involved with early intervention and preschool special education with a Children's Early Intervention Program, an entitlement program that provides specialized services to children under age three with developmental delays and disabilities. Services include evaluation to determine eligibility and a comprehensive array of services, all in the least restrictive setting.

The Partnership has played a key role in raising our community's consciousness about the importance of early intervention. As the newly named Chair of the Legislative Committee on Education, I hope to continue to work with the members of the partnership to further quality, affordable early care and education for all children. ■

have a stake in assuring safe, developmentally appropriate child care. Board members, community volunteers, donors, partners, new and old — thank all of you who joined with us to promote the healthy development of children and families. **Together we can and will make a difference!** ■

## The Early Years Institute



by Dana Friedman, Ed.D.

The Early Years Institute is a catalyst for new ideas, partnerships, and resources to expand early learning opportunities and ensure that all children have what they need to succeed. Through community development, research, and coalition building, EYI hopes to stimulate the public will to increase investments in young children. **Our vision is for Long Island to be a national leader in communities that value children.**

EYI began as Early Care and Education — Long Island (ECELI), which was initiated by five funding organizations. The goal was to examine and improve the support for quality early care and education. After research was completed in February 2003, a four-year plan was developed to help unify the field, expand resources to childcare providers, and increase community support. EYI expands the mission of ECELI to include improving the quality of learning environments for ALL children—those in regulated childcare centers as well as those being cared for by informal caregivers, including parents and grandparents.

EYI is currently involved in several projects that demonstrate its commitment to the collaborative process.

- Recognizing that pediatricians are among the most respected advisors for parents, we conducted a Pediatric Outreach Project to increase dissemination of child development information through clinics, hospitals, and pediatricians' offices. We worked with a team of 12 parenting organizations to learn which strategies

work best in private practice and in health clinics, and we are now working with Docs for Tots to create a national model of pediatricians as messengers about the importance of the early years from a social, emotional, and intellectual perspective.

- EYI has also launched the Long Island Nature Collaborative for Kids (LINCK), which seeks to connect children and nature by creating outdoor nature exploration classrooms in backyards, neighborhoods, parks, preserves, beaches, libraries, schools, childcare programs, and youth programs. Our efforts have caught the attention of a Nebraska foundation that has designated LI as a national demonstration site for nature education for children.

- EYI is conducting a study of Universal Pre-K on Long Island to learn more about why LI school districts returned \$14 million of the \$35 million that was allocated by New York State. Interviews with Superintendents, Pre-K Directors, and community-based organizations that partner with districts to offer Pre-K are creating a picture of how Pre-K is being implemented and what best practices districts can try. The findings will be presented in October 2008 at the Pre-K Leadership Forum convened by EYI and BOCES in Nassau, Western Suffolk, and Eastern Suffolk. This forum will be chaired by NYS Regent Roger Tilles. ■

**The Early Year Institute is located at** One Dupont Street, Suite 101, Plainview, NY 11803. Call (516-304-5480), fax (516-304-5484), or visit its website at [www.earlyyearsinst.org](http://www.earlyyearsinst.org).

## Harlem Children's Zone

An advanced environment project based on the principles of a critical mass of engaged, effective families and early and progressive intervention in children's development

Geoffrey Canada's vision was to go beyond helping a single child or a single classroom and treat an entire neighborhood. His ambitious scope encompassed a 24-block zone in central Harlem with 6,500 children. At the start, more than 60 percent of the children were living below the poverty line and three-fourths scored below grade level. He named the neighborhood Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ). Canada's project had a broad scope because he realized that you cannot fix the schools without fixing the families and the community. His program combines educational, social, and medical services starting at birth and following children to college or the workplace.

"We believe the earlier a child is touched by sound health care, intellectual and social stimulation, and consistent guidance from loving, attentive adults, the more likely that child will be to grow into a responsible and fulfilled member of the community." Following this belief, the Baby College, a nine-week series of workshops offered to parents of children between the ages of 0-3, is a critical piece of early intervention. As a follow-up to the classes, outreach workers organize monthly get-togethers to help parents form special relationships with other parents in the community while gaining valuable child health information.

Since its inception in 1997, the HCZ project has added programs to carry out its broad ambitions:

- **Harlem Gems** - a universal pre-K program.
- **Peacemakers** - placing AmeriCorps-funded Peacemakers in classrooms and after-school and summer programs.
- **The Employment and Technology Center** - offering computer classes to youth and adults in the Zone.
- **TRUCE (The Renaissance University for Community Education)** - fostering academic growth and career readiness.



- **TRUCE Fitness and Nutrition Center** - offering presentations on health-related issues and classes in martial arts, fitness and nutrition, dance and aerobics.
- **Community Pride** - working with Harlem residents to stabilize city-owned housing and small private home ownership, improve the physical environment, and increase resident leadership and involvement in the community.
- **SMART (Shaping Minds Around Reading and Technology)** - offering individualized comprehensive support during in-school and after-school hours.
- **5th Grade Institute** - helping children meet the challenges of entering middle school.
- **Asthma Initiative** - screening and treatment for asthma. Almost one-third of children in the HCZ Project have asthma. In contrast, the national rate is 5 to 7 percent.

With a \$25 million grant (to be distributed over 5 years) from the Starr Foundation in 2006, HCZ will serve another 4,500 children by adding 37 blocks.

As reported in a May 2008 article in U S News.com, the HCZ has been most successful with younger children. Large numbers of Baby College graduates report reading and singing more often to their children and getting up-to-date immunizations. One hundred percent of the past three Harlem Gems classes tested "school ready." And while only 11 percent of Promise Academy's 100 kindergarteners initially tested above grade level, 80 percent had reached that point by the end of the school year. ■

## Meet Roger Tilles, New York State Regent



Roger Tilles, in his keynote address at the Child Care Council Symposium and Luncheon on May 9, 2008, spoke of the positive results—economic, social, and behavioral—of early childhood education. His commitment is backed by his actions. He was at the forefront of the New York State Board of Regents Universal Pre-K initiative and will

be chairing the Pre-K Leadership Forum convened by The Early Years Institute and BOCES in Nassau, Western Suffolk, and Eastern Suffolk in October of 2008. Universal Pre-K, however, is just the beginning. Regent Tilles envisions the day when the Board of Regents will speak in terms of birth through 16, not K through 12.

Mr. Tilles is pleased that on Long Island collaboration exists between schools, libraries, and museums. Several of the 18 colleges on Long Island are working with struggling school districts—Hofstra with Roosevelt, Adelphi with Hempstead, C.W. Post with Westbury, and Dowling and St. Joseph's with Wyandanch. As a result, these school districts have seen improvement, and young educators have been able to practice their craft in the real world of education.

Although proud that Long Island has some of the best performing school districts in the country, he has concerns about the financial and achievement disparities that continue to exist between school districts. One solution would be to consolidate the many Long Island school districts. At present 122 districts serve 500,000 students.

Roger Tilles is one of 16 NYS Regents elected by the State Legislature: one from each of the State's 12 judicial districts and 4 members who serve at large. Regents are unsalaried and are reimbursed only for travel and related expenses in connection with their official duties. Established by the NYS Legislature on May 1, 1784, the Regents of The University of the State of New York form the oldest, continuous state education entity in America. The Regents are responsible for the general supervision of all educational activities within the State, presiding over the State University, the Education Department, and all elementary, secondary, and postsecondary educational institutions, libraries, museums, public broadcasting, records and archives, professions, Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities, and such other institutions, organizations, and agencies as may be admitted to The University.

Mr. Tilles has a long and illustrious history of service to Long Island. He was chair and a founding member of the Association for a Better Long Island, is an appointee and current acting chair of the Long Island Regional Planning Board, graduates as chair of the Long Island University Board of Trustees, served on the boards of WNET/Channel 13 and WLIW/Channel 21 and has been executive vice chairman of the Tilles Center for the Performing Arts in addition to serving on the board and executive board of the Long Island Association. He has also worked to form the Long Island Arts Alliance to bring together the cultural institutions of Long Island.

Roger Tilles was born and educated in Great Neck in their public schools. He and his wife, Jerry, and their daughters, Eliana and Hanaleah, still reside in Great Neck where the children attend the Great Neck public schools.

**We are proud to have Roger Tilles as a Partner in advocating quality early care and education for all children.** ■