

# FAMILY FORUM



Family Forum is the newsletter of the Minnesota Council on Family Relations, a State Affiliate of the National Council on Family Relations Winter 2008



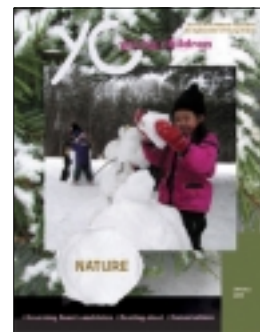
## NATURE, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: A NECESSARY CONNECTION

The Minnesota Council on Family Relations and the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, University of Minnesota are teaming up to offer a conference for educators, health professionals, researchers, community leaders, policy makers, designers and urban planners on the importance of green space in the lives of children, families and communities. Dr. Andrea Faber Taylor, a child environment and behavior researcher from the University of Urbana-Champaign will be the keynote speaker and will present her systemic evidence of two populations in great need of support: children living in impoverished public housing and children coping with AD/HD. She studied day to day functioning of children in the areas of self-discipline including concentration, impulse control and delay of gratification and how greenspace plays a necessary role in how children grow and develop. She says that, "Kids who spend more time

outside end up paying more attention inside!" This has implications for how communities can foster the healthy development of children.

Additional presentations by Dr. Martha Farrell Erickson from the University of Minnesota and national board member of the Children and Nature Network and Nancy Rosenow, Executive Director of Dimensions Education Research Foundation from Lincoln, Nebraska will share national and regional developments and emerging trends and educational models in this new area of research and education.

If you are interested in attending or learning more about the conference, please contact the Minnesota Council on Family Relations at [www.mcfr.net](http://www.mcfr.net) or the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum at 952-443-1422 or [www.arboretum.umn.edu](http://www.arboretum.umn.edu).



## MCFR 2007 ANNUAL CONFERENCE WAS ENRICHING - MATERIALS NOW AVAILABLE

Kristin Dillon, Conference Committee Chair

In November, we had the honor of presenting Dr. James Garbarino as the keynote speaker for our conference entitled "Children's Right to a Healthy Social Environment: How to Protect Them from Social Toxicity." We began the day with an emotionally charged excerpt from a presentation by the Minnesota Spoken Word Association. The monologue "Motherless Child" set the tone for a day that centered on the vulnerability and resilience of children.

Dr. Garbarino followed the presentation with a fascinating discussion that combined his legacy with social toxicity and his cutting edge work around the rights of children as human beings. He gave an enlightening lecture that covered the challenges to the rights of children that exist in our society in an eloquent and hopeful way. After his keynote address we compiled questions from the audience and he answered as many as possible on the spot. This was an exciting opportunity for the audience to engage with such a renowned speaker. At the end of the

morning, many of the conference participants were asking for more of Dr. Garbarino.

After lunch, Donald Gault, one of our conference committee members, and his colleague Darleen Simmons, presented an interactive, condensed version of the Wakanheza Project. This presentation encompasses the concepts of respect and empowerment that Dr. Garbarino emphasized. The achievability of the Wakanheza Project makes peace seem possible.

The afternoon was then filled with intimate breakout sessions. Each of these sessions focused on the rights of

children in a more specific context. The breakout sessions included not only a presentation, but also a discussion period to allow conference participants to build their own tools to protect the rights of children in their lives. Finally, Donald Gault helped us wrap up and share experiences from the day. As a celebratory close to the day, we drew the name of a participant who received an autographed copy of "See Jane Hit," Dr. Garbarino's latest book.

Overall, this was a wonderful, enriching conference. In our evaluations, people said that this conference was "life changing", "approachable, practical, understandable, and applicable", and "helped me dream of what the future could be like if we value children." I may be biased, but I gained more from this conference personally and professionally than I could have ever imagined. One of the things that made this conference so positive and powerful was the enthusiasm of the participants. We had an amazing

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Minnesota Council on Family Relations  
2738 Evergreen Circle, St. Paul, MN 55110

PHONE: 651-407-0950

FAX: 651-407-1754

WWW.MCFR.NET

## President's Letter

Betty Cooke, PhD, CFLE  
MCFR 2007 President

### GREETINGS MCFR MEMBERS,

It is with pleasure and humility that I begin this year as president of the Minnesota Council on Family Relations, an organization dedicated to the education and support of family professionals and the promotion of connections among those involved in research, policy, and practice related to families. This is my second term as president, having also served in this role in 1991. I have been a member of MCFR for 30 years, have a lifelong commitment to the work of the organization, and look forward to the opportunity to provide leadership to it again.

And we are already off to a great start! The MCFR Board of Directors met in a retreat on January 18th to focus on planning for the year and beyond, and what an amazing group of talented, committed, and energized family professionals this is. Be sure to note who they are as listed in this newsletter and thank them for their contributions when you see them. This is truly a partnership among gifted individuals who want to work together and with you to make this the best organization it can be in order to work toward accomplishment of its important mission.

Speaking of the MCFR Board working with you, we want to encourage you to get involved more than you ever have this year, whether this is your first year or you are a veteran member of many years of involvement. We have a listserv on which you can share ideas and information, and we encourage you to serve on a committee, contribute articles for the newsletter and/or website, and give us suggestions about other ways you would like to be involved.

We just held an exceptionally fine conference on November 30th on *Children's Right to a Healthy Social Environment: How To Protect Them from Social Toxicity* featuring James Garbarino as the keynote speaker. As always, Dr. Garbarino challenged and motivated us to exercise our important role as citizen professionals on behalf of the rights of children and families in our world today. Thanks to chair, Kristin Schneider Dillon, and all involved with this event. Also, a huge "THANKS" to our 2007 President Minnell Tralle who provided outstanding leadership in the past year and who I am thankful to have by my side as we work together this year.

**SAVE THE DATE of April 4, 2008!** This is our spring conference date and **an event that you will not want to miss!** The topic is *Nature, Children and Families: A Necessary Connection*, a cutting edge topic receiving national attention. The conference is co-sponsored with the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and will be held there. Morning keynote speakers include Andrea Faber Taylor, researcher from the University of

Illinois Urbana-Champaign, our own Marti Erickson who is on the national board of the Children and Nature Network, and Nancy Rosenow from Nebraska and featured in the latest issue of *Young Children*, the journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Be sure to read all the details within this newsletter and on the website, and register ASAP.

Minnell Tralle and Rose Allen are co-chairing a committee that is already working on the annual fall conference on a topic related to family vulnerabilities. It will be held on Friday, December 5, 2008 at the University of Minnesota Continuing Education Center.

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### 2007 ELECTION RESULTS

MCFR's 2007 elections are now complete and the new members have officially joined the Board. Rose Allen was elected as the new President-elect. Newly elected treasurer is Kristin Schneider Dillon. The four new at-large Board members are Pa Nhia Yang, Sara Lassig, Carolyn Carr Latady, and Heather Dubbeldee. They join Betty Cooke, president and Beth Yokom, secretary, and the other Board members (see the list to the left). We are so pleased to have all of these individuals join the Board and look forward to the upcoming year.





## NEW YEAR, NEW FOCUS: BUILDING BRIDGES AND FILLING GAPS!

Heather Dubbeldee, Chair, Student Section

The Student Section of MCFR has

officially begun its second year, and the theme of strengthening students, professionals and the family field through building bridges and filling gaps is sure to inspire a long and prosperous life for the Student Section.

MCFR hosted its annual board retreat in January and the student section got a lot of attention. Before getting to the excitement, I have an administrative detail to announce. You may have noticed a new author name and picture than in previous articles. I functioned as co-chair of the Student Section with Kristin Schneider-Dillon last year. Kristin is now the treasurer of MCFR on the executive board and has stepped down from an official leadership position with the student section. With great enthusiasm, I have taken on the full position of Chair of the Student Section. However, Kristin will continue to be an integral part of the committee and the future happenings.

Speaking of happenings, our spring social event is coming up quickly. On Friday, February 22nd the Student Section will host its event at Caribou Coffee on

Snelling Avenue from 5-7 pm. Please join us for great conversation, talks from the past, present and future presidents of MCFR regarding their career journey and future outlook on the family field, and an update from me about the Student Section's plans for 2008 and beyond. For more information on this event, and other Student Section news, visit our blog at <http://blog.lib.umn.edu/cline048/mcfr/> or become a friend of the Student Section on our new facebook page. Another reason to check out the blog is to read my new column entitled, "Life as a grad student." I plan to post weekly and would love it to stimulate conversation around the struggle graduate students have balancing all the aspects of our lives as we find our unique place in the family field.

Other exciting items on the Student Section agenda include: further developing a mentorship program to provide students a safe place for inquiry and exposure to the field; and creating a workshop where students can gain experience presenting their work in a low-stakes environment. The specifics of these opportunities will be shared at the February social event and outlined on the blog. All of the items mentioned work

toward our goals to build bridges and fill gaps between (1) student life and professional life and (2) students at different colleges and universities in Minnesota who will soon become colleagues in the family field. If you have any questions about the Student Section or would like more information, contact me (Heather) at [cline048@umn.edu](mailto:cline048@umn.edu).

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Mary Jo Czaplewski, Nominating Committee Chair

Make a difference! Nominations for MCFR board are open now!

Are you looking for a way to share your talents in the family field? Do you know someone else who would like to become involved with the Minnesota Council on Family Relations? Here's your chance to serve with a dedicated and friendly group while making a difference in the profession.

This year, we will be looking for nominees to serve in the following positions on the MCFR Board of Directors:

- President elect— one year, followed by a 1 year presidency.
- Secretary — one year, as recorder of official board business
- Member At Large — two-year term, assist in recruiting new members. (4 are being replaced next year.)

If you are interested in any of these positions, or are thinking of other ways to serve MCFR, we would like to hear from you. For more details about each position, which begins after the State Conference in December, call Mary Jo Czaplewski, 763-502-1345, or email her at [czapmj@usfamily.net](mailto:czapmj@usfamily.net).

### 2007 ANNUAL CONFERENCE *Continued from page 1*

group of people and I thank each of you who were able to attend and make it a success.

If you were unable to make it or would like to revisit the conference content, we have set up a blog at <http://blog.lib.umn.edu/kschneid/rightsofchildren/>. Unanswered questions from the conference are posted here. I encourage you to continue these dynamic conversations about such a crucial issue.

We would also like to thank those who donated money or bought silent auction items to fund conference scholarships. We made \$345 from the silent auction and \$195 from generous donations. We are excited to be able to help people with financial limitations attend our future conferences.

Stay up-to-date at [WWW.MCFR.NET!](http://WWW.MCFR.NET)

# DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS IN THE LIVES OF OUT-OF-HOME-PLACED YOUTH

Ronald L. Pitzer, Susan M. Meyers, & Dario Menanteau\*

As part of an effort to reduce the need for out-of-home-placement of youth, the Family Service Collaboratives and Extension Offices in four south-central Minnesota Counties (Sibley, LeSueur, Nicollet, and Blue Earth) contracted the University of Minnesota's Center for Rural Sociology and Community Analysis to conduct an interview survey of such youth in these four counties. While the study was completed in 2001, it was not widely reported and we believe may be of interest and use to readers of *Family Forum*.

A major purpose of this study was to identify "assets" in the lives of out-of-home placed (OOHP) youth. Assets refer to conditions or attributes of the youth themselves, their families, their school, their neighborhood or their community that reduce risks or increase the capacity of youths to cope with the demands and risks in their lives. The out-of-home-placed youths, their mothers, their fathers (where accessible), their Social Services case manager, and their out-of-home care-provider were asked to rate the extent to which 30 factors were present in the youths' lives prior to the out-of-home-placement. These factors were derived from studies by the Search Institute and other studies of youth resilience.

## NUMBER OF ASSETS

Research by the Search Institute and by many resilience researchers indicates that the more developmental assets youngsters have the less likely they are to get into trouble and the more likely they are to be successful now and in the future. Search Institute's "vision" is for youth to have 20 or more of the 30 assets in their lives. The Search Institute's national database of over 260 thousand teens from 25 states (at the time of the study) shows an average of 16.5 assets per youth with 29% meeting the ideal of 20 or more assets. In Search Institute surveys shortly before the present study, Sibley County 6th, 8th, 10th, 11th, and 12th graders averaged 15.8 assets and 27% met the milestone of 20 or more assets. By contrast, the OOHP youth in the present study averaged 11.2 assets (by their self-estimate) and only 12.5% had 20 or more assets in their lives.

There was considerable disparity among the four categories of raters. The youngsters' self-appraisals of their number of assets varied from 3-25 (with a mean of 11.2), mothers' ratings varied from 7-26 (with a mean of 13.6), fathers from 4-26 (with a mean of 12.7), and Social Services' case file managers ranged from 0-25 (with a mean of 5.6). In summary, as might be expected, the OOHP youth had substantially fewer assets than general teens in the local counties and in the nation.

This matter of disparate ratings deserves further exploration. Who do we believe—the youth, their parents, or the case-file manager? Do the youth lack self-awareness; are they deluding themselves; are they deliberately mis-representing the assets in their lives? Are parents more mature in their judgments of teens' circumstances or are they unengaged and out-of-touch with their teens? Are the case-file managers more objective and more skillful in analyzing characteristics of the youth and the conditions of their lives? Or are they biased toward a negative perception of their clients? It is particularly interesting that parents and case-file managers consistently under-rate the

youths who rate themselves high on number of assets and over-rate the youths who rate themselves low on number of assets.

## MOST AND LEAST FREQUENT ASSETS

The assets **most** frequently perceived by the youth as being present in their lives prior to the OOHP mostly had to do with feeling supported or monitored by parents, other adults, and friends. Others included being able to stick up for their beliefs, being good at making friends, and feeling able to do things as well as most people their age.

The assets **least** frequently perceived as being present prior to the OOHP included involvement in school or extra-curricular activities or in church. Most did little homework and only one perceived himself as doing well in school. It is also interesting that most of these young people did not view their friends as being very good influences.

## PARENTAL NURTURANCE AND DISCIPLINE PRACTICES

The interviews included four items related to "boundaries and expectations". The OOHP youth were considerably different from general teens on these items, reporting fewer limits and less monitoring. Mothers and (to a somewhat lesser degree) fathers of the OOHP youths saw themselves as providing much more nurturance and discipline (setting and enforcing limits and monitoring their young people's behavior) than did the youth. Social Services Department case managers perceived far less in the way of parental guidance, discipline, and monitoring than did either OOHP youths or their parents. "Providers" (caretakers for the youths during their placement) also took issue with the parents' self-reports of active discipline. In a series of questions about what led to the placement, nearly half of the providers insisted that a contributing factor was lack of discipline, lack of structure, inconsistency in discipline—a matter never noted by the mothers and only twice mentioned by fathers.

## CONCLUSION

Much more detailed data regarding developmental assets and other circumstances in the lives of these out-of-home-placed youth are available in the final report of the study. It is most readily accessible on the website of the University of Minnesota Consortium on Children, Youth, and Families. ([www.cyfc.umn.edu](http://www.cyfc.umn.edu)) Given the incidence of out-of-home-placement and its great cost, there would be value in replicating this study with larger populations in other counties. Virtually all of the young people interviewed in this study believed that their behavior or circumstances had improved as a result of their placement. There is great need for systematic follow-up of young people who have returned to home or community after placement to see if these changes sustain over time.

*Pitzer and Meyers are Professors Emeritus of Social Work; Menanteau is Professor of Social Work—all at the University of Minnesota. Pitzer and Meyers are retired Family Sociologists with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.*

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## 2007 Annual Award Recipients

# PRESENTED AT THE MCFR ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON NOVEMBER 30, 2007



The *Ruth Hathaway Jewson Award* is given to a professional in the family field who has demonstrated outstanding service, research and/or education, and who has provided exceptional contributions to the field.

THE RUTH HATHAWAY JEWSON DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO FAMILIES AWARD WAS PRESENTED TO

### MARTHA FARRELL ERICKSON, PH.D.

Senior Fellow & Director, Harris Programs, Center for Early Education and Development, University of Minnesota

Having served as the founding Director of the University of Minnesota's groundbreaking Children, Youth & Family Consortium (1991 to 2003), Marti Erickson now directs the Irving B. Harris Programs in the U of M's Center for Early Education and Development and co-chairs the President's Initiative on Children, Youth & Families. A developmental psychologist and professor in both Child Psychology and Family Social Science, Marti specializes in parent-child attachment, child abuse prevention, and children's mental health. In all of her work, she strives to link research, practice and policy for the well-being of children and families.

Since 1995, Marti has appeared regularly as the child and family expert on KARE-TV's (NBC) Today Show and Sunrise Show. She and her daughter also are co-hosts of a weekly radio show, "Good Enough Moms," which airs every Sunday, 2 - 4 pm on FM 107 in the Twin Cities (and via webcast at [www.fm1071.com](http://www.fm1071.com)).

Marti has served on the boards of various local and national organizations, including the National Council on Family Relations. Over the years Marti has been honored by numerous

state and national organizations, but Marti says her most important credential (and greatest joy) is being the mother of Ryan and Erin, now young adults, and the grandmother of three.

The *Friend of the Family Award* recognizes an organization or person whose work is outside the family field, but who has made significant contributions to the quality of family life in Minnesota.

THE FRIEND OF THE FAMILY AWARD WAS PRESENTED TO



### THE MINNESOTA FATHERS & FAMILIES NETWORK (MFFN)

The mission of the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network (MFFN), as a statewide network, is to initiate, promote and support effective programs and to educate on public policy to enhance the responsible involvement of fathers in the lives of children, families and the community.

MFFN encourages a positive environment where men and women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, from urban, suburban and rural areas and from across the political spectrum, can learn about and promote positive father involvement in families. MFFN is the one-stop resource for Minnesotans to learn about involving fathers in the lives of children, families and communities and provides a professional network for training and mutual support.

MFFN believes that fathers - in addition to mothers - have an important role in the healthy development of children. The Network seeks to increase the number and quality of father-friendly programs and policies without diminishing any of the important resources available for women and children. MFFN Executive Director Paul Masiarchin accepted the award.

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER *Continued from page 2*

Now this is where you come in - we need you! You can volunteer to serve on the fall conference committee or on one of the four standing committees of our organization - Communications, Membership, Nominations, and Policy - by contacting the chairs listed in the Board of Directors directory in this newsletter. Also, be sure to read the articles in this issue from each of the chairs. The Communications Committee will be working to create a new brochure and update the website, the Membership Committee is exploring online membership and new and creative ways to reach more members, and the Policy Committee is working to redefine the role of policy in our organization.

A brief comment about membership: A personal goal of mine this year is to have us all work together to increase membership in MCFR. Let's all reach out to those around us who may be new professionals in the field and encourage them to join. Also, there are many family professionals who I know who used to belong to the organization and, for various reasons, are no longer members. I particularly encourage you to invite them to rejoin and get involved in the exciting work and learning in which we

are involved. Thanks for making a special effort in this direction!

Finally, I want to mention our vital, inspired and growing student section led last year by Kristin Schneider Dillon and this year by Heather Dubbeldee. They are planning a number of exciting initiatives which you can read about in this issue. I want to call particular attention to the opportunity for you to contribute to the Student Scholarship Fund created to help students attend MCFR conferences. Thanks to the November conference Silent Auction and individual contributions to this fund, we were able to fund conference fees for a number of students attending the fall conference. We encourage you to contribute to this scholarship fund at any time throughout the year. The Student Scholarship Contribution Form is posted on the MCFR website or you can request it from our invaluable administrator, Linda Vukelich at [l.vukelich@comcast.net](mailto:l.vukelich@comcast.net).

Please feel free to contact me at any time at 612.625.7792 or [cooke047@umn.edu](mailto:cooke047@umn.edu) with your ideas, challenges, and desire to get involved. It's going to be a great year together.

## WRITING TO CHANGE THE WORLD

Review by Ada Alden. Ada is a past president of MCFR and present chair of MNAFEE.

Pipher, Mary. *Writing to Change the World*. Riverhead Books. Published by the Penguin Group. 375 Hudson Street. New York, New York 10014. 2006

Mary Pipher is an author I hold in high regard. I own four of her books. Her latest book encourages others to write about issues that are challenging, would profit from scrutiny, clarification and above all conversation. Dr. Pipher views troublesome segments of our society with clarity, angst and determination. She has written about adolescent girls, the aged, immigration and the need for authentic relationships instead of multimedia bedrooms.

Mary Pipher is direct and alarmed. She believes we are facing a crossroads and action is required. She lists critical concerns of our time such as "the Age of Information" with wisdom in short supply. Pipher believes substance should be more valued than style. The underlying premise of her book is that "the rescuers will be those people who help other people to think clearly, and to be honest and open-minded." Pipher writes her book to equip each of us to recognize our responsibility to write, thereby speaking up and speaking out. There is evidence that the written word is powerful but not when held hostage in a silent drawer or desktop computer.

The book is comfortable in its organization. She reinforces her readers to be

aware of his or her knowledge and to grab hold of the opportunity to share personal stories and observations. The second section describes the writing process and the writer as someone curious, sensitive, terrified and lonely. Significant quotes from noted writers help establish a sense of camaraderie with the reader. It is comforting to know others too struggle yet, undaunted, carry on. I liked a quote from Robert Hass. "It's hell writing, but it's hell not writing, the only tolerable state is just having written."

The final section is a call to action with a focus on various strategies to get others to think, reflect and act. Pipher provides good guidance for letters, speeches, essays, blogs and even poetry. I know of a college group consisting of faculty and graduate students who are using *Writing to Change the World* as a shared text to fuel individuals to risk taking a stand. Pipher would say our future depends on it. MCFR is dedicated to strengthening families through the education and support of family professionals and decision makers.

Our members would do well to heed the suggestion from Gary Snyder. "Find your place on the planet, dig in and take

responsibility from there." Mary Pipher rallies her readers to grab shovels and to start digging. Mary Pipher believes, as writers, her readers may in fact change the homes, neighborhoods, communities and perhaps the world.

## MCFR COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Beth Yokom, Chair

The Communications Committee is adding a few new members this year, and some new projects. I'd like to welcome Kathy Olson, Pa Nhia Yang, and Peg Lindlof to the committee and say "Thank you for volunteering!" Rose Allen and Ron Pitzer also serve on the committee and have been long-standing, valuable and hard working MCFR communications experts. Thanks to you both for your commitment to MCFR!

We have three primary projects to work on in the coming year – creating a new MCFR brochure, creating a new MCFR display board for use at conferences, and analyzing the MCFR website to determine ways it can become an even more valuable resource for members. Pa Nhia Yang, a graduate student at the UMN, has volunteered to be a student website intern for MCFR, learning how the website works, taking over some of the website maintenance tasks, and helping us to enhance the website. Thank you for sharing your expertise with us, Pa Nhia.

We are also looking for graphic art assistance with the new MCFR brochure design. If any MCFR members know of someone (including a student) who may be willing to donate their time to help us design a new brochure, please contact me at [beth.yokom@anoka.k12.mn.us](mailto:beth.yokom@anoka.k12.mn.us) or 763-506-2461.

As you can see, we have plenty of work to do and would welcome additional committee members. If you're interested in joining us, please contact me. Thanks much!

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Happy 2008 to everyone. Hope you enjoy this issue of the newsletter. My thanks to all of the contributors.

Again, I encourage each of you to consider contributing to Family Forum by preparing a book review or a research article/brief or by submitting an item for Members' Corner (our version of Letters to the Editor). If you have any suggestions for improvement of Family Forum, please let me know. Thank you.

Ron Pitzer  
Family Forum managing editor  
(612) 331-1970  
[pitzer@q.com](mailto:pitzer@q.com)

## MCFR STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

MCFR has established a student scholarship fund and is seeking donations. The fund will allow us to offer scholarships to our conferences. Please watch for an announcement on the listserv and help us build this important resource! For more information, call the office at (651) 407-0950. The donation form is available at [www.mcfr.net](http://www.mcfr.net). Thank you!

# NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS

Marcie Brooke, CFLE  
Past President, NCFR Association of Councils

Minnesota Council on Family Relations (MCFR) members have an opportunity to apply for awards and scholarships through the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) Association of Councils (AOC)

The NCFR Association of Councils Outstanding Student Research Paper Competition Application for Undergraduate and Graduates may be found on the NCFR web site home page. Go to the Association of Councils and look under awards. The Application and three copies of the student's paper are due by April 15, 2008. There will be two award winners. The graduate student paper winner will

receive \$500.00 and be expected to present the paper at the National Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas. They must also be an NCFR member. The undergraduate student paper winner will receive \$100.00. All the information on joining NCFR as a student and the application process may be found at [www.ncfr.org](http://www.ncfr.org)

Each year a national award has been established by the NCFR Association of Councils to recognize the service of affiliate members within their local, state or regional council. Up to five Meritorious Service Awards are given each year to deserving candidates who have been chosen from nominees who fulfill specific

criteria. The award criteria may be found on the [NCFR.org](http://NCFR.org) website in the left hand column under Association of Councils Awards. Nominations must be sent to the affiliate President by August 15th. The affiliate president should write a letter of commendation and forward the packet of materials to the Association of Councils' Past President by September 15, 2008. An Association subcommittee will review the applications and select the 2008 Meritorious Service Award winners to be presented at the National Conference in November 2008.



REGISTER EARLY FOR THE APRIL 4 CONFERENCE AND RECEIVE THE *YOUNG CHILDREN* JOURNAL COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN (NAEYC)!

THE JOURNAL WILL GO TO THE FIRST 200 REGISTRANTS, SO REGISTER TODAY. MORE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT [WWW.MCFR.NET](http://WWW.MCFR.NET)!

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST IN COMMUNICATIONS OR PUBLIC POLICY, MCFR HAS A VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU!

We are currently looking for committee members to serve on the MCFR Public Policy Committee and on the Communications Committee. If you are interested in serving on either of these MCFR committees, please contact Minnell Tralle or Linda Vukelich. In fact, if you want to get more involved, there are plenty of reasons to volunteer on MCFR committees and plenty of committees too. If you enjoy networking with other family professionals, then the membership committee is for you. If you are interested in volunteering on a short-term basis and have a specific research focus or specialty interest, our conference committees might be just what you are looking for. Either way, getting involved in MCFR assures that you will get the most from your membership and enhance your professional experience as well. Call us today!

## DR. GERHARD NEUBECK (1918-2008)

Prepared by Ron Pitzer, Mary Jo Czaplowski, and Sue Meyers. Parts adapted from the *Minneapolis StarTribune*, February 1, 2008 and February 7, 2008.

We lost a beloved friend and colleague recently. Dr. Gerhard Neubeck died on January 28, 2008. He is survived by Ruth, his wife of 67 years, a daughter, a son, seven grand-children, and three great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a son.

Gerry was born in Dortmund, Germany in 1918. He was an avid runner in his youth, qualifying for the 1936 Olympic tryouts but denied a spot on the German team because he was Jewish. His track shoes and jersey are in the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. He fled the Nazis to the United States in 1938. After a brief stint in Brooklyn where he discovered the Dodgers and his love for baseball, Gerry continued his education, earning a B.A. from New York University, an M.A. from Northwestern University, and an Ed.D. from Columbia University.

After completing his education, Gerry and his family moved to Minnesota where he began a long and distinguished career as a professor in the University of Minnesota's Family Study Center and, later, Department of Family Social Science. Professionally, Gerry was a psychologist, marriage and family therapist, and pioneer sexologist—teaching the first undergraduate class in human sexuality in the nation. He contributed greatly to his field, especially in the area of human sexuality, and was a leader in several professional organizations. He was president of the Minnesota Council on Family Relations in 1956-57 and of the National Council on Family Relations in 1977-78. He also served as president of the American Association of Marriage and Family Counselors. He retired in 1986 but continued to stay involved in the family field.

Avocationally, Gerry enjoyed music and

the arts and was an accomplished poet. His wife is an accomplished potter and artist. Gerry was known for his love of family and friends, for his hospitality, and for his interest, commitment, and concern for diverse peoples. He and his wife traveled widely until health problems the past few years limited his mobility.

A service celebrating Gerry Neubeck's life will be held at 2:00 pm on February 17 in the atrium of McNeal Hall on the St. Paul Campus of the University of Minnesota. Donations honoring Gerry's life can be made to the Family Social Science Neubeck Scholarship Fund at the University of Minnesota.

### 2007 ANNUAL CONFERENCE NOTES

#### Betty Cooke, MCFR President

Following are some notes from Dr. James Garbarino's keynote address at last November's MCFR annual conference. It was titled: "Children's Right to a Healthy Social Environment: How to Protect Them from Social Toxicity." If you were unfortunate not to attend the conference and hear his wonderful address, perhaps these notes will give you a flavor for part of his remarks. If you were in attendance, perhaps they will serve as an outline for review.

#### SOURCES OF TOXICITY:

1. **Racism** – traditional toxin
2. **Sexism** – traditional toxin

#### NEW TOXIC VALUES:

3. **Heterosexism** – focus of mainstream bigotry today. Any rejection of a person's identity is a social toxin.
4. **Narrow sex typing** – androgyny is a variable associated with resiliency
5. **Chronic inequality** – "poor (leads to rejection and shame) or regular"
6. **High stakes testing** – emerging as a social toxin; promotes pushing out children at the bottom; toxic for real education of children; diminishes motivation of children and teachers to promote creativity
7. **Large high schools**
8. **Life style that generates obesity** – children today are the first generation with lower life expectancies than their parents; seduced into eating things not healthy for them
9. **Erosion in structure of prosocial adult authority** – children need adults to be in charge in a positive way; creates unnecessary conflict when they are not. Adult mistrust of political and social authority leads to child mistrust of adult authority; leads to "OK syndrome" – change declarative sentences into questions. We put children in double binds – give them choices when that is not in their best interests and then are angry at them because of the choices they make that we give them. Comes to fruition in adolescence – creates dangerous situations. We've seen the end of "good/healthy hypocrisy" – children do not need to know all the details about the "clay feet" of adults.
10. **Brutality** – part of American culture
11. **Southern culture of honor** (higher murder rates)
12. **Role of shallow materialism** – human beings not material creatures; deprives us of our spirituality

**QUESTION: HOW CAN WE DETOXYIFY THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AND HELP CHILDREN LIVE IN A CHILD-SIZED WORLD?**

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