

news

from the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development at Tufts University

Inside

3 Celebrating Diversity

4 Spiritual Development and Eliot-Pearson

5 New Chair of Department

5 Honoring David Elkind

6 Spotlight on Alumni

7 News of EP Faculty

8 Recent Publications

8 Alumni News

Robert B. Pitcher

Friend and Supporter of Eliot-Pearson

Robert B. Pitcher, long time friend and supporter of Eliot-Pearson, died on May 17, 2003. Robert was the husband of Evelyn Goodenough Pitcher, Chair of the Department for many years and the person who held major responsibility for the transformation of the Eliot-Pearson School to the Department of Child Study at Tufts University.

Bob became a Trustee of the Eliot Pearson School in 1961 and remained devoted to the Department for many years. He, along with Abigail Eliot, was of central importance in raising the monies that enabled the Department to build its physical plant. The Department's administration building, the Eliot-Pearson Children's School, and the Evelyn Pitcher Curriculum



(l to r): Bob Pitcher, Dean Richard Kelly (Former Dean of Special Studies), Evelyn (Goodenough) Pitcher, Abigail Eliot and Governor Volpe at the Eliot-Pearson groundbreaking ceremony.

Resource Laboratory were all made possible due to Bob's extraordinary fund raising capabilities. Early photographs show Bob on the land where the Department now stands handing a shovel to the Governor, Robert Volpe, who performed the ground breaking. Bob was a beloved individual who cared deeply about education and public service. His warmth, charm, and charisma allowed him to mobilize support from a wide circle of resources.

Students, staff, and faculty who were in the Department from 1962 through the late seventies may recall some of the wonderful parties that took place in the Pitcher home in Belmont, Massachusetts during the time that Evelyn was Chairperson. Bob and Evelyn's warmth, hospitality and deep devotion to the Department were clearly apparent. The community enjoyed so many good times there. Some of you may remember what a wonderful toastmaster Bob was and how he opened not only his home but his heart to everyone.

A beautiful memorial service was held for Bob at his beloved Henniker, New Hampshire home in June. Family members, friends, and former colleagues remembered Bob with poignancy and humor. Members of the Eliot-Pearson community who loved and admired Bob were also present. Fred Rothbaum, Chair of Eliot-Pearson, acknowledged Bob's contribution to our entire community.

Evelyn currently resides in Henniker, New Hampshire and Sarasota, Florida. An accomplished painter, she has recently joined the Sculpture Club in her community. She sends her love and good wishes to all.



Standing: Sylvia Feinburg and Bob Pitcher
Sitting: Charna Levine and Evelyn Pitcher
at Sylvia and Charna's retirement party in May of 1999.



Governor Volpe breaking ground.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY ZELLER EMBRACES THE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF EVERY CHILD

BY ROBERT BOCHNAK

It's almost impossible for Janet Zeller, director of the Tufts Educational Day Care Center, to enter a classroom and not be noticed. The moment a child sees her, Tufts' youngest students and their teachers wave and bellow out in unison, "Hi Janet!" Several of the children rush to give Zeller a hug. Once every hello is returned and each hug reciprocated, Zeller slips out of the classroom and heads to another.

At its core, Tufts Educational Day Care Center is dedicated to helping children and their families realize the importance of acceptance and how diversity, in all its forms, makes the world a better place. In a typical classroom, there are children from different ethnic groups, those with special needs, recent immigrants, those whose families share a vast range of lifestyles and belief systems. It is testament to Zeller, who has been inducted into Tufts' Hall of Diversity.

Guided by teachers, Tufts graduate student researchers, undergraduate volunteers and other volunteers who came to the center when they themselves were kids, the children work together on projects, play during recess and share stories during snack time. Any differences between the children disappear as everyone acts, well, like kids. For Zeller, these seemingly simple interactions can be the beginnings of a lifelong dedication to making the world a place where everyone is not simply accepted, but embraced and celebrated.

"We want the children to leave here and demand diversity in their lives because they fully believe that it's just better," she says.

"These children have an interest in differences without any negativity, so while they're interested in difference, they're not making the kind of judgments that we learn to make later."

When Zeller, whose tenure at the day care center began in 1983, first arrived, she noticed that there was one group missing - children with special needs. A lecturer in the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development, Zeller, who holds an Ed.D. from Harvard, set out to include more of these children. The process included recruiting children with disabilities, which wasn't difficult because Zeller had done private consultations for these families while she was chair of special education at Wheelock College, and hiring teachers passionate about serving children with special needs.

Today, almost 30 percent of the children at the center have special needs. The center has its own speech/language pathologists, occupational therapist and physical therapist.



Janet Zeller with students Sebastian Newman and Sebastian Mont-Louis.

© Mark Morelli

Zeller's work on behalf of children with special needs has earned her several awards, including the New England Association for Retarded Citizens' 1999 Educator of the Year Award, in addition to her induction into the Tufts Office of Equal Opportunity's Hall of Diversity.

"You know how Groucho Marx said he didn't want to be part of any club that would have him as a member?" Zeller says of her induction. "Well, this is the second time in my life that I feel the opposite of that, the first being when I was named educator of the year by an organization committed to serving people who are mentally retarded. It's nice to be recognized for the things that I care most about, and I think it's important to have something like the Hall of Diversity for people to see examples that they can emulate."

Blake Newman, the father of a son with Down's Syndrome who attends the day care center, says, "We're really lucky. The teachers in the class are great with kids, and Janet is the perfect person for this."

In reality, it's Zeller who feels lucky because she has been witness to the strides that every child can make. "It's pretty extraordinary to see kids whose potential is able to be unlocked and kids who maybe have substantial special needs but that those disabilities are not seen by other children around them as detriments. They are just seen as part of who the kid is. It's inspiring."

And the hugs are nice, too.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AND ELIOT-PEARSON

While there are no revival meetings or cult gatherings at Eliot-Pearson these days, there are lots of activities having to do with spiritual development. In this past year alone, one faculty member (Rich Lerner) has been named to the board of the Templeton Foundation, arguably the most significant supporter of scientific research on spiritual development. Another faculty member (David Henry Feldman) has begun to plumb the mysteries of Piaget's early faith development; another (David Elkind) long ago made his mark through his research on the field of spiritual development, and yet another (George Scarlett) is co-authoring the first ever chapter on spiritual development for the prestigious Handbook of Child Psychology. Furthermore, one faculty member (Howard Spivak) has spear-headed the Tufts University Center for Children's conference on spiritual development, and Eliot-Pearson's Center for Applied Child Development (Lynn Schade and Cindy Krug) is helping to create national standards of excellence in early childhood Jewish education with the help of two faculty members (Fran Jacobs and Don Wertlieb).

But faculty are not the only ones involved. A number of graduate students have been writing and doing research on spiritual development. Elizabeth Dowling wrote the first ever Eliot-Pearson dissertation on spiritual development and is first editor for a new encyclopedia of spiritual development. Amy Alberts, Pam Anderson, Deborah Bobek, and Steinunn Gestsdottir, joined by post-doctoral

fellow Jason Almerigi, have all co-authored journal articles on spiritual development. And Ila Deshmukh is providing invaluable assistance on research projects on spiritual development. Clearly, there is a lot happening at Eliot-Pearson with respect to spiritual development.

As for what's going on in the larger society, present day concerns and anxieties, such as concerns and anxieties about religiously motivated terrorism, about failures within religious institutions and about the shallowness of secular culture, seem to have sparked a new interest in spiritual

“There has always been something essentially spiritual about service to children and families – which is why this recent activity in spiritual development grows naturally from Eliot-Pearson's tradition and mission.”

Why might this be so? Certainly the activity reflects the interests of those involved, but it may also reflect something about the Eliot-Pearson tradition, what's going on in the social sciences and concerns and anxieties in the larger society. There has always been something essentially spiritual about service to children and families – which is why this recent activity in spiritual development grows naturally from Eliot-Pearson's tradition and mission. And in the social sciences, academics are now rejecting old biases that led to a neglect of spiritual development on the grounds that it was a subject too “soft” and value-laden to investigate scientifically.

development – as perhaps indicated by the attention given recently to Mel Gibson's blockbuster movie. Today, it seems, the subject of spiritual development can no longer be ignored. It is significant, then, that on this subject of spiritual development, Eliot-Pearson has taken a leadership role.



Elizabeth Dowling wrote the first ever Eliot-Pearson dissertation on spiritual development.

ELIOT-PEARSON NAMES NEW CHAIR OF DEPARTMENT

Last July, Fred Rothbaum took the reigns from David Elkind to become the department's new chair. This is Fred's second term as Chair as he also served from 1985-1988.

His first order of business was to speak to everyone in the Eliot-Pearson community - to get a clear picture of what the needs of the department are. "The issues," says Fred, "are not all that different from before when I was chair, ... (but) I do not think that we were nearly as focused in the mid-late 80's on issues of diversity. Diversity is not just about increasing the numbers of diverse people. It is also about making sure that Eliot-Pearson is a place where diverse people feel embraced." Fred feels that those students who are from minority groups often require more sensitivity, if not time, because the issues that arise are less expected and less common. Therefore an advisory infrastructure needs to be in place. "This is not something that a few faculty members should specialize in, but rather it is something that all of us must participate in." Fred points out that the Eliot-Pearson community needs to work closely to ensure that all can play that role effectively. "We are working at it and hopefully getting better, but we have a way to go."

Keeping a sense of unity and cohesion within the department is another priority. "There is so much going on in the department with respect to research, applied projects and teaching, and the real challenge is to make sure that all are valued and integrated." To help keep the department unified, Fred is pushing for more time for intellectual exchange among faculty rather than devoting all of faculty meetings to

administrative matters, and to encourage participation by faculty in important decisions affecting the community.

Early Childhood Education Leadership is a final priority that Fred plans on focusing on during his term as Chair. "The core of Eliot-Pearson is its early childhood education program, and we need to make sure that we keep that core valued, in tact and thriving. I am committed to doing what I can to make that happen."

DAVID ELKIND GIVEN PRESTIGIOUS DALE RICHMOND AWARD

Eliot-Pearson is proud to announce that Professor David Elkind is the most recent recipient of the Dale Richmond Award sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Foundation for Child Development. The award is usually given to a non-physician who has made outstanding contributions to the lives of children and families. It was established to honor Dr. Julius Richmond, former U.S. Surgeon General and first director of the Head Start program. David was joined this year by an illustrious group of recipients, including Marion Wright Edelman, Robert Coles, and Jerome Kagan.

David said that, to him, the most important feature of the award is that it comes from another discipline, pediatrics. "It is gratifying to know that my work is valued outside my own field." David's research interests include cognitive and social development in children and adolescents and the causes and effects of stress on children, youth and families. His current research focuses on a new

scale to measure what he calls "the personal fable," a concept he has developed to describe the belief many young adolescents have that they are special and invulnerable. He is especially interested in how this belief contributes to risk taking. Simultaneously, David is working on a new book about play, tentatively titled, *The Play Deficit: Growing Up Stressed Out*.

David has always believed in interdisciplinary work - particularly when it comes to children. "Our scientific boundaries are arbitrary." He says, "My concern has always been with children, their health, their education and their welfare both historically and across racial, ethnic and societal boundaries."

David has contributed a tremendous amount to the Eliot-Pearson community and is extremely well respected among his colleagues. George Scarlett, Deputy Chair of the department, described David's contribution this way, "For over two decades David, through his writing and speaking, has drawn attention and respect not only to himself but to the department. In doing so, he has influenced Eliot-Pearson's tremendous and positive growth and helped make it what it is today, a training ground for experts in child development, a research community for understanding applied issues, and a positive influence in the lives of children and families."

Congratulations, David!

SPOTLIGHT ON ALUMNI

David Anderegg and **Kelley DeLorenzo** met in 1978 on the first day of their graduate program here at Eliot-Pearson, at a barbeque for new graduate students. They have each gone on to careers that directly impact the lives of children and families, as is evidenced below. David and Kelley are the parents of two college-aged children, and they live in West Stockbridge, Massachusetts.

David Anderegg, G'81, has authored an important book for today's parents: *Worried All the Time: Overparenting in an Age of Anxiety and How to Stop It* (Free Press). In this book, David draws on social science research and his own experience as a child and family therapist to help parents understand the difference between wise vigilance and crippling anxiety. David points out that a great deal of parental worry is uncalled for, and may have negative consequences for children and families.

After receiving his MA in Child Study from Tufts in 1981, David went on to receive his Ph.D. in psychology from Clark University, and then completed post-doctoral training at Austen Riggs Center in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. He has worked as a child and adult psychotherapist for more than twenty years, and is currently a professor of psychology at Bennington College. He has also taught at Harvard Medical School, Smith College, and here at Tufts.

Kelley DeLorenzo, G'95, is the Director of Family Support Services at Berkshire Center for Families and Children, a non-profit agency. She serves as clinical supervisor for a number of family support programs, including a housing project for teen parents, a supervised living program for under-18 parents, family literacy programs, and parent education and support centers. She is also a second-year post-graduate fellow at the Infant Mental Health program at the Boston Institute for Psychotherapy. Earlier, Kelley served for seven years as Director of the Early Childhood certification program at Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

You are cordially invited to the

Eliot-Pearson 2004 Annual Alumni Brunch

Meet up with your professors and fellow alumni as we celebrate our
alumni and **2004 graduates**.

Saturday, May 22, 2004 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

105 College Avenue, Medford Campus

RSVP by May 17th with the number of people you expect to attend to
Christine Emery: christine.emery@tufts.edu
or (617) 627-2218

NEWS OF THE ELIOT-PEARSON FACULTY & STUDENTS

Ann Easterbrooks, Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, presented a paper entitled, *Adolescents as Mothers: The Role of Depression in Mother-Child Interaction* at the meetings of the Society for Research on Adolescence in Baltimore, MD in March.

David Henry Feldman, (who is celebrating his 30th year at Eliot-Pearson) Professor of Child Development, was honored at a recent meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development in Tampa, Florida. The symposium was titled "The Impact of Nonuniversal Theory on Developmental Science 1972-2002". Several former students and colleagues participated or attended the event. Three scholarly papers were presented, one of which was a review of Professor Feldman's work in the fields of developmental psychology, art education gifted education, and creativity. The symposium proceedings will be published as an edited volume, with Richard Lerner of Tufts and Ann Benjamin of the University of Massachusetts serving as editors.

Lynn Meltzer, Eliot-Pearson faculty member, was the guest editor of a special issue of *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice* (Vol. 19, No. 1). The articles in the special issue stemmed from the recent work presented by Lynn and others in a symposium at the International Academy for Research in Learning Disabilities conference in Bangor, Wales in July 2003. Lynn's paper summarized ongoing research conducted at the Research Institute for Learning and Development in Lexington, MA in an article entitled, "Positive and Negative Self-Perceptions: Is There a Cyclical Relationship Between Teachers' and

Students' Perceptions of Effort, Strategy Use, and Academic Performance?" Additional authors on the paper include Eliot-Pearson alums Bethany Roditi and Laura Sales Pollica, Eliot-Pearson doctoral student Christina Theokas, and Tufts School Psychology alum Julie Sayer.

An exciting and innovative project, "Drive to Thrive: Fostering Persistence, Effort, and Resilience," with Eliot-Pearson faculty member **Lynn Meltzer** as principle investigator, is being pilot tested in the Watertown public schools with funding from the Verizon Foundation. "Drive to Thrive" is a field research initiative designed to teach students effective strategies and focused effort and to promote academic success in all students.

Eliot-Pearson had a renewed presence at the annual National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) conference in Chicago last November 5-8, 2003. A group from the Eliot-Pearson Children's School, including **Kristen Nemeskal, Debbie LeeKeenan, David Robinson, and Becky New**, gave a successful presentation on "Documentation as a tool for supporting learning and building relations among children, parents and teachers" that drew a crowd of 200 people in the audience. Several Eliot-Pearson alumni came up after the presentation and reminisced enthusiastically about their experiences at the department.



David Robinson sharing his trip to the NAEYC conference in Chicago with the Mixed Age Group in the Children's School.

This past February, **George Scarlett**, Deputy Chair, along with **Sophie Naudeau, Dorothy Salonius-Pasternak, and Iris Ponte** (all three in the Eliot-Pearson doctoral program) handed over to Sage Publications the final draft of a textbook on children's play. The book is due out in the fall and will address a real need for a comprehensive textbook on children's play.

In March, George and two colleagues in Europe handed in the first ever chapter on religious and spiritual development for the next edition of the prestigious *Handbook of Child Psychology*.

Last summer, George gave a talk on organized youth sports - at the Jean Piaget Society's meeting in Chicago, and another talk on Hitler and Spiritual Pathology at the Academy for Moral Education's meeting in Krakow, Poland.

Wish On a Star:

Eliot-Pearson Helps Families In Need

Over the past holiday season the Eliot-Pearson Graduate Student Association collected and donated over 75 gifts to children in need in the Boston area. In its second year running, the program "Wish on a Star" was even more successful than last year! The program was conceived and developed by **Iris Ponte**, a first-year doctoral student. Howard Spivak, Director of Pediatric Ambulatory Services at the New England Medical Center, and Sue Ann Ponte, Director of the Asian Outpatient Clinic, assisted their staff of primary care physicians to gather children's wishes (gifts ranging from hats, toys, and books) from patients. These wishes were posted on cut-out stars in the lobby of Eliot-Pearson, where staff, students, and faculty could choose one and grant the wishes. The delivery of the gifts made both the recipients and the givers very happy!

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Richard M. Lerner, *Liberty Thriving and Civic Engagement Among America's Youth*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2004.

Richard M. Lerner and Laurence Steinberg (Eds.), *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*, Second Edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NJ, 2004.

Cynthia Garcia Coll, Elaine L. Bearer and **Richard M. Lerner**, *Nature and Nurture: The Complex Interplay of Genetic and Environmental Influences on Human Behavior and Development*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Mahwah, NJ, 2004.

Evangeline Harris Stefanakis, *Multiple Intelligences and Portfolios: A Window Into the Learner's Mind*, Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH, 2002.

ALUMNI NEWS

Tamar Ascher, J'87, "Having finished my doctorate on the topic of 'The Role of Educational Belief Systems in Teacher Training', it was clearly time to move on. My partner and I had a lovely commitment ceremony in the summer of 2002 and are now raising our son, Nadav, who is 1 ½."

Sandra J. Bishop-Josef, G'89, is now Assistant Director at the Yale Center in Child Development and Social Policy. Several Eliot-Pearson alums have come to Yale for graduate work in psychology (Rachel Chazan Cohen, Pamela Loman) and have been fellows at our Center. Current Eliot-Pearson students can check out their program at www.yale.edu/bushcenter.

Etta Chiang, G'02, lives in Hong Kong and has been teaching both pre-service and in-service preschool and kindergarten teachers in Hong Kong for almost 2 years.

Susan (Van Raalte) Hershman, J'77, "This past fall I began teaching undergraduates at New York University. I am involved in a brand new undergraduate program called Early Childhood/Special Education (specializing in birth – age 8). I love teaching undergraduates and supervising them in their student teaching. It brings back memories from my days at Eliot-Pearson. I am also teaching a parenting class to New Mothers and their babies at the 92nd Street YMCA. I have two sons, ages 15 and 11."

Janet F. McLanahan, R'60, is still actively involved in teacher education as professor and chair of the early Childhood Development Program at North Shore Community College. Singing, bicycle touring and yoga are her extracurricular activities. "Craig and I have 2 beautiful grandchildren who live in California, whom we see regularly. Life is good!"

Joan Sannela Valdina, R'58, has written a children's book entitled "The Princess Who Dared," which was published by Infinity Publishing Company in 2002. She says that she wrote the book because, "in my 70's, my granddaughter demanded a story and voila, a young people's book was born!"

Sally Gutlon Sussman, R'60, "I am the grandmother of 4 granddaughters, I sell real estate and this year I will have been married for 40 years. Life is good; aging is not for the weak, but sometimes I still feel like a college student."

Rachel M. Stowe, R'44, "This is my 59th year of working with young children as 'the grandmother image.' I still get a monthly pay check. The pay check is modest, but welcomed at age 82!"

Randy Ward, A'78, has been appointed the new superintendent for the Oakland, California, public schools – a district with the largest budget deficit in California history. Ward has had his work cut out for him. The school district, with a "revolving door of superintendents", is \$82 million in debt and a majority of the students read below grade level. One of the first steps he took on the new job was to stop service to 500 district employee cell phones, which were racking up \$75,000 a year. Ward came to Oakland from Compton (Los Angeles County), where he was credited with restoring fiscal solvency to the formerly corrupt school district and lifting rock-bottom test scores.



Do you wish to add your e-mail
address to the
alumni mailing list?

Name: _____

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Degree and year of graduation: _____

SEND US YOUR NEWS!

We want to hear from you! Let friends, faculty, and classmates know
what you are up to these days.

Do you have a recent publication you'd like to share with the Eliot-
Pearson community? Send us the citation!

Update or Citation:

Send to: Janie Orthey Rockett
Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development, Tufts University,
105 College Ave., Medford, MA 02155
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