

Views & Vision

The Newsletter of the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association



Why Visual Literacy For Young Children?

Volume 9, Issue 1

Fall 2007

Marilyn Stalheim, Director, Westwood Early Childhood Center, St. Louis Park, Minnesota

Why Visual Literacy for young children? Experiences in creating their own art are intrinsically rewarding, providing children with a means of expressing ideas and emotions, and representing personal experiences. Viewing and interpreting art is also engaging as it promotes perception, fine motor coordination, cognition, critical thinking, cooperation, and communication.

Discovering and developing pattern recognition appears to be a crucial component of early brain development and a precursor to developing creative problem-solving. As children explore their own and others' art, appreciation for abilities, cross-cultural understandings are offered through many aesthetic perspectives.

We began our Visual Literacy journey in earnest in 1999 when a retired art instructor offered to work with staff, the children and parents at Westwood Early Childhood Center. Sally, our teacher and mentor, played art print post card games with us and challenged us to a series of guided tours at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Walker Art Center. We purchased five large display units for our hallways and sorted our print collection into our twelve months' conversation themes.

Each month prints are mounted along with questions and comments. Sally taught us to use

a method, VTS...if the picture has a story, to ask:

- What do I see?
- What else do I see?
- What do I think?
- What does this mean...or...what might be happening?

Or we might explore the elements or contents...How many...people, animals, fruit? What colors do you see?

An on-going goal is for children, parents and teachers to engage in the process of "getting into the picture." Our intent is to integrate the arts into our educational approach as we embrace the premise of Reggio Emilia:

The child has a hundred languages, a hundred hands, a hundred thoughts, a hundred ways of thinking, of playing, of speaking.
- Loris Malaguzzi

Staff training with Sally continues. This fall, Sally will again visit our classrooms for 15 to 20 minutes of "Art Talk" with the children. Teachers will be engaging the children in ART TALK at a minimum on that day. A booklet of pictures, ideas, evaluation techniques, and age appropriate Art Talk language was prepared for each classroom. These booklets will be exchanged between rooms as teachers wish.

Each month teachers will adopt a picture from the next month's

print collection. The children discuss it, do an art project, act it out, etc. Then when "their" print is hung in the hallway the next month, the children compare their print with the other pictures, guessing the theme etc.

Sally engages the families by writing ART TALK articles for our e-mail newsletter and leading occasional visits to one of our museums with staff and WECC families. Sally's gift of time and knowledge is marvelous, but any teacher could incorporate Visual Literacy into her classroom experience. Enjoy!

Visual literacy is a part of our journey with the children. In the words of poet Carlos Pellicer:

*Through sight the good and the bad
we do perceive
Unseeing eyes
Souls deprived of hope.*

Marilyn Stalheim can be reached at M.Stalheim@westwoodlutheran.org



For on-line art curriculum ideas, visit www.artsconnected.org. A FREE downloadable teacher's guide is available!

Would You Like To Be On Our Waiting List?

Candy Rickard, Current ELEA Administrative Assistant and Former Staff of Prince of Peace Preschool, Everett, Washington



Are your classrooms full and your waiting lists growing? You worked hard to become a well respected Early Childhood program, but now you have run out of rooms to accommodate all the children. Have you considered extending your ministry to outlying locations in area churches?

Over 30 years ago, Prince of Peace Preschool in Everett, Washington had growing waiting lists, but had reached capacity at their location. Together, with a vision, the director, pastor and board decided the only economical way to satisfy the families interested in their program and a way to see the program grow was to expand the existing program in outlying church locations. The solution was a bigger success than what they could have imagined. Although the numbers of locations vary from time to time, at one time, Prince of Peace was not only filling four classrooms 5 days a week at their home location,

but also ran 7 outlying locations in area churches. Sounds overwhelming - and it does have its challenges - but armed with their Mission Statement and with the support of their pastor and congregation, Prince of Peace and the director found a way to make it work.

Through years of working out the "kinks", they have developed a system that works very well. All administrative work comes out of the main location. This includes: hiring staff, payroll, tuition and registration. All supplies are ordered and delivered from this location. Each teacher is expected to attend one teacher/curriculum meeting per month where the teachers receive lesson plans and supplies they will need for children's projects.

The outlying church location is expected to supply a safe, workable classroom. They are paid a monthly maintenance fee based on the number of classes that are held on site.

They are not responsible to provide staff, toys, supplies, equipment or the locked cabinets needed in each classroom. It is important that each church has the support of their pastor and congregation and a good relationship with your director. The program is also set up and designed for the church to take over the program after three years if they feel it is something they want to do on their own. This has happened several times over the years.

So where do you start? First, you need to be a visionary director who is energetic and has developed good relationships with area congregations and their pastors. You can't do this alone. You will need a supportive staff, strong lead teachers and an active board to back you up. Prince of Peace was blessed to have Sue Baxter as their director for the past 28 years, and with Sue, they have watched their program grow from 130 children to 500. She has been through most

of the ups and downs and has only positive comments. When I asked her what the most difficult issue has been, she answered, "communication on room usage." But, she says, you can overcome that by learning to deal with some key people. "Don't think of it as hard to do. It is exciting and such a wonderful outreach to children throughout the community." Your biggest reward will be the knowledge that you have done one more thing to bring so many children to hear about Jesus and His love - for such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Sue Baxter, Director of Prince of Peace Preschool in Everett, WA, will be happy to discuss the possibility of your school or center expanding. She can be reached at 425-338-1933.

ELEA Thanks Its Donors!

ELEA would not be able to provide the types of programs and benefits that it does for its members without the generous support of donors who donate to our Annual Fund as well as the School Extension Fund. Membership dues alone do not balance our budget - your gifts are necessary and much appreciated! We wish to thank donors since our last issue, including:

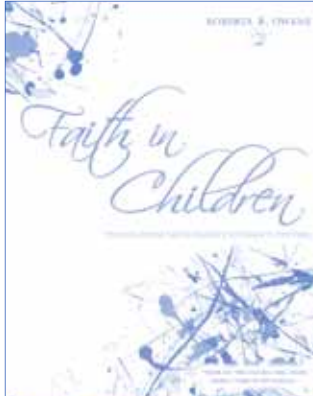
- Prince of Peace Preschool, Everett, Washington
- St. John's Christian Preschool, Bellevue, Ohio
- Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Marysville, Washington

ELEA's Purpose Statement

The Evangelical Lutheran Education Association promotes and supports quality, Christ-centered schools and early childhood programs of the ELCA.

Notes from National . . . Gayle Denny, ELEA Executive Director

* **Faith in Children** provides a beautiful and inspiring collection of stories and wisdom from families, teachers, and directors in faith-based preschools and child care centers. This 264 page, soft cover book's regular price is \$34.95, but is available at a 20% discount to ELEA members if using a special order form included in your Fall administrator's packet (read your mail!). There is a standing "Call for Stories" for future volumes. The volume on faith-based leadership of weekday children's ministries is anticipated to be published in late 2008. If interested in submitting a story, request a copy of the "Call for Stories" information sheet from author/editor Roberta Owens. The profits from book sales will be used



for small grants to faith-based preschool programs for innovative projects. For more information contact: Roberta Owens, Legacy of Caring, 229-247-9959, legacyofcaring@aol.com.

* **Disability and Life Insurance Open Enrollment** is the months of October and November - don't miss out on this great benefit with no medical underwriting. Open the bright yellow envelope (or blue if you already have policies).

* **"Those Who Care . . . Teach!"** is the theme of ELEA's Region 9 (see article on Page 6 for info on the new regional structure) November 10, 2007 conference.

With keynote speaker Marilyn Sharpe from The Youth & Family Institute in Bloomington, Minnesota, and great workshop selections, this proves to be a great event!

Under ELEA's new restructuring

plan, the existing region lines established by the ELCA are being used as the geographic boundaries for ELEA, rather than the previous "network" system. Region 9 includes Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia. All schools and centers within those states have received registration materials for the November 10 one-day teacher and administrator conference, but anyone else who is interested may attend as well.

"Those Who Care . . . Teach!" will be held at Trinity Lutheran Church in Kissimmee, Florida. Registration materials are available at the ELEA website - www.eleanational.org or by calling the National Office at 800-500-7644.

Sponsorship dollars from the ELCA, along with several other friends of ELEA, allows us to provide this quality conference for only \$49 per person (\$39 if 10 or more from one school attend); \$69 for non-ELEA members. This includes lunch - hope to see you there!



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Do You Know Where Your Grandparents Are?



Dr. Rich Bimler, Past President/Senior Staff Associate, Wheat Ridge Ministries

A helpful and hope-filled question these days is this; "Where are all the grandparents?" And, "How are we involving them in the life and ministry of our church and school?"

We have all heard the startling statistics: By 2030, there will be more people over 65 than under 18 in the U.S. Of those over 65, 35% will be over 85. For every 100 individuals 60-64, there will be 80 people in their 90's. These facts and figures could cause us great alarm. However, I suggest that they should instead encourage and motivate us to intentionally work at providing places for these older adults to be in ministry range of the children, youth, and adults around them. The tsunami of more and more older adults around us is not a burdenit's a blessing! The Lord must really love older adults because he's allowing them (us) to live longer and serve longer in new and exciting ways!

So again, let us ask ourselves, "Where are all the grandparents and how are we involving them in the exciting ministries of our church and school?"

A recent study shows that the average grandparent lives 400 miles from her/his grandchildren. This can cause concern in terms of how grandparents can effectively communicate with their grandchildren at this distance. But it is being done, through e-mail, phone, video, special visits, photos, and in many other ways. It also points out the need to help grandparents connect with children within their own church and community in addition to helping them keep close to their "far-away" little ones. We are certainly called to love and relate to our own family members, but not at the expense of caring and connecting with young children who need a grandparent model in their lives right in our own neighborhood. How about starting a "Hertz-Rent-A-Grandparent" to

develop close relationships with the old and the young?

Another challenge our churches and schools have is how to minister to the 4.5 million grandkids who are being raised by their own grandparents in the U.S.! For many reasons, their moms and dads are not present in their daily lives and the grandparents have stepped up to raise and to love them in the best ways possible. Wow, what a great opportunity for our churches and classrooms to enable and equip these special grandparents in their special tasks!

Here are some additional ways that you and your congregation and school can better equip older adults to be rubbing ministry shoulders with children and youth around them. What a blessing the Lord is providing us by placing more and more older adults all around us. Don't worry if they might not drive as fast as we'd like; not to fret if their hearing is not what it used to be (After all, they've probably heard just about everything they've wanted to hear in life anyway!) Instead, see them as a Gift from the Lord, see them as the "Keepers of the Meaning" of faith and life; see them as resources for your ministry initiatives, see them as folks who can and will affirm and love and serve others around them.

Next Steps

Here is a quick list of possibilities for your ministry with older adults. And think of many more ideas with those around you:

1. Listen and talk with the older adults around you and find out what interests them.
2. Bring a small group of older adults together to serve as your "advisory group" to brainstorm ways to involve older persons in

your schools and other ministry areas.

3. Model some generational ministries by bringing people of all ages together to play, pray, relate, study, and do projects for others. Observe what happens in terms of building relationships.
4. Sponsor a "Grandparents Camp" where grandkids and older folks can come together for a few days of fun and relaxation.
5. Ask older adults specifically to volunteer as tutors, mentors, and helpers in your school and classrooms. Do not wait for them to volunteer. Ask them! It makes them feel "worthy" ..and they just may say "Yes"!
6. Hold Grandparent Days a few times a year at school where older adults can come to visit, worship, study, and do things in the classrooms.
7. Ask someone to be "in charge" of older adult involvement in your church and school. A staff member, a volunteer, someone who has the time to take the time to be the "point person" for getting things done.
8. Honor older adults through your regular worship services, as they celebrate turning 80 years old, or when they retire or "reposition" , or when they move to an assisted living residence. Look for "milestones" in older persons' lives to celebrate. And include a cake and lots of kids, too!
9. Ask older adults for "short-term" commitments to some tasks: teaching a 4 week class on finances to young couples, doing a weekend retreat with junior highers, serving to plan a one week vacation church school for families.
10. Select an older adult as your personal mentor. Meet with this

Do You Know Where Your Grandparents Are? Continued from Page 4

person weekly, just to talk and ask and share. Meet at the friendly Starbucks (There's one on every block!), or call it your "St. Arbucks" sessions, to make it sound even more spiritual (!) A great way to affirm older adults, a great way to share your faith, a great way to tap into the vast resources of older people around us. And if one works out, try having 2 or 3 more mentors around ...the more the merrier!

And in all that you do, have fun! Celebrate the faith we have in the Lord! And help others tell the story to others also!

What a blessing it is to have more and more older adults around ...to celebrate with, to play with, to learn with, and to involve in our school ministries. Thank the Lord for us old folks! Thank the Lord for grandkids all around us!

And , "Thank you, Lord, for bringing us in ministry range of each other!"

Where are all the grandparents? They are all around us, ready and willing to be involved in "telling everyone what He has done!" What are we waiting for?

Dr. Richard Bimler can be reached at rich@wheatridge.org

2008 SAT & OLSAT Elementary Testing Dates

March 31 - April 30, 2008

Letters with instructions for downloading all ordering materials from our website - www.eleanational.org - will be sent from Harcourt Educational Measurement in November to all elementary schools.

A letter will not be sent this year to early childhood centers. Early Childhood Screening Materials: "FirstSTEPS Developmental Screening for Preschoolers" and "Greenspan Developmental Inventory" may be purchased and administered at any time during the year. Visit www.eleanational.org and click on "Testing". Contact the ELEA Office for User I.D. and password information for early childhood materials.



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- New Articles of Incorporation
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Mary Ann Pollock, ELEA National Board President



The ELEA's restructuring proposal is now a reality! Thanks to the many, many folks who took the time to read and vote on our new structure. Your National Board of Directors has worked for the last couple of years on this proposal as a way to make the ELEA serve you more efficiently. It is our belief that we now will be able to serve all sections of the country more equitably. We will use the regions of the ELCA as our guidelines for service. Each region will have a conference every other year. These will be held in the odd numbered years; i.e. 2007, 2009, etc. Each region will have basically the same conference planned by our national office, with a few differences as necessary for each region. This year we will have our first conference. It will be November 10 in Region 9. With very little tweaking, we expect the format, workshops, and presenters of this conference to be used for conferences in all of the other regions in 2009.

In some areas of the country, our old Networks worked well, but in too many areas they were not effective. In the new structure, the old networks will now be clusters within the regions and may choose to continue to provide some services. It is not our intent to "fix what isn't broken," just to do all we can to make sure all are served well.

The restructuring will also affect the makeup of the National Board of Directors. Each region will elect one representative to serve on the board. From these 9 folks, the executive committee will be elected. There will be a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. The two at-large positions will be eliminated because of the smaller board. There may be advisors elected to sit with the board. At this time, we have a pastoral advisor, a benefits advisor, and the ELCA's Director for Schools serves as a liaison between the

ELCA and the ELEA.

The ELEA National Board is excited about the new possibilities this restructuring presents! We are sure that there are issues we have not thought of, but expect to be able to tweak this new structure as necessary to better serve all of our member schools. When we add the new structure to the preschool and elementary accreditation processes which we have refined in the last couple of years and the other services provided by the ELEA, it is our hope that all member schools will feel that they are better served.

If you have questions about the restructuring and how it might affect your school, please contact our Executive Director, Gayle Denny, in our national office or me, Mary Ann Pollock, president of the National Board of Directors at maryannpollock@comcast.net. I am always happy to discuss our programs with members.

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Congregations and Schools: Asking, Seeking, Finding Resources for Ministry

February 29 - March 1, 2008 Hyatt Regency O'Hare, Rosemont, Illinois

We're on a Mission from God.

And wouldn't it be wonderful if we had all the funding our organizations need to carry out that mission?

Unfortunately, there aren't too many places that have sufficient funding resources to support every mission and ministry God asks us to lead. If one program gets funding, another new initiative is begun and needs the funding. So how do we **Ask, Seek, and Find the Resources** needed for the vital ministries of congregations and schools?

Come be a part of the exhilarating conference ***We're on a Mission from God February 29 – March 1, 2008*** in Chicago. Strengthen your mission by learning more about fundraising and communications at the Association of Lutheran Development Executives (ALDE) Education Conference. For 29 years, ALDE has been offering development professionals opportunities to network and explore new fundraising ideas. ALDE members want to share that opportunity with congregation and school leaders who most often have multiple responsibilities, just one of which is fundraising and communications, through a special **conference within a conference** just for congregations and schools.

Featured keynote speakers:

- **Terry Parsons** will challenge you to think about "Will Our Children Be Stewards?"
- **Chuck Underwood** will help you to explore the influence of generational values and attitudes on the American marketplace and workplace.

Explore **five breakout sessions** with educational opportunities

specially targeted for congregational and school leaders -- principals, teachers, pastors, school board members, stewardship committee members -- involved in fundraising for God's mission.

- The Pastor/Principal as a Leader in Mission Support
- Without a Vision the Parish/School Perishes
- Ask and You Shall (Usually) Receive
- The Steward's Mission in Today's World
- When on a Mission from God Requires Major Capital Investment

On Saturday, March 1, 18 additional breakout sessions are offered as part of ALDE's regular conference. You may choose to attend one of those, if better suited to your fundraising goals.

But wait! There's more! Included with all of the great educational opportunities are times for networking with experienced development professionals from around North America. ALDE's own members and other fundraising industry leaders will be on hand to share their knowledge with you at lunch on Friday, February 28.

The Friday night **Welcome Event** at *Navy Pier* opens with inspiring worship. Some of Chicago's finest jazz talent under the direction of Andrew Tecson lead the legendary Chicago Jazz Mass Mission-focused Rev. Dr. Frederick Niedner, Valparaiso University, brings God's message. The opportunity to meet and network with ALDE's members continues at the *Crystal Gardens on Navy Pier* while enjoying a reception dinner.



The Association of Lutheran Development Executives (ALDE) is an international organization of fundraising and communications professionals, which is rooted in the Lutheran tradition of the Christian faith and dedicated to serving God's people in the church and the world.

The "conference within a conference" price is \$225.00 per person early bird and discounts for groups of three or more (\$200 per person when the entire group registers at the same time). Price includes:

- Friday lunch
- Welcome Event dinner
- Saturday breakfast
- Saturday lunch
- Coffee breaks
- Access to Exhibits
- Networking opportunities with ALDE members.

Visit www.alde.org for additional information. You may want to consider participating in the regular conference. The total cost for Friday through Monday – conference within a conference **and** ALDE's regular conference – is only \$595.

Making a significant gift to ministry can increase your bottom line!

By making a gift for a charitable gift annuity, for instance to ELEA, you receive an income tax deduction and annuity payment for life. Plus, part of each payment is tax free. Call your ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planner or the ELCA Foundation at 800-638-3522, ext. 2970.

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Views & Vision

Editor: Gayle Denny

Views & Vision is published
four times per year, Fall,
Winter, Spring, and Summer
by the Evangelical
Lutheran Education
Association.

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