

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

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Marina Bers:

Virtual Worlds for Thriving in Real Worlds

Last July, when Marina Bers stood at the White House to receive a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, she spoke about who she is and to whom she is most connected. In her acceptance speech, she explained how the award shows that women who are mothers and immigrants can also be good scientists, not because they make it alone but because they make it with the loving support of others.

In front of President Bush and the White House, then, Marina Bers talked about identity and connections.

All this might seem fairly standard for an acceptance speech were it not for the fact that identity and connections happen to be the central themes in Marina's work with technology, work that has countered the stereotype that

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Photo courtesy of Marina Bers

Marina Bers with her ZORA program

Marina Bers

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computers and technology are good only to impart information and further the aims of impersonal science. Her work takes technology in a different direction, an inward direction and for the purpose of helping children and adolescents better understand themselves, what they value, their personal identities. Her work also helps children and adolescents connect to one another.

These personal and social purposes for technology are seen most clearly in Marina's helping children and adolescents create their own virtual worlds or what she refers to as "identity construction environments" (ICEs). She believes that in making their own virtual worlds, children and adolescents have an opportunity to connect to others in positive ways and better understand who they are and what they truly value.

Why virtual worlds? Why not stick with helping children and adolescents deal, face-to-face, with the real world? The answers are several, but Marina's work suggests two in particular. First, to reflect for the purpose of better understanding who we are and what we value, we need "objects to think with." The computer and technologies provide just that, objects to think with. Second, virtual worlds provide safe and manageable ways to explore issues and connect to others – something akin to the make-believe worlds young children create and that help them to make sense of the real world and connect to others. Fantasy and reality, virtual and real – these are terms, then, that describe partners, not opposites.

Marina likens her programs for creating virtual worlds to providing religious temples and spaces where individuals momentarily separate themselves from the everyday world to introspect and reflect. In building virtual worlds, and especially virtual communities, children and adolescents can have a time and place to discover what to them is most meaningful.



So where might these "identity construction environments be used?"

"Almost anywhere" is the easy answer, but the more specific answer for Marina right now is in areas where young people need special supports. For example, she has taken her technology to the Children's Hospital in Boston where it is now being used to help children undergoing dialysis treatments and also to help children recovering from organ transplant surgery. For these children, identity formation presents special challenges, and so their having Marina's technology provides much needed special supports. This example illustrates one of Marina's own personal values, namely, the value of "...taking our research outside the academic ivory tower in a sustainable way."

Within the Eliot-Pearson community, Marina Bers is also constructing new worlds, though the worlds are real, not virtual. Through her initiative and leadership, Eliot-Pearson now offers its graduate students a concentration in *New Technologies and Human Development*. Her teaching and research grants have brought a technology focus to Eliot-Pearson's educational programs, and she has become a central figure in Tufts' new interdisciplinary doctoral program in mathematics, science, engineering, and technology education (MSTE) – a program now training students to become education leaders.

Technology may make the older generation uncomfortable, but it does just the opposite for today's children. For today's children, technology provides ways they can surpass their elders. Marina Bers' work with technology builds, then, on what children are drawn to. Her work, then, helps to bring the Eliot-Pearson tradition of serving children into the 21st century. In doing so, Marina's work may seem to be only about what is virtual, but for those who are benefiting from that work, it is wonderfully real.

DevTech stands for *Developmental Technologies*. It refers specifically to Marina Bers' research lab, which includes several projects involving the use of technology for supporting positive development in children and adolescents. Here are two stories to give a flavor of the kind of research being done:

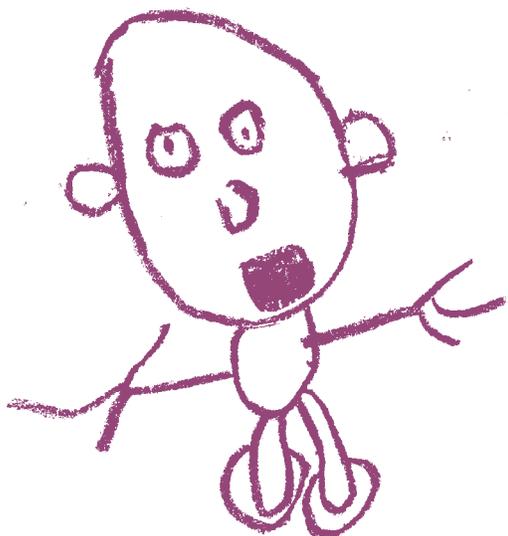


Billy, age twelve, is still adjusting to the aftermath of transplant surgery. His medicines alone make his life atypical, and no doubt his health issues have contributed to his being shy and a loner – which is why he was recommended for the DevTech research project. At first, Billy was reluctant to participate in DevTech's virtual community for a select group of young adolescents recovering from transplant surgery. But now, Billy is a central figure in the group, which refers to him as “the builder” – because every day he is online building up the group's virtual world, adding items and features and discussing them with his new found friends who provide the kinds of supports he sorely needs.

In one summer workshop, the girls were at first anxious about taking on the engineering tasks assigned to them, but after awhile, they warmed to the tasks and were among the most enthusiastic participants. They were particularly excited by one project where they had to program a motorized lego car to go find lego sheep “lost in a fog.” The challenge was to program their car so that it would stop when it found a sheep (no point in finding a sheep and then running over him) and also so that it would stop after a short distance if it passed by the sheep (no point in leaving the sheep further and further behind). In the end, the girls proved themselves to be excellent shepherders.



These examples show two things about DevTech projects. First, they involve children and adolescents in new technologies – the first example has to do with technologies that help create virtual worlds. The second example has to do with technologies that help children develop themselves as engineers.



Second, they promote positive social and emotional development – the first example is of technology helping a young adolescent overcome his isolation and start to develop positive relationships with his peers. The second is of technology helping girls deal with anxieties that are often stimulated by negative stereotypes of girls' being less cut out for math, science, and engineering.

Though the lab has projects that follow the rules and requirements for carrying out responsible research, the spirit of the lab is that of an explorer. Nowhere is this more evident than in the lab's perspective on the internet. As Clement Chau, one of the lab's principal members, explains, “The internet is itself a culture and community. We are just trying to help people be good citizens in that culture and community.” In short, DevTech is not just about adding technology to children's worlds. It is also about finding new ways for children to make positive use of technology so that they can thrive.

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The heart and soul of DevTech is not its projects but its remarkable group of graduate students. To refer to members of this group as students distorts the picture of who they are. They are already accomplished professionals. For example, Clement Chau not only works on projects using virtual communities. He also is an accomplished pianist and cellist and someone who faculty and staff turn to for his expertise in all things technological. Keiko Sato, who also works on projects using virtual communities, is a biologist and artist with training and research experience on both sides of the Atlantic. Laura Beals is a former summa cum laude Tufts graduate who puts her engineering training to work to develop new ways to think about technology education. Newcomer Natalie Rusk brings a wealth of experience from working for many years in MIT's media lab. There are others who contribute significantly to the DevTech projects, but these four examples make clear what we mean by "remarkable."



Photo courtesy of Clement Chau

DevTech Ph.D. candidates from Left to Right:
Clement Chau, Laura Beals, Natalie Rusk, Keiko Sato

However, what may be most remarkable about this group is not their accomplishments, skills, or knowledge. What may be most remarkable is the fact that each member is an exemplar of DevTech's mission and values. Each is entirely comfortable talking about computers, the internet, and software. But each also is comfortable and focused when the talk is about promoting essential values, such as the value of civic engagement, the value of promoting gender identity free of negative stereotyping, and the value of helping children facing special challenges. At DevTech, then, virtue and the virtual make a powerful duo.

To read more about DevTech, please visit their website at <http://ase.tufts.edu/devtech/>.



Connecting the Personal and Professional

Dorothy Warner (Ph.D. 2004)

On the outside, her story was that of a healthy teenager – good grades, good friends, and good family. On the inside, diabetes told a different story, one of isolation and anger – a story common to most adolescents with diabetes. Dorothy Warner relates her story as one who has long mastered the struggles she had as an adolescent trying to cope with diabetes. But she also tells it as a professional who is now dedicated to making life easier and better for today’s adolescents with diabetes. She says, “Today, teens with diabetes can have tighter control with more flexibility because there are better ways to deliver insulin, better ways to monitor the disease, and consequently more flexibility around diet.”

However, there are still forces making it difficult for adolescents to share their experience of diabetes and also making it difficult to feel in control. At Eliot-Pearson, Dorothy learned ways to help teenagers overcome their isolation and sense of helplessness – through the kinds of innovative uses of technology found in Marina Bers’ research lab, as well as through her research collaboration with Stuart Hauser at the Judge Baker Children’s Center and her dissertation work with Donald Wertlieb. Now she is bent on combining her Eliot-Pearson training with additional training in clinical psychology – so as to become a specialist in providing therapy for adolescents with diabetes.

Dorothy Warner represents the new generation of professionals providing care for adolescents. For one thing, she knows the world of today’s adolescents who find all things technological both fascinating and empowering. For another, she understands adolescents’ fascination with electronic games. In fact, for the past several years, she has been a key member of a Harvard research team studying the effects on teens of electronic games with violent content. Warner is continuing to analyze a wealth of data, and the team expects the first articles from their research to be published in the beginning of 2007.



Photo courtesy of Dorothy Warner

Dorothy Warner, Ph.D. 2004

Warner sums up the complicated relationships among the variables she is studying with her expectation that most video games with violent themes are fine for most teens because most appreciate the fantasy and satire in games and the way they engage the player. Her explanation is consistent with her past work on children’s play. While still a doctoral student, she co-authored a text on children’s play, one that demonstrates children’s fascination with worlds of make-believe, including the make-believe found in the virtual worlds of video games.

When Dorothy Warner talks about video games, she shows much of the same enthusiasm shown by adolescents. She speaks about “awesome graphics” and “cool” features that make games interactive. All that is missing is the teen penchant for saying “sick” and “dude.” And recently, she has taken up skydiving – another measure of how sympathetic she is with the world of adolescents. Of course, when she skydives, she takes all the precautions one would expect from a responsible adult. But it’s skydiving nonetheless – something adolescents would likely see as “sick” (translation: “cool”). In other words, those future adolescents in Dorothy Warner’s care are going to have someone who really understands them – because she’s managed to make being a professional something that connects to the personal.



Introducing Ellen Pinderhughes

New Department Chair

Last July, Ellen Pinderhughes became the Department's new chair. The first thing she did was to meet individually with the Department's 25 primary faculty members, all except one who was on leave. "I wanted to identify ways the Department could better support their needs." She also committed herself to responding to the needs addressed in the Department's strategic planning report, which culminated the previous two years of hard work on the part of many. Listening and responding to needs, then, became Ellen's agenda.



Ellen Pinderhughes, Chair,
Department of Child Development

One need has been to build on the Department's tradition of excellence in early childhood education. She explains, "We are in the process of assessing ... ways to enhance and strengthen the [Early Childhood Teacher Education] program in the coming years," starting with an evaluation of the program and a comparison of the program with similar programs, all for the purpose of making thoughtful planning possible.

Other needs have to do with providing more support for faculty and alumni. For faculty, there is a need for more support in the difficult process of developing grant proposals and securing much-needed outside funds to keep developing the Department's research and teaching. She says, "I want to help... faculty and ... students generate grant support." For alumni, there is a need for support around events and staying in close touch with the Eliot-Pearson community. "We have done a good job [with alumni relations] over the years, but we still have room for improvement."

The Strategic Planning report identified several needs for new faculty positions, and so a good deal of Ellen's energies are directed toward overseeing faculty searches, for example, the search going on right now for a new Assistant Professor who will focus on child and family ecology. There is a good chance, then, that by the end of her tenure, the Eliot-Pearson faculty will have a new look, one well suited to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

However, after considering all the Department's various needs, Ellen's main focus may well be on the needs of students. Comparing her experience at Eliot-Pearson with her experience at three different universities prior to coming to Tufts, she says, "There is no question this place is the most caring and open to true student involvement. The faculty's focus is on how they can improve the experience of their students." Ellen, then, wants to be a chair who insures that this particular Eliot-Pearson tradition continues.

The results of Ellen's listening and responding to the Department's many needs does not, as might be expected, make her feel overwhelmed or not up to the job. For one thing, she doesn't feel alone in getting the jobs done, not only because of the support from faculty but also because of the support from staff. "It's great to have a staff that is so on top of things." This theme seems to be echoed by the staff and faculty – as the Pinderhughes era has gotten off to a very good start, one made possible by listening and responding to needs.

Department Seeking Assistant Professor in area of Child and Family Ecology, Tenure-Track

We seek an exceptional scholar and teacher who focuses on the role of communities and community-based institutions in the development and well-being of children and families. We are interested in scholars who study the character, organization, and/or effectiveness of these institutions themselves, or their relationships to the communities they serve.

Please visit <http://ase.tufts.edu/epcd/documents/jobChildFamEcology.pdf> for more details and information on how to apply.

China and Eliot-Pearson

Iris Ponte connects to children abroad

by Iris Ponte

Da jia hao! I am happy to write to all of you from Beijing, China, where I will be conducting cross cultural research on preschool behavior management for the next ten months. So far life in Beijing has been good. I have registered at my affiliation university, Beijing Normal School of Education, settled into an apartment and located a few preschool locations for observation.



Children at the Beijing Normal University Preschool

My first observation site was at the Beijing Normal University Preschool. This school has 1,800 children between the ages of 2 and 6 with a staff of 450 teachers. Another interesting fact is that 20% of these children board in the school, which means that they only go home on the weekends. According to the assistant director, “Chinese society has changed. Mothers work and fathers work. Parents are spending less and less time with their children. For this reason, our job is even more important. We must take care of the health and well-being of these children as if they were our own. It is our job; it is our promise to the parents.” I asked the assistant director how she felt about the one child policy and she replied, “It was a decision that the government had to make for the people. I don’t think it is good for the children, but if we do our job right, it will have no effect on their future.”

Just as I observed in 1999, Chinese preschool classes are fairly large, averaging about 30-35 children and 2-3 teachers in each classroom. These large class sizes are not solely driven by convenience or economics. Teachers in China believe that larger class sizes help children understand each other better, work together and have more friends. When I tell Chinese preschool teachers that the average preschool class in the US is about 12-15 children, the usual response is, “How lonely it must be! That is so sad for the children.” The lunch-time regimen also seems unchanged since my previous observations. In many Chinese preschools, children are asked to remain silent and focus on their food. The Chinese believe that without taking care of the body first, the child cannot learn. During my lunch-time observation one teacher explained to the class, “If you really love one another, do not distract your friends from eating.” For 25 minutes the room was silent with only the sound of little spoons and little cups.



Iris Ponte in center with her husband John at a preschool in Beijing last summer

This is Iris Ponte signing out till next time. If you have any specific questions about life in China or education in China please contact me at iris.ponte@tufts.edu.



Children enjoying lunch

Iris Chin Ponte is a 4th year Ph.D. candidate currently on a Fulbright Grant in Beijing, China. She is conducting her dissertation research on Behavior Management in China, Japan and the United States.

Faculty and Student News

Maryanne Wolf: Breaking Down Barriers

by Michaelann Millrood, A06

In Finland, a child with dyslexia writes his name for the first time. In Israel, a four-year-old is tested for reading disabilities before entering kindergarten. In Somerville, Mass., a second-grader learns to read with the help of a new intervention program. Around the world, children are being tested and treated for dyslexia more successfully than ever before—thanks in part to Child Development Professor Maryanne Wolf’s ground-breaking work at the Tufts Center for Reading and Language Research (CRLR).

Photo by Joanie Tobin for Tufts University



Professor Maryanne Wolf,
Director, CRLR

“Everything we do involves making knowledge come to life for children,” says Wolf, who has directed the center—which is an affiliate of Tufts’ Eliot Pearson Department of Child Development—since 1995. “We have a lot to learn from the dyslexic brain. It teaches us [what elements] have to be there in order to read.”

At the center, Wolf develops and evaluates state-of-the-art intervention techniques to help children overcome barriers to reading. “All of us want to understand what is the best possible set of interventions that we can possibly design for different children,” she says.

Through two large grants from the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, Wolf helped to develop the RAVE-O (Retrieval, Automaticity, Vocabulary, Engagement with Language, Orthography) Program, an experimental, research-based intervention program that is geared toward young elementary school children. The results, which will be released this year, show that this program is more effective than other programs in developing reading comprehension and fluency skills.

Another product of Wolf’s research—the Rapid Automatized Naming and Rapid Alternating Stimulus (RAN/RAS) Tests—has become an important tool in detecting dyslexia.

“I’ve tested the RAN/RAS for almost 20 years now,” she says about the assessment tool, which she developed along with a neurologist from Johns Hopkins University. The test, which uses letters, numbers, colors and objects to determine if a child is at risk for a reading disability, is “a powerful predictor” of dyslexia, according to Wolf. “It’s become a prototype for many other tests.”

Wolf explains that these tests and tools are being used in numerous literacy programs around the world to help children who speak languages as diverse as Hebrew, Greek, Chinese, German, Finnish, Dutch and Spanish. But some of the center’s most interesting work, she points out, takes place in communities nearby Tufts, where undergraduates are tutoring school children.

According to Wolf, members of the Tufts Literacy Corps — an organization that sends tutors to local schools — are trained in cutting-edge dyslexia testing and treatment methods, including RAVE-O.

Wolf points out that because they learn RAVE-O principles, undergraduates in the Tufts Literacy Corps, which is directed by Cindy Krug, know a great deal more than the average tutor. “This is really solid training,” she says.

The initiative dovetails with a broader institutional goal of lending support to local communities and fits with the mission of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service.

For nearly a decade, the center has run the Malden Summer Literacy Enrichment Program, which helps severely impaired young readers. A partnership between the City of Malden and the Tufts center, this four-week reading intervention program includes enrichment based on RAVE-O that is designed to improve literacy and language. Results have been very positive, Wolf notes, with some children who were in danger of being retained able to go onto the next grade.

“The most important goal is to help the kids,” Wolf emphasizes, noting that the program also serves to train teachers in new methods. The goal, she says, is to “harness the beautiful idealism of teachers and tutors and show them how these new methods give them toolboxes they never would have had before.”

As the newly appointed John DiBiaggio Chair in Citizenship and Public Service—a position sponsored by Tisch College—Wolf now has added support for her work in the community.

“Having this chair will promote the concept of citizenship, public service and scholarship as being intrinsically interwoven and that will be a wonderful thing,” Wolf says. “It’s what Tufts does so beautifully.”

While Wolf’s work at Tufts supports local communities, her efforts extend to other areas as well. One program she helped to establish in Arizona focused on the emotional repercussions of dyslexia.

“Dyslexia is not a sickness, but a different arrangement of the brain’s circuits,” Wolf says. Our goal is to “preserve children’s belief in themselves, so they can go on to contribute their many gifts to society.”



Photo by Joanie Tobin for Tufts University Photo

Professor Maryanne Wolf, John DiBiaggio Chair in Citizenship and Public Service

Wolf’s practical experience in creating community programs informs her classroom teaching. She brands herself as “a teacher infused with the latest research” and says that she and her colleagues “are researchers who teach with a vengeance.”

According to Wolf, the introductory child development course that she’s taught for the past 20 years is an opportunity to pass on a wealth of knowledge to more than 100 students each semester. She hopes to give her students a better understanding of children and encourage them to “participate in the formation of the next generation.” Teaching, Wolf explains, is a “vehicle to help change happen.” Wolf remains excited about her teaching and research - and the fact that she knows her work is far from done.

“I think we have made great inroads in diagnosis... And in our new interventions, we are in the first stages of learning how to simulate the brain when it reads a word,” she says. “But we are nowhere close enough to being able to say [our work] helps all children to the degree we wish. We need to work more on that.”

And that’s exactly what Wolf plans to do.



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Amy E. Alberts (Ph.D. candidate), Elise D. Christiansen (Boston College), Paul Chase (Tufts undergraduate), Erin Phelps (Faculty) and Richard M. Lerner (Faculty) had their article, *Qualitative and quantitative assessments of thriving and contribution in early adolescence: Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development* accepted for publication in the Journal of Youth Development.

Ann Easterbrooks (Faculty) was invited in March to present *Patterns of resilience and risk in parenting and personal functioning: Illustrations from the study of young parents* at Brown University, Center for the Study of Human Development. In April, she attended meetings of the Society for Research on Adolescence in San Francisco and co-authored presentations on *The Influence of Culture on the Parenting Styles of Adolescent Mothers* with **Jana Chaudhuri (Ph.D. 2006)** and *Competing Demands: Contextual Risk and Protective Factors Associated With Age-Appropriate Tasks of Young Fathers* with **Cynthia Davis (Ph.D. candidate)**. In May, she co-authored a presentation with postdoctoral fellow, **Jean-François Bureau** at meetings of the American Psychological Society in New York on *Maternal depression in infancy predicts child and adolescent depression* and presented *Attachment and emotional availability: Implications for working with families in the early years* for Thom Child and Family Services in Boston. In July, she presented several papers at the meetings of the World Association for Infant Mental Health in Paris, France: *Cultural differences in emotional availability and parenting in young U.S. mothers* with **Jana Chaudhuri (Ph.D. 2006)**; *Young fathers and their children:*

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Faculty and Student News

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influences of family context on emotional availability with **Cynthia Davis (Ph.D. candidate)**; and *What mothers bring to interventions: How history, community context, and initial functioning influence parenting outcomes* with **Anne Brady (Ph.D. 1996)**, **Jess Goldberg (Ph.D. 2006)**, **Joan Driscoll (Ph.D. candidate)**, **Jana Chaudhuri (Ph.D. 2006)**, & **Fran Jacobs (Faculty)**.

David Henry Feldman (Faculty) was recently featured as #1 in Science Direct's TOP 25 Hottest Articles in the journal, *New Ideas in Psychology* for his publication, *Piaget's stages: the unfinished symphony of cognitive development*.

Martha Julia García-Sellers (Faculty) conducted two intensive training workshops on *Infant Development and Developmental Assessment of Infants and Preschool Children* in July in Guatemala as part of her new initiative to build collaboration between Eliot-Pearson and several Guatemalan universities and government service programs. These 4-day workshops, sponsored by the Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Psicología (INESP), were attended by university students and professionals interested in developmental and clinical diagnosis and services for young children and their families. The workshops included an overview of developmental psychology, a review of comprehensive and ecological perspectives in providing diagnosis and services for children and families, and a review of frequently used screening and assessment instruments, their uses and limitations.

While in Guatemala, she held a book presentation and reception for her recently published work on home-school communication titled *Comunicación entre la Escuela y la Familia: Fortaleciendo*

las Bases para el Éxito Escolar. Her co-author, **Dr. María Luisa Parra Velasco**, was Program Coordinator of the Home-School Connection Program under García-Sellers' direction. Published in Spanish, the book has been well-received in Latin America. It was organized by Lidia Ana Guisela Cárcamo and sponsored by the Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Psicología (INESP).

In August, she was invited to speak in Vancouver for clinicians and service providers from the U.S. and Canada where she again shared experiences and results from the Home-School Connection Program. Her presentation, *Home-School Communication: What's so Hard to Understand*, was the closing plenary session for the conference titled *Brain Development and Learning: Making Sense of the Science*. The conference was organized by Dr. Adele Diamond of the University of British Columbia and Dr. Jana Davison of British Columbia Children's Hospital. In conversations, she came to appreciate how many of the same problems encountered by Hispanic immigrants to the Boston area were also relevant to the immigrants and First Nation's minorities of British Columbia.

She organized the first conference in developmental psychology held in Guatemala from October 25-28. The conference was one component of *The Fifth Congress of Guatemalan Psychology* which is expected to draw attendees from throughout Latin America and fulfilled two important purposes. 1) To exchange knowledge and to inform Guatemalan professionals and students about the field of developmental psychology and its relevance to other disciplines such as education, biology, public health and psychopathology for which the different speakers are renowned.

2) To reunite a group of colleagues and former students who worked and collaborated in years past with Jerome Kagan during his research in Guatemala. Professor Kagan of Harvard University is one of the luminaries of Child Development and his reflections on how his theoretical insights have been shaped by his research in Guatemala was provocative.

Helena Jelcic (Ph.D. candidate), **Deborah Bobek (Ph.D. candidate)**, **Erin Phelps (Faculty)**, **Jacqueline V. Lerner (Boston College)**, and **Richard M. Lerner (Faculty)** had their article, *Using positive youth development to predict contribution and risk behaviors in early adolescence: Findings from the first two waves of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development* accepted for publication in the *International Journal of Behavioral Development*.

Richard M. Lerner (Faculty) taught the course *Promoting Positive Development Among Youth: Developmental Science in the Community* at the Tufts European Center in Talloires, France, this past summer. He was named an Adjunct Faculty member of the University College of Citizenship and Public Service in May and named a member of the National Mentoring Partnership's Research and Policy Council in August. In September, he presented the keynote address, *Mentoring and Positive Youth Development: Theory, Method, and Doing Research that Matters* at the National Mentoring Partnership's Research and Policy Council in Boston. He also co-chaired Family Re-Union 12 at Vanderbilt Univ. in

mid-October in Nashville, TN. On October 25th, he presented the keynote address, *The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development: Implications of Developmental Chance Across Grades 5, 6, and 7* at the 2006 NAE4-HA Conference in Milwaukee. He also presented *Positive Youth Development: What Clinicians, Researchers, and Educators Need to Know* at the Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Center for Family Studies Psychiatry Ground Rounds at the Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami, on October 31st.

Rebecca New (Faculty) was invited to serve as an editor for the exciting new *Co-Inquiry Journal*, a free interactive peer-review scholarly publication in education and teacher preparation (<http://www.coinquiry.org>), dedicated to promoting virtual interchange on innovative approaches to education that address current issues in the field, and manuscripts will be accompanied by visual documentation related to the principles of teaching and learning. This documentation is posted on the *Co-Inquiry Blog* to encourage interchange among a web-based, professional network of committed educators. For the next issue, the journal is moving to peer review. Professor New serves on the editorial board. She was also invited to serve as a member of the Advisory Board for Purdue University's INSPiRE [Institute for P12 Engineering Research] and is consulting with the national Jewish Community Center's early childhood leadership on an evaluation plan for their new preschool program *Ethical Start*. Last July, she also presented the paper, *The Six Culture Study: Past and Present Influences on Cross-Cultural Developmental Psychology* at an INVITED symposium at the International Association of Cross Cultural Psychology (IACCP) conference in Spetses, Greece.

Erin Phelps (Faculty), Aida Balsano (Ph.D. 2001), Kristen Fay (M.A./Ph.D. candidate), Jack Peltz (M.A. candidate),

Stacy Zimmerman (Ph.D. candidate), Richard M. Lerner (Faculty), and Jacqueline V. Lerner (Boston College) had their article, *Nuances in early adolescent development trajectories of positive and of problematic/risk behaviors: Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development* accepted for publication in the *Resilience in Children and Youth* special issue of the *Child and Adolescent Clinics of North America Journal*.

Donald Wertlieb (Faculty) delivered a keynote presentation at Kuwait University's International Conference on Progress in Special Education, March 20-23 in Kuwait. His topic was *Developmental Stress & Coping Perspectives on Children with Learning Disabilities: Frameworks for Assessment and Intervention*. Wertlieb and two other U.S. scholars joined 100 participants from throughout the Middle East to exchange views on addressing the needs of children with special needs, emphasizing contemporary research and effective practices in diverse cultures and systems.

A team from the **Eliot-Pearson Children's School** presented at the NAEYC Conference (National Association for the Education of Young Children) on November 8, in Atlanta, GA. The topic was *Developing and documenting democracy: Early childhood settings as research sites for children as citizens*. This symposium highlighted and debated findings from ongoing school wide research projects in three university laboratory schools in New England. Teachers and faculty at these lab schools have explored the concepts

and realities of children as citizens and active participants in their peer cultures and their communities. They see early childhood settings as a site for civic engagement. Presenters from Eliot-Pearson included: **Rebecca New (Faculty), Debbie LeeKeenan (Faculty & Director, Eliot-Pearson Children's School), David Robinson (Head Teacher), Ben Mardell (Head Teacher & Research Coordinator), Lindsay Barton (M.A.T. candidate), and Rachel Gerber (M.A. Applied candidate).**



From Left to Right: Lindsay Barton, Maggie Beneke, Megina Baker, Jo-Ellen Rowley.

In August, four graduate students from the M.A.T. program attended the EECERA (European Early Childhood Education Research Association) conference on Democracy and Culture in Early Childhood Education held in Reykjavik, Iceland. **M.A.T. candidates - Lindsay Barton, Maggie Beneke, Megina Baker, and Jo-Ellen Rowley** gave a poster presentation about teacher research, linking together coursework and classroom experiences over the past year. The conference proved to be a valuable forum for discussing democratic principles in early education and was a powerful experience to cap their first year of their graduate programs.

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Please let us know if your name should be included in this list, but does not appear.



Photo courtesy of Amanda Sequin

Amanda Sequin with her second grade students

Amanda Sequin wins Milken Award!

by Martha Julia Sellers

Amanda Sequin (M.A. Thesis 2004) was one of two Massachusetts educators and 100 nationwide who were honored with a \$25,000 prize, presented by the Superintendent of Boston Schools and representatives of the Milken Foundation at a surprise school assembly. Amanda told me that, indeed, she had no hint that she was even being considered. You may know that these National Educator prizes are sometimes referred to as “The Oscars of Teaching.”

For Amanda it is an extraordinary honor and, I am sure that those of you who had Amanda in your classes will agree with me that she was a wonderful student. I was fortunate to be her academic advisor, her thesis advisor, and to have her as a student in three of my courses. She worked in the Home-School Connection Program and there she collected the data for her thesis, “The Enhancement of Higher Order Thinking of Spanish Speaking Children.” David Elkind and Barbara Brizuela joined me on her thesis committee. Since receiving her degree, Amanda has been a classroom teacher at the Curtis Guild Elementary School in East Boston where she continues to apply her research perspective as she designs her daily curriculum activities. She continues to collaborate with me in a number of ways. Some of my students have spent time in Amanda’s classroom, carrying out practicums or research projects. All of them benefit from observing her teaching; she’s an exemplary model of the researcher as teacher.

Eliot-Pearson Alumnae Gathered in New York City for “A Visit with Sylvia Feinburg”

by Jonathan Kaplan, A96

This past June, Eliot-Pearson alumnae enjoyed a weekend celebration together in honor of their favorite children’s art professor, Sylvia Feinburg. Everyone in attendance had a fantastic experience meeting with old friends.

On Friday evening, Sylvia met the Eliot Pearson group at the New York City home of fellow alumna, Barbara Kagan Littman, class of 1964 over a delicious catered dinner and drinks. The group enjoyed the opportunity to share their Tufts experiences and to learn about what was new with each other and at Tufts. On Saturday afternoon, the group gathered again at Barbara’s apartment for brunch. Following the meal, the Eliot-Pearson group walked to the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) for an informal private tour conducted by Sylvia. The alums concluded this wonderful weekend experience with refreshments back at Barbara’s apartment.

Finally, attendees presented a “Reflections Book” to Sylvia. Everyone composed a 1-page reflection of a special memory concerning Sylvia, herself, from their Eliot-Pearson days.

An informal, ad hoc committee of fellow Eliot-Pearson alumnae along with a representative of both the Eliot-Pearson Department and Tufts Alumni Relations planned the event. Alumnae on the committee were:

Susan Gamer Blacklow, 1965
Susan Beck Champlin, 1965
Elizabeth Mirkin Hawthorne, 1965
Jane Finneman Hochman, 1963

Barbara Kagan Littman, 1964
Linda Weiner Margolies, 1963
Stephanie Miller Riesel, 1965
Susan Winston, 1976

Alumni News

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Jessica Dym Bartlett, J92, has lived in Acton, MA for almost ten years with her husband, JJ, who is Executive Director of the Fishing Partnership Health Plan. She has a daughter, Molly, who is 8 years old and in the 3rd grade. Her son, Jake, is 6 and just started kindergarten. After obtaining a second masters degree, this time in social work (MSW), Jessica worked in the field as a child and family psycho-therapist and school consultant. This year she has returned to Eliot-Pearson as a doctoral student, and she is thrilled to be back!

Sandra Bishop-Joseph, G89, recently co-edited a book, *Child Development and Social Policy Knowledge for Action* (J. L. Aber, S. J. Bishop-Josef, S. M. Jones, K. T. McLearn & D. A. Phillips, Editors; APA Books, 2006). She continues in her position as Assistant Director of the Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy, Yale University and Associate Research Scientist, Child Study Center, Yale School of Medicine. Sandra can be reached at sandra.bishop@yale.edu.

Emily (Ehrenberg) Blumberg, J98, and her husband, Michael, just had a baby girl. Elizabeth "Ellie" Jordan was born on May 7, 2006. They live in Westford, MA.

Rebecca Cotter, J99, and her husband Mick had their first child, Mickey Jr., on December 6, 2005. He is a fun and easy going baby. "It has been interesting using my knowledge of child development to understand my own baby." Becca is in her eighth year of teaching at Garrison Elementary School in Dover, and she is currently teaching second grade. Also, she is a recent thyroid cancer survivor. "Life has been busy!"

Patricia Cowan Elwood, J63, has retired from her specialist position in education and is currently the Interim Secretary of State of the District of Columbia and Chief of Protocol. She loves what she has been doing and feels very honored to have these positions. She states, "It's been a great transition to a new life!"

John Kyle, A67, retired in January 2006 and is living happily ever after. His most recent job was as Program Director for Outreach and Strategic Planning at the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families. Visit www.nlc.org/iyef for more information on this institute. John was very pleased to lead the development and implementation of the YEF Institute for the past 18 years. Other career highlights include leading the Governor's Office for Children and Youth in the state of Maryland, serving as a Policy Associate at the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, founding and directing a Model Cities/Title IV-A/Title XX child care program for over 200 children in multiple centers and in over 30 family day care homes in Western Pennsylvania, and teaching kindergarten at a college demonstration school. Along the way, John lived in Pittsburgh, PA; Ypsilanti, MI; and now Baltimore, MD. He has been active in local affiliates of the National Association for the Education of Young Children in each state and also served for a number of years on the national board of directors. Eliot-Pearson and Tufts gave John the great start for this career of which he is very proud. In particular, John would like to thank Esther Edwards, Dorothea Marsden, Evelyn Pitcher, and Sylvia Feinburg. Now, he tries to give back a little by providing advice to Richard

Lerner as a member of the advisory group for the *Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development*. John would love to hear from fellow alums at kyleje@gmail.com.

Hillary Sullivan Laing, J84, G87, returned to teaching after having spent several years at home with her 3 children. She is an inclusion teacher at the Fayerweather School in Cambridge, MA, in a combined 1st/2nd grade classroom. As a parent and teacher, she continues to be very grateful for the training and guidance she received from her professors at Eliot-Pearson.

Colleen Manning, G94, is the Director of Research at Goodman Research Group, Inc. (GRG) in Cambridge, MA, an education research firm that specializes in program evaluation. She is delighted to be working with other Eliot-Pearson Alumnae - her Eliot-Pearson cohort member **Michelle Acker, G94**, is a Senior Consulting Associate, and **Peggy Vaughan, G05**, is a Research Associate. In personal news, she is getting married in November!

Christine (Goffio) May, J72 has finished all her coursework for a Doctor of Ministry at Gordon Conwell Seminary in South Hamilton and is doing her thesis on husband-wife communication. She has also just taken a part time job at Lexington Christian Academy, where her kids attended, as a triage counselor. Chris's daughter is now a senior Child Development major at Tufts which makes her so happy. She is loving her student teaching at the Day Care Center, where Chris did her student

teaching, when it was in the Quonset hut. She also has a son who celebrated his first wedding anniversary on October 8th and is in his first job as a teacher in a special program for kids in Middlebury, VT. “He always said he never wanted to be teacher, but the bug seems to have bitten him, too!”

Lisa Richtmann, J87, is continuing to enjoy life with her twins, Peter and Juliette, who are now three and a half, and have just started preschool. She also just started her fourth year of teaching French at The Children’s Own Montessori School in Winchester. This year also marks the twentieth anniversary of The Tufts Foster Children’s Party, for which she continues to volunteer. The Tufts Foster Children’s Party welcomes volunteers from the Eliot-Pearson community! Contact Jonathan Burton in Alumni Relations for more information at jonathan.burton@tufts.edu.

Angel Vail, A02, was working for 3 years with ChildrenFirst, which merged with Bright Horizons, a backup daycare company. Currently she is working as an Event Coordinator for the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk that just took place in October in Brooklyn, NY. She also just started her third season with the Amato Opera in New York City.

Check out up-to-date news at <http://ase.tufts.edu/epcd/>.

If you would like to donate to the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development...

Please take this opportunity to contribute to the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development by considering a donation to one of the following:

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- Sydney Scholarship Fund (for graduate students)
- Feinburg Fund for the Arts in Child Development

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KEEP IN TOUCH!

Our periodic email messages include information on Department news & events as well as career & fellowship opportunities.

If you would like to add your name or confirm you are on our alumni email list, please email Sarah E. Jung at sarah.jung@tufts.edu.

SEND US YOUR NEWS!

Let friends, faculty, and classmates know what you are up to these days, or do you have a recent publication you'd like to share with the Eliot-Pearson community? Send us the citation!

Send to:
Sarah E. Jung
Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development
Tufts University
105 College Avenue
Medford, MA 02155
or email sarah.jung@tufts.edu

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Fall 2006

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