



Confessions of a Mad...  
(figuratively speaking)  
...Executive Director:

Okay, I really do have a confession. Best to get it off my chest right off the bat. Here goes: I know at times, I'm less than stellar re: newsletters and communication.

Walk a mile in these shoes and maybe you'll forgive me! But, I digress. The administrative team, in late January, brainstorms about this challenge. We decide to develop a more comprehensive approach to news and information: we each will contribute an 'article' about the topics we are tackling (**Judy**: program/curriculum; **Licia**: building / I.T. / events / volunteer activities / purchasing; **Janice**: financial reminders; a note from the **Board Chair**; and from **Elizabeth**, the other big picture topics (like our new building, etc.); maybe even a "**Recipe from Ron**"). We're all excited about it! During this conversation, it is mentioned that the last newsletter was in September '08. Licia and I say "I think there was a December newsletter". (I remember working on it, and Licia is a terrific proof reader and she remembers it, too). So, I investigate.

Well – there was a December newsletter alright. IN MY COMPUTER! It never made it to publication – forgot? Ran out of time? Life and the holidays happened? Not sure actually.....I just know how tired I felt at the end of 08.....and that I spent 10 days @ home and did very little. Re-grouped, celebrated the joyous holiday season, enjoyed the fireplace, and football...and of course, my family.

I hope each of you enjoyed the holiday season with those you love the most; and I hope you forgive me my oversight of a Winter newsletter. To celebrate this oversight, you may view the un-edited, un-fancy version of it on our website [www.middleearthok.org](http://www.middleearthok.org). It does have some important info that was....not published. Darn! My sincere apologies.

*Ms. Elizabeth*

## What's Happening?

Classrooms will be organizing our **Spring Scavenger Hunts to be held either Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup> or Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>**. The weather will determine the location of the actual hunts. Watch for info in your child's classroom.

## Our Family Leadership Committee (FLC)

- 1) was instrumental in organizing our fabulous "Valentine's Parties" for each classroom. It was so calm during the parties! We loved it and the children had great fun. Thank you so much.
- 2) The committee's next major project is developing a **Middle Earth float** for participation in our communities **89er Day Parade** to be held **Saturday April 18<sup>th</sup> @ 10am**. More details will be forthcoming! The theme of this year's parade is "**Stake Your Claim: Make it Green**". The committee has decided on the Dr. Seuss book "The Lorax" as our float's theme. FYI...Middle Earth was last year's 1<sup>st</sup> place winner in the float division! We have the trophy to show for it!



There are two float work days planned before the parade. Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup> 10am-4pm (come and go) and also Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup> 6-8pm, to take care of finishing touches! See you there!

**Then**, plan to bring your family to the parade, and walk with the float while the children ride on the trailer. We'll have benches and chairs for them, and it sounds like the float will be a first place winner! This is a wonderful memory-making-opportunity for the children and we hope you will attend. Watch for more details later.

- 3) The next FLC meeting is scheduled for April 6<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm. This is an open committee, so all are welcome...Childcare available upon request.
- 4) Thank you to Alva Brockus (Sarah – Tot I, Charlie and Henry – Discoverers) for chairing this committee for the past 2 years. Alva, you really got this committee rockin' and rollin'! Thank you!
- 5) Please help us in acknowledging the new chair, Angie Beery (Ava-Serendipity). Angie has just joined the Board of Directors and stepped right into this leadership role. Way to go, Angie!



## Mark Your Calendars:

- April 4<sup>th</sup> – 10-4 Float Work Day (come and go)
- April 6<sup>th</sup> – 6pm Family Leadership Committee Mtg.
- April 9 or 10 - Spring Scavenger Hunts  
(see classrooms for date & details)
- April 17<sup>th</sup> - 6-8pm Float Work Night
- April 18<sup>th</sup> - 10am 89er Day Parade
- April 18<sup>th</sup> - 25 Week of Young Child  
April 20<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> (Times TBA) Scholastics Book Fair  
April 24<sup>th</sup> – 6-8pm “Spring Fling” Family Dance  
(Check your child’s classroom for scheduled themes and activities throughout this special week!)

**“The Week of the Young Child” is a national celebration scheduled for April 18-25<sup>th</sup>.**

The national theme is:

**“Bring Communities Together for Children—  
Children Bring Communities Together”.**

We will be planning activities for the classrooms during the week, and will also present two special events in relation to the week-long celebration:

1. A **Scholastics Book Fair** will be held this week. More details to come! Volunteers will be needed!!
2. A **“Spring Fling” Family Dance** will be held Friday night April 24<sup>th</sup> from 6p – 8p. This was a fabulous family event last year and we plan to be rockin’ again this year. We’ll tell you more as it gets closer. Classrooms will be organizing finger foods for snacking (pizza, etc.) and we’ll dance in the gym. Be there or be square, that’s for sure!

**Many Thanks....** to the families who were able to support our **workday** on February 28th! With your help we were able to accomplish many things. Thank you so much! Special thanks to Licia for coordinating this effort once again. You’re really good at it!



Thank you, too, to the support of our Chinese New Year Celebration. The “Year of the Ox” was kicked off in style here at Middle Earth! Mardi Gras was also a blast. The classrooms have so much fun with these celebrations. We appreciate everyone’s generosity and support.

Also, thank you to those who ordered Mabel’s Labels and a special thank you to Kristin Hollingsworth who coordinated that effort. We will let you know the final profit to Middle Earth when the company sends us that information. Kristin Hollingsworth and Hilary Cowen were also instrumental in seeing that our families had the opportunity to participate in the KIDTRAX identification cards. Thank you so much!!

**NPS/BBA:** The Board of Directors submitted application with the board of the Norman Public Schools (**NPS**) to participate during the academic year 2009-2010 in their Bright Beginnings Academy (**BBA**) for Pre-K.



Our application was approved (direct quote: “they did the happy dance”) so – here we go on another step in our program’s growth. I’ll try to summarize: NPS offers 2.5 hour classes of

Pre-K. They will be providing a certified teacher and a teacher assistant during the instructional time – which will happen here at Middle Earth! We will offer a morning and an afternoon session; our program and teachers will be the wrap-around portion of the day.

We will continue to provide our pre-k educational program, meals, rest, and continue to employ our staff. We have been assigned a ‘liaison’ school: Eisenhower Elementary. (I’m personally VERY comfortable with that relationship!). Middle Earth will receive the benefits of this collaboration in a variety of ways including the availability of all resources within the typical school setting. We can and plan to work closely with administration/counselors/media resources/die cut equipment (!) to support our planned activities here at Middle Earth. We will fill up almost entirely with in-house enrollment and are NOT participating in the public school drawing/lottery. In fact, NPS will not even advertise on our behalf. You may see activity over the summer as we prepare for this new collaboration with Norman Public Schools!

***Integrated Business Core (IBC):*** Do you remember those FABULOUS OU blankets that we were able to showcase/sell during November of last year? (The ones we had lots of orders for and couldn’t order more???) The “I. B. Sleepy!” Company worked on our behalf in two ways: they volunteered many hours in our program, and donated the proceeds of the blanket sales to our organization! It was such a fun collaboration. Board member Sue Crites, Licia, and I had the opportunity to attend their presentation to the College of Business (it essentially served as their ‘final’) and let me tell you.....they rocked. They were professional, prepared, rehearsed, and very pleased to have worked with Middle Earth. And.....they donated \$13,000 to our agency! These funds were immediately designated to our building efforts. They came personally to deliver the check to us before the holidays.....it was definitely a win-win opportunity for everyone involved. We can’t WAIT to attend the next IBC Fair and see if we can get adopted again! Thank you, I.B. Sleepy, Co.

**Security Entry System:** The Board of Directors has voted to pursue a security system for the front doors. A bit of history: We have looked at this in the past and cost was the major prohibiting factor – that is, if



we installed a second set of doors into the entryway with a key pad type entry. The original re-model plans included a second set of doors, but our expenses were so much more than anticipated – and then we learned that the opening was not a standard size: the doors would have to be custom. So, we opened for business and carried on (quite well, I believe and feel compelled to add!). During the

ensuing time here, nothing startling has occurred; but, we will be here a bit longer than originally doors anticipated (more on that later!) and the Board decided to invest. So, we looked for alternatives and **here's the upcoming solution:** An exterior card swipe system will be installed on the north side of our entrance. The doors will have a magnetic locking mechanism that can only be opened with a valid card, or with a release button at the front desk. The swipe cards will be arriving soon and we will begin assigning a code/number to each card. We are working out the details of 'how many cards per family' etc.....and I'll let you know how it will be administered very soon. There will be a small fee (maybe \$5?) for replacement cards and maybe for second cards as well. The installation of the swipe mechanism will occur in less than one day once the equipment is ordered and delivered. The entire operation will be tied to the new computer at the front desk. Staff will need swipe cards, too. So, please bear with us as we enter this new phase of our existence: swipe access to the building! We're almost in the 21<sup>st</sup> century! We've come a long way, baby (yea, I know, I'm dating myself).

### **Middle Earth Members Attend Conference**

Nine members of our Middle Earth staff attended an early childhood conference here in Norman on March 7, 2009. Licia Iverson, Judy Vasiloff, Jane Smith, Lynne Shell, Traci Shemwell, Colleen Duncan, Ashley LaGace, Leslie Keller-Kenton, and Candy Jons attended the conference sponsored by the Central Oklahoma Friends of Early Education, United Way Success By Six, the Department of Human Services Childcare Division, and Crosspointe Church. The theme of the conference was **"Inspire A Child...Change the World"** with keynote speaker, Mansur Choudry of Special Care, Inc., director of ABEL Project who spoke on "Inclusion". Licia, Judy, Jane, Lynne, Traci, Colleen, Ashley, Leslie, and Candy attended trainings at the conference on working with children who are autistic, infant and toddler mental health, movement in the early childhood classroom, developmentally appropriate group times, and developing staff relationships. The staff garnered a total of 48 hours of training. In addition, Licia Iverson was a key volunteer on the conference planning committee.

**Board of Directors Update:** I want to begin by saying Thank You to outgoing members Charlotte Gordon (at-large member), Alva Brockus (Sarah-Tot I, Charlie and Henry – Discoverers), Dawn Hallman (Makenzie-Explorers and incoming Dreamer, Katelyn) and Don Correll (at-large member) for sharing their love of Middle Earth, young children, and their expertise while serving. Members who renewed their terms are Sue Crites and Ruth Ann Ball.

We are recruiting for the position of Treasurer of the Board. If you have an interest and the skills, or would recommend someone for that position, please see me (Ms. Elizabeth) or Michelle Seybolt.

### **2008-2009 Officers for the Board of Directors are:**

Michelle Seybolt, Chair  
(Peyton, Discoverers and Parker, alumni)  
Elaine Bradshaw, Secretary  
(Donovan and Elizabeth, alumni)  
Ruth Ann Ball, Vice Chair at-large member  
Unfilled, Treasurer

***Thank You to the Board of Directors  
for the courageous visioning and hard work on  
behalf of the present and future of  
Middle Earth Child Development Center.***

The **Board of Directors welcomes** Angie Beery (Ava – Serendipity) and Stacy Cook (Ainsley – Dreamers) who have accepted terms to serve our organization. Angie has immediately stepped into the role as the Chair of the Family Leadership Committee (FLC) – and will be offering her creativity to the design and construction of the above mentioned float! Stacy will attend her first meeting in April and is excited to lend her skills to our organization. Thank you to Angie and Stacy! We appreciate the support very, very much!



## **Janice's Financial Corner**

- ± **Tax Statements for 2008 are available at the front desk.**
- ÷ **A Payment box is on the wall, just past the front office, for your payments.**
- × **Payments are due on first of the month, if you pay monthly; 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> if you pay semi-monthly; on Mondays, if you pay weekly.**

*"The best way for a person to have happy thoughts is to count his blessings and not his cash."*

*~Author Unknown*



**Mark Your Calendars!** At the March meeting, The Board of Directors approved the following dates for closure of Middle Earth for the remainder of 2009:

Memorial Day	Mon., May 25
Independence Day	Fri., July 3
Labor Day	Mon. Sept. 7
Thanksgiving	Wed.-Fri., Nov. 25-27
Christmas	Thurs.-Fri. Dec. 24, 25
New Year's Eve	Thurs., Dec. 31

In addition, the following information may be useful as you plan your family's summer plans:

Big Kids Program	June 1 – Aug 7
In-Service/Prof. Dev. Days (school closed):	August 13, 14
Middle Earth Academic Year begins	August 17
NPS Academic Year Begins:	August 20

**Middle Earth Child Development Center**  
**151 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.E.; Suite 100**  
**Norman, OK 73071**

**Campbell's Labels For Education Program**  
**Awards Free Educational Merchandise**

You can help Middle Earth earn free merchandise such as computers, audio/visual equipment, physical education equipment, reference books, musical instruments, and other items simply by collecting Campbell product proof of purchase and turning them in to the Front Office. It's easy to pitch in. Simply save product proofs of purchase from any of the following eligible Campbell products and bring them in:

- Campbell's soups
- Campbell's Select Harvest soups
- Campbell's Supper Bakes meal kits
- Spaghetti Os Pasta (Original and Meatball)
- Prego pasta sauces
- Swanson broths and canned poultry
- V8 vegetable juices
- V8 Splash juice drinks
- V8 soups
- Campbell's tomato juice
- Pepperidge Farm breads, cookies, crackers, and frozen products
- Pepperidge Farm Goldfish crackers
- Campbell's Foodservice products

For more information contact Judy Vasiloff here at the center or email her at [judy@middleearthok.org](mailto:judy@middleearthok.org).