

announce

Announcements
from the Ounce of
Prevention Fund

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20 Years Back, 20 Years Ahead: Building on a Legacy of Innovation It began with a good idea: Why not establish a family support center to help employees whose families were considered at risk of child abuse, neglect or other dysfunction? “Any of you who know Irving Harris,” Bernice Weissbourd, a founder of the nation’s family support movement, recently recalled, “know he will call any time, day or night, any day of the week, and say, ‘I have an idea.’” That initial call, over two decades ago, led to a momentous meeting with Greg Coler, then-director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. The meeting, in turn, led to the creation of six prevention programs funded by a mix of private and public dollars—and the Ounce of Prevention Fund was born.



Founders Greg Coler and Irving Harris with Judith Musick

Bernice, Irving and Greg were joined recently by Judith Musick, Ph.D., the Ounce’s first executive director, and the Board of Directors, for a special luncheon panel discussion in which they commemorated the Ounce’s 20th anniversary by recalling the joys, rewards and frustrations of the organization’s early years.

The afternoon was complete with laughter, contradictory recollections and compelling stories as the four founders recapped the Ounce’s fast-paced beginning, which included: the expansion of prevention programs to 22 sites across the state in the second year of operation, the creation of an innovative approach to training early childhood professionals, break-through research that identified the startling link between early sexual abuse and teen pregnancy, the launch of public policy advocacy work on behalf of low-income children and their families, and the opening of school-based health centers and the Beethoven Project, a pioneering effort to provide comprehensive care and education beginning at birth.

One of the Ounce’s newest Board members, Tim Landon of the Tribune Company, introduced the panelists by applauding the Ounce’s “business-like focus and discipline in pursuing an important

social mission.” Judy Langford, the Ounce’s second executive director, observed, “One of the most unique aspects of the Ounce of Prevention Fund is that it has had, from the beginning, powerful, entrepreneurial, risk-taking leadership.”

Harriet Meyer, the Ounce’s current executive director, noted that the challenge for today’s leadership is to “embrace the legacy of innovation” created by the founders. The afternoon ended with the original leaders speculating on the future of the early childhood movement. Judith cited the Ounce’s Educare Center and the involvement of grandfathers and other generations of families in our Arts Program as promising examples of where the field

was headed. Irving emphasized the importance of “finding the right people to do the work.” Bernice noted that the field still confronts many challenges, but she hoped for a “culture change” that recognizes the wisdom of investing in early childhood. “The real strength comes from the founding idea,” Greg Coler concluded. “The Ounce is a public-private partnership: Volunteers with private money partner with government to do the research and development that government alone would not be able to do. It’s from that R and D that you gestate program changes and public policy changes and really make a difference over the years.”



Harriet Meyer, Tim Landon and Norm Katz



Kelly Dibble and Judy Langford



Ounce staffers Portia Kennel and Brenda Dobbins-Noel with Dan Pedersen of the Susan A. Buffett Foundation



Bernice Weissbourd and Helen Zell

Creating a Strong, Ethical and Just Society

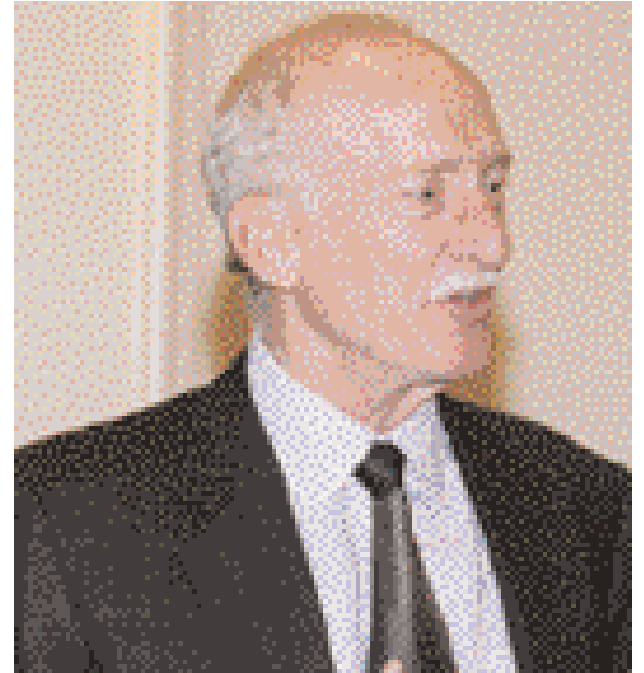
In a presentation that ranged from Proust, Freud and the Roman poet Lucretius to the work of prominent researchers in the early childhood field such as Daniel Stern and John Bowlby, University of Chicago philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum recently addressed 140 friends of the Ounce of Prevention Fund about the importance of healthy child development in building a strong, ethical and just society.

Dr. Nussbaum noted that “emotions have a history” and described how the roots of an individual’s fundamental values and ethical standards are cultivated during infancy. She discussed the importance of creating “facilitating environments” for young children that include families, other caretakers, institutions, and the laws and customs that constitute society.

Dr. Nussbaum warned against the threat of teaching young children “false or uneven values” and noted how negative early emotions can contribute to “perpetuating tragedy” throughout the world.

Keith and Rodney Goldstein, Irving Harris, King Harris, Bob Heaton, Burt Kaplan, Harrison Steans and Helen Zell generously sponsored the **“It’s Good Business to Invest in Young Children”** luncheon. The talk was part of an ongoing series of wide-ranging speakers who have included developmental psychologists, psychiatrists and a Nobel Prize winning economist.

Dr. Nussbaum is the author of several books, including, *“Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions.”* For a copy of her remarks, please contact Lisa Torgerson at 312-922-3863, ext. 389.



Dick Rothkopf



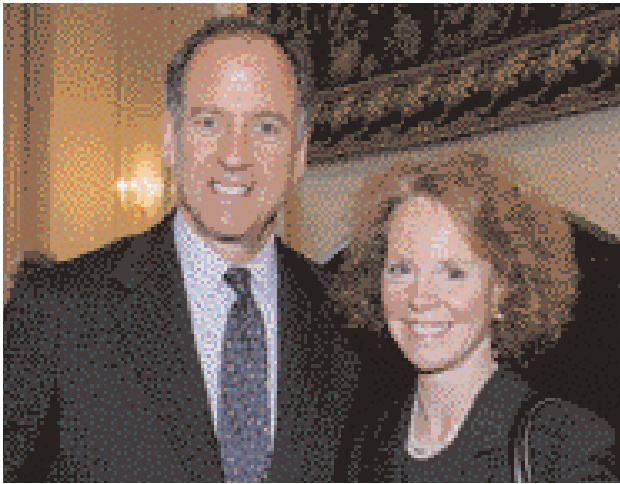
Dr. Martha Nussbaum



Suzanne Gombrich with Liza DeGraff and Heather Eiserman



Harrison Steans, Glenn Torgerson and Greg Coler



Rodney and Keith Goldstein



Edwin Eisendrath, King Harris and Kelly Dibble



Gloria Mack

Donor’s Perspective

“The Pittway Corporation Charitable Foundation has provided major support to the Ounce since it was created in 1982, and our Directors feel that our Ounce investment is one of the best, if not the best, investment we have made in a not-for-profit organization. Ounce projects continue to identify and develop innovative solutions to critical early childhood educational and social issues.”

King Harris, Chicago, Illinois



Judy Murphy, Joyce Skoog, Dr. Martha Nussbaum and Linda Valentine

Learning—and Leading—in the Early Childhood Movement

Reminder
Please help us continue our important work. If you have not yet made a gift this year, please use the enclosed envelope to make a donation to the Ounce of Prevention Fund. Our fiscal year ends on June 30, 2003. Thank you!

A cadre of supporters, friends and volunteers from the Ounce of Prevention Fund recently participated in a one-day dialogue with many of the leading scientific experts in the early childhood field.

Among the presenters were: T. Berry Brazelton, M.D., clinical professor of Pediatrics, Children's Hospital Medical Center in Boston, MA., J. Ronald Lally, Ed.D., Director, Center for Child and Family Studies, WestEd, Sausalito, CA., and Ounce President Harriet Meyer, M.A., who described how the research outlined earlier in the day could affect early childhood programs and public policies. The event, held at the Hay-Adams Hotel in Washington, D.C., was sponsored by Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families. The meeting was designed to energize and educate participants about recent developments in early childhood research.

John Colman, an Ounce supporter, said participating in the conference "deepened my respect for the possibilities in this field—not just in Chicago but all over the country. This experience reconfirmed for me what has been well-documented for many years: There's no longer a question whether the earliest years of a child's life are important. We know they are vital."

"This was a great opportunity for us to learn and discuss some of the issues and cutting-edge research concerning babies and toddlers," said Kate Siegel, an Ounce Board Member.

"We were surrounded by the Who's Who of this field," said Bob Heaton, chair of the Ounce's Board of Directors. "By the end of the meeting, it was clear to me that the Ounce is right at the top of the list of organizations in this country doing this work."



Dr. Martha Nussbaum with Ada Mary Gugenheim of the Chicago Community Trust



Bill Friend and King Harris



Dia and Ed Weil with Dr. Billie Wright Adams

Donor's Perspective

I recently became aware of the Ounce of Prevention Fund through my friend, Gloria Mack, who serves on the Board. From my first introduction, I recognized that the Ounce is a comprehensive, complex and dynamic organization. My husband and I believe that early childhood is where we can make a real difference and the Ounce is definitely a leader in the field.

Christine Moran, Highland Park, Illinois

Save the Date 20th Anniversary Dinner September 22, 2003

Join us in commemorating 20 years of innovation on behalf of young children and their families. This special dinner will feature a presentation on the state of early childhood in Illinois and nationally, by Jack Shonkoff, M.D., Dean of the Heller School of Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University.

Dr. Shonkoff, a nationally renowned early childhood expert, is the co-editor of "From Neurons to Neighborhoods," the foremost national study that has identified what all young children need to grow up safe, healthy and eager to learn.

To make a reservation for this event, please call Lisa Torgerson at 312-922-3863, ext. 389.



A Look at ‘Prevention’— Lessons, Pitfalls and Challenges Ahead

By Deborah Daro, Ph.D.

Dr. Daro, a member of the Ounce of Prevention Fund’s Board of Directors, is a Research Fellow at the University of Chicago’s Chapin Hall Center for Children. She is also a leader of the Ounce’s Birth to Five Project, an ambitious and privately funded effort to maximize public resources by better coordinating and improving the quality of a broad range of early childhood services. This essay is adapted from a more in-depth piece she wrote for the Project’s newsletter.

Prevention as a concept and as a field has come a long way in the past thirty years.

Prevention practitioners, advocates and researchers have a greater appreciation for the complexity of the problems they face and are more careful about not overstating their case. Prevention efforts have established stronger, more diversified partnerships. Prevention research is more rigorous in terms of methods and measures, and is more frequently cited in the articulation of specific program and policy decisions. Program evaluations are documenting more consistent and robust outcomes. Those in the prevention field, and in local governments, are less competitive and are learning how to collaborate more effectively. All of these trends suggest society can expect more from its future investments in prevention.

While our knowledge base is far from perfect, a rich pool of basic and applied research provides many useful lessons to help us shape individual programs as well as our society’s overall approach to prevention. For instance, individual prevention programs can improve their effectiveness by initiating services early in the parent-child relationship, when a woman is pregnant or at the time a baby is born. Programs should also recognize that achieving sustained change with high-risk families requires intensive, long-term efforts, and that addressing a participant’s personal needs as well as her parenting responsibilities is essential. In addition, those who fund prevention efforts need to keep in mind that prevention is often about building relationships, which can be time consuming and expensive in the short-term.

At the same time, society must grapple with broader considerations. Rather than argue over the relative merits of programs universally accessible to everyone versus programs targeted to specific

segments of the population, we must ensure that both operate in support of the other. We must seek to change the community context – not just individual parents. What’s more, we must build a “prevention system” the way we raise our children, one developmental stage at a time.

Many prevention reform efforts suffer from five common mistakes. First, prevention proponents too often over-simplify their strategies. While advocates as well as researchers give lip service to the importance of an ecological framework, they often promote singular, “silver bullet” solutions.

Second, proponents repeatedly overstate prevention’s potential. Prevention efforts are consistently framed as offering the potential for success in *all* cases, an impossible standard to achieve. By setting the bar too high, the field has made it difficult to take pride in modest, but significant, accomplishments.

Third, prevention proponents misrepresent the pool of families they can successfully attract and retain. The fact is not all parents will respond to even the best prevention efforts. Many parents who suffer from severe mental illness or substance abuse or are enmeshed in a culture of interpersonal violence require high quality treatment services. Prevention efforts need to establish strong linkages to these intensive interventions.

Unfortunately, prevention supporters have not formed strong partnerships with treatment programs, particularly child protective services. Indeed, the prevention field’s fourth pitfall has been its inability to work with child welfare reform advocates. Rather than work together, child welfare reformers and prevention advocates often position themselves as alternatives to the other.

Finally, the prevention field continues to struggle with what it means to “go to scale.” Going to scale can mean either providing a greater number of services or creating deeper, stronger connections among existing services. Unfortunately, prevention efforts focus far too much attention on the former at the expense of the latter. Those who develop and fund prevention programs often seek to increase the number of sites before fully understanding what it takes to make the programs sustainable and effective.



Deborah Daro, Ph.D.

The Birth to Five Project offers an excellent opportunity to advance a more enlightened vision of prevention, one that avoids these pitfalls. Indeed, the concept of intervening early is proving a useful vehicle for developing a new, shared vision among those implementing a range of prevention services for very young children. Rather than defining their goal as the absence of abuse, prevention proponents are now seeking partners to maximize the potential of all children. For many, this shared vision will be one where normative standards encourage parents to seek and receive the support they need to care for their children. It will be a vision where parents will understand that their child’s ability to develop to his or her full potential depends not only on their actions as parents but also on the supportive efforts of others—school teachers, coaches, ministers, youth leaders, and the parents of their children’s peers.

To take prevention “to scale” is more than simply replicating a single strategy or promising reform. It is infusing the society with this vision of responsibility and mutual reciprocity. The prevention field now seems poised to provide the leadership, empirical evidence, and political will to implement this vision. Making good on this promise, however, will require more rigorous research and a willingness to use the results in a self-critical manner. Whether the field can exercise this type of self-discipline is part of the challenge that lies ahead.

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