



Macaulay Today

Issue 9-2

Macaulay Child Development Centre

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- Parenting groups
- In-home parent education and support
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Helping children reach their full potential in caring, responsive families and communities

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Child Care Centre Olympics



Macaulay Child Care Centres got a jump-start on Canada's Olympic year with help from 19 volunteers from the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. The day-long event opened with a relay race of flag-bearers from each of the four centres

and a rousing rendition of O Canada. Over 100 children eagerly participated in races, face-painting, soccer, water play and arts and crafts. Children waved flags from different countries ...p.2

The Work of Play

Every day more than 800 children "learn through play" at a Macaulay program. As you will see in this issue of *Macaulay Today*, while many of these activities look like play to the outsider – they are, in fact, intentional efforts to extend children's learning and enable them to develop valuable skills and self-confidence. Our programs also use innovative strategies to reach parents and caregivers, guiding them to use everyday play in order to promote their children's development.

This is the essence of our work: *creating the foundation for children and families to succeed*. And play is a major tool in our kit.

I hope you find this issue interesting as we explore the many ways that our Macaulay programs use play to achieve early learning and development.

Sharon Filger
Executive Director



Child Care Olympics from p.1

at the opening ceremonies.

Overall, children developed new physical skills and learned about competing –all as part of a fun-filled day. One volunteer said, “It was very rewarding to watch the children get involved in the activities and have the confidence to complete the events.”



Olympic volunteers from CICA

Nicholas Cheung of CICA and former Macaulay Board member said, “Staff reaction was overwhelmingly positive. Virtually everyone said they would participate again if given the chance.”

Everyone agrees. The day was a great success and would not have been possible without the special effort of Macaulay staff and CICA volunteers.

Special Summer Support

Children with special needs often need extra support to play with others. For several years Macaulay has offered specialized summer programming for children with autism and other developmental challenges.

Staff accompany children to one of our community programs or visit them in a home child care setting. Based on the child’s needs, individual plans are put in place. Children enjoy themselves while developing social and language skills.

Home Child Care Consultant

Esther Kwapong assigned a summer staff member to support a young boy with attention deficit disorder. She explains that this 6 year old has spent half of his life in foster care. “He felt angry and rejected. He had trouble playing with the other children”. He was often in despair, uncooperative and combative.

With summer support, he made real gains in self-esteem and in his ability to play with others. Just as important, he became genuinely attached to his program staff– an important step on his road to healthy development.

This year, a new parent component met every Friday afternoon. Parents joined their children at

our Early Years Centre. Children played and worked on new skills while parents met others who shared similar concerns.

Many parents were touched to see how well their children had learned to participate in regular activities like circle-time. One mother told us she was delighted to see that the new words her son had learned in the program helped him connect with other children and join in group activities.

Positive experiences like this help families feel more optimistic about their children’s futures. Our thanks to the Meighen Foundation for making this special support possible.

Celebrating Possibilities

Our young artists, ages 3-6, were proud to see their own work on display at the second annual Children’s Art Show at the Mount Dennis Public Library on August 11.

Entitled *Possibilities*, the exhibit featured the paintings, drawings, collages, textiles and sculptures the children created as part of a weekly Creative Expressions Program.

This unique, evidence-based program helps children to develop and discover their creative potential in the earliest stages of their life. By exploring lines, shapes, colours, textures and patterns,



Young artists await the opening

children develop pre-reading and writing skills, divergent thinking skills, math and science concepts, emotional literacy – the foundations of all later learning.

The program, developed by Macaulay staff Eddie Woo, also assists parents to better understand how they can use art to help their children learn.

This program is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services through our Ontario Early Years Centre.

Learning Through Play

Macaulay programs offer children opportunities to acquire many important skills and concepts— all while actively engaged in playful, child-centred activities. Here are some examples of how we use play to further learning:

At the **Ontario Early Years Centre**, literacy and numeracy is advanced through a range of play experiences. OEYC Supervisor, Michael Ashton describes a pre-schooler playing in a sandbox: “She was pouring sand from one container to another and noticed that while the containers were different sizes, the volume of sand remained the same. Turning to her play partner, the child said knowledgeably, ‘This always works’ --a simple example of how children interact, share information, communicate ideas and experience the predictability of science.” Questions from staff guide children to learn from their observations.



Learning about the thrill of the crash!

In the kindergarten room of a **Child Care Centre**, two children played with wooden blocks. One said, “Let’s build a bridge together – it will make a bigger bang when it falls down!” Michael Ashton explains, “This deceptively simple situation highlights the importance of co-operation, the value of communication, the use of fine and gross motor skills, the knowledge of cause and effect, and the thrill of the crash!”

In our **Family Home Visiting Program**, a parent educator sits on the living room floor with a mother and her baby. She models reading a book, and singing a song using simple hand puppets to amuse the baby. As the baby squeals with delight, the staff encourages the parent to get involved. She explains how the baby is developing language and fine motor skills. Most importantly, she explains how by playing together the parent and baby are forming a bond that will last a lifetime.

At our **Homework Clubs**, young students play board games after their academic work is done. Through these games, they learn to cooperate and practice counting and reading.

These are just a few examples of how children and parents benefit from play.

You can help our children learn through play!

- ✓ Become a volunteer in one of our programs.
- ✓ Donate art supplies, educational games & toys.
- ✓ Support our work on-line at www.canadahelps.org or www.paypal.com
- ✓ For more information about how you can get involved, please contact our head office at 416-789-7441.

Letter From a Grandparent



Gevorg Baghdishyan with his granddaughter

“Upon stepping into the Centre, our ears are pleased with the symphony of children’s lively chirping. Children of all ages, ranging from 2 months to 5 years, are the centre of everyone’s attention and joy. The room’s interior is designed with children’s needs—physical, intellectual and emotional in mind. A stimulating and beautiful environment helps shape children’s critical thinking and helps them develop the standards of beauty to be used throughout their lives. The toys and games are so colourful and educational that even adults are fascinated.”

- Gevorg Baghdishyan,
OEYC participant

More Than a Meeting

At Macaulay's Annual General Meeting on June 10, Executive Director Sharon Filger commented on the similarities between today's economic downturn and the conditions that existed when Hazel Macaulay founded our agency in 1933.



Two More Than a Haircut facilitators, Anthony Davis and Dalton Higgins

Now in our 76th year, we continue her legacy of helping children reach their full potential through responsive, innovative and effective programs and services.

One such program was featured at the AGM with a screening and panel discussion of the documentary, *More Than a Haircut*.

Directed and produced by Dalton Higgins and Vanz Chapman, the

film reflects the frank debates of the barbershop sessions.

JC, one of the host barbers summed up the key message of the film, "The most important thing is, you have to be there for your kids."

Now the film's creators plan to promote that message by sharing the film with other community groups.

Good News

We are pleased to announce two new grants that will enable us to continue important work in the community.

Macaulay was recently honoured with a **Vital Ideas** grant from the Toronto Community Foundation. The grant recognizes the significant impact of our *More Than a Haircut* program and will help us spread the important message that fathers

play an important role in the lives of their children.

A three-year grant from the **Ontario Trillium Foundation** will support community and leadership development in the underserved neighbourhood of Eglinton Oakwood.

Board of Directors

2009-10

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Susan Gowans (centre) accepted the award from Rahul K. Bhardwaj, President and CEO and Martin Connell, Board Chair of the Toronto Community Foundation.

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