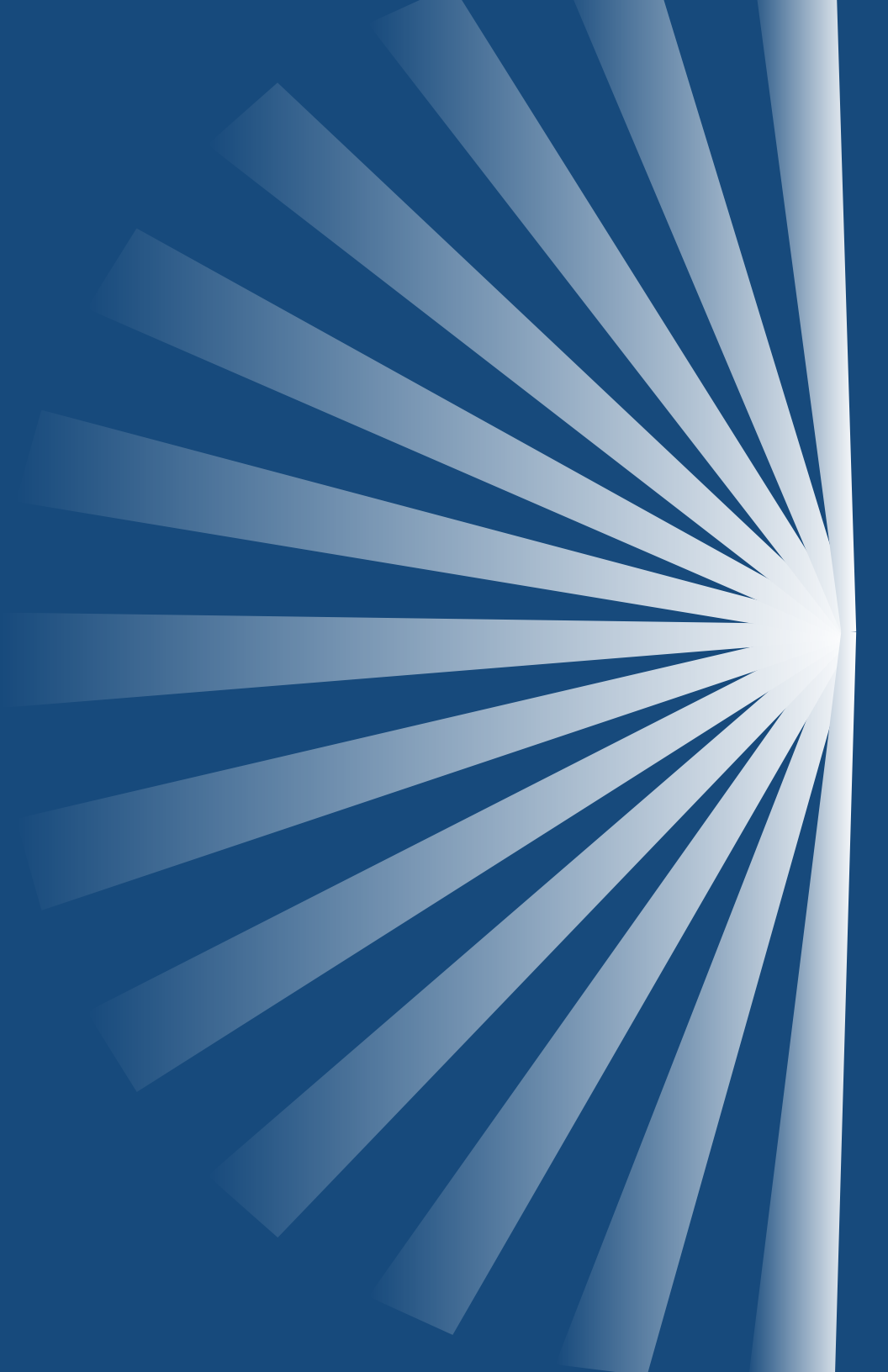


New Horizons



**The Future of Children, Youth,
and the Public Good**

Children's Studies Program and Center
Brooklyn College
of The City University of New York



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Letter from the Director



I am pleased to present this second issue of *New Horizons*, a publication



designed to keep our many friends, colleagues, students, partners, supporters, and future

collaborators informed about our work and progress.

Our inaugural issue of *New Horizons*, published in June 2007, contains much of the background information about the establishment in 1991 of the interdisciplinary study of children at our Children's Studies Program and Center at Brooklyn College of The City University of New York. Since that time, the number of children's studies programs—similar and not so similar, both here and abroad—has multiplied.

But in the same way that a child grows from a minor to attain the legal age of majority at eighteen, Children's Studies at Brooklyn College has also carefully grown from a minor to a concentration, and now, eighteen years

later, we are proud to announce that we are able to offer a bachelor of arts degree in Children's Studies beginning in fall 2009.

This year has been both tumultuous and exceedingly successful in many ways. We are pleased to share our continuing story with you as we work towards building the future of children, youth, and the public good.

Sincerely,

Gertrud Lenzer

Director,

Children's Studies Program and Center

Dedication and Remembrance



Cynthia Price Cohen

This issue of *New Horizons* is dedicated to the memory of



Dr. Cynthia Price Cohen, who died on October 11, 2007. Dr. Cohen was an internationally recognized

authority on children's rights and a drafter of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) from 1983 to 1989, when it was adopted by the General Assembly. She founded and became the Executive Director of Child Rights International Research Institute in 1992 and was an author of more than 150 essays, papers, books, and lectures on the rights of the child and the UNCRC.

An alumna of the City University of New York (CUNY), she received her B.A. degree in political science and philosophy from the City College of New York (CCNY) and attended the CUNY Graduate Center as a Ph.D. candidate in political science. She was an adjunct lecturer in political science at CCNY from 1977 to 1985, teaching

courses on *Constitutional Law* and the *Politics of Criminal and Civil Justice*.

The relationship between the Children's Studies Program and Dr. Cohen lasted close to twenty years, during which time her work enlarged the understanding of children and the evolving jurisprudence of the UNCRC among people around the globe.

It was her wish that, in recognition of our commitment to the human rights of children, Children's Studies would become the recipient of her collection of books, periodicals, and papers representing her lifetime work. We will be forever grateful for this very generous contribution to our Center as this treasure of information becomes available to educate generations of Children's Studies students, researchers, and others who continue to bring this important work forward.

Dedication and Remembrance



John Hope Franklin

**James B. Duke Professor Emeritus
of History and Professor of Legal
History in the Law School at
Duke University**



A distinguished scholar who helped create and transform the field of African American history, Professor Franklin died of congestive heart failure at

age 94 on March 25, 2009, in Durham, North Carolina.

In 1956, John Hope Franklin was appointed full professor and chair of the History Department at Brooklyn College, the first African American to be named chairman of an academic department in the state of New York. He held this position until 1964 and subsequently moved to the University of Chicago and then to Duke University. One of the most influential scholars of American history, Professor Franklin received many prestigious awards, citations, and honors throughout his lifetime.

Professor Lenzer knew him as a friend and colleague during the past thirty years. They met in 1980–81 when they were both Fellows at the National Humanities Center, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. On May 27, 2009, she spoke at the

memorial service for Professor Franklin held at Brooklyn College. As a tribute to her dear friend, Professor Lenzer wrote *The Prince and the Orchid: On the Death of John Hope Franklin (1915–2009)*. She also wrote *In memoriam of John Hope Franklin*. Both tributes may be read on the Children's Studies website.

Professor Lenzer received a personal invitation to attend the memorial *Celebration of the Lives of John Hope and Aurelia Whittington Franklin* held on June 11, at the Duke University Chapel, in Durham, North Carolina.

Children's Studies Timeline



1991 Dr. Gertrud Lenzer founded the American Sociological Association Section on the Sociology of Children. For information, see <http://www2.asanet.org/sectionchildren/> Brooklyn College became the founding institution of the interdisciplinary field of Children's Studies.

1994 A 15-credit minor in Children's Studies was established for all liberal arts majors.

1997 Brooklyn College Children's Studies Center was established.

2001 A 30-credit interdisciplinary Children's Studies concentration for majors in early childhood education teacher and childhood education teacher programs was introduced in cooperation with the Brooklyn College School of Education. Children's Studies is also available to students in the CUNY Baccalaureate program as a major or minor.

2004 The Carnegie Corporation funded policy symposium "Children and the Law in New York" led to the introduction of legislation for an independent Office of the Child Advocate for New York State.

2005 A U.S. Department of Education Ready to Learn Partnership grant funded preliminary research studies to evaluate the effectiveness of newly developed and innovative early literacy materials, media products, and platforms created for children, parents, educators, early childhood caregivers,

and service providers. For information about the resulting PBS television show *Word World* and educational materials visit <http://wordworld.com>.

2006 Dr. Margaret-Ellen Pipe was appointed on the cluster line awarded to Children's Studies for "Child Welfare Policy Research and Analysis," by the Executive Vice Chancellor of The City University of New York.

2007 A CUNY Diversity Grant funded the inaugural "Child Policy Forum of New York: The Right of Every Child," held on April 26, 2007. This was followed by the "Second Child Policy Forum of New York: The Campaign for United States Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child," held on November 16, 2007.

What's New



2008–2009 Milestones in Children's Studies Breaking New Ground and Ongoing Initiatives

Children's Studies has numerous ongoing projects and continues to provide cutting-edge, innovative leadership in the development of new courses, child policy research, pedagogy, and public service on behalf of children and youth.

Here are just some of the exciting developments over the last year that we are proud to share with you:

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Children's Studies Now Offered

The purpose of the new major in Children's Studies, offered for the first time in Fall 2009, is to address the needs of the many undergraduate students who have a keen interest in working with children and youth and who are seeking alternative pathways to careers in professional fields working with these populations.

Welcome to Assembly Member Scarborough, Chair of the Committee on Children and Families in the New York State Assembly

We were honored and privileged to have Assembly Member William A. Scarborough, chair of the Committee on Children and Families in the New York State Assembly, join us as a special guest lecturer in spring 2009. He will be an adjunct faculty member of Children's Studies in the fall 2009 semester, when he will teach our new course Children, Government, and Public Policy in New York State CS 25 (Special Topics).

Welcome to our Advisory Board

Simone Ek

Senior Adviser

U.N. Convention on
the Rights of the Child
Stockholm, Sweden

Welcome to New Members of Our Research Staff

Joseph Grochowalski

Research Associate

Mary Foutz, Esq.

Legal Research Associate

New Courses

Fall 2008 and Spring 2009

Children and the Law CS 33

Taught by Associate Professor Angela O. Burton, Esq., a full-time faculty member at the CUNY School of Law.

Child Abuse and Neglect CS 34

Taught by Professor Margaret-Ellen Pipe, a full-time faculty member of Children's Studies and psychology.

Fall 2009

**Children and the Media CS 25
(Special Topics)**

**Children, Government, and Public
Policy in New York State CS 25
(Special Topics)**



“Third Child Policy Forum of New York: Implementation and Monitoring of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography (OPSC)”

With a roster of distinguished experts and speakers and before an audience of more than 150 attendees, the Children’s Studies Center convened the “Third Child Policy Forum of New York” on the subject of the “Implementation and Monitoring of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on The Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography (OPSC)” on February 6, 2009, at the Church Center for the United Nations in New York. The main purpose of this meeting was to review the degree to which the statutes, regulations, and programs of New York State serve to protect children and adolescents from sexual exploitation. This review, with its focus upon reform of the law and other mechanisms required to implement and monitor the articles of the OPSC,



will, we hope, lead to New York becoming a model for other states. Since the United States is obligated to submit a second report on compliance with the OPSC to the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child in January 2010, officials from the federal government who are charged with preparing the report attended the “Child Policy Forum” in February and have since welcomed the submission

of a New York State Report to be added to the federal report.

One important purpose of this first consultation was realized immediately on the day of the Forum with the establishment of an effective

OPSC “ChildRights Working Group of New York” (CRWGNY), which will ultimately issue a New York State Party Report in 2010 to accompany the federal report of the United States. Assembly Member William A. Scarborough, chair of the Committee on Children and Families in the New York State Assembly; Kathryn Grant Madigan, Esq., immediate past president of the New York State Bar Association; and the director and staff of the Children’s Studies Center have



undertaken to form the CRWGNYS and are currently working with New York State and federal officials.

In preparation for the OPSC Report of New York State, we have prepared an inventory of all the existing New York State statutes and regulations pertaining to the OPSC. Moreover, we have compared the existing body of legislation with the provisions of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child on The Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography and identified those areas where additional legislation will be needed to fully implement the OPSC. We are particularly pleased to report that at the time of publishing the *Proceedings of the Third Child Policy Forum of New York*, legislation is being drafted in Albany to close these gaps.

In this connection, we are delighted to express our deep gratitude to the Oak Foundation, which has provided the Children's Studies Center with a grant to enable us to pursue this important human rights project in New York State as well as to fund the publication of the *Proceedings*. We also wish to thank our distinguished speakers, members of our Advisory Board, and faculty, students, and staff of the Children's Studies Center for having made this event possible.

Our "Third Child Policy Forum of New York" not only focused on the treaty obligations of the OPSC but also

on the wider human rights framework of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child to which it is an Optional Protocol. Even though the United States is one of two countries that have not yet ratified this Convention —193 countries are states parties to it—this international human rights treaty provides a major framework for the interdisciplinary field of Children's Studies. By concentrating on this Optional Protocol, we also hope to contribute directly to the Convention. There are many signs at present indicating that President Obama appears to be in favor of the United States of America ratifying this treaty on behalf of children and young people.

Information about our Child Policy Forum of New York can be found under the Public Policy and Research Initiatives link on our main website page.

Legislative Initiatives

Independent Office of the Child Advocate for New York

Support from previous and current grants enables Children's Studies to work diligently to promote the human rights of children in the form of legislation to establish an independent Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) for New York. The drafting of this legislation originated as an outcome of our policy research work in



connection with our first "Child Policy Symposium: Children and the Law in New York," held in 2004 and is an ongoing project. If the legislation is passed, the office would provide oversight and accountability to the systems of child administration and supervision in New York State. The OCA legislation has been reintroduced by Assembly Member Barbara M. Clark as bill A03233 in the New York State Assembly and by Senator Velmanette Montgomery as a same as bill S04790 in the New York State Senate. The bill passed in the New York State Assembly in June 2009.

In related news, it is important to note that this has been an especially eventful year due to the many changes that have direct and indirect effects on the OCA legislation. This was a historic year as Barack Hussein Obama was elected the first African American president of the United States. His support of child rights and the UNCRC has been documented in an Associated Press article: "Obama seeks to join global Rights of the Child pact," by John Heilprin, June 22, 2009. Many changes were also taking in place in New York State as Governor David Paterson replaced former Governor Eliot Spitzer, and the Democrats gained the majority in the New York State Senate. Business in the New York State Senate was disrupted this year and ended in political turmoil in a struggle

for control between legislators of the Republican and Democratic parties, resulting in the inability to pass legislation at the end of the session.

In support of the OCA legislation, it is also of interest to note that at the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Forty-Eighth Session, Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 12, Paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on The Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, the Concluding Observations for the United States of America state in No. 18: "While the Committee recognizes the difficulty in creating an independent agency at the federal level to monitor the implementation of the Optional Protocol, because most of the laws and services required are a state responsibility, the Committee is concerned that there is no agency such as an Ombudsman at the federal or state level to monitor the implementation of the Optional Protocol."

The ombudsman movement continued to move forward as Massachusetts joined the nearby states of Connecticut, Delaware, New Jersey, and Rhode Island in the establishment of an independent Office of the Child Advocate by executive decree of the Governor of the State of Massachusetts, Deval L. Patrick, on December 20, 2007.



Recent incidents with regard to adoption fraud in New York City, ongoing issues about the juvenile justice system, and the increase in child fatalities in New York City—to name only a few urgent factors—underscore the need for the establishment of an independent New York State Office of the Child Advocate. Many examples can be provided. Here is just one: An article by Julie Bosnan in the *New York Times* cites a report in *Child Welfare Watch*, a policy journal published by the Center for New York City Affairs at the New School, showing that “more children in families said to be known to the New York City child-welfare system died in 2008 than in any of the previous twenty years. There were forty-nine fatalities, according to *Child Welfare Watch*, a policy journal, including fourteen homicides; the other children died in accidents or of natural causes, and, in some cases, the cause was not determined.”

Research

Childhood and Adolescent Bereavement

The Children’s Studies Center has been working with the New York Life Foundation to study the existing research and practice in the field of child bereavement. Though the general body of research has been growing over the past few decades, how

children grieve is not fully understood and the long-term outcomes of an early loss have barely been studied. This important undertaking on the part of the Children’s Studies Center sought to uncover the areas where experts lack understanding, the extent of the fragmentation of knowledge across professional and academic fields, and the gap between knowledge and practice. The New York Life Foundation, through their charitable “Nurturing the Children” initiative, intends to use the information prepared by the Children’s Studies Center to educate practitioners about recent research as well as to improve communication between bereavement organizations that provide services for children and youth.

The 271-page report issued by the Children’s Studies Center under Professor Gertrud Lenzer, Director, and Joseph Grochowalski, Research Associate, offers a complete snapshot of the world of child bereavement. The report includes full descriptions of fifty organizations and foundations that work with grieving children, and a complete listing of more than two hundred organizations in the U.S. More than one hundred current books are listed and described for children and teenagers to read for therapeutic purposes, for caregivers to read to help understand how children grieve, and for professional counselors and



therapists. Also included in the report are analyses of scores of recent important research studies in the field that highlight our understanding of how children grieve, the long-term effects of an early loss, and the efficacy of individual therapy, group counseling, and bereavement camps.

Student Researcher Training

In addition to ongoing individual research projects that students undertake for independent study, grant work, or the CS21 Applied Research in Children's Studies course, we have included another component in our student researcher training initiatives by exposing high school students to our program and research initiatives.

In summer 2009, Children's Studies welcomed summer youth employees from nearby high schools to work in our research center. They were given an overview of the UNCRC, along with the background information on our Children's Studies Center and Program. All three are

working diligently to help list the numerous documents, publications, and books that we received and continue to receive from the Cynthia Price Cohen library. These documents can be an invaluable tool for future research by our students. Our summer youth employees are also participating in a summer art project inspired by their new awareness of the UNCRC, helping to transcribe proceedings of previous events, and working on other important research projects on behalf of the rights of all children.

Career Exploration Internships

The Career Exploration Internship course is designed to help broaden students' knowledge of the vast array of careers in child- and youth-related fields and organizations in professional settings, including the media, the court system, advocacy centers, child welfare and public health organizations, NGOs, legislative offices, and more. Unlike other internships, Children's Studies exposes students to new possibilities for specific career paths that are grounded in our interdisciplinary and human rights approach to holistically educating about and for children. They receive professional-level, hands-on experiences that are meaningful and productive.

This past academic year, two new internship sites were added—a not-



Summer Youth Employment Project



for-profit that teaches young adults in or at risk of foster care to advocate for themselves and take control of their lives and another not-for-profit law firm funded by the New York State Office of Court Administration which provides representation to children in custody/visitation, domestic violence, and guardianship cases.

Guest Lectures

This year marks a milestone in the history of the Children's Studies Guest Lecture Series with the introduction of William A. Scarborough, Assembly Member, for the 29th Assembly District in Queens, and chair of the Committee on Children and Families in the New York State Assembly, as a special guest lecturer for all of our Children's Studies classes in spring 2009.

Assembly Member Scarborough explained how the Committee on Children and Families deals with legislation affecting child welfare, including foster care, adoptions, child care, juvenile justice, family court, youth development and delinquency prevention programs, persons in need of supervision, detention and placement of adjudicated youth, and other services and programs for children and their families. He provided an overview of how legislation is started and then moves through the assembly and the senate, with special insights from a key legislator's point of view

about how budgetary processes, public hearings, policy recommendations, politics, competing interests, and other factors can affect the success or failure of legislation.

Students were equally informative as they shared their personal experiences with these systems of child supervision and administration with the assemblyman. Many expressed appreciation for this inside knowledge of the workings of the legislative process as they concern children and youth. One student commented, "Hearing Assembly Member Scarborough has been a great honor. Understanding the



On September 3, 2008, Simone Ek, a native of Sweden and Senior Adviser to the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child gave a guest lecture to Children's Studies classes, which was shared as a campus wide event. She is the leading authority on the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. During 1980–89 she was External Relations Director of Swedish Save the Children International in Geneva and active in the drafting of the Convention.



legislative procedure for state laws and the creation and implementation of programs and services in relation to children is helpful and important; much of the legislative process appears to be very complex, even more so now with so many different public sectors scrambling to avoid the threatened budget cuts to New York City and State. Scarborough's visits and lectures can also serve as motivation to become more active in voicing issues that are important to children, especially at such a critical time."

Diversity Initiatives

"Children are not only minors, but they constitute, in fact, a social minority in our societies.

Children's Studies aims at representing children and their interests through synthesizing knowledge, research, and insights gained from different disciplines and in this manner helping to give children a voice.

The work of the Brooklyn College Children's Studies Program and Center addresses these issues and works on behalf of children and youth who can neither advocate for themselves nor have a voice."

—Gertrud Lenzer

(Read more about our Diversity Initiatives on the new link on our website: http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/pub/departments/childrenstudies/documents/childrens_documents/diversity.pdf)



Special Guest Lecturer: Hon. William A. Scarborough, chair of the Committee on Children and Families, New York State Assembly



Million Fathers Club

Assembly Member William A. Scarborough, chair of the Committee on Children and Families in the New York State Assembly and newly elected chair of the Million Fathers Club, a fathering initiative, invited Children's Studies to participate by serving on the steering committee and to collaborate in the kick-off event, held on March 28, 2009, at the Robert Ross Johnson Family Life Center in St. Albans, New York. The activities were open to all, but addressed many specific issues facing disadvantaged minority fathers and their families.

Community Outreach

- The work and accomplishments of our Children's Studies Center, including that of Gertrud Lenzer, Founding Director, Children Studies, Brooklyn College, The City University of New York, appears in the Summer 2009 issue of *Child and Youth News*, the newsletter of the American Sociological Association (ASA) Section on Children and Youth. These articles document the founding of both the Sociology of Children and the field of Children's Studies. See pages 1-4 of the newsletter found at url: http://www2.asanet.org/sectionchildren/files/Child_Youth_News_Summer_2009.pdf
- On June 2, 2009, Professor Gertrud Lenzer was invited to participate on the panel for the breakout session entitled "Incorporating the CRC into



*In February 2009 Ellen Fried, board member of Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS), presented a private screening and discussion about the GEMS film *Very Young Girls for our Perspectives on Childhood class*. She spoke about GEMS and commercial sexual exploitation.*



Curricula." The event was sponsored by the Campaign for U.S. Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the National Symposium on the Convention on the Rights of the Child held in Washington D.C. For information, see: <http://childrightscampaign.org/crcindex.php>

- On April 3, 2009, Professor Lenzer was an invited speaker at the Brooklyn College Multicultural Day activities sponsored by the Division of Student Affairs.
- On February 11, 2009, Loretta Chin, research coordinator, and Elise Goldberg, coordinator, Children's Studies Program and Center, participated in the "Cradle to Prison Pipeline Campaign" event held at Medgar Evers College.
- On December 2, 2008, Children's Studies made a presentation at the Middle States Self-Study Town Hall Meeting at Brooklyn College to provide feedback on the working draft of the self-study on the Middle States reaccreditation process and to draw attention to the need for support of the Children's Studies program.
- Gertrud Lenzer, as founding chair of the American Sociological Association Section on the Sociology of Children, attended the Annual Meetings of the American Sociological Association, including

the Business Meeting and sessions of the Sociology of Children and Youth Section, in Boston, July 31 through August 1, 2008.

- On November 9, 2008, Brooklyn College held its biannual open house for prospective students. There was an excellent turnout with many participating disciplines. Children's Studies student and staff members Teresa Anderson, Jane Muller, and Alicia Wade represented the Children's Studies Program and Center.
- Loretta Chin and Professor Gertrud Lenzer were invited to participate in an Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Statewide Convening in Latham, New York, on May 29, 2008. The title of the event was "Transforming Child Welfare Practice to Improve Outcomes: The Role of Oversight — Together Building an Effective and Efficient Accountability System." Ms. Chin represented the Children's Studies Center. The morning program included overview presentations of the existing oversight mechanisms for children within OCFS and governmental offices; the afternoon program discussed the then legislation for the establishment of an Office of the Child Advocate in the New York State Assembly (A00304d) and in the New York State Senate (S6298a).



- Professor Gertrud Lenzer was the panel organizer and chair of *The Interdisciplinary Field of Children's Studies at Brooklyn College: Origins, Mission, and Research Agenda*, at the international conference "Child and Youth Research in the 21st Century: A Critical Appraisal," held at the European University of Cyprus in Nicosia, on May 28–29, 2008. Professor Lenzer presented "Origins, Mission, and Policy Work at the Children's Studies Center and Program at Brooklyn College of The City University of New York," and Professor Margaret-Ellen Pipe presented "Interviewing Children about Abuse." Joining them was Dr. Nicole Schaefer-McDaniel, formerly a faculty member in the Children's Studies Center, who presented "Children Talk about Their New York City Neighborhoods: The Role of Subjective and Objective Neighborhood Evaluations in Understanding Child Health."

From Our Faculty

Children's Studies faculty and staff are involved in many activities on and off campus. They have been invited to share some of their activities with us for this publication.

Heidi Bjorgan, Adjunct Faculty Member

Ms. Bjorgan is currently conducting her dissertation research in London, England, working with focus groups of physically disabled girls and women. Through qualitative research, they will explore their political voices and human rights within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Askia Egashira, Adjunct Faculty Member

"P.A.R.T., the Participatory Action Research Team at Benjamin Banneker Academy for Community Development, conducted two studies during the 2008–2009 academic year. The first, "How Deep is the River of Race? Race, Racism, and Race Relations in New York City Public Secondary Schools," examined students' attitudes about race and racism prior to the presidential election and collected data from various schools in Manhattan and Brooklyn. The second study, "Hide and Seek . . . Hip-Hop, Where You At?" examines the relevance of hip-hop for high-achieving urban high school students today. The principal investigators, in conjunction with their instructor, Askia Egashira, hope to work collaboratively with Brooklyn College



and the Children's Studies Center during the 2009–2010 school year.

Faculty Highlight

Professor Margaret-Ellen (Mel) Pipe
*Professor of Children's Studies
and Psychology*
**Brooklyn College, CUNY, and
Graduate Center**

Continuing research on the investigation of child abuse, a project led by Prof. Margaret-Ellen Pipe and Dr. Yael Orbach, Senior Research Associate in Children's Studies, followed more than one thousand cases of



suspected sexual abuse from the initial investigative interview through the justice system, based in NIH databases. The research was funded by the National Institute of Justice, and a full report is available at <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/224524.pdf>. Prof. Pipe presented findings of this project to the American Psychology-Law Society, Jacksonville, Fla., in

March 2008; the American Society of Criminology Annual Conference, St. Louis, Mo., in November, 2008; the International Investigative Interviewing Research Group Annual Conference, Teeside/Middlesbrough (U.K.) in April 2009; and to the International Congress of Law and Mental Health, in New York, in July 2009.

Prof. Pipe was also invited to give a presentation in the Department of Social and Developmental Psychology, University of Cambridge (U.K.), where she talked about an on-going series of studies, conducted with Dr. Karen Salmon, from Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand, on how best to prepare children for upcoming experiences. The research was supported by a grant from the Australian Research Council to Dr. Salmon and Prof. Pipe.

Finally, in January 2009, Prof. Pipe was appointed to the editorial board of the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, published by the American Psychological Association.



Alumnae Spotlight

Children's Studies alumnae have been accepted to prestigious graduate schools in education, law, medicine, and social work, to name a few, and have gone on to successful and rewarding careers. We asked several of them to reflect upon their experiences with the Children's Studies Program and Center and to share their stories with us.

Moyjae Aaron, '05, B.A. in Sociology, minor in Children's Studies

"When we invest in children and families, the next generation will pay that back through a lifetime of productivity and responsible citizenship."—*The Science of Early Childhood Development (2007)*

For more than twenty years, I have worked with infants and young children in different settings. I realized that working with young children was not just about providing their basic needs, but that their future growth and development depended upon the support of the adult caregivers in their lives. My passion for working as an early childhood educator motivated me to pursue a college education and to become knowledgeable about childhood development. I spent several years at Brooklyn College taking evening courses while working. I completed my degree in sociology with a minor in Children's Studies in

2005. At present, I am at the Bank Street College of Education, nearing completion of a graduate degree in infant/parent development and early childhood intervention.

My interest in the Children's Studies Program was initially fostered by my sister, a Brooklyn College graduate with a minor in Children's Studies. She was among the first students in the program and believed it would suit me well because I wanted to work with children. My interest was further cultivated through the courses that I took in Children's Studies, in particular a paper I wrote "Leave No Child Behind," and a volunteer internship at one of the New York City juvenile centers. These two assignments broadened my understanding and made me more aware of the relevance of early childhood education to



childhood development and our role as adults in educating the whole child.



Since leaving the college, I have had the opportunity to work as a family literacy assistant with parents and their children from infancy to preschool age. I help the adults enhance their parenting skills in developing language and literacy in their children through everyday activities. This five-year-old program currently operates through the five boroughs of New York City. It is a collaboration of the Department of Education Office of Early Childhood, the Mayor's Office, and the New York City Housing Authority.

Through my work, I have gained valuable experience in working with families and their children, and a broader understanding that children are an extension of their family. Children's everyday experiences are shaped through the influence of the social forces of family, community, and culture; giving parents these kinds of support helps them enhance their parenting practices, boost their children's self-esteem, and develop secure, emotionally stable families.

Giuliana Reitzfeld, '09, B.A. in English, minor in Children's Studies

My major is English and my passion is children's literature. Having no idea how to combine my interests into anything resembling a career, I spoke to my children's literature professor one day after class. He

listened to me talk about how I felt this literature could be a tool for drawing out hard-to-reach children. I expressed my frustrations at knowing my interests but not knowing how to put this information to use, and he said, "Sounds like you are talking about Children's Studies." I began an e-mail correspondence with Elise Goldberg, who runs the program. Prof. Gertrud Lenzer, program director, invited me to do an independent study paper on children's literature. The process of writing that research paper was difficult and rewarding because Professor Lenzer demanded more of my writing than I thought I had to offer. I grew a tremendous amount that semester.

After I finished my independent study course, I heard that the program offered an internship class. I applied for what turned out to be my dream internship. I began working in a first-grade classroom early in the semester, and I knew I was home.





I loved being in the class with those children. One day a week, eager, bright, but challenged students surrounded me. My teacher rapidly increased my responsibilities. I've had the opportunity to conduct assessments and to work with students individually on reading and math. I restrained my desire to giggle when they called out for "Ms. Giuliana," and I was thrilled when they wanted me to be the one to sit with them while they sorted through a new challenge. The satisfaction I get from teaching is hard to put into words. When one student, Krystal, came to a word she did not know, I told her to look to the picture for clues. She said, "rain," but I pointed out that the letters from that word did not match the letters on the page. "St" began the word, and as I watched her eyes go from the word to the picture and back to the word, the pieces fell into place. "Storm!" she exclaimed. That moment, and a collection of similar moments, made my decision to go into teaching solid. A full circle to arrive at the starting point: I want to be a teacher.

The opportunity given to me by the internship program was invaluable. I am going to graduate school knowing that I am pursuing the right career. Had I not taken this course, I would not be going with the same degree of certainty.

Anastasia Teper, '07, B.A. in Psychology, minor in Children's Studies and Art History

My decision to take Children's Studies courses was very much affected by my love for children and my personal experiences as a child, as well as an initial interest in psychology. The people who work and teach in the Children's Studies Program are



pioneers advocating, protecting, and teaching others about children's rights and safety. They sincerely believe that our world can be a better place if our children can be better raised.

My internship was with the New York City Alliance against Sexual Assault. This opportunity taught me how to read and examine professional literature analytically and introduced me to so many other issues, including sexual assault of children, rape, trafficking, abduction, and other serious societal and moral dilemmas of our



time. The agency also showed me a different side of such problems and introduced me to ways of healing from various traumas that many children experienced, including the use of art therapy, social work, and simply action, including advocacy and direct work at child abuse prevention.

I am finishing my first semester as a graduate student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and plan on applying my major to the field of juvenile justice and possibly doing investigation in the field of child abuse, trafficking, and abduction.

All along the way, the faculty and staff of the Children's Studies Program supported me, including Professor Lenzer, Loretta Chin, Professor Pipe, and Elise Goldberg. I will remember them for the rest of my life as rare gems of inspiration, hard work, care, love, and determination. Every time I encounter a problem or a personal difficulty, I always think of Professor Lenzer and what she would say. I had never before met anyone as engaging or inspirational as her. Thank you Professor Lenzer for being there for me!

Alicia Wade, '09, B.A. in Psychology, minor in Children's Studies and English

When I left high school, I left my dreams of becoming a lawyer behind. My experience as a CityYear AmeriCorps



member sparked a new interest in me: working with children. At Brooklyn College, I became a psychology major, intending to focus on children, never expecting to look back—but I did.

In my junior year, I was a work-study student in the Children's Studies Center and after learning about their programs, I declared a Children's Studies minor. The internship—one of the first courses I took—was an opportunity to explore how law, which I still thought of pursuing, affected the lives of children.

My internship was with the Family Court. The Honorable Bryanne Hamill, a Family Court judge, and I hoped this experience would help me



decide whether I should pursue my interest in law.

The Children's Studies program required me to devote seven hours each week to the internship, but the work that Judge Hamill assigned me demanded much more. I went back almost a year later to ask what she had expected of me as a Brooklyn College intern; did she hold the same expectations for me that she had for her legal interns?

Judge Hamill assured me that this was not so. Her expectations for her interns are molded according to their intended major. Her legal interns are expected to research various issues and to draft bench memos and judicial memos; her undergraduate interns are expected to research social issues relevant to impoverished families caught up in the Family Court system. All interns are expected to gain a better understanding of Family Court issues in Brooklyn so that they may become effective members of the courtroom team helping to resolve matters facing children. A major component in attaining these goals was our observation of courtroom cases.

This experience was the deciding factor for me; after spending an hour or more each day sitting beside the judge, it was clear that law was not the right career choice for me. Win or lose the court case, the child has already

lost, and helping him or her to work on some aspect of himself or herself meant more to me than prosecuting the offender. Although the jobs are equally important, I find my calling to be outside the courtroom doors.

Does this mean I will go into social work, school psychology, or possibly school counseling? That is something I must still decide, but my internship experience gave me the assurance that I made the right choice in changing my intended major.

Grateful Acknowledgement

to All Our Champions for Children



Funders

In addition to support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Colgate-Palmolive Company, and the New York Community Trust/Mark Family Fund, Children's Studies has received grants for 2008–2009 from:

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The New York Life Foundation

The Oak Foundation

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This publication was made possible in part by grants from the Colgate-Palmolive Company, the New York Community Trust/Mark Family Fund, the CUNY Diversity Projects Development Fund, and the Oak Foundation.

The Children's Studies Center gratefully acknowledges our funders for their generous support and the Brooklyn College Office of Communications for editorial and design assistance in the production of this publication.



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No. 11 August 2009