

Watertown Family Network

Helping people be the best parents
they can be to their children

Treehouse Shakers Performance & Fundraiser



The Treehouse Shakers, a New York-based non-profit dance-theater company, helped the Watertown Family Network raise over \$1500 on Saturday, February 28. "Animal Rhythms: Two African Folktales" was performed in Watertown Middle School's auditorium by dancers Larissa Laurel, Mara McEwin, Emily Bunning, Malinda Crump, and Maxx Passion, accompanied by percussionist, Roderick L. Jackson. They started off the show by soliciting the audience's own rhythmic talent,

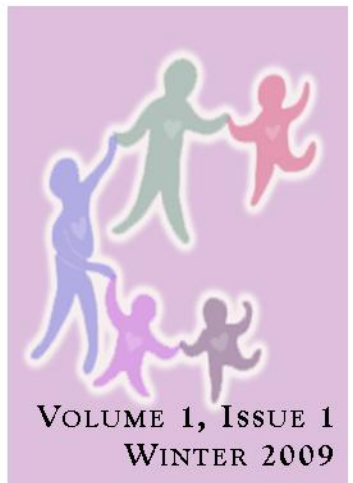
showing everyone how to body-drum the names of the animals in the stories. Then, two West African tales were performed in colorful costumes, with dramatic narration and live music. In addition to the show, there were also refreshments, a raffle and the sale of Wrap-n-Mats® (reusable sandwich wraps). Over 100 people were in attendance. Thanks to the Treehouse Shakers and all the parent volunteers for making this such a successful fundraiser!

Early Education Advocacy Day

At the State House in Boston on Wednesday, February 25, Cheryl and eight WFN families met with state senator Steven Tolman. Joe Previta, who organized and led the group, said, "It was a great meeting in which we got to share how important

the WFN is for all of us. What was incredible about the meeting is that Senator Tolman has agreed to make funding the WFN one of his highest priorities! This would not have had happened without the stories that were shared and all of the postcards that we signed! It was awesome to see the children present Senator Tolman with the postcards." Senator Tolman will need help from the other state legislators, and also from the House of

Representatives. Therefore, Joe drafted a letter to Representative Hecht for WFN parents to sign. A special thanks to Joe for all of the organization on this important effort.



BABY BASKETS

♥ Since the start of 2009, 80 new baby baskets have been delivered by the WFN to the newest Watertown residents. Welcome to the 2009 Watertown babies!

♥ If you know a Watertown resident with a new baby, please give their name and address to Arlene or Cheryl, and the WFN will deliver a baby basket to them.

Reminder!

Please call the network to register in advance for special events so we can have enough snacks and goodies for all of the children in attendance.

Thanks!

Bright Beginnings Story Time with Big Joe the Storyteller



On Tuesday, March 3, at the Brigham House, Big Joe the Storyteller entertained about 35 families belonging to the Watertown Family Network with the tales of The

Three Bears, The Three Little Pigs and The Gingerbread Man. He followed up with a special rendition of Little Red Riding Hood, starring "Little Joe" himself. After story time, the children enjoyed a snack and made stick puppets of bears and pigs so they could perform

their own puppet show at home. Each child received coloring sheets on the Three Little Pigs so that it would be easy to recall the story. Three bedtime story bags were raffled off as a reminder to parents on how important it is to read to children, especially at bedtime. Parents were invited to sign a special card to thank the Cultural Council for the grant that covered the costs of this event. Another successful event enjoyed by all.



Behind the Scenes at WFN

You may know him only as the ever-patient "Man in Red" who sits for hours as we cajole our children to smile for the all-important holiday photo but for nearly nine years, the "Man in Red" has toiled quietly behind the scenes at WFN. Ray Smith, husband of Arlene, has helped the Network in numerous ways. He has been technical support, handyman extraordinaire (fixing toys, tightening tables and furniture, painting walls, hanging signs), and carpenter, using his ban saw to cut out thousands of hearts, teddy bears, kites and any other craft item that his wife draws. He never says "no" to the Network, and for that we thank him.

Friendly, Fuzzy and Furry



At the Greek Church on March 6, "Creature Teachers" entertained

over 40 families with an animal show. Animals on display included: a parrot, chinchilla, raccoon, turtle, possum and a lizard. The children really enjoyed when the lizard stuck out his tongue to eat his food. While waiting for the animals to arrive, the children participated in animal-themed crafts,



making animal bookmarks and woolly cotton ball sheep.



Watertown Savings Bank Customer Choice Awards

Thank you to the many network families (and their relatives and friends!) who voted for the Watertown Family Network in the Watertown Savings Bank's annual Customer Choice Awards. The WFN was

awarded one of the top prizes (\$2500) at a ceremony on March 11 at the Hellenic Center on Bigelow Avenue. Candy Gleason attended the festivities, representing the Watertown Family Network Parent Advisory Board

and spoke to the guests about her experience with WFN. It was an opportunity to thank the bank for their generosity and also a chance to make more folks aware of the mission of the WFN.

Early Childhood Information Fair

Once again, the Watertown Family Network played a key role in the organization of the annual Early Childhood Information Fair. The Fair was held at the Watertown Middle School on Saturday, March 28, and as usual, attracted hundreds of families. Rosary Academy Learning Center, Watertown Cooperative Nurs-

ery School, the REACH Program of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, WIC, and Thom Charles River Early Intervention, as well as our own Watertown Family Network were among the many exhibitors. The Fair provided an opportunity for parents to assemble information on the many educa-

tional and recreational opportunities available to them in the area, all in one convenient place. Special visitors—Clowns from The Big Apple Circus—were on hand to charm the children. After the Fair parents and children were entertained by (Watertown's own) favorite children's musician, Debbie Cavalier with her musical group entitled "Debbie and Friends".

A Cat in the Hat Morning

"A Cat in the Hat Morning" was the celebration of Dr. Seuss' birthday by the Watertown Family Network and Ms Cole's third-grade class (from The Hosmer School). This is a tradition that has spanned many years and attendance was over 20 families this year. The event took place at the Brigham House on Friday, March 13. Ms Cole's class and seniors all wearing the traditional red and white stovepipe hats played many rounds of BINGO for prizes. The Cat in

the Hat, played by Jen Smith (Arlene's daughter) in full costume, read *The Tooth Book* by Dr. Seuss. Her interactive storytelling awed the children, who were eager to jump in when prompted. The rhymed story reminded all to take very good care of their teeth - baby teeth and permanent alike. All children received toothbrushes, tooth pillows (to hold the children's own first lost teeth) and certificates. Music with Oren was enjoyed by all in the dining room and one resident's immanent 100th birthday was recognized. Ms Cole's class and the children of WFN made fish in honor of Dr. Seuss' book "One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish." Ms. Cole's third-graders were wonderfully kind and considerate to our little ones and the residents of Brigham House.



Craft Night

Celina Correa-Mark, a network grandmother, led the Craft Night on February 23. Celina taught the five moms present how to make laureate necklaces like the ones that were on display at Arlene and Cheryl's office. For a fee of \$15, each mom received a kit with all of the materials needed, including Swarovski crystals, silk chord, bead glue and the knot-making tool. Besides the laureate they designed, the moms were also able to take the tools home to create more necklaces. At the end of the class, Celina surprised the moms and generously gave them additional beads to make matching earrings! "It is nice to get out of the house without the kids and do something just for me," said Malu Rodriguez, a mom who attended.

Everyone is welcome to share a craft they love by leading a craft night at the network. Some ideas include knitting, crocheting, card making, scrapbooking, etc. Even if you think you're not so crafty, you are always welcome to attend craft night and learn something new!





The Wear'n of the Green

It was a "sea of green" as you looked over the twenty plus families who attended the "Wear'n of the Green" event at 100 Warren Street Senior Housing on March 19. Patti Richardson, social worker for 100 Warren Street, had a difficult time deciding who would win the tiny tots' "Greenest of the Green" award, but finally picked out little Addison. Phyllis Miele was our "Greenest of the Green Senior". Phyllis planted spider plant "babies" for the parents to take home. The children were busy with planting and coloring shamrocks. Music with our own Cheryl Segreve and a snack of crackers and juice rounded out the morning. All children took home a packet of seeds to plant when the weather gets a little warmer.



Fund Raising Efforts

Various fundraising efforts starting in Fall 2008 have contributed over \$30,000 to the Watertown Family Network.

These funds were collected through grants, individual donations (82 donors giving about \$14,000), Santa photos and Breakfast with Santa, as well as our very popular "All I Want is a Place to Play" campaign. Grants were received from the Bilizekian Family Foundation, the Silver Tie Fund, the Cultural Council, the Brian O'Neil Foundation, the Miller Tracy Founda-

tion, Helen Robinson Wright Fund and more. These grants provide for programming and general operating expenses. The Cultural Council grant will allow for the return of Friday Morning Music, and new this year is an additional grant from the Cultural Council entitled "Bright Beginnings", which brought us Big Joe the Storyteller at the Brigham House.

Businesses have rallied to the aid of the Watertown Family Network and we would like to acknowledge

their contributions. Donations were received from MOR Associates, Watertown Ford, Five Star Quality Care, Watertown Savings Bank, Watertown Rotary Club, Watertown Book Club, Brigham House, Watertown Police Association, and Payson Park Church.

We would like to thank all for their generosity during the recent fundraising campaign. The Watertown Family Network could not carry on its important mission without your contributions.

Grants

If you work for or know of any company or organization that provides grants for early childhood programs, please let Arlene and Cheryl know how the WFN can apply.

Upcoming Events

April and May
2009

-Egg Hunt

-Make Way for Ducklings Walk



-Book & Toy Exchange

Collection at First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Watertown

On a recent chilly Sunday morning, Arlene was invited to address the congregation of the First Parish in Watertown. It was the perfect opportunity to spread the word about the network and its mission. After Arlene spoke, over \$400 was collected and sent to the Watertown Family Network. Many thanks to First Parish for this opportunity.

Representative Jon Hecht Makes Donations to Local Charities

This year, our legislators have the right to a pay raise; but State Representative Jon Hecht opted to give his raise to many local charities and organizations, including the Watertown Family Network which received \$640. We appreciate Jon Hecht's generous support of ours and other community organizations.