



JPA

Juvenile Protective Association



August 2017

Uncovering Our Past Gives Us Energy for the Future

Paper is heavy! That was one the many discoveries we made during JPA's recent Great Basement Cleanout over the last two weeks. Client and financial files aside, it's hard to imagine why we needed to hold on to decades of bland staff memos, hundreds of pounds of old training manuals, and other outdated information. But amid floor-to-ceiling stacks of paper stuffed in wrinkling paper boxes, we also uncovered priceless treasures.

Tucked into a file folder was a JPA annual report from 1910! In it, I was thrilled to see a Miss Jane Addams proposed for a two year term on the Board of Directors. Imagine, I was holding a piece of paper from the time Jane Addams was alive! In another annual report celebrating JPA's 50th Anniversary, I was moved to read about Miss Jesse Binford, who led JPA for 35 years from 1916 to 1951. Her tribute said: "We look to the past with pride in our accomplishments and with the strong realization that to a great degree these years of achievement are largely due to Jessie Binford. A warm, indefatigable, courageous personality, she has worked without fear or favor." She was described as an unfailing friend of Chicago's children.

So, in August, when we celebrate Women's Month, I am happy to learn more about the women who created and led JPA. I am honored to have such amazing role models to look to for inspiration. While women have greater freedom to choose the roles they will play, some things remain true. Women are strong and powerful when they act without fear or favor. They are strong and powerful enough to be kind and courageous, which I think means, at times, being as tough as nails. They kept the faith and believed in Chicago's kids.

I'll be thinking about these traits in today's women of JPA—our board members, staff and volunteers—as I drive a 1,000 miles east to visit my best friend of many decades, Angel. And I'll be thanking all the angels who work so hard to make JPA important in the lives of children and families—woman who make the world a better place.

In sisterhood,

P.S. JPA also appreciates the men who are unfailing friends of children. I look forward to highlighting their contributions in future issues.



Planting Acorns: An Interview with Dr. Rob Siegel, JPA's New Clinical Director

Therapy at JPA embodies a commitment to making a better future for Chicago's children and neighborhoods. Whether dealing with the youngest client or the schools and teachers we support, a dedication to helping individuals and communities heal from trauma and move confidently into the future marks everything we do. JPA's new Clinical Director, Rob Siegel, has spent his career devoted to working with and healing those most in need.

Prior to joining JPA as the Clinical Director, Rob was on the medical staff at Chicago Lakeshore Hospital (CLSH, a psychiatric hospital)—Children's Pavilion. He supervised their diagnostic testing program and was the behaviorist helping the staff develop their ability to connect with, understand, and help an often-misunderstood population. He received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado, his Master's in Forensic Psychology from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology, and his Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology.

Although this role marks a new phase for Rob at JPA, he's worked with us as a consultant since April 2016, serving on our permanency team, which helps DCFS evaluate the best interests of children in foster care. He also brings fourteen years of experience in child welfare as a forensic

psychologist, lending his expertise "wherever law and psychology intersect."

He's attended court hearings with children, worked with kids on probation, and has been a consulting psychologist for youth in care.

Rob's depth of experience at both the clinical and

administrative levels is a big plus for JPA. He'll oversee our team of therapists and program directors to ensure that our clinical services continue to be delivered seamlessly and effectively. "JPA's therapists are our best resource," he says. "They have such devotion to a population that's really underserved." He's clearly excited at being part of the JPA team: "Therapists here are heroic...They are willing to do everything they can to help their clients."

Although dealing with students affected by trauma presents a huge challenge, Rob speaks

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optimistically and from experience when he says, “The amount of resiliency and strength in these kids is amazing.” He knows JPA’s therapists understand this characteristic and put their best into their work.

“When you come to JPA there’s an atmosphere of enthusiasm and wanting to grow as people.”

Although therapy may begin with what’s immediately apparent, such as acting out in class, it also requires a faith in the future. Rob pinpoints one of the major tenets of JPA’s philosophy: “We may be referred to help a child make a behavioral change, but we focus on our relationship and helping the child have a safe space so we can support their development so they can make positive choices.” Their progress can be a long time coming. It can even be marked by an increase in symptoms like aggression. “Therapy’s not a straight line,” Rob comments. “The intangibles are important. You never know what acorn will grow into an oak.”

Rob is also conscious of the struggles teachers have with students who have been traumatized. Schools are not really designed to be therapeutic, he notes; they’re focused on the academics. Poor behaviors present as barriers.

JPA’s therapists help teachers deal with the intangibles affecting students’ behavior so they can form positive relationships with the

children in their classrooms. “Eighty percent of communication is nonverbal. We help teachers attend to nonverbal cues so they can be more proactive and equipped at identifying students who may be struggling and learn how to help them.”

For example, teachers are concerned with maintaining order in their classrooms so they can complete lessons. However, students who struggle emotionally often express their struggles behaviorally. Teachers can fall into a power struggle with students quite easily. Helping teachers focus on their relationships with students allows them to have a bigger influence in their students’ choices. In the long run, everyone benefits.

And it’s the long run we’re focused on, Rob says. “Each interaction makes a difference. We often do not get to see the extent of the impact we’ve made.” It is hard for outsiders to understand the work of therapy and how children make progress. He wants to change that by helping “educate others about therapy and growth and how to see the growth. If effective, people will rely less on the myth of the ‘quick fix.’”

Rob discusses the “parallel process”: trauma affects children, families, professionals, schools, and the community as well as the therapists. A child may be the identified client; however, trauma impacts all of us. He knows we cannot undo or eradicate the harm caused by trauma but we can help support each other and heal. He’s also conscious of JPA’s need to communicate with other constituencies to gain their support for its work. Therapy can strike outsiders as “soft” or not really addressing the issues involved. “People want to see the magic,” he notes. However, when we can help support and understand the teachers and the schools, then they can become a part of the magic too.

As Rob talks about therapy and JPA, he grows more intense. Discussing the complications and intangibles of therapy seems to energize him. It’s clear he’s fully committed to his life’s work, ready and eager to lead JPA’s dynamic team of therapists as they carry on the work Jane Addams began nearly 100 years ago, a work more essential than ever. [JPA](#)



Mothers' Strengths

By Erin Vanden Brook, JPA Therapist

As a child therapist, I witness parts of my clients' lives that are difficult and painful. That can leave me with my own heartaches and feelings of exhaustion. But at the same time, I've had many opportunities to see how these challenges can be catalysts for resilience and strength for my clients and their families.

I am particularly moved by the constant power I encounter with mothers and grandmothers – women who without hesitation or question make sacrifices and reshape their lives to ensure their children and families have the best they can provide. Like anyone, they may endure times that require more effort and support, but they fight through because it's not just themselves they're carrying, but also their entire household.

Faith:

Two years ago, Faith, a single mother with a 10-year old daughter, came to Chicago to escape extreme domestic violence. She had come close to being killed on more than one occasion and knew that her only option to keep herself and her child safe was to get as far away from her abuser as possible.

But Chicago was not an easy fix – living on the streets and in shelters, Faith rarely had a moment where she wasn't fighting to find a roof over their heads and some food to eat, let alone any time to breathe and process the astronomical life change

she had just put her small family through. Still, she persisted, and eventually secured housing, found counseling, and began to establish a new life where she and her daughter could heal. There would be days where she said she thought she would break, but she knew she had to keep going, not for herself, but for her daughter.

Kim:

Kim thought her parenting years were behind her. She had raised four children and was happily settling into her role as doting grandma who got to have fun with the grandkids during the day, while still having nights to herself. That was until her youngest daughter moved out of Chicago, leaving a son behind.

Kim knew if she didn't step in, her grandson might end up in foster care; she just couldn't let that happen. So she changed her work schedule to accommodate drop off and pick up at school; cleared out a spare room to make a bedroom her grandson would love; took him to doctor appointments and summer camp; and made sure he still visited his dad when she could.

Kim also asked for help when it became evident this change in her grandson's life was bigger than the two of them could handle on their own. Even on the most challenging days when she would call with a lengthy list of events that left her feeling lost and overwhelmed, she'd tell me it'd be okay, that she'd always do what was needed for her babies.

Paula:

A mother of two boys, Paula was considered a “hothead” at their school. She’d often raise her voice with school staff, using language that was not the most child-friendly.

Teachers didn’t always know how to approach her with feedback about her boys’ behavior and academic challenges, worried she might cause a scene – and it’s true, she often did. But when I offered a support group for single mothers at the school, she was quick to sign up and always attended. She’d reflect empathically about the effect her actions and reactions had on people, openly acknowledging that it might be helpful to try communicating differently.

She was actively looking for ways to make that change. Paula shared that the father of her two boys was in prison; she feared that if she failed as a parent and her sons had any problems, no

matter how small, they would end up in prison or worse, killed.

She disclosed times when she’d had to drive around at night with her young sons sleeping in the back of the car because they had turned off the heat in her apartment, and times when she had to work two jobs just to afford enough food for her kids, but not enough to feed herself. Paula constantly fought for her kids, and, as she put it, “if I don’t, who will?”

As a woman who doesn’t have kids of my own, I find myself constantly in awe of the selflessness, courage and strength it takes to be a mother. From day one, moms are pushed to the very limits and tested on what they can physically and emotionally handle. As I continue to work closely with female caregivers - mothers, grandmothers, aunts, cousins, neighbors, and friends – I’ll cherish the opportunities I have to witness the endless power that exists within these real-life superheroes. [JPA](#)



ASK Jane

Q: A girl has taken to calling me “mom” in my classroom. What is that all about? Is it okay? How should I as her teacher respond? Should the administration be involved? What should I think about and do?

A: What Makes a “Mom”?

While at first the solution may seem complicated due to the emotional nature evoked by being called “mom,” it is actually pretty straightforward.

It’s clear that this student has developed a positive attachment to you, and is showing it through using the affectionate title “mom.”

Now, whether this behavior signifies a healthy attachment where she feels safe sharing and learning with your guidance is unclear. It may be her way of complimenting you and acknowledging how important you are in her life.

She may also have ruptured attachments with primary caregivers at home and is looking for a safe adult to attach to. This can only be determined by speaking with her gently and privately.

First, it is important not to shun her or disapprove of her desire to connect with you. Displaying warm and welcoming signs of being approachable and open to communication is important in any teacher-student relationship. Teachers play a huge role shaping student success and self-image; it's crucial that students feel accepted and welcomed into their classroom to be on a healthy track to both academic and emotional success.

Of course, this doesn't mean you must blindly embrace and be comfortable with certain signs of affection such as hugging or a constant desire to be with you. Just as she has important reasons for bestowing the "mom" title, you have important reasons for maintaining healthy boundaries between you, and you are allowed to define these. In fact, it may be necessary for both your sakes to ensure that no misunderstandings can occur.

Some examples you might use to address this student might include: "It's clear we have a close relationship, but I would feel most comfortable if you would call me Ms. B or Ms. Broderick. Is that OK?" **JPA**



This month's take home tips are all about setting up healthy boundaries with kids in the classroom.

What: Age appropriate, healthy communication with kids contributes to their healthy emotional development. Acknowledging their expressions of affection while maintaining your professional stance strikes a good balance.

Why: Modeling healthy communication between adults and students reinforces the important concept that talking about feelings is healthy and important.

What: Reach out to other teachers or school staff or practice responses to tough student questions if you are unsure what to say.

Why: It's hard to have all the answers and emotions are complicated. Often, simply telling students, "While I may not have all the answers, I care" is all they may need to hear in that moment. They then still feel safe, cared for, and understood.

What: Honor the sentiment, not the content.

Why: A student may say or do something you're not comfortable with and that's ok. Think of the child as practicing ways to connect and communicate and let him or her know kindly whether it's appropriate or not and why. Seeking to understand the reason the behavior occurred is important, but so is setting healthy limits that you are comfortable with. If the behavior intensifies or becomes concerning, ask for advice from colleagues. Larger issues may be involved. **JPA**



NOTES and NEWS

August 2017

Cleanup at JPA!



QA specialist Akadia Kana Ochana says farewell to basement detritus.



Jenna and Bevin organizing toys and games for JPA's kids.

The Great Basement Cleanout of 2017 produced a conference room of toys for play. A good cleaning and they'll be ready for the new school year!

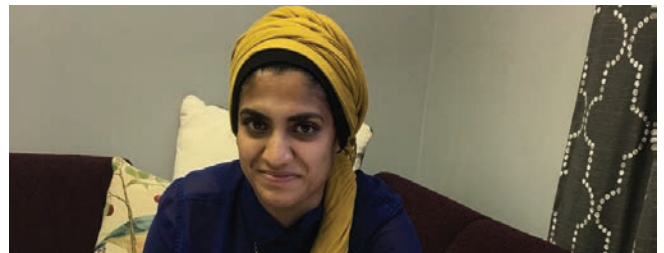
Thank You Kenilworth Union Church



JPA is grateful for the continued generous support of Kenilworth Union Church again this year. As a grant recipient, we were invited to attend the

KUC annual rummage sale where JPA was given blue bags and invited to pick up free clothing and supplies which we have since shared with our school partners. A great partnership!

JPA Welcomes Rameya to the Team!



She brings years of experience as a social worker and a teacher in Detroit to her role as C2K's newest consultant.

One of the important lessons learned from our first year of the C2K pilot was the importance of speaking the language of teachers. We're delighted to bring another social worker/teacher into our ranks. Rameya will be serving in 4 new schools, including a school in Roseland on Chicago's far south side.

Director of 9th Gear Erin Vanden Brook



Helping sort and organize the supplies are, summer intern Helen Zhang, and therapist Francesca Cole Barnes.

DePaul University business school friends of Erin Vanden Brook, JPA's Director of 9th Gear, were tasked with developing a business plan to raise \$1,000. Their plan generated over \$2,200 which they used to purchase supplies for the students in 9th Gear. We gave this project an A+!

Elliot Steinberg and Connect Kindergarten



Elliot Steinberg, a trustee of the Saul Zaentz Foundation, visited our offices this month for an update on Connect Kindergarten (C2K), a multi-year project funded by the Foundation that examines how to help teachers create positive relationships with children entering school for the first time.

Children who have positive relationships with their teachers in Kindergarten are more likely to achieve social, emotional and academic success throughout elementary school. Elliot has been traversing the country as he works to promote early childhood education. During his travels, he's sharing the work of JPA and making introductions for us locally and across the nation.

For example, Elliot discussed C2K with Alabama's Department of Early Childhood Education. While Alabama ranks at the bottom of the list for economic development, it ranks as the number one state in the union for its innovative work on preschool and early childhood education. Our discussion with Elliot focused on the linkage between early childhood education and the work we do in the first few years of elementary school. To learn more about what the National Association of Elementary School Principals is doing to promote Pre-K to 3rd grade leadership, naesp.org.