



# Building Bright Tomorrows...Today

Fall 2013

## Message from the Executive Director

Fall is in full swing and the beautiful surroundings at Old Mill Center are basking in the colors of the season. Our programs still head outdoors to take in the experiences of changes in nature, falling leaves and the start of a wetter season.

I have been at Old Mill Center for almost three months now and marvel daily at the children and families, staff, volunteers and the amazing facility that is the hub for our services. As the new kid on the block, my first job has been to familiarize myself with the many programs and services we deliver at our facility and in the community. This newsletter is an attempt to bring the depth and breadth of our programs to you, our reader.

**With services to children aged birth to 18 and their families, Old Mill Center is woven into the fabric of our local community.** Our programs and staff interface with many other agencies and schools, as well as professionals at the local, regional, and state level. Collaboration, effective communication and information sharing are some of the technical buzz words that help us provide effective services to our clients. But underlying the technical jargon, every day I watch the care, deep concern and wish to help and empower the children and families with whom we work. Some of our work helps heal emotional wounds and hurt. Some of our work gives children and adults the strategies and tools to cope with mental illness and other challenges. Above all, we want to change our communities for the better, so that all children and families thrive.

**The work at Old Mill Center relies on the support of our community.** This support is provided in many ways:

- Volunteers give their time assisting in our programs, maintaining our library, and helping with our annual auction, other fundraising, and administrative tasks.
- Donors and sponsors provide generous financial support where user charges, insurance billing and contracts only fund part of our services.
- Students from local high schools and colleges lend their support as interns and fundraisers.
- Professionals connect families in need with our services.

To each and every one of you who has touched Old Mill Center with your support over its history, **thank you!** Your support changes lives.

**If you have not yet connected with Old Mill Center, I invite you to visit us for a tour.**

My journey at Old Mill Center has only just started. I look forward to sharing it with you and introducing you to the miracle that is possible if we support children and their families when they need help and believe that they will do well when they can.

~Bettina Schempf, MBA

## A Better Life for Ana

### A story from our Relief Nursery



Ana's parents brought her to the United States when she was just 13 years old. They left behind a life in the small city of Aguascalientes, Mexico and settled in Hammond, Indiana. Ana was sad to leave and angry at her parents. For the first year she refused to speak English. Her parents opened a small Mexican restaurant and she became a young waitress to help support the family. She attended a local high school and started learning English through the ESL (English as a Second Language) program. Working and going to school left her little time to develop relationships among her peers. During this time she became close to the cook, who also worked for her father. He lied about his age and marital status and she became pregnant with his child. When she was 15 years old, she gave birth to her first child, Omar.

She met her husband, Emanuel, when she was 17 and moved in with him a week after her 18th birthday. Two months later she graduated from high school and the couple married. They had their first child, Emanuel Jr., when she was 19 years old. The young family struggled to find work and moved to Texas so that Emanuel Sr. could go to work with his father. Again the family found it difficult to find a sustainable income. The next two years saw the birth of her third child, Cassandra, and several more relocations in search of work. There were many times that the family had only beans and bread to eat. At one point, the family was given 24 hours to evacuate the basement of a home in which they lived. Ana gave birth to her youngest child, Isaias, shortly after.

At this time her husband began to struggle with alcoholism and started coming home in the early hours of the morning looking for a fight. Ana was always careful to shield the children from this side of their father. After she confided in an aunt that Emanuel was being physically abusive, her brother came to her house and told her it was time to leave. He brought Ana and her four children to live with him in Chicago, and supported them as they came up with a plan to move her closer to her parents who now lived in Corvallis. Before she left Chicago, she went to the doctor with complaints of pain and fatigue. He told her that she needed to get more rest; a difficult thing to do as a single parent of four active children!

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Check out our **2012-2013 Annual Report** online at [www.oldmillcenter.org](http://www.oldmillcenter.org)

## Save the Date

Nov 22 & 23 Pictures with Santa  
Winter 2014 Fireside Musical Series  
May 9, 2014 34th Annual Auction

Contact OMC for more information  
541-757-8068 or jerilyn\_opoein@oldmillcenter.org

## Building strong and confident young girls



Norah Storniolo, a Crescent Valley High School student, has a vision: Help build a library that supports parents and girls by providing books that focus on encouraging young girls to grow into strong, confident women. She partnered with Dana Campbell from the **Corvallis-Benton County Public Library, Soroptimist International of Corvallis, Grass Roots Books & Music** and a private donor and was able to purchase a limited number of copies of four books, of which Old Mill Center and Parent Enhancement Program were recipients.

The books are now part of the Old Mill Center library and available to all our programs. They have already been used in our **Child Safe** support groups for child victims of sexual assault.

- **Girls: A-Z** (preschool/early elementary)
- **The Care and Keeping of You: The Body Book for Younger Girls** (elementary school)
- **The Care and Keeping of You: The Body Book for Older Girls** (preteens)
- **Raising Confident Girls: 100 Tips for Parents and Teachers**

While Norah is on a year-long adventure as an exchange student in India, her plan for “Strong and Confident Young Girls” Part 2 is in the works and will begin when Norah returns next May. Thank you Norah. We appreciate your strength and confidence in pursuing your vision and look forward to Part 2.

## What's In A Name? The Quillow

Is it a pillow? Is it a quilt? Whatever it's called doesn't really matter. What matters is that for nearly 20 years, Geary “George” Cuniff and her band of merry quilters have been sewing “quillows” for the children of Old Mill Center who attend the preschool, Intensive Treatment Services and Relief Nursery therapeutic classrooms. When I asked George how this all came about, she told me she couldn't actually recall where the inspiration came from, but it was one of “those conversations with Bev” (Larson), OMC founder and George's sister, that started something like, “You know, George, I have this idea...” Most of us have had one of those conversations with Bev which led to us helping her with some sort of project, so I knew exactly how it happened! **All these years later, new quillows magically appear at the beginning of the school year for all the new children. They keep them as a cherished memento of the special times they had at OMC when they leave.**

Alex (age 16) and Brinn (age 15) Rich were both preschoolers at OMC and still have their quillows. When asked about their experiences, Alex reported that, “Old Mill was a big part of my childhood and I know I will never forget it. My favorite memory was the ‘Monkey Room’—it was the best!” Brinn says, “Even though preschool was a long time ago, I still vividly remember all the fun times I had there, and I am still friends with many of the people that share those same memories.”



**To keep the wonderful tradition of the quillow alive, we need your help.** To volunteer to sew or to purchase fabric, please contact Geary Cuniff at Quiltwork Patches in Corvallis (212 SW 3rd St. or 541-752-4820). Your help will create more wonderful childhood memories.



**“Today is a good day. There is school today. Yesterday, there was no school. It was a sad day.”**

Owen Mooney, age 4 returning to OMC Preschool after summer break

Fall brings thirty **3-5 year olds** to our **Preschool program**. The program operates from 8am to noon, five days a week. For thirty-five years, this Old Mill Center program has been creating a place for all children to prepare for kindergarten. Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) the Preschool provides rich, fun and developmentally appropriate experiences to support children's growth and development.

## Putting the “Ho, Ho, Ho” in the Holidays

Every year Old Mill Center strives to create special holiday memories for the families we work with who are unable to provide holiday cheer for their children. We count on our many generous community businesses and individual donors to help brighten the holidays for our many children in need. Last year we were able to help more than 175 children!

**Sponsoring a child or children in a family is easy:** Give us a call. We will provide you with first names and sizes; you buy a toy or book, a pair of pants and a shirt for each child, bring the wrapped gifts to Old Mill Center, and we deliver them to the children. You can also make a cash donation or provide a gift card to a store such as Target, Kmart, Old Navy, Ross, TJ Maxx or Fred Meyer so that we can shop and purchase what is needed for the children.

We are continually amazed by the thoughtfulness and generosity of our community. For many of our donors, it's their holiday tradition. The level of involvement is up to you. **Why not start a new tradition at your home or business?**

**Volunteers needed:** Would you like to help coordinate our Family Holiday Giving this year? We are looking for volunteers who can assist with their time from October to December 2013.

For questions and to sign up to coordinate the Holiday Giving project, please contact Cindy Bond at 541-757-8068 or cindy\_bond@oldmillcenter.org.



## Intensive Treatment Service (ITS) Super Heroes



ITS is a therapeutic classroom program for children ages 3-7 year old. Our mission is to strengthen and support relationships between children, families, schools, and our community. We believe that children and families do well if they can and that all of us want to succeed.

Parents or guardians choose to place their children in our program when less intensive treatment (e.g. outpatient) or educational programs (e.g. Positive Behavior Support Systems) have not been successful in helping the child develop positive relationships and living skills at home, in school or in the community. Throughout the five day per week program children experience weekly individual therapy sessions, group therapy sessions, educational services, and parental guidance/

family therapy. Children stay in the ITS program for 3-12 months until they can successfully transition to kindergarten or school.

### Most importantly, we are a classroom filled with super heroes.

This summer the children explored what makes a hero. Over several weeks we read books about heroes. Ideas were born. What are the qualities of a hero? The children decided that keeping people safe, showing compassion, and being smart were important qualities of heroes. How can we be heroes?

Each child chose the qualities of their personal super hero. One child became Jumping Super Hero and worked to help people that were scared, sad and crying. Another child was Water Super Hero, this hero worked to save the fish in the sea. Animal Lover Super Hero worked to care for horses and other animals that needed her. Costumes were made and many lives were saved on the playground. All of the children discovered a sense of confidence and compassion for others as they explored the realm of heroes. **These children are the true heroes as they work incredibly hard to gain the skills to help them become successful in their community.**

## Child and Family Therapy

The Old Mill Center's Child & Family Therapy program **helps children of all ages and their families find the opportunities for growth and improvement hidden in the challenges of life.**

Counseling has been shown to improve family relationships, reduce the impacts of trauma, navigate school difficulties, assist in accessing services in the community, and address many other concerns, bringing enrichment and comfort to families.

In addition to general services, counselors provide education and support groups for children and families who are recovering from sex abuse. The counseling staff also consults with and assists other Old Mill Center programs to provide the rich and balanced services for which Old Mill Center is known.

The Old Mill Center building and **surrounding nature areas** provide unique opportunities in which we help our clients thrive. We have the **Monkey Room**, where large motor skill activities are used to help children integrate new learning, the **Art Room**, where minds can be free and express feelings through art, and nearby parks and natural areas to establish new patterns of thought. The Old Mill Center counselors also provide **community-based counseling** in the school setting to meet the needs of our diverse population. Our staff work with students and teachers to address additional needs of children.

Child & Family Therapy at Old Mill Center is here to help children thrive. Please contact us today if we can help your family, a neighbor or a concerned friend! No referral is needed for Oregon Health Plan clients.

## Healthy Start becomes Healthy Families

The Healthy Families Program of Benton County at Old Mill Center **promotes and supports positive parenting and healthy growth and development for parents and their newly born children.** Healthy Families provides free home visiting services to eligible families in Benton County. Participation in the program is voluntary.

Families receive supportive coaching on topics such as:

- How babies grow, develop, and learn
- Caring for infants, including tips on feeding, sleep, and safety
- How play helps babies learn
- How to keep the family healthy
- How to cope with the challenges of parenting
- Connecting with other helpful services and resources

*"It's nice to have someone to talk to who is knowledgeable and shares information about things like going back to work, pumping breast milk, and teething. Everyone has been very helpful...I really feel like I have someone for support."*

Healthy Families Parent, August 2013

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about the Healthy Families program, please contact Medora Tuck Stevens at 541-757-8068 ext. 117.



## The Old Mill Center Book Fair is Coming!

**WHEN:** October 28 – November 5

**TIME:** 7:30am – 5:30pm



Each year OMC hosts a book fair to help build our library and to provide books to build home libraries of our enrolled families and support family literacy! Shop for holiday gifts for children, grandchildren and friends.

## Board of Directors

Dennis Hanson, Chair	Attorney
Brenda Coleman, Chair-Elect	Social Worker / Educator
Karen Misfeldt, Secretary	Heilig, Misfeldt & Armstrong
Dale Ramsay, Treasurer	Contractor (Retired)
Meredith Baughman	Town & Country Realty
Patricia Dixon	Community Representative
Sid Lasswell	CH2M Hill (Retired)
Tammy Thompson	Campbell's Cleaner
Jim Van Olst, MD	Orthopedic Surgeon (Retired)
Bobbie Weber, PhD	Oregon State University

# Wish List

- Area rugs
- Arts & craft supplies: crayons, stickers, water colors, paper, paint brushes, etc
- Baby wipes
- Blank journals or planners (for keeping track of appointments etc...)
- Blue tarp
- Board games
- Bottles
- Bubble table
- Bug catchers
- Butterfly net (scientific quality)
- Cardboard blocks
- Cleaning and laundry supplies
- **Diapers: especially sizes 3-6 & pull-ups**
- Digital camera
- Dish towels
- Dress-up clothes
- Dry erase markers and erasers
- Drying racks
- Floor drum
- Floor mats
- Floor pillows in blues, browns, tans or greens
- Floor puzzles (science and nature themed)
- **Gift cards to Target, Fred Meyer, Kmart, children's resale shops**
- Infant/toddler toothbrushes
- Legos
- Markers
- New digital scale



- Pants/shirts sizes 2T-7 (boys/girls)
- Paper products: toilet paper, paper towels, Kleenex
- Patio furniture set (Adult Size)
- Personal hygiene items
- Plastic tools (hammers)
- Play dough
- Play housekeeping items (broom and mop)
- Pustefix bubble bears
- **Safety supplies: outlet covers, baby gates, doorknob covers, safety latches**
- Salad spinner
- Sand box toys
- Seeds and plants for OMC classrooms' raised garden beds
- Sidewalk chalk
- Sippy cups
- Slant boards for handwriting
- Soccer ball, basketball, playground balls
- **Sports activities scholarships from local businesses: Lil' Kickers, karate, dance, etc**
- Storybooks
- Tempera paint
- Toy cars and parking garage
- Train set
- Velcro
- Washable loveseat cover (brown, green, or blue)
- Watercolor bottles
- Wooden easels



**"Old Mill Center is such a great place for me" ~ Ava, age 5**  
Thank you for making a difference in the life of a child like Ava.

I would like to make a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check \_\_\_\_\_ (payable to Old Mill Center)    Visa \_\_\_\_\_    M/C \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail form and donation to: 1650 SW 45th Pl Corvallis, OR 97333

## Why I give...

**Beckie and I have been involved with Old Mill Center since 1980.** Over the past 33 years it has grown exponentially but still remains a very friendly albeit professional organization. Until 2001, Beckie and I were mostly involved in the fund raising aspects of Old Mill Center. Then, we were granted full custody of our 4 year old grandson. Every week for the next 8 years we met with various professional counselors to help him and us through the many and varied issues that we encountered on a daily basis. Through all of those years the staff and councilors affiliated with Old Mill were always polite, informative and very professional in their approach to our problems. As a result of all of those collaborative efforts, our grandson has now been reunited with his mother and they are doing very well. He is a sophomore at Philomath High School and is doing well. **Without the patience and continual guidance that we received from Old Mill, the outcome could have been far less positive.** We both highly recommend their many and varied areas of expertise to anyone who needs their help. Beckie and I are honored to support such a worthy organization, bettering the lives of children and families for over 35 years!

~ Jerry Duerksen

## Continued from front page

In January of 2012, Ana and her children finally moved to Corvallis. She sought another medical opinion and was diagnosed with Graves' disease. Graves' disease causes eye pain and pressure resulting in a bulging of the eyes, extreme sensitivity to heat and general pain and fatigue. The required radiation therapy treatment was made especially difficult because it required that she spend a week away from her children. "One of the hardest things I've ever done," she says. Because of the treatment she also had to stop nursing her youngest son, just two months short of her goal of a year. She lived close to her parents now and they provided support for the family, but the circumstances were very stressful and Ana was running low on self-confidence. She found out about the Old Mill Center Relief Nursery from a friend. Ana immediately signed up to be in the **outreach program** and joined the **parent support group**. The group meets once a week for 3 hours, during which childcare and food are provided. The first hour and a half consists of a group session, led by a licensed therapist, who supports parents in sharing their struggles in a safe and nurturing environment. The second half of the group is led by a parent educator and focuses on parenting topics and teaches positive parenting strategies. Ana also accesses monthly home visits that focus on her individual family goals. Conveniently, her youngest son, Isaias, also attends the Early Head Start classroom based at Old Mill Center. She couldn't believe that people who didn't even know her were willing to help her and her children create a better life. Ana credits her Old Mill experience with giving her the confidence to find a job and apply to Linn Benton Community College. Through services provided by a community partner, The Acorn Center, she applied to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, and was granted a work permit, social security number and driver's license. She was offered the very first job she applied for at Ray's Food Place in Philomath, and is starting the Medical Assistant program at LBCC this fall. **With the support of a unique collection of family services at Old Mill Center, Ana says, "My eyes were opened to a brand new life and to the fact that the world was not really an ugly and mean place. By 30 I will be able to support my family by myself."**