



# Building Bright Tomorrows...Today

Spring 2016



## Cultural Competency in the Face of Changing Demographics

What does providing services to families in need look like in America today? We are a nation of immigrants. Here at Old Mill Center, it is imperative that we recognize the shifting demographics of our community to best meet the needs of our families. Being able to serve the community well is important to us. Recently, we have added several bilingual (Spanish/English) staff members across various programs. Often, staff attend outreach events that are organized by and for members of the Latino

*“...equality means giving everyone the same resources, equity means giving each student access to the resources they need to learn and thrive.”*

communities in Benton and Linn counties, and we continue to expand the print resources offered in both English and Spanish.

We recognize that the Latino community in Benton County is, within itself, diverse. It is comprised of individuals and families who are working in every field, from academia to social services, agriculture to law, business to medicine. Many speak multiple languages, while some speak only English. Some are recent transplants to Oregon, while some families have been here for generations. Our aim is to let the Latino community help us understand how to best serve their children and families.

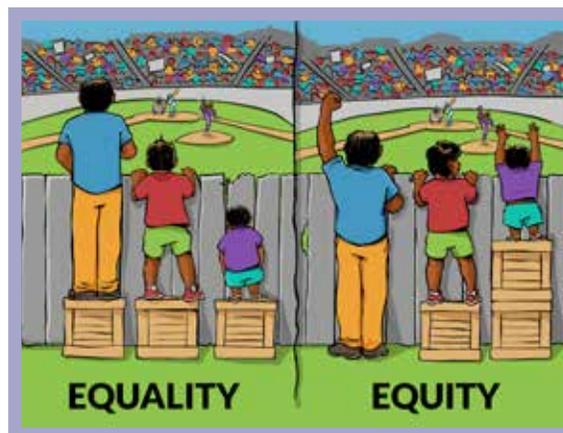
Demographics in our community are changing. Due to turmoil abroad, there has been an influx of Middle Eastern families seeking refuge and opportunity. And just like our Latino families, they come from diverse cultural backgrounds that defy generalization. What is the best way to serve these culturally diverse families within the framework of our available resources? We cannot employ specialists for each unique culture.

*“Cultural competency...is about changing the system to meet people where they are.”*

Instead, we are recognizing the need for cultural competency. Developing and refining this new practice is challenging, but offers the great reward of better understanding and serving families in need.

Cultural competency is less about educating marginalized individuals to navigate a system that wasn't designed to include them, and more about changing the system to meet people where they are. It includes discussions about the ways that oppression and discrimination affect all of us, including those who are complicit in or benefit from systemic injustice. This brings a shift from equality--offering equal opportunities--to equity. The difference, as noted by Shane Safir in her article for edutopia.com “Equity vs. Equality: 6 Steps Toward Equity,” is “...**equality** means giving everyone the *same resources*, **equity** means giving each student access to the *resources they need* to learn and thrive.”

*--Melissa Wolfe, Bilingual Home Visitor*



Graphic provided by Interactioninstitute.org

## Straight from the Director

Like many communities in Oregon and the US, ours here in Benton and Linn counties is changing and becoming more diverse. Diversity is an opportunity, but also challenges us. This happens at the personal level where we might be excited to learn about other cultures and try out different foods, but we can feel fear or apprehension when we encounter different customs and traditions, different dress codes and languages that we don't understand. We are experiencing diversity in our work as well. Our professional dialogue now includes conversations about families and children who have moved here to flee from war zones. We examine our thoughts about what we take for granted when interpreting the use of rules, rewards and discipline for parenting. We reach beyond our desire to serve the Latino population to also serve the many other communities and families who are seeking help.

As a community, as a state, as a country and as global citizens, we need to learn so much to build a peaceful world. Only when we break down our fears, analyze our own understanding and values, and communicate across the barriers that language and culture can create, will we be able to understand, heal, and live side by side peacefully.

I hope you will join with us as we continue on this journey, so that we can be a hopeful and helpful resource for the children and families in our midst who need us most.

*--Bettina Schempf, Executive Director*

### Where Her Children are Safe

Gretchen Thielman, a home visitor with Old Mill Center's Relief Nursery program, typically has a caseload of 20-25 families. The families come to her through many different channels, but share one thing: they are struggling with life situations while trying to effectively parent young children. Some are living in homeless shelters with small children, some are in recovery from addiction, others are escaping domestic violence and situational trauma. And now, largely due to the rise of instability in the Middle East, a new demographic is emerging: almost a third of the families Gretchen serves are recent immigrants from the Middle East. Here is one of their stories:

*Two years ago, Sumeia was accepted into a PhD program at OSU, allowing her family of seven to move to Corvallis from war-torn Libya. The Libyan government sponsored the move, providing a stipend for living expenses and tuition. But political instability has made the stipend unreliable. All five children sleep in one room of the tiny, immaculate two bedroom apartment that the family is struggling to keep. Back in Libya, Sumeia's husband, Ahmed, ran a successful internet café before strife drove customers away. Now, despite his credentials, he struggles to find employment. Meanwhile, Sumeia is hard at work on her degree at OSU--she's part of a project developing transdermal heart medication. Our Relief Nursery has provided classroom support when her oldest son was struggling in a community preschool. Sumeia is grateful to be here in Corvallis, where her children are safe and people are kind and helpful.*

Old Mill Center helps to connect families like Sumeia's with other parents, as well as with information about child development and positive parenting strategies. Our staff helps families navigate unfamiliar systems of health care and education, and make the most of very challenging financial situations. Through education and collaboration, we work to break down barriers and make the world a safer, kinder place for all children and families.



### Cultural Competency in Practice: Names

One example of cultural diversity is the number of naming practices around the globe. When we do not understand a naming practice or devalue it because of our lack of understanding, we limit our ability to work effectively within the culture with which the family identifies. I've recently started to work with families from the Middle East, and found myself confused by the naming practices.

Due to varying alphabets and cultural differences, names from many countries may not be adequately represented when transliterated from their origin and put into a standard Western format of First, Middle, and Last names. A mother, father, grandmother, and child may all have different last names to be used on documents and medical records. This can lead to confusion on behalf of providers regarding family relationships and how to properly address families.

This issue is not unique to Middle Eastern cultures. Families hailing from areas as varied as Korea and China to Mexico and Brazil also deal with misunderstandings and confusion over accurately representing their names and understanding their naming practices. As an organization that strives to provide culturally competent services, we continue our goals of understanding families within their cultures. Understanding naming practices is one small way to ensure we are doing so.

*--Kelly Longway,  
Healthy Families Home Visitor*

### You Can Incorporate Regular Giving Into Daily Life!

**For nonprofits, even the smallest contribution makes a difference. Today there are more ways than ever to integrate regular donations to your favorite nonprofit into your daily life.**

#### Charitable Payroll Deduction Plans

Many employers offer charitable payroll deductions. Connect with your Human Resources Department and ask them to automatically donate a portion of your monthly earnings to Old Mill Center. When your monthly pay comes through, your donation has already been deducted. Some employers even have matching funds, making your donation go twice as far!

#### Local Stores

**The Arc** will donate earnings of consigned items if you tell them you want the proceeds given to a specific charity.

Register your credit card with **eScrip** and select Old Mill Center as your cause. When you shop online using that card, or patronize select retailers in person--such as Cloud and Kelly's--a portion of your spending is donated to Old Mill Center.

Select Old Mill Center as your preferred organization, and earn donations when you shop at **Fred Meyer** using your **Fred Meyer Community Rewards Card**.

#### Shopping Online

Register with **Amazon Smile**, **Goodsearch**, or **Goodshop**, select Old Mill Center as your favorite cause, and when you use their service the company donates a small amount to us.

It all adds up!

## Cindy Bond Challenges You: Be a Brain Builder!

I am excited to introduce VROOM, a new tool built on the knowledge that there is no time in life when the brain develops more rapidly than during the first five years.



VROOM is for parents, caregivers, teachers, grandparents and anyone who has contact with young children. It offers daily brain-building activities based on a child's age and the family's daily routine--no special toys or equipment needed. It also explains **why** each activity is important based on the latest brain research. It is available on the VROOM website, via text on a smartphone, or through Old Mill Center's home visitor staff, who have the information on card keyrings. You can participate electronically by going to [www.joinvroom.org](http://www.joinvroom.org). Or, contact our home visitor staff for a set of the paper-based version. Thanks to the Tri-county Early Learning Hub, Old Mill Center is able to receive VROOM materials and distribute them in our community.

**After I attended a training session several weeks ago, I shared the program with our home visiting staff. They are excited to introduce the tool to the families with whom they work. They start with: "You already have what it takes to be a brain builder!"**

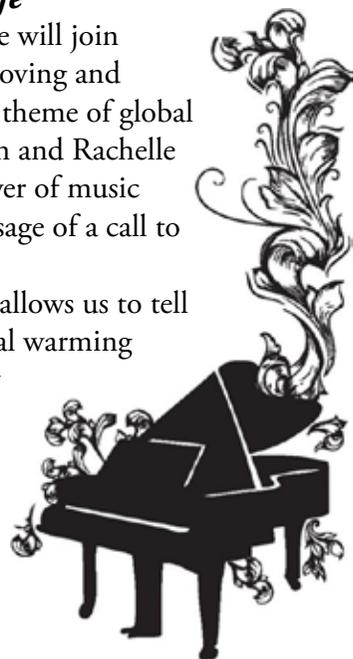
**VROOM offers fun, easy ways to turn everyday moments into brain building moments!**

### Fireside Piano Recital Saturday, April 9th, 4pm *In a Time of Extinction, A Call to Life*

Author Kathleen Dean Moore will join Rachelle McCabe in a very moving and powerful presentation on the theme of global extinction. Together, Kathleen and Rachelle became convinced of the power of music and words to convey the message of a call to action for climate change.

"This performance is art that allows us to tell the terrible truths about global warming and mass extinction, in a way that enters peoples' hearts, rather than breaking them," Kathleen says.

*Tickets are \$65 and available by calling (541) 757-8068 or at [www.oldmillcenter.org](http://www.oldmillcenter.org)*



### The Joys of Friendship

Nick is a little boy with global developmental delays. He attends preschool at Old Mill Center. Here, he has a good friend named Bobby. Bobby is developing typically for his age.

When Nick does something fun or exciting, Bobby is right there to announce to the class what a cool thing Nick just did. When Nick is off-task in class, Bobby checks in on him and helps him focus on their activity. When Nick discovered how much fun it was to throw rocks and leaves over the preschool's fence during outside time, Bobby quickly caught on to the game and started gathering more items to share and toss over. The friends spent 10 minutes engrossed in Nick's invented game.

In Nick, Bobby has a friend who does fun, cool stuff. In Bobby, Nick has a friend who looks out for him and appreciates him.

At Old Mill Center, we believe in the power of the heart's ability to transcend differences.

The friendships we see every day in the Integrated Preschool--like Nick and Bobby--are the result and reward of those beliefs.

*\*names have been changed*

*--Alicia McWilliams, Preschool Co-lead Teacher*



## Special Notes

### 36th Annual Dinner and Auction presented by Duerksen and Associates



silent auction \* live auction \* raffle  
tickets available online or call (541) 757-8068

### Donation Wishlist

Markers, spiral notebooks,  
& kid-friendly art supplies

Children's gender neutral  
rain gear, sizes S, M, L

Children's gender neutral  
rain boots, sizes 11, 12, 1, 2

Children's clothing,  
sizes birth-6X

Safeway gift cards for snacks

## Board of Directors 2015-2016

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Executive Director

### A Note from Jerry and Beckie Duerksen

In 1980, Beckie and I began supporting Old Mill Center. We believe in the vision and the mission to help keep children safe and give them a chance to thrive. We like the work that our friend, Bev Larson, was doing. It seemed innovative, creative, and at the same time, so necessary.

The Center continued to grow, adding programs and clientele. Naturally, with that growth, there was a need for continued funding. We have risen to that challenge each year since with financial support.

We didn't imagine that we would have a need in our own family for assistance from Old Mill Center, but then our grandson Joseph began struggling with behavioral issues at age four. We enlisted the aid of Old Mill Center's staff, who helped Joseph identify the triggers that made him act out inappropriately, and showed him he could safely release his angst and anger. Our whole family benefited.



Old Mill continues to grow in a variety of ways to meet the needs in our community. Our grandson has grown into the young man we had hoped. He has the tools to deal with daily life, and a sense of normalcy. We are so grateful.

We give because we believe in Old Mill Center's work, and we have seen the growth in their programs, the growth in our grandson, and the need for growth in funding. We encourage our community to join us in giving to Old Mill Center. Together, we improve the lives of children and families.

--Jerry Duerksen, Platinum Sponsor 2016 Auction



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