

# 21C County Connections

Rockland 21<sup>st</sup> Century Collaborative for Children and Youth

Vol. 4, No. 2 Spring, 2002

## Rockland 21C Leaders Called Lamplighters and Pathfinders

Photo by Rick Helman



The Rockland 21C Annual Meeting on March 8th at the Nyack Seaport was a smashing success. Harriet Cornell emceed a program during which new Board members, as well as invited guests, heard — through the voices of Dr. James Ryan, Scott Vanderhoef, Mary Jane Pauling, Ron Anagnostis, Mark McNeill, Sherri Goffman, Betsy Hastedt, Mimi Hoffman and Jimmie Warren — about the history of Rockland 21C and the success and impact we have had.

Each shared personal anecdotes to illustrate the point that their program, field or purview is healthier thanks to the work of Rockland 21C and its many partners. Whether it was Mary Jane Pauling discussing early childhood development, Ron Anagnostis telling us about the growth of his Family Resource Center at Sloatsburg Elementary, Mark McNeill sharing his vision of Nanuet as an embodiment of 21C values, Betsy Hastedt's passion for after school programs, Sherri Goffman stressing the importance of "communication" for building school/community partnerships, or Jim Ryan speaking about changes in Rockland's educational landscape ... it was clear these worlds are no longer discrete. Rockland 21C has helped each sector become comfortable with the others, establish mutual respect and work together for the best possible future for all children.

Ed Zigler, the esteemed Director of Yale University's Bush Center for Child Development and Social Policy, told us that he believes Yale learned more from Rockland 21C than Rockland learned from Yale. He said we accomplished more in the last five years than any community Yale worked with in the U.S. in that period of time; that he was gratified to see the uniqueness reflected in the Family Resource Center display boards in the meeting room, a testament to the model's flexibility; and he was extremely impressed that the Collaborative has involved more than 50 partner agencies in the course of our efforts to build strong school-community partnerships.



***"Yale learned more from Rockland 21C than Rockland learned from Yale."***

*Ed Zigler, Director, Yale's Bush Center*

Scott Vanderhoef praised Harriet Cornell for the critical role she has played in leading our initiative and building it from an idea into a vital, growing and enduring community structure. His

sentiments were echoed throughout the event.

Jimmie Warren, Assistant Superintendent of Schools in East Ramapo, and our closing speaker, left us with several profound African proverbs, including "If you don't know where you are going, all roads will lead there." Jimmie talked about this proverb as it relates to children, and why child-centered organizations must help children find a positive direction.

This was a fitting way to end our day. It was clear to all that a journey that began six years ago, has a path. And, as Suzanne Sennett said, speaking on behalf of Governor Pataki, we in Rockland have become "lamplighters and pathfinders" for the rest of New York State ... for which they are "very grateful."

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		<b>Joseph Zambito</b> South Orangetown Public Schools

# Reflections on the 6th Annual Symposium

## *Achieving Results Through Collaboration*

Achieving the best possible future for every child is a pipe dream, unless all segments of the community have ownership and work together. The vision needs to be ubiquitous, the commitment endless and the quality of the work high. In this spirit, 150 child-centered professionals came together on March 26 for a day of learning, networking and sharing. This year's Symposium was a professional development experience during which the learning was to be applied "early and often." We are pleased to report that attendees told us that you learned a lot, are using what you learned ... and are teaching it to many others, including fellow teachers, PTA leaders, government officials, and 9/11 survivors.

As we look to the future, we see that financial resources are very tight. At the same time, we see awesome human resources surrounding us, all the more powerful when we use them to achieve a shared mission. This was clearly portrayed by the many display boards surrounding us in the RCC Atrium, depicting community developed collaborations. Each of these collaborations has been a great teacher. A Symposium participant from another County, with years of consulting experience in communities known for their partnerships, commented, "I don't think Rockland knows how special it is.

You are making collaboration work, not just working to collaborate."

Reflection is a vital part of the collaborative process. Here are reflections from some Symposium participants:

Peter deLisser's workshop on "Responsible Listening" gave us a framework for thinking about the skills of productive, reflective listening. We learned that those skills allow us to take responsibility for the course, and even the outcome, of conversations we engage in ... a "hard to remember at the time" but useful part of collaboration. It's a process that I hope will become a habit.  
— Max McClintock, RASP

The theater troupe itself was an example of seamless collaboration. The way they portrayed some of the issues faced by members of the audience by playing off each



Hudson Valley Playback Theater reminds us about the magic of collaboration.

other's impromptu performances, clearly displayed the complexity of attributes necessary for successful collaboration.

— Suzette Baez, Rockland County Department of Health

The Hudson Valley Playback Theater forced you to face your emotions about collaboration. They took an experience we all had (it helped to see how universal it was) ... and they depicted the challenges, how much work it is, the out-of-the-box ways to make it work ... and how valuable it is when it *does* work. — Marcella Amorese, Mental Health Association

Marty Blank, the Symposium keynoter, discussed the value to children and families of outside community agencies in schools. It struck me that it is just as true for early childhood programs. I will now make an effort to contact agencies like the Department of Social Services, mental health agencies, and community groups to participate in our child studies meetings ... and see where that leads. — Cathy Allison, Head Start of Rockland

Carol Diemer helps participants discover their True Colors.



### *Lisa Ficucello, BSW Student, Dominican College*

As a social work student from Dominican College, interning at the South Orangetown Family Resource Center, I have been able to apply my knowledge from the classroom to my experience at the FRC. I see how a change in one's environment has a strong impact on a young child. The connection, therefore, between school and the family, is critical to easing the transitional process for a child entering pre-school or kindergarten and is particularly valuable for a child who has special needs.

The Family Resource Center is an optimal setting in which parents can interact with other parents in an informal manner. It is a place where parents can express the concerns they have about their developing child. As a college student, I was able to witness first hand what happens when children begin to develop peer relationships. Having a special event such as

a story hour allows for this interaction. The children are eager to play together, increasingly comfortable separating from their parents, and learn the social skills they will use the rest of their lives.

The FRC offers important information, referral and supportive services to South Orangetown residents. But, during my time here, I did notice one service gap. Parents frequently call the Family Resource Center looking for free tutoring. Yet, the only tutoring service for young children within the County is rather expensive. I would like to see the FRC offer a free tutoring service in partnership with local colleges.

Overall, the South Orangetown Family Resource Center has so much to offer parents, teachers and care providers of young children. It is an outstanding resource to have available within the community and a great internship experience.

# Beyond The Juggling Act

*Lilly and Tomas Velez both work two jobs so they can afford their modest apartment, used car and living expenses. Getting to any school-related activities for their three children is out of the question for them.*

*Cynthia Lowell is a single parent. Her supervisory technology position at a local company leaves her with little energy to spare at the end of the day for her worn out five-year-old or her 4th grader who has been "homeworked to death" in preparation for high stakes assessment tests.*

*Latoya and Ralph Wilkes are both educators, careers they hoped would mesh with raising a family. However, the child-care needs of their toddler and pre-schooler are daunting, and the growing challenges of their profession have caused them to re-think this choice.*

These three scenarios are indicative of the lives of many Rocklanders. The family/work stressors resulting from such opposing demands have a downward spiral effect in our workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods. What can be done to change this for the better?

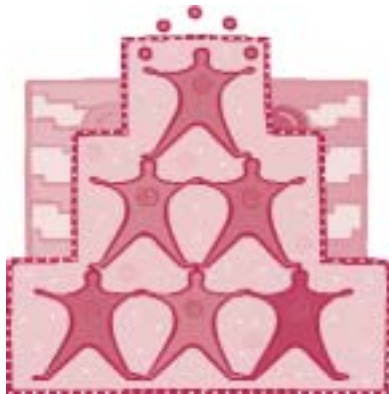
Ellen Galinsky, President of Families and Work Institute, believes that a lot can be done, and is being done in communities around the U.S. The strategy is one we all embrace — collaboration — among work, home and school. There are ways to create a system which can be "navigated," rather than precariously juggled. Ellen is coming to Rockland on June 13 to share her wealth of knowledge with us.

A Palisades resident, Ellen has long been a great friend to Rockland's child-centered organizations. Most days of the year you can find her meeting with Fortune 500 companies, national policy leaders and university scholars. (She first spoke with us about this project right after a meeting she had with Laura Bush on the same topic.)

At 9 a.m. on June 13 (in the Raso Room at the Palisades Center Mall), Ellen will meet with Rockland employers of all sizes to help them understand why it is so important to enter into meaningful partnerships with their employees and their community. She has found that workplaces, big and small ... for profit, non-profit and municipal ... have begun to understand they must play a central role in creating a healthy balance between home and work and school. It is in their self-interest in the short run ... and in the long run too. The June 13 audience will also meet our network of FRC Coordinators and have an opportunity to plan ways to work together in the future. Rockland 21C's child-centered partners are encouraged to attend as well.

Local employers can reserve seats for the meeting by getting involved in *Beyond the Juggling Act*, a collaboration among the Big Apple Circus, Families and Work Institute, and Rockland 21C. And, by purchasing a block of 10 tickets for \$500 (good for many performances during the Big Apple Circus Rockland run), they will be helping our network of FRCs and their own employees as well.

Please support *Beyond the Juggling Act*! Circus tickets and reservations for the June 13 meeting are available through the 21C office. (627-KIDS or Mimi21C@aol.com)



## A Message From Harriet Cornell

# Marking a Milestone

21C held a milestone event on March 8, marking six years of Countywide collaboration to benefit Rockland's children ... as well the inauguration of a new phase in our development. What a memorable afternoon! Thanks to the vision and efforts of a small, dedicated team of people — the 21C Executive Committee — and the active support of schools, government and community, enormous advances have been made.



*Harriet Cornell emcees the 21C Annual Meeting.*

A milestone represents "a significant point in any course," and it is essential to look back and appreciate the fruits of our labors: 23 Family Resource Centers in our schools; strategic planning efforts with the community; six annual Symposia to disseminate information and best practices; a regular newsletter, a listserv; ongoing educational outreach; funding to help establish and sustain FRCs and other initiatives; an office at BOCES; incorporation as a not-for-profit organization; a full-time Coordinator and full-time Administrative Assistant; a strong partnership with Yale University; and local sponsorship of the renowned Big Apple Circus as a fundraising and communications vehicle. None of this could have happened without the brilliant leadership and navigational skills of our 10-person Executive Committee, and, since December 1999, the intellect and energy of our Coordinator, Mimi Hoffman.

Happily, we have earned the support of elected officials at all levels. In honor of our celebration, New York State Senator Tom Morahan and Assembly Member Alex Gromack promised active help. Letters from U. S. Senators Hillary Clinton and Chuck Schumer congratulated us and stated "your unique program is a showcase for other communities who want to provide for their young people the kinds of family resource centers, after-school programs and internships that are already benefiting students in Rockland County." Of course, our major financial support comes from County Executive Scott Vanderhoef and Rockland County Legislators who attended the event in force.

As all of our speakers that day reminded us, 21C is all about partnership: helping our school and community partners in ways that benefit them and advance our joint commitment to the optimal development of children. The 21C-related linkages that have been created between schools and community agencies have been of inestimable long-term value.

Now our challenge is to stay the course, with policies and goals to be set by our new Board of Directors: 20 leaders representing the face of Rockland, together with the 10 who brought us to this point. It is an incredible group of people whose wisdom and talents will take us to a new level. I anticipate a bright future for the children and families of Rockland — and am honored to be a part of 21C.

## 21C I&R Implementation Team

By Susan Needle Vitale

*Action Plan 5.1 –  
Develop a  
system for the  
coordination and  
dissemination of  
information*

*Action Plan 5.2 –  
Implement  
approved system*

A 21C I&R Implementation Team was established to address the strategy identified during the 21C strategic planning phase — “We will provide a comprehensive means of receiving and disseminating information internally and externally.” Our goals were to review models of successful I&R systems and recommend how Rockland could proceed to replicate their most effective components. The team represented a cross section of service delivery agencies, FRC Coordinators, organizations that provide I&R services, Rockland CARES/Integrated County Planning, and other interested parties.

System elements, software options, staffing, budget and system “ownership” were explored. With the exception of system “ownership,” specific recommendations were made. Since “ownership,” or “project hosting,” requires a financial commitment as well as other organizational resources, no host organization was prepared at that time to move the project forward.

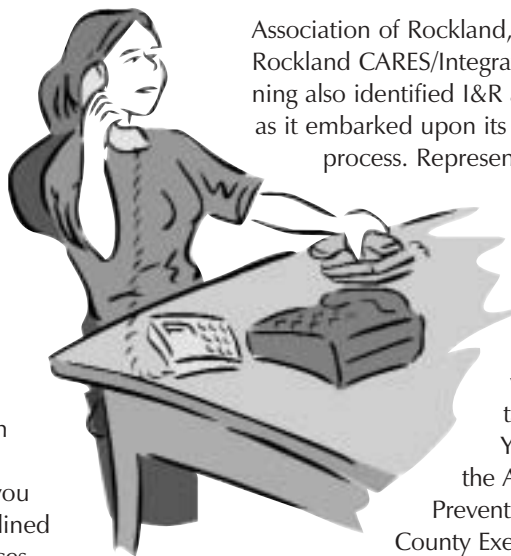
### Lessons Learned:

The team learned about elements of a successful I&R system and what resources are required for implementation. We discovered that the specifics of emphasis, staffing, project scope and project oversight by the collaborators could vary. Without a “host” organization, it was not possible for further project planning to occur. The team drew on the history of I&R in Rockland, continuing to build bridges between existing stand-alone I&R systems.

## Taking Information & Referral (I&R) to the Next Level

### What is I&R?

Ever wonder how to find the right health and community services when you, or someone you know, need help? That could mean placing many phone calls and searching through a confusing maze of agencies and services. An I&R system addresses these issues. With one phone call, you get centralized, streamlined access to existing services. There is a thorough, efficient and accurate service inventory and referral system, and a staff to relay information that is custom-tailored to the needs of each caller.



Association of Rockland, to name a few. Rockland CARES/Integrated County Planning also identified I&R as a key outcome as it embarked upon its own planning process. Representatives from the

Departments of Social Services, Health, Mental Health, Probation and Planning, as well as representatives from the Youth Bureau, the Alliance for Prevention and the County Executive’s office

participate in Rockland CARES.

This past summer a Rockland CARES I&R workgroup was charged with developing a plan and a budget for a Countywide I&R system. The workgroup began with the basic premises identified by the 21C I&R Implementation Team and considered an array of possibilities in developing its recommendations.

Our County Executive, Scott Vanderhoef, accepted these recommendations, the Department of Social Services agreed to “host” I&R, and I was designated to direct the project. Formerly the County Grants Specialist, I was transferred to Social Services to direct the development, implementation and operation of the

Rockland CARES I&R. I served as Chair of the CARES I&R Workgroup and Co-chair of the 21C I&R Subcommittee, which focused on software selection and implementation.

### Rockland I&R Project Parameters

Building upon the recommendations of 21C, the CARES I&R project will collect, classify, maintain and disseminate information about human services, recreation, education, and community service programs. It will provide access to resource information via phone, Internet, in person and in print to connect people to appropriate services. The goal is to improve access to services for the residents of Rockland, and provide information to service deliverers and planners. Reports, directories, and mailing labels will be readily available from the data.

### I&R Advisory Committee

We have created a diverse, 40-person I&R Advisory Committee, which includes many who have participated in the 21C and other previous planning efforts. It was important that this group represent the wide-ranging needs and voices of our County. The Committee will participate in implementation, ensure that the system

### History of I&R in Rockland

As early as 1984, the Rockland County Legislature’s Commission on Women’s Issues convened a planning group to research I&R systems used across the U.S. The beginnings of Rockland I&R projects can be found in directories and databases created at Social Services, the Youth Bureau, the Office for the Aging, Office for People with Disabilities, Veterans’ Office, United Way and the Library



**Carole Weisberg**  
*Program Associate, Yale University*  
*School of the 21st Century National Center*

Six years ago, a busload of enthusiastic and curious people from a diverse set of Rockland County organizations and school districts descended on New Haven for the Yale School of the 21st Century Summer Conference to learn about the 21C model and see if it would work in their community. As we anticipate the 13th Annual Conference at Yale this summer, it is exciting to realize that many of those same people who came to New Haven six years ago will be presenters this year, showcasing the hard work that went into building a successful Countywide 21C initiative.

At this year's Conference, Rocklanders Harriet Cornell, Robert McNaughton and Mark O'Neill will offer their perspectives on the value of a regional school-community partnership, sharing not only their accomplishments but also, in their words, "the bumps in the road," those lessons that can be so helpful to others. Just two of the many successful partnerships that have so enriched the Rockland County initiative and can serve as models to others around the U.S. will be presented — the Nanuet Networks for Families and the Higher Education/School-Age Care Task Force.

From Yale's perspective, showcasing the work of the Rockland 21st Century Collaborative at our Conference is a wonderful opportunity to give participants from other locations a glimpse of the synergy and power inherent in a regional approach. While 21C has three statewide initiatives —

in Connecticut, Kentucky and Arkansas — Rockland was the first Countywide model in the nation. It is also the first regional initiative to be launched without substantial legislative or foundation funding at the outset.

In trailblazing the Countywide approach, Rockland helps us highlight the advantages of multi-site implementation. First, individual 21C/FRC programs gain strength from each other. The more concentrated they are in a given geographic

area, the more support they offer each other ... by collaborating on programs, sharing resources, building public awareness and learning from their particular successes. Second, we have found that regional initiatives are less vulnerable to the inevitable changes in staffing or leadership that too often undermine more isolated programs. And third, multi-site implementation highlights the flexible nature of the

model. 21C can look very different in different places, even if those places happen to be next door to each other. Finally, having a geographically concentrated group of 21C sites makes it more efficient for us here at Yale to provide meaningful and timely technical assistance to reinforce the work happening at the local level.

For these reasons and many more, Yale has been extremely pleased to work with Rockland County over the last six years. We are proud of all they have accomplished, and we look forward to many more years of partnership and collaboration.

***"We are proud of all Rockland 21C has accomplished, and we look forward to many more years of partnership and collaboration."***

meets the needs of all Rocklanders, and engage in dialogues such as:

- How should we design a network?  
How do we address system security topics?
- What literature should be disseminated to callers?
- How can the system be sensitive to the diverse community?
- How should an I&R system be accessed on the Web?



### Next Steps:

A phased implementation is planned. The first phase, resource development, will include conversion of the existing Social Services database into a format compatible with the new software selected. The first emphasis of data collection will be focused on disaster and emergency preparedness and services, since these services are vital for community safety. An expanded data collection process will take place over time.

Phase two of implementation will be the actual start-up of I&R telephone coverage. The third phase will focus on extended day telephone coverage and dissemination of a resource directory, both on disk and in print. Universal access to data via the Internet is the focus of the last phase of implementation.

### Resources:

For more information about I&R, you can visit the site of the professional association, AIRS, at [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org) ... or the New York chapter, NYS AIRS, at [www.nysairs.org](http://www.nysairs.org).

Connecticut has set up their I&R system based upon a single statewide database. Their Web site is: [www.infoline.org](http://www.infoline.org). Another example of a well-defined and highly successful I&R system is Westchester FIRST — [www.firstwp.org](http://www.firstwp.org).

Finally, if you have a suggestion for Rockland's I&R project, or if you know of an organization that should be included on the Advisory Committee, please contact me at [vital@co.rockland.ny.us](mailto:vital@co.rockland.ny.us).

*Susan Needle Vitale is the I&R Project Director.*

**The Beginnings**

**A**t this point, the 21C Family Resource Centers are in all stages of development. This year alone seven centers opened their doors for the first time. Here's a look at the exciting, but sometimes difficult, start-up period. Connor School, a true "start-up," was awarded a \$5,000 21C grant last year. The BOCES/MHA Family Resource Center opened a school-based center this year, but had been "operational" providing family support out of the MHA offices for more than a year before that. They were awarded a \$15,000 "sustainability grant."

**Connor School FRC, Ramapo Central**

*By Kathy Lamar*

Starting an FRC is very challenging, but also very rewarding. We officially began in January and, while very excited to finally get started, I had no idea where to begin. We decided the best place to start would be with the health of our students, which was identified as a need in our grant application. I arranged for dental screenings from the Rockland Department of Health. With almost 90 students involved, it was a big success. I am in the process of trying to help our students who have not been immunized get their required shots before the start of the next school year, including incoming kindergartners. Good Samaritan Hospital has agreed to provide space for this service. Our school nurse is working with me to arrange for the Department of Health to handle the immunizations for us. It is a challenge, but it is exciting to know that we are "trailblazers" in developing this type of program in Rockland County. I also created a brochure for the Connor FRC, which will help explain who we are and what we do for our school and community. I'm compiling an info packet as well, for parents and families new to our community. We hosted an appearance by Little Hawk, an American Indian who tells about the Indian way of life and respect for others through stories and dance. This program communicated the inclusive philosophy of our Center, how much we value respect for others, and our desire to bring children and families together to share in creative experiences. I would like to organize a playgroup and/or parent group, but that won't be possible until September due to time and space issues. I did complete EPIC training this year, and look forward to co-leading EPIC groups with Anne Nissen, Sloatsburg's FRC Coordinator. In September, with more resources from 21C and others, I hope to devote more time to the FRC. We see the potential and are very eager to move full speed ahead.

*Kathy Lamar is the FRC Coordinator at Connor School.*

**BOCES-Mental Health Association FRC, Nyack**

*By Rose Ann Mercado*

It makes such a difference now that we are located inside a school. Not only are the kids who attend the BOCES schools on the BERC (BOCES Educational Resource Center) Campus coming in to enjoy a lollipop and touch base, but teachers, school psychologists and principals are coming into the Center as well. It's so much easier to work together and help parents stay involved in their child's education.

The other day we had a middle school child with serious attendance problems. At a child study meeting we discovered that she would enter the school building if someone met her at the bus and walked her through the front door. I am in a great position to facilitate that. The student knows she can count on me, and she is shedding a lot of anxiety, and getting to school.

Earlier in the year we realized that many of our parents did not understand the alphabet soup of Special Education — IEP, CSE, LD, ED — and they felt unprepared to

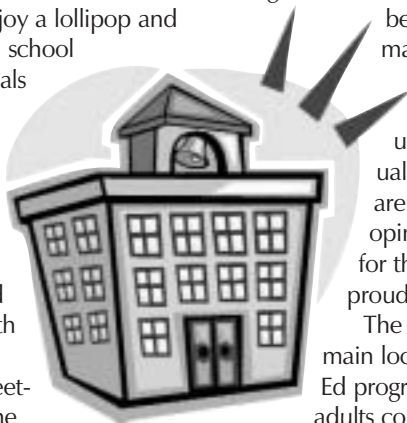
participate in a meaningful way in their child's education. We started a Parent Empowerment Group at the Martin Luther King Center on Saturday mornings. It has been a great success. So many parents in the group are now going into their child's annual reviews understanding their Individualized Education Plan and are actively engaged in developing the best possible plan for the coming year. I am so proud of all of them.

The BERC Campus is also the main location for the BOCES Adult Ed program where hundreds of adults come to learn English and get their GEDs. The FRC can play an important role in helping those parents better understand how to negotiate the educational system on behalf of their children.

As for the Center itself, BOCES provided us with a wonderful space, and I have thoroughly enjoyed giving in to my nesting instincts. It's homey, inviting and calming and everyone seems to feel at ease here. And, when I unpack a few more boxes,

it will be filled with plenty of resources. Just like Network, the assessment approach MHA has become known for, I focus on the strengths first, and then shift to the concerns. The potential here is enormous and we are confident that we can realize it. What do we need? More time, more staff, more priority setting. While there are days I look at my calendar and can't believe I created such a monster day for myself, I also have to pinch myself because I love what I do and feel so lucky to be doing it.

*Rose Ann Mercado works for the Mental Health Association and is the BOCES FRC Coordinator.*



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# Celebrating Collaboration

## Partnerships Bring Over 500 Performances, Residencies & Workshops To Rockland Schools

By Carol Stewart, Ed.D.

From birth, children instinctively use “pretend” as a means of making sense of the world. They interact with peers and arrange space and objects to bring their stories to life. The approach to arts education, as envisioned in the New York State and National Standards, builds on this foundation. The standards call for instruction that integrates all components of the art form. Some educators are referring to comprehensive arts in education programs as being *discipline-based*. Discipline-based means that the education program provides a sequential and cumulative learning continuum that involves students as active learners in a diversity of challenging and evocative experiences that develop the whole person. The ensemble nature of the arts not only enables, but requires, students and the teacher to work collaboratively in various roles to solve intellectual, creative, communicative and evaluative problems.

All children should be given the opportunity to express themselves in the arts. Consider the young person who sees and paints a watercolor, or hears and composes a song. That youngster’s mind is engaged in one of the most important, intense forms of concentration — making something entirely new from one’s own

mind. Rockland BOCES collaborates with school districts, agencies, community organizations and artists to provide educational services to meet the needs of young artistic learners. PTAs, the Helen Hayes Theater Company, the Rockland Historical Society, the Arts Alliance of Haverstraw, and the Arts Council of Rockland are just a few of our partners.

Over 500 performances, residencies and workshops featuring musicians, artists, composers, actors, choreographers, authors, directors and producers are booked into Rockland County schools each year by Rockland BOCES Arts in Education CoSer. The CoSer is a New York State financing mechanism administered by BOCES to support Arts in Education. Many local artists and arts organizations have a chance to work within school settings thanks to CoSer.

To learn more about how to utilize CoSer Arts in Education resources in your school or school district, contact your PTA, building principal, or me (at [cstewart@rboces.lhric.com](mailto:cstewart@rboces.lhric.com) or 845-627-4724).

Carol Stewart is an Administrator at BOCES Instructional Services.

## The Big Apple Circus & A Tent Full of Partners

Generous beyond belief, helpful beyond words, talented beyond measure. That is the collaborative partner we all wish for. Thankfully, our wishes have been answered. The Big Apple Circus will return to the Palisades Center Mall, with the Opening Night performance on June 13 donated to Rockland 21C and 22 of our community partners.

This year, the circus theme is “Big Top Do-Wop,” starring Grandma, the most beloved of the Big Apple Circus clowns. And rumor has it, we all better practice our “Hand Jive.” (For those born after 1960, think Y-M-C-A in a chair). From the time Big Apple Circus opened at Lincoln Center this season, just weeks after September 11, the show has served as the perfect tonic for the unease that has gripped us all. We need their humor this year more than ever! So please join us under the tent on June 13, or at any of their 20 additional Rockland performances.

We are helping Big Apple Circus achieve record-breaking audiences by having discounted performances publicized in schools, supporting a group sales campaign, coordinating a ticket distribution campaign for families who could not otherwise afford to attend (Circus of All®), and by facilitating Beyond the Ring®, a circus arts program during the out-of-school time. Beyond the Ring is underway this year in cooperation with the Clarkstown Family Resource Center Partnership.

The Big Apple Circus is eager to work with individual schools to develop a range of circus arts assemblies and in-class activities which align with NYS Learning Standards and can be financed through Arts in Education CoSer aid. They have also helped us develop *Beyond the Juggling Act* to bring the world of employers, parents and schools closer together. (see article on page 3)

Tickets to most performances are available by calling the Helen Hayes Theater Company (358-6333) or by going to the Big Apple Circus box office in the Palisades Center parking lot opposite Home Depot beginning on June 13. Opening Night and *Beyond the Juggling Act* tickets are available through the 21C office. (627-KIDS or [Yolanda21C@aol.com](mailto:Yolanda21C@aol.com))

Support our collaboration with the Big Apple Circus. Let’s keep it a WIN-WIN proposition!



Child Care  
Resources of Rockland  
Clarkstown FRC Partnership  
Community Action Program  
(CAP)  
Community Playgroup  
Link FRC  
Little Tor FRC  
MHA of Rockland  
Nanuet FRC / Miller  
Nanuet FRC / Highview  
New City FRC  
North Rockland  
School Age Care Program  
Nyack FRC  
Ramapo Community  
Nursery School  
Rockland After School  
Programs (RASP)  
Rockland County Girl Scouts  
Rockland County YMCA  
Rockland  
Parent Child Center  
St. Agatha’s Home  
Stony Point  
Child Care Center  
Strawtown FRC  
Tops for Tots Children’s Center  
West Haverstraw FRC

*Rockland 21st Century Collaborative for Children and Youth is a pioneering countywide partnership with children as our priority. Our mission is to ensure the best possible future for every child by building a comprehensive support system that links family, school and community together.*



## Fred Frelow, Associate Director

*Working Communities, The Rockefeller Foundation*

### **Could you update us on your professional life since you left the Nyack School District?**

In the summer of 1997 I was recruited by Columbia University to direct a national project which focused on increasing the quality of teaching in the U.S. I worked closely with our Director of State Policy on strategies for recruiting, preparing, and rewarding quality teaching. We worked with the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Governors Association, the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, to change U.S. educational policies. In the last five years "teacher quality" has become one of the most accepted education reform policies in the U.S.

### **Since moving to The Rockefeller Foundation in 2000, what have you discovered that may be of interest to our readers?**

Families in Rockland may be interested to know that state and federal policymakers have made a historic commitment to

educate every child. Twenty years ago, only 50 percent of African-American children graduated from high school, an indication that our government was not paying attention to improving the achievement of low income children. This bipartisan commitment is the reason there has been a new charge to measure success.

Census figures revealed a stunning change in U.S. demographics. Not only are there changes in ethnicity, the nature of the family has changed. Many more families are headed by women, many more women are in the workforce, and parents are working many more jobs for longer hours. Thus, the centuries old relationship between schools and families must change. This is why 21C is important. Schools must adapt to families.

### **Why do you think school-based Family Resource Centers work?**

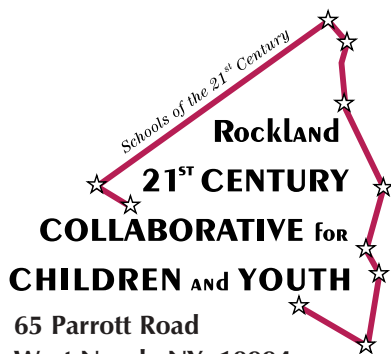
Because they focus on families. Too often the schools only focus on the child, and follow a deficit model when they focus on



the family. Luis Moll, a University of Arizona professor, writes about the "funds of knowledge" in communities and families. Family Resource Centers are the only school-connected institution thinking daily about how to draw these funds of knowledge into the school to benefit children.

### **As a parent of an elementary school child, what advice do you have for parents and teachers about parent involvement in the child's education and development?**

The best advice I could give is try to convince your local school boards to invest in models based on 21C that help build the infrastructures to make parent involvement easier. Teachers and parents are working very hard. Often it is hard to get on the same page. School boards must embrace the concept of a community school. Schools must partner with and respond to all the people in the community. They must make it easier for teachers and parents to work together. Only local policymakers at the highest level can make this easier.



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## EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

- June 13 .....** **Opening Night / Big Apple Circus**  
To benefit Rockland 21C and partners  
Call 627-KIDS for tickets
- June 13 .....** **Beyond the Juggling Act**  
Ellen Galinsky, Families and Work Institute  
Call 627-KIDS to reserve a seat or for more info
- June 23-25 ....** **National Coalition of Community Schools Conference**  
Washington, DC — Rockland 21C panel  
For more info: [www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org)
- July 15-17 .....** **The School of the 21st Century Conference**  
New Haven, CT — see page 5 about Rockland panels  
For more info: [www.yale.edu/21C](http://www.yale.edu/21C)