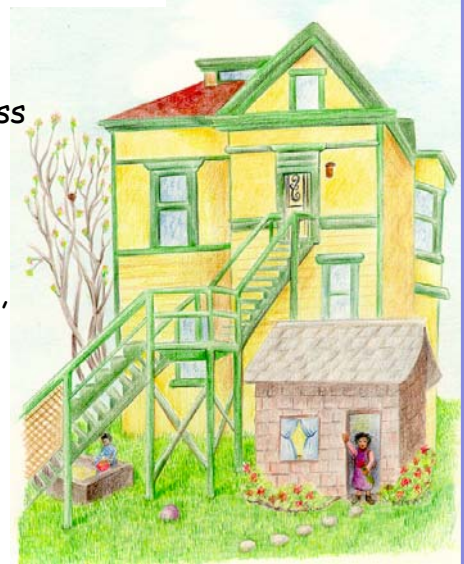




Nourishing and protecting the light within each child



Serving children and families
at risk for reoccurring homelessness
through
Early childhood education,
Infant and Toddler development,
Before and After School program,
Respite care,
Arts programs,
Child development classes,
Family support
and Festival Celebrations



Spring 2008

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Dear Friends,

Recently we were asked to speak at the Claremont Graduate University in Southern California on the topic of leadership and teamwork. Sophia Project is recognized for creating a successful model for meeting the needs of the vulnerable children and families we serve. Now entering our eighth year of service, our children continue to build on the healthy developmental foundation they acquired while attending our early childhood programs, and 100% of the families we work with remain housed and stable. Sophia Project effectively:

- Supports the healing and normal development of young traumatized children through a curriculum of early intervention, early childhood education, before- and after-school care, and weekend respite care all specifically designed to meet these children's specific needs.
- Provides parents, who are struggling with poverty and toxic levels of stress associated with overcoming such adversities as homelessness and domestic violence, with parenting education, no-fee full-time therapeutic care with 24/7 availability as needed, and family support programs crafted to meet the needs of each individual family.
- Helps to revitalize the low-income neighborhood in which it is located. The full-time live-in community of staff and interns collectively maintain two large houses with beautiful gardens, create safe and beautiful home and childcare environments, and are a positive force in the life of the neighborhood.
- Trains young adults through a vigorous program of professional development and service internships.

These four elements weave together to form a strong program. Below we invite you to read several accounts of the work of the Sophia Project written by staff and board members.

All of this rests on your support. Thank you for making so much possible.

With gratitude,

Carol Cole
Executive Director

Christmas Respite Care at the Sophia Project, by Ellie Wood, Sophia Project Board of Advisors

I visited Sophia Project the weekend before Christmas, when respite festivities were in full swing. Stopping first at Myrtle House, I found Carol and David along with a board member and her partner playing with Dorthy, of 18 months, who along with her brothers and sister had spent the previous night at Myrtle House. Dorthy's two brothers, age four and six, along with her sister who was eight, were all at Fairyland with the interns, along with two other children from different families.

The board member and her partner had just delivered four new bicycles. Three of them for a family who had "graduated" and were now living in Hayward. The youngest girl, Allison, had joined the Fairyland outing while her two older brothers had gone with two interns to San José to see the Sharks play hockey. The fourth bike was for the oldest son of a different family returning to Honduras in January. With the bike he would now be able to ride to the local school, making it possible for him to finish high school.

The bikes were beautiful, top of the line, and the best part of all was that David would be delivering them to the Mom's of these children so that they would be able to give them as *their* gift on Christmas Day.

Leaving Dorthy while David watched over her, Carol and I went to Sophia House where some interns and all the rest of the children were playing happily while they waited for a home-made pizza dinner and an evening of tree trimming and cookies the children had made that afternoon. It was a joy to see these children I had known when they were so much younger, now so well, clear and healthy. The two boys, eight and eleven, who had been to their first hockey game, described the action with incredible detail, sparkling eyes and smiles as big as their faces while the younger ones played with contentment and self-possession.

That afternoon, watching them feel so safe and happy, so loved and appreciated, was my Christmas gift. It's a gift that Sophia Project gives to these families every day, and has been giving, for seven years to 92 children and over 30 families.



Impressions of the intern training program: An interview with Christl Bender

Christl joins Sophia Project twice a year for 3 weeks as a valued active coworker bringing over 65 years of Camphill experience.

Christl, what is your overall impression of the Intern Training Program?

I have watched the intern program grow and grow every year. At first people just stayed for one year at a time, and now interns have stayed on for three years. Regardless of what stage they are in, each intern needs a great degree of tutoring and mentoring. I am always amazed how Carol and David find the time and energy to provide the individual and differentiated training. I know from the interns themselves that what is offered here is very professional. There is no other place like the Sophia Project and this is reflected in its unique intern program in which Waldorf curriculum is combined with a very strong attention to the cultural background and individual needs of each child.

What do you think is the biggest impact of this program on the lives of the interns?

If this kind of life doesn't touch and challenge you it will make you "wake up". Occasionally an intern finds the work study too intense and cannot fully participate, but for the many who dig in there, the overall consensus is that what they have seen and what they have learned is tremendously invaluable. They certainly did not realize it before!

And the impact on the lives of the children they work with?

The children would not be where they are without this program. In fact, without such a well-established focus, this would be merely a babysitting job with nothing much going on and the children not really being helped. But here at the Sophia Project it is different. In this case the children are changing and their families are changing.

Christl, any final thoughts?

I wish there were more Sophia Projects around because the way people are welcomed and accepted here is absolutely amazing. This is what people need most nowadays - to be taken in by other human beings who welcome them, embrace them, and offer them an ear and a heart for their needs.





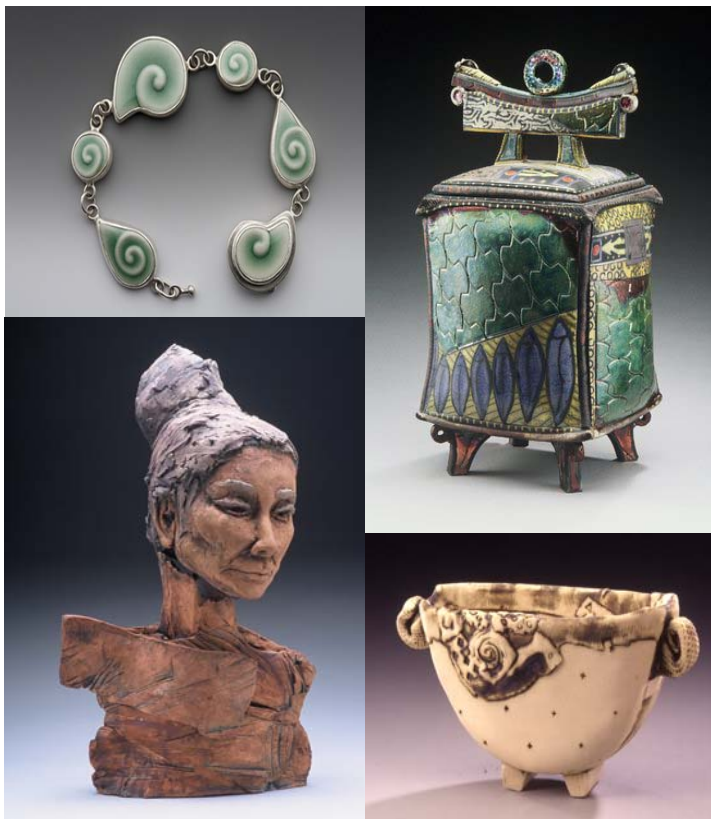
Our garden- an integral part of our curative education by Elizabeth Hussert

As springtime steadily approaches, we can once again appreciate the new life budding in our garden. This new life alludes to the dedication of our Sophia Project gardener, Dolores, former Waldorf teacher and gardener who began to collaborate with the Sophia Project over three years ago. The joint effort of Dolores, the staff interns and the fantastic volunteers (many thanks to Patricia and James Shin) make the two gardens a success beautiful environments for our children and families.

Each staff member and intern dedicates at least 1 hour a week to their assigned plot, which is theirs for an entire year, all four seasons. Additionally, they each meet once a month with Dolores for mentoring and hands-on assistance such as learning how to prune a fruit tree. In this sense our garden here is also educational: it offers the interns a different way to connect to nature, it provides the children with daily outside time and a way to create a better relationship to growing food and being with the natural world, and it beautifies the community and neighborhood we serve.

When recently asked about the meaning of the garden for her, Dolores quickly thought of two words- *connection* and *beauty*. The gardens at the Sophia Project represent a tangible connection to the earth and a chance to create beauty. For Dolores the gardens also represent an opportunity to stop and become more present, which is not necessarily easy in the current frantic pace of our times. When you stop and look at a butterfly you begin to notice how the butterfly is not in a rush. It just is and exists, and inspires us to do the same.

For Dolores it is really special to know that the gardens at the Sophia Project exist. She lives in Oakland and is happier living here because the Sophia Project is here offering a direct service that is dedicated to the children, the care of the children and the family of the children. For Dolores, the garden is important because it represents a unique chance for the children to develop an important and necessary relationship to beauty and nature, through the guidance of their own care givers.



Fine Glass and Ceramics Sale

In conjunction with
The Association of Clay and Glass Artists
of California

Open to the Public
3 May, 2008

Landmark Building A
Fort Mason Conference Center
San Francisco, CA

10am—3pm

Sophia Project Benefit
<http://www.sophiaproject.org>

Sophia Project Part-time Staff Members

Jo Ellen Peterson - Development Director
 Kate Hoppe - Executive Assistant
 Elizabeth Husserl - Grant Writer

2007-2008 Full-time, Live-in Staff & Interns

Martin Alfred - 1st yr. Curative Education Diploma
 Windsong Bergman - Teaching Assistant
 Sarah Deurloo - Teaching Assistant
 Jana Pazourkova - Curative Educator
 Becky Rowland - AmeriCorps Member
 Kristin Service - AmeriCorps Member
 Jenny Ventura - 3rd yr. Waldorf Teacher Trainee
 Tracy Weber - AmeriCorps Member
 Kelley Heneveld - Americorps Member

Pictures by Sharry Wright
 and Ellie Wood

Wishing you many peaceful and joy filled days
 Carol Cole, David Barlow
 and The Board of Sophia Project

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 David Barlow

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*Sophia Project is
 A Camphill Association of North America Affiliate
 &
 A Member of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of
 North America*



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