

# · CHILD'S PLAY ·



Summer 2008

USA-TLA: Promoting Development Through Toys and Play

Vol. XXII, No.4

## LITERACY: WHAT'S PLAY GOT TO DO WITH IT?

### Ohio Conference Bubbles with Opportunities to Learn

**P**ublic librarians, toy librarians and other professionals working with children of all capacities will be welcomed at the Cuyahoga County Public Library, Parma, Ohio, on Friday, October 10, 2008, starting at 8:30 a.m.

The second major conference to be co-hosted by USA-TLA and held in the modern and capacious location will focus on children's literacy through play. Fresh nuances of toy lending in the 21st century will keep attendees enthused.

"We are absolutely thrilled to be hosting this conference," said **Donna Giannantonio**, long-time board member of USA-TLA and employee of the Cuyahoga County library program. Giannantonio was instrumental in the formation and success of its far-reaching toy loan program begun more than a decade ago on the watch of long-running Mayor John Coyne, a great toy-library fan.

"We anticipate a large group of professionals eager to learn or be refreshed in how play and toys contribute to the overall intelligence, health and development of the children we teach and serve," she said. "We know that the networking at coffee breaks and lunch will create professional bonds that serve attendees long after the conference ends. The toy companies that exhibit will showcase new products selected for enduring play value. We are very excited by the wide-ranging and thoughtful agenda."

Some of USA-TLA's most prominent leaders will take the podium during the day – **Rhoda Redleaf**, author, and early childhood educator from St. Paul,

Minn., **Marty Stone**, teacher and special needs specialist from Scarsdale, N.Y., and **Nina Hillery**, infant-toddler specialist, with First Steps, Child Care Connection in Akron. Each will cover her or his area of expertise – Redleaf on reading and recycling, Stone on discerning and dealing with special needs with particular focus on autism, and Hillery, in the keynote spot, delivering new intelligence on literacy and play.

**Celia Huffman**, youth services manager of the public library in Cleveland, will share new and favorite aspects of the expanded program, which has garnered much media attention and a new family of widespread users.

**Gaye Spektka**, program manager of Assistive Technologies of Ohio, will discuss the challenges of choosing adaptive toys for children with disabilities.

The day promises a strong finish from **Susan Linn** from

Harvard Medical School's psychiatry department who will make "The Case for Make-Believe: Saving Play in a Commercialized World."

A raffle of toys will bring the conference to a close on Friday, but tours of select toy libraries in Cleveland will take place throughout the day on Saturday.

Registration for the conference may be made online at <http://usatla.org>, or by using the registration form included in this newsletter.

"We look forward to the participation of many Child's Play readers and TLA members in what promises to be an immensely worthwhile event," noted Giannantonio.





## Cuyahoga County Public Library Expands Toy Loan

**T**hanks to the Internet the Cuyahoga County Public Library is making its collection of takeout toys available countywide. Meant for children from newborn to age 8, the trove ranges from dolls and puzzles to model habitats and teeter-totters.

The toys used to be available only at the library's Brooklyn branch. But a new, nearly identical set of toys went online late last year. Patrons can order them for pickup at any of the library's 28 branches.

Scanning the yellow boxes stacked to the ceiling at the library's headquarters in Parma recently, Youth Supervisor Sue Kirschner said, "I understand this is how it looks in the North Pole. Chaos."

Former Mayor John Coyne launched the Brooklyn collection in 1992 with private money that still supports it.

The countywide cache is funded with \$10,000 from Giant Eagle and \$5,000 from Assistive Technology of Ohio. It duplicates all but Brooklyn's biggest items, such as a six-ft. balance beam.

The combined collections will hold about 2,000 items, counting duplicates and 300 distinct toys.

Patrons praise Brooklyn's wide selection. "I have my kids pick out the toy they want," says parent Angie Harzberger of Cleveland. "They usually want more than we're allowed to take" – four at a time.

The staff seeks toys that are fun and educational, boosting literacy skills such as motor coordination, left-right ordering, and letter recognition. Kirschner prefers classics, from nesting toys to stacking rings.

*(Extracted from The Plain Dealer story by Grant Segall on 12/26/07)*

### Members Take Note!

Enclosed in this issue of Child's Play is a ballot of nominees to the USA Toy Library Association Board of Directors for 2008–2011. Please mark your choices and mail or fax your ballots to USA-TLA headquarters by October 30, 2008. Fax: 847-920-9032; 1326 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, IL 60091. Thank you!



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Child's Play is a publication of the USA Toy Library Association, 1326 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091; 847-920-9030 (phone); 847-920-9032 (fax); usatla.home.comcast.net (website); usatla@aol.com (email). Articles, suggestions and letters are welcome. Edited, designed and produced by Iacuzzi Associates, Inc., 847-920-9020.

## Newest Director of USA-TLA Brings Rich Background in Social Services

**S**andy Richards, director of child care services for New Jersey-based nonprofit Children's Aid and Family Services, is head of the agency's Turrell Child Care & Early Learning Center in Paramus. Richards, someone who understands the priority status of children in this world, is a firm believer in the value of quality playtime starting in the cradle.

"What we do here at Turrell with our children at an early age affects their attitudes and decisions for a lifetime," says the newest director of the USA Toy Library Association Board of Directors.

The 30-year employee of the Turrell Center considers herself lucky.

"I got into a field I truly love very early on in my career and have grown professionally at a place I love." Richards began as an aide for the Turrell Center, which serves towns throughout Bergen County (population 900,000), became a teacher, educational coordinator, assistant director, and most recently director. The Turrell Center boasts 13 classrooms, 40 full-time teachers, a cook, assistant cook, secretary, training coordinator and a number of aides.

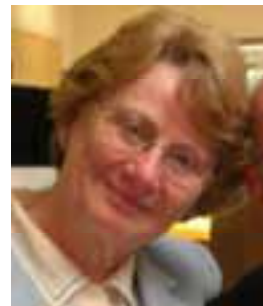
Two hundred forty children make Turrell their home part- or full-time from infancy to age five when

they graduate and move on to the Center's kindergarten, says Richards. About 45 percent come from at-risk families: parents may have limited financial resources or parenting skills, or struggle with other extenuating circumstances that make child-rearing difficult.

"Often we have these children for five years, five days a week, all day," says Richards. "As a result we work with both the child and his or her family to make the situation at home better for all involved."

Gaining parents' involvement is part of the Turrell mission. "We invite parents to spend time in the classroom getting to know the teachers and the curriculum so that they see a new way of life to carry back home – one that includes priorities of nutrition, cleanliness, a positive attitude and new parenting skills that include play and playtime.

"Our families come from all over the world – South America, the Far East, Middle East, Africa, Europe and the U.S., and a combination thereof. The diversity is significant because our children learn early on that differences in appearance mean far less than many internal similarities – such as how we feel and think and act. Our children are prepared to get along with all different kinds of people when they leave our place." She adds, "This we consider a valuable life skill."



*USA-TLA President Jim Rancilio received a State Resolution naming him the 2007 Michigan Librarian of the Year from Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm. Congratulations to our star from all the USA-TLA membership!*

## Elaine Adler Toy Library: New Development

**T**hree years ago another TLA director, Elaine Adler, became a new kind of benefactor of Turrell by opening a toy library at the Center.

"Elaine gives her support to the toy library every year, and it keeps growing – with more toys and more children enjoying them," says Richards. About 150 families use the library, taking away one toy per family for a one-week loan. The toyrarian welcomes each child, often helping with the selection and checkout and encouraging the young borrower to take special care with the toy so others will be able to play with it later. "It's a very successful program and a wonderful addition to our child care program," Richards notes.



### Try It You'll Like It! Filo-Design with Laces

By USA-TLA Director Leslie Eslinger

It's only right for a toy made in Italy to have an Italian name. Hence, "Filo" which means "thread" in Italian. The subtitle, "Design with Laces," is an accurate description of the activity. Simply put, you draw designs with laces, undo them, and start again. This product is the new version of a sewing or lacing card. It addresses many of the frustrations that are inherent with traditional lacing activities. Sometimes the tips of the laces are not sturdy enough for a child to grasp comfortably. More often than not, instead of going in and out of each hole, the child wraps around the card and ends up with a tangled mess. For parents and teachers, it's no fun trying to retrace the tangles so the lacing card ends up back on the shelf with tangles intact!



Filo is designed to reduce frustration and enhance enjoyment. The set includes a lacing pen that is long and sturdy enough for a child to grasp easily. The child "punches" the pen into the soft plastic grid plate, which "magically" holds the string, and stitches are made instantly. No need to go all the way through the card and start the dreaded wrapping problem. The child can make a free-form design or use the template cards to copy a design. This activity is good for developing dexterity, fine motor control, and hand muscle development.

An added bonus – the set is all nicely self-contained in a case with a handle. It includes the lacing board, four lacing pens, four brightly colored laces, 18 template cards, and a booklet with more design examples. So try it, you'll like it!

*Leslie Eslinger is the Education and Product Development Specialist for Becker's School Supplies.*

*Filo – Design with Laces (QA0570) retails for \$20.99 in the 2008 Becker School Supply catalog, [www.shopbecker.com](http://www.shopbecker.com). 1-800-523-1490.*

### Lights, Action, Fun with The Crayola Video Camera New Crayola Video Camera Includes APTE's Kid-Friendly Editing Software

Put the magic of movies in every child's hands! Whether you are a five or 50 you'll delight in making your own videos. It's easy with Crayola's digital video camera and APTE's Video Genie software. Plus, Video Genie software lets you export videos to your iPod, the web or e-mail.

Crayola's digital video camera has rubberized parts for easy handling, a 1.5-in. color preview swivel screen, a built-in microphone for recording audio, and an expandable SD slot. The camera is PC and Mac-compatible. With the Video Genie software, young users can make movies in just seconds. Video Genie walks him or her step-by-step through the editing process. Pre-school children will soon be movie stars and directors in their own productions.

To develop the Crayola digital video camera and software, three committed companies put their experience and expertise to work. Crayola, the world's leader in children's creative products, contributed its unique style and images. APTE, a premier education publisher, developed the video editing software. Sakar, a leading distributor of electronic products, coordinated the efforts of all three companies to bring the product to market. Together, Crayola, APTE, and Sakar have created a digital video camera with great fun and learning value for children of all ages.

APTE is an education publisher of multimedia products for home and school markets worldwide. For more product information on the Crayola video camera contact APTE at 800-494-1112 or visit the APTE web site at [www.apte.com](http://www.apte.com)

# Kent State's "Toys in a Library" Workshop Plays Beautifully Again

For the past six years Kent State's School of Library and Information Science (SLIS), the Department of Continuing Studies and USA-TLA Director Nina Hillery as lead teacher have offered the two-day workshop "Toys in a Library? Toys, Play and the Literacy Connection." In July participants in this one-credit graduate workshop examined how play and the use of toys play a vital role in the development of pre-reading and pre-writing skills for infants, toddlers and pre-school children.

According to Hillery, infant-toddler specialist with First Steps, Child Care Connection in Akron and who will keynote USA-TLA's conference in Ohio in October, the objectives of the first day of the workshop include:

- Identifying what early skills are needed for learning to read and write
- Examining early childhood developmental stages as they relate to playing with toys and what skills are acquired
- Examining ways to adapt play materials and activities to include children with disabilities

Objectives on day two include:

- To examine the use of toys in a library setting

- To identify community partners and resources
- To identify appropriate criteria for choosing toys
- To examine other toy library operations in the US and the world

But, says Hillery, the overriding objective is to have fun!

As in the past, participants had the opportunity to visit the Brooklyn Branch Toy Library of the Cuyahoga County Public Library (CCPL) in Ohio. This year offered the special activity of a virtual tour of CCPL's expanded toy loan that now radiates throughout the county's library system.

"Anna Heinz, youth literacy and outreach librarian, took participants through the awesome tasks of requesting, filling orders, transporting, delivering and retrieving thousands of toys," noted Hillery. Statements from excited patrons about the system-wide toy loan were shared as well as CCPL's philosophy of the play literacy connection.

"The expansion of the toy loan program shows the commitment of CCPL in providing access to materials to parents, students, teachers and children that foster literacy growth," said Hillery.



## Literacy: What's Play Got To Do With It?

### REGISTRATION FORM

Mail Deadline: October 8, 2008

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Program \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### ACCOMMODATIONS

Make your reservations near the conference and airport: Hilton Garden Inn Cleveland Airport  
4900 Emerald Court S.W., Cleveland, OH 44135  
Tel: 216-898-1898, Fax: 216-898-1498  
www.hiltongardeninn.com

\$89.00/pp plus tax. Free shuttle service to/from the airport. "Step Up To Quality" credit to be given pending approval, expected 9/15/08. Call or email to confirm.

### FEES

Adult professional (pre-registered)	\$40.00
Adult professional (at the door)	\$50.00
Student (pre-registered with valid ID)	\$20.00
Student (at the door with valid ID) *	\$25.00
Amount submitted : \$ _____	Check No. _____

\* A few scholarships are available.

Make checks payable to the USA Toy Library Association and mail to: Donna Giannantonio, 30942 Windy Hollow Lane, North Olmsted, OH 44070

Registration deadline is October 8, 2008. Don't delay, sign up today!

Questions? Contact Judy Iacuzzi, Executive Director, USATLA at 847-920-9030 or jqi@comcast.net; or, Donna Giannantonio at 440-777-8175 or 216-849-1249 (mobile) or giannantonio@cuyahogalibrary.org.

Please check all the populations which your program serves:

- infant/toddler     special needs     low-income  
 pre-school     school-age     multi-lingual  
 other \_\_\_\_\_

### TOY-LENDING TRENDS WORLDWIDE

Here's lately what we've found inspirational in strategic publications and the worldwide web.

#### ... 5th International Toy Research Association (ITRA) World Congress Takes Global Look at Toys, Play and Culture

This summit of 100 participants who met in Nafplion, Greece, in July 2008 looked at gritty issues like:

- *the complex relationship between media, toys and children;*
- *differences in cultural perspectives to technology and the developing child;*
- *toy design as seen from varying cultures, such as Hong Kong, India, China, and European nations; and*
- *the continuing creative value of traditional toys for*

*all kinds of folks, including special needs and elderly*

For more information and photographs, check [www.sanatomyplay.org](http://www.sanatomyplay.org).

#### ...ITRA and British Toy and Hobby Association (BTHA) Award Prizes

An American professor, Jananne Phillips, and a student in London, Hyun-Jung Oh, have earned financial rewards for their outstanding toy research, it was announced this summer at the ITRA. The prizes given by the ITRA and the BTHA together will be given at the ITRA Congress, which occurs every three years. An award of £500 is given for the best student research on toys, and an award of £1,000 to a senior scholar or practitioner on the uses, design and effects of toys. Included in the gift is a travel stipend of 500 pounds toward the ITRA Congress with the expectation that there recipients will present their findings.

#### Professor Phillips Tackles Family Development and Toys, Earns Prize

Little did University of Southern Maine Lewiston-Auburn College professor Jan Phillips know that a trip to the local supermarket with her then-12-year-old son would lead to her being named the first recipient of an international award for outstanding research on the uses, design and effects of toys. The International Toy Research Association (ITRA), in conjunction with the British Toy and Hobby Association (BTHA), named Phillips the first recipient of the ITRA – BTHA Prize for Outstanding Toy Research. Phillips, an associate dean and faculty member in social and behavioral sciences at USM's Lewiston-Auburn College, was invited to attend the recent 5th World Congress of the International Toy Research Association in Nafplion, Greece, to accept the award and present a talk on her research. The Congress attracted scholars and students, as well as representatives of toy manufacturers, museums and folklore organizations from 20 countries.

The basic premise of Phillips' research is that how we buy, give, receive, use and even dispose of toys says a lot about how we celebrate, define, manipulate, and idealize family relationships. Those same consumer behaviors also help create generational dynamics and define race, class and gender roles.

Phillips first seriously considered the role of consumerism in the development of family life after a "frustrated engagement" with her son over how many different cookies to buy in an aisle of the local supermarket. Her son explained that he had to have the right cookies to trade in the school cafeteria because the kids he wanted to sit with expected those brands.

As she explained in her journal article, "Attention, Shoppers – Family Being Constructed on Aisle Six!": Grocery Shopping and the Accomplishment of Family," she initially

used the episode to teach about consumption and children's peer identity issues. Later, however, she saw the "seemingly small moment" in aisle six as an opportunity to address such issues as what a family does and does not value, and to teach and learn more about sharing.

From there, Phillips extended her research interest to focus on family behaviors surrounding the consumption of toys. More than six years of research is explained in her article, "Accomplishing Family through Toy Consumption," which was published in the 2007 edition of the journal *Children, Media and Consumption*. She was asked to present an abbreviated version of that scholarly article at the 5th World Congress of the International Toy Research Association.

Her toy research focuses on a qualitative analysis of 141 student writing projects dating back to 2001. Specifically, Phillips asked students to identify their favorite toy, how they acquired it, what it permitted them to do or do better, and to comment on the role toys play in social life.

These toy odes, as Phillips refers to them, show how toys give children a sense of control, comfort, or an outlet for empowerment. They also show how toys define family relationships and a sense of identity, as in the young girl who, after doing much cajoling, received a truck as a gift and, as a result, felt more comfortable interacting in her predominantly male family and childhood environment.

As Phillips told her audience in Greece, "All these practices suggest, in the end, a very different approach to the study of family – as something recurring yet dynamic that gets created, challenged and transformed not in a millennium but in minute moments every day."

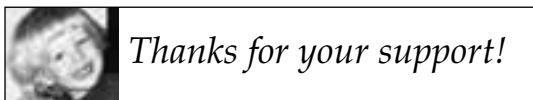
For more information on the International Toy Research Association, visit [www.toyresearch.org](http://www.toyresearch.org). For more information on the British Toy and Hobby Association visit [www.btha.co.uk](http://www.btha.co.uk).

# Toy Library Resources



## Resource Order Form

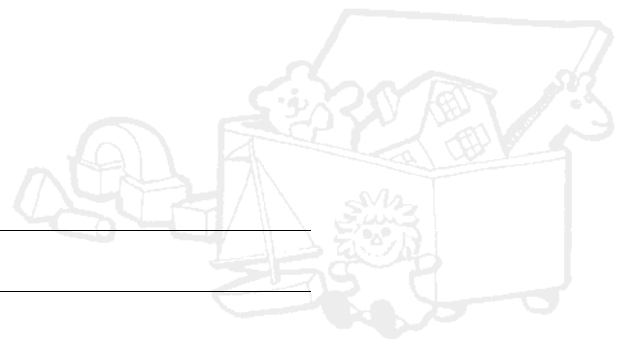
Quantity		Member	Non-member
	<b>Child's Play Newsletter</b> (One-Year Subscription) Included with Membership. An 8-page periodical full of news and information about toy libraries and related topics.		
	<b>USA Toy Library Association Operator's Manual</b> Everything you need to know about setting up and operating a toy library.	\$12.50	\$25.00
	<b>Read It! Play It!</b> by Joanne and Stephanie Oppenheim An illustrated, 112-page book of fun activities that build literacy through reading and playing. <b>Now in English and Spanish!</b>	\$12.50	\$25.00
	<b>Learn and Play the Green Way</b> by Rhoda Redleaf and Audrey Robertson An illustrated, 200-page book loaded with suggestions for homemade toys that teach.	\$18.00	\$36.00
	<b>Theme Kits Made Easy</b> by Leslie Silk Eslinger 161-page book of clever ideas based on "teaching themes" (fairy tales, animals, city life, etc.) packaged as "kits." A great teaching tool for providers, parents and teachers.	\$20.00	\$40.00
	<b>The Oppenheim Toy Portfolio</b> by Joanne and Stephanie Oppenheim "The Best Toys, Books, DVDs & Music for Kids"	\$12.50	\$25.00
	<b>The Power of Play</b> A discussion about early childhood education with Dr. Michael K. Meyerhoff, The Epicenter Inc.	\$5.00	\$10.00



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 1326 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091  
 Phone (847)920-9030  
 Fax (847)920-9032  
<http://usatla.org>



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Email \_\_\_\_\_

Member  
 Non-member

*USA-TLA: Promoting Development Through Toys and Play*



**USA Toy Library Association**  
1326 Wilmette Avenue  
Wilmette, IL 60091

## **SAVE THE DATE!**

**USA-TLA & Turrell Child Care  
Center Conference**

**"POWER OF PLAY"**

**Saturday, May 2, 2009**

**8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

**Paramus, N.J.**

**Watch for details at <http://usatla.org>**

### **... Highlights of International Toy Library Conference - Toy Libraries Bringing Toys and Games to Life" in Paris, Oct. 13-17, 2008**

The 11th ITLC, to be held at the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie de la Villette, will focus on the following questions:

- *What connection exists between toy libraries and more contemporary toys and games*
- *What is the relationship with playthings made in the community and by children?*
- *How are activities based on the objects?*
- *Do children use toys and games in a specific way that is different at the toy library to that in other places?*
- *What is at stake for the organization of the facilities, the toy librarians' training? For more information or to register visit [www.alfludotheques.org](http://www.alfludotheques.org).*

*If you've already received a copy of Child's Play, please pass this along to a friend or colleague. Thank you.*