

# NEWS

The Evergreen State College

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Charlotte Beyers spends most of her workdays romping with little Buffaloes at the Olympia Child Care Center; Michael Karp offers hours of patience toward helping an autistic three-year-old; Janet Kramer struggles daily with the Vietnamese language; while Pamela Bowe plows through more than ten children's books a day.

The four are all involved in child care in Thurston County. They're among 28 students from The Evergreen State College enrolled in the "Caring for Children" academic program. And, they're caring for preschoolers at more than a dozen day care centers in Olympia, offering a variety of programs and facilities that give them a unique and useful perception of what their instructors call "reality day care."

Charlotte Beyers, for example, has spent the past four years working as a teacher at the Olympia Day Care Center, which offers a home-away-from-home for 65 youngsters between two and six years of age who are there up to 10 hours a day. All of the children have working parents and many come from low income homes.

Charlotte says she enrolled in the Evergreen program "to get the background I need." With two of her three children raised, Charlotte says she always wanted to go back to college. "And this program is ideal --- it gives me the chance to continue working with children, which I love to do, and to go to school, too."

She spends four to five hours a day with her little Buffaloes (four and five year olds), then studies and seminars with the other 27 students once a week. In addition, she maintains frequent contact with her two professors, Dr. Carol Spence, who earned her doctorate in child development from the University of Washington, and Betsy Diffendal, whose educational

Dick Nichols, Director  
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background in cultural anthropology has been applied to studies of young children in her work as a consultant for the federal Office of Child Development in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Michael Karp sees a different side of Thurston County day care than Charlotte. He works as a teacher aide in the federally-funded PEPSI (Parent Education Pre School Intervention) program, based at John Rogers School. As a part of Michael's daily responsibilities, he spends 30 minutes working individually with a three-year-old autistic youngster who avoids all communication with the outside world.

The goal of the PEPSI program, Michael says, is to give handicapped youngsters a headstart, and children like three-year-old Marlene require a persistent and extremely patient effort. "Her progress has to be measured very, very gradually," he says. "At first, I'd only ask her to accomplish two very simple tasks in the half hour I worked with her. And then she'd cry most of the time. It was very draining on both of us."

Now, Michael says, she can handle up to six tasks in a given half hour without much crying. Michael has been involved in education for emotionally disturbed children for several years and has already applied to graduate school in special education at the University of Washington. He hopes to eventually establish his own treatment center for youngsters like Marlene.

The other male student in the Caring for Children program, Jim Chupa, also brings several years of working with youngsters to Evergreen. Assistant Director of the college's Driftwood Day Care Center, Jim says he's "trying to add theory to what I feel I know intuitively about children." He's seeking a "firm grasp on the development of children" to add to his three years of work in an open concept preschool in Idaho. Then he wants to put it all together to develop a "sensible preschool curriculum --- one that is based on the realities of a child's world."

Those realities are something Marlene McPhail knew all about before she enrolled. Marlene founded Dell's Day Care Center in Centralia seven years ago with seven children. After investing more than \$40,000 in a 3300-square foot facility specifically designed to be a "funland for little people," Marlene felt she needed more education.

"One of my goals in life was to go to college," she says. So, she took general courses at Centralia College for two years, then heard about the Evergreen program. "When I enrolled last Fall I had my own theories based on practical experience," she recalls. "Now I've found that my concepts and feelings are right."

Before entering the Child Care study program Fall Quarter, Marlene authored a 40-page paper on the work she did developing her highly successful day care program. That paper, she says, has been a high point in her experience at Evergreen. "I didn't know how much I knew about child care until I had to write it all down," she says. "The paper earned her 12 units of Evergreen credit (equivalent to one full year of course work) through the External Credit Office and, she says, "it also gave me a great deal of self worth."

Marlene is also gaining a lot from her book work, most of which is individually geared to her needs. "I've adjusted the ways I handle discipline," she says. "I now use the eyeball-to-eyeball approach with a firm grasp on young shoulders," she smiles. And, she says, "I've given up being a martyr."

The attractive mother of three used to work 12 hours a day at her center "and I wanted everyone to know it." She still begins her day at 6:30 a.m. when the first children arrive, but she delegates a lot of the bookkeeping, cooking and other routine tasks to her crew of five teachers and four student volunteers from Centralia High School, who earn academic credit working for her.

"I realized I couldn't do everything and I learned how to delegate responsibility," she says. "It's all a part of growth and maturity." She says she's also learned the terminology of day care --- "I can now label the concepts I've been applying all these years." She's gained what she calls "an increased sense of professionalism" and a new pride in her accomplishments.

Marlene will be 39 when she graduates from Evergreen in June and she says she's "going to wear a big medal around my neck," when she gets her long-coveted bachelor's degree.

Janet Kramer has a different goal. She wants to break a language barrier --- and do it in a hurry.

Janet is one of three Evergreen students establishing a pre

Janet is one of three Evergreen students establishing a preschool program to teach English to Vietnamese youngsters while their mothers receive English instruction.

Janet, Becky Outten and Debi Manning divide their time between St. Michael's Convent and the Evergreen Village where they operate their three-hour per day Vietnamese program "pretty much on their own." With help from Headstart and their Evergreen professors, the students have devised a number of activities designed to break that language barrier.

One day recently the youngsters were cutting out huge sheets of paper and whipping soap flakes into a batter they could mix with paint. Each step of the way, they learned the English names for the tools they were wielding --- an egg beater, a paint stick, scissors, etc

The children are "so gentle," Janet says, but she empathizes with the frustration they must feel about some of the activities. "Because of the language barrier, we have to deal with them at a lot lower level than they are capable of," she says. "They could do so many more things if we knew how to speak their language."

Children at the State Capitol Museum are learning a lot about their environment and the physical world thanks to the efforts of Pam Farr, a Kirkland senior, who is teaching a preschool science program at the museum one day a week. She previously interned at the Pacific Science Center in Seattle where she helped develop science curricula for elementary school youngsters. She has been adapting that curricula to preschoolers and, she says, she "likes doing it because the kids like doing it." She says what she's learning in the program --- specifically about child development --- helps her design curricula that fit the children's stage of development.

Pamela Bowe also works at the Capitol Museum with preschoolers --- offering them art instruction one day a week. When she's not there, she's either working at the Olympia branch of the Timberland Library doing research on children's literature or reading ten books a day to increase her awareness of what's available for children in that age group.

She spent the past three years working in elementary school reading programs and got excited about developing similar programs for younger children. When she's completed her research, she'll publish a bibliography of children's literature and then, Spring Quarter,

will travel to day care centers throughout the Olympia area offering books and her services as sort of a "personalized bookmobile."

As she travels to those centers, Pamela will find a diversity of techniques and approaches to child care. She'll probably also find more Evergreeners. As Nancy Thomas, head of the Olympia Day Care Center, observes, "without Evergreen interns, many of the programs in our area just couldn't function. They provide the additional staff and expertise we can't afford to pay for."

In addition to the Centers mentioned earlier, Evergreeners enrolled in this one academic program are interning at Olympia Headstart, Children's Friend Preschool, Westside Cooperative, Sunshine and Holly Nurseries, St. Martin's Preschool, parent cooperative centers in Lakewood and Shelton, and the East County Child Development Program in Elma.

Each of them is developing what Dr. Spence calls a "competency for working with children." The Evergreen program emphasizes the importance of developing abilities to work with children, in addition to academic understanding of the theories behind child development.

"Their practical experience in the day care centers spurs their interest in learning more about child development," say Dr. Spence and Ms. Diffendal.

Many of the Evergreen students will continue working in child care; several intend to earn the new nationally recognized Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, which is not a 'license to teach,' but an indication of competency.

By the end of Spring Quarter, that competency will have been developed in three quarters of daily contact with children --- and it will have enriched preschool programs and the lives of countless youngsters in Thurston County.