

# the Meadow Lark

informs the mind and tickles the heart

Spring 2009

## What CFI Means to the Rohlen Family

written by Kendall Rohlen



Before our family landed at CFI, we were living in Boston and the only program available to families with young children there was Gymboree. When we moved to Menlo Park, I was thrilled to find the Child and Family Institute: a place for moms to spend quiet time playing with their child that offered a variety of activities-play dough, painting, sand table, trucks, dolls, puppets-even Montessori style activities, puzzles and outdoor time.

The room was always warm and the familiar smell of coffee brewing in the Hearth welcomed us each week as my 18 month old and I bounded in with smiles on our faces. We met other moms, learned the "I Wiggle My Fingers" and "It's Time To Say A Little Goodbye" songs and fell head over heels in love with CFI and its teachers.

Before long, I had a newborn in tow, sleeping in the corner in a car seat while I played with my two year old. "The Meadow," as we called it, stood for that special mommy and me time together that was particularly important for us now after a new sibling had come along.

As our family evolved, so did our relationship with CFI, and soon we had multiple kids in various programs-mornings, afternoons, teas, Faith-full families, camps and now for me Heart Voices. When we were in the 0-2 year old phase, the programs were appropriately "mommy and me" and the focus was sharing, kindness, acceptance and working together. As we moved into 3-4 years of age, there was more interaction with peers, building of community amongst

mothers and shift of focus to a larger world. The 5-10 year old emphasis has built upon the "mom and me and community: focus of the first 5 years, and added a spiritual and giving to others component. Our family has adopted the familiar traditions of lighting a small candle, opening up our heart doors and breathing in peace and sending it out to the world.

We are eager to experience

what the years ahead may bring at CFI. The irony of our experience at the Child and Family Institute is that it started out as a Gymboree alternative "with great play dough." But, over the years, the many programs have gently shaped our family, enforced our values, and taught us to be better people. It has been a place for growth for us as parents as well as for our children; a place to turn to for support; and a place of immense depth and offering for our family. We are forever grateful. ...and to think it all happened while we thought we were "playing."

Here are a couple quotes from our children on their experiences at CFI:

**Luke, 4 years old:** "I love teacher Kris. She pushes me on the tire swing and yells, "Blast off!" She is so much fun!"

**Thomas, 7 years:** "I love The Meadow because they have great snacks, and when we went there (for afternoons) the moms always made us a surprise to take home."

**Harrison, 4 years:** "I love it because our whole family goes... even Charlotte!"

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### Quotes from Josetta Walsh

"In my heart may heaven and earth unite."

"In everyday living the sacred dwells"

"I believe in the basic beauty,  
goodness and truth of every child"

"Today I open myself to create heaven  
on earth. Come Play With Me!"

# calendar

## MAY 2009

- May 8 Dads and Kids (ages 4-8)  
Make Mothers Day gifts  
6:30-8:30 p.m.
- May 9 Spring From The Heart Family Day  
4:30-7:30 p.m.
- May 18-22 Last Week of Classes
- May 20 Board Meeting - 7-9 p.m.

## JUNE 2009

- June 23 Meadow Camp Week 1 begins  
9-11:30 p.m.
- June 30 Meadow Camp Week 2 begins  
9-11:30 p.m.

## JULY 2009

- July 7 Meadow Camp Week 3 begins
- July 14 Meadow Camp Week 4 begins
- July 21 Meadow Camp Week 5 begins

## SEPTEMBER 2009

- September 9 Wednesday/Friday  
Toddler Orientation - 9:30-10:30 a.m.
- September 10 Tuesday/Thursday  
Toddler Orientation - 9:30-10:30 a.m.
- September 15 Toddlers begin  
Afternoon in the Meadow begins
- September 16 Afternoon in the Meadow begins



## Make a Daily Peace Pilgrimage with your Family Using CFI's Tabletop World Peace Village

The Tabletop World Peace Village provides a variety of peace activities. The Village is made up of the Houses of Worship for Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Islam, Judaism and Native Americans.

### As a Family:

» Make a daily peace pilgrimage by moving the candle around the Village. Read the peace prayer of a faith tradition in the booklet and send peace to all people.

- » Learn about each faith tradition in the booklet.
- » Read the Golden Rule in the booklet as expressed by each tradition. Talk about how we can live out the Golden Rule in our homes and schools.
- » Renew your family's commitment to make every step of life a prayer or peace.

**Thursday, April 23rd**

9:30 - 11:00am at CFI  
New Member Coffee and Tea

## MEADOW MAKERS Final Meetings

All are invited to come and learn more about Meadow Makers and our role at CFI. Bring a friend!

**Thursday, May 21st**

9:30 - 11:00am at CFI

Summer fun talk, announcement of the new Co-president for 2009/10, and finish our year with a prayer by Kris.

Happy Spring,  
Marion Suarez and Maile Creamer, Meadow Maker Co-Presidents

Stop by the CFI office to pick up your own family Tabletop Peace Village ... Cost is \$25. Kit includes Tabletop Village, candle, and booklet. This is a **GREAT** gift for classroom teachers or for the person who has everything!



## MELISSA'S RECIPE FOR SUMMER FUN!

Written by CFI Teacher, Melissa Frank

The hard part of summer for most parents finding balance between lounging play and more structured play. But summer should be all about play and summertime is for fun! Here are some of teacher Melissa's favorite thoughts on how to have a great summer with your kids:

If possible schedule one or two one-week camps or classes thrown into the mix. Have a set day of the week when your family goes to the pool or beach. If you have a pool set a day of the week and have friends come over-example: every Thurs. is pool day, open hours are 10 to 1. You might want to establish who you invite as an ongoing play group so the numbers don't get too big.

Spend some time with your kids making a LONG list of possible things to do. Pick a day for field-trips or activities. Some children may miss out when it is their turn to go to camp. Add items to the list YOU like as well and delete a few items that would truly make you crazy- but really let them have their trip to the "Sugar Shack," just limit the budget, then cross it off. Whenever possible, stay home!!! Play with water in any form in your back yard.



IDEAS FOR FIELD-TRIPS, PACK A PICNIC AND GO TO:

### Museums:

- » Cantor Art Museum, Stanford,
  - » Hiller Aviation Museum, San Carlos,
  - » Coyote Point Museum, San Mateo
  - » Palo Alto Jr. Museum. etc.
- Bike or Scooter Rides:** around your local school, Sawyer Camp Rd, Canada Rd. on Sundays is closed to cars, Stanford Campus, Coastside paved trail in Half Moon Bay.
- Train and Carousel Rides:**
- » Tilden Park, Oakland, (510) 525-2233
  - » Oakland Zoo, (510) 632-9523
  - » San Francisco Zoo, (415) 753-7080

» Billy Jones Wildcat Railroad & Carousel, Los Gatos, (408) 396-RIDE

### Farms:

- » Hidden Villa, Los Altos
- » Phipps Ranch, Pescadero: Pick your own berries, check out their store too!
- » Ardenwood Farms, Fremont
- » Go bird watching at Bay Lands. How many different ducks can you see?
- » Give quarters to each child who is "talking age." Ask them who they would like to call. Write down names and phone numbers and then set out to find a pay phone. See what happens!

### Parks and Concerts:

- » Free concerts are at Stanford Shopping Center and Menlo Park, etc. Make a picnic or pick up a pizza and bring drinks and a blanket and enjoy an evening out of your kitchen.
- » Visit a new park, Barclay Fields is at Farm Hill & 280, Windy Hill, at Willowbrook & Portola Rd. has shade and is great for playing in the creek, just watch out for poison oak!
- » When you get into the car you can always make the ride interesting by making it a "theme" day. Look for shapes, numbers, or particular letters

### Eating Activities on the Patio:

- » Make lemonade or sun-tea or mix together for a ½ and ½!
- » Make a fruit salad, give each child some fruit to cut up and toss in the bowl.
- » Shelling peas
- » Peeling hard boiled eggs
- » Cut up a watermelon and have a seed spitting contest
- » Eat ice cream cones, watermelon, popsicles outside and then get hosed off or jump in the pool.
- » Make fruit smoothies, let kids pick and cut up the fruit
- » Freeze juice in ice cube trays or juice -pops, put a gummy worm in each one
- » Plant strawberries or green beans and let kids snack on them -- anytime.
- » Shuck corn and try some uncooked
- » Go to a farmers market. Ask each child to pick one or two things for dinner, make it and add cottage cheese if it is all fruit!

### Most Important!!

Get a babysitter once or twice a week for the afternoon so you get to have some adult time too!!

## 3RD ANNUAL CFI VINTNER'S NIGHT

February 7, 2009

What an amazing night we all had at our 3rd annual Vintners Night! The wines were delicious, the food was fantastic and the Hagey's home was a perfect setting! Thank you to all who contributed in making the night a success. Special thanks to Nancy Evars and Stephanie Rudd for all of their hard work as Co-chairs.



Nancy Evars, Sharon Purcell, Ashley Honerkamp, Stephanie Rudd, and Meadow Maker Co-Presidents Marion Suarez and Maile Creamer



Nancy Evans, Vintners Night Co-chair, Shirley Hagey, host, and Stephanie Rudd, Vintners Night Co-chair

## Empty Suitcases and Happy Hearts

Written by Melissa Kraus

Have you ever reached the point in your wonderful vacation, usually the day you are packing to go home, when you sigh and wish you didn't have to repack your children's suitcases?

I certainly have, and my response was to NOT repack those suitcases. Instead, I've used the occasion as an opportunity to donate literally everything in my children's suitcases to local causes. Twice in Fiji, where the temperatures are tropical year-round, I've donated my children's summer/vacation clothes (which they would quickly grow out of anyway) to the local village. I did this by asking some friendly childcare staff at the hotel if they could help. They were thrilled to assist. I asked if they knew anyone in their local village who might benefit from clothes and they assured me they could get it to those in most need in the village.

On a return trip to Fiji, I purposefully loaded up my suitcases with inflatable soccer balls, books and old kids shoes and visited the village myself. The staff was thrilled, we were able to help locally and I went home with empty suitcases. Similarly, in Mexico, I had lots of great kids summer clothes that I wanted to donate, recognizing that my children would outgrow them before the next summer and wanting to help locally. I asked the concierge how this might be possible. He quietly informed me that there had been a recent local flood and the staff at the hotel was collecting donations from the staff itself, but wasn't allowed to ask the guests. He was grateful and excited when I showed up with two huge bags of children's clothes that could go to the local flood victims and could be worn year-round in the local climate.

So, the next time you are cursing having to re-pack your kiddos suitcases on vacation, find a local way not to and go home with empty suitcases and a happy heart!