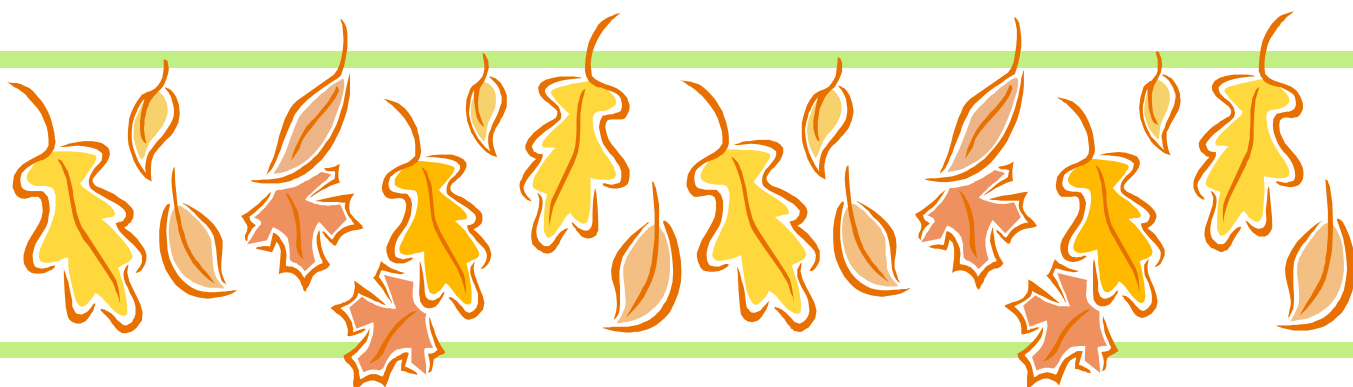




## the co-op **communiqué**

September/October 2007



### President's Letter

#### **Maga Sanchez-Dahl**

This September will be the first time in seven years that I spend weekday mornings without any children in my house. This school year they will attend first grade, kindergarten, and my little one will be in day care for three hours every morning.

I have mixed feelings whenever I think about this subject, from freedom, independence, and peace of mind, to uncertainty, loneliness and confusion.

With regards to the first three, I can't even imagine that I will have three full hours to concentrate on a project. I will come and go as I please without having to worry about snacks and naps and things like that. At the same time I know that my children will be in a safe environment and be just fine.

However, the last three feelings are a little bit more complicated for me. I feel that I will need to relearn to

be with myself and take time to know who I am now as a mother of three and as an independent woman.

Shortly after I became a mother, it was easy for me to get into a routine and know what to expect in terms of meals, play, and nap times. In a way, things started becoming familiar, and I knew what would happen after breakfast or after bath time. Now, uncertainty will come into play as I need to create a whole new routine for myself.

As much as I have complained about not having time for myself, it is another world for me to know that in the mornings I'll be on my own. It is up to me to make the best of this time. Living in a city where I still do not feel deeply rooted and without extended family around, I can't help to feel quite lonely when I am not around the kids.

A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to travel on my own for five days. I found that it took me two full days to realize that I didn't need to take care of anybody

else but me. Confusion was all over me. I found myself looking in three different directions at the same time, just like I do when I am with my three kids. My mind kept running through my usual daily tasks. It was a big realization for me to notice how my body was ready to keep going, even if there was no need for it.

I know that my path is to start awakening my professional side, but I have it very clear that it has to be a gradual process. Interestingly enough, as I am celebrating my future three hours of freedom, my neighbor just shared with me about her deep sadness as her oldest son just left for college yesterday. Have a happy autumn.

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### **Trials of Motherhood**

At one time or another, we've all tossed our car keys in the trash and approached the car holding out a plastic bag full of used Kleenex. (That has happened to you, hasn't it?) Though the joys of motherhood are many, some of us find that our powers of concentration fade when we're trying to keep track of the little ones. Here are some tales from the front about the forgetfulness that can overtake you when you're tending your children:

*The first time that I went out by myself with my three children, I forgot our stroller on the sidewalk. It wasn't until after two days when I needed to use it again that I realized that the stroller was not inside the car. I immediately called my husband telling him why in the world had he taken the stroller out of the car and never communicated that to me? He had no clue what I was talking about. Then it hit me, and I realized that I had left the stroller outside the Blue Slide Playground. It was my priority to make sure that all three kids were secure in the car, so I never thought about the stroller. We loved our stroller. It had been with us for more than five years, all over New York City and had made at least five trips to Mexico. We always travel with our dog, and she fits perfectly on the basket underneath (multifunctional stroller!). I immediately got a new one, same model and brand, but I still miss my old one.*

--Maga Sanchez-Dahl

*When my son was about 15 months old, I had recently returned to work and was going to bed too late, getting up too early and working full, long days. I came home from work one evening, delirious with exhaustion, and sat down with him to eat dinner. I looked down and burst into laughter—I had put his bib on me!*

--Abby Katzen

*Every once in a while I find myself looking in the rearview mirror to make sure I've put the baby in the back seat. I've never forgotten him, but I sometimes have to check to make sure! Now that's scary....Sigh....*

--Marie Routledge

# calendar

## kickoff picnic!

**saturday, sept. 15**

4:30 p.m.-8 p.m., Camp David Lawrence Center, Schenley Park. RSVP to organizer: Leslie Grodin, Leslie.Grodin@verizon.net.

## board meeting

**sunday, oct. 14**

9 a.m., 61C Cafe, 1839 Murray Ave., Squirrel Hill. All are welcome!

## potluck

**monday, oct. 29**

6-7:30 p.m., Third Presbyterian Church, Fifth and Negley avenues. Halloween theme (boo!). Hosts: Sarah Moore, sarahmillermoore@hotmail.com, and Lise Vesterlund Brodkey, vester@pitt.edu.

## fall outing

**saturday, oct. 13**

3 p.m., Shenot Farm in Wexford, Call organizer Sara Stock Mayo, 412.521.5616

## play dates

**mondays**

4 p.m., Bartlett Street Playground in Schenley Park.

**thursdays**

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Third Presbyterian Church, Fifth and Negley avenues.

## mom's nights out

**monday, sept. 24**

7 p.m., Enrico's Ristorante, 5863 Ellsworth Ave., Shadyside. Host: Laura Schneiderman, lois.lane2006@yahoo.com.

**thursday, oct. 11**

7 p.m., placed TBA. Host: Sara Barger, lbarger@mac.com

## book club

**wednesday, oct. 3**

7:30 p.m., *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace...One School at a Time* by Greg Mortensen. Host: Nadine Gomes, 2860 Fernwald Road, 412.224.2532.



# over the river (& off the radar)

**by Sarah Moore**

Sometimes I feel as though my sanity hinges on getting my kids out of the house for a bit, even if it is just an hour or less (particularly during our family's post-nap/pre-dinner witching hour).

Other times, we wind up out and about with just a short gap of time to fill. Generally playgrounds are the best way to satisfy this need, but sometimes the weather doesn't cooperate (or we just need something new). So, here are a few free ideas, clustered by neighborhood, that may help you out when your family needs a quick "filler." Thanks to Paula Cerrone and Sarah Hultgren-Lund for their suggestions for this piece.

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## Squirrel Hill

**The Frog Pond at Frick Park:** The Frick Park Environmental Center (2005 Beechwood Blvd.) has plenty of free parking. Walk through the main entryway (towards the Environmental Center that was destroyed by a fire in 2002) and to the right. A short series of steps will bring you to a small pond, bisected by wooden walkways, that hosts a number of frogs and other wonders of nature. The Environmental Center is also a starting point for a variety of hikes within Frick Park.

**Fire Station No. 18:** The firefighters based at this Squirrel Hill Station at 5858 Northumberland St. (near the intersection with Shady Avenue) are very friendly and welcome young visitors during down times. If they happen to be busy, just hit the playground at the Children's Institute, less than a block away, instead.

**Homewood Cemetery:** It covers 200 acres of land, has been around for nearly 130 years, and can be an interesting place to explore with kids. Enter on Dallas Avenue near Aylesboro Avenue (or from the Point Breeze side). Wear sturdy shoes and bring paper and crayons to make gravestone rubbings.

## Oakland

**Schenley Plaza:** Bring money for the meters (\$1/hour) and stay patient while you search for parking because the payoff is nice. This space along Forbes Avenue, adjacent to the Main Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and across the street from the Cathedral of Learning, was recently transformed from a parking lot into the "Grand Entrance to Schenley Park." Rides on the PNC Carousel are generally \$1.25, but are free after 3 p.m. (closing time is 6 p.m. M-F, 7 p.m. on Sat. and 5 p.m. on Sun.) for the rest of the season (until the end of October). Free live lunchtime concerts Mon.-Sat. also continue through October. If the weather turns wet during your visit, just head inside the wonderful Main Library. The children's section is on the ground floor to the right, just past the Crazy Mocha Café.

**Carnegie Museum of Natural History and the Museum of Art:** Although generally not free for non-members, you are very likely to be waved in free of charge if you arrive after 4 p.m. (entrance is on Forbes Avenue at Craig Street). Since you'll only have an hour before the 5 p.m. closing time, just enjoy a section or two, like Polar World on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Natural History section or the temporary art exhibits in the Heinz Galleries just up the stairs opposite the admission desk. The admissions policies may tighten in late November when the dinosaurs return, but if you're turned away and aren't willing to pay, just head around the corner to the Main Library.

**Kraus Campo:** Officially this is a meditative rooftop garden on the underground Posner Center at Carnegie Mellon University. In our family, it is known as "the numbers garden." This space is located on campus between the Tepper School of Business and the College of



Fine Arts, near the intersection of Tech and Frew avenues (metered parking available on both these streets). The garden contains a vibrant blue wall with a backwards quote and a series of bold orange walkways that twist and turn through red-leaved plants (watch for thorns if they need trimming!). The center area contains a large, flat “sculpture” covered with a grid of numbers. The sculpture can be climbed on and provides a perfect playing board for a game of number “Twister”. Kraus Campo is also a great spot for hide-and-seek. If you are having trouble picturing it, check out [www.cmu.edu/cfa/garden.html](http://www.cmu.edu/cfa/garden.html) for more information.

## Point Breeze

**The Frick Art & Historical Center:** Skip the Clayton Mansion, but enjoy the grounds, greenhouse, Car & Carriage Museum, and Frick Art Museum all free of charge Tues.-Sun. from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. The parking lot is accessed from Reynolds Street just east of Homewood

Avenue. No touching is allowed in the Car & Carriage Museum, so avoid that one (unless you need to use their restrooms) if the temptation will be too great for your kiddos.

**Sterrett Parklet:** This sweet playground is easy to miss, but its nice equipment and friendly atmosphere make it worth a visit. The entry is on Edgerton Avenue near Lang Avenue (next to Sterrett Middle School). It is a very small space, but contains a couple of swings, two playing structures (one for 2-5-year-olds and the other for older kids) and benches.

## Shadyside

**Roslyn Place:** If you enjoy the quirky and unusual, make a stop at this little cul-de-sac off of Ellsworth Avenue, one block east of Aiken Avenue. Now look closely at the paving material. Roslyn Place is likely to be the only remaining wooden street in the contiguous United States. It’s so cool that it doesn’t even matter if your kids don’t adequately appreciate it.

**Mellon Park:** The playground on the north side of Fifth Avenue can get overrun with large groups (and their trash), but the park area bounded by Fifth and Shady avenues is always pleasant. Explore the formal gardens dating back to the Mellon mansion days, find an old oak to climb or get a close-up view of the public art outside the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts. The annual “A Fair in the Park”, held Sept. 7-9 this year, is a wonderful arts festival.

The PFC deeply regrets the early September departure of Jai and Randy Pausch, with their children, Dylan, 5, Logan, 2, and Chloe, 1, to Chesapeake, Va., to be closer to family. Randy was diagnosed with cancer a year ago, and in spite of treatment, the cancer returned aggressively last month. Our thoughts and prayers are with them.



## spotlight

### Nadine Gomes

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#### Tell us about your background.

I was born and raised in New York City. I graduated from the High School of Music and Art (FAME SCHOOL), where I studied the clarinet. I then completed my undergraduate degree in history at the University of Wisconsin- Madison. After a few years of work in DC, I got a fellowship and obtained my master's degree in public health (Health Education) at the University of Hawaii- Manoa. I completed a wonderful three-month internship in Thailand examining rural and urban Health Ed projects. I then spent 10 years living and teaching in Mozambique, where my husband is from. At the moment I am home with my two boys.

#### What are your hobbies?

My hobbies are reading, swimming and traveling.

#### How did you meet your spouse?

I met my spouse in graduate school in Honolulu,

Hawaii. We were both studying for our master's degrees. Aurelio was a medical doctor from Mozambique studying biostatistics and epidemiology through a USAID fellowship. I was studying health education. People often ask if we met surfing, but we met in the computer room, where he worked. I ended up following him back to his home country and staying for over 10 years.

#### Have you read a great book lately?

I've recently read *Win the Whining War & Other Skirmishes: A Family Peace Plan* by Cynthia Whitham, MSW. It's a step-by-step guide to increasing cooperation and reducing conflict. I've attended her parent workshops, and she offers practical solutions to everyday problems.

#### What's the best place to take your child in Pittsburgh?

I love taking my boys to Sandcastle. We went all summer long, and they had wonderful time. The water park offers something for everyone, and it's on a beautiful setting down by the river.





## Joanna Elsas

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### What are your hobbies?

I was a potter in college and afterward for a few years. I did functional stoneware pots. After about five years, I started having problems with hand pain, so I had to stop doing pottery for a while and haven't gotten back into it again yet, since we've had kids. I started quilting baby blankets when my friends started having kids. I just finished my first queen-sized quilt for my mom's 60th birthday. I also love other kids' crafty sewing projects.

### Do you have any parenting advice?

One of the best things we did was get our kids attached to a "lovey". It has made bedtime, transitions, and car rides much easier.

### How did you meet your spouse?

Jon and I met at Carleton College in Minnesota. We knew each other all four years, but I don't remember specifically when I met him. We started dating a few weeks before we graduated. Of course, all our families were there for graduation, so he invited me out to dinner with his parents one night. On the way to their hotel, he said he hadn't told them that he was bringing me to dinner. Hmm...a little awkward, but no big deal. Then he admitted that they didn't know he was dating anyone at all. Lovely. He ended up moving to Virginia with me for the summer. I had been planning to live with a friend on her farm and help out with her CSA again. Later that winter we went to New Zealand for a few months to camp and

hike and miss a winter in the U.S. That spring we decided to move to Maine together.

### What is the best place to take your child in Pittsburgh?

We live in Regent Square, a few blocks from the Hutchinson entrance to Frick Park. We like to walk down the steep hill to the newly restored part of the Nine Mile Run. The field there has a creek running through it and tons of bugs, butterflies, and crickets to catch and chase. We also take the "upper" trail to the playground at Forbes and Braddock. It's nice to be able to walk through the woods to reach the playground. Sometimes we go to the new ice cream shop on the corner of Forbes and Braddock before we walk home.

### Tell us about an embarrassing moment.

When I was Aiden's age (3), I was chasing a little kid around the raised edge of a mall fountain. I remember my mom warning me to stop before I fell in, but I didn't get down, and of course I fell in. I clearly remember opening my eyes when my head hit the bottom and feeling pennies squished on my face. My dad went into the department store and bought a huge new bath towel to wrap me in, since I was drenched. My parents thought it was a hilarious story and loved to tell it for years afterward. Argh! I was so embarrassed and mad every time: "Remember the time Joanna fell in the mall fountain?!"



# kindergarten

## **PFC Kids Starting Kindergarten in Fall 2007**

Laura Brodkey and Sarah Brownlee: **Falk School**  
Simon Bruhn, Jordan Finklestein, Ben Lund, and Aaron Ritter: **Colfax Accelerated Learning Academy**  
Abe Kaplan: **Community Day School**  
Josh Moore: **The Children's School**  
Graham Nelson: **O'Hara Elementary School**  
Simone Rothstein: **Cyert Center for Early Education**  
Scott Routledge: **Winchester Thurston School**  
Rodrigo Sanchez-Dahl: **Waldorf School of Pittsburgh**  
Jack Staunton: **Liberty Elementary School**  
Johnny Stern: **St. Bede School**

## **Kindergarten Information Night**

For those of you with 4-year-olds confused by the local kindergarten choices and seeking more information, the JCC is hosting its annual:

Kindergarten Information Night  
7-9 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 17

Levinson Hall in the JCC, Murray and Forbes avenues, Squirrel Hill

Public and private school representatives will be on hand with booths and information. Refreshments will be provided, and children are welcome!

## **Fundraiser's Corner**

The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International is holding its annual Walk to Cure Diabetes on Saturday Sept. 15. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. at Flagstaff Hill in Schenley Park, and the walk begins at 10 a.m. Stephanie Land's friends Gina Sucato and Scott Watson have organized a team in support of their son Nate, now starting second grade, who has juvenile diabetes. To join Nate's Team, see <http://walk.jdrf.org/walker.cfm?id=86734311>.

## new faces

### New Board Members

Two new board members are joining us! **Sara Barger** has replaced secretary of two years Laura Kaplan, as Laura anticipates the arrival of her third child. And this fall, **Christy McGuire** will be replacing treasurer and former newsletter editor Sarah Moore. Many thanks to Sarah and Laura for their work!

Excellent

### 10 Things to Know About New Members the Bruhns:

10. There are four of us: Matt, Lara, Simon (5) and Owen (2)
9. If you ask us where we're from, we'll hem and haw (Matt grew up in Washington state and Lara in Paris, France, but neither have family there anymore).
8. We've spent the last 10 years traveling all over due to Matt's work (he was a USAF fighter pilot).
7. Lara spent the last decade working in sales, diversity recruiting, software, and as a college professor (the last two while also being a mom).
6. Lara and Matt are two of the four co-owners of Prantl's Bakery in Shadyside (Lara will be working on strategy for the bakery while Matt does an unrelated consulting gig).
5. Matt loves to bicycle, and his favorite sporting event is the Tour de France.
4. Lara would be content to sit in a cafe drinking coffee and reading a newspaper.
3. The boys would not be content with Matt and Lara doing the above, so we either take turns or all go to a park or pool.
2. We have no family in Pittsburgh, but hope to have lots of friends soon (thank you to Heidi Norman for recommending the PFC).
1. If you invite us over, we'll bring the baked goods!

*Lara and Matt can be reached at [mlsbruhn@yahoo.com](mailto:mlsbruhn@yahoo.com).*

# milestones

## BIRTHDAYS

Turning 10

**Jacob**, child of **Joanne and Doug Spence**,  
September 7

**Collin**, child of **Melinda and Greg Mallek**,  
October 7

Turning 9

**Melinda**, child of **Marcie and Steven Ritter**,  
October 18

Turning 7

**Matteo**, child of **Maga and Roberto Sanchez-Dahl**,  
September 18

Turning 6

**Sarah**, child of **Kate Brownlee and James Anderson**,  
October 18

**Ben**, child of **Sarah Hultgren-Lund and Josh Lund**,  
October 12

**Aaron**, child of **Marcie and Steven Ritter**,  
October 25

**Scott**, child of **Marie and Bryan Routledge**,  
September 26

Turning 4

**Finney**, child of **Sarah and Michael Staunton**,  
October 20

Turning 3

**Logan**, child of **Jai and Randy Pausch**,  
October 2

Turning 2

**Dora**, child of **Darcy and Mike Gordon**,  
September 17

**Mariana**, child of **Maga and Roberto Sanchez-Dahl**,  
September 24

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Jacob**, child of **Lise Vesterlund-Brodkey and Daniel Brodkey**,  
October 25

Turning 1

**Carlos**, child of **Marisa Osorio and Neal Sofge**,  
September 18





**Pittsburgh Family Cooperative**

c/o Third Presbyterian Church

5701 Fifth Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15232