



This is the real learning...

by Clifford Scholz

Remember starting a new school year when you were a child?

Were you riding to the farm with all your schoolmates crammed into a pair of wagons? Did you gather apples and squeeze the cider out of them? Did you work with friends to pump a hand pump and drink the cool water as it splashed forth on a hot September afternoon? Did you wade down at a lakeshore-- pants rolled up and shoes off? Did your school year ever start off by eating hot roasted corn on the cob or making and eating bread baked in a brick oven?

Probably not. Certainly I never started a school year off that way. Yet when some people hear stories from children about what's happening those first few days at Upland Hills School, they might say, "Well, isn't that *nice*! That sounds like *fun*! And then school starts next week, right?"

Well, it *is* 'nice' and it *is* 'fun', but the important thing is: school really has already started. It starts when children are shoulder-to-shoulder in the wagons and they realize: hey, this is it, we're all together! It happens when many hands collect many apples and the result is one big bucket of cider for all to share. It starts when one child makes a discovery --a frog maybe, or a new idea-- and shares it with the others. It starts when children see their teachers doing the same things they are doing: exploring the world, feeling their way into relationships. They see grownups, yes, and teachers, too, but also: people. People who eat corn on the cob, who

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Editorial Note: This early winter issue of *Connections* focuses on the importance of play in the lives of our children and in ourselves. Curiosity, wonder and imagination are all necessary ingredients of a conscious and meaningful life. Play allows us to cultivate and nurture these qualities in ourselves and provides enjoyment to our lives. Play is an important teacher here at Upland Hills School.

The Secret World of Childhood

By Phillip Moore

During my childhood, the secret world was at the end of my block. I'm riding my bike towards this large fence with barbed wire at the top. The wire is tilted at a 45-degree angle so that any fool crazy enough to climb to the top would be cut or snagged before falling the 10 feet or more to the ground on the other side. Yet for a child it takes more than a fence, even a formidable fence, to keep you on the wrong side of a secret world. As I turned the corner, my eyes examined the fence looking for other options. On the day I discovered the opening I knew that I was not the only one who desired entry.

I parked my bike behind a bush and noticed that someone had cut a hole in the fence just big enough for a kid. This genius had cut the hole with a hacksaw and then used old copper wire to reattach it so that it appeared to be solid fence. The day I noticed it, the sun had reflected off an exposed piece of copper. I untwisted the copper easily and stepped into the world of the Detroit Zoo.

My secret world was a place where baboons played and groomed on a fake concrete mountain, where Elephant dung perfumed the air, where polar bears bathed in water pumped out of the Detroit River, and where peacocks roamed at will. It was my own private 'wild school' dedicated to adventure and imaginary play and it was the way I dealt with sadness and a persistent inferiority complex. It was the secret world that enabled me to make friends with myself. Yet it was not my only secret world.

Another of my secret worlds was located right across the street.

On a bright, sunny fall day, I noticed a boy on a tricycle peddling down his driveway. He had just moved in and even though he was hard to see, I was drawn to him. I went to the edge of street and as he came nearer I realized it was my friend Brian. Brian and I had met in Detroit at our Sunday school and formed the kind of friendship that 5 year olds instinctively know about; the kind that is defined by laughter, silliness, and secrecy. Now, as fate would have it, he had moved into our neighborhood directly across the street from me.

The connection to a friend is very fragile. Brian and I played together often. We rode bikes, we played home run derby, we drew pictures of people with big ears and nose hair, we hid in basements so that we could spy on older sisters and we went to school together. I

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Upland Hills School

Mission Statement

Upland Hills School, founded in 1971, is an independent school community whose purpose is to educate pre-high school children. Our aim is to discover and respect the uniqueness of every child.

Guiding Principles

Upland Hills School holds the following principles as our core values and seeks to create an environment that:

- Protects, nurtures and defends the innocence of childhood
- Encourages a relationship between children and the natural world
- Empowers teachers and staff
- Fosters cooperation and consensus in decision-making
- Promotes mutual respect and trust that encourages our community to form authentic relationships
- Teaches us to think comprehensively
- Builds friendships that connect us with others around the world

Upland Hills School encourages children to know themselves and to connect with their environment as responsible world citizens. We provide a full academic program that emphasizes mastery of skills and creative growth. Our vision is that through the alignment and commitment of parents and teachers, children will come to see themselves as having extraordinary learning potential and access to the greatest miracle or tool in human experience, love.

Connecting with the Future

Calendar of Important Events

December

Wed., Dec. 19 Staff & Student Holiday Celebration
Thurs. Dec. 20-Tues. Jan. 1 **Holiday Break - NO SCHOOL**

January 2008

Wed., Jan. 2 School Resumes
 Sat., Jan. 19 7 pm **karenJoy theatre**
"UHS Community Showcase"
 Sun., Jan. 20 2 pm **karenJoy theatre**
Bernard Woma
 Tues., Jan. 22 PTP (Parents Teaching Parents)

February

Tues., Feb. 5 12:30 pm Arts Festival
Mon-Tues, Feb. 18-19 **2nd Evaluations - NO SCHOOL**
Wed-Fri, Feb. 20-22 **Winter Break - NO SCHOOL**
 Mon., Feb. 25 School Resumes

March

Wed., Mar. 19 Staff & Students Spring Celebration
Thurs.-Sun., Mar. 20-30 **Spring Break - NO SCHOOL**
 Mon., Mar. 31 School Resumes

April

Sat., Apr. 12 5:30 pm Traditions and Transitions Auction 2008
 Tues., Apr. 22 PTP (Parents Teaching Parents)

May

Fri., May 2 1 pm **karenJoy theatre - TPS "Annie"**
 Sat., May 3 2 and 7 pm **karenJoy theatre - TPS "Annie"**
Mon., May 26 **Memorial Day - NO SCHOOL**
 Tues.-Fri., May 27-30 Ted's Group Senior Trip

June

Mon.-Tues., June 2-3 **Final Evaluations - NO SCHOOL**
 Wed., June 4 Renaissance Festival
 Thur., June 5 All School Overnight
 Fri., June 6 Last Day of School

(Editor's Note: In October, a team comprised of Phil Moore, Judith Roth, Clifford Scholz, and Tom Tomich submitted a proposal for the Buckminster Fuller Challenge, sponsored by the Buckminster Fuller Institute. Each year a distinguished jury awards a single \$100,000 prize to support the development and implementation of a solution that has significant potential to solve humanity's most pressing problems in the shortest possible time while enhancing the Earth's ecological integrity.

Although what is presented here is not the final submission, this draft reflects the essence and passion that allow us to think big about the future and legacy of Upland Hills School.)

UHS Proposal for the Buckminster Fuller Challenge

No doubt during this process you will have countless wondrous and genuinely worthwhile proposals before you. As judges, yours is a monumental task. You must choose one that will yield the greatest good. The question is, which?

Given the state of the planet itself there's considerable pressure to choose a proposal that would benefit the environment. Ours has an enormous positive impact for the environment both in the short and long term. Of course, with such upheaval and political fragmentation in the world, a proposal that could affect societal change is certainly called for. Toward that end, ours can bring about genuine, positive and lasting social change. Then again, perhaps the most powerful way to get at the first two problems is to focus on the individual and heal the alienation and disconnection that modern living has foisted upon us. Hopefully, you will find that what we propose does so at the most profound level.

What single proposal could impact all these areas? One that is aimed at the very best place where integration and wholeness may be seeded and nurtured. That place is children. Children, given their innate wholeness, are the ideal center around which to build communities dedicated to nurturing that wholeness and tapping into the synergies inherent in humans who are not divided against themselves but united in body, mind, and spirit. And together those communities will achieve all that is possible instead of fighting over who gets most of what already is.

What we propose is a new educational model – the Upland Hills Model. This model provides an option for parents, communities and children that is founded on the idea that “all children are geniuses” and that the true function of education is to “draw out” that genius. Inspired in part by Buckminster Fuller, it is a 36-year old tested model that nurtures the natural development of all children. With the support of the Buckminster Fuller Institute we would like to offer this educational model to the world.

Imagine a school where children who are ill fake being well in order not to miss a day. Imagine a school that encourages children to play in a safe creative environment. Where the teachers are venerated, where they approach their teaching as an art form, and where they retire to a co-housing unit that encourages them to play a grandparent role for the learning communities that they served in. Imagine a school with children



undertaking self-directed projects, who have learned how to work in cooperative groupings, who are addressing world problems and who are determined to make the world work for 100% of humanity without disadvantaging the natural world. And then imagine a school like this in every village, town, and city on the planet.

One of the most powerful strategies in education is to model the behavior you wish to teach. Every parent knows that just talking about change does not create the desired result. We must BE the change. The Upland Hills Model is a living experiment on the conceptual frontiers of educational restructuring. This

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Bucky, continued from page 4

model has been incubating in relative obscurity for the past 36 years. During this time we have been able to focus on the “self” aspect of the school. This intra-personal form of intelligence has permitted us to deeply explore the beauty of the inner journey.

Also during this time we have successfully dealt with the “facts” of educating a child in the post-modern era. These facts have to do with but are not limited to: compulsory education, rigid age stratification, transitions from our school into other schools, parental expectations and needs, vibrant curriculum, synthesizing the latest brain/mind research, using leading edge science to create new structures that embrace every learning style and multiple intelligences.



We have also taken a “whole systems” approach to learning into every facet of our learning community. During the life of our school we have addressed how our system connects and relates to existing systems, how to form a system based on an intention to be ecologically responsive and how to be constantly aware of the macro and micro implications of whole systems.

Finally, we have devoted a tremendous amount of attention in the area of social intelligence. Our experience is that children who feel themselves to be an integral part of an extended “learning family” who have been given the tools to interact gracefully, and sensitively with people of all ages and who have grown into compassionate and caring souls are people who will be able to transform consciousness.

Our approach to implementing this model takes several forms. First, we must continue to protect, alter, and deepen the model that we have co-created. Second, we will convene a team of media professionals to explore every outlet available to us in order to best convey the complexity of the message. A series of short “YouTube” films, a full length documentary film, a dynamic leading edge website and a series of books, plays and songs, are all projects “in process.” Third, we will use our theatre home base to invite educators, parents and interested parties to a variety of events ranging from workshops on multiple intelligences to performances of children’s theatre. The fourth strategy is to travel to parts of the world where we have already established a connection: Japan, India, England, France, Argentina, Mexico, South Africa, and selected cities in the United States and Canada. These journeys would allow for a direct interaction with team members for schools who are resonant with the ideas and curriculum proposed in the Upland Hills model.

Implementing our solution involves linking up with as many networks as possible in order to co-create an awareness and interest in transforming education. We have strong relationships with the National Association of Independent Schools, the National Coalition of Alternative Schools, the Association of Independent Michigan Schools, The Starkey Hearing Foundation, University Preparatory Academy, Big Picture Small World, OSEarth, NGO’s representatives in the United Nations, Oakland University, and Wayne State University to name a few. In short, what we propose to do is the embodiment of one of Bucky’s deepest beliefs. He believed that people couldn’t be exhorted to be good. He believed it was better to draw out the good of humanity. Something we have witnessed with every child that has come through our doors.

We have launched some 688 individuals into the world. They are seeds of a form of consciousness that will touch thousands of others. We have done this as just one lone school. Imagine a movement as strong as the Montessori schools. It gets positively thrilling when you do the math.

"TRADITIONS AND TRANSITIONS" AUCTION 2008

Please join us in celebrating all that is Upland Hills School, from the traditions that we love so well, to the constant flow of growth and change.



Become a Sponsor - Provide essential underwriting

for the evening . Includes ten (10) reserved seats at a special table for you and your guests with personal signage/logo display, Banner recognition, Program Book acknowledgement and a full-page ad.

Buy a Patron Table - Host a table for 10 at the Auction. Share it with friends and family for a memorable evening, or donate it back to the school and we will fill it for you! Includes ten (10) reserved seats at a special table with personal signage/logo display, Program Book acknowledgement and a half page ad.

Donate Auction Items - Donate new, quality items for Silent and Live Auctions. The value of Silent items starts about \$50, while Live items begin at \$500. Some ideas:

Entertainment tickets - music or dance lessons - handcrafted jewelry - pottery - signed books
- travel packages - photographs - sporting event tickets - dinner - body work - cottage rental

Start now to request donations from businesses that you patronize. Whether you live near or far, we'd love to receive an auction item from you!

Advertise - Publicize your business or one that you support in our Auction Booklet. Families can also place an ad to celebrate their child and/or the school.

Sponsorships and Patron Tables

_____ Philanthropist	\$7500	_____ Champion	\$2500
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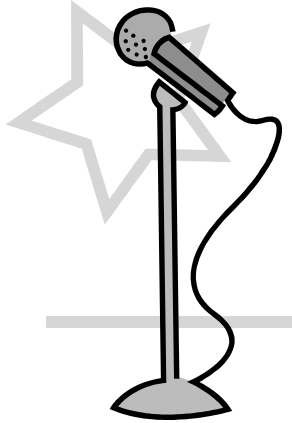
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Return this form with payment to: Upland Hills School, 2575 Indian Lake Road, Oxford, MI 48370 248-693-2878

karen joy theatre *5th Anniversary Season*



The Upland Hills Community Showcase

Sat. Jan. 19th 7pm

A little song...a little dance...a lot of fun!

*Join us for a night of great music from UHS parents, staff, friends
and Contra Dancing*

\$15 in advance, \$20 at the door, \$10 students

Bernard Woma Ensemble

Sun. Jan 20th 2pm

Direct from Ghana, Bernard Woma, Master of the
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Recognized around the world as an outstanding
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Feel the energy and rhythms of African Dagara
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You'll be tappin', clappin' and dancin' in the aisles!

A "must see" cultural and entertainment experience
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Tickets: \$10 reserved/advance purchase

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See both events for just \$20 per person!

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The Power of A Play

By Jane Kline

The audience has been seated. The house lights slowly go down. A veil of darkness transports us to another place and time. Backstage, the energy is swirling with excitement, anticipation, jitters as the children realize "the moment" they worked so hard for has arrived. Weeks of rehearsals are a thing of the past. Family, friends and many, many unfamiliar faces eagerly await the grand entrance of their "stars". Stage lights fade up and the magic begins. The actors "play" to the audience. The audience plays back with laughter, gasps, tears and applause. The power of each creates a delicate exchange, a spectrum of interaction. Yes, the children are engaged in scripted dialogue of play. But, they also journey to a place of "unscripted" self discovery and personal growth.

A three year study by the U.S. Department of Education provided compelling documentation on the value of performing arts instruction to children and youth. Arts programming noticeably improved critical thinking capacities, interpersonal skills, general academic performance and overall attitude toward school.

Meredith, an eleven year old UHS theatre student, has found benefits that will continue to serve her well. "Rehearsing the play over and over helped me. I wasn't as nervous in front of the audience." Speaking parts offer opportunities to develop language skills of tone, context and clear communication. Twelve year old Hailey has learned the value and importance of being part of an ensemble. "We work together and help each other if someone doesn't remember their line or is nervous. It's teamwork." Whether they are building sets, creating costumes, working the lights and sound, the stage and tech students see how their contribution makes an impact on the entire production and community. Zach, a twelve year old artist, was drawn to the stage for his own reasons. "I wanted to learn a new art form. The plays have made me more comfortable speaking in front of large audiences." He also likes the applause!

Artistic Director, Karen Moore, says it best, "Theatre not only gives children the opportunity to interact with music, beautiful language and thoughtful ideas, but the transforming power of theatre can change a shy child into a confident one. How marvelous to be given the opportunity to explore different ways of being. To stand on stage expressing the emotion that will move an audience to tears and laughter. How exciting to be a part of that audience that is swept away by the vibrancy of a heartfelt performance! It is our belief that equipped with self-esteem, children will discover and improve themselves and their world."

That's the power of a play!



Christina Waldeck, Lauren Riley, Ashley Wrubel, and Kara Eshelman in "Three Strong Women"

Women at Play - The Quilt Retreat

By Holly MacMahon and Linda Bowers



On Friday and Saturday, November 3 and 4, a group of 20 women- current parents, staff and alumni- came together at Windrise, a wonderful retreat center in Metamora. It is a place of rest and renewal, encouraged by its owner, Estela Monjo and the setting itself.

Surrounded by wild spaces, one can begin to reconnect with the quiet voice inside-the voice that awakens when we hear the wind, or see the sun, the moon and the stars sparkle on a lake. This voice is often hushed or relegated to the background, as we busy ourselves in taking care of others. Sometimes we find ourselves disconnected from it altogether.

Given this time and this place, we began our quilt for the "TRADITIONS AND TRANSITIONS" AUCTION 2008. More importantly, we began to reconnect with that quiet voice. Nurtured by laughter, conversation handwork, wonderful tea and an abundance of good food, we came to know more deeply the power of rest and play.

Just as our children need wild time and a place to play, so do we as mothers (and fathers!). It is worth looking into our lives to see how wildness and play present themselves. When we wake up to how essential play is to our well being, we can make healthier choices about how to spend our time. The proof is in the group picture below.



Real learning, continued from page 1

delight in water and animals, who strive for the perfect loaf of bread and sometimes fail (but it tastes good, anyway).

In those first few days, children, grown-ups, and even the buildings and the land itself become partners in learning. It's not just a time to do some "fun stuff" before the "real learning" begins. This *is* the real learning, and as classes begin and more structure is added, the relationships are already there, ready to grow. The teacher is a teacher whether at a dry-erase board helping children discover the usefulness of long division or in front of a maple tree on a frosty morning showing how to tap sweetness from hard cold wood...a similar idea, actually....

...and by the way, that's probably the reason all the classrooms have doors to the outside: it's a big part of where things happen in life.

Throughout the school year, these relationships are celebrated: children to their learning, their environment, their teachers, to one another and to themselves; and all of these to the larger communities of life. Parents also work in the garden and theater, help teachers, and chaperone field trips, shaping the school through their own relationships. The Arts Festival showcases the results of many kinds of learning and brings people together, as do stage events at every season.

At the end of the school year, the children and teachers, many having already traveled various distances together on learning expeditions, roll out their sleeping bags on the floors for the all-school overnight. Students strut their stuff on stage at the talent show, and children and teachers spend their last treasured 24 hours together before summer recess.

So, what happens when relationships come first in education? Predictably enough, what happens is that the child's relationship with self, peers, teachers, community, planet, *and* the various academic disciplines becomes stronger. Because, as it turns out, all of these webs of connection are themselves connected. Thus, what happens at Upland Hills School is not just about building relationships that drive learning, but is based upon a deep understanding that the quality of relationships a child creates, whether with another person, a pond, a piece of music, or a quadratic equation, is what education is all about.

Nancy's Fund Update

With the formal introduction of Nancy's Fund, our Tuition Assistance program, at last year's "**Dimensions**" Auction 2007, many wonderful things have occurred. We are adding this Nancy's Fund Update as a regular feature of *Connections* to keep you informed of the latest news.

We are delighted to tell you that proceeds from the "Buy a Day at Upland Hills" at the auction item last spring and a portion of a generous gift from the Starkey Hearing Foundation have allowed Upland Hills School to provide 21 students from 13 families tuition assistance for the 2007/2008 school year.

To all of you who helped make it happen, we offer our sincere gratitude. Your generosity supports economic diversity at the school and makes the dream of an Upland Hills School a reality for each of these children.



Secret World, continued from page 2

could make Brian laugh by just wiggling my fingers as if threatening a tickle. I knew him better than my own brothers and yet he came from a very different kind of family. As we grew, I began to watch him die. It was subtle at first yet there were signs all along. He was trapped in a game where the odds were stacked against him. He started out disliking school and grew to hate it. Although he loved to play, when the play shifted from 'just fun' to keeping score, I noticed a shift.

On our block, we played touch football, softball and imaginary games of cowboys and Indians, hide and seek and kick the can. I remember a time when we were about 11 that we were playing a touch football game on my front lawn. There were only two people on each team and we were beginning to play with a bit more skill than usual. I was guarding Brian as he went out for a pass. I came down on his leg. He exploded. He yelled, turned red, and spit out words of hatred and pain while I hid in shock and shame. I realize now that as we were acquiring more skill, he seemed to be losing interest.



Brian and the tricycle

By the time we reached seventh grade it was clear that Brian was not able to 'play the school game.' He struggled in every class and on report card day, he revealed to me that he had a few D's, even one in wood shop. I knew he was in for it. He begged me to walk the 3 miles home rather than take the bus. He had this idea in his head that the slower he approached his home, the longer he could avoid the inevitable humiliation. Our secret world of play took a serious hit that day.

Play is much more than the sum of its parts. It is imagination in action; it is unpredictable and highly interactive. Play allows us to exercise our minds in an open exploration of everything we need to learn without it feeling like learning. Play is therapeutic and it is in danger.

The World Future Society forecasts that in the next 25 years, "Children's 'nature deficit disorder' will grow as a health threat. Children today are spending less time in direct contact with nature than did previous generations. The impacts are showing up not only in their lack of physical fitness, but also in the growing prevalence of hyperactivity and attention deficit. Studies show that immersing children in outdoor settings- away from television and video games- fosters more creative mental activity and concentration."

Our school is host to the impossible playground. It is a bare spot of land on top of our septic field. There is grasshopper hill on the east and a swamp on the west, a basketball court on the northern border and a slight hill to the south. It is about a third of the size of a football field. On this impossible playground on any given day there can be a basketball game, a touch football game, imaginary play in the pine trees at the edge of the football game, tree climbing in the apple tree on the crest of grasshopper hill, sand play in the sandbox at the entrance into the adventure playground and swinging on the flat near school. I marvel at this impossible playground because of the way the children love being near each other while they play. Surrounded by trees, with gentle hills as the ground underneath our feet, this impossible playground beckons us all to come play.

And when I answer that call, I find myself back in my body, having fun, remembering a childhood with Brian when he was still whole, and another kind of hole in the fence at the end of my block. This play forms a contract with my soul. It says that as long as I keep choosing to let go and have fun I will be touching the secret place. The place that let me imagine I was going to become somebody, the place that was scented with elephant dung. The place that lives in us all, the secret place of childhood.

The chance of a lifetime!

Upland Hills School and the Starkey Hearing Foundation are teaming up for a **March Mission to Mexico**. During this 5 day trip at the end of March, participants will assist in providing the gift of hearing to the underprivileged in Mexico. We are seeking several individuals to join us on this meaningful outreach project.

You have two opportunities to get involved in this chance of a lifetime. You can bid on a team membership in a special on-line auction or submit an application to become a team member.

If you are interested, please visit the UHS website, www.uplandhills.org, to learn more about the auction opportunity and/or to download an application.

Applications can be submitted by mail or email to UHS at info@uplandhills.org and be postmarked by Jan. 31, 2008. Notification of acceptance will follow in early February.

Auction bids can be made online until 11:59 pm on February 29, 2008. The auction winner will be notified by March 3, 2008.



Starkey
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So the World May Hear

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