

Rackham Graduate Parents Newsletter



Fall Quarter: September-December 2008 Issue 2, volume 1



Welcome Back

Welcome new and returning students. This year RGP (Rackham Graduate Parents) hopes to be better than ever. Some changes are going to take place, starting with the format of our newsletter. As you might have noticed, it has

received a facelift. This month the focus of the newsletter is music, more specifically, songs that children and parents can enjoy together.

Other changes include a new graduate parent fellow, Dikshya Brubaker. Let's give her a warm welcome. She brings with her plenty of new ideas to build on last year's program. In addition to our organized events, RGP is working hard to plan more informal events and to expand our presence on campus. For example, we attended the new graduate student orientation this year to recruit new and prospective graduate parents. Lastly, RGP wants to say good-bye to last year's grad parent fellow, Mike Layne, who is no longer a graduate student after having successfully defended his dissertation. Thanks for your work, Mike, and congratulations.

Welcome Dikshya, the New Grad Parent Fellow



Hi, I am Dikshya Brubaker (far left in photo), the new grad parent fellow. I have one daughter who is 16 months old. I am a Master's student with a dual degree in Public Health and Information Sciences. I just finished my first year of study in Health Services Administration (MHSA) at the School of Public Health.

This year I want to make sure all the graduate parents feel welcomed and comfortable calling Michigan their home. It is no easy task to balance home and school life. But since we are all in this together, I want to hear from you the kind of activities you are interested in and would like to attend this coming year. Please send your suggestions or any ideas to dikshyab@umich.edu. I have some ideas about picnics and potlucks but I want to hear you. I hope you will join me in the planned activities. I look forward to meeting with you this year.

Kid's Songs that Don't Drive Parents Crazy

Children seem to have a natural inclination to enjoy to music. It becomes evident that to be a good parent, you need to have a broad repertoire of songs to sing. However, most children's songs can quickly drive an adult crazy; we know with young children, it's all about the repetition. You can't get by with just singing a song once. And yet it is easy to quickly become sick and tired of "The Itsy Bitsy Spider" or "London Bridge is Falling Down". Many Generation X parents (those born from approximately 1964 to 1982) listen to music that they can enjoy with their children.

Here are a few top choices of songs that have broad appeal. The first suggestion is from a group called They Might Be Giants. This band started singing quirky rock songs in the 80s and 90s. More recently they have become quite popular among children. Their energy and style make for an easy segue from adult to children's music. Moreover, having been popular with many of the parents when they were teens, the familiar vocals are easy on the ears. Their two albums for children are "Here Come the ABCs" and "Here Come the 123s." The subject matter is highly predictable, but the lyrics aren't. They will stick in your head, just like any children's song, but with panache. Check out their video for their song called "The Alphabet of Nations" on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CP4VVG2LUU>.

Two other entertaining songs that bridge the gap between parents and toddlers are by Feist and James Blunt. These songs come from Sesame Street, which has been working on designing programming suitable for children and their parents to watch together. Several parents have commented that they like the kid's version better than the adult one. Watch the Feist video here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fciD_I17NI and see for yourself. James Blunt's song about his infatuation with a triangle is another tune that you will find yourself pleasantly humming as you are doing the finishing touches to your preliminary exams: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joGLXHk8NmM>.

Our Summer Event: Leslie Science Center



On an overcast Saturday in July, a handful of graduate parents were richly rewarded for braving the weather. Parents and their children watched the raptor presentation with rapture as they learned about the different birds of prey. For those who have not been out to the Leslie Science Center, it is worth the

trip (especially since it is free to wander the grounds). They have a packed September and October calendar. To find out more, go to <http://www.lesliesnc.org/>

Our First Event the Calendar Year

Our first event will take place on Monday, September 29th. Join us at 11:30-1:00 for a luncheon in the Assembly Hall, 4th floor, in the Rackham Building. Graduate students with children have unique responsibilities. Join us for a lunchtime panel discussion and meet other graduate student parents. Learn about the resources available in our community and share your experiences with fellow parents. Lunch will be provided.

Registration

Pre-registration required at

<https://secure.rackham.umich.edu/Events/wssel.php>

Early Childhood Musical Development at the Ann Arbor School for the Performing Arts by Stephanie Weaver, Director



As a faculty member and administrator at the Ann Arbor School for the Performing Arts, I am often asked: “How soon should I start music lessons for my child?” In many cases, parents of very young children, infants, toddlers and preschoolers feel that their children are too young to benefit from formal, structured music classes in any measurable way. However, recent research has shown that there is a critical window of opportunity in the early years for children to build foundations in the areas of language, vision, attitude and aptitude. The sooner children begin to experience a rich musical environment, the sooner their musical aptitudes will begin to establish themselves. Early childhood, a period of rapid change and devel-

opment, is the most critical period in a child’s musical development; it is a time when humans are most receptive to the fundamental components of language and music. Recent research has shown that people who studied music or learned to play instruments as children process spoken language more easily and accurately and musically stimulated babies seem to develop more quickly, become more verbal earlier and demonstrate accelerated intellectual development.

Early childhood music education for very young children, from infants to six year olds, should be a joyful, social and creative experience. AASPA is committed to providing the very best start for a child’s musical journey with curricula based on sound educational research. We know that boys and girls learn best when an experience is engaging and educationally sound. Structured, but fun early music learning opportunities make basic concepts such as rhythm and pitch second nature. Children cultivate listening and attention skills, self-confidence, reading readiness, language, creativity, self-motivation, physical coordination, social skills and cognitive reasoning.

For more information about the Ann Arbor School for the performing Arts, visit www.aa-spa.org

Rackham Graduate Parent Workshop and Resource Fair: Saturday, December 6, 2008



We are going to hold our 2nd annual Rackham Graduate Parent Resource Fair on Saturday, December 6th from 9:30am-1:30pm. Like last year’s event, we will have booths set up for organizations and businesses from around the Ann Arbor area.

We will also have workshops for parents designed around maintaining a healthy and productive work/life balance.

For the children, we will have face painting, story time, arts and crafts and, of course, balloons by José. A light lunch will be provided.



Useful Resources on Campus and Around Ann Arbor

http://www.rackham.umich.edu/student_life/campus_community/childcare_parenting/#health

This page provides extensive information and links to other of U-M resources, healthcare and pregnancy resources, and activities for parents and children.

<http://studentswithchildren.umich.edu>

In addition to offering information about financial resources for students with children, there is also a link to all eligible daycare facilities where you can use the childcare subsidy and how to apply for it.

<http://www.arborweb.com/eventindex.fk.html>

Calendar of Ann Arbor events for children.

<http://arborweb.com/cg/t0046.html>

Interactive map that lets you find the closest school, daycare, or sporting event going on in your neighborhood.

<http://www.annarborfamily.com/>

This website includes articles from their monthly magazine, arts and craft ideas, and also a calendar of events that is slightly different from arborweb.com's site.

<http://www.med.umich.edu/mott/>

This U-M site not only includes basic information about the Children's Hospital, it also includes an extensive list of health topics and information about classes and programs organized by the Hospital.

Join our Group

If you or any other graduate parent you know would like to join our list-serve and or Facebook group, please e-mail Dikshya@dikshyab@umich.edu.

