

# Rackham Graduate Parents



March-May 2009

## University of Michigan Child Care Options

To serve parents better, the University of Michigan's Early Childhood Program has added more spaces for children and reorganized their centers. They now include the Northwood Child Development Center, Towsley Children's House and U-M Children's Center, which collectively provide spaces for approximately 200 children.

### **New Facilities**

Over the summer, the Pound House and Children's Center for Working Families merged and became the Towsley Children's House and moved into the former Pfizer childcare facility temporarily while their new facilities are under construction. The Pfizer site is unique in that it was designed from the ground up with children in mind. The new Towsley building is expected to be completed in 2010 providing even more room for children.

### **More Infants**

Because of this move to the former Pfizer site, an extra 12 spaces for infants and toddlers opened up. Currently, the infant spots are full, but space is available for children 29 months and older. However, since so many children move up from the infant category quickly, there will be space available for the next academic calendar. If you are thinking of using any of the U-M Early Childhood Centers, you can go online and fill out an application to

reserve a spot at <http://www.hr.umich.edu/childcare/application.html>.

### **More Flexibility**

The centers now offer more flexible scheduling options. Besides attending full time, parents can choose selected full-days or a half-day programs. That means, for example, you can send your child just two full days. Alternatively, you can send your child to the half-day morning or afternoon session five days a week.

### **Financial Aid**

For those who are not eligible for the child care subsidy, another grant available is the Child Care Tuition Grant (CCTG). In order to be eligible for this award, you must be ineligible for the Child Care Subsidy, and demonstrate financial need. This grant can only be used at U-M Early Childhood Centers. For more information about this grant, visit <http://hr.umich.edu/worklife/childcare/moneymatters.php>.

### **U-M Early Childhood Program Playdate**

All of the U-M centers will gather together at My Urban Toddler on Saturday, March 21 from 1:00-4:00 pm to showcase the different centers. There will be representatives to answer your specific questions. While you are there, kids can play for \$5.00. Half of the proceeds will be donated to the U-M Early Childhood Programs.



## **WIC Program**

WIC is a free government sponsored program that provides special supplemental nutrition for Woman, Infants and Children. The goal of WIC is to help prevent malnutrition in low-income pregnant women, and mothers with children up to 5 years old.

WIC provides supplemental food, offers professional nutritional education, promotes breast feeding and makes referrals based on health screening and assessments of need.

The supplemental food includes a series of predetermined provisions and amounts. General food items include milk, eggs, beans, cereal, cheese and peanut butter. The amounts you receive depend on the size of your family and income.

Many graduate parents qualify for this program and do not realize it. Those eligible to receive WIC are pregnant and breast feeding women; women who have recently had a baby; infants from birth to 12 months; and children ages 1 to 5 years who are also residents of the state of Michigan. You must also be income eligible, and determined by WIC clinic staff in local agencies to be at nutritional and/or health risk. For more details, call the North Campus liaison, Samantha, at 647-8360.



## **Moving on After Graduation**

As graduation approaches, grad parents need to prepare for their family's next move. There are three

important areas that you should think about before leaving the area: meeting all of the graduation requirements, collecting the necessary documents from your child's school and preparing to move out of your house or apartment. (Of course these are just guidelines and by no means an exhaustive list).

Although you may have completed all of your coursework, there are plenty of loose ends that need to be tied before the University will release your diploma. In addition to all of the necessary paperwork, make sure you have paid all of your fees and any fines you might have incurred. Don't let a library fine keep you from receiving your diploma.

For those who will be moving abroad, to make your child's transfer into a new school easier, ask your current school for a cum folder (cum stands for cumulative) before you leave. This contains your child's transcripts and other important information to help segue the child to the new school. Although most cum folders include information on immunization, don't forget to obtain copies of immunization records as well from your child's pediatrician.

For those who are staying stateside, less work is involved. You can ask for a cum folder, but usually when you enroll your child in a new school, they contact the old school and arrange delivery.

If you are renting, make sure your landlord knows about your departure ahead of time (this is best done in writing). In some cases, 30 days notice is required, even if the lease will expire. Most places required a one-month deposit when you moved in. Don't forget to ask for it back. Some apartments have a security deposit as well. Leaving your apartment in impeccable condition will help assure you receive it all back. If you pay utilities, call them to provide an address for the last bill and give them a specific date when you will no longer be responsible for the services at that address. Some utilities let you do this online. Keep detailed records so that if there are any inconsistencies, you can consult your notes and correspondence.



# Ann Arbor Family Days

## Family Days

March 8th-9th marks the fifth annual Family Days in Ann Arbor. Many of the events held around town are free, but some do cost money. One free event, for example, is a workshop to learn about Cambodian and Thai classical dance and mask making at the Ann

Arbor District Library from 10:00-11:00 am. After finishing the masks, you can join a parade down Main Street. Check out the website for more details: <http://www.annarbor.org/familydays/>.

## Hands-On Museum



Attendance for our last few graduate parent events has been great. This year more parents and children than ever attended the Hands-On Museum in January. Younger children spent the afternoon playing in the newly redesigned Toddler Room. They especially enjoyed playing with boats and buckets in the water area. Older children explored the science experiments and played in the ambulance.

If you are a fan of the Hands-On Museum, \$75 (\$70 if you buy online) will buy you a family season pass that even includes grandparents. For that price, three visits a year with the family pays it off.

## My Urban Toddler



Graduate Parent Fellow Dikshya Brubaker planned a wonderful birthday party for all of the graduate parents at My Urban Toddler in February. Children dressed up in their birthday outfits and celebrated a communal birthday party with a delicious cake. Children continued playing long after the event ended. Thanks so much to My Urban Toddler for accommodating us.

For those of you who still haven't experienced My Urban Toddler, there will be another event on March 21 (see pg. 1) as part of the U-M Early Childhood Playdate. Although this event isn't free, \$5.00 is an excellent value.

## Java Jungle



The Jungle Java Spring Break Event provided great fun for parents and kids still in Ann Arbor for Spring Break. The kids had an exciting time playing while parents chatted, drank lattes and talked about summer plans with fellow grad parents. A few brave parents crawled up into the play structure to play with the children. Some parents and most children left exhausted. Thanks everyone for coming out and getting in the spring break spirit!

## Upcoming Events

- March 15: Family Bowling at Colonial Lanes with Pizza, 3-5pm

### **A Note from our Graduate Parent Fellow, Dikshya Brubaker**

In Fall 2008, I took the role of a graduate parent fellow for Rackham not knowing much of what the job entailed. I did not know that many fellow graduate students were parents at Michigan. Therefore I did not know what to expect. However the anxiety quickly turned into joy as I started meeting the graduate parents at the different events I helped organize. Everyone I met was very friendly and was bringing out the best in one another by participating in events, bringing food to share at the picnic, sharing stories at the biweekly coffee-hours, joining the fun for the kids at the child and family-centered events and more. Being an event planner and social coordinator was the most fun job I could ever ask for. Since my responsibility was to plan and host the events, I had the good fortune of working with the very kind and supportive team at Rackham, mainly consisting of Darlene Ray-Johnson, Lynne Shivers, Annie Hesp and Danielle Harms. I know there are a lot more staff that make things happen in the background, therefore my apologies for not knowing your names forthright. However, here is a big thank you to all that you do, to make our time at Michigan fun and memorable.

The Rackham Graduate School Administration has been very supportive of us grad parents at Michigan and I want to thank them on behalf of all the parents as well, as I hear many compliments and appreciation from the parents and families at our events. We are not your typical students and it is great to know that Rackham and Michigan as a whole have recognized our unique journey through graduate school.

Last, but not the least, I hope you have a great experience at Michigan, academically and socially; connecting with fellow students and building relationships. A great way to do this is through the Rackham GradParent group on Facebook, the social networking site. This year it has grown considerably and we hope more of you will join the network. Even after you graduate, I hope you can remain in touch through the site and e-mails with one another, post updates, let us know what your family is up to, reminisce about old times and events and most of all, keep our Michigan spirit up.

I thank you for the opportunity to be a coordinator for the social events for you this year and hope to see even more of you in the events lined up for the rest of the semester. It's been an exhilarating year and it was truly an honor for me to be a part of this group. Thank you again for everything.

-Dikshya