

Save the Date Continued

February 20 • 12:30 pm–2:30 pm

Cooper Pediatrics, 3 Cooper Plaza, Suite 200

Family Literacy In-Service Topics

The History of President's Day

For more information about the Camden Campaign for Children's Literacy, please visit our web site:

<http://children.camden.rutgers.edu/literacy.htm>, or contact Angela Connor-Morris, Program Coordinator at (856) 225-6739.

February 21 • 12:30 pm

Camden Free Public Library, 4th and Federal Street

Storyteller Gerald Fierst presents "The American Spirit" in celebration of American History Month. Gerald Fierst portrays the oldest man in America, and, through his eyes, we experience the history of our nation with an emphasis on the vision, courage, and values of the people who shaped it. Explore the pageant of American history, including George Washington, Chief Sequoah, Sojourner Truth, the Wright Brothers, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King! For more information about the Camden Campaign for Children's Literacy, please visit our web site: <http://children.camden.rutgers.edu/literacy.htm>, or contact Angela Connor-Morris, Program Coordinator at (856) 225-6739.

February 26 • 4:30 pm-6:30 pm

6th Floor Faculty Lounge, Law School

Fifth meeting of the 2003-2004 Seminar series, "Rethinking Childhood in the Twenty-First Century." Dr. Ellen Handler Spitz presents "Picture Books and the Inner Lives of Children." For more information please contact Dr. Myra Bluebond-Langner, Director of the Center for Children and Childhood Studies at (856) 225-6741.

February 28 • 12:30 pm

Camden Free Public Library, 4th and Federal Street

Storyteller Queen Nur presents "No Mystery in Black History." In celebration of Black History Month, powerful stories come to the audience through historical African American tales. Values are indelibly remembered through lively African folktales. For more information about the Camden Campaign for Children's Literacy, please visit our web site: <http://children.camden.rutgers.edu/literacy.htm>, or contact Angela Connor-Morris, Program Coordinator at (856) 225-6739

March 6 • 12:30 pm

Camden Free Public Library, 4th and Federal Street

Storyteller Lamont Dixon presents "The Cat in the Hat" in celebration of Dr. Seuss' birthday. When the Cat in the Hat visits, the fun never ends! For more information about the Camden Campaign for Children's Literacy, please visit our web site: <http://children.camden.rutgers.edu/literacy.htm>, or contact Angela Connor-Morris, Program Coordinator at (856) 225-6739

March 11 • 12:20 pm-1:20 pm

Large Conference Room – Armitage Hall

Associates Seminar

Dr. Catie Coe presents, "Youth, Learning and the State in Ghana" For more information contact Sonia Krutzke, CCCS Administrator at (856) 225-6741.

March 13 • 12:30 pm

Camden Free Public Library, 4th and Federal Street

Storyteller Oni Lasana presents "Harriet Tubman:

Her Story" in celebration of Women's History Month. Based on the life of Araminta Harriet Ross Tubman, this storytelling experience will take you into the world of the most fearless woman who ever lived... from her childhood to adulthood! Oni Lasana presents a dramatic storytelling experience! For more information about the Camden Campaign for Children's Literacy, please visit our web site:

<http://children.camden.rutgers.edu/literacy.htm>, or contact Angela Connor-Morris, Program Coordinator at (856) 225-6739

March 25 • 4:30 pm-6:30 pm

6th Floor Faculty Lounge, Law School

Sixth meeting of the 2003-2004 Seminar series, "Rethinking Childhood in the Twenty-First Century." Dr. Loretta Bass presents "Making Sense of Children's Labor and Childhood in Sub-Saharan Africa." For more information please contact Dr. Myra Bluebond-Langner, Director of the Center for Children and Childhood Studies at (856) 225-6741.

March 27 • 12:30 pm

Camden Free Public Library, 4th and Federal Street

Storyteller Ed Stivender presents "Once Upon a Planet." Accompanying himself on banjo, fiddle, and harmonica, Ed tells stories from diverse cultures around the world, focusing on themes of Harmony, Temperance, and Fairness. Join in this musical storytelling experience! For more information about the Camden Campaign for Children's Literacy, please visit our web site:

<http://children.camden.rutgers.edu/literacy.htm>, or contact Angela Connor-Morris, Program Coordinator at (856) 225-6739



Rutgers University Center for Children and Childhood Studies



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The Childcare Literacy Training Initiative is off to a Great Start

By: Angela Connor-Morris, Senior Program Director-Service and Outreach



After months of planning with Camden City childcare directors, the Childcare Literacy Training Program got underway on September 7, 2003. During the month of September, six seminars were offered under the title "Who Are You in the Lives of Young Children? A Professional Development Seminar." The purpose of the seminar was to examine and discuss strategies that would enable the participants to develop a plan advocating for quality standards and professionalism in the field of early childhood studies.

Ninety-one staff members from thirty-three childcare centers participated in September's seminars. The Rutgers Center for Children and Childhood Studies is very proud to see this level of participation from the community. CCCS supplied free transportation to all direct care staff who attended the seminars, eliminating one of the biggest obstacles identified by childcare directors during the planning phases of the Camden Campaign for Children's Literacy.

Sherilynn Johnson Kimball, a seasoned trainer in the area of professional development with more than twenty years experience in education, administration and management was instrumental in constructing these seminars with special attention focused on the needs of the childcare staff in the city of Camden, New Jersey. Sherilynn also serves as Validator and Mentor for the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Accreditation Program. Most recently, Sherilynn has been selected to serve a three-year term on the Professional Development Council of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs.

Other directors involved in the planning of these seminars included Cheryl Williams of Camden Day Nursery, Martha McRae of Broadway Family Center, Diana Walker of Martin Luther King Center, Sue Leggoe of Partners in Parenting and Gloria Mitchell of Respond.

The Childcare Literacy Training Program provides Camden childcare professionals with 120 hours of classroom instruction so that they may obtain their Child Development Associate Certification. The program also provides participants with weekly mentoring and ongoing technical assistance to assist with the certification process. RU-CCCS has developed a key partnership with the New Jersey Professional Development Center by opening a satellite office onsite in January of 2004. Through this partnership, scholarship service and Camden city childcare center accreditation will be a key focus.

For more information regarding the Childcare Literacy Training Initiative or to receive a complete training schedule, please contact Angela Connor-Morris at (856) 225-6739 or visit our web site:

<http://children.camden.rutgers.edu/literacy.htm>.



Support for the Rutgers University Center for Children and Childhood Studies

The Rutgers University Center for Children and Childhood Studies gratefully acknowledges the support we have received from individuals, corporations, foundations, state and federal agencies. Contributions and grants are used to support various research, service and outreach programs, undergraduate and graduate education in childhood studies, as well as Center operations.

Funder Listing

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The Center depends on private contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations to carry out a wide variety of research, service and educational projects that meet the needs of children and those responsible for their development and well being. If you would like to make a contribution, kindly make a check payable to the Rutgers Foundation and send it to Rutgers University Development Office, 411 Cooper Street, Camden NJ 08102. Please note that you would like your gift to go to the Center for Children and Childhood Studies. Inquiries about making a bequest or other types of planned gifts should be directed to Sharon Beales at (856) 225-6324.

STARR Thanksgiving Event

By: Robert Atkins (Assistant Professor of Nursing, Temple University)

On November 23rd, the youth of the Camden STARR (Sports Teaching Adolescents Responsibility and Resiliency) Program conducted their annual Thanksgiving Turkey Basket community service project. For nearly a decade, STARR participants have purchased turkeys and other Thanksgiving delights (e.g., pumpkin pie, cranberry sauce, stuffing, onions, green beans, yams, fruit, etc.), assembled the baskets at St. John's Baptist Church in Camden, and delivered the baskets to needy families in the city. This year the members of STARR delivered baskets to 20 families. STARR participants have the opportunity to do other community service work during the year but they seem to derive an especially deep sense of accomplishment from delivering the turkey baskets to needy families. As one long-time STARR participant described the turkey basket project, "I like doing this. It makes me feel good to help people who need it."



STARR meets year-round at 9 a.m. on Saturdays at Dudley Grange Park in Camden for a morning of team-building soccer games. For more information, visit the STARR program online at <http://hart.camden.rutgers.edu/STARR/index.html>.

Literacy Campaign Yields Results: Camden Childhood Studies Program Combines Scholarship and Outreach

By: Melissa Payton - Focus

Just three years after it was founded, the Rutgers-Camden Center for Children and Childhood Studies is having a measurable impact, not only on scholarship, but also on the lives of children and families in the surrounding community.

For example, from January 2001 to September 2003, the center, through its Camden Campaign for Children's Literacy, has:

- distributed 69,177 books to children and libraries. The total includes more than 6,000 new books given to children by their physicians at each well child visit.
- signed up more than 1,000 children for free pre-school under the Abbott mandate requiring that school districts offer such programs to poor children.
- helped more than 100 child-care workers receive nationally recognized Child Development Associate certification through special training.
- referred more than 300 parents to Literacy Volunteers of America for literacy training.

At the same time, the center has promoted and encouraged research on children and overseen the undergraduate courses leading to a minor in childhood studies.

"We believe that childhood studies will be to this century what women's studies was to the end of the last century," said director Myra Bluebond-Langner, professor of anthropology. "What makes our center unique is our multidisciplinary emphasis and that we've taken on this threefold mission."

That three-pronged approach — involving scholarship, service and outreach programs, and undergraduate courses — has helped win the center support from dozens of foundations, individuals and federal and state agencies. The John S. & James L. Knight Foundation has given the Camden literacy campaign \$650,000 so far.

The center sponsors nearly a dozen outreach programs dealing with local public schools, museums, recreation and health issues, but its signature project is the Camden literacy campaign. The six initiatives within the campaign are designed to address the needs of children in Camden, 80 percent of whom live in poverty, according to Bluebond-Langner.

Angela Connor-Morris, the childhood studies center's coordinator of service and outreach programs, directs the literacy campaign. In addition to the Prescription for Reading Program that makes sure children get a new book at each well-child doctor's visit, the Parental Literacy Program trains nurses and physicians to refer parents with literacy problems to the Literacy Volunteers of America for help. The Library Outreach Initiative has beefed up program offerings and holdings at Camden libraries, leading to a card registration increase of 38 percent and circulation increase of 26 percent from 2001 to 2003, Bluebond-Langner said.

The Abbott Preschool Outreach and Registration Initiative was modeled after the success of Healthy Futures for Camden Youth, a program led by Dan Hart, professor of psychology and associate dean of the Rutgers-Camden College of Arts and Sciences. Five years ago, Hart started organizing young Americorps volunteers to go door to door in Camden, signing up families for NJ KidCare, the state-funded health insurance program aimed at low-income families. (The state program has since been renamed NJ Family Care.)

The Abbott Preschool program has increased local preschool enrollment by 22 percent, Bluebond-Langner said, and brought needed state funds to Camden. Meanwhile, Hart's Healthy Futures program, which is also sponsored by CCCS, is going strong as well. Hart said the center's ability to combine research and outreach sets it apart.

"Ofentimes at universities, these centers morph into just applied social science or into institutes that are providing service but don't have a research component," he said. Not only has CCCS been able to ensure that its social service programs have a research basis, but "Myra has done a good job in making it genuinely

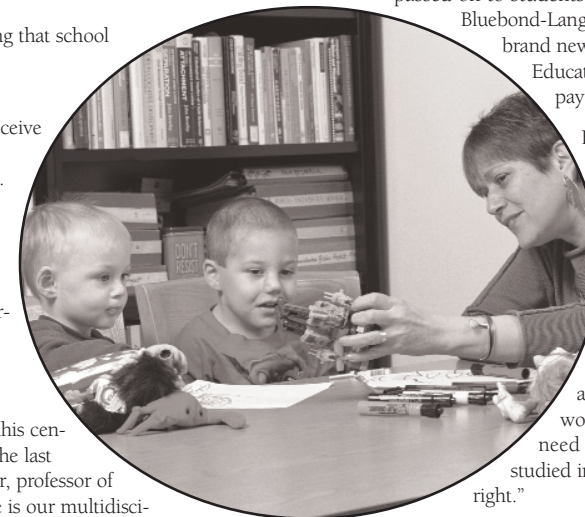
interdisciplinary," Hart said. "She has worked very hard to keep history, philosophy and English all involved."

He cited the center's well attended "Remembering Childhood" speakers series this fall, in which celebrated authors Faith Ringgold, Tanya Maria Barrientos and Michael Chabon discussed their views of childhood as reflected in their works.

"We believe that good research informs good service and outreach projects, and policy development," Bluebond-Langner said. "Then the things that are learned are passed on to students and others who can use them."

Bluebond-Langner, who came to the Camden campus 30 years ago as a brand new Ph.D., is a pioneer in what the Chronicle of Higher Education in 2000 called "the small but growing movement to pay heed to the experiences of children."

Her first book, *The Private Worlds of Dying Children* (Princeton University Press, 1978), won the Margaret Mead Award from the American Anthropological Association and is considered a classic in its field. *In the Shadow of Illness* (Princeton University Press, 1996) looked at the parents and well siblings of children with cystic fibrosis. Currently, she is working on a study about decision-making for children with cancer when a cure is unlikely. Children are not merely the "passive recipients of action," she said. "They're also active agents. Children are the creators of their own worlds as well as part of the worlds of others. They need to be studied in their own right and their voices heard in their own right."



The Center for Children and Childhood Studies was formed in 2000 when Bluebond-Langner, College of Arts and Sciences Dean Margaret Marsh and other faculty members realized that childhood research was particularly strong on the Camden campus. Provost Roger Dennis said the success of the childhood studies center is especially important for a small campus like Camden. "We need to look for those instances where we can be on the leading edge, ahead of trends rather than following," he said. "If we're going to be world class, which we want to be, we need to find places where we have the ability to be cutting edge and be first — the 'first actor' phenomenon. I'm excited that we discovered that we had this strength across the faculty in this field."

The center now lists 40 faculty associates, some of whom are conducting research on subjects ranging from representation of adoption in children's literature, to studies of children's ethnic identity and studies of children whose parents are incarcerated.

With Rutgers University Press, the center has launched a well-regarded book series that has just published three new volumes — on race and the classroom, children coping with chronic illness and children's views of the troubles in Northern Ireland — and has more on the way.

The center sponsors a monthly seminar to let Camden faculty members discuss their research progress with their colleagues. A regional seminar series on childhood studies brings in outside scholars.

Bluebond-Langner hopes Rutgers-Camden will eventually offer a master's and the nation's first Ph.D. in children's studies. She would also like the campus to become a center for scholars in childhood studies and offer scholar-in-residence programs.

"We should be an intellectual center in the community, with research informing service and outreach, and service and outreach programs being evaluated. All this information should be disseminated, not only to students but also to the public and those involved with the care of children," she said. "I want to see Rutgers as a destination point in childhood studies."

For more information about the Center for Children and Childhood Studies please contact: Dr. Myra Bluebond-Langner, Director, Rutgers University Center for Children and Childhood Studies, 326 Penn St., Campus Center, East Wing, Camden, NJ 08102, Tel: (856) 225-6741 Email: bluebond@camden.rutgers.edu or visit CCCS' website at: <http://children.camden.rutgers.edu>.

Bluebond-Langner Presents Work on Decision Making for Children at CCCS's Associates Seminar



Dr. Myra Bluebond-Langner, Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and Director for the Center for the Children and Childhood Studies presented preliminary findings of her study, "Choiceless Choices: Decision Making for Children with Cancer When Cure is Not Likely" at the CCCS Associates Seminar held in October. Her study is a three year bi-national ethnographic participant-observation study of the decision making process for children who have been diagnosed with cancer and whose cancer has recurred.

Dr. Bluebond-Langner stated that it is important to note that though the prognosis for children with cancer has greatly improved over the last thirty years, still sadly a third of these children will die from their disease. For a vast majority of these children, the realization that they will not be cured comes after a period of aggressive therapy, often with devastating side effects. It is at this point in the trajectory of the illness that parents, physicians, and sometimes the children themselves are faced with the agonizing choice of how to proceed with treatment. The choices include enrolling in a phase I clinical trial (dose escalation not efficacy), the use of a personalized management plan (perhaps a second or third line chemotherapy that in the past has been used to

treat this particular type of cancer but has not been found to be as effective as the initial treatment), a more aggressive therapy (not necessarily a trial) or palliative care (comfort measures). For these families the outcomes of further treatment must be weighed against the costs---in all dimensions: physical, emotional, social and even economic. Their decisions go beyond calculation of risk and benefit. Their decisions must also include and depend upon cultural values and meanings.

Dr. Bluebond-Langner's study focuses on the norms and values of the society, culture and institutions where the decision making takes place, each individual's life experiences, and their interpretations of their and others roles and responsibilities, the patients and parents understanding of the patient's condition, prognosis and options, as well as what sources of information are available to them. Its goal is to provide a rich detailed description of the entire decision making process that would serve as a basis for not only a socio-cultural and ethical analysis of the process but also for recommendations for policy and practice.

For more information about this seminar series, please visit our website: <http://children.camden.rutgers.edu> or call Sonia Krutzke at (856) 225-6741.



Maria Kefalas Presents Research at CCCS Regional Seminar Series

The second seminar in the Center for Children and Childhood Studies Regional Seminar Series, "Rethinking Childhood in the Twenty-First Century" was held on October 23. Maria Kefalas, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Saint Joseph's University presented the paper, "Labor of Love: What Good Mothers Do: Low-Income White, African American, and Latina Mothers' Childrearing Strategies and Philosophies."

Dr. Kefalas' paper focused on analysis of repeated open-ended interviews with low-income single mothers ranging in age from 15 to 50, paying particular attention to their childrearing strategies and philosophies in raising children in high crime and high poverty inner city communities (Camden NJ, and Philadelphia, PA). Her study investigated these women's accounts as to what mothers "do" for their children, how they protect their children, the role education plays in their lives and what hopes and dreams they hold for their children.

She found that while middle-class observers often focus on what low-income mothers cannot provide for their children these mothers celebrate the everyday heroics required to keep their children safe, fed, clothed and out of trouble. In a philosophy mothers describe as "being there" mothers who know the odds are stacked against them understand that a good mother is someone who "holds" on to her children and supports them no matter what the future might hold.

So while these women struggle and strive in order to have their children succeed, a woman can still be a good mother in her own eyes and in the eyes of her community even when her children lose their way (because of drugs, violence, criminal behavior, school failure, or early childbearing). After all, a good mother's primary goal is to "hold on" and "be there" for her children no matter what their outcomes.

Dr. Kefalas along with her co-investigator, Kathy Edin will be publishing the results of their study in a book entitled, *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage*. It is being published by the University of California Press in 2004.

For more information about this seminar series, please visit our website: <http://children.camden.rutgers.edu> or call Nancy Southerland at (856) 225-6741.



Barrientos Discusses Bi-Cultural Upbringing and Novels at Second Remembering Childhood Lecture

By: Cathy Karmilowicz, Rutgers-Camden public information office

On Oct. 15, novelist Tanya Maria Barrientos served as the second featured speaker in the Center for Children and Childhood Studies, *Remembering Childhood: Meet the Authors, Hear Their Stories* lecture series held in the Rutgers-Camden Gordon Theater.

Barrientos led attendees through the bi-cultural worlds of her childhood, and her novels, *Frontera Street* and the recently published *Family Resemblance*. Born in Guatemala and raised in the Texas border town of El Paso, Barrientos discussed how her novels are greatly inspired from her childhood experiences. She read from both novels.



Particularly poignant was a passage Barrientos read from *Family Resemblance*, where the novel's heroine Nita Deleon, reflects on the day her father passed his immigration exam, and recalled hearing for the first time about the 1954 coup in

Guatemala. For Barrientos, this literary experience illuminated real-life experience; her parents still do not talk in depth about their earlier lives in Guatemala. Through researching this period of history for her novel, Barrientos, much like her character, Nita, learned about her heritage, and the risks her parents took in bringing her to the United States.

A journalist for more than 20 years, Barrientos is a staff writer at the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, where she pens the column "Unconventional Wisdom" which appears every Saturday. Her fiction has been awarded a 2001 fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts and a 2001 Pew Fellowship in the Arts. She is currently working on a new novel.



In the News

*Dr. Holly Blackford (Assistant Professor, English) presented, "Beyond Identity Politics, Beyond Harry Potter: The Surprising Formalist Reading Practices of Girls 8-16," at the conference of the National Council of Teachers of English in San Francisco, California in November.

*Dr. Myra Bluebond-Langner (Distinguished Professor, Anthropology; Director, Center for Children and Childhood Studies) was awarded an NEH Fellowship for "Choiceless Choices: Decision Making for Children with Cancer When Cure is Not Likely."

Dr. Bluebond-Langner is the recipient of a \$5,000 Rutgers University Dialogues Grant for the project, "Toward a Better Integration of History into the Undergraduate Childhood Studies Program."

*Dr. Cindy Dell Clark (Assistant Professor, Human Development and Family Studies - Penn State), was interviewed for the Comcast Cable "Newsmakers" program. November is National Diabetes month and Dell Clark was interviewed on how children cope with diabetes, the focus of her recently published book, *In Sickness and in Play* (Rutgers University Press, 2003).

*Dr. Sheila Cosminsky (Associate Professor, Anthropology) and Diane Markowitz (Associate Professor, Geography & Anthropology) gave presentations on childhood obesity to the Gloucester County Social Service's migrant parent's meeting at schools in Bridgeton, NJ and Hammonton, NJ in November.

*Dr. Ted Goertzel (Professor, Sociology) gave a presentation on his new book, *Cradles of Eminence: Childhoods of More than Four Hundred Famous Men and Women* (Second Edition, Great Potential Press, Inc. 2003) at the National Association for Gifted

Children conference in Indianapolis in November.

*Dr. Janet Golden (Associate Professor, History) recently served as historical consultant at the McCord Museum in Montreal where an exhibit on the history of childhood in Montreal is set to open in October 2004.

*Dr. Drew Humphries (Professor, Criminal Justice) was awarded the Distinguished Scholar Award from the American Society of Criminology's Division on Women and Crime at the organization's annual meeting in Denver in November.

*Dr. Jane Siegel (Assistant Professor, Criminal Justice) presented, "Fighting Behavior of Female Offenders' Daughters" at the American Society of Criminology Conference in Denver in November.

*Dr. Siegel co-authored a paper entitled, "The Impact of Complex Trauma and Depression on Parenting: An Exploration of Mediating Risk and Protective Factors," which was recently published in the journal *Child Maltreatment*.

*Dr. Bill Whitlow (Professor, Psychology) is a recipient of a \$5,000 Rutgers University Dialogues Grant for the project, "Developing a Research-Based Childhood Studies Course on Lead Poisoning and Children."

*The Center for Children and Childhood Studies is the recipient of a \$330,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The grant supports the Camden Campaign for Children's Literacy's Child Care Training Initiative: Phase II project.

*CCCS has received a \$25,000 grant from the Kurr Foundation for general support of the Center's work.

Tom Donnelly Presents Research on Civic Engagement at CCCS Associates Seminar

Thomas M. Donnelly (Rutgers University) presented "Promoting Adult Voting and Volunteering Through High School Community Service and Extracurricular Activities" at the CCCS Associates Seminar in November. His presentation was based on his work with Daniel Hart (Rutgers University), James Youniss (Catholic University) and Robert Atkins (Temple University) in which they examined the influence of high school community service participation, extracurricular involvement, civic knowledge, and civic attitudes on voting and volunteering 8 years after high school using the National Educational Longitudinal Study.

Initial findings suggest that community service and extracurricular activity in high school had substantial effects on adult civic participation, while civic knowledge and attitudes had lesser effects. Both voluntary and school-required service were associated with increased adult civic engagement. The type of extracurricular activity (instrumental vs. expressive) and leadership status were related to adult voting and volunteering. The findings suggest that required service is beneficial, not detrimental, and that extracurricular involvement is associated with positive civic engagement.

For more information about this seminar series, please visit our website: <http://children.camden.rutgers.edu> or call Sonia Krutzke at (856) 225-6741.



Rutgers Press Announces Publication of Fourth Book in Childhood Studies Series



Dr. Myra Bluebond-Langner, series editor of the Rutgers University Press Series in Childhood Studies and Director of the Center for Children and Childhood Studies is pleased to announce the publication of its fourth book in the Childhood Studies Series, *Rethinking Childhood* edited by Peter B. Pufall (professor of psychology at Smith College and co-editor with Harry Beilin of *Piaget's Theory: Prospects and Possibilities*) and Richard P. Unsworth (senior fellow of the Kahn Liberal Arts Institute at Smith College, dean of the chapel and professor of Religion). *Rethinking Childhood* is a multidisciplinary collection of essays in the emerging field of childhood studies.

Being a child in American society can be problematic. Twenty percent of American children live in poverty, parents are divorcing at high rates, and educational institutions are not always fulfilling their goals. Against this backdrop, children are often patronized or idealized by adults. Rarely do we look for the strengths within children that can serve as the foundation for growth and development. In *Rethinking Childhood*, twenty contributors, coming from the disciplines of anthropology, government, law, psychology, education, religion, philosophy, and sociology, provide a multidisciplinary view of childhood by listening and understanding the ways children shape their own futures. Topics include education, poverty, family life, divorce, neighborhood life, sports, the Internet, and legal status. In all these areas, children have both voice and agency. They construct their own social networks and social reality, sort out their own values, and assess and cope with the perplexing world around them. The contributors present ideas that lead not only to new analyses but also to innovative policy applications. Taken together, these essays develop a new paradigm for understanding childhood as children experience these years. This paradigm challenges readers to develop fresh ways of listening to children's voices that enable both children and adults to cross the barriers of age, experience, and stereotyping that make communication difficult.

For ordering or other information on these and other books published by Rutgers University Press, please visit <http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu> or call 1-800-446-9323. For more information on the RUP Series in Childhood Studies, please visit http://children.camden.rutgers.edu/RUbook_series.htm.

Award Winning Novelist Michael Chabon Concludes Lecture Series with Talk on Golems, Childhood, and the Power of Storytelling

By: Cathy Karmilowicz, Rutgers-Camden public information office



On Nov. 19, world-renowned author Michael Chabon concluded the Center for Children and Childhood Studies *Remembering Childhood: Meet the Authors, Hear Their Stories* lecture series held at the Rutgers-Camden Gordon Theater. The Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist discussed childhood run-ins with golems, a family lineage that, according to his father, includes Houdini and Napoleon, and above all, why stories make life so much better.

His lecture was titled, "Golems I have Known; or Why my Elder Son's Middle Name is Napoleon." Chabon's repeated encounters with the golem - which according to Jewish folklore is an inanimate, often clay, mold of a man that can be brought to life under the right mystical circumstances - emphasized both his religious heritage, as well as his storytelling legacy.

Chabon recalled gaining from his father's far-fetched stories, "the sense of incredible connectedness." The other family Chabon discussed was, of course, the literary family he acquired through reading. When finished writing one of his first short stories - closely stylized after that of Sir Conan Doyle - Chabon, after receiving praise from his birth family, recalled the pleasure of mentally stepping into a room where his favorite authors seemed to have been waiting for him. Closing the lecture, Chabon remarked, "I'm still carrying the burden of those stories, and of course, I'm still lying."

In 2001, Chabon's *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. The book chronicles the coming of age

of two Jewish cousins during World War II America - Josef Kavalier, a Czech immigrant who fled the Nazis, and Sammy Klayman, an aspiring comic book writer - who join forces to create a new super hero named The Escapist.

Chabon is currently making his debut into comic book writing with the anthology, *Michael Chabon Presents... The Amazing Adventures of the Escapist*, which follows the super hero introduced in the award-winning novel. The anthology will appear quarterly, and its first edition is scheduled to hit comic book shelves mid-December.

Joining the ranks of the comic book film genre, like this year's *American Splendor*, co-written by Rutgers-Camden grad Robert Pulcini, Chabon has finished his tenth draft of the screenplay for *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* - what many have called a book about the history of comic books - for Scott Rudin Productions and Paramount Pictures. About the screenwriting process, Chabon says, "It's like trying to adapt a cow into a walrus, you could probably do it, but it would be a really bloody, fallible mess. You have to pretend that it was never a cow to begin with." It's hard to forget a Pulitzer Prize-winning cow; Stephen Daldry, of *The Hours* and *Billy Elliot*, will direct the walrus.

Chabon's book *Wonder Boys* was turned into an Oscar-nominated film released in 2000. Other published works from Chabon include *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh* and *A Model World and Other Stories*. Born in Washington, D.C., and raised in Columbia, Maryland, Chabon read omnivorously during childhood, from comic books to the classics. He currently resides in Berkeley with his wife, a mystery writer, and his four children; they just finished reading *Treasure Island* as a family.

Kimberly Scott Presents Research on African American and Latina Girls Collectivism at CCCS Regional Seminar



"Roosevelt reeling!" "Roosevelt buildings judged unsafe." "After a day of turbulence, Regents oust the school board in Roosevelt." These are some of the headlines describing Roosevelt--the only district in New York currently operated by the State Education Department. During the 2001-2002 academic year, Dr. Scott became the sole researcher allowed access to this publicly scrutinized predominantly African-American setting (89% African-American; 11% Latino). Interested in examining how sixth-grade African-American and Latina girls make sense

of their educational experiences in a State-operated district, she gained access to two of Roosevelt's elementary schools. Black Feminist Theory shaped the contours of this multi-method study. A modified version of grounded theory analysis allowed four themes to emerge. Her presentation at CCCS' regional seminar focused on the theme of belongingness.

Referring to girls' desire to feel kinship with other girls, the sense of belongingness depended upon the individual school context. In one school, Davis Michael Elementary School (DM), the school climate emphasized student autonomy, female empowerment, female group interdependency, and Afrocentricity. Among all three of DM's sixth-grade classrooms, the girls located in this context tended to place great value on establishing and maintaining a strong female network, had a strong sense of their future academic and professional aspirations, and were motivated to oppose the negative reports of

Roosevelt with their own academic and social accomplishments. Importantly, the teachers in DM held very high expectations with a "no nonsense" attitude that focused on the girls' academic, social, and cultural development.

The second school resembled a typical (urban) school setting. That is, Carter Elementary School's climate encouraged individuality. Among this setting's three sixth-grade classrooms, the Carter's girls believed friends were important just as their DM correlates. However, rather than identifying peers as members of a formidable collective, Carter participants characterized their relationships as fragile dyadic or triadic associations. With a much greater concern on their present-day cultural happenings, the Carter girls had difficulty articulating future goals. Additionally, the girls felt disempowered by the negative press coverage. The teachers in this school did little to address these or other social and cultural concerns.

Variance between the schools did not affect student achievement or perceived social skills. In light of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation currently sweeping this nation, these findings proffer various questions about achievement, social development, and teacher qualifications for Black and Latina female students in this State-controlled district. Now in Year Three of a longitudinal project, Dr. Scott anticipates continuing her pursuit of these and other areas of interest until the girls graduate from Roosevelt's High School.

For more information about this seminar series, please visit our website: <http://children.camden.rutgers.edu> or call Nancy Southerland at (856) 225-6741.