

Arlington Family Connection

supporting children age six and under and those who care for them



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www.arlingtonfamilyconnection.org



National Stand for Children group lobbies for children

by Vicki Ford
Member of Stand for Children, First Parish Team

Stand for Children is a national, grassroots organization working to give greater political voice to issues that affect children through the power of speaking collectively. Currently there are Stand for Children chapters in Oregon, Tennessee, and Massachusetts. An Arlington chapter has recently formed (*see article at right*).

Since 1999, Stand has advocated for and secured more than \$181 million for schools and children's programs using its grassroots organizing model. Programs range from low-cost, volunteer programs to major budget initiatives. The Washington County, Ore., chapter, for example, organized a program of volunteer dentists to serve the district's elementary and middle schools after learning that dental needs are the main reason nationwide for missed schooldays.

Elsewhere, Stand has been instrumental in establishing Early Childhood Education programs for children and training for teachers. In 2004, the two-year-old Stand chapter in Lexington, Mass., was instrumental in restoring and preserving \$3.27 million for Lexington's schools and almost \$1 million for other programs. This allowed Lexington's schools to maintain reasonable class sizes, restore foreign language, art, music, and physical education programs, and save special education tutoring. It enabled the town to fund or restore programs in social services, the town library (including accreditation and access to state funds), wheelchair-accessible public transportation, public works, and public safety.

While Stand staff facilitate the processes of identification and analysis of proposed actions, and implementation of the action chosen, the actual fact-finding and decision making are the work of the chapter membership. This is key to the organization's effectiveness and success. Each chapter is comprised of teams, which identify and study issues of interest for the chapter's strategy team (ST) to consider. The ST, comprised of two or three volunteer

National Chapter, cont. page 2

Local chapter has 100 members in Arlington

by Vicki Ford
Member of Stand for Children, First Parish Team

Formed only last year, the Arlington chapter of Stand for Children already has more than 100 members. Collectively, the chapter has selected its first issue: to lobby on behalf of Arlington's children for adequate funding of essential children's services in town. These services include the town library, the Arlington Youth Consultation Center, and public school programs.

The issue of adequate funding was chosen because the level of state and federal aid to the town is not going to rise significantly, and the size of the town's structural deficit is large -- almost \$50 million over the next five years. If nothing is done, this shortfall will necessitate more cuts to services provided to children in Arlington. For example, town library services may be curtailed even more and there is the possibility of the loss of accreditation. Without accreditation, the library cannot apply for state and federal library funds or participate in interlibrary loans.

Another vital organization that could be severely affected by cuts is the Arlington Youth Consultation Center (AYCC). AYCC provides counseling services to Arlington children from preschool to adolescence, as well as to parents, grandparents, guardians and caretakers. AYCC deals with a wide range of problems, including family crises and violence, school adjustment, abuse and neglect, alcohol and drug abuse, and depression. In recent years, the AYCC has had to cut its caseload and reduce time per case in the face of increasing demand and decreased funds. More cuts may follow.

In our schools, the student population is increasing in the lower grades relative to the high school, which will put

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Submissions deadline for the Feb. issue is Jan. 14. Email articles to newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org
Calendar items to calendar@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

National group has winning model

National Chapter, *cont. from page 1*

team coordinators per team, reviews and shapes the various issues into a cohesive action and then presents it back to the chapter for a vote. All Stand chapters follow the same set of criteria for selecting an action issue.

Is that issue:

- * easy to describe?
- * achievable given the pros and cons known at the time?
- * broadly and deeply felt by the chapter's membership?

More than 50 percent of the chapter membership must participate in the vote, and more than 80 percent must vote "yes" for a vote to pass. Thus we are truly a membership-driven organization where each voice counts! Once an issue has been selected, we all come together to work on that issue's campaign. The chapter might also decide to continue fact-finding about other issues to have a wealth of well-developed issues for subsequent campaigns.

For more information, visit <http://www.stand.org>, there is also a link to the local Arlington chapter.

Vicki Ford and her husband, Larry, have made Arlington their home for more than a decade. She welcomes feedback at vford@att.net

Local chapter is growing

Local Chapter, *cont. from page 1*

more demand on teachers and classroom resources. Arlington school programs have experienced considerable uncertainty in recent years as some programs have been removed and then only partially restored. AFC members who get involved with Stand for Children now, while their children are very young, have the potential to set significant changes in place by the time their children enter the public school system.

How can you get involved in Stand for Children? Like everyone else, current Stand members tend to be stressed for time and energy. But our team framework allows new members to become a part of Stand without being pushed into a heavy volunteer commitment until one feels ready, willing and able. Monthly meetings stay within a strict 90 minute timeframe and discussions are thoughtful and productive. Members step in for each other on tasks when necessary, and the teamwork works!

Arlington's 100-plus members are divided into four teams shown below. While the Calvary Church and First Parish teams are "church-based" (part of a "social justice" framework), they are open to non-church members. Likewise, the other

two teams are open to all members of the community, despite their school-based or geography-based affiliations. You may sample as many team meetings as you wish before selecting which one to join.

January team meetings will be important to launching our first campaign, so now is a great time to join. The meeting schedule is as follows:

Turkey Hill Team

Sunday, Jan. 9, 7pm
Home of Judi Paradis, 143 Forest St.

Arlington High School Team

Tuesday, Jan. 11, 7pm
Home of Tracy Gesser, 6 Revere St

First Parish Team

Wednesday, Jan. 12, 7pm
First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington
Intersection of Mass. Ave/Rte. 60

Calvary Church Team

Thursday, Jan. 13, 7:30pm
Calvary United Methodist Church
300 Mass. Ave

For more information, contact Liz Monnin at liz@stand.org or visit the national Stand for Children website at <http://www.stand.org>. There is a link to the Arlington chapter.

AFC Steering Committee Members

Karen Donovan, Webmaster, 781 777-1011
webmaster@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Betsy Lawson, Newsletter, 781 646-5812
newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Justine Lynch, Treasurer, 781 648-0006
treasurer@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Debra Reardon, Community Service, 781 643-2081
community@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Ruth Schmidt, Membership, 781 643-2362
membership@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Note: The Steering Committee always invites new members to join. A volunteer is especially needed to serve as clerk for the next few months. Please join us for our next meeting, Tuesday, Jan. 11 at 7:30pm. See Save the Dates!

Editorial policy

The **Arlington Family Connection** (AFC) newsletter is published monthly and is free with membership. Published articles reflect the views of the respective authors and do not necessarily represent the views of AFC. Childcare, healthcare and legal information is provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended as a substitute for medical or professional advice. Always consult your own healthcare provider for any decisions relating to your child's well being. Copyright remains with the individual author for bylined articles. All other materials are copyright **Arlington Family Connection**, 2005. Permission is granted to reproduce articles for which copyright is held by AFC provided appropriate credit is given and no fee is charged. The AFC newsletter accepts submissions from AFC members on issues relevant to families with children six and under. The editorial board reserves the right to refuse submissions for any reason. Send editorial submissions to: newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org; calendar listings to calendar@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org.

What impact are you having every day?

by *Melissa Lucius*

You know those handy liquid soap dispensers that are all the rage these days, that adorn lots of household bathroom sinks? I got to thinking how a seemingly small thing like this impacts the environment. Maybe I have too much time on my hands, but I did the math: let's say that the average household buys 2 soap dispensers per month vs. 2 old fashioned bars of soap. Over a 50 year period, that's 150 pounds of empty soap dispensers that go in the trash/recycle bin. Compare this to the 8 pounds of bar soap wrappers that go in the trash/recycle bin. Wow... when you look at the impact over a long period, you can see how a seemingly small thing like this makes a real dent! And that's just one product, for one family.



Of course we can reduce the dent by doing things like recycling. It's a great system, but even if you throw the empty dispenser into the bin, the process has just begun. It takes lots of resources (a collector to come and pick it up from the curb, gas to drive it to the recycler, machines to turn the plastic into another product, etc.). Recycling one little dispenser is just a drop in the bucket, but imagine how many resources it would take to process those 150 pounds of dispensers! It's earth-friendlier to use less in the first place (some call it pre-cycling), or use a less impactful product.

All this made me realize how it's important to make sure that the things we do every day, several times a day, day after day, are environmentally friendly. Sure, it's a good idea to make sure that everything we do is environmentally friendly, but especially the things we do frequently. If you're already into the habit of recycling your paper and plastic goods, it doesn't matter so much if you throw one empty water bottle into the trash when you're on the run. If you're already into the habit of buying organic foods,

it's not the end of the world if you drink some hormone-laden milk.

The trick is to examine your day-to-day habits and see how they're impacting the environment. Look at all the products in your house, and how often you use them. How would it all add up at the end of your lifetime? Paper towels? Detergent? Tissues? For example, I don't use biodegradable detergent and I don't have an especially energy-efficient washing machine, but I only do 2 loads of laundry a week. On the other hand, we eat lots of fruit at our house, and I make sure it's organic.

These seemingly small things really add up over a lifetime. And what adds up even more are the not-so-small things. Apparently, snowmobiles are really environmentally unfriendly. But I will probably ride a snowmobile only once in my life, so I'm not so worried about the impact of that one ride. However, how many gallons of gas will I use, driving all the cars I will own over my lifetime? That's a lot of pollution to hand down as a legacy to my daughters. So I try to minimize it by having a fuel-efficient car, and only one.

— *Melissa has 2 daughters and is a project manager at a software consulting company. Please send any feedback you have to mrlucius@rcn.com.*

Help Wanted--Want the chance to edit a publication that serves the needs of parents of young children in Arlington? AFC is looking for a new newsletter editor beginning with the March 2005 issue. Training, help and encouragement provided. Interested? Don't delay, contact: newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Calendar

Special Events for Families

SteveSongs Concerts

<http://www.stevesongs.com>

- *Jan. 8, 10:30am* – Arl. Heights Nursery School Fundraiser, Cavalry Church, 300 Mass. Ave., Arl., \$7 (family max \$28). Tickets on sale Jan. 5 at 127 Lowell St., Arl. Info: 781-646-8499.
- *Jan. 17, 9:30am & 12noon* – Temple Emunah Preschool Fundraiser, 9 Piper Rd., Lexington. \$5/advance, \$7/door. Free under age 2. Info: 781-861-0708.
- *Jan. 30, 3pm* – KidSpace Fundraiser, Payson Park Church, 364 Belmont St., Belmont. \$5/advance, \$7/door. Free under age 1. Info: 617-484-0855.

Exploring Music & Movement

Sat. Jan. 8 & 15, 10am. Robbins Library. Ages 4-7. An exciting program of creative movement with music led by Arnie Harris. Free. Sign up for one or both workshops beginning Dec. 27. Info: 781-316-3234.

Sparky's Puppets

Sat. Jan. 8, 2pm. National Heritage Museum, 33 Marrett Rd., Rt. 2A, Lexington. The Three Pigs and others travel to the West and meet a sneaky coyote and sly outlaw. \$8/adult, \$6/child. Info: 781-861-6559, <http://www.monh.org>

Rick Goldin Concert

Sat. Jan. 22, 10:30am. Park Ave.

Congregational Church, 50 Paul Revere Rd., Arl. "It's Winter!", music and puppet show. Fundraiser for Community Nursery School of Lexington. \$6/person, free under age 1. Available in advance at Catch a Falling Star and Michelson's Shoes in Lexington Center. Info: Linda, 781-274-0194, www.rickgoldin.com.

Freedom and Songs – Remembrance of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Sat. Jan. 22, 2pm. Robbins Library. Ages 5 & up and families. Presented by Valerie Stephens. Songs and stories that illustrate the courage of those who fought for freedom. Space limited; tickets available starting Jan. 20. Free. Info: 781-316-3234.

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In-Defense KIDS Safety Program

Four consecutive Saturdays starting Feb. 5, 12:30-3pm. Ages 5-7. The program covers home, school, out-and-about, and vehicle safety, stranger tricks, personal safety and defense against abduction. \$129/child, reduced fees for additional children. Info: 781-643-7353, Cheryl@indefenseboston.org

Arlington Center for the Arts Vacation Program

Feb. 21-25, 8:30am-3:30pm with extended day option. 5-day session with a Carnival! theme where kids can make masks & costumes, music & dance. The week will culminate in a parade of huge sculptures celebrating Carnival. Register early as spaces fill up. Ages 5-11. \$245/members, \$265/non-members. Info: 781-648-6220, <http://www.acarts.org/classes.php>

Sing-alongs

Mondays

5pm. Finagle a Bagel, 91 Middlesex Tpke., Burlington. Ed Morgan performs a selection of fun original and classic children's songs. Free. Info: 781-273-6500, <http://www.finagleabagel.com>

Tuesdays

10am. Robbins Library, Arl. Babies to 36 months. Join either Liz Buchanan or Sulinha for songs and singing games. Space is limited; tickets available at 9am. Free. Info: 781-316-3198.

Thursday, Jan. 6

10am. Fox Library, Arl. For pre-school children of all ages. Join Liz Buchanan for songs and singing games. Free. Info: 781-316-3198.

Second & fourth Friday of the month.

Sing-along with Diane Taraz. 10-10:30am, Calvary United Methodist Church, 300 Mass Ave, Arlington. \$1. Info: 781-648-3719, <http://www.dianetaraz.com>

Saturdays

11am. Stellabella Toys, 1360 Cambridge St., Inman Sq., Cambridge. Join local musicians to sing songs and play games. All ages. Free. Info: 617-491-6290.

Library Storytimes

UPDATE! Mondays, Jan. 10, 24, 31 10:30am **OR** 11am. Robbins Library, Arl. *Due to popularity, we will offer two sessions, each limited to 12 children. Tickets available day of the program.*

Drop-in for ages 18mo.-3yrs. with an adult. Stories, rhymes and fingerplays, followed by play, simple craft, and socializing. Info: 781-316-3234.

Tuesdays, Jan. 18, 25

10-10:30am. Fox Library, Arl. Stories and a simple craft. Ages 3-5. Info: 781-316-3198.

Wednesdays, Jan. 12, 19, 26

10:30-11am. Robbins Library, Arl. Drop-in for ages 3-5 with an adult or alone, but adult must remain close by in Library. Longer stories, rhymes, games and fingerplays followed by a simple craft and book checkout. Info: 781-316-3234.

Other Storytimes

UPDATE! National Heritage Museum

Thurs. Jan. 13, 10:30am. 33 Marrett Rd., Rt. 2A, Lexington. We will read *Quillworker*, about a Cheyenne girl, then make beaded necklaces. Ages 4 & under. \$3/child. Info: 781-861-6559, <http://www.monh.org>

Barnes & Noble Storytimes

98 Middlesex Tpke., Burlington. Pre-schoolers - Tuesdays at 10:30am Pajamarama - Fridays at 7pm. Free. Info: 781-273-3871.

Barefoot Books

Fri. & Sat. 10:30am, ages 2 & up. Sun. 2pm, ages 5 & up. 1771 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. A fun hour of age-appropriate stories. Coloring and refreshments too! Free. Info: 617-349-1610.

Harvard Coop

11am every Tues. & Sat. 1400 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. Join us for our preschool story hour with snack or craft on the Lower Level. Free. Info: 617-499-2000.

Henry Bear's Park

Thursdays, 11am at Arl. & Cambridge locations. Ages 3-6. Free. 685 Mass. Ave., Arl. Info: 781-646-9400. 361 Huron Ave., Cambridge. Info: 617-547-8424.

Pottery Barn

Daily, times vary. Check store for details (there should be a time posted out front). Free. Pottery Barn, Burlington Mall, Burlington. Info: 781-221-5833.

Other Arlington Fun Stuff

UPDATE! Regent Theatre Family Fun

Saturdays, 10:30am. The Regent Theater (7 Medford St., Arl.) offers great family programs.

Jan 15, Gene Stamell / Party Tunes!

Jan. 22, Spooof Gabbling Circus

Jan. 29, Wayne from Maine

\$5/child, senior, \$7/adult. Info: 781-646 4849

<http://www.regenttheatre.com>

NEW! Puddlestompers

Nature Exploration

8 week session for ages 2-4 on Thursdays, Jan. 20-March 3, 11am-12pm. Classes will be held indoors at the Dallin Art Museum and Community Rm. Activities include songs and games, nature crafts and exploring natural elements. A portion of the proceeds from this class goes to the Arl. Conservation Commission.

\$140/8 wk. session. Info: 781-449-0776,

<http://www.puddlestompers.com>

UPDATE! Public Skating

Mon. Jan. 17, 10am-12pm, Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday

Open through March 18. Veteran's Memorial Sports Ctr., 422 Summer St., Arl. \$5/adult, \$2.50/child, discount punch ticket also available. Skate rentals or sharpening: \$3/pair. Fridays: 11am-1pm, 2:30-4:45pm, 7-9pm. Sundays: 9:30-11:30am, 2-4 pm. Info: 781-316-3880.

Toddlers and Twos

Wed. & Fri., 9:30-11am. Gibbs Gym. Indoor gym time for ages 15mo. - 3yrs. with parent, sponsored by the Arl. Rec. Dept. Drop-in for \$5/visit or \$45/10 classes (punch card available at the Rec. Dept. at 422 Summer St.). Info: 781-316-3880.

Arlington Boys & Girls Club

60 Pond Ln., Arl. The Boys & Girls Club offers a variety of programs for children ages 6 mo. & up from swimming to tumbling and more. The club is open for free family swims most Fri. evenings for members and their immediate family. \$20/annual child membership, plus fee for ea. program. Info: 781-648-1617, <http://www.abgclub.org>

Arlington Rec. Dept. Programs

Each season, the Arl. Rec. Dept. offers a number of programs for small children, including indoor gym playtime, arts & crafts, gymnastics, sports, and yoga. *Tip: get on their mailing list since many*

programs fill up quickly! 422 Summer St., Arl. Info: 781-316-3880, http://www.town.arlington.ma.us/Public_Documents/ArlingtonMA_Recreation

Fidelity House

25 Medford St., Arl. Fidelity House offers many programs for young children, including a tot playgroup (drop-in or class), pre-school sports, and gymnastics. No membership required for children up through Kindergarten. Fees may apply for each class. Info: 781-648-2005, <http://users.rcn.com/fidelityhouse/default.htm>

Parent and Tot Connection

Fridays, 9:30-11am. Arl. Boys & Girls Club, 60 Pond Ln., Arl. Drop-in playgroup for toddlers and pre-schoolers with caregiver. Age-appropriate play activities, crafts, stories and music. Free, supported by a grant to Community Partnerships for Children. Info: 781-648-1617.

Art Beat Weekend Workshops

Every Sat. Drop-in from 3-6pm. To do a different themed craft each week. Ages 4 & up, prices \$10 & up. 212-A Mass Ave., Arl. Info: 781-646-2200, <http://www.artbeatonline.com>

Capitol Theater Movies for caregivers with babies. Mondays, new movie chosen weekly starting between 1-2pm, \$4.50/adult. Nursing, bottle feeding, fussing, and changing diapers is strongly encouraged and never frowned upon! 204 Mass Ave., Arl. Info: 781-648-6022. To join the email list send an email to BabyFriendlyMovies-subscribe@yahoogroups.com; for more info visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BabyFriendlyMovies>; for this week's movie visit <http://www.somervilleteatreonline.com>

Puddlestompers Playgroup

Mondays, 10:30am-12:30pm. Drop-in pre-school playgroup has moved inside for the winter. Meets in the Fox Library Community Rm. Arl. (\$1/family donation requested). Occasional fieldtrips, meets outside at local playgrounds in warm weather. To join the group's email list, contact 781-641-0944 or JulieLucey@comcast.net

Beyond Arlington

Belmont KidSpace

Mon. & Thurs. 1-5pm, Fri. 5-8pm, Sat. 9am-12pm, 2nd & 4th Sun. 2-5pm. Payson Park Church, 365 Belmont St., Belmont. This indoor playspace is available for ages 5 & under. \$30 season pass (Jan.-May) or \$3/family per day. Info: 617-484-7703, <http://www.belmontkidspace.org>

Bedford Family Connection Playroom

Mon. – Fri. 9:30-11:30am. First Parish Church, 75 The Great Rd., Bedford. The playroom offers a warm, informal atmosphere where children can play together while parents and caregivers supervise and chat. Members: \$.50/child per day; non-members: \$2/child per day. Info: 781-275-5231, <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/rlcww/index.htm>

Babes in the Woods

Middlesex Fells every Tues., 10-11:30am. Strolls and hikes through the park. Free. Info: 781-396-8994, <http://www.fells.org/babes.html>

Kids Playground

15 Normac Rd, Woburn. Indoor playground with open play space, tubes & tunnels, mini golf, interactive village and more. Open 7 days a week. Info: 781-935-2300, <http://www.kidsplayground.com>

Michaels Imagination Saturdays

Saturdays, 10am-12pm. Michaels Arts & Crafts Store, 34 Cambridge St., Burlington. Different craft each week. Ages 5-10. \$2/child. Info: 781-229-7592, <http://www.michaels.com>

Pre-school movies

Tuesdays, 10:30am. (No movies on Tuesdays that follow a Monday holiday.) Cary Mem. Library, 1874 Mass. Ave., Lexington. Movies for pre-schoolers, ages 2-6 in the Cary Library Mtg. Rm. Info: 781-862-6288, <http://www.carylibrary.org>

Puppet Showplace Theatre

Sat. & Sun. 1 & 3pm shows. Wed. & Thurs. 10:30am shows. 32 Station St., Brookline. Recommended for age 3 & up. Age appropriateness varies per show. Call for performance schedule. \$7/members, \$8.50/non-members. Info: 617-731-6400, <http://www.puppetshowplace.org>

Rattle at the Brattle, baby-friendly film series. Wednesday afternoons 1-3pm, 40

Brattle St., Harvard Sq., Cambridge. Free. Film schedule only available at box office or by joining the email list. 617-876-6837. For more info or to join the list: parents@brattlefilm.org

UPDATE! SHIP AHOY

Saturday Morning Theatre

10:30am, Concord Youth Theatre, 40 Stow St., Concord. Concord Youth Theatre actors will inspire you with their new and improved versions of familiar children's stories, complete with ample opportunities for audience participation. Jan. 22 – Aladdin
Jan. 29 – Chicken Little
Ages 3 & up. \$5. Info: 978-371-1482, <http://www.concordyouththeatre.org>

Toys R Us Fun Day

Saturdays. Each week features a new fun activity for kids! Ages 3 & up. Free. Info: 800-869-7787, <http://www3.toysrus.com/our/tru/prom/funday/> for a calendar of events and the store nearest you.

Winterpark at the Waldorf School

Fridays, 9:30-11am. Waldorf School, 739 Mass. Ave., Lexington. Drop-in. Come and meet other families, prepare a snack together, and enjoy a weekly closing circle. A Waldorf-trained early childhood teacher leads the morning. Suggested donation of \$5-10. The first Fri. of each month is Baby Winterpark, for children under 1. All other Fri. are for children under 3. Info: 781-863-1062, <http://www.thewaldorfschool.org>

Local Attractions

UPDATE! Winter Walk at Gore Place 52 Gore St., Waltham. Explore the open spaces and hidden places on this 45-acre estate. With Gore Place's winter "activity packs", children and their accompanying adults can search for animal tracks; identify trees by their shapes, needles, or pinecones; and visit the llama, sheep, goats, chickens and rabbits at our farm. Each borrowed backpack contains binoculars, a magnifying glass, and activities appropriate for children ages 3-9. When the grounds are snow-covered, children's and adult's snowshoes will also be available. One hour rental: backpack \$5; snowshoes \$5. Free parking. Hours: Mon-Fri 10am-3pm. Ring the bell at the Mansion to get your backpack and begin your winter adventure. Reservations recommended – call 781-894-2798. <http://www.goreplace.org>

NEW! National Heritage Museum
33 Marrett Rd., Rt. 2A, Lexington. Many great monthly programs for kids and families including storytimes with crafts, 2nd Sat. programs, and family programs. Info: 781-861-6559, <http://www.monh.org>

Children's Discovery Museum
177 Main St., Acton. A Victorian house with rooms, corridors, and closets creatively transformed into ten hands-on exhibit areas. Check their calendar for many special programs. \$8/Person; Free/under 1. Info: 978-264-4200, <http://www.discoverymuseums.org>

Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary
208 South Great Rd, Lincoln. Explore the fields and forest and visit the farmyard. Weekly programs for kids. Members free, \$6/Non-member adult, \$4/Non-member ages 3-12. Info: 781-259-2200, http://www.massaudubon.org/Nature_Connection/Sanctuaries/Drumlin_Farm

Ecotarium
222 Harrington Way, Worcester. Nurture young children's curiosity and wonder with hands-on exploration of real things. Monthly family preschool programs. Members free, \$8/Non-member adult, \$6/Non-member ages 3-18. Explorer Express Train ride, \$2.50/person. Info: 508-929-2700, <http://www.ecotarium.org>

Habitat Wildlife Sanctuary
10 Juniper Rd, Belmont. Trails wind through forests, across meadows, around 2 ponds, and wetlands. Also fun programs for kids. Members free, \$4/Non-member adult, \$3/Non-member child. Info: 617-489-5050, http://www.massaudubon.org/Nature_Connection/Sanctuaries/Habitat

Harvard Museum of Natural History
26 Oxford St, Cambridge. Sat. programs for kids age preschool to 1st grade. \$7.50/Adult, \$5/Ages 3-18. *Note: Free to the public 3-5pm Weds. from Sep. -May.* Info: 617-495-3045, <http://www.hmn.harvard.edu>

The Stone Zoo
149 Pond St., Stoneham. Small local zoo, minutes from Arlington, with a petting barnyard, playground, and lots of animal exhibits. Great for young children! \$7/Adult, \$4.50/Ages 2-15. Info: 617-541-5466, <http://www.zoonewengland.com>

Seminars & Open Houses

Special Ed Forum
Thurs. Jan 6, 7-9pm. Hardy School, 52 Lake St., Arl. Parents will have an opportunity to comment as a group on special programs, services, timelines, and procedures offered to children with special needs in Arl. schools. In addition, an overview of PQA and the Complaint System will be provided. Trish Orlovsky will moderate a discussion with Dr. Daniel Mosco, Chairman of the Arl. Coord. Program Review, and Jennifer Weissman, Arlington's PQA Liaison. Free. Reg. required. Info: Trish Orlovsky, 781-641-0182, t_orlovsky@hotmail.com

Waldorf School Winter Open House
Sat. Jan. 8, 10am-12pm. 739 Mass. Ave., Lexington. This event is specifically for parents and their children aged 2.9 years through Grade 3. Families will have an opportunity to tour classrooms, talk with teachers, and view student work. Info: 781-863-1062 ext. 510, <http://www.thewaldorfschool.org>

Caring for the Caregiver – Stress Mgmt. for Parents
Mon. Jan. 10, 7-8:30pm. Bishop School Library, 25 Columbia Rd., Arl. For parents of students, grades PreK-8. This seminar will discuss the psychological and physiological aspects of stress and how caring for kids is stressful. Strategies of ways to reduce stress will be explored, including brief attention to diet, exercise, sleep and the use of stress management techniques. The presenter, Dante Spetter, Ph.D. is a Pediatric Psychologist practicing in Arlington with 15 years of experience. Free. Donations accepted to cover fees. Info: 781-316-3570, cbouvier@town.arlington.ma.us

Writing Workshop
Thurs. Jan. 20, 7-9pm. Thompson School, 60 North Union St., Arl. For parents of students, grades K-6. Writing is one of the key facets of literacy development. Several initiatives are currently underway in the Arl. Public Schools to support curriculum instruction in this area. This program will be an opportunity to hear about these initiatives and to ask questions and review curriculum materials. Free. Donations accepted to cover fees. Info: 781-316-3570, cbouvier@town.arlington.ma.us

Feeding Kids Healthy Food in a Toxic World
Mon. Jan 24, 7-9pm. Hardy School Cafeteria, 52 Lake St., Arl. For parents of students, grades K-8. Like adults, children are in desperate need of information on how to eat healthier and fit physical activity into their daily lives. Unlike their parents, however, they're growing up in a world rife with challenges to healthful eating, overwhelming availability of fast food, "biggie" size portions, and the demise of the family meal. This forum will cover such topics as healthy weight, contributors to childhood overweight, physical activity, and how families and communities can work together to create a healthy food environment. Hillary Wright, Med, RD, LDN, is a registered and licensed dietitian/nutritionist with over 18 years experience. Free. Donations accepted to cover fees. Info: 781-316-3570, cbouvier@town.arlington.ma.us

Effective Parenting: A Workshop
Wednesdays, Jan. 26, Feb. 2, 9 & 23, 8-10pm. Learn practical parenting skills as well as effective ways to communicate with your child. Led by a seasoned mom and skilled facilitator, this small and highly interactive group will explore different parenting topics each week through lively discussion and fun exercises. For parents of children 0-3 years old. \$120/person, \$160/couple. For more info, contact Melissa Lucius, parenting@rcn.com or 781-641-4284.

Benefits

Kans for Kids
Sat. Feb. 5, 10am-1pm. Gibbs School on Tufts St., Arl. Donate clean returnable bottles and cans to benefit Arl. Rec. Youth Activities. Info: 781-316-3880.

UPDATE! PTO Thrift Shop for the Arl. Public Schools. Closed for the Holidays until Jan. 8. Note new hours: Wed. 4-8pm, Thurs. 9:30am-1pm, 2nd Sat. of the month 12:30-6pm. Basement of the Fox Library at 175 Mass. Ave., E. Arl. Gently-used clothing for all ages, toys, books, housewares and more. Volunteers needed during store hours and for donation processing. Info: 781-483-3433, <http://www.ptothriftshop.com>



AFC Membership/Renewal Form



New Member Renewal Date:

Name(s):

Address, Zip:

E-mails:

Phone:

Please list your children:

Name Gender Date of Birth

Please circle all that apply:

I am a: Parent Child Care Provider Educator
Grandparent Health Care Provider Other

I am: Employed full-time Stay at home parent
Employed part-time Other

Newsletter delivery preferences:

US Mail Email Both

School District (circle for geographic location):

Bishop Brackett Dallin Hardy
Peirce Stratton Thompson Out of town

Areas of Interest:

Events/Parties New Parent Outreach Seminars
Newsletter Outings with kids Web site
Playgroups Outings without kids Other

Membership Dues *All memberships renew in September*

One-year membership \$20 (joining July-January)
 Mid-year discounted membership \$10 (joining Feb-June)
 Send a gift membership (\$10 or \$20) to the following:

Please make check payable to **Arlington Family Connection** and mail with this form to:

Arlington Family Connection
PO Box 150
Arlington, MA 02476

For information or questions, contact Ruth Schmidt at (781) 643-2362 or membership@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Groups

NEW! Infancy to Independence (I to I)

I to I is a 16-week program for families with young children (ages 1-4) in Waltham and surrounding towns. Children learn and grow through free play and creative projects while parents share advice on child rearing and discuss a wide range of topics. Parents cooperatively run the program. Families meet once a week (T, W, Th or F), 9-11:30am, Feb.-June (also Sept.-Jan.). Each day is limited to 12 families. Fee is \$50 per semester plus \$10 for each add'l sibling; siblings under 12 months free. To schedule a tour, contact admissions@ItoI-MA.org or go to www.ItoI-MA.org or write to I to I, 375 Lexington St., Waltham, MA 02453.

Arlington Fathers' Group

Tuesdays 7:30-9pm. Sponsored by Parents Helping Parents. Free support group for fathers who are feeling isolated, overwhelmed, or concerned about their anger toward their children. For location & information, call 800-882-1250.

Belmont Food Allergy & Asthma Support Group

Area parents meet monthly to discuss and advocate for the issues that arise when you have children living with food allergies and asthma. Info: Theresa Normile, Tnormile@foodallergyfacts.com or 617-489-6668.

Grandparents' Support Group

Second Tues. of the month, 12-1:30pm. For grandparents who are primary caretakers of their grandchildren. Free, sponsored by the Town of Arl. Info: 781-316-3410.

La Leche League

La Leche League is an international, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization dedicated to providing education, information, support, and encouragement to women who want to breastfeed. Arl. meetings at Fox Library, 175 Mass. Ave. at 7:30pm on the 1st Tues. of ea. month (for pregnant women & nursing moms) and the 1st Thurs. of ea. month (for moms of nursing toddlers). One morning meeting is held in Cambridge on the 2nd Thurs. of the month at 10am, call for location. Free. Info: Heather (781) 648-2988, <http://home.comcast.net/~jrsladkey/lll/index.html> Neighboring towns also have leagues with monthly meetings. Refer to <http://www.llusa.org/MARIVT/Massachusetts.html> for a listing of Mass. Leagues.

New Mothers' Drop-in Group

Fridays, 10-11:30am, Calvary United Methodist Church, 300 Mass Ave., Arl. Free, nonsectarian, facilitated group. All new parents are welcome with their babies. Sponsored by Jewish Family & Children's Services. Info: 617-558-1278.

New Mothers' Drop-in Group

Every other Tues. (1/18, 2/1), 9:30-11am, Henry Bear's Park, 685 Mass Ave., Arl. Free, informal drop-in group for new mothers with infants. Info: 781-646-9400.

New Mothers' Group

Tuesdays, 10-11:30am, Beth Israel Deaconess & Children's Hospital Medical Care Ctr., 482 Bedford St., Lexington. Free, group meets for eight weeks. To register or for more info, call Kristin Hicks at 617-667-2229.

Nursing Mothers' Group

Wednesdays at 1:30pm. Baldwin Park I, 12 Alfred St., Woburn. Drop-in. All breastfeeding mothers, babies (and grandmothers) welcome. Meet other breastfeeding moms and have your breastfeeding questions answered by a certified lactation consultant. \$2 donation suggested. Info: 781-756-4788, <http://www.winhosp.org>

Older First-time Moms' Group

Third Wed. of every month, 7-8:30pm. Social and support discussion group for first-time moms in their late 30's & 40's in the Boston area. Free. \$1 donation suggested. Info: 781-674-2029.

Arlington Family Connection
PO Box 150
Arlington, MA 02476

Save the Dates!

Thursday, Jan. 6

AFC Book Club

Meets first Thurs. of every month. For more info contact Gail Zyla at gail@zyla.com. This month's book is *Five Quarters of the Orange* by Joanne Harris.

Saturday, Jan. 8

Working Moms Group

Usually meets the first Sat. of the month 10:30am-12pm, for a casual discussion forum. Arl. Senior Ctr., 27 Maple St. There will be occasional additional social outings. For questions or to join the mailing list, contact workingmoms@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org or call Johanna at 781-643-2112.

NEW DATE: Tuesday, Jan. 11

AFC Steering Committee Meeting

7:30pm. Open to all members. For the meeting's location, contact Ruth Schmidt at 781-643-2362 or info@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Wednesday, Jan. 19

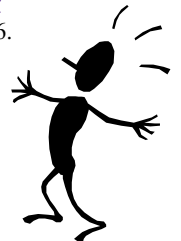
Organizing for Busy Families Seminar

7pm, Robbins Library Comm. Rm. Professional organizer Cristin Lind presents an interactive seminar that will examine areas to help families: prepare dinner, process paperwork, leave on time, and stay connected. Registration is full, but your name can be added to a wait list. You'll be contacted if space becomes available. Email info@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org or call Ruth at 781-643-2362. Snow date, Wed. Jan. 26.

Due to popular demand, a 2nd date has been added on Monday, Feb. 7 (snow date, Tues. Feb. 15).

Registration is almost full, so act fast!

Email info@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org



Monday, Jan. 24

AFC Mom's Movie Night

Join us for a movie at the Capitol Theater, E. Arl. (7pm-ish), followed by a casual gathering for ice cream in the theater's parlor. An e-mail will be sent several days prior announcing the movie title, time, and other details. For more info contact Sue at 781-316-8450 or scorvi@rcn.com