



Quality programs that inform, involve and inspire

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Washington State Exceptional Caregiver Award Winners Named

KCTS 9 celebrates the accomplishments of exceptional in-home caregivers and announces a new conference supporting the professional development of child care providers in our community.

SEATTLE—KCTS 9, supported by *A Place of Our Own/Los Niños en Su Casa*, has identified seven exemplary home-based child care providers in our community providing care for children ages birth to five years: Linda Brehmer and Lee Wolf (Seattle); Barbara Bussa (Tacoma); Nicole Chaudry (Seattle); Jena Inghram (Seattle); Marylynn Murphy (Puyallup); Bonnie Senter (Lynnwood); and Sherry Smiley (Seattle).

All winners will be featured on KCTS9.org and will receive a certificate, a \$100 honorarium, and a selection of children's books and resources for their child care. One winner will be featured on KCTS 9 through an on-air spot highlighting her achievements, and may be selected as the caregiver of the week on the series *A Place of Our Own*, a daily television series, Web site and outreach program devoted to the unique needs of people who care for children.

In conjunction with the awards, KCTS 9 is proud to host a special networking and professional development event to honor and celebrate our community's child care providers, and to provide them with additional support and training. The conference, scheduled for Saturday, November 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., includes three hours of STARS-accredited training; a keynote speech by Jone Bosworth, Director of the Washington State Department of Early Learning; and a ceremony to honor the seven winners of the Washington State Exceptional Caregiver Award. Continental breakfast and buffet lunch are also provided. Attendees may select a morning and an afternoon session from among the four workshops offered: *Using TV to Teach*, *Conflict Resolution*, *Preventing Obesity*, and *Creating a Print-Rich Environment*. Admission to the conference is free. To RSVP, contact learning@KCTS9.org or 206.443.6686.

KCTS 9 and *A Place of Our Own*, produced by Los Angeles PBS affiliate KCET, seek to advance early learning by honoring the practices of exceptional caregivers. Nominations for the Washington State Exceptional Caregiver Awards were submitted to KCTS 9 and judged by professionals and experts in the early childhood field including: Elizabeth Bonright-Thompson with Washington State Childcare Resource and Referral Network; Kim Van Ekstrom with Thrive by Five; Linda Crisalli with Washington Association for the Education of Young Children; and Jone Bosworth, Director of the Washington State Department of Early Learning, who states: "These caregivers provide nurturing learning environments for children and also are amazing role models for others. They truly inspire all of us to be lifelong learners."

KCTS 9 thanks the following organizations for their support and collaboration on this project: The Department of Early Learning; Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network; Child Care Resources; Circle of Success and SEIU. Major funding for *A Place of Our Own* is provided by BP, First 5 California, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. *A Place of Our Own* is a production of KCET/Los Angeles in association with Sesame Workshop and 44 Blue Productions, Inc.

KCTS 9 Washington State Exceptional Caregiver Award – Winners' Profiles

Linda Brehmer and Lee Wolfe

Linda Brehmer and Lee Wolfe are a mother-daughter team who run a mixed-age program called *Little People's Place* (LPP) in Seattle. Together they provide a safe and nurturing learning environment by teaching children patience and kindness through play and instruction. Their notable preschool program engages children in extraordinary art projects modeled after Lee's and Linda's own love for creativity, as seen in their much praised hand-painted murals adorning the facility. Linda is an active advocate and union member; she is a mentor for child care providers and often delivers trainings to other family child care providers. Linda and Lee honor special milestones in children's lives with special experiences, such as graduation parties for students moving on to kindergarten—complete with a photo album documenting each child's growth through their years at LPP. Linda and Lee believe in extension activities, and have taken trips to Seattle Children's Theatre, Woodland Park Zoo, farms and puppet shows, as well as an annual camping trip in a yurt village.

Barbara Bussa

Barbara Bussa has been a childcare provider for young children in her Tacoma home daycare *My Other House* since 1994. The three separate families that wrote to nominate her agree that Barbara provides a secure and caring learning environment for the children's mental, physical and emotional development. In respecting each child's individuality, she helps them learn at their own pace by providing a variety of structured activities that appeal to all learning styles. Her best practices include: emergency preparedness, where children learn basic safety procedures; daily written reports, where daily notes around every child's progress and details about activities are sent home; attention to teachable moments, where behavioral expectations are clearly outlined; creative and craft activities, where children make lifelong keepsakes that build upon fine-motor skill development; and parent education, with planned activities with which parents can get involved in their child's learning.

Nicole Chaudry

Nicole Chaudry immigrated to the United States from Germany, where she attended law school and later pursued work in child care. Now in West Seattle, Nicole earned her Child Development Associate (CDA) and is currently pursuing her AA degree in Early Childhood Development. Nicole's program, *EuropaKids Bilingual Learning Center*, received nominations from six different families of children in her care. Each acknowledged the success of her multicultural program where children quickly become fluent in German language and culture, and well as learn math, reading, social and personal skills. In addition to providing gymnastics and music classes for nine children, she recently incorporated a Spanish curriculum as well. Her three-year-old family business gets the support of her husband, Benjamin; together, they consider it an extension of their own new family and wish there could be a Parent Award for the parents in their program.

Jena Inghram

Jena Inghram has been a child care provider for over 14 years and currently resides in West Seattle, where she maintains *Tiny Tribe*, her home-based childcare business comprising four staff members caring for 19 children in infant, toddler and preschool groups. Jena is a member of Puget Sound Association of the Education of Young Children (PSAEYC) and has a BA in Human Services with an emphasis on the young child and social work. Jena received nominations from four different parents who described her as a caregiver who responds to children's needs using positive discipline strategies and empathy. Children are engaged in a multi-age classroom where they mentor each other and spend time with siblings, as well as pairing off for age-appropriate lessons ranging from

numbers to neighborhood demographics and from the human body to the solar system. Additionally, children are a part of the community and often take field trips to the library, pet store and karate lessons, as well as board the public bus for bigger trips, like the Seattle Aquarium.

Marylynn Murphy

Marylynn Murphy of Puyallup has been providing child care out of her home for 50 years. Recently retired, her *Loving Start Daycare* program fostered generations of families who consider her extended family. Her approach to working with families long-term includes hosting large scale Open Houses twice a year, where over 100 relatives attend and show support for their children's growth and learning under Marylynn's care. Marylynn focuses on each child's social, emotional, academic and physical development, keeping an eye on individual children's long-range needs. Loving Start Daycare nurtures children's social-emotional health by modeling important life skills, and their intellectual growth with challenges from geography to French language. Marylynn received nominations from three different families who highlighted her strength for communicating and for supporting children's positive social-emotional development. With nearly an acre of land and an enormous inside facility, children are encouraged in physical fitness, exploring nature trails and planting in the garden.

Bonnie Senter

Bonnie Senter has provided care for young children in her Lynnwood home since 1974. Bonnie earned her Child Development Associate (CDA) from Edmonds Community College, her AA from Shoreline Community College in Early Childhood Education, and her BA from University of Washington in History. As a special needs and multi-cultural education advocate, Bonnie cares for children with autism and Downs Syndrome, as well as for many children whose care is subsidized by the state. Bonnie also works with the local school district to coordinate care for children with unique learning styles, and with the Child Care Provider's Preschool co-op to provide deeper preschool and social experiences for children in her care. To support success in school and in the community, Bonnie offers a variety of experiences and cultural opportunities, including American sign language, Spanish, and cooking, in the daily routine. She is a mentor in the provider community and shares her insight in her monthly contribution to the South Snohomish Child Care Provider newsletter.

Sherry Smiley

Sherry Smiley operates a successful home-based childcare program called *Every Kid Counts Childcare and Learning Academy* which is in the late stages of accreditation with the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Every Child Counts specializes in care for children with severe behavior and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorders, and Sherry's long-term goal is to develop her center into a Head Start program. Children in her care learn Spanish, about nutrition, and even help prepare their own meals. Professionally, Sherry works to serve the child care community on the Puget Sound Association for the Education of Young Children; as the Public Policy chair for the Washington Association for the Education of Young Children; and as an elected leader in the King County Region for the SEIU Local 925, participating on the bargaining team. She also served on the original steering committee for the White Center Early Learning Initiative, and participates in monthly directors meetings. All this is in addition to providing the highest standard of child care service for every child in her care.

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