

**Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center  
2006 Annual Report of the Board of Directors  
(September 1, 2006 – August 31, 2007)**

*Introduction*

For over 19 years, the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center (SEEC) has been one of the finest early childhood educational experiences for children everyday. This year was no exception as SEEC continues its mission of providing a high-quality educational program for young children. SEEC also is a leader in the field of museum-based education, and the organization has helped to advance educational opportunities for all children, on a national and international level. SEEC truly is far more than a child care center, and provides a tremendous amount of educational outreach in the greater DC area and throughout the country. By sharing SEEC's expertise on a national level, SEEC has helped to further the education mandate of the Smithsonian Institution.

For the 2006-2007 school year, SEEC was at full enrollment with 131 children. SI children make up 75% of the SEEC population, with diversity representation of 34.5%.

Over the course of 2006-2007, SEEC was very actively engaged with educational outreach efforts well beyond the Smithsonian. Through educational outreach, SEEC Executive Director, Dr. Sharon Shaffer and the SEEC museum education team shared their expertise using museum exhibits and artwork in conjunction with children's literature and everyday objects to teach young children and provide them with creative and unique learning opportunities. SEEC offered information about its "museum-based approach to learning" in a variety of ways including professional training classes and seminars, written materials, teaching kits, and customized consulting. In the past year alone, Dr. Shaffer and her team have conducted dozens of seminars with hundreds of registered participants, totaling nearly \$300,000 worth of consulting fees. All of that money was directed back to enhance SEEC's daily early education program.

The SEEC Museum Education team found the time and energy to share their professional expertise beyond SEEC's walls, while still managing to attend to the day to day requirements of providing an outstanding museum based learning educational environment for the children enrolled in SEEC's program. The Educational Outreach component of SEEC's program helps to strengthen the financial base of the daily educational center by raising money for SEEC scholarships and providing valuable support for SEEC's resources. The SEEC Museum Education Team has helped to spread the magic of SEEC to those who don't have the ability to experience it everyday as the children actually enrolled with the program do.

This year the SEEC Board of Directors addressed a number of issues involving staffing, scholarship, finances, educational outreach, and emergency planning. This was also the year when the Board embarked on the process of determining how best to restructure SEEC as an organization, especially as the outreach component expands and more

consulting opportunities are presented. The Board formed an Ad Hoc Administrative Restructuring Committee to take on this important project.

One of the biggest changes on the staffing front was that Ces Brunow retired in December 2006, after 15 years of service to SEEC. Ces started as Assistant Director at Arts and Industries for five years and then proceeded to become a Site Director, first at A&I, and then at American History West (AHW) for another ten years. A special celebration was held in her honor at Baird Auditorium and many current as well as alumni families and friends of SEEC participated. Donations were collected to establish a fund in Ces' name to purchase equipment for the playground at American History.

Emily Houck was hired as the new Assistant Site Director for AHW, and she started her new role in November 2006 prior to Ces' departure. It ended up being a very smooth transition, and we are so pleased to have Emily here at SEEC.

In regard to administrative support, 2006-2007 was much more of a challenge, since Alicia Sar resigned her position as financial administrator, leaving behind the major functions of record keeping for tuition payments, payroll administration, and benefits coordination. Fortunately, many staff members including Meredith McMahon and Dr. Shaffer helped to assume these responsibilities, but it produced an undue amount of additional work and strain on all involved. Clearly, this departure helped SEEC to most effectively strategize on how administrative support should be arranged to meet the current needs of the program, and it will play a key role in the planning for the organizational restructuring.

The second Literacy Gala took place on May 19, 2007 in the Ripley Center and it was another great success. Each center focused on one author and prepared exhibits that included class collections based on children's literature. Once again, a SEEC family picnic took place before the Gala. The Literacy Gala highlighted the work of local authors, provided art activities for the children, and included story telling by featured authors. The entrance fee was one book per family to be donated to a school or library. It truly is a wonderful new tradition at SEEC.

### ***Board Committee Overview and Initiatives***

A complete list of the SEEC Board for 2006-2007 is attached. The Board Officers were: Karen Avery, *Chair*; Yong Lee, *Vice-Chair*; Sue Fruchter, *Treasurer*; Shannon Perich, *President, SEEC Parents' Association*; Rick Sasaki, *Secretary*; and Sharon Shaffer, *Executive Director*.

Nine full Board meetings were conducted this year, and three Executive Committee meetings. In order to make meetings more interactive, we designated a specific discussion topic for each Board meeting. The discussion focused on the work of one of the committees, because we were eager to keep the committees alive and active. The first Board meeting focused on Goal Setting for the year, and other discussion topics included:

Development, Educational Outreach, Teacher Recognition, Finance and Budget Planning, Administration and Organizational Structure, The Parents Association, and the National Museum of American History renovation schedule.

This year's SEEC Board Committees included: Development (*Chair, Toby Mensforth*); Finance (*Chair, Sue Fruchter*); Education and Outreach (*Chair, Sharon Shaffer*); Membership (*Chair, John Lapiana*); and Teacher Recognition (*Chair, Rick Sasaki*). We also convened two new ad hoc committees: Administrative Restructuring (*Co-Chair, Yong Lee; Co-Chair, Shannon Perich*), and American History Emergency Planning (*Chair, Jennifer Jones*). (A complete Board committee participant list is attached).

For the very first time, we held a "Meet and Greet" reception for all SEEC Board and SEEC Staff as a way to introduce board members to staff and get better communication occurring between staff and board. It is important for the Board to get to know the staff, for they are such an important and valuable asset to the entire SEEC program. The Board is intent on improving communication overall with the entire SEEC community.

### ***Development Committee***

The CFC campaign got underway and SEEC children once again participated in a special Smithsonian-wide kickoff event. Using the new SEEC database information, a letter went out to all members of the SEEC family, (past, present, grandparents, etc.) asking that their CFC contributions be directed to SEEC. Annual Giving Pledge forms were also distributed to the Board with a goal of 100% Board participation. A total of \$33,000 was raised for SEEC's 2006-2007 Annual Campaign, and \$24,750 of that was in the form of pledges to CFC.

The Board discussed ways to raise more funds for scholarships grants. The overall goal is to try to raise enough money to cover scholarship grants awarded of approximately \$120,000 for the current school year. Last year's IMAX screening and hot dog sale were successful events, and other ideas were solicited. The Development Committee was charged with setting an immediate goal for scholarship outlay and looking at how the Endowment Fund is performing to meet this goal.

The Annual Scholarship Auction was a huge success and it was held at the Donald W. Reynolds Center for Art and Portraiture, home to the Smithsonian American Art Museum and National Portrait Gallery, on Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup>. Once again, a special kick-off event for Auction ticket sales was held and this year it was a Saturday morning viewing of "Night at the Museum." This early morning opportunity was extremely popular and well attended, and in addition to previewing the film, families had the opportunity to purchase Auction tickets at a reduced price. This year's auction was chaired by Cindy Zarate, and the SEEC Auction raised a total of over \$57,000 in gross revenue.

## *Finance Committee*

Again this year, Bill Harvey from Janney Montgomery Scott (JMS) Investment Company met with Finance Committee members to update them on the progress of SEEC investments. The group discussed the allocation percentages to determine how best to maximize SEEC's financial stability. Mr. Chase reviewed and prepared a cash flow analysis chart for the committee.

The FY '06 audit showed that income over expense was \$212,459.03 for the fiscal year that ended on August 31, 2007.

Funds in the amount of \$205,000 were moved to SEEC's unrestricted JMS investment account from the general operating account in the SunTrust Bank. The Finance Committee discussed the need to restrict funds in the operating account in conjunction with limits for bank insured funds. The Executive Director and Accountant evaluated upcoming financial needs and moved funds from SunTrust to JMS to ensure that SEEC is earning interest on the greatest portion of its assets while still maintaining an appropriate level of working capital.

The Finance Committee implemented several changes to make the budget more logical. Three options for revenue based on tuition increases were discussed:

- 3% aligns with COLA to adjust for cost of living
- 4.4% reflects a balanced budget
- 6% reflects actual cost increase

The Board increased the Metro benefit to 50%, raised from SEEC previously paying 25% of cost. Also, there was an increase in funds allocated for college reimbursements and added dental benefits. Salary changes were also discussed. 15 hours of additional museum education time will be added in the new budget, 20 hours was added to the 20 hours already allocated for finance to give time for both HR Administration and Finance Administration. As in past years, a merit increase is an option for performance in addition to COLA.

The Board voted \$25,000 for the new Master Teacher program. In an effort to retain good teachers, the Master Teacher position would provide a new level to the staff structure and offer an additional \$5000 per year, along with more responsibility. Interest from the unrestricted funds would fund this worthwhile program to help increase staff retention.

The Board also approved adding a new line item to the budget, committing \$100,000 to the Scholarship Fund each fiscal year. This will simplify the process of providing funds for scholarships in the future. The Board voted to cap scholarship grants at \$140,000 for the coming school year.

The Board voted unanimously to increase tuition by 4.4% for the 2007-2008 school year. A letter went out to parents to inform them of the new rates. It focused on new and increased staff benefits that resulted in a 7.7% increase in program expenses. The new tuition rates result in a balanced budget.

### ***Educational Outreach Committee***

SEEC continues to receive numerous inquiries about training and consulting and the museum education team has been busy with many outreach initiatives. The Board believes it is important for SEEC Parents to be kept informed about these programs that help make SEEC a model program, particularly since this educational outreach activity has such a pivotal effect on the restructuring plan for SEEC.

The year was extremely profitable for educational outreach and included partnerships with a wide range of schools and museums. The most significant relationship continued to be with Miami-Dade Museum Magnet Schools and expanded to include three additional Miami-Dade elementary schools with a focus on K-2. SEEC provided professional development for all schools that are involved in the partnership and has also created resource kits for the museum schools.

Another important consulting relationship continued with a charter school in Davenport, Iowa. SEEC entered its third year in the consulting relationship with Lincoln Academy of Integrated Arts, a school utilizing community museums which include the Figge Art Museum, an SI Affiliate. In other educational outreach initiatives, SEEC provided special seminars for other Smithsonian Affiliates, the African Art Museum in Philadelphia and the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History in Georgia.

New initiatives included training in Littleton, Colorado at the Historic Society and seminar offerings linked to Art Smart, a successful collaboration with Warren County Public Schools through a U.S. Department of Education grant. In addition, SEEC began the early planning stages with an interesting museum and school collaboration in South Carolina involving professional development and curriculum consulting for the school district's kindergarten teachers and museum partners. Proposals for funding cited SEEC as the primary consultant. SEEC also worked with the Delaware Department of Education. Furthermore, this year international outreach was conducted at the Contemporary Art Museum in Seoul, S. Korea.

KET (The Kentucky Network) aired *Art to Heart*, an eight-part television series that looks at the importance of the arts as a form of early self-expression, for children from infancy through age eight. This program aired in November and includes a visit to SEEC and discussions with staff.

The FTC Child Development Center expressed interest in licensing the Museum Magic program and the committee is working to develop a partnership with the Hello Museum in South Korea. This international project will serve as a model program in the future.

Fifteen more staff hours will be added to the Museum Education program. The museum staff is currently working to revise the Infant/Toddler curriculum.

The Educational Outreach Committee discussed the fee structure for licensing the SEEC curriculum, *Museum Magic*, and also started the process of developing guidelines for international licensing. The license fee has been \$5000 since SEEC first began to license the curriculum, plus a yearly renewal fee based on enrollment. Currently, Just Us Kids, Brent Elementary School and Beauvoir have licensed this curriculum.

The committee also discussed the need to update the old SEEC videotape about Museum Magic. It was suggested that a DVD could be produced for both internal and external use. This may be a good opportunity to educate SI educators and employees in ways to approach teaching the arts. A committee would need to be formed to work on the DVD project and a grant written to apply for funds to produce the new product. This would need to be included in the 2007-2008 budget.

SEEC will continue to try to get information about the ir education and outreach programs into the Smithsonian Center for Museum Studies' EDGE system.

### ***NMAH Emergency Planning ad hoc Committee***

Many parents attended SEEC's annual meeting on emergency preparedness in mid-October. JJ McLaughlin, Director, Smithsonian Office of Protection Services, discussed plans for SEEC during a major crisis. Parents learned about the new 24 hour hotline (202-633-8100) that will be operating to distribute information during emergencies and a new website at [www.alerts.si.edu](http://www.alerts.si.edu).

Dr. Shaffer and Ms. Williams met with Mike Sofield, NMAH Director, Facilities Planning and Operations, and Tom Hollister, NMAH Safety Manager, in October to go over emergency plans for the centers. Each center has its own emergency disaster plan in place. Space in the QUAD has been designated for temporary classrooms. SEEC will work on these plans with Richard Day from OFEO.

NMAH closed its doors to the public on Labor Day and demolition to the Museum's interior building began in December. Mr. Hollister has spoken with the demolition company about noise and safety issues. New areas were designated for "Shelter in Place" and building wide fire drills at NMAH. Generators have been purchased for the American History building. SEEC site directors will set up a phone tree for each center to use in case of an emergency, if it became necessary to close one of the AH centers. Fortunately, no closures were required.

### ***Administrative Restructuring ad hoc Committee***

This committee met regularly to begin strategizing about how best to restructure SEEC administratively in order to address the growing educational outreach arm of the organization. The first plan of action was to examine the workload of the Executive Director. After reviewing the Executive Director's role and responsibilities, the committee decided to recommend that a full time employee be hired soon to ease Dr. Shaffer's workload. This person would join the administrative team, either as an outside hire or from within the SEEC organization.

The committee continued to solicit feedback and make specific recommendations to the Board in February. Issues concerning Outreach activities, including the workload of the Museum Education staff, are to be addressed separately by the Outreach Committee.

### ***Membership***

Yong Lee and Lonnie Bunch resigned from the Board. Mr. Lapiana and the Membership Committee discussed these two vacancies and identified areas of expertise (SI Office of Education, OHR or one of the art museums), for selecting new members. Alison McNally was considered for one of the Secretarial appointments. Other names, Eleanor Harvey, Esther Washington, Kathy Sklar, Judy Gradwohl and Todd Cain were discussed for possible openings.

At the end of the year, the Board thanked Mr. Mensforth, Mr. Sasaki, and Ms. R. Lee for their tremendous service to the Board.

Board officers for the 2007-2008 were discussed. Mr. Chase will become Vice-Chair. Ms. Fruchter will continue as Treasurer. Ms. Perich will serve as Secretary, and Ms. Hoisington will be President of the Parents Association.

### ***Teacher Recognition***

At the Staff Appreciation Dinner at Elephant and Castle, Hannah Lott received the Diane Homiak award, and Meredith McMahon received the new SEEC Distinguished Staff award. This tradition was established to honor the dedicated individuals who contribute to SEEC. Also, this year Raelynn Snyder received a special recognition as "Rookie of the Year."

## *NAEYC*

Five SEEC staff members attended the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) conference in Atlanta this year. SEEC continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to professional development by providing an opportunity for staff to attend this national event.

NAEYC issued some new Early Childhood Program Standards and Accreditation Criteria and these new requirements must be met when a center applies for reaccreditation. The new criteria stipulate that:

- All educators working with children must meet minimum educational standards of CDA or have 12 credits (ECE) or be enrolled in a program toward that goal.

These new criteria have a financial impact on SEEC, for more funds will need to be allocated to staff for tuition reimbursements. The Finance Committee was charged to take this into consideration for their financial planning this year. SEEC has always set its standards higher than those of NAEYC. However, accreditation by an outside organization is reassuring to prospective parents.

SEEC began working on its NAEYC re-accreditation in August, and this accreditation process is under the direction of Assistant Director Karen Bell and Meredith McMahon with the support of other administrators. The cost of the overall process was nearly \$3,000 and hundreds of hours of work by teachers and administrators.

## *Conclusion*

It was another year full of excitement, terrific progress, and innovative education practices. As we look to the future, the restructuring of the organization and improved communication with SEEC families are the top priorities.

It was decided to inactivate the Development Committee and to disband the ad hoc NMAH Planning Committee for 2007-2008. Ms. King and Ms. Enright have agreed to co-chair the Education and Outreach Committee for next year.

Many changes have occurred at SEEC in the past few years. The administrative team is reflecting on individual and programmatic roles of each individual and attempting to restructure responsibilities. The goal is to move some of the center wide duties from the Executive Director to the site administrators to allow the Executive Director more time with the expanding education and outreach program. This shift will only further improve the strong focus and attention on giving the best care and educational experience possible for the children enrolled at SEEC everyday.

The Board of Directors greatly acknowledges the vital role that the Smithsonian Institution plays in the life of the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center. In this

constantly changing political and economic environment, the Smithsonian continues to demonstrate its firm commitment to young children and to SEEC as an educational organization. We are extremely grateful for this support and are proud to be a part of the broader Smithsonian community.

Respectfully,

Karen E. Avery  
Board Chair, 2006-2007