

---

# ANNUAL REPORT

---

Vermont Square Parent-Child Mother Goose Program

2017 - 2018

December 7, 2018

Vermont Square Parent-Child Mother Goose Program  
720 Bathurst Street, Suite 500A, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2R4

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2017 - 2018

Our program originated in Toronto in 1984 as The Mother Goose Enrichment Program, developed by Barry Dickson and Joan Bodger and offered under the auspices of the Children's Aid Society as an early intervention program. Katherine Grier and Celia Lottridge were invited to be part of that program. In 1986 after the pilot project ended, Katherine and Celia took the program out into the community as The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program. It was incorporated in 1986 and became a registered charity in 1987.

The program is a joyful group experience for parents and their babies or two-to-four-year-olds. If vulnerable, well-meaning parents do not emotionally bond or expressively communicate with their young children, the parent-child relationships and the children's futures can be compromised. The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program® intervenes to prevent this outcome with a physically close and interactive program in which parents and children learn to share the power and pleasure of oral rhymes, songs, and stories. The approach is backed by decades of research, yet is so simple and natural that the parents effortlessly gain the skills and confidence that foster healthy relationships during their children's crucial early years, and the children enhance their neurological foundation for lifelong emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

All children's early experiences mold their brains, and the primary caregiver provides most of those experiences. Simple things like the caregiver's choice of words, tone of voice, gestures, facial expressions, holding, and cuddling lay the neurological foundation for the child's life.

Because the peaks in a child's brain development for literacy, numeracy, social skills and emotional control all occur from ages one to three, the changes to a child's brain around this period are unlikely to be reversed. As a result, the return on investment during and close to this period is greater than for any other time in a person's life.

Because Parent-Child Mother Goose initiated a training and certification process for Parent-Child Mother Goose Program teachers nation-wide and internationally almost 30 years ago, the organization has enabled Parent-Child Mother Goose programs for many thousands of parents, babies and young children in every province in Canada as well as Australia, China, United States, Iran, and Ecuador. Program languages include Indigenous languages, English, French, Spanish, Somali, Farsi, Mandarin, and ASL

## Principal Activities 2017 - 2018

- 7 PCMG programs to underserved Toronto communities: Lakeshore, Elmbank Infant, Elmbank 2-4, Parkdale, Malvern, and Somali, and a Refugee Program at Sojourn House.
- 18 PCMG Teacher Training Workshops in Toronto and across Canada to train PCMG teachers for agencies that wish to provide PCMG programs in their own communities
- 343 books and disks for PCMG program providers and families across Canada and abroad
- Advocacy and partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations

### Programs

#### Highlights from the Field

*Please note that since some stories are very personal, some potentially identifying features, including the names of the programs, have been omitted from these excerpts from teachers' end-of-term reports and participant questionnaires in order to preserve confidentiality. Thank you, all, for the great information!!*

One young mother who was struggling with being a new mom slowly bonded with her first son, and eventually they became the program's biggest fans. The mother became much happier and more confident as well as easier on her son, a sweet and gentle boy, and on herself. She started to really feel like part of the community and would help the teachers to set up for the program. She became pregnant again and seems much better equipped now to nurture a second child.

Several grandparents came to the program, including one grandfather, who would bring the child even when his daughter, the child's mother, who was suffering depression, was not there. The emotional support was especially important to everyone in this family.

One mother came with a baby and an older girl. She never smiled or joined in with her baby, but often looked off sadly into the distance, while the older daughter soon started doing the rhymes with the group. The mother confided that she also has an older boy, and her baby only sleeps a couple of hours at a stretch. She began to open up and share more about her family in Afghanistan, how dangerous it is there, but how lonely she feels here, having come through an arranged marriage, leaving all her blood relations behind. Eventually she began to respond to the group, and she and the baby started to smile back. The mother seems very intelligent and one day asked a program teacher to take her to the library to find a meaningful novel to read.

On a school professional development day, when older children often come to program with their younger siblings, there was a 5-year-old boy who had been in the 2-4 program. He not only remembered all the rhymes, but was able to tell the pattern story *The Key to the Kingdom*. He was so good that we had him tell the story at the 2017 30th Anniversary AGM!

One mother coming with her new baby brought along her two-year-old son, who had come to the program when he was younger. Now that his younger brother is coming to the program, the older boy has started singing the program repertoire spontaneously. But he is gratifyingly quiet at diaper changing time when his mother recites a rhyme from the program!

A mother who comes with her two children loves the stories and says that whenever the group does a Tigrina rhyme, it helps her to feel connected to her heritage. She has shown interest in learning more and telling stories herself.

When a mum with three children suddenly stopped coming to the program, the teachers reached out to her and learned that her mother had died. She was glad to be encouraged to return to the program and it helped her to deal with her grief and keep moving with her life and being a parent.

One family has made a lot of headway with multiple problems. They are from Syria, but the little boy was born here. He has severe eczema as well as an auditory processing issue that has not been fully diagnosed. The mother appears very stressed and has been quite rough with the little boy, who is very shy and cries a lot. After being warmly welcomed into the program and coming to feel comfortable and accepted, the mother and child both began to relax. The child will go into the play area with his mother now and play with other children. The mother clearly appreciates the emotional support she has received as well as the group's faith in her little boy. They always seem to be hungry, so the teachers let them take leftovers home whenever possible. On school professional development days the mother brings her older son, who will benefit from the improvement in the family dynamic as he goes to summer camp and junior kindergarten.

One mother has been coming since her 18-month-old child was two months old. They both really enjoy the rhymes and stories, so much so that the mother is interested in taking a Parent-Child Mother Goose teacher training workshop and maybe becoming a PCMG teacher! This has happened before and we love it.

There is a core group of parents for whom one program made a lasting impact early on. Their infectious enthusiasm helps the newer parents to integrate more easily and motivates them to learn the rhymes and songs by heart, all the better to use them with their children at home.

One mum with limited resources was encouraged to come by her community home visitor. At first she attended sporadically and would not stay till the end of the hour. After 10 weeks, she comes more regularly, always stays for the full hour, and is finally singing and rhyming with her child. She seems more comfortable now with the other mums, and it definitely took courage to keep coming while her toddler kept getting into bags and strollers not her own!

### **QUOTES FROM PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

- This program meant that I had the space for my child to meet with other kids and learn to engage with kids of different ages and backgrounds, to be friendly and calm himself, and to interact with me so we can understand each other better. It gave me confidence as a mother.

- The stories always have purpose and meaning.
- It is a great development tool for kids.
- It helped me to get out of the house and support my child's development.
- I like this program because my son is leaning a lot. And it's fun!
- As a first-time parent, connecting with other parents helped me to understand because they had similar experiences.
- I enjoy the expressiveness with which the stories are presented, and the messages too.
- It's amazing for first-time parents. I have a way to help my baby go to sleep
- I value the socialization and language learning for my child.
- I would love to come more than once a week, even on the weekends.
- It has been a lifesaver! On a long road trip to Ottawa, our daughter was very restless in the car, and my husband was so good with her, doing the rhymes over and over to keep her happy.
- I met other moms and my kid made friends. The program helps me to be close with my kid.
- This is a great awesome program. Because of this program I avoided postpartum depression, made new friends for myself and for my kids for a lifetime. Please keep this program going!
- My child's learning ability has improved. Thank you. We will be back in September.
- The group feels like another family to me. I look forward to coming here on Fridays.
- Hearing the stories builds my imagination, and telling them builds my confidence.

## **Program Funding**

The majority of the direct costs of our Lakeshore, Parkdale and two Elmbank Programs were funded by City of Toronto Community Services Partnership and the Peter Gilgan Foundation. The direct costs of our bilingual Somali Program were funded by Etobicoke Brighter Futures Coalition. Our Malvern Program was funded by Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation, Tippet Foundation, St. Andrew's Charitable Foundation, and Ben and Hilda Katz Foundation. TD Canada Trust provided additional support for the Parkdale and Malvern Programs. All other funding for operational expenses and indirect program costs were from the private sector (please see Donors section at the end of this report) or our social enterprise. Thank you!!

## **Program Statistics**

The 247 adults and 272 children registered in our directly delivered Parent-Child Mother Goose programs in Toronto this year were culturally diverse and many shared rhymes and stories from their mother tongues. Program participants' cultures and languages included: Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Bargla, Bosnian, Cantonese, Croatian, Dari, Edo, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Ibo, Ilocano (Philippines), Japanese, Kutchi, Mandarin, Nepali, Pari (Sudan), Pashtu, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Sudanese, Swiss German, Tagalog, Telugu, Tigrinia, Tamil, and Tibetan.

## **Social Enterprise Activities**

Our workshops, books and disks are offered as a supplementary service to agencies and individuals anywhere in the world who are interested in PCMG, with the ultimate goal of disseminating the PCMG program and its methods and benefits as widely as possible. In a good year, our social enterprise is a small source of revenue to support PCMG operations.

### **PCMG Teacher Training Workshops**

Teacher training workshops create new Mother Goose teachers, expand and strengthen the network of Mother Goose programs, and help to maintain the standards of programs as well develop important skills and awareness in people who work with children in other ways. PCMG delivered 16 teacher training workshops in 2017-2018 in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and New Brunswick, including one second level PCMG Storytelling Workshop.

### **Book and Disk Sales**

Of the 343 items sold, our most popular books were by *Zoom, Zoom, Zoom* closely followed by *The Moon is Round* and *Where are the Stars*, and the most popular disks were *Sally Go Round the Sun* and *Sally Go Round the Moon*.

## **Partnerships**

### **Etobicoke Brighter Futures Coalition**

As a long-time member of the outstanding EBFC, who fund our Somali PCMG Program, we participate in the EBFC evaluation and coordination committees and meetings.

### **National Program and Training Committee**

The Program & Training Committee are a national volunteer group responsible for the policy and standards of the Parent-Child Mother Goose programs and teacher training workshops. We are very grateful to the dedicated women who do the invaluable work of maintaining the integrity of our programs and workshops.

### **Native Child and Family Services Toronto**

We are delighted to report that the customized Aboriginal Parent-Child Mother Goose Program that we developed at Native Child and Family Services Toronto in 2014-2016 continues to be independently taught by two Native Child and Family early childhood education staff. Both took our teacher training workshop and one apprenticed in the first year of the program with Ruth Danziger and Velrina Alexander.

### **Early Child Education Colleges**

PCMG offers students from ECE and Child Care degree programs the opportunity to gain exceptional experience and knowledge as volunteer childcare assistants in our PCMG programs. A student who commits to a minimum of 10 weeks in order to maintain continuity in the program receives a PCMG childcare certificate if he or she completes 30 weeks. Thank you to our wonderful ECE students!

### **Midaynta Community Services**

We are grateful to partner with Midaynta for our bilingual Somali Program. Midaynta Executive Director Mahad Yusuf offers highly knowledgeable support and promotes the program with families through Somali Immigrant Aid, where the parents study English.

### **Sojourn House for Refugees**

Sojourn House is a temporary home for newly arrived refugees from all over the world. It has offered settlement services and programs since 1987. We were grateful to Sojourn House in partnering with us by providing the location for our 2018 PCMG Refugee Program funded by the Ontario Ministry of Immigration and Citizenship.

### **Family Resource Agencies**

The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program is also offered throughout the Greater Toronto Area by many other teachers who have taken our teacher training workshops and become certified. These teachers work with a variety of family resource agencies, including the following:

- Afghan Women's Organization
- Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre
- Blue Hills Child and Family Centre
- Centre for Immigrant and Community Services
- Davenport Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre
- Parkdale High Park OEYC (Earls court-Creche Child Development Institute),
- Milton Community Resource Centre
- Ministry of Education
- Oakville Parent-Child Centre
- The Chartwell House Early Learning Centre
- YWCA Durham
- OEYC Today's Family
- Story Planet
- East York/East Toronto Family Resources
- Regent Park Community Health Centre
- Region of Peel
- Mississauga Parent-Child Resource Centres
- Mothercraft/Breaking the Cycle
- York Child Development & Family Services
- Native Child & Family Services
- Parent Resources
- OEYC Stoney Creek
- OEYC Today's Family
- OEYC Markham Family Day Care Services
- OEYC York North
- Oakville Parent-Child Centre
- YWCA Durham OEYC

## Memberships

PCMG is a member of the Canadian Association of Families Canada (previously known as the Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs FRP), Storytellers of Canada, Etobicoke Brighter Futures Coalition, Social Planning Toronto, the Centre for Social Innovation, and Sick Kids Hospital Infant Mental Health Promotion.

## Special Mention

### Parent-Child Mother Goose Program in Australia

We had another delightful visit this year from Jenny Tuck of the PCMG Australia Committee of Management. Topics included outreach to Aboriginal communities, succession planning, and the program's certification by Child Family Community Australia under the auspices of the Government of Australia as an *evidence-based* program:

*Several evaluations of the program have been conducted that showed positive outcomes for participants. A Canadian evaluation of the program (with a control group) found that mothers in the intervention group had higher levels of parenting efficacy and were more likely to judge their children as being secure (Scharfe, 2011). Results were most significant for the intervention group over time (6-month follow up).*

*In addition, results from an Australian evaluation (Terret et al., 2013) that included a comparison group found that children in the intervention improved more in their language abilities, and parents had a reduction in perception of child demandingness.*

### 1001 Friday Nights of Storytelling Fundraiser

Every Friday night for the last 40 years, storytellers have gathered in downtown Toronto for 1001 Friday Nights of Storytelling, an open evening of oral stories. Once again this year Pat Bisset organized one of their gatherings as a benefit for PCMG, raising \$575 in individual donations. Many thanks to the amazing Pat Bisset, the storytellers, and their donors!

### Emerging Teller Award from Storytellers of Canada

From March to June 2018, in partnership with Storytellers of Canada - Conteurs du Canada through their Emerging Teller Award, Ruth Danziger mentored PCMG teacher Gail Miller as a storyteller. Gail was one of only two emerging storytellers chosen for this award, and in July 2018 Gail told a story at the 2018 SC-CC Conference in Peterborough. Thank you to Ruth and congratulations to Gail!

## **Parent-Child Mother Goose Program for Refugees**

We received an Ontario Multicultural Community Capacity Grant to offer a new Parent-Child Mother Goose program for refugees at Sojourn House that was taught by Program Director Ruth Danziger and our bilingual Eritrean teacher Leeya Solomon. Participants particularly enjoyed the warmth, trust, and emotional support that developed in the group.

## **Parent-Child Mother Goose Program First Nations Project 2018-202**

Indigenous parents still live in the shadow of the residential school experience that almost destroyed their cultural identity. As desirable as it is for them to enhance their own parenting skills, they must be allowed to do so in the light and spirit of their own culture. Only culturally sensitive intervention makes this possible. And since intervention during early childhood has greater and more long-lasting effects than intervention at any other time, culturally sensitive intervention with young parents now will have the greatest and most long-lasting possible effect on the children.

With many thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for a \$105,200 designated grant, PCMG will support parenting and early child development programs for two years for parents with their children aged 0 to 4 in each of three northern Indigenous communities: Big Trout Lake First Nation (Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug), Sandy Lake First Nation, and M'Chigeeng First Nation.

Programming will be led by trained PCMG teachers from the community. Local elders and extended family will be welcome and encouraged to participate. To create the PCMG teachers, PCMG will offer PCMG two-day teacher training workshops to adults from the health, education, and childcare sectors in each community. Trainees who do not teach a classic PCMG program will be available to teach a program in the second year or later and can immediately apply their skills in their own work with children.

To ensure proper support for PCMG in the three communities and to develop and enrich the PCMG teachers' skills and confidence, PCMG will provide three additional advanced one-day teacher training workshops over the two-year period.

We are thrilled to embark upon this partnership with First Nations communities!

## **Thank you to our Contributors!**

The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program extends heartfelt thanks to the creative and dedicated individuals who brought about delivery of PCMG programs and workshops to the community!

**Program Director** Ruth Danziger  
**Office and Social Enterprise Manager** Sarah Pinder

### **Program Teachers:**

Sarah Abusarar  
Velrina Alexander  
Pat Bisset  
Ruth Danziger  
Batun Farah  
Renita Fillatre

Lynda Howes  
Falis Kediye  
Gail Miller  
Maria del Carmen Ordonez  
Leeya Solomon  
Maryaleen Trafford  
Megan Williams

### **Childcare Assistants:**

Fatime Khamis  
Nasira Hassan  
Seema Walia  
Solomon Bokre  
Ishtar Jama  
Khadijah Mohammed

### **Volunteers:**

Tanisha Lepine  
Seneca College  
Samaneh Samavi  
TD Canada Trust

### **Teacher Training**

#### **Workshop Facilitators:**

Heather Boonstra  
Ruth Danziger  
Maureen Doll  
Chantal Rogers  
Kim Heatherington  
Beth Hutchinson

Celia Lottridge  
Terrie Moar  
Ginger Mullen  
Maria del Carmen Ordonez  
Moire Porter  
Rachel Wagner Lemblé  
Marie-Line Therriault

And a great big thank you to our dedicated **Board of Directors!**

Mira Adler, Chair  
Naomi Harris, Vice Chair  
Joan MacDonald, Secretary  
Irving Cho, Treasurer  
Fatima Amjad

Andrea Gonsalves  
Samina Hashmi  
Marg Anne Jones  
Allen Karakatsanis

# Donors

We could not be more thankful to our donors, who truly make it possible to deliver our program free of charge to families with babies and young children:

## 2017-2018 Foundation, Corporate, and Government Funders

- Bull Wealth Management
- Burgundy Asset Management
- CIBC Wood Gundy World Markets Children's Foundation
- Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation
- City of Toronto Community Service Partnership Program
- Etobicoke Brighter Futures Coalition
- Leonard Wolinsky Foundation
- J.W. McConnell Family Foundation
- Jackman Foundation
- N. R. Harris Family Foundation
- P.E.A.R.L. Foundation
- Peter Gilgan Foundation
- Shum Vourkoutiotis Fund at the Toronto Community Foundation
- St. Andrew's Charitable Foundation
- Tippet Foundation
- TD Canada Trust

## 2017-2018 Individual Donors

- 1001 Friday Nights
- Mira Adler
- Fatima Amjad
- Jonanne Fenton
- Naomi Harris & Boulaye Traore
- Andrea Gonsalves
- Mimi and Anthony Hollenberg
- Nancy Howard
- John Hylton
- Susan Hylton
- Andrea Imada
- Syed Ali Jafri
- Graham Jones
- Marg Anne Jones
- Peter Jones
- Stephen Jones
- Allen Karakatsanis
- C. Anthony and Patricia Keith
- Joan MacDonald
- Linda MacDonald
- Valerie Michell
- Vaanisai Nagallapati
- Patricia Pinfold
- Meghan Xavier
- Anany Yadav

## 2017-2018 Donors in Kind

- BoardMatch
- Elmbank Community Centre
- LAMP
- Parkdale Community Health Centre
- Salesforce.com
- TechSoup
- Toronto Community Housing Corporation
- Toronto Public Library, Albion Branch
- Toronto Public Library, Malvern Branch
- WholeNote Media

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Report prepared by:  
Susan Ryan, Executive Director  
Vermont Square Parent-Child Mother Goose Program

