



ImPrints

MPSI IS PART OF THE DIVISION OF RESEARCH AT WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY, DETROIT, MI

FALL 2017

New Trauma Theory Examines Cultural Betrayal

Numerous factors impact a person's response to violence. The age of the victim, the frequency and duration of the assault(s), the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator – each conspires to influence the kind of harm the victim experiences. Dr. Jennifer M. Gómez, MPSI's new post-doctoral fellow, has revealed yet another critical factor: cultural betrayal. For six years, she has worked to refine her Cultural Betrayal

Trauma Theory (CBTT), rapidly gaining professional ground.

"Being raped by a stranger is clearly traumatic," Dr. Gómez said. "But is different than being raped by your husband." Stranger rape lacks the element of betrayal, since there is no relationship. But marital rape elicits a profound breach of trust in addition to the violence. Dr. Gómez' theory goes further, adding the impact of culture. "If a Black woman is raped by a Black man, the racial loyalty is also disrupted. A member of her 'group' has turned on her," Dr. Gómez said. Layers of additional trauma add to the original abuse.

These effects happen in ethnic minority groups, because years of racial oppression by "outsiders" can foster deep loyalty between members. Members unite for support, validation and a sense of community. This circle of trust can be protective and secure. When within-group violence between members breaks this (intra)cultural trust, though, the effects of this cultural betrayal trauma can intensify. The victim may feel shunned by the group that used to protect her. She may have no safe haven, no one to trust.

Gómez' research found that cultural be-

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IMH Director Ann Stacks (l) and IMH Clinical Coordinator Carla Barron (r) tour Dr. Osafo around Detroit as she studies MPSI's infant mental health program and others across the U.S.

London Visitor "Delighted" by MPSI Infant Mental Health Program

Yvonne Osafo is a London-based, parent-infant psychoanalytic psychotherapist specializing in early intervention. This summer she toured the U.S. to learn how it supports infants mental health through curriculum, training, internship and intervention. She planned to visit MPSI's Infant Mental Health program, including our first-in-the-country dual-title degree, for a day or two. She was so impressed, she stayed two weeks, exploring Detroit and blogging about our IMH approach. Dr. Osafo's guides included Ann Stacks, Ph.D., IMH director; Carla Barron, IMH clinical co-coordinator; and Carolyn Dayton, Ph.D., IMH associate director.

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Dr. Gómez is MPSI's new post-doctoral fellow in Wayne State's postdoctoral to faculty transition Program. She cites her mentors and the opportunity to work with minority youth as key factors in her decision to come here.

#FamiliesFirst100

A Joint Program with United Way

One hundred years of helping children and families in Southeast Michigan may seem like a long time. But for the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute (MPSI) and the United Way for Southeastern Michigan (UWSEM), the shared milestone feels more like a beginning. The two iconic Detroit organizations partnered this fall on

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Pulitzer prize winner Stephen Henderson (l) hosted the Families First panel with Dr. Herman Gray (center), CEO of UWSEM and MPSI Director Dr. Lichtenberg (r).

Trauma from page 1

trayal trauma in ethnic minorities predicted post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and internalized prejudice. "We must acknowledge and be sensitive to these overlying factors, to provide effective and empathetic interventions," she said.

Dr. Gómez' CBTT is unique in the field of trauma, a perspective not yet well-explored. "In my background research, I found no existing theory I could use to systematically test for outcomes for minority populations and to show within-group differences." So she created CBTT. She credits predoctoral mentor Dr. Jennifer Freyd of the University of Oregon with inspiring and encouraging her work. Dr. Freyd is a leading expert in betrayal trauma.

An Offer Hard to Refuse

Dr. Gómez came to MPSI through Wayne State's new Postdoctoral to Faculty Transition Fellowship program, an opportunity she called "pretty rare" among the universities she considered. Transition fellows receive generous stipends and benefits, work with faculty mentors, participate in learning communities and receive funding for national conferences. Most significantly, fellows who receive external funding as postdocs can earn a WSU tenure-track appointment

In MPSI, Dr. Gómez is mentored by Dr. Valerie Simon (jointly appointed to MPSI and the psychology department) and Dr. Stella Resko (jointly appointed to MPSI and the department of social work). "My whole postdoc is designed around my work, and my time is protected," she said. "Usually you work in someone else's lab and pursue your line of research on the side."

Detroit was an easy sell. Her first career was as a ballet dancer, so the city's art and culture scene, especially the Jazz Festival, is a favorite. Dr. Gómez has lived in New York City; Eugene, Oregon; San Diego, and Charleston, South Carolina and now has an apartment in a historic building in the heart of midtown. "I toured Detroit twice with the Dance Theatre of Harlem, performing in public schools to expose the little ones to ballet. It was 10 years ago, but Detroit still has a special place in my heart." Dr. Gómez' work also benefits from her posi-

Cultural Betrayal Trauma Theory (CBTT)

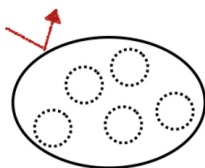
2015, Sasha Johnson-Freyd and Jennifer M. Gómez



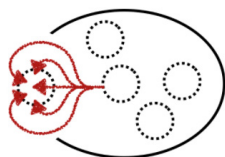
Traditional Model of Trauma expects that individuals have defenses to trauma. **Circle = defenses. Arrow = all forms of trauma.**



Betrayal Trauma Theory puts trauma in the context of interpersonal relationships with trust or dependency. This creates a unique vulnerability to traumatic betrayal. **Perforated Circle = vulnerability/perforated defenses. Arrow = betrayal trauma**



(Intra)Cultural Trust – Cultural betrayal trauma theory contextualizes betrayal trauma within larger sociocultural dynamics. Cultural minorities pool defense resources to buffer against societal trauma. **Ellipse = pooled defense resources. Arrow = societal trauma**



Cultural Betrayal Trauma occurs when a member of a cultural minority has uniquely vulnerable defenses to the betrayal of (intra) cultural trust. When a victim is violated by a perceived in-group perpetrator, the victim's (intra)cultural trust is also betrayed. **Arrows = Cultural Betrayal Trauma**

tion at our major urban research university. Wayne's location and strong community engagement pave the way for access to the minority adolescents she plans to study.

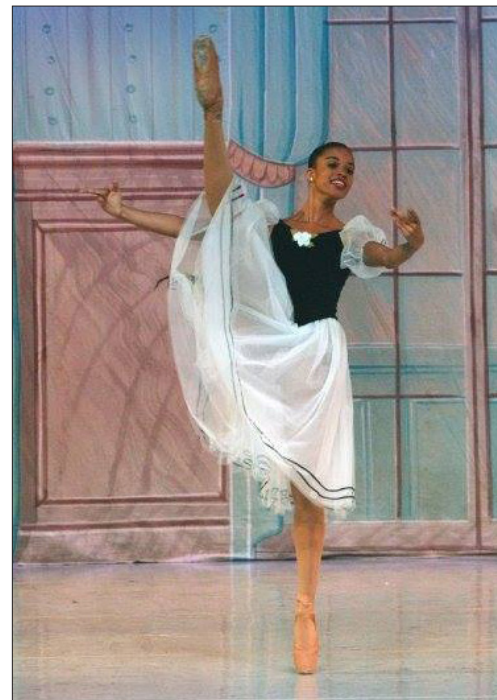
From Dance to Dissertation

Her life has unfolded in unexpected and rewarding ways. Dr. Gómez graduated from high school with no plans for college, not even taking the SAT. She had danced ballet since age 11, when a relative pushed her to try something athletic after she grew too tall for her first love, gymnastics. She saw Dance Theatre of Harlem at age 16, "Black people doing beautiful, strong, wonderful roles," and joined them

not long after graduation. When a chronic injury sidelined her years later, she tried two classes at the City College of New York to figure out what to do next. A supportive English professor told her she was smart and could master anything. The interesting coursework in her Psych 101 class sealed the deal. "It was fascinating and opened up my mind to possibilities."

Today, Dr. Gómez is first author on 16 publications, including two book chapters, and a paper that was one of 2016's top 10 most cited in *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, & Policy*. She has won several awards, including the 2017 American Psychological Association Division 56 Award for Outstanding Dissertation in the Field of Trauma Psychology. Her work on CBTT has been funded by the National Academy of Sciences through the Ford Foundation Fellowship program.

Dr. Gómez is excited to be at WSU and MPSI, working on her CBTT with minority populations. "I wanted to be in a place where I have the space to do the work I value. To also have my mentors and colleagues support and respect me, and my work, is a bonus," she said. "I may not need that to accomplish my goals, but I wanted it, and I appreciate it."



Dr. Gómez danced ballet immediately after high school, touring for several years with Dance Theatre of Harlem. A supportive professor at City College of New York opened her to the possibilities of academic pursuits.



Dr. Ondersma (top right) leads a brainstorming session on using technology to help hard-to-reach populations in a cost-effective way.

Motivating Change in Risky Pregnancies – MPSI’s Deputy Director **Steve Ondersma, PhD**, received a \$500,000 Michigan Health Endowment grant to help pregnant women struggling with substance use and mental illness. Called High Touch, High Tech (HT²), the intervention is delivered via smart phone, tablet or PC in the obstetrician’s waiting room. The approach is private, personalized and non-confrontational, aimed at promoting self-change or the seeking of professional treatment. Dr. Ondersma’s team will work with Michigan State and the University of Michigan on the two-year project.



A Woman of Distinction – Psychology undergraduate and MPSI lab assistant **Spencer Genrich** won the Wayne State 2017 Woman of Distinction Student Award. Spencer works with MPSI faculty member Valerie Simon, PhD, researching the development of adolescent girls exposed to interpersonal violence. Spencer was selected for the award based on her commitment to issues pertaining to women, diversity, equity and inclusion.

Re-charter Committee Affirms MPSI Value

Institutes like MPSI occupy a special position at Wayne State. They operate by an academic charter up for review every six years or sooner. MPSI’s review took place in February. The process included a self-study of grants, trainees, programs, outreach, publications, and communications, followed by a site visit from an advisory committee of faculty from various WSU colleges and departments. The team interviewed faculty, staff, trainees, leaders from our Early Childhood Center and even members of our Board of Visitors.

A month later, their extremely positive report recommended a six-year re-charter. The conclusion: MPSI meets or exceeds its mission by conducting impactful research, collaborating and forming interdisciplinary partnerships, training students, engaging the community, and significantly contributing to the well-being of Detroit’s children and families, and the professionals who serve them.

Nat Geo Lauds Prenatal Brain Studies – The work of MPSI faculty member **Moriah Thomason, PhD**, was spotlighted in June’s *National Geographic* magazine with photos of human fetuses undergoing MRI scans. Dr. Thomason’s team performs periodic scans to check brain growth and connectivity, focusing on fetuses at risk of premature birth. “Preterm children are at



higher risk of developmental delays,” she said. Stress and lack of oxygen are often blamed. Finding the exact causes of impairment could make future interventions quicker and more effective.

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Some excerpts from Dr. Osafo's blog:

Dual Title IMH Program

I joined the first class of the term with a brand new cohort of students. The 10 students are also registered onto other masters' degrees at the university, mainly in social work, nursing and psychology. The selection process is highly competitive, so those who are finally selected show an exceptional level of commitment and motivation.

This approach to IMH is very different from our approach in the UK, where our main IMH professionals come from a psychotherapy background. Most of our training schools require trainees to already be qualified therapists and have experienced personal therapy before they can specialise in parent infant psychotherapy. In the UK, there is a requirement to do a two-year infant observation, and some UK training institutions also require other forms of organisational observations. The UK training is more spread out, whereas the US system is very focused and intense, which fits into the way the university courses are structured.

The teaching style of the IMH programme is very dynamic, and I was amazed at the volume of work set for the students to do between classes.

Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute

Dr. Osafo learned about IMH related research projects, including showing teachers and parents ways to strengthen their emotional connection with children, building the relationship between dads and infants, and singing lullabies to reduce parental stress while soothing and bonding with baby.

MPSI has a three-pronged approach; namely research, community engagement, and education. The aim is to translate all research back into the community. Valuable research becomes effective interventions in the community. The research has a vast impact on the way professionals work with families to provide the best possible outcomes for their infants. They pass on the knowledge to parents, social workers, teachers, nurses and other professionals so that babies have the best start in life.

Back in the IMH Classroom

I am amazed at the progress of the students after just a week. Every student has delivered and demonstrates a surprising understanding of theoretical concepts, as if on the programme for a year rather than just a week. The teaching goes beyond parent-child psychotherapy; it includes assessment, advocacy, concrete assistance, developmental guidance, emotional support (listening emphatically and non-judgmentally; nothing is off limits), and parent-infant psychotherapy (making links from past to present).

I am also mindful of the amount of work that Ann (Stacks) has to put in before this and every class. All the questions and

responses to the students' quiz had been analysed and used to plan the class and responses fed back to the class, and discussed in detail. During class, Ann moved between the groups to assist the students to practice what they learned, as they would be required to apply the learning individually to the case studies set for the coming week. Every student is focused and engaged.

Well . . . that class really sealed it for me. I will have to look more into how this course was structured, because it is so dynamic and effective.

Read Dr. Osafo's complete blog at:
www.yvonneosafofpsychotherapist.com/



"We lay our hearts on the table."

Family First
 Rebecca shares honors with (l-r) daughter Ella, mom Francine Dorn, dad Patrick Dorn, husband Jamal, daughter Maya, and niece Jessica Murphy.

MPSI Coordinator Wins Infant Mental Health Award

Rebecca Wheeler, MSW, IMH-E(III), research coordinator for MPSI's Hearts and Minds on Babies project, won the 2017 Esther Dean Callard Award. The highly respected award from the Metro Detroit Association for Infant Mental Health recognizes outstanding contributions to infant mental health at both the county and state level. Rebecca has a long history of providing clinical services, consulting, clinician training, and project coordination. She felt especially honored to receive the Callard Award.

"Although I don't have a grand title, political sway or dozens of publications, this organization of my peers recognizes the value of direct work with families, interdisciplinary organizing efforts, training and reflective supervision in the trenches," she said. "This is what most of us in infant mental health and early intervention do, as we lay our hearts on the table to improve infant outcomes."

Rebecca currently coordinates Hearts and Minds on Babies, a multi-county research study on supporting reflective functioning in early childhood teachers. Cited by colleagues and students as calm, supportive and nurturing, Rebecca exemplifies relationship-based practice in all her work.



Dr. Ratner (top center) engages a group of UWSEM project leaders and MPSI researchers to consider innovative ways to bring educational resources to parents and children.

Bottom – Attendees chose from six sessions at the Families First Forum. This one explained a new smart phone app to help parents build healthy routines and strong connections with their children.

United Way from page 1

a community forum called “Families First for 100 Years” to explore research and service intersections now and in the future.

“We shared current projects and new ideas with each other and our guests,” said planning committee member Hilary Ratner, Ph.D.. Dr. Ratner, former vice president for research at Wayne State University, is training director at MPSI. About 120 people attended the free forum, which included breakout sessions and a keynote presentation from Pulitzer Prize winner Stephen Henderson, an editor for the *Detroit Free Press*.

“Our breakout sessions showcased the exceptional work being done by both organizations. This event is a springboard into what we hope will be an even deeper partnership. We look to our many community partners to co-create the next steps we might take together,” Dr. Ratner said.

Sessions covered healing childhood trauma, the importance of fathers, parent education and engagement, arts and preschoolers, measuring impact, early emotional development, healthy eating and activity, and family literacy. Henderson set the day’s tone with a personal account of the Tuxedo Project, the restoration of his abandoned family home in Detroit into a neighborhood literacy center. “The house was a wreck, and 24 of the 40 houses on the block were abandoned,” said Henderson.

The completed project houses a writer-in-residence and is a gathering spot for neighborhood children and adults. “I was shocked,” Henderson said of the condition of his childhood streets and the desperation of its residents. “I’m also inspired by the resilience I see in people who live in



areas like that.”

Henderson shared stories of an 81-year-old neighbor with no power or running water. A fire on his second floor was contained, but damaged flooring fell through to the first floor. The man cannot afford repairs so lives around the wreckage. A young woman and her 2-year-old son are squatters in another home now on the auction block for tax foreclosure. She also lives with no electricity or water. “They don’t walk around complaining. They don’t mope. They are ready to help themselves but they just don’t have the resources,” he said. “What levers do we need to pull to get these people to a better place?”

Herman Gray, M.D., CEO of UWSEM, and MPSI director Peter Lichtenberg discussed how their organizations offer help through direct services, community engagement, fundraising and research. Connecting the people who have needs with the right programs can be difficult. Some families have lost records due to homelessness or other catastrophe, so many don’t even have a birth certificate to enroll their child in a Head Start program.

“They can’t access the services,” Henderson said. “We need to make this easier, to bring the programs to the people.” The problem crosses all age groups. Dr. Lich-

tenberg, who also directs the Institute of Gerontology, said two-thirds of older adults in Detroit live in underserved areas where basic needs are unmet.

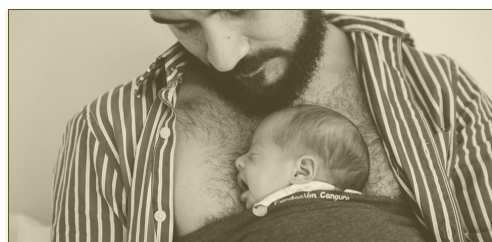
Dr. Gray said that as UWSEM strives to help, “we recognize the resilience and respect the dignity of every child and family in Detroit.” He suggested the “old notion of mobile services” as a possible solution to the problem of accessibility.

The panel agreed that agencies need to coordinate services and think more holistically, possibly using technology to streamline and engage. Henderson ended with a challenge for those tasked with helping Detroit’s vulnerable. “Can you *think* differently about this? Can you *feel* differently about this? How can your institutions start to cover that distance and peel back the barriers?”

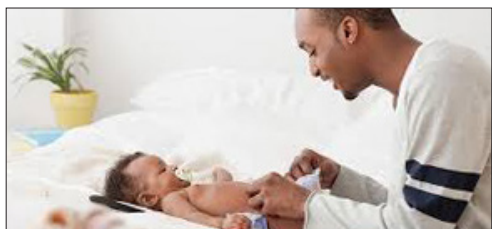
After the forum, 30 representatives from programs at UWSEM and MPSI met in a working session to brainstorm next steps and discuss how to turn ideas into action. “We have enough work to keep us busy for the next 100 years,” Dr. Ratner said.

Dad and Baby Time

Carolyn Dayton, PhD, is passionate about helping dads be more central in early infant care. As associate director of Infant Mental Health at MPSI, she studies development and parental bonding, especially in at-risk families. From birth, babies are biologically primed to connect with their parents. Fathers and mothers are also biologically primed to care for, connect with and protect their babies. The care parents provide babies during the first months of life creates the “glue” to support a lifelong relationship with the child. The simple tasks of holding, rocking, feeding, and soothing newborns are also the building blocks of baby’s healthy growth and development. Fathers sometimes feel left out of these critical early bonding moments. Here are a few tips from Dr. Dayton’s work to help dads foster the newborn connection:

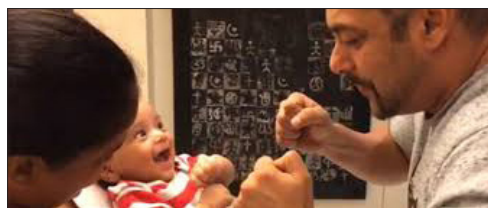


Kangaroo care – Skin-to-skin contact is great for babies. It helps them feel calm and connected and supports their underdeveloped ability to regulate body temperature, heart rate, and other physiologic processes. Plus it’s easy. Lay down or sit reclining in a chair with your shirt off. Place baby face down in only a diaper on your chest. Baby will be warmed by your body temperature and will hear and feel your heartbeat. Over time, baby will associate feeling warm, calm and cared for with the feel and smell of you. Do stay alert to baby’s breathing during Kangaroo Care. Putting your baby on his or her back is best for regular sleep time.



Specialize – Find a few activities that become your specialties with baby, such as bath time, diaper changing, rocking to sleep, and singing at bedtime. Whatever it is, do it as often as possible. Although your baby will not remember this in the tradi-

tional sense when he or she grows up, the strong connection created by the experience will remain.



Sing, sing, sing! – Babies are rhythmic beings and love to be sung to. They don’t even care what you sing or whether you sing well. What matters is that you sing in an active way. Hold your baby while singing, make eye contact, rock, even waltz around the room. Your musical voice and the rhythmic movement are a recipe for a pleasurable connection.



Hold on – Snuggle and cuddle your baby as much as possible. The old saying that “you can’t spoil a newborn” is true. Newborns don’t have the cognitive capacity to manipulate you. They cry because they need something: food, a diaper changing, comfort, heat or cooling. The more you carry and hold your baby, the calmer your baby will be and the more connected you two will become.

Worried you aren’t connecting?

Get support

Talk to a trusted friend or relative about your feelings. Sharing, and hearing how other parents cope, can relieve your worries. If you can’t connect in person, try online groups. You are not alone.

Take care of yourself

It’s hard to feel warm, loving and connected to your baby when you are exhausted from family and work. Exercise, have some fun, eat nutritious food, nap when you can, and get a check-up. Men can experience mental health struggles like depression and anxiety during the perinatal period, just like women. Your physician can help you find the help and support you need.

Take care of each other

A new baby in the family can turn other relationships upside down, especially the one with your partner. Find some alone time to reconnect. Time together, no matter how small, can make a difference. If more intense help is needed, try a few sessions with a licensed counselor. A strong connection to your partner can make it easier for both parents to bond with baby.



Freer House Garden Nears Completion

The Freer garden revitalization project, under development for several years, took an exciting leap forward this summer. Flat paving stones, with an interesting history themselves, were arranged to create decorative areas for outdoor events. The pavers are Lake Erie sandstone, salvaged from old Toledo sidewalks (circa 1900), that perfectly complement the original stonework of the Freer House. Expert masons also crafted a seat bench and masonry columns of Pennsylvania bluestone to support the iron gates and fencing to be installed later this fall. The subtle colors of the stone range from lilac and rust tones to gray and slate blue, echoing the hues of the original Freer House stonework.

Trees, shrubs, bushes and grasses that reflect Freer's original selections for his garden, were planted in the courtyard and front yard. The plants combine Asian and American varieties, and mirror Freer's combining of Asian and American art in his collection. An exact replica of the Peacock Room's missing iron porch railing, designed by Wilson Eyre, Jr. in 1906 but removed in 1966, has been painstakingly replicated by James Viste of Edgewise Forge as the finishing touch on this unique and stunning project.

Fred Knight of K.C. Runciman Landscapes designed the intricate garden and has overseen its installation. Associate curator of U-M's Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum, David Michener, provided invaluable guidance, as did members of the Freer House Garden Committee. The garden has been expertly installed



The Freer House garden has been completely transformed with a new walkway, pillars, benches, trees and other plantings. Inset – Expert craftsmen James Viste, Edgewise Forge, installs a new porch railing that is an exact replica of the railing removed 50 years ago. Fred Knight (in background) of K.C. Runciman Landscapes.



by W.H. Canon Landscape Company under the supervision of project manager Tim McAlister and foreman Tim Diaz

The Denise Little Memorial Fund, the Birkhill Family Foundation, Chemical Bank, Grosse Pointe Farm and Garden Club, Junior League Gardeners, Grosse Pointe Questers #147, and more than 90 individual donors generously donated funds to support this project.

While close to completion, the Freer House Garden Project still needs your help.

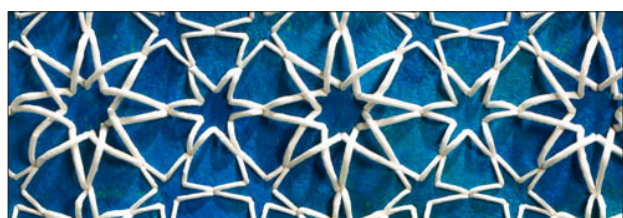
We seek donations to purchase the garden's centerpiece: a stone Japanese lantern, similar to the one Freer received in 1905 as a gift from Yamanaka & Company. The original resides outside the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

To help with the lantern or support the overall garden project, please contact William Colburn at william.colburn@wayne.edu

JOIN US

Exhibit open, 1-5 pm | Artist's talk, 3 pm | Free & open to the public

Artist in Resonance: Hiroko Lancour at the Charles Lang Freer House



Saturday Nov. 4, 2017

A special one-day exhibition of art by Japanese born Detroit artist, Hiroko Lancour, in the unique setting of the historic Freer House.

Hiroko Lancour, inspired by the legacy of Detroit industrialist and collector of Asian and American art, Charles Lang Freer, will display her artwork throughout the house. Lancour earned an MFA from Wayne State University and has received numerous awards for her art. Select works will be available for purchase. Registration not required.



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Impact of Woodward Consortium Model

Managing an early childhood center can be extremely challenging. It requires trusting relationships with children, parents and teachers often while juggling administrative and business duties. Six years ago, MPSI and WSU's College of Education joined together to offer support to nearby centers along the Woodward Corridor. The resulting Woodward Corridor Early Childhood Consortium has provided free professional development conferences, coaching, workshops, and parent engagement opportunities to about 20 centers licensed to serve about 1,500 children.

Directors interviewed about their involvement with the consortium said they benefited from the Community of Practice (CoP) model used, which emphasizes interpersonal connections, resources and creating a sense of community. A CoP unites people who have a common professional interest and a desire to improve their practice. Though the CoP is facilitated by



Quality childcare engages students on multiple levels and stimulates creativity. Students at MPSI's Early Childcare Center enjoy story time with a guest reader.

a leadership team, interactions are collaborative with experts and novices acting as both teachers and learners.

Details appear in this fall's "Creating Communities: A Consortium Model for Early Childhood Leaders," published in *Teacher Development*, by Hilary Ratner, Erika

Bocknek, Anna Miller, Sharon Elliott and Beverly Weathington.

For information visit:
www.wsuecconsortium.org