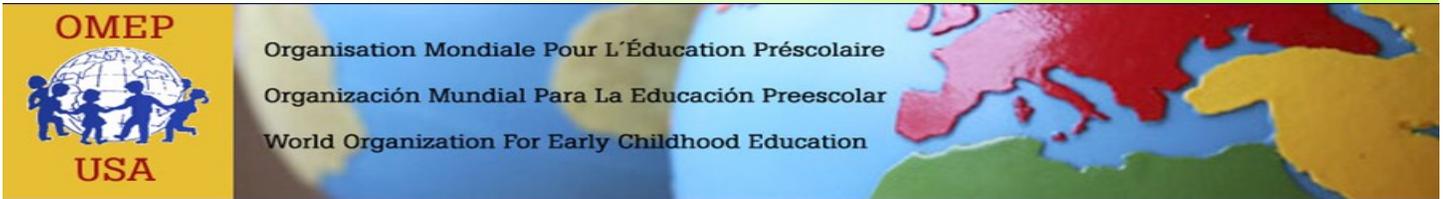


Fall  
2018

# OMEP-USA NEWSLETTER



## Inside this issue:

President Message 1

Dr. Judi Simmons  
Estes's Interview 3

Peace Education  
Initiative 4

Upcoming Events 8

## Message from OMEP-USA President

Judith Lynne McConnell-Farmer, Ed.D

OMEP-USA Looking Back While Moving Forward:  
Prague, Budapest, and Panama City

What an honor it is to be your President and represent OMEP-USA at the two-day OMEP World President's Assembly which preceded the 70th OMEP World Conference on Current Conditions of Early Childhood Education Today: A Foundation for a Sustainable Future, held in Prague, Czech Republic, June 25-29, 2018. It was a magnificent setting for the annual OMEP World President's Assembly and Conference. OMEP Presidents from forty-nine countries around the world discussed, debated and networked during the intensive and fast-paced meetings. It was a humbling, yet exhilarating experience.

### Editor's note

Please send your story  
to

**Dong Hwa Donna  
Choi, Ph.D**

Professor

Park University

Kansas City, MO

E-mail:

[dong.choi@park.edu](mailto:dong.choi@park.edu)

OMEP-USA's presence at the conference was evident. Proudly, ten OMEP-USA members attended the conference and most participated in panels, individual paper presentations, and workshops. A contingent from the USA traveled to observe in selected preschool setting in and round Prague, attended a banquet with folk song musicians and dancers, and went together to a Black Light Theatre production in old historic Prague. We contributed to the Doll Project organized by Russia's OMEP President, Larisa Shevchenko. It was decided at the regional meeting in Opatija, Croatia during the 69th OMEP World Conference for us to participate in this project. National OMEP Presidents were

encouraged to bring a doll representative of their country to the conference in Prague. Past President Edna Ranck brought our contribution in her luggage, an inspired Native American female doll, which I then hand-delivered to Larisa. Several other Presidents brought dolls for the project as seen in the accompanying photograph. The purpose of this project was to create a world-wide collect of dolls as national symbols. Hopefully, this project will be expanded in the years to come to include a doll from every national committee.

Maria Vassiliadou, President of OMEP-Cyprus, sponsored a Creative Art Project for the 70th OMEP World Conference. The aim of this project was to give an opportunity to children from all the countries to express their feelings and to communicate with one another through an artistic language. Participating children created a picture in response to the following question: “Why don’t you tell us your story in colors?”. One drawing from each OMEP World region was selected for a first-place award. We willingly submitted the drawings by three different preschool students at the Manchester School for Young Children in Topeka, Kansas to the contest. This school is owned and directed by one of my former students, Christina Turner, and hallmarks as one of the few Reggio Emilia inspired schools in Kansas. Unfortunately, none of our USA creative art drawings won first place (Canada won that honor), yet, Maria did ask if she could display our creative art projects at an upcoming conference in Cyprus. So...., our students’ drawings are now in Cyprus much to our delight and that of the students who created them!

In recognition of the achievements of the past 70 years in OMEP a history/picture book was assembled by World OMEP. This was a momentous and important enterprise which resulted in a detailed and quite readable book. Our submission required the assistance of many of our members including Blythe Hinitz, Edna Ranck, Jean Simpson, Judith Wagner, and Lenore Weinberg, to name but a few who helped us gather our archival OMEP-USA history. A most noteworthy and socially relevant global policy statement issued during our days at the OMEP World President’s Assembly focused on the welfare of our children who have migrated. This was an urgent call to action in support of children regarding migration and refugees. An exact copy of the statement is in this newsletter. Please share it with others in your community. A brief version of it follows:

“Representing members in more than 70 countries around the world, OMEP, the World Organization for Early Childhood Education, calls upon local, national, and global leaders to take immediate and responsible action. The current situation in the world creates the urgent need for all nations to ensure the human rights of all children, especially the youngest and the most vulnerable, regardless of their migration status. All children must have access to all services and they must not be detained or separated from their families.”

Following the conference OMEP-USA sponsored a trip to visit the legendary early childhood center, The Pikler Institute, in Budapest, Hungary. Pamela Cook coordinated the event and Susan Peebles and I traveled with Pamela for the three-day event. At the Pikler Institute we were privy to a private lecture highlighting their rich history, dialogues with the administration and teachers, and a tour of the facility. It was a fascinating and fitting extension of all we experienced in Prague.

# **An Interview with Dr. Judi Simmons Estes**

## **Vice-President, OMEP U.S. National Committee**

Dr. Mary Duncan

Region 5 Representative

Let Your Light Shine...

Have you ever heard the children's song, "This little light of mine...?" The woman we will learn about in this Spotlight on Members exemplifies this song in real life. Dr. Judi Simmons Estes, has been a member of OMEP-US for 13 years and recently retired after 50 years of teaching and administrative roles, spanning early childhood through higher education. In 2005, Judi ran into a friend at an NAEYC conference. As they walked and talked, the friend, Dr. Gwen Coe, invited her to an OMEP meeting that was taking place at the conference. Judi had never heard of OMEP before and attended the meeting with Gwen. Judi says that her life was never the same. She immediately joined OMEP and began to get involved; her involvement has encompassed being an active member and then board Secretary for six years and now Vice-President.

OMEP membership became Judi's "ticket" into a new world of international travel. She found that the more experienced members in each OMEP travel group had a way of taking new members under their wing. Traveling with OMEP members, Judi met many educators who introduced her to other travel destinations. Through this international exposure her world view grew immensely. Each individual she was able to converse with provided an insight into education from their cultural point of view. There seemed to be a common thread woven through various countries, for educators in each culture strived to impact their students in positive ways. This was something that Judi appreciated. Whether she is teaching in a preschool in Bath, England; a college classroom in Wuhan, China; or observing teachers in classrooms in Belize, Central America, Judi focuses on engaging students during the teaching-learning process.

By being a part of OMEP-US all members can learn from one another. Being a member of OMEP-USA offers an many opportunities to grow in personal and professional development. Traveling internationally for the first time can bring up a lot of fear as a result of so many unknowns. For example, travel to different countries, or presenting at an international conference can literally take a person out of their comfort zone. It can be intimidating. For example, Judi shared about an opportunity she had on a trip to Cuba when she visited maternal hospitals and met with a group of pediatricians about brain development the first three years of life. While the experience was out of her comfort zone, she found the doctors to be receptive to the topic and anxious to have a discussion. When faced with fear, a mantra Judi lives by is, "feel the fear, and do it anyway." So as each of us embrace the call to teach at various places and states, we can all take a moment and learn from a veteran in the field; get involved with OMEP. Make a difference; let your light shine.

# Peace Education Initiative

Judi Simmons Estes, Ph.D. & Judith Lynne McConnell-Farmer, Ed.D.

In 1946, Lady Allen of Hurtwood (United Kingdom) and Alva Myrdal (Sweden), with others from France, Denmark, and Norway, developed a plan for the creation of a world organization to promote the well-being, rights and education of young children. The UNESCO Assembly in Paris greeted the plan with warm support, and the founders invited representatives of 19 countries from 5 continents to a World Conference on Early Childhood Education in Prague in 1948. At that Conference, OMEP was born and today has over 70 member countries. The OMEP U.S. National Committee is undertaking a peace education initiative to promote the well-being, rights and education of young children. The initiative will begin January 2019 and will be celebrated at a Conference to be held in San Antonio Texas, April 3-5, 2020.

*“Peace education is the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment. There are numerous United Nations declarations on the importance of peace education.”* (Wikipedia)

A common theme among all peace education initiatives is a commitment to nonviolent communication. During this past century there has been a growth in social concern about forms of violence, genocide, modern warfare, ethnic hatred, racism, sexual abuse, etc. Evaluations have shown that whole school peace education programs reduce bullying and violence in schools and improve school climate. School peace education efforts have demonstrated a positive impact upon student academic performance. In the US, teaching children to focus on inner peace has become confused with teaching religion; some believe the emphasis is upon creating safe schools, not upon creating a peaceful society. However, the focus of peace education is actually on the belief that if children adopt and practice peace values, as adults they will help create a civilized and peaceful society

## Goals of the OMEP U.S. Committee Peace Education Project

- Facilitate a discussion of peace education related projects, among OMEP membership and with the general public.
- Provide resources related to peace education topics, among OMEP membership and with the general public.
- Serve as a clearinghouse to collect information related to peace education activities.
- Grow our membership through concentrated efforts to make our Peace Education Project activities easily accessible.
- Network with other organizations with peace education initiatives.
- Market the upcoming U.S. National Committee conference in April, 2020 in San Antonio, Texas.
- Contact the host country for the 2020 World OMEP Conference to see if the U.S. National Committee can promote the topic of Peace Education and invite other countries to share their peace initiatives in some way, yet to be defined.

## Ideas for the OMEP Peace Education Project

- Activities would begin in January 2019 and continue to April 3-5, 2020 when the OMEP U.S. National Committee Conference is held in San Antonio, Texas.
- It is proposed the OMEP U.S. National Committee 2020 conference have a theme related to peace education such as “Creating a Culture of Peace” or simply “Peace Education.”
- Develop a logo for the Peace Education Project and use on all materials developed and all communications through social media and/or website, advertising, etc.
- Webinars, including guest interviews could be provided, possible with CEU credit attached
- Short (3-4 minutes) videos regarding a peace education related topic and posted on the OMEP U.S. website.
- Social media could be used to promote the Peace Education Project including Facebook, twitter, a blog, etc.
- A resource section could be added to the website.
- Link with to peace education related

If you are interested in serving on the Peace Education Initiative Committee or contributing to the activities of the initiative, please contact Judi Simmons Estes, Vice-President, OMEP U.S. National Committee at [jestes@park.edu](mailto:jestes@park.edu). The first meeting will be held December 1 (Saturday) from 9:00-10:00 am. CST; at that time a decision will be made for a regular time/day that best meets the committee members schedules. Meetings will be held using the video conferencing tool, Zoom. Check your e-mail for an invitation.

## Universal Children's Day- OMEP-US Children's Day - November 20

### UN Convention on the Rights of the Child May Be on Hold

### But Supporting Children's Rights Is Not

Dear OMEP Members and Friends

Children need you! One way to help is by recognizing and supporting Universal Children's Day (UCD). UCD is a day to celebrate all children, recognize their global human rights and promote programs throughout the year that are in "the best interest of the child! These global rights fall under 5 categories- Survival, Protection, Development, Provision, and Participation. This is an OMEP national and international concern.

#### Universal Children's Day – A Fun Day with a Serious Message!

How Do We Support "In the Best Interest of Child" throughout the year?

##### 1. Knowledge of All Children's Human Rights

Children, parents, families, teachers, organizations, governments, and everyone involved with children need to understand and support all children's human rights. This includes society's needs to support parents in raising their children. There are many rights from the 42 articles found in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child on which to focus. Examples are: the right to have friends and acceptance of their friends, right to play, right to their education, protection from physical and emotional abuse, neglect, violence, freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and the right to express their own opinions especially when it involves them. Adults can help children learn about their rights by identifying them in children's regular activities at home, school, and in organizations. Ask each child what a specific right means such as the right to have friends, or the right to express their opinion. Compare answers. Children's right for development can be fostered by encouraging their participation in family, school, and community activities.

##### 2. How Do We Help Children Understand and Follow Their Rights and Their Responsibilities to Others

Adults can help children think of alternative ways to respond appropriately. In doing so, consider the child's temperament and development. The adult's positive role modeling and praising the child's successful efforts are crucial. Listen to children. Let children help plan activities. We need to identify and support healthy ways to parent and help prevent exploitation of children in their homes, schools, communities, and on the internet. Help others remember. All children need love, care, fun, and acceptance.

References:

Universal Children's Day: <https://omep.us/>

Convention on the Rights of the Child: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

World Day of Prayer and Action for Children: [www.day of prayer and action.org](http://www.dayofprayerandaction.org)

Wikipedia: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Children's\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Children's_Day)

Dorothy Sailor, Professor Emeritus, OMEP-US Advocacy Chair for Child Rights

P.S. Please feel free to share any or all of this information. A notice in the library about UCD is always helpful.

# Migrant Children's Needs NOW

## An Urgent Call to Action in Support of Children as an Unambiguous Priority in All Global Policy Statements Regarding Migration and Refugees

- Representing members in more than 70 countries around the world, OMEP, the World Organization for Early Childhood Education, calls upon local, national, and global leaders to take immediate and responsible action.
- The current situation in the world creates the urgent need for all nations to ensure the human rights of all children, especially the youngest and the most vulnerable, regardless of their migration status. All children must have access to all services and they must not be detained or separated from their families.

Continued ... from page 2

Looking ahead, our 2019 OMEP World Conference is close to home in Panama City, Panama, July 24-26 with the OMEP World President's Assembly on July 22 and 23. Check your calendar and plan on joining the USA delegation heading south to Panama.

Globally and close to home these are trying times for children and their families. Hopefully, the results of the local and state elections will elect officials who support the welfare and prosperity of those children who are upmost in our thoughts. On November 20th we celebrate the Universal Day of the Child, a fitting tribute to those most dear. Wishing you glorious holidays during this festive and religious season from my family to yours.

All my best,

Judith Mac

# OMEP-USA members at the World OMEP Conference Prague, Czech Republic









**71th OMEP  
World Assembly  
&  
International Conference, 2019  
in  
Panama City, Panama**

World Assembly: July 22-23, 2019  
Hotel El Panamá

International Conference: June 24-26 2019  
Hotel El Panamá

## *OMEP Website & Facebook*

The OMEP-USA website has a new look and is available for you to obtain information. Even though the website is evolving, you will find important links, history and events of interest to the student of professional with international interests. Many thanks to Ebony Cray Jones for her assistance!

The website address is: <https://omep.us/>

Join OMEP- USA on Facebook : **OMEP-USA**

Twitter : **OMEP-USA**