



## THE EDU-K UPDATE

MAY 2010

### BGI History in the Making ~

Our Board of Directors made history this year by approving the first Strategic Plan for Brain Gym® International. As noted in our January edition by Bonnie Hershey, Board Chair, the directors met in Ventura, CA for one week in January. Strategic Planning Consultants Doug Green and Dena Jenson were hired to assist. They conducted a series of data collection activities including surveys and interviews prior to the meeting; all of which were used to direct the discussions and the eventual strategic plan.

In addition to revising the mission statement (see website), the board identified four critical issues facing the organization. These issues formed the basis for strategic priorities for the work of the organization over the next three years, which are:

- Board Leadership and Development

The Brain Gym® International Foundation Board of Directors operates as a diverse and effective governing board that provides overarching global strategic vision, sets policy, supports resource development and provides fiduciary oversight.

- Resource Development

Expansion and diversification of sustainable resources (for best use of people, time, and revenues) maintains and supports all areas of endeavor for Brain Gym® International. We involve donors and volunteers in the work so that they feel increasingly engaged and committed.

- Communications

The organization supports a robust and authentic external communication and marketing structure that promotes the goals and strategies of the organization.

- Programming

Programs operating under the banner of Brain Gym® International are recognized for their consistent program elements and branding.

I am personally delighted about this historical accomplishment. The strategic plan, driven by our mission, is the roadmap for our organization. It prioritizes tasks and allows us to know if we're heading where we say



### Edu-K Tips and Tools:

by Deborah Scott Studebaker

#### The Language of Edu-K, Part 3: the Mechanics of Stabilization

Last issue we began to explore the **physical skills of learning**, as

described in the new *Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition*. We discovered how an infant creates her "movement map" by coordinating sensory input with the three primary movement abilities:

stabilization, locomotion and manipulation (sensorimotor coordination). In this issue we'll take a closer look at stabilization, the types of movement it supports, and the Brain Gym® activities associated with it.

**Stabilization** is absolutely fundamental to movement. It is from this central reference point that *up* and *down* come into relationship, and actions such as twisting, turning, reaching, pulling and spinning have a central axis from which to originate. Upright balance (like standing on one foot) is also represented here. Yet stability is not necessarily static; co-author Gail Dennison explains that "it isn't strength alone that's stabilizing... centering gives us the dynamic stabilization that's possible when we experience how various elements of our movement relate to our center.

"For example, for the concept of Centering in the 101 course, we use the image of the dolphin—or "The



we want to go. This year we took baby steps, the basis for taking strides and eventually jogging along at a nice flowing pace in the coming years.



In Celebration & Gratitude,  
Kari Coady  
Executive Director

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#### Annual Brain Gym® Conference

Ashland, MA USA  
July 22-25, 2010  
"The Joy of Moving with all Ages"  
Warren Conference Center & Inn

#### Brain Gym® in Action-10th Anniversary

August 1-9, 2010  
Ottawa ON, Canada  
Contact: [maureen@braingyminaction.com](mailto:maureen@braingyminaction.com)

#### IKC International Conference

2011 Aug 26-28  
Kecskemét, Hungary  
Contact: [Zsuzsanna Köves](mailto:Zsuzsanna.Koves@ikc.hu)

Register by  
June 15th to  
avoid paying  
the late  
registration  
fee!

The Conference Venue  
releases all rooms after  
this date.

### Spotlight On: 2010 Post Conference Courses

As stated in the March *Edu-K Update*, we are spotlighting our [post-conference courses](#) this Spring and Summer. Last time we talked about *Double Doodle Play* and *Movement Re-education*. So this time, carrying on with *Master at Work* and *Movement Dynamics*:

#### Master at Work:

Paul Dennison will be presenting a one-day post-conference course *Master at Work, Level 1* on Monday, July 26, 2010. Get the answers direct from the creator of the Brain Gym® program. Take advantage of this rare opportunity to spend one day with the Educational Kinesiology founder, Dr. Paul E. Dennison. Come with specific goals and questions to help

Swimmer." The dolphin can swim toward the surface of the ocean or dive deep into the depths. It can leap and turn, never losing the stability offered by its movement around or through its vertical midline. The dolphin's dorsal fin, in the center of its back, acts as a keel\*, providing stability." (Dennison, personal communication).

Human beings search for stabilization through a sophisticated internal communication system that links muscles, tendons, bones and organs to the brain, nerves and spinal cord (ibid). When we're misaligned, we respond to our environment with subtle physical adjustments. Instability prompts us to seek balance!

As students and teachers of Edu-K, we pay attention to the motional (and emotional) possibilities arising from stability at the midline. The **Energy Exercises** align the body to build the skills of planning and organization, and help restore grounding and a sense of well-being (BGTE, 6). The **Deepening Attitudes** further address the social/cognitive aspects of sharing, play and cooperation. "The ability to stabilize oneself physically correlates with an ability to feel or express emotions, manage impulses and release irrational fear" (ibid).

Stability inspires movement and movement requires stability. When we observe stabilization in our lives, we find a frame of reference for order, harmony, thought... and action!

\*A keel is a solid convex shape that juts out from something to keep it balanced and steady.

Dennison, Paul and Gail Dennison. *Brain Gym® Teacher's Edition*. Ventura, CA: Hearts at Play, 2010.

Dennison, Gail. Personal communication. May 18, 2010.

Todd, Mabel E. *The Thinking Body*. Brooklyn, NY: Dance Horizons, 1972.

### Featured Volunteers

*Kathy Monahan & Pam Formosa*

Volunteers hold an integral role in our organization. The Board of Directors and each of the committees consist of volunteers. Of course many of us also promote the Brain Gym® work by

create this unique environment that will allow for new, free-flowing knowledge and application of the Edu-K process. BG101 recommended.

A participant of his Level 2 course said, "The Masters Courses provide a priceless opportunity to observe the founder use the work himself."

### **Movement Dynamics:**

Sue Stepick will be leading a one-day post-conference course *Movement Dynamics* on Monday July 26, 2010. Register ASAP! As reprinted from the Update in April 2009, Sue says, "Experience the unique dynamics of the three planes of movement (Laterality, Centering, and Focus) through playful Cross Crawl variations, gentle dance flows set to integrated music, and Action Balances for such goals as improved non-verbal communication, creative expansion, and honoring personal space. This course invites participants to explore movement patterns for ease of posture in gravity, core activation, and movement articulation. Students learn delightful and practical new applications for Brain Gym®, Vision Gym, and the Integrated Movements. BG101 required

Participants have said:

"Now I know the significance of Brain Gym from a felt, rhythmic sense." --CH

"Movement Dynamics gives a whole new sense and shape to balances." --KR

## **Conference Highlights ~**

by Cindy Goldade

The [Annual Conference](#) is fast-approaching July 22-25 and it has something for everyone.

The overall theme *Moving Joyfully With All Ages* hints at the four days being packed with [keynotes](#), [workshops](#), networking and relaxing [activities](#) aimed at the entire lifespan. There will be specialists from fields such as: education (early childhood through university), occupational and physical therapy, music, geriatrics, vision and auditory specialists, plus much more. The venue is in beautiful New England area on the East Coast of North America.

You can choose to attend a single keynote for \$50 or come for the whole day at \$165 (\$105 day package for the venue and \$60 payable to BGI). Better yet come for the whole conference and stay on-campus for a warm bed, three chef-prepared meals per day, and use of the facilities.

Each day has a focus.

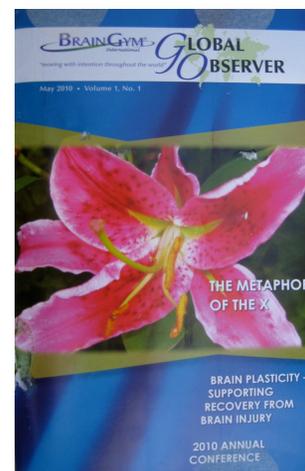
Thursday is [Introducing the Brain Gym® Program](#) and begins with a two hour Brain Gym® Introduction by the first appointed faculty member, Colleen Gardner. Paul Dennison, Brain Gym co-founder from California, is the opening keynote Thursday afternoon. Neuro-biologist Carla Hannaford and many others are in the afternoon workshop line-up.

regularly volunteering in our communities.

This edition we wanted to take some time to publicly acknowledge two stellar volunteers. Pam Formosa and Kathy Monahan stepped forward last year and agreed to co-chair the 2010 Annual Conference. Organizing a conference takes immense time and energy. These two have devoted countless hours researching an appropriate venue, attending teleconference meetings, communicating with speakers and attendees, building new skill sets, and so much more. They deserve our utmost thanks and appreciation for persevering through incredible learning curves.

The fulfillment will come in a few short weeks when we enjoy the Conference at the Warren Conference Center and Inn outside of Boston, Massachusetts. When you see the Conference Co-Chairs Pam and Kathy or any of the other volunteers, be sure to thank them for their hard work.

**Get the *Brain Gym*® GO!**



The first edition of our new publication, *Brain Gym*® *Global Observer*, came out a few weeks ago. Let your family friends know that they can get a subscription for \$25/year!

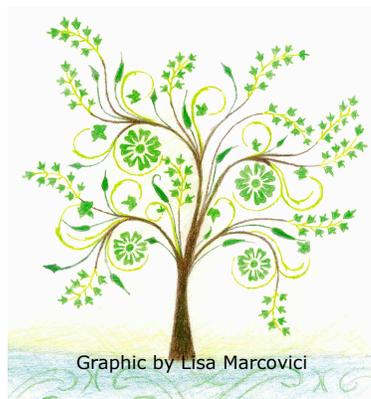
Friday we'll delve into the relationships of the eyes and ears to optimal living with a focus on Listening and Looking. Paul Madaule from Toronto, Canada is the keynote speaker Friday morning to explore *Listening and the Voice in Sound-Movement Integration*. **Featured speaker** John Abbondanza will bring his optometrist's perspective to the afternoon's sessions.

Theory in Action is Saturday's focal point. Keynote Charles Krebs will share *What's New in Understanding the Brain* on Saturday morning. After an afternoon of lively workshops, the evening will culminate with the Annual Conference Party, available at a special fee for those not staying onsite.

Sunday we will Bring It All Together. Featured speaker Randy McChesney will share about the complementary program *Educating Through Music* within a line-up of amazing presenters, including co-founder Gail Dennison.

There are also four days of post-conference options July 26-29. The line-up this year has both founders, Paul and Gail Dennison facilitating *Master at Work Level 1* and *Double Doodle Play* along with International Faculty Kay McCarroll (UK) and Jeanette Primost (Israel) teaching *Movement Re-education* and *Playful Child*. As noted in the Course Spotlight, Licensed Instructor Sue Stepick, is offering *Movement Dynamics*. Registration for these courses is closing in a week so we can guarantee each instructor's flight.

The Conference Planning Team looks forward to matching names to faces. See you in July!



## Ask Dave

Dave administers and answers questions posted to our [website](#) message board, "Ask Dave". To visit or post a question [click here](#).

### Question:

Hello - I have an almost 6 year old son who is diagnosed with PDD-NOS and has low-tone and is a sensory-seeking. Currently, he is in a typical kindergarten setting with pull-out support for speech/lang. and OT and social skills. A friend referred me to Brain Gym and it sounds very interesting although I'm a little nervous about the physical aspects - how strenuous they are? We have steered away from non-traditional therapies so I'm a little leery. Would Brain Gym be appropriate for this type of child? I know it is difficult to say without having seen him. Any and all info. or similar experiences would be appreciated.

### Dave's Answer:

The Brain Gym® exercises are not strenuous. They are self actuated movement activities like Cross Crawl which is essentially walking in place, this can be done sitting or lying

## A Brain Gym® Story

Amy Unger, licensed instructor shares:

My balance problems that plagued me (and my mother) all winter are gone since taking Bev Hunter's *Learning and Gravity* course in March.

Since taking the workshop I have been getting my 86-year-old mother on the balance board. I bought boards for myself, her and my teen-age son. We all love them. My mother has not been an enthusiastic or long walker in the last five years. After being on the board about three to four times per week for six weeks, my mother suddenly agreed to walk to the corner of her rather long block. She was really sashaying along! When returning she suggested walking through the park behind her building. This entailed a sidewalk that sloped both up and down as well as approximately 25 feet of lumpy grass. She did a wonderful job of self-correcting her balance and maintaining her pace and stride.

Now, in late May, my mother can stand on the balance board without any support or assistance—even eyes closed for two minutes by herself. She is telling everyone that she has a secure relationship with gravity! While bragging to her 84-year-old sister, I overheard her say that she feels like an airplane when walking and that she can stand with her eyes closed on the board! I'm so thrilled at this renewal of skills for her.

Additionally, for years, two toes that were not able to lie flat have plagued her. Now, her toes lie flat whether on or off the board. She makes remarks about feeling her whole foot and the entire floor when she walks.

She loves it all! The circulation in her feet is wonderful now with improved skin tone and



while moving arms and legs, or Lazy 8s which is tracking the hand with the eyes in a figure 8 on its side pattern. I have worked with some students experiencing low tone whom I observed some positive changes in and other Brain Gym® instructors report positive changes with students experiencing PDD though these were not scientifically controlled situations.

The Brain Gym® activities are intended for educational purposes only and meant to be used as learning readiness activities to help the person develop and practice sensory-motor skills for related learning skills. They are not meant to be a treatment for any psychological or medical condition and will not “cure” any condition. They may help the person cope with their situation a little better by relieving some of the challenges and stresses presented by sensory integration difficulties. They also seem to me to help the person learn new ways, or areas of the brain and pathways for processes in the brain and reconnect some of the old in new ways, to gain/regain some skills. As with any exercise program please consult with your physician before starting the Brain Gym® exercise program.

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flexibility.

Her blood pressure is down from the 170's to the 120's and she was able to come off her blood pressure medication. Her confidence is up so much; she's become a conversational firecracker with all of her new energy.

We deeply appreciate the course authors who share personal knowledge by writing courses, traveling, and facilitating workshops. I, myself, was inspired by Bev's own personal story as well as her enthusiastic teaching. The *Balance & Gravity* course gave me the balance and jump start I needed when medications were not addressing my needs. It is wonderful to be able to swim and garden without the guarded fear of falling and resultant holding-back posture.

Thank you for “turning on the light” and showing us the way to steadiness.



### **A Special Thank You**

to Cindy Goldade, without whom  
this edition of the *Edu-K Update* may have been  
significantly delayed. Thanks for doing more than your share this time, Cindy.