

# Continuum

THE LLLI ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION

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*Life is a series of transitions, each bringing new joys, challenges, and adventures that push and pull us to grow into who we are—and what we are becoming.*

*And so it is for the LLLI Alumnae Association, too. After 14 years of very loving guidance, Pam Oselka is turning her focus to funding development for LLLI and we warmly welcome Marilyn Thompson as the new Alumnae Coordinator.*

*The Alums have grown—on a shoestring budget and lots and lots of volunteer hours—from “infancy” through “toddlerhood” into “elementary” stages and “adolescence.” Dare we say now we are emerging into young adulthood? It’s an exciting transition time. We’re growing up!*

## New Coordinator leads the Alums

When the announcement went out that La Leche League was searching for a new Coordinator of the Alumnae Association, Marilyn Thompson knew in an instant this was the job for her.

“For some time, I’ve been looking for something that I could give my time and energy to, something that I believe in. La Leche League is, and always has been, close to my heart. It honored my feelings of motherhood and gave me the basis for raising my children. Now that my children are grown, I am delighted for the opportunity to give back to this organization that I hold so dear.”

Marilyn, a retired LLL Leader and Alumnae member, lives in Plymouth, Minnesota. As an active LLL Leader, she was the Medical Liaison in Minnesota (now Area Professional Liaison) and she is a Registered Nurse.

Most recently, Marilyn has been employed part time by an organization that sponsors Dale Carnegie training in the USA states of Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin. Her duties have included working as a training consultant, in sales support, and as an administrative assistant.

Marilyn comes to the Alums with strong communication and listening skills, experience in facilitating vision and goal setting, and many years of teamwork. She’s been described by a co-worker as very loyal, bright, and creative—“a person always looking for new ways to do things better.”

Many of you first “met” Marilyn when she was introduced in a 1999 CONTINUUM article about Life After LLL (on the Web at [lalecheleague.org/Alumnae/Life-Thompson.htm](http://lalecheleague.org/Alumnae/Life-Thompson.htm)) that featured her cross-country bike ride to raise money for the American Lung Association. She still enjoys bicycling in the summer and being outdoors as much as possible. Other pastimes include knitting, reading, and exercising.

Marilyn also takes Spanish once a week, working toward her dream of being able to speak another language. “Also, I’ve read it’s

good exercise for the brain! And I enjoy learning something new.”

She and Bob, her husband of 37 years and a dentist, also enjoy traveling. Their travels have taken them to

China and Vietnam, Peru, biking in France, and most recently New Zealand.

Marilyn has two sons, Peter and Ole, who live in Minneapolis. Peter is an artist and Ole works as a house painter. “He’s one of those people who can do about anything,” says Marilyn. “Needless to say, I am intensely proud of them. Neither is married and we have no grandchildren, but I have many greatnieces and greatnephews to enjoy.”

Marilyn strongly believes that Alumnae members and potential members are women with wisdom and experience.

“We are valued for our life experiences,” she says. “I look forward to building relationships with the Alumnae Council and members, listening to suggestions, putting plans in place, and working as a more active member of this wonderful organization.”

Marilyn assumed the role of Alumnae Coordinator in mid-January. A March strategic planning session has brought into focus both long-term and more immediate Alumnae goals and activities. You’ll be hearing lots about them in the coming months. With the upcoming 50th Anniversary celebration of LLLI, it’s a perfect time to look at the various ways we can reconnect with past Leaders and chart our course for the future.



Marilyn Thompson

From dream to reality: working mothers tell their stories

"As an editor, my job was to help shape this book. As it turns out, this book has shaped me," writes Jennifer Hicks in the introduction to *HIRKANI'S DAUGHTERS*, a new publication of La Leche League International.

Jennifer was pregnant with her first son when *HIRKANI'S DAUGHTERS* began to germinate. "As my belly ballooned, so did the book." While in graduate school studying Journalism and Global Health, she contacted Rebecca Magalhães, Director of External Relations and Advocacy for LLLI, to talk about her idea.

For Rebecca, it was a dream come true. Having worked for UNICEF and the Peace Corps prior to her extensive global work for LLLI, she had often thought about an anthology of stories about breastfeeding mothers from around the world. She knows, first hand, the universalities these mothers share whether in Chicago or Chile.

The connection with La Leche League was invaluable for Jennifer, especially its "intense talent for grass roots activism."

"No sooner did we discern a need for this book," she explains, "than the request was sent through an extensive web of helping hands across the world. Like-minded friends, Leaders, members, and organizations quickly and brilliantly answered our call to action. WABA, UNICEF, WHO, IBFAN, and many, many individuals around the world spread word of this book to friends, family, and colleagues.

"From worldwide list-serves, to a bulletin board in Malaysia or a newspaper article in Mumbai, breastfeeding and child advocates ... moved quickly to make this project happen.

"The groundswell of support," says Jennifer, "was awe-inspiring."

In *HIRKANI'S DAUGHTERS*, you'll meet:

*These stories resonate  
with people.*

*The universalities will be  
as touching as the differences  
are surprising.*

—*Hirkani's Daughters*

- ◆ Melissa Reyes of the Philippines, who breastfed her fourth son with the one breast she had left after chemotherapy and a mastectomy;
- ◆ Carrie Nimmo, a Canadian performer, who dances around the world taking her breastfeeding son along and enriching him in the process;
- ◆ Jennifer Moorehead, the sole provider

for her family, who drives through an opening in a separation wall in the West Bank every day, taking her child to work so as not to be divided if the Wall should ever be completely closed;

- ◆ Vedevatti Habu from India, who remembers nursing her daughter in between the dusty shelves of the library where she worked; and
- ◆ Claudia Ocampo from Mexico, who walks to work, walks home to nurse during her lunch break, walks back to work, and then home again at the end of the day—over two hours roundtrip.

You'll also meet countless other breastfeeding, working women from all corners of the world who have "switched their jobs, quit their jobs, changed their employers' minds, taken their children to work, enlisted support, driven more, walked more, pumped, hurried up, slowed down, cried, and smiled for much the same reasons—their growing children."

**Hirkani: ordinary milkmaid, extraordinary mother**

According to an ancient tale from India, Hirkani was a milkmaid—and a breastfeeding mother—who lived during the 1600s in a small village at the foot of a mountain range.

In the Hindu month of 'Ashwin,' during a time for celebration at harvest end, King Shivaji's palace required extra milk for the festivities. The milkmaids in the area were instructed to deliver their milk to the king's fort. Although the trip would be difficult for Hirkani, the extra money was needed by her family and she was excited to see the pomp and splendor of the capital.

She carefully planned to make

the long and arduous trip between breastfeeding sessions. She set out on foot, carrying the heavy cans of milk.

Once the milk was delivered, Hirkani was somehow separated from the other milkmaids. She searched to no avail and by the time she reached the fort gates, they were locked for the night. Only the king could order them opened. But the wait proved too long.

Desperate to feed her hungry baby in the village below, Hirkani searched for a way out of the fort. Against all odds, she scaled a 1,000 foot vertical cliff that not even the king's finest soldiers dared descend. Safely back at home, she nursed her baby to sleep.

## Just a bunch of numbers?

Think annual reports are “just a bunch of boring numbers”?

If so, I suspect you haven't read the “La Leche League International 2005 Report.” The annual report is available on the LLLI Web site at: [www.lalecheleague.org/images/05\\_LLLI\\_AR.pdf](http://www.lalecheleague.org/images/05_LLLI_AR.pdf) It includes fascinating stories about how La Leche League Leaders, Groups, and staff members are helping to create a world of “happy mothers, breastfed babies.”

This sixteen page document manages to take the reader on a whirlwind tour of La Leche League activity—from peer counselors in South Africa, a new Group in Mongolia, and a European breastfeeding conference in Dublin, to a post-earthquake Japan and lactation rooms in factories in the Dominican Republic. Surrounding these stories are updated statistics and research on breastfeeding and its importance not only to babies and to

mothers but to nations' economies and global health initiatives.

Oh... and there *are* numbers! For those who enjoy financial details, you can compare LLLI's financial health from 2004 to 2005. You'll learn that 86 percent of contributions made to LLLI are from individual gifts and that 64 percent of donors are Leaders! You'll also learn that only 21 percent of LLLI's money comes from memberships and subscriptions. I'll let you check out the report to see the sources of the remaining amount.

It is true that LLLI continues to struggle with finances, but even with that challenge, you'll also see that we continue to reach out and help mothers and families in familiar ways and new ways as well. With 42,000 Leaders accredited during the last 48 years, one-on-one help and Group meetings continue to be an important part of our mother-to-mother outreach.

Added to that were 4.1 million visits to [www.lalecheleague.org](http://www.lalecheleague.org) last year, 120,000 calls to the 1-800 helpline, and an untold number of mothers who have been reached through the two million copies of THE WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING that have been published through the years.

So, as you're planning your weekend reading, add the “La Leche League 2005 Annual Report” to your list! And when you're finished reading, consider sharing what you've learned—or even the report itself—with your employer, your health care provider, or a public health official in your community. Your conversation just might be their introduction to La Leche League and subsequently to more “happy mothers, breastfed babies.” And those are numbers we'd all like to see!

Meg Sondey, Mexico

## CBI participates in expert panel

Katy Lebbing, the manager for the LLLI Center for Breastfeeding Information (CBI), has been participating in a Technical Expert Panel to advise the Tufts-New England Medical Center Evidence-based Practice Center as it produces a systematic review of the effectiveness of breastfeeding on child and maternal outcomes for the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office on Women's Health.

The review will be used to update the National Women's Health Information Center's Web site section on breastfeeding at [womenshealth.gov](http://womenshealth.gov). This is the US Government's site that is associated with the National Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign.

The review will also be used to update the U.S. Government's *HHS Blueprint for Action on Breastfeeding*.

The 2000 edition is online at: [womenshealth.gov/Breastfeeding/bluprntbk2.pdf](http://womenshealth.gov/Breastfeeding/bluprntbk2.pdf)

Through teleconferences, the panel worked on reviewing research in the areas of:

- ◆ Short and long term outcomes of not being breastfed.
- ◆ Timing of introduction of comple-

mentary foods and health outcomes.

- ◆ Maternal short and long term health outcomes based on type of feeding done.
- ◆ Intervention strategies to promote and support breastfeeding in pre-peripartum periods as measured by initiation and duration rates of breastfeeding. Intervention examples include peer to peer support.

## LLLI brands first product

An LLLI licensed nursing bra has hit the USA test market in 24 Nordstrom stores around the country. This is the first LLLI branded product and it will come in two styles—a soft cup and an underwire. To learn more about the bra, including stores where the bra can be purchased, visit: [llli.org/bra.html](http://llli.org/bra.html).

If the store test is successful, Nordstrom will sell the bra in additional stores. You can help by recommending the bra to mothers, purchasing one by phone if you live outside the test region, and requesting a Nordstrom store in your area carry the bra.

## The wisdom of grandmothers knows no cultural boundaries

In La Leche League, there is a strong tradition of building on the wisdom of our elders. The Founders have held a revered and respected position in our organization for almost 50 years. The growing list of long-term Leaders—more than 500 who've been active more than 25 years—gives another testimony to the importance we place on intergenerational support and knowledge. Even this issue of CONTINUUM highlights a mother/grandmother Leader team (page 8).

Dr. Judi Aubel also knows the importance of grandmothers, whom she defines broadly as “senior women in the household who are knowledgeable about all matters related to the health, development, and well-being of children and their mothers ... [including] not only maternal and paternal grandmothers, but also aunts and other older women who act as advisors to younger men and women and who participate in caring for children.”

Dr. Aubel is co-founder of The Grandmother Project, a not-for-profit, non-governmental agency committed to promoting the health and development of poor communities in Africa, Asia, and Latin America through grandmother-inclusive strategies.

Aubel recently conducted a review of the literature, policy, and programs in non-Western societies to see how grandmothers have been integrated into intervention strategies to improve child health and well-being. Her August 2005 report, *Grandmothers: A Learning Institution*, was produced for review by USAID and can be downloaded from The Grandmother Project Web site at: [grandmotherproject.org](http://grandmotherproject.org)

From analysis of information available to her, Aubel identified a series of core roles of grandmothers that seem to hold true across cultures.

♦ All cultures recognize the critical role

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*Society itself fails  
when it isolates  
the young and the old  
from one another*

—Teresa Scott Kincheloe,  
*Native American Educator*

of grandparents as guides and advisors to the younger generations.

- ♦ In all cultures, grandparents play gender-specific roles related to child development.
- ♦ Grandmothers are responsible for transmitting cultural values.
- ♦ Grandmothers' child-rearing expertise is acquired over a lifetime.
- ♦ In all cultures, grandmothers are involved in multiple aspects of the lives of children and families at the household level.
- ♦ The roles of grandmothers appear to be universal, whereas much of their knowledge and practices are culturally specific.
- ♦ Grandmothers are both directly and indirectly involved in promoting the well-being of children.
- ♦ Grandmothers influence the attitudes and decisions made by male family members regarding children's well-being.
- ♦ Some of grandmothers' practices are beneficial for child development; others are not.
- ♦ All grandmothers have a very strong commitment to promoting the growth and development of their grandchildren.
- ♦ Compared to younger women, grandmothers generally have more time to spend and patience with young

children.

- ♦ Most grandmothers are interested in increasing their knowledge of “modern” ideas about child development.
- ♦ Grandmothers' knowledge comes primarily from their own mothers and their peers.
- ♦ Many grandmothers have a collective sense of responsibility for children and women in the community.
- ♦ Some grandmothers feel that their status as advisors in child and family development is diminishing.

Overall, Aubel found that “grandmothers are present in all cultures and communities, that they have considerable experience and influence related to all aspects of child development, and that they are strongly committed to promoting the well-being of children, their mothers and families.”

Based on her review, Aubel draws several conclusions:

- ♦ **There is a limited documentation of grandmothers' roles.** “The results of many studies on different child development topics either completely ignore, or give minimal attention to, grandmothers' roles and influence at the household level.”
- ♦ **Most assessments fail to examine household roles and relationships.** “There is a need for alternative assessment methods based on a more systemic, anthropological framework that looks at social structures, roles, and relationships in households that influence attitudes and practices related to child development.”
- ♦ **Grandmothers contribute to cultural continuity.** There is a growing concern that neglecting the cultural dimension of development programs is a dangerous trend that can contribute to the loss of cultural values and identity. Grandmothers play a critical role in transmit-

ting these values and practices to younger generations.

❖ **Grandmothers play an influential role in children’s development across cultures.** “In virtually all non-Western societies... senior women, or grandmothers, play a central role in child-rearing.”

❖ **Few child development programs explicitly involve grandmothers.** Despite the significant role grandmothers play in child-rearing, few programs have involved them as key actors in key program areas related to child development, including early childhood, primary school education, maternal and child health and nutrition, child hygiene, and HIV/AIDS.

❖ **Several factors contribute to the limited inclusion of grandmothers.** “First, many development agencies and staff have negative biases against grandmothers related to their ‘age,’ ‘inability to learn,’ and ‘resistance to change.’ Second, the [program] models... borrowed from the West, tend to focus on ‘mothers,’ and sometimes ‘parents,’ while ignoring the significant ... influence of elder household actors in virtually all non-Western societies.”

❖ **A few successful grandmother-inclusive programs do exist.** “In programs where a grandmother-inclusive approach has been adopted, feedback from grandmothers, from other community members, and from development staff has been very positive and in most cases their involvement appears to have contributed to increased program results.”

❖ **There is a gap between policy statements and reality.** Policy statements from UNICEF and other international organizations consistently advocate for building on the strengths

of families and local capacity. While inclusion of grandmothers seems a natural outgrowth of these policies, few programs actively include grandmothers as a resource to help meet children’s needs.

❖ **Grandmother leaders and networks should be viewed as social capital.** Social capital is defined as “the glue that keeps communities together and that is required for a collective and sustained response to community needs.” But... “limited attention has been given to the potential represented by natural grandmother leaders and their social networks for promotion of children’s development.”

❖ **Grandmothers are receptive to the use of nonformal education approaches that build on their existing knowledge.** “In experiences in several countries, nonformal, adult education methods have been very successfully used with groups of grandmothers.”

These conclusions, suggests Aubel, “support the need to more actively involve grandmothers in child development projects in the future.”

*Ed note—What is your experience with grandmother “inclusion”? Send your story or thoughts to: s.christe@sbcglobal.net*

**Policy Support for the Inclusion of Grandmothers in Child Development Programs**

<b>Child Development Priority Policies</b>	<b>Implications for the Inclusion of Grandmothers in Child Development Programs</b>
1. Strengthening family systems.	Grandmothers should be full partners in all efforts to strengthen family systems.
2. Building on cultural roles and values.	Grandmothers’ roles and experience in children’s development should be reflected in materials and activities.
3. Integration of traditional and modern child care practices.	Grandmothers’ practices should be inventoried, the beneficial ones encouraged, and the harmful ones slowly discouraged.
4. Building on community resources and strengths.	Grandmothers should be viewed as a positive force for children’s development, while at the same time they are provided with opportunities to strengthen their practices.
5. Strengthening community support mechanisms for children and their families.	Programs should strengthen natural grandmother leaders and networks as well as their sense of collective responsibility for children in the community.
6. Building social capital for sustainable development.	Links between grandmother networks and other community structures should be reinforced.

—from *Grandmothers: A Learning Institution*, p. 35

## Thank you, Pam, for leading the Alumnae on a terrific journey!

For the past 14 years, Pam Oselka has fulfilled her role as Coordinator of the LLLI Alumnae Association with high energy, dedication, and grace. She's inspired this group of retired and long-time Leaders to grow in countless ways—from increased memberships to enriching trips.

The following are just some of the Alumnae projects that have been initiated under Pam's capable guidance:

- ◆ LLLI Conference activities, including entertaining pre-Conference events, the Founders' Tea, the Navigating the LLLI Conference table, Rejuvenation sessions, Conference Orientation for new attendees and Leaders from outside the USA, the Founders' Parlor, the Late Night Chat with Alums, the 25-year Leader Gathering, "We Remember" honoring deceased Leaders, and the popular Donation Drawing;
- ◆ Alumnae trips, including Grand Canyon hikes, a Savannah getaway, and the upcoming visit to San Antonio;
- ◆ an Alumnae Web presence ([lalecheleague.org/Alumnae.htm](http://lalecheleague.org/Alumnae.htm)), with over 200 pages of information, history, sharing, and fun;
- ◆ a network of Alumnae Area Representatives, who work to connect retired Leaders at the local level;
- ◆ Retired Leader mailings, including a recognition certificate and a Retiring Leader Survey that is compiled and reported to the LLLI Board and ACLs every two years;
- ◆ the biennial LLLI Alumnae Award, given to an active or retired Leader who has gone on to demonstrate excellence in her professional, personal, or volunteer accomplishments;
- ◆ identification of Area Pioneers who founded the first LLL Groups in their states

and countries throughout the world; and  
◆ 5,000 for the 50th!, a new project to find some of the over 20,000 former Leaders currently "lost" to LLL.



1992 ~ The first Alumnae Grand Canyon hike: Pam, center, with Indiana Alum Sue Christensen (l) and former BOD Chair Cindy Smith (r)



2003 ~ Tickets, anyone? Pam (left) and Susan Switzer sold lots at the LLLI Conference in San Francisco.



2000 ~ Pam (top left) had the opportunity to represent the LLLI Alumnae and connect with the Great Britain Alumnae Association at the European Conference.



1999 ~ At last! Much deserved rejuvenation—an Alum specialty—after the LLLI Conference at the Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel in Florida. This is a rare view of Pam *not* on her feet meeting and greeting Alumnae and other conference attendees.



1995 ~ Pam, center, setting sail along the Chicago shoreline at an LLLI Alumnae preconference event with Viola Lennon (l) and other Alums.



1997 ~ Ever the goodwill ambassador, Pam made connections and shared Alumnae information with Leaders and administrators throughout the world. Networking at LLLI Conferences, like this one in Washington, DC helped expand Alumnae horizons.



2005 ~ Thanks to the whole Oselka clan for sharing their mom with the Alums! During Pam's tenure as LLLI Alumnae Coordinator, she planned four weddings and welcomed six grandchildren into the family (a seventh is due in June).

## LLL across the generations

*As an active La Leche League Leader, one of my favorite times is when a grandmother-to-be brings her daughter or daughter-in-law to her first LLL meeting. Invariably, as we go around the circle making introductions, the future grandmother will share that she, too, attended La Leche League meetings as a young mother and that it had made an incredible difference not only in her life, but in the lives of her children as well.*

*Often the younger mothers and mothers-to-be will listen with awe as this LLL alumna shares stories of her breastfeeding days, her children's toddler years, their teen years, and now their adult years. Not infrequently, one of the younger mothers will sigh and say, "Wow, I'm so glad you're here. It's wonderful to hear how LLL philosophy has helped you through all those times."*

*Sometimes these daughters and daughters-in-law become La Leche League Leaders. In this issue of CONTINUUM, we'd like to introduce a mother/daughter Leader duo who not only have shared La Leche League across generations, but also have spent time as Group co-Leaders. Robin Stanford has been an active Leader since April 1974 and lives in Tallahassee Florida. Her daughter, Laura, has been a Leader since 1996 and now lives in Jacksonville, Florida.*



*As LLLI gets closer to its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, there are now generations of mothers whom we are reaching. What's it like to know we're touching a second, or sometimes even third, generation of mothers?*

**ROBIN:** It's great to know that women who received help and support from LLL are going out of their way to help new mothers discover the same wonderful support and information. In my current Group, I have a mom whose

mother was a Leader many years ago. The grandmother came to a meeting and said that she wasn't there as a retired Leader because she hadn't stayed up-to-date on breastfeeding information, but was just there to support her daughter. Throughout the meeting, she shared information that is the same now as it was back then. The basic mothering support and information just never changes.

*Of course, if we're serving generations of moms, we also have the opportunity to have generations of Leaders in the same family! When did you discover that there were some mother/daughter or other LLL Leader relationships?*

**ROBIN:** Many years ago, I was serving on our Area Council and learned that there was a Group in the Area with a mother/daughter Leader team and thought, "how cool!" My own daughter was only in high school at that time.

**LAURA:** I was leading a meeting here in Jacksonville and one of my mom's co-Leaders came with her daughter who had a newborn. That was odd—leading a meeting with my mom's co-Leader in attendance along with someone with whom I had played at meetings as a child.

*What were your first thoughts when you realized that the two of you were embarking on the beginning of a mother/daughter Leader duo?*

**ROBIN:** I had just handled being the local planner for a Leader Development Seminar in Tallahassee, Florida when both my daughter and one of her LLL friends said they were interested in becoming Leaders. I loved the idea of being a co-Leader with my daughter.

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## *The basic mothering support and information just never changes.*

—Robin Stanford

I had started attending meetings when I was only a few months pregnant with Laura. She went to meetings with me until after my second child was born, when she was almost three. Our family attended many LLL functions through all her growing up years and most of our family trips were to conferences, so in many ways, her becoming a Leader was a natural progression.

**LAURA:** I'm laying down the road for a mother, daughter, and granddaughter Leader trio! My daughter, Miranda, is 13 and loves talking about breastfeeding. She wears the breastfeeding bracelet that my mom bought for her and doesn't hesitate to tell people about breastfeeding when they ask. That doesn't really surprise me, though, because I remember being that avid about it at the same age.

*How did it work to lead meetings together?*

**ROBIN:** We co-led for almost five years, from 1994 until Laura moved away. I was the older mother/grandmotherly type; she was a young single mother.

**LAURA:** Our greatest strength was how well we worked together. My mom always let me lead the meeting if it was my turn—she didn't take over. This was a great example of LLL mothering. By the way, I think she always *loved* to tell

the story of my breastfed bowel movements when she was leading!

*How did mothers respond when they learned that you were a mother/daughter set of Leaders?*

**ROBIN:** Laura often said that the best way to successfully breastfeed was to have a Leader as your mother! I think most people found our relationship helpful as we each offered a different perspective. I think it helped show mothers how breastfeeding benefits the long-term relationship between mother and child... and onto the next generation.

**LAURA:** I think they looked up to us more, because that means it works.

*Was it an advantage or challenge to have two generations of Leaders in the family?*

**ROBIN:** Our biggest challenge was with LLLI. They had a hard time mailing NEW BEGINNINGS and Leader dues notices to two Leaders at the same address! Other than that, there was never a problem with two Leaders living together under one roof. If someone called with a breastfeeding question, there was usually one of us who could help.

Laura started out being the kind of mother every LLL Leader would want for her grandchild. She lived at home until her daughter was in first grade and they moved out of town. It was a wonderful thing to watch my daughter and granddaughter grow in their relationship.

**LAURA:** The LLL way of life was easy for me, because it was all I ever knew. I never had to second guess what my mom was saying compared to LLL ways. The hardest part was when I was

applying to become a Leader. The questions about LLL philosophy were hard because it was all I knew... I felt like writing just "ditto," "ditto," "ditto!" Another challenge was being raised on only whole foods... When I became an adult, all I wanted was white bread, Jif peanut butter, and grape jelly! I discovered that another Leader's daughter had the same reaction as an adult.

*For other women out there who may have a niece, daughter, or other younger female relative considering Leadership, are there any words of wisdom you would share?*

**ROBIN:** Only that you have to let each mother find her own way. I always felt bad when a family member or close friend didn't want to breastfeed or didn't feel as strongly about it as I did. As far as I know, I was the first person in my family who even considered breastfeeding. All my children have always suggested breastfeeding to their friends. Hopefully, at some point in the not to distant future, my other daughter will have a baby and be able to become a Leader if it's right for her. She already gives lots of breastfeeding information and support to her friends. My son often tells his friends to call me for help if they need it.

**LAURA:** I wish someone would have helped prepare me for the burn-out as a Leader. Sometimes it is really hard when a mom calls and sounds so desperate and wants your permission to quit. There seem to be so many excuses for quitting breastfeeding.

*Looking forward to a possible third generation of Leaders within the family... any thoughts about what breastfeeding and parenting issues will be important in the next fifty years?*

**ROBIN:** Its wonderful that my 13-year-old granddaughter wears a bracelet and shares the advantages of breastfeeding with her friends. I think with all the information available on the Internet we will not see the large numbers of mothers coming to LLL for support, but I hope I'm wrong.

**LAURA:** There are still some issues with breastfeeding, especially breastfeeding in public, but I like to look at how far we have come since my mom started with LLL 35 years ago. ...In the next thirty years, I hope that everyone will be nurtured through LLL philosophy!

Meg Sondey  
Mexico

### Are you in a family of multiple LLL Leaders?

If so, we'd like to know! We're building a list of related Leaders that we'd like to acknowledge on the Alumnae Web pages and in a listing in the Alum room at the 50th Anniversary Conference.

If you have a sister, daughter, mom, aunt, in-law or other relative who is also a Leader (or retired Leader), send your name and hers, where you each live, your relationship, and your current LLL status to Sue Christensen: s.christe@sbcglobal.net

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## The Alum Bookshelf: *Because I Said So*

**B***ecause I Said So—33 Mothers Write About Children, Sex, Men, Aging, Faith, Race & Themselves* edited by Camille Peri & Kate Moses.

The well-written essays in this book touched me, amused me, and amazed me. Although I may have lost interest in reading books about pregnancy or birthing, I have not lost interest in reading about mothering, because a mother is something I will always be.

When I read the essay "On Giving Hope," I felt like my heart had been hit with a sledgehammer when I realized that this particular mother was the wife of Daniel Pearl, the journalist who had been executed on TV by Al Qaeda

terrorists in early 2002. Her strength and commitment to life is something to marvel at.

There is an essay by a mother of an autistic child and it made me think of a dear friend who has an autistic boy of her own, full of love and charm, just like the boy in the story. There are stories by single mothers, poor mothers, women of various religions and different ethnicities. There are stories by lesbian mothers, mothers who used surrogates to become mothers, mothers who are not sure if they measure up as mothers, and even mothers who have left their children.

I was sad to leave this group of mothers, for despite the many differ-

ences, within each story there was often something that struck a chord within me. Some stories took me back to the days when my children were little and I couldn't even use the bathroom in privacy and some echoed the "New and Strange World of Teenagers" that I am living in now. We mothers are amazing creatures and we have stories to tell!

The editors of this book have a previous book entitled *Mothers Who Think*. I will definitely be checking that one out of the library too and look forward to another enjoyable read.

Deborah Sowery-Quinn  
Ontario, Canada

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## Party On!

**H**ave you had your LLL fundraising house party yet? Need an idea? Here are a few to get you started.

◆ Get out of the house! Hold your party at your favorite coffee or bagel shop. Everyone comes in comfy clothes on a Saturday morning and catches up with each other... leaving a donation for LLL in "the pot."

◆ An excuse for tea... dust off that fine china and Grandma's tea pot and get gussied up for a ladies' afternoon tea. If you ask everyone to bring their favorite sweet or savory, it's an easy-to-put-together afternoon!

◆ If your nose is always in a book... or your body at a book club meeting... why not plan a special book club event around one of LLL's books? You provide special refreshments (from one of LLL's

own cookbooks of course) and everyone pitches in to the LLL 50th Anniversary Fund.

◆ Who says teenagers can't change the world? Many high schoolers are looking for service projects related to clubs or organizations. Teens can hold rock-a-thons or other events for the Fund.

◆ Scrapbooking is hot! But who has time? Gather your ten best friends right now and organize a scrapbooking house party. You might even put together a scrapbook about your LLL Group, with everyone making a contribution to the fund in LLL's honor.

◆ Any excuse for a reunion is a great excuse for a reunion! Getting together with old LLL friends? There is no better time than now to gather those ladies together and catch up on the news. And

while you're reviewing copies of the WAB and old pamphlets, ask each for a donation to make sure La Leche League is there for their grandchildren!

◆ We all love parties. Many LLL friends and members have home-based businesses. Throw a party to showcase the business, with the proceeds going to the 50th Anniversary Fund.

◆ Have a pajama party! Who doesn't remember what fun pajama parties were! Invite your best buddy girlfriends, stock up the house with "chick flicks" and nail polish, and invite everyone over. You provide the snacks and fun, and everyone contributes to the 50th Anniversary Fund.

Check out more ideas and party details at [www.partyhostcenter.com/lalecheleague](http://www.partyhostcenter.com/lalecheleague).

## 5,000 for the 50th! Help us find "lost" Leaders

Since 1956, over 40,000 Leaders have been accredited by La Leche League International, but only 20,000 are currently in the LLLI database.

Here's another list of Leaders that have been lost to LLL. You can find more names at: [lalecheleague.org/Alumnae/5000.htm](http://lalecheleague.org/Alumnae/5000.htm)

MaryLou Albino (New York West)  
 Kathleen Amacher (Champaign, Illinois)  
 Lisa Aulis (Yorkville, Illinois)  
 Juno Baker (Oak Park, Illinois)  
 Carol Barshack (Crete, Illinois)  
 Charlotte Bennet (Lincoln, Illinois)  
 Alice Brassie (Dunlap, Illinois)  
 Paula Cantor (Deerfield, Illinois)  
 Ruth Ann Cha (Wheaton, Illinois)  
 Elizabeth Davis (Mt. Prospect, Illinois)  
 Kathy DeBritz (New York West)  
 Mercedes Dewey (Rockton, Illinois)  
 Claudy Dwyer (New York West)

Alanna Eiter (Lynwood, Illinois)  
 Patricia Faivre (Dekalb, Illinois)  
 Kay Garber (Zion, Illinois)  
 Janis Grayson (Naperville, Illinois)  
 Nance Hahn (New York West)  
 Joanne Hartwig (Elmhurst, Illinois)  
 Fran Jeroutek (Chicago, Illinois)  
 Mrs. James Keech (New York West)  
 Abby Kinne (New York West)  
 Janice Klocek (Downers Grove, Illinois)  
 Kathleen Lamb (Lake Bluff, Illinois)  
 Rose Lauren (Naperville, Illinois)  
 Mrs. Richard Loomis (New York West)  
 Cilla Marck (Peoria, Illinois)  
 Evelyn McCaffrey (Hinsdale, Illinois)  
 Mary Noll (Arlington Heights, Illinois)  
 Janice Pellicore (Wheeling, Illinois)  
 Judy Perez (New York West)  
 Debra Peterson (New York West)

Mary Ptak (Palatine, Illinois)  
 Mary Racette (New York West)  
 Deedie Riedl (New York West)  
 Mrs. Craig Savage (New York West)  
 Marcia Schalk (Elign, Illinois)  
 Diane Tenbrook (Cary, Illinois)  
 Pat Viele (New York West)  
 Marion Wade (Troy, Illinois)  
 Nancy Wildrick (New York West)  
 Laura Zimmer (Chicago, Illinois)

### Take a walk!

The LLL in the USA World Breastfeeding Week Celebrations Web site is updated for 2006 and ready for you! Check it out at <http://www.lllusa.org/lllusa/wbw.html>

### Innocenti Declaration 2005

We who are assembled in Florence, Italy, on this 22nd day of November 2005 to celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding declare that these actions are urgent and necessary to ensure the best start in life for our children, for the achievement of the Millennium Development goals by 2015, and for the realisation of the human rights of present and future generations.

[www.innocenti15.net](http://www.innocenti15.net)

### Do the stars really shine bright deep in the heart of Texas?

You bet! Discover San Antonio, Texas, with the Alumnae Association November 8 - 13, 2006! It's an opportunity to experience first-hand the grand fun of an Alum adventure.

San Antonio, with its wonderful River Walk winding through the heart of the city, is an exciting mix of cultures and rich history. Think Spanish, Mexican, Native American, Deep South, and Wild West!

We'll be visiting the Alamo, the Spanish Missions, German mansions, and elegant theaters and museums. As we wander the city, we'll also sample the many ethnic foods typical for the area.

So ring up your LLL friends, mark your calendar, and watch for details of the trip coming soon on the Alumnae Web pages: [lalecheleague.org/Alumnae/html](http://lalecheleague.org/Alumnae/html) and in the next CONTINUUM.

### Join the Alumnae!

YES, I want to keep in touch and support LLLI. My Alumnae membership category is checked below. Enclosed is:

- \$10 for CONTINUUM (I am currently an LLL Leader or member)
- \$30 for a retired Leader/member LLLI Alumnae Membership (includes CONTINUUM)
- \$46 for CONTINUUM and an LLLI Individual Membership (includes NEW BEGINNINGS)
- \$75 for a 3-year LLLI Alumnae Membership (includes CONTINUUM)
- \$125 for a 5-year LLLI Alumnae Membership (includes CONTINUUM)
- Check to LLLI enclosed
- Credit my account:
  - Visa  Mastercard

# \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Current LLL status: \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: LLL International, P.O. Box 4079, Schaumburg IL 60168-4079 USA

# Continuum

La Leche League International  
P. O. Box 4079  
Schaumburg IL 60168-4079 USA

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
La Leche League  
International

## The LLLI Alumnae Association Council

**Coordinator:**  
Marilyn Thompson  
3650 Forestview Lane  
Plymouth, MN 55441  
763-559-2173  
<mthompson@llli.org>

**Alum Administrative Assistant:**  
Wendy Masters  
703 Audubon Drive  
Valparaiso, IN 46383  
219-462-9709  
<wendy38mm@yahoo.com>

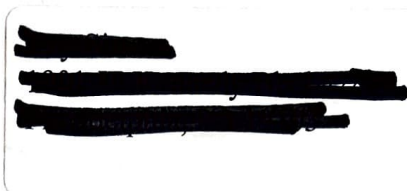
**Publications/Web Site:**  
Sue Christensen  
1304 Leeper, South Bend IN  
46617 · 574-288-7151 ·  
fax: 574-237-1071  
<s.christe@sbcglobal.net>

**Public Relations/Web Site:**  
Janet Jendron  
112 Park Springs Road  
Columbia SC 29223  
803-736-1585  
fax: 803-935-5342  
<jjendron@usit.net>

**Special Projects:**  
Nancy Franklin  
3425 Turtle Village  
San Antonio, TX 78230  
210-979-6372  
fax: 210-593-4106  
<NBFLL77@aol.com>

**LLLI Liaisons:**  
Pam Oselka  
9701 Kruger Rd., Union Pier  
MI 49129 · 269-469-2706  
At LLLI: 847-519-7730 x257  
<poselka@llli.org>

Viola Lennon  
200 South Dee, Park Ridge IL  
60068 · 847-692-5228



50 Years Celebrating  
the Power of Breastfeeding  
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MARK

## Get ready to celebrate!

La Leche League is turning 50! Starting in the summer of 2006 and continuing through the Conference in summer of 2007, LLLI will be in celebration mode.

♦ **Come to a picnic!** To kick off the celebration, a Commemorative Picnic will be held Sunday, August 20, 2006 in Wilder Park, Elmhurst, Illinois—the park where LLL Founders Mary White and Marian Tompson first talked about meeting with their friends to help them learn about breastfeeding. All the Founders plan to attend. More details will be posted on the Alumnae Web pages ([llli.org/Alumnae.htm](http://llli.org/Alumnae.htm)).

Can't come to Illinois? Find out if there's a Commemorative Picnic near you—or plan one yourself for LLL friends and families.

♦ **Celebrate at a dinner!** A 50th Anniversary Dinner will be held Saturday, October 28, 2006 at the Lisle-Naperville Hilton. There will be a reception with the Founders and a block of rooms will be reserved at the hotel.

♦ **Attend the 50th Anniversary International Conference!** The 50th Anniversary Celebration LLLI Conference will be held in Chicago, Illinois USA, at the Hilton Chicago on July 20-23, 2007. You won't want to miss this once-in-a-lifetime event! Parents and professionals from all over the world will gather to celebrate the significance and accomplishments of La Leche League over the past five decades. Make plans now to participate!

♦ **Send in a quilt square.** Quilt Squares will be sewn together into banners that will be used as the backdrop on the stage at the 50th Anniversary Conference in 2007. You can order a Quilt Square Kit for \$5.00 (check payable to LLLI) from: Helene Scheff, 210 Brookhaven Road, North Kingstown, RI 02852-1976 USA. The kit contains detailed instructions and fabric for the base. You can sew, appliqué, draw, or stencil your design or message.

Find out about other events at [llli.org/fiftieth.html](http://llli.org/fiftieth.html)