



# Ongoing PEPS Group Bulletin

**WELCOME** to the first edition of the Ongoing PEPS Group Bulletin! Now that you have completed the formal twelve week portion of PEPS, it is PEPS hope that you have decided to stay connected as a Group and continue to grow the community we've helped you create. PEPS would like to continue to be a resource for you as we believe parents need all the support they can get on their journey through parenthood. As an ongoing PEPS Group, you will also receive this quarterly newsletter with tips for keeping your Group going, Group activities as well as educational topics.



PEPS Groups that continue to meet come in all shapes and sizes; some still follow a formal format while others meet for potlucks or the occasional Parents Night Out. Some Groups have a fully functioning babysitting co-op while others have morphed into book Groups. Whatever format your Group follows, enjoy the ride and try to stay with it through the ups and downs. You will find the friendships that continue to develop to be rewarding and like no other. Parenting is an adventure, and one that is definitely worth sharing!

Betsy Sullivan,  
Community Outreach Coordinator  
206-547-8570 x28  
[betsys@pepsgroup.org](mailto:betsys@pepsgroup.org)  
[www.pepsgroup.org](http://www.pepsgroup.org)

**We want your bright ideas! Help us name this newsletter and see a Seattle Children's Theater play on us (four tickets!) Email your ideas to: [betsys@pepsgroup.org](mailto:betsys@pepsgroup.org)**

## SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT

Did you know that PEPS has a speaker list just for Ongoing PEPS Groups? The list includes some of our most popular speakers on topics such as nutrition, baby sign language, financial planning and couple's relationships. Each quarter, Speaker Spotlight will focus on a speaker that you can invite to your Group. Speakers have lots of great information to impart and they love coming to PEPS Groups. For a copy of our speaker list (or to provide feedback on our speakers) contact Betsy at [betsys@pepsgroup.org](mailto:betsys@pepsgroup.org).

## ONGOING PEPS GROUP PROFILE

*This portion of the newsletter will highlight a Group that has been meeting beyond the twelve-week newborn program. As a way to inspire your PEPS Group, keep it going strong and spark those creative ideas, check out this portion of the newsletter.*

Anita Tourginay has been meeting with her Group for 21 years and they are still going strong! Over the past 21 years, their friendship has evolved into one that is like no other.



Q: Why do you think your Group has stayed together for so long?

A: I think that there really has to be a desire to stay together and for us there was. We get together every two months or so for dinner. Usually one of us will send out an e-mail and we meet up. Sometimes our leader even comes!

Q. Why was PEPS so important to you?

A. PEPS really created a community and it also created a place where we could find common ground with others regarding our stories about our babies. You know how you have friends who don't have babies when you do? Well there is only so much that they want to hear about how much you are feeding your baby, how the baby is sleeping etc. before they don't want to hear it anymore. With PEPS, it's all about the babies.

Q. Would you say that you would rely on your PEPS friends for support?

A. I would definitely rely on them for support. They may not be my best friends, but they offer great support and I know that they will always be there for me. We went through divorces, post partum depression, and moves. We have a common bond that will always be there. Our children even see each other occasionally. The people in my Group will remain my friends for life!

## **GROUP TUNE-UP**

*Each quarter, Group Tune-Up will focus on different ways your Group can work together to strengthen the bonds that create and contribute to your PEPS community. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please let us know.*

Q. My PEPS Group seems to be struggling with a good time to meet. The babies go to sleep at different times and everyone seems to be late to our meetings or they don't come at all. What can we do to meet everyone's needs?

A. Struggling with sleep issues is a common problem when PEPS Groups continue to meet. Here are some tips that have worked for other Groups.

- Try shifting your Group meeting up by a half an hour,
- Switch mornings with afternoons every other week you meet so those who can't make it one week can make it the next,
- Change your evening Group to a weekend get together- for brunch or a potluck.
- Keep your time the same and make the meetings longer, but have someone stay after and help clean up.

Regardless, try to get to the meetings you can make, and keep having those parents night out. Eventually, you'll be on track and able to meet again at a time that works for everyone.

## **GIVING BACK – PAYING FORWARD**

*“PEPS gave me support, encouragement, a shoulder to cry on and people to share the little tiny wonders of my son that only another mom could enjoy. Most*

*importantly though, PEPS gave me a place to feel safe when I was questioning everything I was doing and friends that, no matter how old my kids get, I will remember forever.” ~ Allison Jones, 2003 PEPS Group participant*

12 weeks ago you entered a room full of other parents and their infants not knowing quite what to expect. Just like thousands of other parents who participated in PEPS programs over the years, you’ve since become part of a community; you’ve shared the Highs and Lows of one of the most challenging and vulnerable times in your life and learned valuable parenting skills. For 25 years people whose lives have been changed by PEPS have given back so that other parents can have similarly powerful experiences. We encourage you to “pay it forward” for the new parents who’ll also need and benefit from PEPS:



## **VOLUNTEER**

Volunteer Group Leaders are vital to the PEPS Newborn Program. Over 1,700 new parents like you rely on these dedicated volunteers each year. Our volunteers find great joy and satisfaction in helping new parents connect and share through their PEPS Groups!

**If you are interested in leading or co-leading a PEPS Group, please contact PEPS’ Volunteer Coordinator Cate Palmer at 206.547.8570 ext 15 or [catep@pepsGroup.org](mailto:catep@pepsGroup.org). You can learn more on our website at: <http://www.pepsgroup.org/support/volunteer/volunteer-for-peps>**

## **DONATE**

From time to time, people ask why PEPS needs to raise money: “Our Group Leader is a volunteer; we meet in each other’s homes and provide our own snacks – where is the money going?” That is a fair question, here’s the true answer:

The expenses of forming a PEPS Group – we form 170 Groups for 1,200 families each year! - are almost all front-loaded. They include the helpful PEPS staff members who process registrations, answer questions, match parents into Groups and provide Orientation sessions. For each new Group we must recruit (or re-

engage), screen, train (or update), support and evaluate a Group Leader. Throughout each Groups first 12-weeks of sessions we review weekly reports, help Leaders deal with issues and monitor the Group's progress. As with any enterprise of this scale, we also have the ongoing expenses of rent, phones, technology and administration.

Fees cover about one-half the cost of each family's PEPS program experience. The rest comes in through the generosity of our many supporters, almost all former PEPS Group members. PEPS is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization and receives no government funding.

Please consider PEPS in your charitable giving plan this year! Some PEPS Groups get together and donate to PEPS as a Group, others encourage their baby's first birthday gifts to be a donation to PEPS; many join us at our Annual Luncheon in the spring or make a gift during our Summer Phone Campaign and still others choose to give during our Fall Annual Fund Campaign. However you choose to make it, your gift is important and makes a real difference for new parents!

Visit <http://www.pepsgroup.org/support/Donate> for how you can make YOUR donation or contact Marion Mohrlak, PEPS' Development Director, at 206-547-8570 ext 30 or marionm@pepsGroup.org.

## CREATING A FAMILY VISION

Once a new baby enters a household, it doesn't take long to realize that parenting is more than just providing food, shelter and clothing. Parenting is how we show our love, affection and values- values which come from our own family history and the way we were raised. Our values also come from the life experiences that have impacted us along the way; life experiences which could include school, work, volunteer or political work, shared experiences with friends or our partners. Most of us don't know exactly what kind of a parent we are going to be until our children start teaching us along the way. We may have the inkling of an idea, but parenting is really something we learn as our children grow.

Having a family vision can be one of the most helpful tools in your parenting tool kit. While there is something to be said about learning from mistakes, it's also nice to have understanding and a clear direction to follow. Isn't it better to know what you want and to be intentional in your actions than to react without purpose?

So, how does one go about creating a vision and putting it to use? In *Becoming the Parent You Want to Be; A Sourcebook of Strategies for the First Five Years*, by Laura Davis and Janis Keyser, Broadway Books, 1997, the authors present the “Nine Principles for the Parenting Journey. These principles can answer a variety of questions for the parent such as;

- What do I want my children to learn?
- How can I help my child deal with the ups and downs of life?
- How can I teach them to feel safe?
- What values do I want pass on?

Thinking about these ideas, or writing them down can be a first step in helping a parent envision what they want for their family. The next step would be putting one of those ideas into action. For instance, if helping others is a value you want to share with your children, expose them to your own volunteering efforts from a very young age. Take them with you if you deliver meals to the elderly or when you deliver food to the food bank.

Along the same lines of creating family vision, Stephen Covey discusses family culture in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families*, Golden Books, 1997. He defines family culture as a nurturing environment of shared beliefs and ideas. Your family culture may include activism, activity and awareness of new ideas and cultures. Or, it may involve volunteering, compassion and simplicity. Regardless, Covey suggests starting with the end in mind and then coming up with a mission statement. Write down your beliefs and what you want to see in the future. Think in positive and inspiring terms and then turn those thoughts into your family mission statement.

Whatever your values may be, if you are interested in exploring this theme further, check out the many books, articles and websites that can point you in the right direction. Or, you could even discuss the topic of a Family Vision or Mission Statement with your Ongoing PEPS Group! The important thing to remember is that parenting is personal and what fits for your family is what is right for you. Parenting is an exciting journey that will last for a long time so enjoy the adventure!