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Magic Me [2]

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# EISNER & ASSOCIATES, INC.

ADVERTISING • PUBLIC RELATIONS

JULIE MERCER  
Senior Vice President  
Director of Corporate Development

April 1, 1993

Ms. Gina Sanone  
Assistant to the Senior Advisor  
White House Office on National Service  
145 Old Executive Office Building  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Gina:

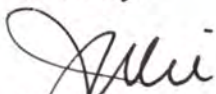
We were delighted to have you visit Magic Me yesterday, and I trust from your comments over lunch that you enjoyed your visit.

So many non-profits these days are spending precious resources to justify their existence, or worse to revamp their programs to make them relevant. If we could just harness our collective energies into maintaining the ones that really do work, this country would be a far better place.

Magic Me is one of those success stories. And your visit was very encouraging to us. I know you'll spread the good word at the White House, and as Alfred said so many times yesterday, "call us." We also want to be helpful to you.

Thank you again for spending the day with us. And best wishes in making the President's vision of national service a reality.

Sincerely,



Julie Mercer  
Chairman of the Board  
MAGIC ME, INC.

P.S. *Thought you might enjoy our bogus Clinton/Gore ad campaign that won and lost three ADDYs....*

## MEMORANDUM

To: Everyone  
Fr: Jina  
Re: Baltimore site visit  
April 1, 1993

On March 31st I traveled to Baltimore to visit two community service programs. Because of Susan's prior commitments I was able to attend this grand tour in her place. The visit included a stop at a "Magic Me" session in progress and lunch with the Chair of the Board of Directors. This was followed by a visit to the college class of students who also take part in the program. Afterwards, I was able to look at the community service programs at the University of Maryland at Baltimore County (UMBC).

All of us in the office can benefit by visiting a program. The itinerary was very well organized by the Magic Me staff. I imagine we receive these sorts of invitations quite often. Even without an invitation most programs are probably thrilled to set something up for any of us who work here. We can learn about their program and they get to ask us questions about the Office of National Service. Before you go I would suggest reading over the talking points.

Attached are program descriptions which you can add to your briefing books ( Magic Me in K-12 and UMBC in Higher Ed) along with an introduction page for the notebook.

SUSAN - you might  
add comments  
abt what they  
want / expect  
from us

WHAT DO YOU THINK

PLEASE EDIT IF YOU  
LIKE

I edit  
looks good - Thanks. Jina  
Susan



**Magic Me** -- Linking at-risk youth with the elderly is the aim of Magic Me. In 25 cities a program has been set up that takes middle school aged youth into a nursing home where each youth is paired one-on-one with a resident of the home. The youth keep the same resident as a partner from year to year and often continue the relationship even after their three years of middle school. From the onset, both the elderly and the youths are told that their purpose is to help the other. Students are selected by the schools, but they are never labeled as special or risky, in fact, they are told by the principal that they are the best candidate for the project. The key for interesting the youth in the program is they get to leave school. Of course they grow to love what they are doing.

At the Waxter Center (nursing home) Magic Me staff and I interacted with the youth and the elderly while they made and filled Easter baskets. Two students from UMBC participate to ensure the program runs smoothly. They are part of a social work course taught jointly through the University and Magic Me. The 15 students must keep journals, write papers and participate in the sessions at the nursing homes.

Lynn Bopp  
Director of Development  
808 North Charles  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
410-837-0900

**Univeristy of Maryland at Baltimore County**

**Center for Learning** -- UMBC has a Community Service program which includes not only undergraduate students, but also includes a post-college program developed in part by Mark Shriver (son on Sargeant). The CHOICE program works with youth that are actually termed delinquent. Students who have recently graduated from schools around the Baltimore area are employed full time to look after the nine youth they are each assigned. Face to face contact is made with each youth between three and five times daily to provide the youth with a positive role model and to keep an eye on behavior.

The UMBC undergraduate students are involved with CHOICE through tutoring the youth in math and reading which take place at the university every Wednesday. I was able to visit the pre-tutoring session where the youth and students eat together in the campus cafeteria. To give you an idea of the mind set of these youth, one young african-american male during his fist trip to UMBC told his tutor that he didn't know black people could go to college.

John Martello  
Director  
UMBC Center for Learning  
Baltimore, MD 21228-5398  
410-455-2494  
410-455-1074 fax





MAGIC ME®

Learning to serve . . . Serving to learn

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Founder

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Executive Director

April 15, 1993

Gloria Johnson, Appointment Secretary  
White House Office of National Service  
145 Old Executive Office Building  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Gina Sanone suggested that I write you regarding Mr. Segal's calendar. You may know that Gina had an opportunity to visit MAGIC ME®, Inc., an international, school-based, service-learning program headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland on March 31. We were delighted to have Gina see this program in action and I feel confident that she gained a great understanding of the value of this unique innovative program.

As Ms. Sanone learned when she was here, MAGIC ME is the focus of an upcoming ABC special docudrama starring Tony Danza. The program, entitled "GETTIN'OVER", showcases our program at the Hagerstown Alternative School as well as the work we are doing with high-risk students in Baltimore. The special, a six-part series, tells the story of how disillusioned and troubled young people are overcoming insurmountable odds to become valuable, productive members of society. The show highlighting MAGIC ME kids clearly demonstrates the value of community service in the lives of these youngsters.

The program is scheduled to be aired nationally, prime-time in late May or early June. To celebrate this national exposure and to capture the attention of community and governmental leaders, MAGIC ME is planning to have a VIP screening on the night the program is aired. We feel this is a wonderful opportunity to educate the public and advocate the value of community service. Therefore, we would be honored if Mr. Segal would accept this invitation to be our distinguished guest speaker at the event.

We are planning to have Dr. Nancy Grasmick, Maryland's State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Amprey, Superintendent for Baltimore City Schools and Mayor Schmoke on hand for the festivities as well as dozens of prominent business and community leaders. Already the local ABC affiliate is preparing a special tie-in show to the special. This

promises to draw a great deal of attention, as Dr. Grasmick and the Maryland State Board of Education are currently struggling to reach consensus with the state legislature over a new graduation requirement for Maryland students that mandates 75 hours of community service.

Mr. Segal's visit would have a significant impact on those in attendance and those watching the program. It would be wonderful to learn first-hand about President Clinton's vision for national service and to hear from a national advocate on the merit of service in every American's life. Mr. Segal's message would be welcomed and well received.

Unfortunately, I do not have an exact air date for the program. According to the producers it is tentatively scheduled for May or June. It is my hope that this letter will begin the process of scheduling Mr. Segal's engagement as MAGIC ME's most honored guest. We are told that we will have approximately three weeks notice prior to the air date. Hopefully that will be enough forewarning if Mr. Segal accepts our invitation.

If you would like more information on MAGIC ME, Gina has a packet of information and a video on the program. Or, feel free to call me and I will be delighted to help in any way I can. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future. Many thanks to Mr. Segal and you for giving this request your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Lynn A. Bopp  
Director of Development

cc: Gina Sanone  
Alfred de la Cuesta

LAB/lb

Susan,

Think this is  
you. I left a  
message acknowledging  
receipt of letter.

Elizabeth  
Boston

Glenn





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Kathy Levin  
Founder

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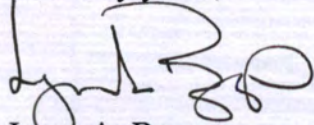
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Sincerely yours,



Lynn A. Bopp  
Director of Development

cc: Gina Sanone  
Alfred de la Cuesta

LAB/lb



SOWK 390D  
Magic Me Internship  
Spring 1993

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this course is to give students a hands-on experience working with adolescents, the elderly, and the developmentally and physically handicapped in a unique community service program. Under the supervision of social work faculty and Magic Me staff students will conduct groups of middle school students in a community service experience in nursing homes, and facilities for the developmentally and physically disabled.

The group experience will be complemented by a weekly seminar where issues such as: group skills, developmental issues related to the young and old, and practical problem-solving strategies for conducting groups will be discussed.

Students will be required to conduct a weekly activity group in the service facility and once a month will conduct a reflection session with the middle school students in their schools. The seminar will be used to discuss appropriate activities and topics for the reflection sessions.

## Readings

Bem, D., Caspri, A. & Elder, G. "Moving Away From the World: Life Course Patterns of Shy Children. Developmental Psychology. 24, (6), 1988.

Bilides, D. "Race, Color, Ethnicity, and Class: Issues of Biculturalism in School-Based Adolescent Counseling Groups." Social Work with Groups. 13 (4) 1990.

Corder, B. "Planning and Leading Adolescent Therapy Groups." in Innovations in Clinical Practice. eds. Keller, P. & Heyman, S. Tallahassee: Professional Resource Exchange, 1987.

Fisher, H. Magic Circle: Group Therapy for Children." Social Work in Education. 11 (4) 1989.

Freedman, M. "Fostering Intergenerational Relationships for At-risk Youth. Children Today. March/April, 1989.

\*Hagborg, W. "Group Counseling with Adolescents Special Education Students: Challenges and Useful Procedures." Adolescence. Fall, 1991.

Hedin, D. & Conrad, D. "Learning from Service Experience: Experience is the Best Teacher-Or is it?" in Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service. Raleigh, N.C.: National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, 1990, pp. 87-98.



Hurley, D.J. "Resistance and Work in Adolescents Groups." Social Work with Groups. Winter, 1984.

Hursh, B. "Tools for Journals and Debriefing." in Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Guide for Community and Public Service. Raleigh, N.C.: NSIEE, 1990.

Lackovic, G., DeKovic, K. & De Kovic, M. "The Contribution of Significant Others to Adolescent's Self-Esteem." Adolescence. 25 (100) Winter 1990.

LeCroy, C. Teaching Children Social Skills: A Game Format. Social Work. 1987.

Malekoff, A. "Socializing Preadolescents into the Group Culture." Social Work with Groups. Winter, 1984.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Preadolescent Prerogative: Creative Blends of Discussion and Activity in Group Treatment." Social Work with Groups. Winter, 1987.

Mc Dermott, C.J. "Empowering the Elderly Nursing Home Resident: The Resident Rights Campaign." Social Work. March, 1989.

Moody, H.R. & Disch, R. "Intergenerational Programming in Public Policy." Journal of Contemporary Society. Vol. 20 (3-4), 1989.

Redl, F. "Preadolescents-What Makes Them Tick?" in When We Deal With Children. New York: The Free Press, 1966.

ReVille, S. "Young Adulthood to Old Age: Looking at Intergenerational Possibilities from a Human Development Perspective." Journal of Children in Contemporary Society. Vol. 20 (3-4), 1989.

Rolzinski, C.A. "Magic Me: Bringing Young People Into Nursing Homes to Enrich the Lives of the Elderly; Dispelling Young Peoples' Fears About the Elderly." in The Adventure of Adolescence: Middle Schools Students and Community Service. Washington, D.C.: Youth Service America, 1990.

Rose, S.R. "The Development of Problem-Solving Skills in Children's Groups." Social Work with Groups. Spring, 1987.

Russell, J. "155 Exercises: A Starting Point for Leading Structured Groups." in Innovations in Clinical Practice: A Source Book. eds. Keller, P. and Ritt, L. Tallahassee: Professional Resource Exchange, 1987.

2/3 Schine, J. Community Service for Young Adolescents: A Background Paper. New York: The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989.

\*Simonian, S., Tarnowski, K., & Gibbs, J. "Social Skills and Antisocial Conduct of Delinquents." Child Psychiatry and Human Development. 22 (1) 1991.

Stockdale, J. "The Principles of Leadership." Education Digest. March, 1982.

Ventura-Merkel, C & Freedman, M. "Helping At-risk youth through intergenerational programming." Children Today. 17, Jan.-Feb., 1988.

Walsh, R., Richardson, M. & Cardey, R. "Structured Fantasy Approaches to Children's Group Therapy." Social Work with Groups. 14 (1) 1991.

Williams, Terry M. & Kornblum, William. "Teenagers and Hard Times." in Growing Up Poor. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1985.

Zimmermann, J., et al. "Journals: Diaries for Growth." in Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service. Raleigh, N.C.: NSIEE, 1990.

#### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

##### 1. JOURNALS

Journals will be required of all students and will be turned in at the mid-term date and at the end of the semester

##### 2. PAPER (FIRST SEMESTER STUDENTS)

- A. Due last day of class
- B. 5-10 typed pages
- C. Personal impact of service
- D. Evaluation of objectives of Magic Me
  - Does it meet objectives
  - How? Evidence
  - Suggested Improvements
  - Other effects of program

Note: The readings assigned during the semester should be used as a base of knowledge when doing the final paper. That is to say that the final paper should not simply be your personal feelings and observations. It should be your personal feelings and observations supported by the literature. Citation of the assigned readings should be included in your paper, as well as any outside readings you may choose.

##### SECOND SEMESTER STUDENTS

A. The assignment for second semester students will consist of:

- 1) review of seven articles which relate to their continued learning and development as experienced interns
- 2) annotated bibliography of each article



3) discussion of why article was chosen and how it contributes to your continued development

Topic areas might include those areas that were addressed in the first semester (at-risk youth, community service, developmental issues, and group process and leadership). Other areas of interest might include developmental issues of the elderly, or specific group leadership issues i.e. co-leadership.

Three articles will be turned in at mid-term and the remaining four will be submitted at the end of the semester.

#### THIRD SEMESTER STUDENTS

Third semester students will be required to submit a reflection activity designed for a specific goal. ( See handout) An outline of this activity will be submitted at mid-term and the completed activity will be turned in at the end of the semester.

#### 3. PARTICIPATION

- A. Students are expected to attend class and be active participants in the seminar.
- B. Students are also expected to adhere to their weekly schedules at the school and/or nursing homes. If you are unable to attend you must contact the Magic Me office or Jim Bembry.

UMBC INTERN COURSE  
SPRING SEMESTER PLAN

| <u>WEEK</u> | <u>ACTIVITY</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| February 3  | Finalize placements<br>Process concerns for beginning groups<br>Describe role of group leader and group leader/intern<br>Explain group leader mid-semester and final evaluation<br>Group leaders speak individually to interns assigned to groups |
| February 10 | Process initial feelings from group experience<br>Discuss the goal of reflection and review reflection procedures<br>Discuss the importance of journal writing and journal feedback                                                               |
| February 17 | Discuss healthy and appropriate group leader boundaries                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| February 24 | Role play appropriate group leader skills for disciplining students                                                                                                                                                                               |
| March 10    | Group Process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| March 17    | Group Process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| March 24    | Prepare for mid-semester evals                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| March 31    | Mid-semester evaluations due                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| April 7     | Spring Break                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |



April 14

KM not at class  
Process evaluations and set goals for  
second semester

April 21

Process group experiences

April 28

Discuss termination

May 5

Process group terminations

May 12

End of year evaluation and  
wrap-up

During the first 15 minutes of each class, one student is to present one article from the reading list, each student must do this at least one time by the end of the semester.

## **UMBC INTERN EVALUATION CRITERIA**

1. Attends groups regularly and promptly and schedules time to meet with group leader weekly.
2. Brings journals with comments to students each week.
3. Understands goals of MAGIC ME®.
4. Intern jumps in when appropriate with little encouragement.
5. Maintains appropriate boundaries with kids.
6. Able to lead (on their own) at least one group at service site, and one reflection session by end of semester.



## **INTERN/CO-LEADER ROLE**

1. Schedule a time to communicate with group leader either prior to and/or after each MAGIC ME® visit to discuss group process, plan for sessions and receive support for intern/co-leader role.
2. Attend UMBC class weekly.
3. Promptly attend MAGIC ME® group weekly.
4. Write feedback in student journals on a weekly basis.
5. Plan and lead at least one activity at service site and at least one reflection by the end of the semester.
6. Communicate to group leader any issues or problems that may arise during the semester to receive support and feedback.
7. To learn and model appropriate skills for disciplining students.
8. Communicate to group leader any concerns or problems regarding a student in the program.
9. Maintain professional boundaries with students in program.
10. Complete group leader journal weekly.

## **GROUP LEADER ROLE**

1. Plan activity and bring supplies to service site.
2. Communicate these activities to all intern/co-leaders and volunteers prior to session.
3. Lead reflection sessions and assign intern/co-leaders and volunteers roles for these sessions.
4. Responsible for advising school, service site, intern/co-leaders and volunteers of any schedule changes, special activities and reminders for program semester break and completion dates.
5. Responsible for calling the service site if transportation becomes a problem. If the need arises, follow-up daily to ensure transportation.
6. Responsible for obtaining student and service site statistics to report to program director.
7. Coordinate and plan activities with service site staff as much as possible.
8. To meet with interns/co-leaders and volunteers prior to and/or after each MAGIC ME® visit to discuss group process, plan for sessions and provide support to intern/co-leaders and volunteers.
9. To keep a group leader journal and ensure that student journals are receiving appropriate feedback from interns/co-leaders and volunteers.
10. Responsible for group discipline and training interns/co-leaders and volunteers of these skills.



MAGIC ME COURSE @ UMBC

SMAN WORD OF MOUTH PROGRAM

\$25,000 OF STAFF TIME THROUGH COURSE / YR.

104 STUDENTS OVER PAST 2 YRS.

MAGIC ME<sup>®</sup>

Learning to serve... Serving to learn

Kathy Levin  
Founder

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Executive Director

March 8, 1993

Susan Stroud  
Senior Advisor to the Director  
White House Office on National Service  
145 Old Executive Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Ms. Stroud:

Pursuant to our conversation this morning, it is my sincere hope that your schedule will permit you to be MAGIC ME's special guest on March 31. This organization has a long and distinguished history of multi-level student service that we are eager to share with you. It would be most beneficial for you to get a comprehensive overview of the MAGIC ME program by first visiting a group of our middle school students (assisted by college interns) in direct service to the elderly and then to attend the UMBC MAGIC ME course at the University's School of Social Work.

The agenda for the day would be as follows:

10:00 A.M. - Meet at MAGIC ME® office (808 N. Charles Street)

10:15 - 11:15 A.M. - Site Visit - The Waxter Center (816 Park Ave.)

11:30 - 1:00 P.M. - Lunch with Board President, Executive Director, Program Director and Director of Development

1:30 - 3:30 P.M. - Visit Intern Course (UMBC, School of Social Work)

CENTER FOR LEARNING

Please advise as to your availability for March 31, 1993. Many thanks for considering this request. I feel confident that you will find MAGIC ME® a worthwhile and innovative community service-learning model.

Sincerely yours,

Lynn A. Bopp  
Director of Development

reduce  
the time?  
11-230?



To GINA

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time 1:25

**WHILE YOU WERE OUT**

M GINA COMO

of UMBC

Phone (410) 455-2493

| Area Code          | Number          | Extension                           |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| TELEPHONED         | PLEASE CALL     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| CALLED TO SEE YOU  | WILL CALL AGAIN | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| WANTS TO SEE YOU   | URGENT          | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| RETURNED YOUR CALL |                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

Message \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Operator \_\_\_\_\_



AMPAD  
EFFICIENCY®

23-023

CARBONLESS

Susan -

Why not have Gina  
go to this one?

BA

✓ 5 blocks N of  
4 PENN STATION in BA

**FAX SHEET**  
**MAGIC ME, INC.**  
**808 NORTH CHARLES STREET**  
**BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201**  
**410-837-0900**  
**410-837-0937 (FAX)**

**PLEASE DELIVER THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT TO:**

**TO:** Susan Stroud  
202-456-6420

**FROM:** Lynn Bygo

**DATE:** 3-8-93

**PAGES:** 2-

**MESSAGE:**

Dear Susan

See Attached -

Thanks -

Lynn Bygo



ALSO: THOUGHTS ON THE KUWAITI ART EXHIBIT

# Sun Magazine

THE BALTIMORE SUN

FEBRUARY 24, 1991



**THE WONDROUS WORKINGS OF THE MAGIC ME PROGRAM**

BY KATHY LALLY





KATHY LEVIN, FOUNDER OF THE MAGIC ME PROGRAM, ASKS SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: "JUST GIVE ME ONE SHOT WITH THE KIDS."



MAGIC ME EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ALFRED DE LA CUESTA, WITH INTERNS JANICE HAWKINS AND ARI BLUM. THE TAPE IS USED TO SIMULATE THE LIMITATIONS OF THE ELDERLY.

# CONJURING UP

BY KATHY LALLY

IN A SECOND-FLOOR CLASSROOM AT BOOKER T. Washington Middle School, in the very heart of one of the city's most poverty-stricken and life-threatening neighborhoods, eight sixth graders are squirming in their seats, as sixth graders do whenever they find themselves in a room with desks and blackboard, and one boy finally topples his desk and falls to the floor. Laughter momentarily interrupts their talk of courage and bravery and love.

On the street below the classroom window, three police cars and a paddy wagon are parked, summoned to deal with a couple of boys who dragged a young girl into a bathroom down the hall, intent on molesting her. The kids pay no attention to the police cars, a common enough sight in West Baltimore.

These children, and other groups like them at middle schools throughout Baltimore, have been volunteering once a week at nursing homes, and they are gathered for a periodic reflection on their experiences. They are among 700 Baltimore youngsters -- and 1,000 others across the country -- who are involved in Magic Me, an enormous undertaking begun more than 10 years ago by one young Baltimore woman who wanted to change the world.

# FRIENDSHIPS

'MAGIC ME' YOUNGSTERS  
GET LESSONS IN SELF-WORTH  
AS THEY LEARN TO REACH OUT  
AND HELP OTHERS



PATTY BOND, MAGIC ME'S PROGRAM DIRECTOR, LEADS SIXTH-GRADERS AT BOOKER T. WASHINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL IN AN EXERCISE DESIGNED TO TEACH TRUST.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PATRICK SANDOR



student; about how the other kids call the Magic Me kids sis-sies; about how you have to impress your friends by acting up.

"What's more important," Patty asks, "what other people think of you or what you think of yourself?"

"What you think of yourself," comes the chorus.

Now the guidance counselor weighs in. "I hope you have gotten something out of this," she lectures. "I hope you've learned you can be good students."

No one says a word. They have tuned her out and gone a million miles away.

After the kids leave, Patty and Ari ponder the question of how they are able to get the kids to pay attention and behave when teachers throughout the school complain it's an impossible task.

"It's a smaller group," says Patty.

"There's no homework," says Ari.

"It's an experience thing," says Patty. "They're creating it. If it's boring, they have to take the responsibility. It's just a totally different setting."

"We're more laid-back," Ari says. "Our jobs don't depend on them being tested."

Perhaps the most illuminating incident of the afternoon, however, arrived when Shawn fell off his chair. He had been tipping his chair backward. He had tipped it forward. He tipped it sideways, every moment defying gravity. Neither Ari nor Patty said a word. After he fell, after everyone laughed, he got back up. And not one more time did he tip his chair or even squirm in it.

This would rarely happen in a regular classroom. The teacher would have interrupted the class numerous times telling the kid to sit still. And the kid never would have sat still.

Patty thinks about the incident a little more.

"Our expectations aren't that they'll sit with their hands folded," she says.

"If you let the little things go," Ari says, "they don't seem to become a problem."

"We ask them the questions," Patty says. "They have the answers, not us. I think that's the key -- they're creating the group and creating what they want to create and finding the answers."

Kathy Levin and her tiny staff

at Magic Me are trying to substitute the powerful lessons of the nursing home, where kids find themselves able to bring smiles and tears of gratitude from the most dour faces, for the lessons of the neighborhoods, where girls are molested and boys are bullied and shot and if you look around yourself, you see there's absolutely no reason to hope for a job or incentive to get an education.

They do this with a terrible and wonderful honesty, an unflinching look at reality. During this year, one group of Magic Me kids from Benjamin Franklin Middle School was accused of stealing a Goofy doll from a South Baltimore nursing home. Alfred was doubtful they had, but the director was convinced of it.

"How could someone with such flimsy evidence be convinced you're responsible?" Alfred asked them. "You have a reputation problem."

The kids, protesting their innocence, refused to grapple with the fact that they might be barred from the nursing home. Alfred, frustrated, told him he wasn't going to waste his time if they wouldn't come to terms with their problem. He left the meeting, but as he reached his car he reconsidered and returned to the meeting room. He found the kids in the middle of a soul-searching session, deciding to write a letter of apology. The next day they each contributed 57 cents to pay for a new doll, and the nursing home let them return.

On a hot August day, a group of Magic Me kids from South Baltimore was visiting the Deaton Nursing Home across from the Inner Harbor. They pushed the patients in wheelchairs out to the courtyard, where they moved a toy basketball net from patient to patient and gave them a ball to shoot baskets.

"Most of them just like for us to be there," said Nicole Harris, one of the youngsters. One woman patient was giving her a very hard time, talking about men until Nicole practically shriveled up with embarrassment. "Oh, I have men," the woman said. "I'm still getting them."

"Oh, my God," shrieked Nicole. But she didn't flee.

Later in the year, on a raw, rainy November day, a Booker T. group visited Franklin Court

Nursing Home in West Baltimore and helped the patients draw pumpkins. There was a warm glow to the sterile room as the patients smiled at the kids and reached up from their chairs for a hug.

"I thought I would be uncomfortable," said Alexis Cox, a sixth-grader. "I didn't know what to say." She was having a lively conversation with a tiny smiling patient, Lavinia Carter. Alexis helped her draw and Mrs. Carter beamed, slipping her a butterscotch and squeezing her cheek.

"It was a fantasy," says Kathy Levin, "a crazy fantasy."

Kathy, as everyone in Magic Me calls her, is a 33-year-old woman who often breaks into a hearty laugh. After graduating from Brown University in 1979, she returned to Baltimore in 1979 looking for something to do. She had grown up here and graduated from the Park School. She had enough family money — her father was in the steel business — that she could afford to look for an opportunity to do good and didn't have to have a paycheck coming in right away.

"I was struck by the possibility that if you could turn around the negative energy in pre-teens, you could accomplish an awful lot," she says. "Kids are so full of energy, but it doesn't have a very good direction outward."

"If you could turn it into something that would help people . . ." she says, adding, "I can't finish the sentence. Wow. It's because I couldn't finish the sentence that Magic Me was born. If I could turn that energy into anything it would be damned good."

She herself had visited a nursing home during her college days with a vague idea of trying to do something good. She encountered a 105-year-old woman drooling and thought she should go over and say hello. "This is a very important thing here," Kathy says. "I couldn't do it, and I thought something was wrong. I realized she was more powerful than I. I wanted to get closer to her, and something about her started all those questions. Who is the one trapped inside the body she doesn't want to be trapped in?"

Kathy was not quite at the point of turning the questions



into Magic Me. She took a job in New York, working in product development. "It was exciting," Kathy says, "but pretty quickly I felt like cotton candy. So I came back to Baltimore to sink my teeth into something."

She persuaded the principals of several Baltimore middle schools to give her an hour or so with groups of kids, and she started asking them questions. "Do you know what I mean? Do you know what it means to be trapped inside a body that doesn't work the way you want it to?"

Then, with Magic Me existing only in her own mind, she began asking middle school principals if they could give her their toughest kids to work with. Most of them had no idea of what she was talking about. They couldn't imagine what this beautiful, young, socially connected woman wanted with their poor kids.

"What got over the hurdle was persistence," she says. "It was me calling back 900 times. I realized that I had a great idea and they'd be crazy not to see it would be a bonus. The deal was, just give me one shot with the kids."

That was 11 years ago. For the first eight years, she did everything herself. Now she has a board, of which she is president, and an organization — Alfred, Patty, a program coordinator for the Eastern Shore and a fund-raiser. She is hoping to raise money to make Magic Me self-supporting, instead of drawing on her own bank account. She is unmarried, so she can afford to allow Magic Me to become her job as well as her family. But her financial ventures are all Magic Me-oriented — she recently helped produce the musical "Gypsy" so she could get the experience to develop a musical of her own. And when she does her own musical, the proceeds will go to Magic Me.

"I would come up with \$50 for each bus trip because I was so thrilled kids wanted to go," she says. "I wasn't worried I was spending money. I was so happy they wanted to go. It all felt so unique. So it cost \$50? It was fabulous."

She met Alfred, who was working in a dropout prevention program at Baltimore's Northern High School, just as it was becoming clear she needed

a staff.

Alfred, who favors Ray-ban-style sunglasses and marvelous suits, seems to be able to charm any kid he meets. "He couldn't for the life of him deal with some of the kids he had at Northern with what he had at his disposal," Kathy says.

"Everybody kept mentioning Magic Me and this Kathy Levin who did crazy things with kids," Alfred says. "I had no budget, so I needed something I could get for free."

Alfred was skeptical but desperate. "Alfred said, 'These kids aren't going to let you tie them up,'" Kathy recalls. "They're tough, large people. So I tied them up. Alfred was more terrified than the kids. Some of them didn't like it, but we started talking about limits, how you can't move when you're tied up, and the sky opened up."

Kathy gave them a passionate description of what they could do. "You are powerful enough to get through your repulsions," she said. "You can save lives. Who wants to do it?"

Every hand went up.

Recently, Kathy found herself sitting next to the director of the National Library for the Blind on a train to New York. They talked, and she had an idea that kids could help the blind place orders for books with the library. The library director told his Baltimore regional office to go ahead with the project, and Alfred has sent kids over for training sessions. Now the youngsters will be able to help the blind in Baltimore nursing homes order books.

"I can't tell you how many hours of overtime I've put in because of her train rides," Alfred says. "She always looks for someone interesting to sit next to."

Kathy's idea of learning self-worth through service to others is one that is gaining more and more currency. The state of Maryland has a similar project geared to high school students, which is run by Kathleen Kennedy Townsend and is called the Maryland Student Service Alliance.

The White House has an office devoted to service, and at the end of January President Bush named Magic Me the 362nd "Daily Point of Light." (Referring to his speech encouraging a "thousand points of

light," the president has been recognizing volunteers by designating a point of light six days a week.)

Last fall, President Bush summoned a busload of Magic Me 13-year-olds to Washington for a ceremony extolling the virtues of public service. The kids found themselves sitting somewhat uneasily amid the grandeur of the East Room, seeming small and uncertain, where earlier in the day, waiting for their bus outside their schools, they had looked much bigger and vaguely defiant.

There was an empty seat on the end of the row in the White House, and a tall 16-year-old strode over to take it. "Dream of a lifetime," he boomed as he sat down.

The young man, in coat, white leather tie and black tennis shoes, introduced himself, sticking out his hand. "Jeremy Moczygemba," he said, "San Antonio, Texas."

He was with another group of student volunteers brought to the White House for the ceremony, and he was pleased, very pleased. "My biggest dream is to one day become president," he said, checking out his future surroundings.

While the Baltimore kids discussed the Middle East situation on the bus, confusing Iraq and Iran, Jeremy not only had the nuances down, he already had policy formulated. "I plan on really going back to the basics, to what America really stands for," he said.

David Missouri, an eighth grader from Baltimore's Benjamin Franklin Middle School, was asked if he would like to be president. He looked puzzled at the very idea. "Not really," he said.

The ceremony ended and an ebullient Jeremy marched off, back to his hotel and back to a realm of different experience in San Antonio, back to the road that leads to the possibility that any American kid who waits might become president.

The Baltimore kids straggled off to their bus. It bumped and jolted forever back to Baltimore. They told Patty Bond how they wished they could take algebra, but their teachers say they can't handle it. The bus stopped and half-a-dozen kids stepped down and fanned out into the night, following the sidewalks back to the West Baltimore projects. ●

An Empirical Examination of the Reflective Component of Magic Me-  
an Experiential Education Program  
by Nancy Templeton, M.A.

Experiential education has been defined as "educational programs functioning outside of conventional classrooms that place participants in responsible roles and engage them in cooperative, goal-directed activities with other youths, with adults, or both" (Hamilton, 1980, p. 180). The theoretical basis for experiential education has come from three different fields of study through the work of social psychologist Kurt Lewin, developmental psychologist Jean Piaget, and educator John Dewey. Although they were studying different phenomena, their conclusions were the same - that real learning takes place through thoughtful interaction with the environment.

While a "hands-on" approach to education is becoming more common in American classrooms, the majority of public school classes are still taught using a different model. Conrad and Hedin (1989) contrasted the "information-assimilation model" with experiential education. In the information-assimilation model, information is presented through a symbolic media such as a textbook or lecture. The student organizes this information into principles and generalizations. An inference is then made which suggests a particular application from the general principle. The end result is putting the application into practice. This is a deductive model where conclusions about specific instances follow from universal principles. The experiential model is an inductive process where inferences are made to general principles from specific observations. First an action takes place and its effects are observed. The student attempts to understand the effects in this particular instance. Once understanding of the specific situation is gained, the student comes to an understanding of the general principle under which it falls. The information-assimilation model is superior in being able to cover large amounts of information and systematically generating principles from that information, however, little time is spent on application of the principles. The experiential model quickly involves the student in the learning process, but often time is not spent in defining the principles involved and making generalizations.

A number of theorists have suggested that reflection is a necessary component in an experiential education program (Conrad & Hedin, 1990; Kendall, 1988; Rutter & Newmann, 1988; Schine, 1989; Schine & Harrington, 1982). Reflection is defined by Schine and Harrington as, "...a cluster of skills that includes observing, asking questions, comparing and contrasting experiences, forming generalizations, and trying to apply these to new experiences" (p. 17). Reflection provides an opportunity for assimilation and synthesis which allows students to make generalizations and applications at a later time. This process does not come easily and generally requires adult guidance. Reflection may take place through guided discussions or through the use of a dialogue journal (a journal where conversations take place between the youth and an adult).

While it appears that reflection is a necessary component of an experiential education program, no empirical evidence could be found to support its usefulness. One of the most comprehensive studies completed to date was the Experiential Education Evaluation Project (EEEP) conducted by Conrad and Hedin (1981a). The EEEP was an evaluation of 27 high school experiential education programs which had been identified as having a record of excellence over a period of time. Four comparison groups were set up consisting of students who attended one of the



high schools studied but who were not participating in the experiential program at their school. One of the many findings of this study was that the presence of a formal, weekly reflective seminar was important in affecting change. This component proved to be the strongest of the programmatic variables which accounted for a statistically significant proportion of variance in the analysis. While this finding supports the belief that the reflection component is important, the study was not empirically designed in that the program participants and comparison groups were not randomly assigned to groups. The possibility that students who volunteered to participate in the experiential programs were inherently different from those who did not can not be ruled out. This study attempted to eliminate this potentially confounding variable by randomly assigning students to the three experimental groups.

### Current Study

The purpose of this study was to examine, in a controlled study, the effects of a reflection group in an established experiential program, Magic Me. Magic Me was founded by Kathy Levin as a way to decrease the psychological distance between youth and the elderly. The program began working with public school middle school students in Baltimore in 1983. Since that time it has been instituted in at least fifteen states and two European countries. It is now recognized as a successful educational model which takes disinterested youth and effectively encourages participation in community service. In a desire to discover ways to improve the program, Magic Me agreed to participate in the research. The sixth grade students who were eligible to participate in Magic Me and who attended two Baltimore City schools were invited to participate.

The Magic Me program has two basic components. The first is an intensive service component where students are released from their regular classrooms throughout the school year to provide community service for one hour a week. The service component is scheduled for two consecutive weeks and is then followed by one week of guided reflection which is the second component. The students also write in a journal immediately upon completing the service experience. Group leaders suggest specific questions, read the journals, and write comments in them to be returned the following week. Students who are selected to participate in Magic Me begin the program at the end of September during their 6th grade year and continue during the school year until the end of May of their 8th grade year. Sixth graders were selected for use in this study as it was the beginning of their Magic Me experience.

Counselors in both schools were asked to generate a pool of approximately 70 students who would be appropriate for participation in Magic Me to be tested. Students who were tested and returned a permission slip for further participation in the research were randomly assigned to one of the three groups. The groups were tested once in September, prior to the formation of the three experimental groups, and again in June after Magic Me had concluded for the school year. The testing consisted of a measure of moral development - the Defining Issues Test (Rest 1979), The Social and Personal Responsibility Scale (Conrad & Hedin, 1981b), and a measure of social skills (both self-administered and teacher-rated) - the Matson Evaluation of Social Skills with Youngsters (Matson, Rotatori & Helsel, 1985). The scores from the pre-tests were used as a means to control for individual differences at the beginning of the study.

The study was conducted in the 1991-1992 school year and involved 96 sixth



grade students from two middle schools in Baltimore: Ben Franklin Middle School and Booker T. Washington Middle School. Each school had three randomly selected groups of approximately 15 students: a helping group with guided reflection, a helping group without reflection, and a control group which met only for the two testing sessions. The two schools were selected based on the fact that Magic Me had been present for several years, the presence of a large pool of sixth graders, and similar socioeconomic factors. There were some differences between the schools for which it was not possible to control. Ben Franklin Middle School is predominantly white school located in a blue collar neighborhood on the southern edge of Baltimore. Booker T. Washington Middle School is located in downtown Baltimore and has an all black student population. Preliminary testing found that the language and reading achievement test scores for Ben Franklin were significantly higher than those for Booker T. Washington. Another difference was that Ben Franklin began using a non-graded approach during the year of the study, with children being placed in classes based on academic ability rather than grade level. Differences also occurred in the quality of nursing homes visited and group leadership. The nursing home visited by the reflection group at Ben Franklin had to be changed second semester because of the poor participation on the part of the first nursing home visited. Group leadership was provided for all four groups by the Magic Me program coordinator, however, co-leadership varied from no co-leader to two, and in some groups the co-leaders changed between semesters.

### Results

A multivariate analysis of covariance was conducted to determine if any significant differences existed on the three measures (DIT, SPRS, MESSY) between the groups at post-test when controlling for the pre-test scores. Results of the analysis showed that the reflection group's (combined for both schools) scores at post-test on the measure of social and personal responsibility were higher than the non-reflection and control groups when pre-test scores were considered,  $F(2,52)=3.08$ ,  $p<.05$ . There were no significant differences on the measures of social behavior and moral development.

Secondary analysis on subtests of the scales found that the reflection groups rated themselves as being less impulsive than both the non-reflection group,  $F(1,43)=7.51$ ,  $p<.02$ , and control group,  $F(1,47)=4.39$ ,  $p<.04$ . At Ben Franklin Middle School, the reflection group rated themselves as higher than the non-reflection and control groups on appropriate social skills,  $F(2,39)=3.45$ ,  $p<.04$ .

A secondary analysis was also conducted to determine whether or not there were any significant findings regarding the rate of participants who dropped out of the study. At Booker T. Washington Middle School it was found that students who were in the non-reflection group were significantly more likely to drop out of Magic Me than those who were in the reflection group, Chi-square(1,27)=4.91,  $p<.03$ . Also at Booker T. Washington, students who were in either of the Magic Me groups were less likely to be suspended at the end of the year than those in the control group, Chi-square(1,38)=4.41,  $p<.04$ .

A final significant finding was that students who participated in either Magic Me group at Ben Franklin Middle School had few days absent for the year than those in the control group,  $F(1,21)=4.92$ ,  $p<.04$ . This particular finding was influenced by the non-reflection group having far fewer absences ( $M=10.67$ )



for the year than either the reflection group (M=23.46) or the control group (M=23.73). At Booker T. Washington, the reflection group had the lowest average number of days absent (M=28.39), followed by the non-reflection group (M=33.31), with the control group having the highest (M=38.57), however the differences were not significant.

#### Discussion

Statistical analysis found evidence to support the idea that reflection is an important factor in an experiential education program. The reflection group, (either from both schools combined or at one of the two schools) scored higher than the non-reflection and control groups on measures of social responsibility, impulsiveness, and a self-rating of appropriate social skills. All of these findings lend credence to the idea that the reflection component is helpful in assisting students generalize from specific examples to broader principles. At one school, students in the reflection group were less likely to drop out of Magic Me than those in the non-reflection group. This provides formal confirmation of the informal observation made by the Magic Me executive director that reflection is useful in developing group cohesiveness.

While most of the findings supported the importance of reflection, one finding did not. The non-reflection group at one school had significantly fewer days absent for the school year than either the reflection or control group. At the other school, participation in Magic Me (regardless of group), resulted in being less likely to be suspended at the end of the year than those students in the control group. These findings suggest the possibility that there are other factors involved. Two potentially important factors which were not controlled for were the quality of the nursing home environment and the ability of the group co-leaders. Given that the reflection group at the school where one finding occurred had to change nursing homes due to difficulties in participation on the part of the nursing home residents, it is quite possible that this may have accounted for the non-reflection group doing better in some ways. Clearly, further studies need to be conducted to determine other factors which influence the effectiveness of experiential education programs.

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