

## NYC-Parents in Action: Twenty-five Years

BY MAUREEN SHERRY-KLINSKY

On the 25th anniversary of the founding of NYC-Parents in Action, we would like to share with you some of our organization's history and to recognize the woman who was instrumental in its formation. In 1978, Lynn Manger, now Chairman Emeritus of the NYC-Parents in Action Board, was a mother raising four young children in New York City. She was concerned to observe the growing availability of drugs to city school children. The drug culture in 1978 New York seemed to be pulling in younger people than ever before, with head shops proliferating around 59th and 86th Streets on the east side, and in the Times Square area. "At that time, many of the independent schools were not acknowledging the presence of drug use by students," says Mrs. Manger, "and if they did, they felt it was the parents' place to confront the problem." She called a few other concerned parents to meet in her dining room; then and there NYC-Parents in Action was created. "We decided that we wanted to get the word out to parents in an educated, informed fashion," she continues. "They needed to know what the signs of drug use were, and how they could talk to their children about drugs, and about the health dangers to their young bodies. We knew that most parents truly cared, but didn't know how to help their kids."

Mrs. Manger's mission was warmly embraced by some of the private schools in Manhattan and was less enthusiastically welcomed by others. "We knew that if we were to be successful, we had to have the schools behind us all the way," says Mrs. Manger, who, with her team, appointed school representatives in as many schools as possible. Through the school representatives, they distributed flyers that gave parents information on suggested readings and meetings to attend where they could learn more about the issue. The flyers did not sugar-coat the problems that schools were hesitant

to advertise. And from the beginning, the organization attempted to address the whole family, putting the onus on fathers as parents too. "We were careful to call ourselves 'NYC-Parents in Action,' not 'Mothers in Action,'" Mrs. Manger explains. "We tried to schedule many speakers at 6 pm, to attract more working fathers to our seminars."

Mrs. Manger and her original board, which included Joyce Fedden, Joyce Hearst, Chris Sarazen and Charlotte Weber, did not limit their efforts to parental outreach. In addition, they petitioned the Governor of New York State at the time, Governor Hugh Carey, to pass legislation that would close shops selling drug paraphernalia. Within one year the legislation came to pass. "Parents learned they could make a big difference by not condoning anything to do with the sale of drugs," says Mrs. Manger.

What began with four young women meeting in a dining room is today's NYC-Parent's in Action, an organization with a presence in 50 independent schools that provides approximately 26,000 families with facilitated discussion groups at member schools, seminars and panel discussions, and a newsletter and website containing timely information on parenting issues. Lynn Manger feels that both parents and schools have improved greatly in how they deal with drug use in children. Communication is better, and systems are often in place now to keep kids from slipping up. "But if you insert other words in place of 'drug and alcohol use,'" says Mrs. Manger, "like eating disorders, or fears about terrorism, or learning issues—all concerns for parents today—you see the future focus of our organization, in addition to the drug and alcohol abuse that initially set us on our path."

Lynn Manger is modest when questioned about her own life, but it is clear that she has always worked

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# PRESIDENT'S Letter

Welcome back—I hope that you had a restful and rejuvenating summer! I'm happy to start off the school year by telling you about the exciting programs that NYC-Parents in Action has planned for 2003-2004. As I begin my second year as President, and as NYC-Parents in Action celebrates its 25th Anniversary, we are focussing more than ever on the areas that we see as our strengths: the facilitated discussion groups, the seminars, and our newsletter and website. We feel that it is essential to maintain our programs free of cost to our 26,000 independent school families. To do so, we've created a private funding campaign for the *Lynn Manger Lecture Series*, named in honor of our founder, who continues to serve on our Board and to inspire our work.

We have again elected to follow a theme for the year, which helps us to bring you concentrated information on one topic. We felt that this year, with the difficult world conditions and increased stress and pressure that children face, we should look at ways that we can keep our children emotionally healthy. Our theme is **“Your Child’s Emotional Life: Nurturing Wellbeing in a Complex World,”** which is also the title of our

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tirelessly for the causes to which she is committed. She comes from Connecticut. She and her husband, Dr. William Manger, raised their family in New York, and Lynn worked as a hospital volunteer before becoming involved with children’s issues. Although she was a busy mother of four at the time when she began NYC-Parents in Action, she spent three or four days each week “getting the message out.” She currently sits on several boards, and maintains her strong commitments to several organizations, including VITAL, a charity promoting children’s nutrition in schools; the Landmarks Preservation Foundation; the Board of Youth and Community Development; the advisory Board of the National Association of Drug Abuse Problems; the National Hypertension Organization; and St. Andrews Dune Church, of which she is a trustee. ●

October keynote lecture featuring Dr. Jonathan Cohen of the Center for Social and Emotional Education. Also in October we will co-sponsor a program with Resources for Children with Special Needs, Inc., and The Parents’ League entitled **“Needles in the Haystack: How to Identify Learning, Attentional and Behavioral Problems Your Child Might Have,”** an outstanding panel of world-renowned experts on those subjects. In December we will join KiDs of NYU to explore children’s anxieties in a panel titled **“Anxiety Attack: Tests, Friends, The World, and Other Things Your Child Worries About.”** After our Eighteenth Annual **Teen Scene** (which explores the things that parents worry about!) we conclude the year’s program with a panel discussion in April on our children’s spiritual lives: **“An Inner Life: Fostering Your Child’s Spirituality.”**

We hope that you will consult our “save the date” calendar in this newsletter and plan to attend these programs. You’ll hear more about them from flyers distributed by your schools. The Special Seminars for school representatives will cover many topics: a pediatrician and a school nurse will speak on physical signs of emotional distress; experts will discuss eating disorders and children involved with substance use. All of these seminars will be covered in our newsletter and on our website. Do these subjects interest you? Do they make you think about ways you can best help your child? Are they topics that you’d like to discuss with other parents at the facilitated discussion groups we offer at schools? That’s what we’re hoping —please let us know if we’re succeeding.

We welcome your thoughts. We welcome your participation in the activities of NYC-Parents in Action. Please email me at [president@parentsinaction.org](mailto:president@parentsinaction.org) with your comments and ideas. I look forward to hearing from you, and to the exciting year ahead.

With warm regards,

**CELESTE RAULT**

NYC-Parents in Action, Inc. invites speakers to present their opinions and expertise on specific topics. Their opinions and comments are not necessarily those of NYC-PIA.

## The Lynn Manger Lecture Series

In celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of NYC-Parents in Action this year, the Board of Directors will honor our founding member Lynn Manger for her dedication and many years of service. We have established the Lynn Manger Lecture Series as a tribute to Lynn's vision and her continuing participation in NYC-Parents in Action.

Lynn Manger recognized that parents of teenagers needed more information regarding substance use and abuse, and that they also needed support to address this issue before children reached the age of experimentation. Lynn, along with several independent school parents and administrators, founded NYC-Parents in Action to help parents get the information and support they need. Today the organization provides a program of lectures, parent discussion groups, newsletters and a website that serves more than 26,000 independent school families. The program informs parents so that they can prepare their children to make reasoned decisions as they navigate through childhood to the teen and young adult years.

If you would like to make a contribution to this series, please call the NYC-Parents in Action office at (212) 987-9629. ●

### SAVE THE DATE

Parents in Action Family Benefit  
 Sunday, February 22, 2004  
 at  
 The New Victory Theater

#### Wanted:

Articulate and supportive men and women who are interested in learning how to facilitate NYC-Parents In Action discussion groups. You will be professionally trained in group dynamics in order to guide parents through meetings on a variety of parenting topics. Most meetings are held in Manhattan but we need facilitators who live in Brooklyn or are willing to travel to Brooklyn.

**Training sessions begin in September.  
 Please call 212 426-0240 for more information.**

## School Representatives

Alexander Robertson School.....	Robin Landau
Allen Stevenson School.....	Noreene Storrie
Bank Street School.....	Deborah Holland
Berkeley Carroll School.....	Julie Riskin
Birch Wathen Lenox School.....	Carol Hess, Amy Sessa
Brearley School.....	Peggy Ellis
Brooklyn Heights Montessori School.....	Kate Rock
Browning School.....	Michele Wijegoonaratna
Buckley School.....	Sacha MacNaughton
Calhoun School.....	Loren Lozmore, Lori Serling Sklar
Cathedral School.....	Clio Goland
Chapin School.....	Donna La Sala
Churchill School.....	Jane Shapiro
Collegiate School.....	Nancy Young
Columbia Grammar and Prep School.....	Leslie Shasha, Carla Schaeffer
Convent of the Sacred Heart.....	Cynthia Scrudato Carla Rentrop
Dalton School.....	Dominica Jones Samuels, Ricki Peaslee, Linda Heinberg
Dwight School.....	Connie Tilton
Ethical Culture School.....	Rona Nelson
Fieldston School.....	Susan Schneider
Friends Seminary.....	Karen Quinn
Gateway School.....	Heather Leeds
Grace Church School.....	Melanie Wells
Heschel School.....	Merle Wolff
Hewitt School.....	Jane Frank, Alice Spencer
Horace Mann School.....	Janis Heller
Loyola School.....	Mary Jane Haher
Lyce Francais de New York.....	Marianne Guillonneau
Marymount School.....	Joan Scagliola
Nightingale-Bamford School.....	Laura Hong, Elena Kissel, Jennie Corbett
Packer Collegiate Institute.....	Lisa Bedell, Tracy Brown
Poly Prep County Day School.....	Patti Feuereisen
Professional Children's School.....	Martha Brookshire
Riverdale Country School.....	Carol Cohen Zelikovic, Maura Donovan
St. David's School.....	Martha Zipp
Spence School.....	Tessa Namuth
St. Bernard's School.....	Ann Marie Embiricos, Deepka Gidumal
Temple Israel.....	Beth Lee
Town School.....	Kathy Posner
Trevor Day School.....	Waltraud Tammen
Trinity School.....	Nancy Brooks
Winston Prep School.....	Wendy Sanders
York Prep.....	Elizabeth Lundqvist

*List complete as of July 31, 2003. Please contact your school and/or NYC PIA with any additions or changes.*

## NYC-PARENTS IN ACTION 2003-2004 CALENDAR

### FALL 2003

October 9, 2003  
The 92nd Street Y, 8:30-10:00 am

**Your Child's Emotional Life:  
Nurturing Wellbeing in a Complex World**  
*Town Hall Discussion with keynote speaker:  
Dr. Jonathan Cohen, Ph.D., Center for Social and  
Emotional Education*

October 21, 2003  
Park Avenue Christian Church, 6:00-7:30 pm

**Needles in the Haystack:  
How to Identify Learning, Attentional and  
Behavioral Problems Your Child Might Have**  
*Co-sponsored with Resources for Children with Special  
Needs, Inc. and Parents League of New York, Inc.*

December 3, 2003  
The 92nd Street Y, 8:30-10:00 am

**Anxiety Attack: Tests, Friends, the World and  
Other Things Your Child Worries About**  
*Town Hall Panel Discussion*

### SPRING 2004

February 9, 2004  
Trinity School, 6:00-7:30 pm

#### Teen Scene XVIII

April 21, 2004  
All Souls Church, 6:00-7:30 pm

**An Inner Life: Fostering Your Child's Spirituality**  
*Panel Discussion*

If you'd like to be in touch with NYC-Parents in Action, you can reach us at:

**MAILING ADDRESS:** NYC-Parents in Action, Inc.  
P.O. Box 287451 Yorkville Station  
New York, NY 10128-0025

**TELEPHONE:** 212 987-9629

NYC-Parents in Action Administrator: [Penny Spangler](#)  
NYC-Parents in Action website: [parentsinaction.org](http://parentsinaction.org)

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FALL 2003 ISSUE