# **Smart Love** Newsletter

### Meet Smart Love's Associate Board!



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Superheroes Unite! That was the theme at the first Smart Love Associate Board meeting. This newly organized group picked their "Superhero Sidekick" and then brainstormed ways to further their mission: to raise awareness, friends, and funds for Smart Love by utilizing their talents and network. With help from U.S. Cellular's Innovation Team, Rachel Miller and Laura Christman, they generated ideas on events, explored their personal and professional connections, and simply got to know one another. The board has already generated many fantastic ideas—so be on the lookout for some Superhero worthy events!

Our Associate Board is a group of dedicated professionals and parents who have been involved with Smart Love in different capacities. All funds that they raise will be used to further expand awareness and support for Smart Love.

We are pleased to introduce our Superhero Associate Board Members: Tiffany Cannon, John & Robyn Azpeitia, Jessica Bargnes, Emily & Bob Carroll, Anne Crees, Samantha Dimas, Alison Gehle, Jeremy Guenther, Victoria Heineman-Pieper, Judy Maritato, Jeff Sadowski, Tracy Rady, Chris Soderlund, Tanya Stippich, Tanya Vayl, and Maria & Markus Wimmer.

## Associate Board Chair Tiffany Cannon

Tiffany Cannon is a current Smart Love Preschool parent and the very first chair of the newly formed Associate Board! She lives in Logan Square with her husband Aaron and son Matai. In addition to helping support the work of the Associate Board, Tiffany is also an Application and Project Manager at U.S. Cellular where she leads the development of a new strategy and program for the company's intranet. Tiffany was also a Change Management Consultant at Accenture for many years, creating and

executing training and communications programs that served employees across the globe. Inspired by the challenge of running her own business, Tiffany cofounded The Silken Tent, a destination day spa offering spa & wellness services,



Tiffany Cannon

lifestyle retail, and organic foods. After earning her degree in Community Counseling from Loyola University, Tiffany began her career as a Child and Family Therapist for a non-profit in Evanston where she helped establish its counseling program. We are grateful for Tiffany's passion for issues around parenting, mental health, and a love for building successful programs.

#### **NEWS**

## Smart Love reaches over 2800 in FY15



Increased efforts to reach out to families last year resulted in many more who now know about Smart Love and the programs we offer. Our counseling staff cared for 691 children, teens and adults last year and our preschool program enrolled 174 preschoolers, toddlers and infants. Our parenting and child development seminars were attended by 174 parents and professionals. A total of \$158,000 was provided in scholarships and financial aid to over 167 individuals so they could experience our preschool programs or access our counseling services. Lastly, we raised over \$220,000 from individuals, businesses and foundations.

## #GivingTuesday is "Giving Toysday" at Smart Love!



Smart Love Family
Services is launching
its new #GivingTuesday
campaign called "Giving
Toysday." Giving Tuesday
is a global initiative to
connect diverse groups of
individuals, communities
and organizations around
the world for one common
purpose: to celebrate
and encourage giving.

On Tuesday, December 1st, Smart Love Family Services will engage its supporters and social media followers to donate funds used to purchase toys for the Smart Love Preschool and Smart Love's Child Counseling Program. Every dollar donated will go to toys, games, and art supplies to enrich children's lives. Follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn, and sign up for our email communications to learn how toys have helped Chicagoland children!

## Annual Fund Helps Children Thrive—It's That Simple!

Fall has arrived and with it the launch of the Annual Fund, our most important charitable giving program. It is the primary way in which parents, grandparents, alumni, and friends make philanthropic gifts to Smart Love Family Services each year. Helping families thrive is essential to what we do. And with your financial support during the Annual Fund drive we can make that happen. It's that simple.



We rely on voluntary contributions to the Annual Fund to support our preschool program, provide parent coaching, parent groups, seminars, workshops, toddler classes, and counseling for children, parents, couples, and individuals. Fees, tuitions, and insurance reimbursements cover only a portion of the costs of providing these programs and services. Gifts to the annual fund help us balance our operating budget, keeping our organization healthy so we can help more children and families.

Your generosity makes a huge difference. When you give generously, it enhances the wonderful things we do, which enhances the incredible experiences our children and families have, which enhances the wellbeing they take out into the world, and on and on. It begins with you and your gift.

The easiest way to give is to visit us online at www.smartlovefamily. org/contribute.php or use the envelope included with the newsletter. Please consider a gift today. After all, investing in children and families is the most important work we will ever do! It's that simple.



### Save the Date

Friday, March 11, 2016 6–11 p.m.

Little Feet, Big Fun, our Annual Scholarship Benefit Gala Gala proceeds provide financial aid to children and families in need.

Experience the elegant surroundings of the Four Seasons Hotel on Chicago's vibrant Magnificent Mile. The evening includes a lively cocktail hour, seated dinner, exciting live and silent auctions, a stimulating program, music, and dancing! To learn more and to purchase tickets visit www.smartlovefamily.org.



### Spotlight on Donors

Heartfelt thanks to all those who made gifts this past year (July 1, 2014–June 30, 2015)

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#### **Guarantors**

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<sup>\*</sup> Gifts to 2015 Little Feet, Big Fun! Gala / Martha Heineman Pieper, Ph.D. and William J. Pieper, M.D. Scholarship Fund.

<sup>#</sup> Gifts to the Natalie G. Heineman Smart Love Preschool Fund. ^ were attendees to the 2015 Little Feet, Big Fun! Gala.

#### **PRESCHOOL**

# Smart Love Preschoolers Enjoy a Literary Feast!

All children enjoy "story time" but at Smart Love Preschool, it's taken to a whole new level. Every day after snack time the teachers select a book to read to the children that amplifies the themes that the children are talking about and learning in the week's curriculum. The children gather around and often begin talking about the book even before the teacher begins. This is welcomed because it shows an enthusiasm for learning and it's contagious! The teacher might say, holding up the book, "This is what we are going to read today. I wonder what it's about?" Thus begins the back and forth experience the children have with the teacher about the book. The teachers strive to make the experience fun, knowing that if the children enjoy their relationships with one another and with the teacher, the stones are laid for the children's cognitive growth. The teachers explain that there is an author who writes the words making up the story and an illustrator who draws the pictures. The teachers might not read every word in the story as they are adjusting the content to make it relevant to the children in the class, and to what they have experienced already about the subject of the story. The teachers are very flexible in how they read, pausing often to let the children express their ideas and offer what they think will happen next. The teachers might point to the illustrations and use their own words to describe what is happening. Being responsive to the children is the most effective way to stimulate learning.

This fall the children are also exploring our children's library in a new way. All the children received their own library cards complete with a photo. They use the cards to go with their class each week into our children's library, explore our book collection, and select a book. Depending on their interests, a child might select from our many books on trains, or from our selection of gardening books, or books on construction and building. The children love the process of writing their name on the clipboard and using the stamper to stamp





the date they check the book out! The books are brought back to the classroom and are placed into a very special library book basket that holds all the children's selections. The children can find their special book in the basket and enjoy it many times during the week on their own or with their classmates.

Another activity that stimulates children's knowledge of written language is creating their own books. When children are enthused about a story or an event in their lives, teachers will take "dictation" and help a child to create their own storybook, complete with their choice of construction paper for the cover and white paper for the written story. When a teacher reads the dictated story back to the child, it is the ultimate in authorship, with editing and a final copy! In addition to writing their own stories, each child is given a small spiral notebook or "journal" that carries their photo on the cover. Inside the notebook, the children can "write" or draw whatever they wish — as both author and illustrator.

The combination of teachers' expressive reading at story time, the children's library browsing and book selection, and lastly, creating their own books, makes the process of learning multifaceted, engaging and fun!

#### PARENTING



### Oak Park's Community Mental Health Board Funds Parent Program

Funding in the amount of \$8,000 has been authorized from the Community Mental Health Board of Oak Park to enable Smart Love to pilot a new program. The Parent Training and Support Program was developed in partnership with TASC, an organization that is working

with 30 middle school students and their families in Oak Park. The pilot combines a parent support group with individual parent coaching. Our hope is that the pilot will prove successful and we can expand the model to other Oak Park parents interested in parenting help that goes beyond a one-time seminar or discussion. This funding is part of a larger effort by Smart Love to become more integrated into the Oak Park community and expand the profile of our organization as a provider of services to parents in addition to our work with children. For example, we recently formed a partnership with Parenthesis, a well-established non-profit in Oak Park noted for its parenting programs for families with children under six years old. We are offering Smart Love discussion groups to their parents at their location several times a year. And last fall, we received a \$5,000 grant from the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation to launch our Parent Support Initiative and bring Nancy Luepke on board as our Parent Advocate. Nancy's primary role is to help parents of our child and adolescent clients in our counseling program get support, answers, and information so that they feel a part of a positive process of change for their whole family.

### QUICK TIP:

# Electronic and Social Media: How best to help children gain benefits and avoid pitfalls



Electronic and social media are all around us. While there are benefits to their use, there are also pitfalls. (For example, the anonymity of many social media platforms makes it ripe for online bullying.) Parents often don't understand the new ways that their children are communicating or entertaining themselves online, which makes it harder to offer guidance. This is exacerbated by the fact that children are in the

process of figuring out boundaries, which is challenging in real time and more so in the Internet's boundary-less space. Smart Love can offer a helpful perspective to guide parents as they consider ways to regulate their children's electronic media use.

All parents want their children to grow up to be happy and successful adults who make healthy and constructive choices for themselves. The prerequisite is that children need a solid internal self-esteem from which to make constructive and self-caretaking choices, which takes all of childhood to develop. In the meantime, our children need our help to be safe and healthy. Children develop this solid core through their relationship with their parents. They copy how you treat them and in turn treat themselves and others that same way. Nurturing your relationship with your child is the best insurance you have to helping your child avoid the negative aspects of electronic and social media use.

Children are engaged in learning all about the world they live in and understanding those around them. The Internet and electronic media can be a useful tool for learning--completing homework, using computer games as part of a school's curricula, visiting teachers' websites to get assignments and hand in their work. In addition, there are numerous platforms that teachers use to communicate with students and parents. Electronic media can also be used to nurture a child's interests and social skills. For example, your son's hours playing Minecraft can spark a love of architecture. Your daughter's time playing her favorite sports game can help her learn the rules of the game and keep her interested in playing on the school's team. Children's interest in social media, such as Facebook, Pinterest, and Snapchat, helps develop social skills and an understanding of their likes and dislikes. Kids are under a lot of pressure at school and social media and games can offer a much-deserved respite from those pressures.

Discussions about constructive use of social media and being safe online can begin early. Ask your child about what they enjoy about social media and gaming and listen to what they say about it. Keep an open mind, ask questions, and offer helpful perspectives, such as not sharing details about personal information.

For younger children, place the computer in a central location rather than in their bedroom so you can engage with them and explore together while also keeping an eye on what they are doing. During middle and high school, children will most likely have a Smartphone and use a laptop for their schoolwork. It's more difficult to manage phone and laptop use when children are in their rooms, but you can set rules together about their use. For example, at bedtime they can hand the phone and laptop to you so they can get the rest they need. If children understand that you are helping them make decisions that are in their best interest and not too restrictive, they will be more likely to accept them. If you have to say "no," put it in the context of concern for their safety and help them find a way to do what they want with your help, such as finding a suitable picture to post online.

Most importantly, maintain and develop your relationship with your child. As your child grows and his or her interests change, try to find fun things you can do together as an alternative to the mostly solo time spent online. Ride bikes, explore a museum, go skating, run a science experiment, cook, etc., and enjoy the time you have with your child. Parenting is a long-term process that provides many parent and child experiences that will help your child to discover over time the healthiest balance of enjoyment and stable self-caretaking.

## Parenting Tips for regulating child's electronic and social media use

- Talk, engage, and listen to your child about their usage and what's fun about it
- Begin early, using age appropriate language, to talk about cyber-bullying, sharing personal IDs and information, etc.
- Involve your child in coming up with rules around usage
- Control the device not the child
- Provide fun alternatives to screen time that you can both share

### Smart Love Books for Families

Books are available for purchase at the following sites:

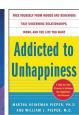
smartlovefamily.org smartlovepreschool.org smartlovepress.com amazon.com bn.com















#### **OUR LOCATIONS**

Chicago • Oak Park



Like The Natalie G. Heineman Smart Love Preschool and Smart Love Family Services on Facebook!



Follow @smartlovefamily on Twitter

TO LEARN MORE VISIT www.smartlovefamily.org www.smartlovepreschool.org

## Smart Love Offers: counseling services

- Play Therapy
- Adolescent and Adult Psychotherapy
- · Parent Guidance and Counseling
- Couples and Family Counseling
- Child and Adolescent Groups
- Testing Services for children, adolescents and adults
- Autism Treatment Program

#### **EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

- Parent & Baby Group (infants 6 wks.-5 mos.)
- Parent & Crawlers (6 mos.–11 mos.)
- Toddler Explorations (parent and toddlers 12–36 mos.)
- Toddler Transitions (toddlers 30–36 mos., parents nearby in Family Room)
- Preschool & Kindergarten (half and extended day programs for childrer 3–6 years)

#### PARENTING PROGRAMS

- Parent Coaching
- Parent Education Seminars
- Publications for Parents and Families

## SMART LOVE. FAMILY SERVICES

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### Staff Spotlight: New Clinical Trainees Welcomed

We are pleased to welcome our clinical trainees: Ms. Felicia M. Owens, Ms. Talli Hitt, and Ms. Jessica Hudnall. Ms. Felicia Owens received her Master's in Community Counseling from Concordia University in Chicago. She is currently earning her doctorate in clinical psychology from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology. She has more than 10 years of experience working in mental health settings, education, and student growth and development. Ms. Talli Hitt received her Master's in child psychology from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, where she continues to work toward her Psy.D. She has worked with children, adolescents, and families in many different settings, and has provided psychotherapy to children, adults, and families. She has experience working in a hospital, schools, and community agency settings. Ms. Jessica Hudnall is a student in the Counseling Master's Program at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Jessica is currently working as a counseling intern at Smart Love. Ms. Hudnall has experience working with children in a variety of settings including as youth mentor and advocate at her local church and at various community organizations.







Talli Hitt



Jessica Hudnall

The Smart Love Approach was developed by Martha Heineman Pieper, Ph.D., and William J. Pieper, M.D., and is described in their book Smart Love. The Natalie G. Heineman Smart Love Preschool offers classes for three to six year olds, and parent and child programs for children six weeks to 36 months. Smart Love Family Services provides counseling for children and families based on the Piepers' therapeutic approach, Inner Humanism®. Parenting programs include private parent coaching, educational seminars (co-sponsored by the Intrapsychic Humanism Society), parent training and support programs, and publications. © 2015 Smart Love Family Services is an Illinois-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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