

# Docia Shares a Story about Spring



Photograph by Jean Berlfein

It was a warm, sunny, blue sky day, and Marsha Gutch, sitting on the lawn with her group of four year olds, was talking with them about what a lovely day it was — that it felt like spring. She asked them if they knew what spring was.

These were some of their answers:

*Tammy: The winter melts at spring.*

*Monica: You put fake sun up and get spring. You go to the store and pay your bills. You get dizzy.*

*Phoebe: Spring is when the sun comes out and there's sunsets. That's when you move to different houses.*

*Adam: You could put sandals on. You don't have to wear hot clothes.*

*Tamecka: Spring is rainbows. The rain comes down. People feel like planting yards.*

*Laura: It's when the rainbows come and the animals and the trees grow and grass grows.*

*Kelly: You should buy an umbrella in the spring. You can get married or visit a farm.*

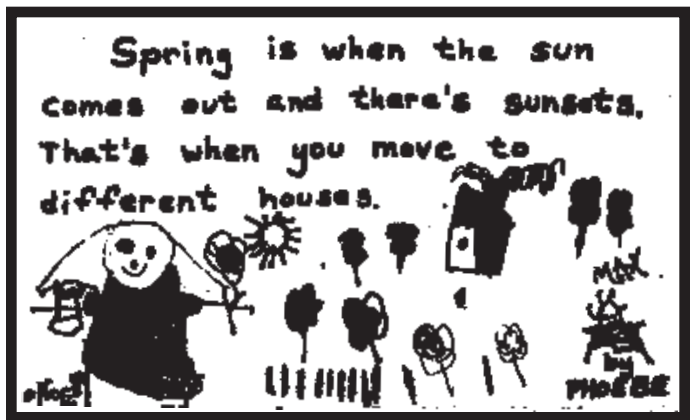
*Katie: Spring is when the ice turns into water.*

Marsha told the children she loved spring because everywhere there were flowers. She said she had been thinking of starting a flower garden in the play yard; would they like to help? The answer was an enthusiastic *yes*.

The next few days were busy ones. A flower bed was dug, and a trip to the neighborhood nursery was

made. With the gardener's assistance, dianthus, lupine, marigold, viola, geranium, and sweet alyssum seedlings were purchased. On return to the center, they were tenderly placed in the newly dug flower bed. Although it was weeks before blooms appeared, each seedling was daily scrutinized, weeded, and watered.

Marsha brought flower catalogs for the children to look at and read stories to them, like Barbara Cooney's *Miss Rumphius*. She discovered that the project was as much an adventure for her as for the children. She found herself doing more and more research because the children asked so many questions she couldn't answer: Where did the colors come from? Why did the flowers die? How did the roots drink? What did the snails, cut-worms, and slugs eat and why were they so sticky?



All in all, it was a wonderful experience from the beginning, when talking about spring sparked the imagination and interest of the children, to the end when the flower garden became a reality.

Serendipity?

*Docia Zavitkovsky has furthered the cause of young children as a practitioner in the field for over 45 years and as past president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Known far and wide for her storytelling, she has traveled extensively as an early childhood consultant, lecturer, and adventurer.*