

A Manner of Speaking

by Bonnie Neugebauer

Walking briskly through an October morning, my friend Lorelee and I were discussing her granddaughter Ivy's school. Lorelee had picked Ivy up the previous afternoon and was effusing: "Along the wall they have all these photographs of the children's hands, just their hands; and they are all doing different things. So, the idea is to identify your child's hands. It isn't as easy as it sounds. It took me three guesses to get it right!"

"When Anthony (Ivey's father) went to Parent Night, they took pictures of all the parents' hands. Anthony wrote Ivy's symbol (another way for children at the school to be known) on his hand, so it was easy for her to find his photo. Isn't that just great? It's such a wonderful school. It's just so . . . so ALIVE!"

What a great adjective to describe a place where young children and their teachers are spending their days together — ALIVE!

And just by that one word, you know that this school is a place where things are different every single day, where events and individuals have the power to change the agenda. You can feel the pulse, the rhythm, the movement. You want be part of the action.

Lorelee's final comment about Hilltop Children's Center was this: "I'd just love to spend time there and be part of all of it." I wanted to be there, too, just from listening to her story.

A place that is ALIVE. A place that makes you WANT TO BE THERE.

I immediately thought about my own work here at *Child Care Information Exchange*. We need to ask: Are we ALIVE? Does everyone WANT TO BE HERE? And it might be a good test for you, too, to assess how things are going for your program. It would be a good thing if we all periodically asked these questions of ourselves and of our work:

- Do I want to show up every day?
- Does each day hold the possibility for change?
- Will I be open to serendipity if it comes my way?
- Am I willing and prepared to use my creative, emotional, intellectual powers to create change?
- Are my co-workers engaged?
- Am I aware of the life that each other person brings to our shared day?
- Is our work alive in the larger community?

Enjoying your work and who you are at work is certainly a blessing. And even though blessings are often perceived as coming to us as gifts, I think we can also make them happen — at least sometimes. Bless the important work that you do by being alive in it and bringing life to it. And that will certainly be a blessing to others.