Dr. Intisar Shareef was a social justice advocate, humanitarian, Trustee of PLUSA, and most importantly, a dear friend to any and everyone who knew her. As a warrior of peace, she has left us with infinite lessons of love, equality, diversity and respect. A prolific author, professor and sought-after presenter at national and international conferences, Intisar also had a very special place in her heart for Pikler®.

Studying at the Pikler® Institute on several occasions, she was profoundly moved by the impeccable way in which babies were being cared for by lovingly attentive and trained caregivers. Intisar, always hungry to learn more, asked Anna Tardos if she could stay at Lóczy to work as a caregiver. A professor wanting to remain in Hungary and tasked with working as a caregiver? Yes, it was this altruistic spirit that would help give her a real sense of the day-to-day life at this extraordinarily special children’s home. Intisar believed that by opening a window onto the life of Emmi Pikler and her theories on early childhood education, she would also expand her own views and philosophies.

Indeed, she imagined having the opportunity to be by Anna's side on a daily basis, exchanging theories of their mutual observations of infants engaged in self-initiated activity. I was fortunate to be present when Anna smiled tenderly at Intisar's generous proposition. Graciously, and with the most loving gesture of gratitude, Anna turned down Intisar's kind offer, as there were no vacancies at that time.

But that offer formed a significant bond between Anna and Intisar, which was reinforced when Intisar, on the last day of her second intensive at Lóczy, said to Anna, “You remind me very much of my mother. You are strong, and wise like her, and you also make me want to be a better person.”

When I informed Anna of Intisar's passing, her reply upon hearing that this vigorous champion of children was gone, was one of shock and surprise, with Anna simply exclaiming, “I can't believe it!”

It was also Intisar's sensitive understanding of the Pikler® approach that led her to apply its principles with her own grandchildren: “It is a mystery to me,” she wrote, “how love can continue to grow. My two granddaughters are testament to the fact that our capacity to love others is boundless. Both their fathers are my adopted sons, and it amazes me that their offspring look just like them. What a blessing for them to finally “see themselves” in the flesh. Pikler® has been extremely important to me, as I have learned how to hold my children...
In memoriam, Dr. Intisar Shareef

and to let them go simultaneously. The balance we all seek is not just physical, but also emotional and spiritual. The wisdom of Dr. Pikler and Dr. Tardos has been a healing power in my life. I am eternally grateful to both of them.”

To this I respond, “And we are eternally grateful for you, dear Intisar. May your journey be filled with peace, respect, love and kindness - all the fruits of the many seeds you planted on this earth. How are we now to experience a world without you, Intisar? How can the work on diversity continue? How may we learn to love one another, in spite of our different beliefs? You gave us these answers long ago, and we pay tribute to you by honoring your life’s work. Yes, we are different, but we are all human beings, all deserving of the same respect. These words continue to sing in my mind as I hear your voice, Intisar.

“Although you left us far too soon – and in a quiet fashion, because this is who you are, Intisar - you filled your 73 years with a vast enthusiasm and an open heart. And while you may have always been the best-dressed person in a crowd, standing tall with an aristocratic presence, you were also a most humble, attuned, and serene soul. Today you depart with a soft whisper, like the gentle blowing of a dandelion’s seeds – an evanescent shooting star – one that leaves behind a light and message for peace. I love you dearly, Intisar , and for all of us.  She was truly a wonderful woman and was so generous and giving.” – With love, Enid Elliot

“These news break my heart, like Elsa and all of us! Intisar was for me the symbol of intelligence and sensibility about her role with the Pikler® Institute, for her work about children, about peace, about concord in the world. I am really, profoundly sorry and sad. I will join you to honor her as she deserves.” – With love, Agnes Szanto

“I had to read her message three times to believe what I was reading and now I am sitting here with tears in my eyes. What an incredible loss. Intisar had such a beautiful spirit and we had the absolute joy of her visiting our project here in El Salvador. My entire family fell in love with her in the few short days we got to spend with her. She held the entire 72-person class, of very high-level government officials, enthralled as she taught them about seeing the child in front of you. And she made us all laugh when she was surprised in her hotel, in the morning, by a window full of parrots that almost flew into her room! What a gift it was to have even that small amount of time with her, to learn from her strength, her wisdom and her humor. I can only imagine the loss for her family. Please send them my love and tell them we will be lighting candles for her in El Salvador.” – Meghan López, Whole Child International™

“Thank you Intisar for being a warrior of peace, for advocating for diversity and fighting for the children! You will never be forgotten and will live in the hearts and memories of all of us! Rest In Peace.” – Love, Larissa Neilson

CONTINUED TO PAGE NINE
As far as iconic screen moments go, the smoldering tango danced by Gabrielle Anwar and Al Pacino in the 1992 film, “Scent of a Woman,” certainly qualifies, with Pacino winning an Academy Award for his portrayal of Lieut. Col. Frank Slade, and Anwar continuing to rack up a slew of impressive thespian credits herself. And though her love of acting has been a primary focus in her life (she spent seven years on television’s “Burn Notice,” and is currently filming the series “Once Upon a Time” for ABC), the British-born mother of three who lives in Miami, Florida, has recently written a screenplay about the life and times of Dr. Emmi Pikler.

In addition to acting, painting, writing and directing, Anwar, 47, serves on the board of Pikler/Lóczy USA.

VL: Your children are now 23, 16 and 13. When and how did you first discover Pikler®?

GA: I was going through a separation and I had a 4-year old, Willow. I wanted to take her to a child psychologist during this time so that she would have a third party to vent to, should she need to, so she wouldn’t feel she was being disloyal to her mother and father. I introduced her to this fabulous woman, who, when she got to know us, said, ‘You know, you have a very Piklerian way of handling your oldest.’ And I said, ‘What on earth is that? Is it some sort of pickled vegetable?’ So she sent me to a RIE® class with Hari Grebler in Santa Monica.

VL: You were also pregnant with your son, Hugo, at the time. What were your first impressions of the class?

GA: From the moment I walked into the room I felt at ease, I felt open, and everything suddenly became very simplified. The colors of the room were soothing, there was no electronic interference, and the moment my son was three months old, I enrolled in the class and it affected my entire life – all of my relationships, not just with my children, but it opened my eyes to a communication that was so exquisite. I thought to myself, ‘Why isn’t this implemented in all daycares and homes and childcare institutions?’ I thought this is something that could probably change the planet.

VL: You then had your third child, Paisley, and went to classes with her, as well.

PLUSA was present on September 23rd, in Los Angeles, California at the Hungarian Gala “Ambassadors of the Future,” benefiting the international student exchange program. The proceeds of the Gala will be awarded to students from the Carpathian Basin supporting their studies in the United States via the Bognar Family Scholarship Fund.

Honorary Chairman: His Excellency Dr. László Szabó, Ambassador to the Republic of Hungary.

A Conversation with Gabrielle Anwar

By Victoria Looseleaf

(Standing left to right) His Excellency Mr. Tamás Széles, Consul General of Hungary with wife Ildiko Nagy; Susan Pekarovics, M.D. and Attila Beres, Ph.D., Gregory Willson, (Seated left to right) Elsa Chaín, President and CEO of Pikler/Lóczy USA; Professor Vena Ricketts, M.D., Professor Natasha Khazanov, Ph.D., Hannah Mate.
Gabrielle Anwar

GA: It wasn’t a huge shift for me, because I lived in a very modest cabin in Topanga Canyon at the time, and didn’t have a television or a lot of Fisher-Price toys. I sort of re-wrote in my mind the parenting programming—what I learned from my own mother and father. I unraveled everything and brought it to the simplest form and implemented that with all my relationships—with my own parents, with my friends—and everything calmed down. There was much less hectic interactivity in my life, particularly in the way of interacting with my children. I saw these little humans as this extraordinary gift to me and to the universe, and I was inspired and aroused by life. It changed everything for me—these classes—so that’s how I discovered Emmi Pikler.

VL: You met Elsa Chahin about two years ago and realized that there was an important story to be told about Emmi Pikler, at first through a documentary, then as a narrative, a biopic.

GA: The more I talked to Elsa about the origins of RIE®, the more I discovered that there was this very interesting pediatrician at the root of it all. Elsa and I devised a plan to see how I could introduce myself to Emmi’s daughter, Anna Tardos, and not seem like such an outsider to the method. We planned a trip to meet Anna in January, 2016, in Budapest, and fortunately, Anna was very receptive to the idea, and the more I spoke to Elsa, prior to leaving for Hungary, the more I realized this wasn’t just a documentary. This was something that could be an extraordinary cinema-graphic parable.

VL: What was it like—going to the source, if you will—and working with Anna Tardos?

GA: She blocked out the time for me, because her schedule is booked months and months in advance. We would do three or four hours and then take a break. She’s so focused and lucid and clear about everything, although she keeps punctuating things with – ‘There’s nothing to tell, there is no story, I’m not that interesting’ – and then she’ll go into this fantastic rendition of an experience she once had and it blows my mind. She gave me some incredible imagery, full of flavor and texture. She’s a formidable creature and I adore her, I’ve fallen in love with her. All I want to do is be held in her arms.

VL: Emmi Pikler was born in Vienna in 1902 and died in Budapest in 1984. As part of your research, you also met and spoke to numerous people with ties to Pikler in Paris, Berlin and Munich, and are calling the film, “My Own Piece of Sky,” from “The Choice,” by Hungarian poet, Ottó Orbán. What is the arc of the story?

GA: The film is told chronologically, Emmi’s birth to her death, and had so many hurdles to overcome in between. The obvious one being Jewish at this time in our history, but also her being one of the few female pediatricians of the era and having a very specific way—an incredibly advanced, progressive way of looking at not only health and medicine, but also child development. She was just so ahead of her time—even still, to this day—there are very few pediatricians or anyone in childcare that view the child as a respected capable human. So Emmi was really forging her way through these developmental discoveries. She was also in hiding during World War II, but still maintained her personal integrity and her professional integrity, and had these amazing characters that she relied upon. Her husband was also very charismatic and was in prison—he escaped twice—for a long amount of time. There are so many elements of heroism in her lifetime.
VL: Have you thought about casting and would you consider starring in the film?

GA: I would, of course, be honored to play Emmi Pikler, however, I think my goal is to have this film be revered, and for as many people to see it as possible. It would behoove the film to cast an A-List celebrity rather than an actress who hasn’t been in a box office hit for a long time. The funny thing is, I’m so invested in this project that I don’t know if anyone’s “A-list” enough to play Emmi Pikler. I feel like there’s that wonderful quote in Harper Lee’s book, “To Kill a Mockingbird,” where she says, ‘You can’t know a man until you step in his shoes and walk around in them.’ I feel like I’ve been walking around in Emmi Pikler’s shoes. So I look at these other actresses and think, I don’t know, she might not have the integrity. I’m not even thinking as an actress of their acting potential, I’m thinking of the woman as a whole.

VL: Ultimately, what will you want audiences to take away from the film?

GA: I would love people to leave the theater curious about their own parenting and how they were parented. I would also like them to feel this intuitive awareness of what this implementation of the Pikler® method could do to the world, because it’s very hard to rehabilitate incarcerated criminals, it’s very hard to be in therapy. It’s very hard to be born again. If we could start at birth with Pikler®, there would be no need to be born again.

Victoria Looseleaf is an award-winning freelance journalist with bylines in the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, KCET Artbound, Dance Magazine and other outlets. In addition, she edited the recently-released book, “In Loving Hands: How the Rights for Young Children Living in Children’s Homes Offer Hope and Happiness in Today’s World,” by Elsa Chahin with Anna Tardos.

Congratulations to Katalin Hevesi and Agnes Szanto PhD, Recipients of the 2017 Emmi Pikler Award

Merci Agi, köszönöm Kati, you have transformed the lives of thousands of children, and for this we are grateful and we honor you!

KATALIN HEVESI, Pikler® Pedagogue, began working at the Pikler infant’s home (Lóczy) in 1963, in addition to her direct work with the children, she has authored many articles and is part of the Hungarian working group that helped draft the Ten Rights for Children Living in Children’s Homes, and the Ten Rights for Children Attending Day Care. Hevesi has conducted seminars for the French Pikler/Lóczy Association in France and in Belgium for 10 years, and currently works in the archives of the Hungarian Pikler/Lóczy Association.

AGNES SZANTO PHD., had early contact with Dr. Emmi Pikler, who was her family’s pediatrician when she was born. She has lived in France since 1956 and received a Masters Degree and Doctorate in Psychology in the research of the psychomotor development of young children. A Professor of Early Childhood Development at Universities in France, Belgium, Italy and Argentina, Szanto is also a keynote speaker at international conferences. She is a founding-member and Vice-President of the Pikler-Lóczy Association of France and of the International Pikler Association, as well as board member of Pikler/Lóczy USA. She has authored many books that have been translated into several languages.

Coming Soon!

Thanks to the generous grant from Community Playthings® the book, Emmi Pikler, More Than A Pediatrician by Anna Czimmek MD, will soon be published in English!
ENGAGING WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS THROUGH RESPECTFUL AND PEACEFUL CARE

Three-day Pikler® Introductory workshops—in four locations—were a huge success!

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, February 2017

TESTIMONIAL FROM MARCIE WESTPHALEN, INFANT/TODDLER SPECIALIST, DOULA

“It has been nearly six months since I attended the Intro to Pikler® training in Charleston SC. I continue to reflect frequently on what was so graciously and professionally shared with all of us over those three days.

I cannot fully express the impact the Intro to Pikler training has had on me. I would first like to say that you are exceptional guides. Your confidence, compassion and expertise in the information you shared came through from the very start of the training. I knew right away that I was fortunate to be present for this and even more fortunate that you were the conduit of this information. Funny, I often tell other new parents: “When looking back, the caregivers, classes, teachers and coaches you share your children with should be GIFTS to your children. Each one of them bringing respectful and exceptional experiences that allow them growth at their own pace.” So now I thank YOU for creating this very environment for us in the Intro to Pikler® Training.

This was not only a transformative experience, but also a confirmation of what I have felt for a very long time: a coming home of sorts. The training confirmed that there IS a way to be with infants that exudes respect for the child in ANY situation. The reminder that modeling love and sincere respect for the individual babies we come into contact with makes an imprint upon the child for life. I leave this training with an even heightened awareness of the infant and toddler, not just as these simple labels we so easily place on them (“infant/toddler”), but as small people and human beings with a desire for deep relationships that create meaningful attachments. I gained a deeper understanding of the environment and how important proper preparation and set up is for meaning, trust and respect to easily occur, as well as the importance of uninhibited mobility for the infant. And even more important was the understanding of role of humility that needs to be present as we care for and interact with infants and toddlers.

So much has gone through my mind since completing on Friday; what wonderful people came together for this training, what amazing insights were shared as we all became comfortable and how might I create the impact on others that YOU and the Pikler® training have made on me?

Thank you so much for all that you did to make this so meaningful and successful! You are amazing women, a gift.

Before attending the three day intro I spent countless hours reading whatever I could on Dr. Emmi Pikler, Lóczy, and the Pikler® Method. I scoured the Internet for whatever information I could find and watched YouTube videos endlessly. But nothing compared to the experience I was able to share with a wonderful group of men and women at the Pikler® Intro. There were moments of great reflection and emotion for me, as well as others in the class, as we put our hearts and minds in the position of the child. It has been one of the most valuable trainings I have ever attended.

Living in a world that is often surrounded with turmoil, catastrophe and disrespect, is a clear reminder to each of us that we MUST do our part to spread love, peace and respect, in order to make the greatest impact on our families, communities, countries and our world. What better way than starting with touching the lives of babies? Whether you care for infants, work with toddlers or lead others in caring for young children, being a part of the Pikler® trainings will surely impact our world 100 fold. I truly look forward to being in attendance at future Pikler® trainings!”
Seven Tips for Respectfully Changing Diapers

By Sary Montero, Lead caregiver, Costa Rica – participant of our 3-day Pikler® Intro in Charleston.

“We shouldn't be having a power struggle, we must be humble and serve.” Spoken by Dr. Emmi Pikler, this phrase echoes inside my head because there are times when a change of diaper is a bit uncomfortable for the child as well as for the adult, and we fall into a power struggle. I would like to be able to say there is a magic formula so that it is always easy, but there isn’t, for that reason I believe that it can be an invaluable moment.

A child has his diaper changed approximately five thousand times throughout his life. What if this time was spent connecting and getting to know each other, as well as strengthening the relationship? During this time you can learn what his various expressions mean and what they wish to communicate through their gestures, making it easier for adults to accompany them in their development.

Changing diapers is what I enjoy the most during child care. It is a time where it is just the child and I. My life changed completely after participating in the Pikler® 3-day intro. It not only changed me, I have seen how the it has had an effect on the children I have the privilege to care for. For that reason I want to share with you seven tips for respectfully changing diapers:

1. **ANTICIPATE AND HAVE A CONSISTENT ROUTINE:** Letting a child know ahead of time not only makes them feel safe, it also empowers them. It also strengthens the trust the child has in the adult, because we are fulfilling what we said we would do together. There are moments when the routine may change and it is important that we communicate that, so they are aware of the reason for the change of plans.

2. **A COZY SPACE:** The area in which we change a diaper must be in a calm place where few people walk by; it is a vulnerable moment. The space should also be free of any distractions since mobiles or toys get the child's attention and the most valuable thing in this moment, is the connection with his caretaker.

3. **INVITING THE CHILD TO PARTICIPATE:** How many of us like to be taken into account? The children are totally capable. It is not about them changing their own diaper but they recognize the importance of their collaboration, the child depends on the adult, but even more important is the fact the adult depends on the child. Lets give them the opportunity, so they guide us and teach us other ways of doing things.

4. **RESPECTING TIME:** As adults we are constantly rushing through the day and we forget how important it is that we respect our children's rhythm. Taking five more minutes during a change of diaper can make a big difference. Many times they express themselves in different ways as they usually do with the objective of asking us to slow down and enjoy the moment with them.

5. **THE USE OF OUR HANDS:** The first contact children have with the world is at their time of birth, through the hands of the person that receives them, and as adults we are the connection they have with the world that surrounds them. The child's well being depend to a great extent on the way they are held and caressed. It is essential that we are careful and gentle in the way in which we touch them, since they are in the process of developing their perception of the world through these experiences.

6. **BEING IN CONSTANT COMMUNICATION:** Having conversations with them in a paused manner and with a pleasant tone of voice invites them to collaborate, since we are showing them we are present and available for whatever it is they wish to express.

7. **LISTENING:** At all times, children are communicating with us through many languages, but do we really listen? Each one of these tips depend on this last one, listening to the child's voice to get to know them and understand them. Listening when they tell us they are not ready for their diaper change or what clothes they would like to wear. In essence, it has to do with our presence, as summarized in one sentence by Anna Tardos (Dr. Pikler's daughter and former director of the Pikler® Institute), “It is not about independence, it is about interdependence, and the adult being present for that child.”
TULSA TECH, TULSA, OKLAHOMA, April 2017

TESTIMONIAL BY BECKY HENDERSON, PROJECT SPECIALIST, A-STATE CHILDHOOD SERVICES

“When I awoke the Friday morning after the Pikler class in my home in Little Rock, I was overwhelmed with feedback from the Pikler training in Tulsa! When I had arrived at the International Infant and Toddler Conference, I was wanting to learn something about the Pikler® pedagogy. Little did I know that I would have the awesome opportunity to experience it first hand through a scholarship to your training. Not only did I learn so much through the “exercises;” but also, I had my philosophy about caring for infants and toddlers radically changed! I had taught about giving respectful and gentle care to infants and toddlers; but through the training and the experience of being the child, I truly learned what the terms “respectful and gentle care” really meant. Now it is my time to “pay it forward” by sharing in the professional development classes that I teach and by discussing the Pikler® method when doing technical assistance. I’m especially interested in sharing my new knowledge with a large infant center in south AR. The center has a new assistant director who is so excited about learning new things and who is trying to make lasting impactful changes in her center which is in the Delta.

One of the great aspects of the training was personally getting to know each of the trainers. Each of you reached out to make my travel arrangements, my registration, and my learning needs met in a personal way. It is easy to feel a little nervous when around people who are well versed in the subject matter, but your team made each of us feel “safe” and comfortable so that we were free to learn. The experience of sharing with people from so many locations, experiences and job descriptions gave such useful insight into how Pikler® can be applied.

Again, let me say how grateful I am to have had such a unique learning experience. I look forward to reading my Pikler® books and following Pikler USA.”

TESTIMONIAL BY REBECCA TAYLOR, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST, CAP TULSA/OECP

“I was privileged to get to attend a 3-day Pikler Introductory workshop in Tulsa. In my role as Professional Development Specialist supporting Infant and Toddler teachers and caregivers, I have attended many conferences, workshops and trainings pertaining to early childhood development. This one was different. This workshop has been a life changing experience for me. It has changed who I am as an observer, teacher, and caregiver. I have become more aware. I am more aware of my stride. I walk differently when I’m in the presence of young children. I breathe differently. I wonder more and act less. I would say that I have always been passionate about and fascinated with babies and I am grateful to get to work in a field that has such a significant purpose. I am so grateful for getting to attend this workshop. The instructors, Elsa and Susan, made each one of us feel special, understood and connected to each other. I am amazed at what you can learn with an open heart and an open mind. I have continued the work by adding some of the activities in trainings with infant/toddler caregivers. It has definitely impacted me professionally and personally. I have noticed a difference every time I am with my own grandchildren. It feels pretty awesome knowing what I’ve taken from this experience will continue to influence others.”

Dr. Emmi Pikler, (1902-1984) was a Hungarian pediatrician, author and lecturer known for her revolutionary approach to infant and child care. In 1946 she founded a residential nursery in Budapest, Hungary, the Pikler® Institute, where the focus was to preserve the competence, autonomy and integrity of the young child, ages 0 to six years. Since Pikler’s death, thousands of participants from around the world attend trainings onsite at the Institute, which ceased operating in 2011, but was established as the Pikler® Daycare Center in 2006 and continues its mission to conserve the practical applications of the Pikler® pedagogy—to bring up infants and young children with respect. In addition, there are a number of Pikler® associations worldwide, including throughout Europe, in Asia, and North and South America, where certified Pikler® trainers lead workshops in this groundbreaking pedagogy.
TERESA BERG, PHD, ADULT COORDINATOR, TULSA TECH

“Having had previous experience working in Pikler® inspired facilities, attending the Intro to Pikler® training in Tulsa, provided a new level importance and understanding for my own personal attention and respect for infants, toddlers, and young children. Engaging in the experientials allows the learner to become the baby and with an adult lens you are transformed through the respect and gentleness of care you become to understand. Pikler® pedagogy and its respectful caregiving methods are essential to share with parents and caregivers. I am excited to share these practices with the adults in the programs I coordinate.”

TESTIMONIAL BY AMANDA WILSON, ED.D.

“Like drinking water from a fire hydrant, I left the three day Pikler USA training with so many experiences and notes in hand. To be honest, I was unprepared for the depth of information or the manner with which Elsa so innately understood me. Through carefully constructed conversations, videos, and exercises, I was able to reflect and develop an awareness of my mind, body, and emotions. Each tangible and rich experience fostered an emotional response where our collective group was able to investigate, process, and analyze the basic tenets of the Pikler® pedagogy.

During the third day, I remember being asked to write a letter to a child that I know well. In the letter, I was to write my dreams for this child and share my deepest wish and greatest hope for him.

I took the task seriously and selected my four-year-old “nephew.” I have no children of my own and since I am an only child, my best friend’s firstborn has become like a nephew to me. He is smart and kind and full of energy. He is quite precocious and we have spent hours together playing, reading, and cuddling on the sofa. As I wrote, I tried to envision him as a young man, tall and handsome; I tried to imagine what I really wanted for him in his future. What will he be? What will he do with his life? How will the world be impacted by his fervor and zest for life?

Upon completion of the letter, Elsa asked us to share our letters, if we were willing. Most of us openly shared our letters, and each one made us tear up as we considered these lovely human beings and their futures. It was only after we had shared each letter that Elsa concluded the exercise. While I won’t spoil the surprise, this exercise cemented my Pikler® experience. I was reminded of the immense responsibility that we have to ourselves and to each child: to slow down, offer respect, and be present in every moment.”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO

Dr. Intisar Shareef

“Intisar was a great educator, a role model, and a wise woman. She brought humor, courage, and diversity wherever she went and shared a questioning mind and deep understanding with those around her. She often glowed with an inner strength and confidence that could be felt in the room. She will be deeply missed by many and our loss runs deep.”
– Love, Linda Hinrichs

“We have certainly lost a warrior–Intisar is one of those rare, special people who lights up a room and a conversation with her presence. I have always been inspired by her and am deeply saddened by this news.”
– Nicole Vigliotti

“My heart is breaking…What an amazing legacy she has left for all us and the children whose lives we will impact!”
– Carol Rowland

“Dear Intisar, I open my email to find this beautiful chain of tribute and love to you and my tears begin to flow, yet a smile streams across my face as I remember the moment I met you. You were one of my first true mentors in culture and learning to love with no boundaries. You opened my eyes to me and the way that I am is the way I touch others. If only you knew how many you have touched in your life. Today, I celebrate you and the legacy you leave and I thank my God for placing you in my life. While I only shared brief moments in time with you, you my friend were a role model, a model of peace, a gentle sweet yet fierce woman who truly stood for what she believed and in those brief moments you changed me forever. Thank you for sharing you with me. I am forever touched and changed.”
– With Love, Joyce Hepler
"ITANA (Infant and Toddler Advocacy Network Australia Inc.) was keen to engage Elsa Chahin, Jutka Kelemen, and Zsuzsa Libertiny for a 3-day Pikler® introductory course as we had heard excellent feedback about the program that had been running in the USA for several years. We were aware that many people are eager to learn more about the Pikler® approach, but that the cost of the 5-day modules and the time away from work and families is often hard to manage. Providing a 3-day introductory workshop meant that educators and parents could learn more about this pedagogy without needing to make such a large financial and time commitment. During our time in Sydney, we heard rave reviews from the participants in the course, lots of “aha” moments and many connections made between people from around Australia. We even had people travelling from Perth to Sydney, a 4.5-hour flight, as well as one participant joining us from Japan. There continues to be a high-level of interest and engagement in offering more 3-day introductory courses in Australia and ITANA looks forward to offering many more Pikler® introductory workshops.”

We welcome Dr. Larissa Neilson to the PLUSA Board of Trustees

It is with great joy that we welcome Dr. Larissa Neilson to the PLUSA Board of Trustees. Born in Lima, Peru, Larissa’s experience as an infant/toddler specialist, author, and attorney, will support our mission of sharing Dr. Pikler’s message—that of caring for babies and young children respectfully—with ethics and integrity.

New Pikler Production: Initiative, Cooperation, and Reciprocity

We are delighted to announce the release of a newly revised production of the wonderful film, “Initiative, Cooperation, and Reciprocity” by Éva Kálló and Julianna Vámos, narrated by award-winning journalist Victoria Loose-leaf. This production was made possible thanks to the generous support from the Board of Trustees of Pikler/Lóczy USA.
Thanks to the generosity of PLUSA Board of Trustees, one participant from Ecuador received a full scholarship to attend a Beginning Level Pikler® Intensive in Budapest, Hungary, May 2017.

My Experience with the Pikler® trainings

By Julissa Castillo, Program Coordinator, Educator, Ecuador

“I was dazzled by the simplicity of Dr. Emmi Pikler’s early childhood development guidelines, “attempting to teach a child something he can learn on his own is not just useless but also detrimental”. Carefully observing all the possibilities a child has when he moves around in an adequate and well-prepared environment changed my perspective in regards to my role as a child development educator for the children I work with.

I have continued to be amazed by the profound sensibility toward the child’s holistic development from his first days as a newborn and subsequent years. The child’s deep glance and the delicate and detailed perception of his emotional and motor development continued transforming my perspective as an educator, from the most basic voice tone principles to the highest levels of respect in regards to motor skills.

Since then, I began to look into the assortment of information, utilizing all available resources, developed through the years by Dr. Pikler and her team of experts, who have left an impact and changed the direction of my educational practices for small children.

This constant search led me to attend my first Pikler® workshop in Tulsa, Oklahoma “Engaging with infants and toddlers through respectful and peaceful care”, where I had the wonderful experience of meeting Elsa Chahin and Dr. Susan Patrick, who with a great deal of skills and knowledge, provided us with an excellent introduction to the Pikler® pedagogy. Throughout the course of three days we participated in experiential activities, which tested the limitations of my own knowledge, allowing these to transform my thoughts with the most profound details that cover this wonderful vision about children.

At the end of the workshop, I was pleasantly surprised by having been awarded a scholarship to attend a professional development workshop in Budapest at the Pikler® House, commonly known as Lóczy. I can’t deny that I was overwhelmed with excitement when I realized I was going to be able to be at the precise place where the guidelines and ideologies were born, and continue to be present to this day.

Participating in the intensive, “Respectful care and the relationship with the adult” in Budapest, led me to better understand the work developed by Dr. Emmi Pikler, Anna Tardos and their team. The moment you arrive at the house where it all began, it is easily perceived that a simple, yet complex harmony, exists and travels through the doors of each classroom where children are cared for, it pierces through the walls flooding the space with a delicate breeze, where words construct, movements transform and gestures strengthen.

Each presentation with the professionals who handled our questions, doubts and comments, was guided with the utmost respect and great information about the diverse topics that came up in regards to child care. We had several practical activities that made us comprehend the importance of paying attention during daily tasks in child care and once again recognize that: “We should never treat a child mechanically. We should never handle him like an inanimate object, no matter how small he is. We should always pay respect to him! We should carry out tasks together, in cooperation”.

I strongly consider that these workshops and intensives are developed with love, respect and commitment for those of us who wish to continue to disseminate that daily tasks in child care, autonomous movement and play must leave a positive imprint in the childhood of every child for a balanced and healthy development.”

Thanks to the generosity of PLUSA Board of Trustees, one participant from Ecuador received a full scholarship to attend a Beginning Level Pikler® Intensive in Budapest, Hungary, May 2017.

My Experience with the Pikler® trainings

By Julissa Castillo, Program Coordinator, Educator, Ecuador

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SINGAPORE, May, 2017

The Power of a Mindful Presence, A Dedication to the Nurses of the Pikler® Institute

By Mrs. Shu Mei Winstanley, J.D., Co-Founder, Chapter Zero Singapore

Before the word “mindful” or “mindfulness” became buzzwords, the nurses at the Pikler® Institute were already doing ‘it’. What, you may ask, is ‘it’?

‘It’ is the ‘mindful presence’ they had when caring for the babies, most noticeably seen during moments of care – diaper changes and bath times, mealtimes, and other moments of ‘togetherness’. ‘It’ is when the adult does not have other things on her mind but the child. It is with this mindful presence that the foundations of reciprocal partnership are formed between the nurses and the children.

As I reflected on the learnings of the Intro to Pikler® workshop in Singapore conducted by Elsa Chahin and Dr. Susan Patrick, I penned down some observations:

- She cares deeply for the child, though the child is not hers.
- She is focused on the child she is caring for. She sees only him.
- She walks in ceremonious slowness, yet exudes a confidence only gained from knowing each child under her care intimately.
- She sees the child fully – the child is not ‘just’ a baby, the child is treated with reverence, as an esteemed individual.
- She is self-aware of her own emotions, she is calm and patient.
- This is a relationship to her, this is the relationship to the child.

WHAT THEN CAN THESE NURSES OFFER TO THE PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF THE CHILDREN TODAY?

The nurses offer a glimpse into how self-awareness can impact the relationship with the child. Parents can heave a sigh of relief knowing that it is not the most extravagant toys or gadgets which will benefit the child, but it is in the simple moments of connection which matters.

Furthermore, in parenting or caregiving, there are plenty of times even the most well-attuned individuals are unable to fully recognize what their child wants or needs, or are unable to give them what they want or need. They can however offer the gift of their presence, and by being empathetic.

The nurses showed brilliantly at how they were empathetic when infants cried to get a need met, or when a toddler cried because a toy was taken from him. They were calm and collected as they empathized with the child. There was no distraction or dismissing of feelings. Indeed, the child was taken seriously.

And perhaps, in a world which strives for ‘more’, ‘better’, and ‘faster’, we may offer to infants something more eternal, the gift of our presence, in the here and now.

I am incredibly grateful to the nurses of the Pikler® Institute for transforming the humble work of caregiving, and for the magnificent individuals Elsa Chahin and Dr. Susan Patrick who travelled to Singapore to carry on Dr. Pikler’s work globally. Your presence and work with us was deeply therapeutic and transformed us as individuals.
New Book by Elsa Chahin and Anna Tardos

In Loving Hands: How the Rights for Children Living in Children's Homes Offer Hope and Happiness In Today's World by Elsa Chahin with Anna Tardos, is the definitive book that advocates for children living in residential settings. Under the proper circumstances, these institutions, while not always providing the ideal climate for healthy growth, both emotionally and physically, can operate in the best interests of children when they adhere to the precepts of this book.

Written in three parts—an overview, the declaration of 10 rights and global voices of experience from professionals around the world—In Loving Hands offers an in-depth look at how the quality of care in residential homes can be improved through information, detailed guidance and applicable tools. After comprehensive research, the authors have made it their mission to support institutions in successfully caring for young and school-age children in group settings.

No longer is it necessary for institutes to be branded as “Dickensian,” as this book provides the tools for creating a safe and nurturing environment, with children receiving responsive care from trained, educated and caring adults. The authors of In Loving Hands offer a responsible, pragmatic and passionate alternative to the familial home, one where children are able to thrive and grow up to be healthy, happy and productive members of society. Equally important is the idea that the information in this book can also apply to parents blessed to be raising children at home.

PRAISE FOR IN LOVING HANDS

“The incredible work of the Pikler® Institute shaped who I became as a mother, and inspired me to found Whole Child International. Having brought countless professionals to the Institute, I can say that the knowledge gained there has the power to illuminate and is invaluable when working with children.” – Karen, Countess Spencer, Founder and CEO, Whole Child International

“Chahin’s and Tardos’ book, In Loving Hands,“ is the preeminent teaching tool for anyone who comes into contact with a young child. This method, modeled after Pikler®, has not only changed the lives of my children, but changed my life, as well. By being respectful - and with one careful touch at a time - I believe we can gently bring peace into the world with our loving hands.” – Gabrielle Anwar, Actress, author, film-maker

“Children are not only bearers of our future, but also our teachers of the present moment. As Dr. Emmi Pikler designed a thought-out approach in which respect to the child was essential in the lives of our most vulnerable children, so, too, do Chahin and Tardos expand upon the Pikler® premise in their book, “In Loving Hands.” An invaluable resource for caregivers and parents alike, this book is both necessary and a revelation.” – Dr. Paola Guriaeib, Neurologist

“Elsa Chahin impressed my wife, Carlyn, and myself, with her compassionate heart and a limitless capacity to care for others. It’s no surprise, then, that her dedication to the most vulnerable of the world’s people - young children and babies – has been channeled into this powerful book, “In Loving Hands.” I’m also certain that this is the beginning of many more “Loving” projects.” – Patrick Duffy, Actor

“As a mother, finding Pikler’s work was transformational! Imagine understanding – and seeing - your child in a new dimension, one where freedom and support help create competence and confidence. Tardos and Chahin’s beautifully written book, “In Loving Hands,” offers these insights and more, teaching us how reverent interactions help create a peaceful society.” – Ninfa Salinas, Senator for the Republic of Mexico

“There is no greater or more beneficial responsibility than raising a child. Children may not listen to your words, but they will mirror your actions, which will eventually impact the world.” – Mrs. Kim Simplis Barrow, First Lady of Belize

“With thoughtful, yet simple words, In Loving Hands instructs us in the quality of care needed by infants reared in children’s homes. I sincerely wish that all – from caregiver to administrator - charged with such a responsibility, will read this important and vital book.” - Geneviève Appell, Psychologist and co-author of Lóczy, An Unusual Approach to Mothering

“The familiar and recognizable strategies derived from Pikler® and so beautifully conveyed in Elsa Chahin’s and Anna Tardos’ book, In Loving Hands, create miracles for the universal child. Utilizing enrichments to promote self-initiated interests and motivational spontaneity, the authors lead the way for mothering - either in an institution through caregivers or in a familial home - by providing effective support for positive self-image development, growth and maturation.” – Dolores Sheen, educator and co-founder, Sheenway School and Culture Center.
New Educational Material By Our Two Certified Pikler® Trainers in the USA

Beverly Kovach DVD series: Being With Infants

This one-of-a-kind series gives childhood providers and parents direct access to a comprehensive care approach from renowned infant/child specialist, Beverly Kovach, certified in MACTE (0-3), Pikler® and Resources for Infant Educators (RIE®). Pulling from the “best-of-the-best” in Early Childhood Education and Development, advancing theories of Dr. Maria Montessori, Dr. Emmi Pikler, Magda Gerber.

This series is designed to be used by centers as on-going professional development and support. The first course is in infant care only and covers everything from parent concerns to diapering to signs of readiness for the weaning table, picking up the baby, administration, continuity of care, and demonstrations.

PART 1: INFANT SERIES INCLUDES

Unique teaching and application of theories from Dr. Maria Montessori, Dr. Emmi Pikler, Magda Gerber and others…

• Practical demonstrations of early childcare approaches and care provided by certified teachers
• Expansive series topics including: Philosophy, Body Care, Play (YES PLAY!), Learning, Administration and more…
• 5 hours of instructional VIDEO training in infant curriculum and practice
• Live webinar support – Pre-Order customers only
• Autographed paperback curriculum guide

Order on Amazon! https://www.amazon.com/Philosophy/dp/B072FH8S57/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1505261293&sr=8-1&keywords=beverly+kovach

BEING WITH INFANTS AMAZON CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Mary Willison
“…the content is excellent. Provides an overview of the RIE philosophy in how it is actually to be applied to infant care. The chapters are brief so that a class could discuss/practice after each one. Great companion to the book.”

Sue
“Excellent resource for any caregiver or parent of an infant. Being With Infants really dives into the authenticity of the caregiver/infant relationship on a comprehensive and meaningful medium. Highly recommend this title.

Barblovesbooks
“I’d love this series to be required viewing for all infant and toddler caregivers. Beverly Kovach’s words of wisdom on what is truly important for the youngest children (primary caregiving, unhurried, respectful, relationship-building caregiving routines as the curriculum) will go far in improving the quality of care provided for little ones. I highly recommend these videos!”

Stefon
“I have really enjoyed watching Being With Infants. My husband and I try our best to follow Magda Gerber’s approach and this was a great reminder for me. I loved being able to see Magda’s advice be put in to practice to learn what it really means to SLOW DOWN. I would highly recommend this to parents who are trying to follow a RIE approach.”

Nicolette Fadelon
“If you’re a parent, teacher, grandparent, or just enjoy being with young children then this is an absolute MUST-HAVE!! Beverly is a passionate, experienced, and knowledgeable professional in the field. As a Montessori-trained toddler teacher with a Master’s degree in education, I recommend this book to many parents and even my own family and friends. I own her other book “Being with Babies” which I used when I took my infant/toddler Montessori training and it is a phenomenal resource as well.”

Anonymous
“Miss Beverly is such an invaluable resource. Her published work is a tangible reference for those interacting with young children. I would highly recommend this book to anyone that interacts with children. Modeling and explaining how to engage in a respectful manner is key to creating healthy and long lasting relationships.”

PIKLERUSA HAS A FACEBOOK PAGE (FACEBOOK.COM/PIKLERUSA)
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