

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

Family Development

A CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN EARLY LEARNING • FOUNDED IN 1985

WEMAGINATION CELEBRATION - Spring 2017



Our Mission

Highest Quality Early Childhood Development through Honoring Relationships Rooted in Equity and Social Justice

At the heart of the Family Development Program's work is an image of a child who is powerful, curious and infinitely competent as an active, dynamic learner. We do everything in our power to keep this remarkable spark of learning alive.

Since our earliest beginnings, the Family Development Program has promoted a philosophy of child-centered learning, where teachers and parents are collaborators in supporting children's natural joy, passion for creative discovery, and a wonder of learning.

We believe that quality education for every child defines one of our greatest challenges as a society and as a citizenry. We believe that equity is every child's inalienable right. Our approach to our work is rooted in a deep, enduring respect for the cultural and family heritage that our youngest children know and love dearly.

We believe that our children need to be surrounded by *circles of support* that actively engage their families as full partners with early learning programs and schools. We need strong and trusted relationships with families to tackle the complex and very tough job of education. It's a huge responsibility to instill a lifelong love of learning – learning that nourishes and builds our citizenship, our communities, and quality of life that is shared by all.

The heartfelt understanding and nurturance of children with their families is what defines the Family Development Program.

*by Lois Vermilya,
Family Development Program Director*

Nothing Without Joy

Loris Malaguzzi, Founder of the Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education

Can you imagine *Nothing Without Joy*? Let yourself wonder for just a moment about how this provocative statement captures...a sense of place, a practice of inquiry, and a philosophy of learning.

As the UNM Family Development Program celebrates our Wemagination's 20th anniversary this year, we too are honored to join Loris Malaguzzi in declaring that the heart of young children, as powerful and capable learners, beats strong with rhythms that are keenly attuned to "joy." *Nothing Without Joy* conveys the laughter and the relationships and the expansive role of play which are centerpieces of Wemagination.

Wemagination as a place is a colorful, joyful resource Center that takes a stand for green education. Last year, we saved three tons of re-use materials that could have ended up in the landfill. We honor all of it as dynamic and great stuff for children's investigation, learning and unbridled joy.

Wemagination as a practice of inquiry engages adults to reclaim their insights from when they were young and lost in the full range of joys that are present when we play. Joy can be gleeful or thought-provoking or a sense of relief when a tough, challenging problem is finally solved. Wemagination promotes play as children's work, celebrating the joy of what it means for children (or adults!) to play. There are a hundred languages to express what play means for young children – an expansive joy that Wemagination celebrates every day.

Wemagination as a philosophy of learning engages adults to re-enter a child's world of play where we can discover how joy fuels all kinds of things like learning new words, math principles, engineering feats, scientific cause and effect, the elegance of beauty, and so much more.

Understanding *Nothing Without Joy* can inspire all of us to see Wemagination as essential learning that pays tributes to young children as strong, determined joyous learners. This motto mobilized the Family Development Program to create our Wemagination Resource Center 20 years ago and helps us stay rooted as we celebrate its good work two decades later.

This journal sings of *Nothing Without Joy* as we croon with pride in Wemagination's 20th Anniversary. The articles will provoke your own curiosity about learning through storytelling and instructive reflection, and will probably get you into the cupboards to find your own great stuff for play. Here's a preview for what there is to discover:

Beginnings – We Imagine Together by Paula Steele:

Our opening article gives you a tiny glimpse into the long history of the WE. Some stories from teachers involved in the earliest days connect to their educational practice today, a good 20 years later. There's joy found at Wemagination over the years as a place that inspires "rejuvenation" that can "stretch our imagination".

The Satisfaction of Learning with Loose Parts by

Dorothy L. Kerwin: This article encourages you to think creatively about all of the learning inherent in something as simple as a stick. Enjoy discovering how young children explore materials of all kinds, especially those that are open-ended or known simply as "loose parts".

The Wisdom of Open Ended Play Objects from Birth to 3 Years Old by Ybeth Iglesias:

Here's some support for understanding what infants and toddlers are learning when they play with all kinds of everyday stuff you have at home. It will give you some insights into that proverbial question: why is it that the box at Christmas is so much more fun than the toy you bought that was inside it?

Preschoolers Play the Old School Way by Janelle Garcia

Cole: Can you remember what it was like to play when you were four or five years old? This article explores the independence and pure joy of play where "the fascinating natural materials around the yard were the cornerstone of our childhood".

Play Builds Connections by Sam Rodriguez:

Meet six year old Mario Rodriguez who has a thing or two to teach you about the joy of gold perfume caps. Can you imagine two towers bridged by an arch, a labyrinth with a slithering snake, an extra shiny airplane that is close to the sun, going to Alaska, and to space, and maybe even to Disneyland?

A Day at the Wemagination Center by Alida Davila

Larrichio: Enter the JOY of being at the WE. Savor hearing about what it is really like being there when you get to receive treasured items, organize beautiful materials, display playful ideas for how to use them, listen

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to stories about all the ways children are learning — and even better: rediscover your former kindergarten student 25 years later!

Friends of the WE and Sustainability by Kate Dixon and

Rachel Overmier: There is joy in growing Wemagination through FDP's new Friends of the WE volunteer program. Read about all the ways you can get involved if you are "playful, creative, enthusiastic, curious, environmentally conscious, and dedicated to the outcome of young children and families."

We celebrate Wemagination's 20th Anniversary with this journal. We love the WE for its long heritage of joy expressed as a colorful educational space, a dynamic practice of inquiry, and a learning philosophy that honor's children's work when they play. Our beloved AmeriCorps Vista Volunteer Rachel Overmier captured this quote which sums up Wemagination royally:

When you really mature, you will again become childlike. A deep laughter will spread over your life. It will be more like a dance and less like a business.

Osho

Beginnings — We Imagine Together

by Paula Steele



Come on in! This young fellow is about 23 years old now!

Twenty-four years ago the staff of the Family Development Program (FDP) began to plan and organize for the opening of an innovative learning center focused on play. That was 1993 and they expected to open the Wemagination Center in 1994. Well, it took a little longer than expected and opened officially in 1997. Twenty years later it's going strong — stronger than ever!

Now, when I say the staff of the FDP, you must understand that it was a completely different staff then. Like any organism, FDP has evolved over time, as has the Wemagination Center. It looks substantially different now than it did 14 years ago when I came on board. The interior has been remodeled, cleaned up, organized and

beautified! It still holds a wonderful assortment of re-use materials for creative learning for all ages.

Let me take you on a journey of the Wemagination Center through the voices of historical documents, photos, and community members who have known the Center throughout the years. Some of you reading this may remember old friends. Others of you will be enticed to come to the Center and make new friends.

One of the first documents explaining the rationale for the Wemagination Center describes it this way:

Learning through relationship is the basis for all effective educational practices. These practices may be called social constructivism, emergent curriculum, developmentally appropriate practice, the Reggio Approach or something else. We call this approach Wemagination which comes from “we-imagination,” we imagine together.

Those first staff members imagined the Wemagination Center as a place for adults to get in touch with the memory and understanding of play. It was meant as a place where materials that called forth creative possibilities could be experienced and accessed. Play with open-ended materials or loose parts is democratic. Each person, at any age, chooses what to play with, how to play, and how long to play according to their own





ability, desire, and interest. Materials are inexpensive and collectible by anyone. There's no need to purchase expensive and manufactured toys that are often limited in their use.

Connie Jo Baca is a long-time Wemagination member. She was involved in a project led by Michael LaFlamme in 1998. This was a large scale initiative that involved 58 teachers from Albuquerque and various areas of the state. They received training on using open-ended materials for play and learning and follow-up support. Connie Jo continues to find resources at the Center to enrich her preschoolers' learning and environment. She said, in 1998, "Playing with materials at the Wemagination Center was a very big factor in how I feel about the materials. Teachers don't allow themselves the opportunity to really play with stuff, to discover the properties of a material and to stretch our imaginations." I met with Connie Jo recently and she still believes that the hands-on process is as critical for adults as for our young learners. In addition, she finds play is an excellent avenue for children to communicate to us. "The more we know about a child, the better we are as teachers."

Our own Janet Stewart, part of the FDP team from 2008 to 2013, was involved in the project and had this observation: "As one group of children developed expertise in the materials and what they could do with them, more and more children joined the group and they accomplished bigger and more intricate tasks."

Lynda Torres has been coming to the Wemagination Center since it first opened. Lynda used the WE as a place to complete her Professional Development Dossier



Ann Dunbar, artist and teacher, created this gate for the WE when it first opened. The gate was an indication of the WE as a portal to colorful imaginative possibilities in learning.

and also when she pursued and received National Board certification. She visits regularly, and especially when she is in need of getting back on track - almost as a therapeutic space. She describes the WE materials as non-gender specific; they transcend language, culture, and ideologies. Using them is hands-on and experiential - crucial to learning process. "Watching what kids do with the materials has power and beauty."

These teachers and thousands of others, including parents and children, have found rejuvenation, inspiration and joy at the Wemagination Center and through the use of loose parts materials available there. You are invited to do the same. Come visit us. Be a part of the next 20 years of history.

We still offer workshops! Like us on FaceBook. ♥

The Satisfaction of Learning with Loose Parts

by Dorothy L. Kerwin

"... Children find sticks an endless source of make-believe fun. Sticks can turn into swords, magic wands, majorette batons, fishing poles, and light sabers. When children pretend with sticks, they cultivate their creativity and develop their imaginations. ... Children build with sticks, bat balls with them, and walk with them. They are the original building blocks for creative play. Sticks also promote free play—the freedom to invent and discover. They encourage playing outside instead of inside. Sticks are all around us; they are natural and free. ... Few adults or children can resist simple play with sticks—from drawing in the sand on the beach, to building a campfire and then toasting marshmallows. Sticks are not only possibly the oldest toys, they're possibly the best!" (<http://www.toyhalloffame.org/toys/stick>)



In 2008, the stick was inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame. The qualities for which the stick was given this honor form the foundation of why playing with all open-ended materials is so important. Because these items have an indefinite number of uses, they provide boundless opportunities for children to explore. Materials can be manipulated, stacked, rotated, sorted, constructed and deconstructed. Without a set of directions, the sky is the limit for what children can create and imagine.

The term, *loose parts*, was coined by a British landscape architect, Simon Nicholson. He described *loose parts* as items that provide a multitude of variables. Nicholson explains in his 1972 article, *The Theory of Loose Parts: An Important Principle for Design Methodology*, that when professionals design single-use playground equipment, they get all of the fun of messing around, investigating and experimenting, while children are left with following directions. Yet, if we believe that children have the inherent capacity to create and discover, then we can allow them the fun of learning and playing with Loose Parts. Children are allowed to become the creators of their own learning instead of following what adults have designed for them.



When children are invited to freely explore *loose parts*, they are developing a body of knowledge about the materials, about their experience, and about themselves. This allows children to make sense of their world and lays the foundation for all of the learning that follows. And



the learning abounds. They use their senses to explore color and light, textures and shapes, sound and rhythm. When children carry, move and build, they are learning how to use their bodies. When children investigate open-ended materials together, they learn to express themselves and figure out how to get along with others. Understanding one-to-one correlation, patterning, weight, measure, cause and effect, classification, seriation, and symbolic representation are just some of the complex ideas that children learn through their investigations.



But if tinkering with *loose parts* allows children to design and create their own learning, what is the role of parents and teachers? Just as children experience the joy of playing with materials, adults can experience the joy of observing the children as they experiment and construct. We get to wonder about what items we should place in the environment based on what we know about the children. Where should we put them? How can we arrange them in an aesthetically pleasing way? How can we introduce these materials to the children? We get to reflect on the questions we can ask. And when should we ask them? We get to offer the ingredients and allow the children to create the recipe. By following this process, we all have the satisfaction of learning through the inquiry of exploration. ♥



Objects from Birth to Three Years Old

by Ybeth Iglesias, MPA

In today's world we are often lead to believe that the best learning experiences and toys for our kids are expensive store-bought items. In reality the best learning experiences and toys are those based on the child's age, development and interests. Often home and natural environment items such as boxes, bottles, yarn, cooking objects, leafs, pinecones...are the ones likely to be used the most and stimulate the imagination. A simple and open ended object such as a small box can be anything to a child: a phone, a cup, a car, or a magic container. The possibilities are many and the item can be used differently by the child as their development progresses and they grow. Open ended objects are those that can be used/reused in numerous ways creatively. They may include blocks, dress ups, props, recycled items, and natural materials like seeds, earth, sand, and water. Open ended items or symbolic props encourage children to use more details in their pretend play.



In the first year a child begins to gain mastery over her body. Development includes reaching for objects, exploring them, sitting-crawling-walking, and saying her first words. At around four months a child should be able to reach out with each hand for an object. By six months she should be on her way to exchanging the object from one hand to the other. Creating fun, colorful noise bottles out of small water bottles filled with different items such as beans, rocks, and glitter (sealing the cap with glue) not only encourages reaching and manipulation of the bottle but also the exploration of sounds. Another activity is to allow the child to play and explore kitchen items, (plastic spoons, pot, and pans) teaching her not only how to use them correctly but encouraging the sharing of imaginary food and drink.



In the second and third year a child perfects his fine-motor skills by progressing to a pincer-grasp and moving his hand to writing position. Gross-motor skills such as the ability to run, stand on one foot, and walk backwards are developing. A toddler is capable of expressing himself in five word sentences. He can balance, squat down and pick up a rolling object. He can also kick and chase an item as it rolls away. A child can tell a story about the item he is playing with. You can encourage speech and imagination. When playing with an open-ended item,



A Toddler Teacher's Journey



a hair roller may one day be a race car, the next day a cup, and on another day a looking glass. A toddler will develop the ability to make connections and categorize by sorting items by color and size, and later by use.

Learning in the first three years:

- ♥ **Sorting** - Learning shapes, colors, numbers, and other categories (trucks-animals-blocks)
- ♥ **Stacking** - Learning how to balance and practicing fine motor skills (use of their fingers and hands)
- ♥ **Sizes** - Learning differences in sizes from small, medium, and large to perspective on size relationships (fits inside or covers/surrounds the outside)
- ♥ **Sensory play** - Learning by exploring the environment using all five senses. How does an object taste, smell, feel, sound and look? Can it be manipulated?
- ♥ **Language and Pre-Literacy** - Telling stories, role playing scenarios, and describing details of items encourages communicating. Using open ended items that represent other things promotes more advanced use of symbolic representation. For example, a stick may represent a sword, that can be a written word: sword.

Play is the highest form of research. Albert Einstein ♥

Safety Tip

Choking: Avoid using items that fit through a toilet paper roll.

Use items labeled BPA free.

Avoid using objects with chipped or lead paint.

by Kacee Edmonds

Years ago when Gigi Yu, Albuquerque Public School's Early Childhood Art Resource teacher, introduced the Reggio Emilia philosophy at our school, she explained the concept of using open ended materials. At that time, my room was full of toys.

Because my students have language delays and limited experiences secondary to their hearing loss, I believed that they needed the toys. The toys helped them learn the names for things and helped them develop play schemes.

So, I was stuck and worried about how my students would learn language without these materials. Over time, Gigi was able to help me slowly introduce more and more open ended materials and I realized that the children were actually using a lot of language. Their creativity was improving and their imaginative play continued to grow. They were no longer limited by the single-purpose of toys. I began incorporating more natural and recycled materials such as shredded paper in a salt shaker, wood slices in with the dishes, or empty VHS cases. It was amazing to see how much the students appreciated and enjoyed the open ended materials, much more than the toys. Now my class has areas where all of the materials are open ended and free for exploration and discovery! ♥

*Kacee Edmonds is a Toddler Room Teacher
New Mexico School for the Deaf - Albuquerque Preschool*



Preschoolers Play the Old School Way

by Janelle Garcia Cole

When you think of your preschool years, what memories come to your mind? I remember playing outside with my cousins in the mud, making houses with sticks, old lids, and anything we could find. It was a time to explore, create, and dream. We didn't have money for expensive toys. Our backyard and the fascinating natural materials around the yard were the cornerstone of our childhood.



Looking back, I realized we were expressing ourselves, generating ideas, and using our imaginations with the recycled materials in our homes and yards. We were learning math, physics, and geometry and didn't realize it. When we went into Kindergarten, we were prepared. We had strong fine motor skills, we knew about trial and error, and we knew how to play with our peers. We experienced pure joy in play.



Preschool children who play, create, and experience hands-on-learning will become better readers.

Preschool children who play will adapt socially and make friends more easily.

Preschool children who play will be exposed to more vocabulary words and have a better understanding of language.





Steps to encourage play using materials around the house.

STEP 1. Give the child/children recycled materials to play with and explore. Make sure they are appropriate for their age.

STEP 2. Give the child/children time to generate ideas.

STEP 3. Let them use their imagination and their own ideas. (Try not to chime in *too* much.)

STEP 4. Reinforce and encourage their creativity as they indulge in their (pretend) world.

STEP 5. Encourage creativity and go along with them as they discover an imaginary world. (Do extend ideas and vocabulary from time to time.)

When preschool children are exposed to rich environments and open ended materials, they are developing and practicing literacy, math, science, and social skills.

When children have a strong foundation of play and manipulating materials, they will be ready for elementary school.

When my son attended preschool, he learned in a natural and organic environment that was play based. Most important, he learned how to interact with his peers, he used his imagination, and he experienced the true love and joy of play. He is now in first grade and he is doing very well emotionally, socially, physically, and academically. Meaningful play developed his confidence and self-esteem. My advice is to always make time for play.

Who wants to play? ♥



Here is a list of items you can recycle and save for child-focused play.

- ♥ Toilet paper rolls
- ♥ Paper towel rolls
- ♥ Old CDs
- ♥ Milk cartons
- ♥ Water bottles
- ♥ Buttons
- ♥ Assortment of Papers
- ♥ Envelopes
- ♥ Cereal Boxes
- ♥ Ice-cream, cream cheese, yogurt tubs
- ♥ Ribbon
- ♥ Boxes of various sizes

Play Builds Connections

by Sam Rodriguez

In the past year the Family Development Program Team loaded up bins of Wemagination materials, taking a small sample of the contents of the Center to share with the New Mexico communities of Cuba, Estancia, Grants, Magdalena, Santa Rosa and Raton. The Family Development Program organized play events in collaboration with each of the communities' Early Childhood Coalitions supported by N.M. Children, Youth and Families Department, Office of Child Development. What follows is the story of one such encounter.



In the community of Santa Rosa, six year old Trey carefully explored the range of materials available to him and decided that he wanted to select and play with a bin full of gold perfume caps. He carefully unloaded the bin onto the table and began to stack the gold caps. Initially he built two towers and wondered how he could connect them. He wanted to build an arch that would span both towers but he assessed that the towers were not secure enough. Trey decided to construct a labyrinth in the shape of a snake and talked about how the snake would slither through the dirt and rocks. Later he decided to deconstruct the labyrinth and placed the perfume caps back in the bin. It seemed that placing the caps back in the bin helped Trey to conceptualize that the palette had been cleared and that he was now free to use the caps in a new and different way. Trey began to lay out the caps in a deliberate manner and would not reveal what he was designing. He expressed that we would have to wait and see. He advised that we could guess but he would not reveal what he was creating until he was done. Midway

through his endeavor another child asked if he could borrow ten caps. Initially Trey was reluctant to share his materials, but he decided that he could share. Trey reassessed how to complete his vision with fewer caps.

After Trey completed his project I ventured with a number of guesses. I questioned, "Is it a telephone pole? An intersection? A cross? And finally, is it an airplane??" With strong enthusiasm Trey declared that I correctly guessed what his creation was. Trey explained that the shininess of the caps reminded him of what an airplane looks like in the sunny sky. He began to tell me that he was the pilot of his airplane and that he was most likely going to travel to Alaska, then to space and maybe to Disneyland. Trey watched as another child tried to organize his caps to form an airplane. Trey supported him with direction and a sense of accomplishment and pride, but Trey asserted that his plane was extra shiny because it flew so close to the sun.

In this brief observation with Trey during a play event, we are reminded of the value of play, the value of relationships, the value of actively being with a child and sharing his spirit of openness and wonder. Trey helped the adults in this experience remember the learning and fun that can occur with simple ingredients available to all of us. This was one child's experience in the community



of Santa Rosa, but in community after community we noticed that parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles walked away amazed. The play events offered a sense of connection, a reminder about the simplicity of fun learning opportunities, and the value of partnering with our children in play so that we can learn together. It was such a joy to see how children across the state approached the randomness of materials we brought to their community with limitless creativity. Mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, and grandparents shared in the joy of constructing, building, creating, thinking, laughing, and simply having fun and being with one another. ♥

A Day at the Wemagination Center

by Alida Davila Larrichio

The Wemagination Center (the WE) is magical. It sparks my imagination in a thousand and one ways on using the endless items stored in its warehouse. My creative juices perk up and I start thinking about how to best use certain materials. Wednesday is one of the busiest days at the WE. Oftentimes my thoughts get interrupted when the members, mostly teachers, arrive to discover what might be “new” on the shelves. As soon as they enter the Center I can hear the “Wow’s” and the “Ah’s” and other expressions of excitement that I can see reflected on their faces. The WE is not only a place where members come to shop for their classrooms to enhance their appearance, but to learn about new ideas to bring back to their children, stimulating new learning experiences for students and teachers alike.

The WE is even more than that. It is a cozy corner where friendships continue to grow and where new ones are born; where acquaintances emerge from the past, either by chance or by appointments; where teachers once again meet their former students. I am always elated when I greet someone and they stare at me, asking if I was once their kindergarten teacher. When I introduce myself and we both realize that we have a shared past, we startle each other, screaming and hugging simultaneously. As we embrace, my memory takes a twenty-year leap back to the past as I try to picture the twenty-five year old woman standing in front of me as a five-year-old child.

The WE is a place where memories are stored alongside the materials. It is intriguing every time a donation box arrives, to anticipate what the contents may be. I see a variety of donations, some of which are commonplace, but others that are much more unusual and complex. I see written postcards and wonder how long ago they



were sent and where they have traveled. I see parts of nature being wrapped carefully, or I see art that someone has designed, usually with great love and originality that wets my curiosity. Frequently, I associate some unique item with the personality of the donor.

This is the time when my imagination unravels and the materials are seen from another perspective. I can imagine, for example, a tumbleweed being a chandelier, a filmstrip turning into a room divider, or shiny paper turning into a classroom wall mirror. The donors see the WE as the last safe place to leave what once was their special belongings. So, with that thought, I feel a great responsibility to have those treasures displayed so others can use them appropriately and appreciate their value. Recycling at the WE has become a unique awareness, an eye opener, not only for the employees of UNM and participating local members, but for others throughout the state. When entering the WE, I frequently hear the visitors commenting on how they will start saving certain items to bring to the WE and be part of this exciting organization. I have had people visiting from out of state, looking around the Center, jotting down new ideas, and asking permission to touch and feel the items while their curiosity and emotional expressions are reflected on their faces. Many inquire as to how to develop a similar program in their home school districts.

When I leave the WE at day’s end, I carry with me the best treasures of all: an appreciation for the value of recycling; I get to see the items from a new perspective. I experience new friendships that germinated throughout the years and, most of all, the shared learning experience among the members. In addition, I get to experience their great ideas; their love and strength, dedication and their tireless commitment to the children and families they serve. Listening and sharing ideas with others reminds me how beneficial and helpful the WE has been to the community throughout the years.

Keep on recycling and sharing! ♥



Friends of the WE and Sustainability

by Kate Dixon and Rachel Overmier

Volunteer Defined: (Verb)

“To choose to act in recognition of a need, with an attitude of social responsibility and without concern for monetary profit, going beyond one’s basic obligations.”

Susan J. Ellis and Katherine H. Campbell

A Dream Realized

In late 2014 the UNM Family Development Program (FDP) began building a volunteer program that would help support the Wemagination Resource Center (the WE). The Corporation for National and Community Service estimated that in the state of New Mexico in 2014, there were around 410,050 volunteers who served 60.9 million hours. Clearly the people of New Mexico have a strong desire to better their communities, so it makes good sense for FDP to tap into such a rich resource. Through strategic planning, which included the support of an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer, FDP has laid the groundwork for a self-sustaining professional volunteer program through the Friends of the WE. This will enable the WE to continue to be a vital source of recycled open ended materials, while promoting the philosophy of learning through play.

But We Can’t Do It Without You!

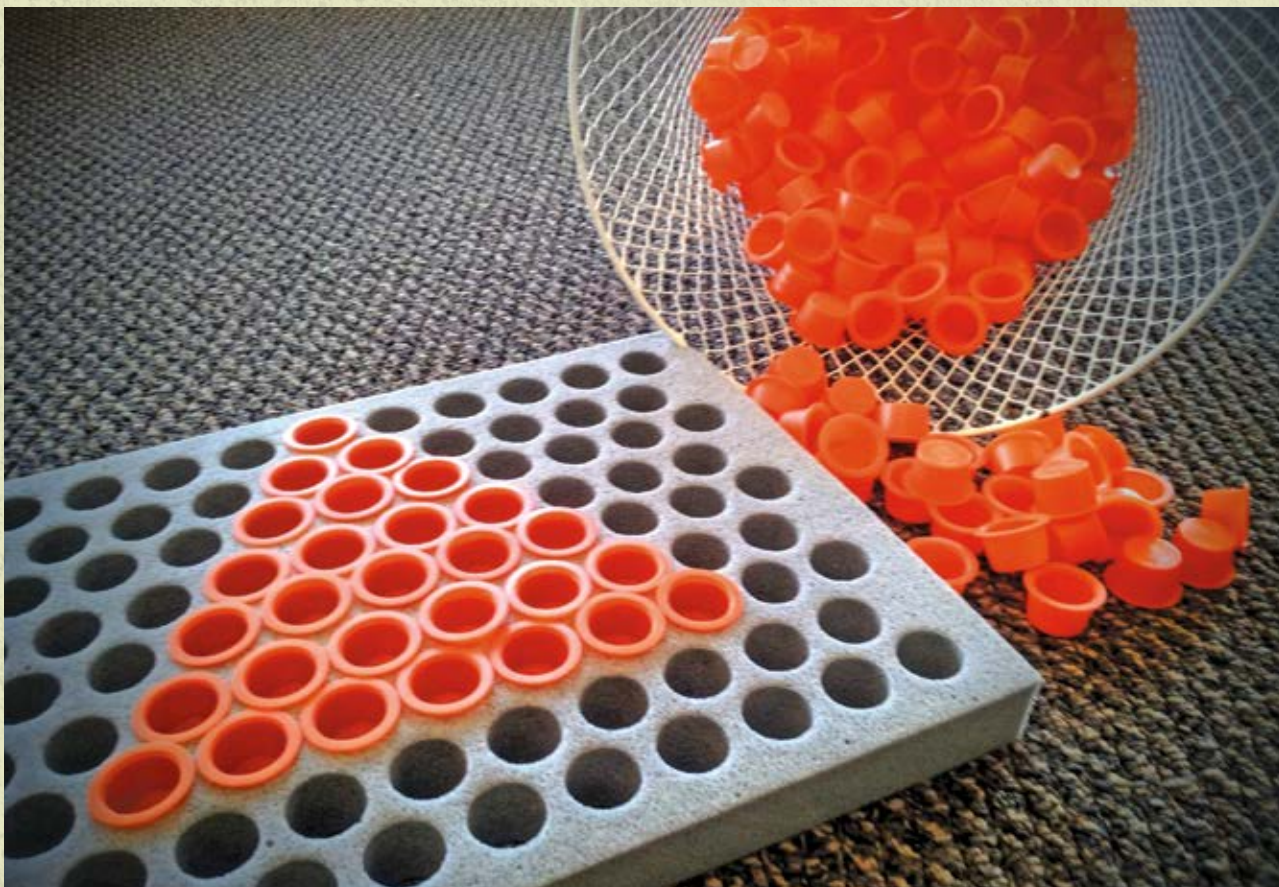
One of the key initiatives that support our environmental responsibility is to locate high-quality re-use materials that support the essential role of play with open-ended resources. The WE is full of safe, recycled items that would have ended up in New Mexico’s landfill. Without local and state businesses and community members, the WE would not be such an incredible resource due to the beautiful items that donors provide.

What Do WE Materials Look Like?

Varying from the one-of-a-kind to the ordinary, the collection includes foam punch-outs, caps from perfume bottles, beads, paper, and an array of other items in a vast assortment of colors and shapes, perfect for inspiring any child (or adult) to play.

What do Friends of the We Do?

The volunteers at the Wemagination are people who care about the environment, care about recycling, and bring their own ideas to the Center. But most of all, they are people who take pride and personal satisfaction in helping the community. Thanks to them we get a lot done. Together we help members use materials with innovative





ideas. It is a regenerative approach—one of give and take. It is a conversation of idea exchanges that begins in the morning and frequently continues throughout the day. Volunteers are:

- ♥ Playful
- ♥ Creative
- ♥ Enthusiastic
- ♥ Curious
- ♥ Environmentally conscious
- ♥ Dedicated to the outcome of young children and families

What Kind of Volunteer Opportunities are there at the WE?

Friends of the WE are either Center-based or Community-Based.

CENTER-BASED FRIENDS:

The Center has tasks that are necessary to running a professional and efficient nonprofit organization. Friends at the Center may include:

- ♥ **Educational Showroom Friend:** Supports WE staff members in arranging, organizing and displaying educational materials.
- ♥ **Warehouse Friend:** Supports WE staff members in maintaining warehouse sections through managing inventory.
- ♥ **Donor Friend:** Assists WE staff members in identifying and soliciting local and state-wide manufacturers and businesses for donated recycle materials.

COMMUNITY-BASED FRIENDS:

J.U.N.K. (Joy in Uncovering New Knowledge) in a Trunk— Learning though Play Experiences are interactive, free workshops that promote play and learning through the use of WE materials.

♥ **Play Advocates** are highly trained Friends of the WE who provide free community-based workshops. *As a professional volunteer program, all Friends of the WE are provided appropriate training.*

Why is it important to become a Friend of the WE?

Without Friends of the WE, our shelves might be bare or they might lack the organization that makes the WE such a fun place to browse! With Friends of the WE, our Wemagination Resource Center continues to grow and develop as it has in the past 20 years as a high quality educational resource center for the future.

How Do I Become a Friend?

Online application at: <https://we.unm.edu/>
 Come by the WE: 4010 Copper NE. Wednesdays from 10-6; Thursdays from 1-6; first Saturdays from 11-3.
 Talk to an FDP staff member.
 Find us at: <https://fdp.unm.edu/>

We look forward to meeting you! ♥

AmeriCorps VISTA members live and serve in some of the nation's poorest urban and rural areas. With passion, commitment, and hard work, they create or expand programs designed to bring individuals and communities out of poverty. Each VISTA member makes a year-long (or longer, if they choose), full-time commitment to serve on a specific project at a nonprofit organization or public agency. VISTA members generally do not provide direct services, such as tutoring children or building homes. Instead, they focus their efforts on building the organizational, administrative, and financial capacity of organizations that fight illiteracy, improve health services, foster economic development, and otherwise assist low-income communities. VISTAs develop programs to meet a need, write grants, and recruit and train volunteers. In other words— VISTAs develop sustainability.



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