



## The Heart Gallery and Social Interest: 2010 Conference

This year's conference of the Florida Adlerian Society was held in March at the beautiful and relaxing Safety Harbor Resort and Spa. Next year's conference will be held March 3-5, 2011 at the same location.

Tim (president and CEO) and Glorinda Higham (executive vice president) of Interstate Transport Company received this year's Social Interest Award for their contributions to the community and most of all their involvement and leadership with The Heart Gallery.

The Heart Gallery of Pinellas & Pasco counties provides an emotionally safe way to connect children with families through a traveling exhibit featuring the faces and stories of local foster children ready for adoption. Gloria and Tim spoke about the organization and their personal experiences during the conference's keynote address.

Conference participants attended from the Southeast, Montreal, Canada, New York, Chicago, St. Maarten, and Puerto Rico. The faculty and staff of Alfred Adler Elementary also attended the conference.

One of the most well-attended workshops featured a day-long live demonstration of Adlerian Psychology. Adlerian



Gloria and Tim Higham, center, received the 2010 Social Award for their involvement with The Heart Gallery of Pinellas and Pasco Counties. The award was presented by last year's winners, Greg DeCosmo (left) and Lori DeCosmo (right), founders of the Alfred Adler Elementary School.

Master Therapists Wes Wingett, Frank Walton, Timothy Evans and Geri Carter worked with an individual, a family, and a couple to demonstrate Adlerian therapeutic techniques.

Tim and Gloria's keynote speech regarding their involvement with The Heart Gallery and the raising of their son was a genuine description of social interest in action. It was an inspirational and heart-warming experience.

(See Page 4 for more on the Alfred Adler Elementary School.)

## Scenes from FAS Conference 2010



Conference attendees Becky Razaire, Sherry Brown, and Lolita Grohmann.



Randy Gainforth, FAS vice president, and Lisa Runyon, FAS president.



Presenters Kathy Walton, Cindy Walton-McCawley and Frank Walton.

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Wes Wingett and Lolita Grohmann (center) with Sisters Sonia Melendez, Bianca Colon, and Glenda Lopez from San Agustin del Coqui of Puerto Rico.



Friday's demonstration workshop kept attendees engrossed.

## FAS Conference 2010: Some Comments from an Attendee

By Joshua M. Gross, Ph.D., ABPP

What a pleasure to come around the last turn and find ourselves at the lovely little village of Safety Harbor. The Professor (my wife Melissa) and I had not been to the Florida Adlerian Society annual conference in some time (with this our eleventh year in Florida since moving here from California in 1999 for Melissa to join the faculty of the College of Information at Florida State University). Sometimes it takes a while to get settled down enough to find the good things and that was our impression as we made our way into the lobby and checked in for our weekend stay.

As a group and family psychologist with an Individual Psychology orientation, it was only a matter of time before I was going to make my way to the FAS conference. My practice at the University Counseling Center at FSU has been focused primarily upon developing a group counseling program since I joined the staff in January of 2001. Since that time we have made some good progress in moving from a center where few if any groups endured to one where we currently publish a weekly roster with up to fourteen various process and psycho-educational or theme-based therapy groups that run year-round in various formats. Much of the work we do here is guided by the ideas of Indi-

vidual Psychology, and I hope that we have the opportunity to talk about this at FAS in the coming years.

Our conference experience was very positive. It had been quite a while since I had spent some dedicated continuing education time in the land of Adler's Individual Psychology, and it was nice to meet up again with some people I had not seen in a long time. The Professor and I very much enjoyed our day with Daniel Eckstein, who did a fine job of bringing me back in touch with the basics of theory, lifestyle assessment and re-orientation strategies. This made for a well-spent and pleasurable day for us to say the least.

We spent our second day in the demonstrations, which was something that Melissa, as a professor of librarianship and the thirty-something-year spouse of a clinical psychologist, has had relatively little opportunity to experience alongside me. The idea that Adlerians are both interested and willing to work in the demonstration format allows for training that many others will never have the opportunity to experience. What a well-spent day watching the high level and wide range of interventions that can be offered using Adler's Individual Psychology - with Wes Wingett doing individual counseling, Frank Walton doing family counseling and Geri Carter and Tim Evans doing

couples counseling. It is not often that we have the opportunity to see professionals who are both able and willing to share their work and talk about it in a training format in such an open and gracious manner.

We left the conference with a lot of good feelings. Clearly, it is time for me to spend more time around others who practice and think about our work with a similar theoretical orientation. We also felt the invitation of friendship and community which invites us back for next year. I am encouraged about bringing ideas with me about how to share some of the work we do here at Florida State using the process group therapy format as a means to express the tenets of Adler's Individual Psychology.

Florida Adlerian Society  
2111 W. Swann Ave., Suite 104  
Tampa, FL 33606  
(813) 251-8484  
www.adlerflorida.org

### FAS MISSION STATEMENT

We support mental health as a public health issue. Happiness is staying connected to the important people in your life. Mental health is knowing what choices to make that allow you to stay connected. Good relationships, not control, are the core of mental health.

We support those principles found in Adlerian psychology and those incorporated in other Third Force Psychologies such as William Glasser's Choice Theory. These approaches are made to order for the development of the fully functioning person.

To carry out our mission, we support the Adler Elementary School, the FAS Annual Conference, and other like-minded organizations and associations.

FAS, for the past five years, has promoted mental health by featuring William Glasser, Robert Whitaker, Rudy Ruettiger (subject of the movie Rudy), NFL quarterback Chris Simms and the Heart Gallery at our annual conferences.

## Book Review: *Beyond Success and Failure*

By Lori Pratt, FAS Board Member

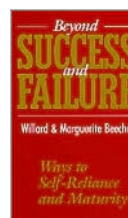
I tend to think much more complex than what I read in Willard Beecher and Marguerite Beecher's book *Beyond Success and Failure*.

When interpreting their messages that are so simply written, it seemed almost too easy, and I asked many times, "Why don't I just do this?" It is absolutely a book to get one started!

This book was as intense as it was very simple. It is a great book for readers looking for the simplistic way to a less stressful, happier lifestyle and way of thinking - a "beginners" book, I would personally say.

The most powerful and enlightening phrase I found was, "Neither the master nor the slave is truly free." They go on to say, "Only the free and equal can cooperate. It is obviously impossible for a master and a slave to cooperate. Neither is free of the other, and the behavior of one is strictly limited by the behavior of the other."

Life is actually a game, but it is a team sport that involves equality and belonging to the same team, not just a spectator sport cheering everyone else on.



## Learn to Stop the War and Have Fun Together Instead

By Cameron W. Meredith, Ph.D.

Many parents are turned off at the thought of a war between them and their children. Such a state often infers that they do not love their children and that they are irresponsible and ineffective parents. They are insulted at the mere thought of war. Good parents just would not allow their home to become an armed camp. On the other hand, children often call the conflict "war" because it best describes what is going on in many families today. They tell it like it is; a war is a war is a war. Regardless, most parents would agree that there is entirely too much conflict and deep down wish that they could find a way to improve family relationships and have more fun together.

What many parents do not realize however, is that, until conflict is resolved, there is little hope of truly having fun together. Over and over again, parents become discouraged as sincere attempts to have fun together disintegrate into conflict. Attempts to play games together often result in conflict over cheating. Outings are often ruined as children fight in the car and parents make endless threats in an effort to restore peace. What starts out to be a fun shopping tour at the local grocery ends up in an impossible struggle with an unruly demanding child. Funtime with company is often spoiled by entirely too many warnings and reprimands from parents. Parents, at the outset then, must recognize conflict for what it is and more importantly, learn what they can do to resolve it. This, in turn, will truly free the whole family to have more fun together.

I often ask parents, "How are things going between you and your children?" They usually reply, "Everything is okay and we are making out all right." I ask further, "Do your children fight? Do you find yourself in daily conflict with your children?" "Oh yes," they say, "but that is human nature. My parents had to tolerate us and now we have to put up with the same annoying behavior." I ask, "What do you do about it?" They usually respond, "We try to reason with them, let them know who is boss, use a lot of common sense, and only spank when we have to." "Is the conflict reducing?" I ask. "Not much," they reply, "but there does seem to be a little improvement as they get older."

As unbelievable as it may seem, many parents have actually convinced themselves that the abnormal misbehavior of their children is normal human behavior. They believe that their children are merely going through horrible stages and ages. As useless as the misbehavior is, they still only see it as hopeless human nature. Many parents readily admit that yelling and spanking seldom help but, since most parents they know are also yelling and spanking, they consider it common sense and keep it

up endlessly. As they view it, however, it is not war but rather only their somewhat miserable destiny together. It does not have to be this way. Parents and children are not victims of environment, human nature, ages and stages. They can learn to behave differently, to stop the war and to have fun instead.

While there are many things parents can do to stop the war, they are seldom the cause and should not be blamed for the senseless conflict which exists in almost all families today. Almost invariably at least one of the children will experiment with useless behavior designed to provoke. This in itself is not war. If however, a parent at this point grabs the bait and accepts the call to battle, the war may begin, continue or even intensify. It is futile to look for cause or pinpoint blame. At least two people have to be willing to fight. It is more realistic then to think in terms of how one person, particularly the parents, can stop the war.

It is difficult for parents to give up their self-appointed role as the boss. They have brainwashed themselves with the idea that they are absolutely responsible for their children. Even though they usually know that they cannot make a child do what he does not want to do, they still try to control. They are sitting ducks for creative children who provoke them to battle. The result is war and, unfortunately, the parent seldom wins. The children have many momentary victories but, as in all wars, both parties lose in the long run.

When parents are fully aware of the war for what it is and, at the same time are not blaming themselves, they are well on their way to stopping the war. They must recognize that there is useless conflict with the helpless child who demands service and the "good" child who demands praise and reward as well as the "naughty" child who provokes war. When they can open themselves up to change without being defensive about their present methods, they can learn more effective ways of behaving. When they give up trying to control children and almost constantly telling them what to do, the children will provoke and defy much less. When they concentrate on changing their own behavior, they can find ways to stop the war.

As a first step, parents simply have to stop fighting, stop giving in, stop praising and stop punishing with all their children if they hope to stop the war. To be specific, here are three suggestions for experimentation: (1) stop looking, (2) stop talking, and (3) remove oneself from conflict. Almost immediately, there will be more time to have fun together and to do meaningful things with each other. Friendly feelings will increase and hostile feelings will decrease. Cooperation will replace competition. A family atmosphere made to order for

the development of healthy human beings will emerge but only after the war has stopped.

As parents extricate themselves from controlling, judging, struggling for power and giving undue service they will find to their amazement almost unlimited time and opportunities to have fun together in everyday living. However, it is not the quantity of time but rather the quality of time that counts. Working parents and parents without partners as well as all busy parents can find ample time each day to have fun together. It is a false idea indeed that parents should spend more time with their children to produce brighter and better children and to improve relationships. If anything, more time often results in more fighting and unnecessary service. It is the quality of time in short periods together like mealtime, bedtime, getting up in the morning, shopping, auto rides, and visiting friends that really counts. The relationship in these activities should be enjoyable, satisfying, fun, and encouraging, rather than controlling and judging. This is where we build "friendship insurance" for the many human relations problems which are certain to occur in a democratic family atmosphere.

There is a place nevertheless for activities which require more time. Family trips, walks together, a variety of games, and visits to museum, cultural affairs, and sporting events can be invaluable. It is important, however, that fun is the primary motive, such activities should not be occasions to criticize and correct children on manners or honesty. If they degenerate into sneaky lessons in history, grammar, or arithmetic, the value is questionable. Games particularly should be fun with no strings attached.

Having fun together depends heavily on involvement, cooperation and friendly relationships. This is when both talking and listening really help. Family members have every reason to move toward each other rather than against or away. This is the time for development of ideas, beliefs and values and the creation of an atmosphere where family members can have a positive influence on each other without strings. This is the ultimate in helping and encouragement.

In summary, if you find yourself as a parent spending hours each day being a doormat or an opponent, just stop. It is certainly unwise to do for a child what he can do for himself and even more unwise to cooperate to fight. Children should have the privilege, for example, of getting up, dressing, eating, getting to school on time, doing homework, and going to bed all by themselves without a slave or a boss. The time saved can be creatively utilized in unlimited fun time and is almost foolproof insurance against the possibility of having to live with a tyrant or a spoiled child.

## Individual Education & Alfred Adler Elementary

By Timothy Evans, Ph.D.

### From Raymond Corsini's Writing on Individual Education:

"The schools that I had known were undemocratic. Students were condemned to attend. They simply had no rights. We live in a democracy, but the schools had no democracy. The question was how to make a better system without ever using the fighting term--democracy."

"When teachers demonstrate to students that they have a belief in a student's ability to make decisions, learn, and behave, then students feel respected, worthwhile, and motivated to learn and behave. Creating a respectful climate between teachers and students and between students and students, using the best group dynamics practices, is also a major goal and responsibility in a democratic educational system." \*

The Alfred Adler Elementary School in St. Petersburg, Florida just completed its second year. The school year ended with Lori and Greg DeCosmo holding an Encouragement Exchange in their home for the teachers and FAS members.

This year the school had an increase in attendance and the Family Education Center was started.

The next Encouragement Exchange will be held at Nicola and Zak Haddak's home on July 24.

A thanks to Lori and Greg DeCosmo along with the teachers of the Alfred Adler Elementary School for having the courage and dedication in making Ray Corsini's words into reality. Nice Job.

\*Taken from "Corsini's Individual Education: A Democratic Model" (2007) *Group Dynamics: Theory Research and Practice*, Vol. 11, No. 4, p. 248.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Encouragement Exchange  
at the Haddak home  
Tent. date: July 24, 2010  
Check FAS website for details

South Carolina Conference of  
Adlerian Psychology  
Sept. 24-26, 2009  
Springmaid Beach Hotel,  
Myrtle Beach, SC  
[www.adleriansc.com](http://www.adleriansc.com)

### **Florida Adlerian Society**

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Florida Adlerian Society  
2111 W. Swann Ave., Suite 104  
Tampa, FL 33606

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**16th Annual FAS Conference**  
**March 3-5, 2011**  
**Safety Harbor Resort and Spa**  
**Safety Harbor, Florida**