

Children at the Well

January 5, 2006

Dear Student,

We are very pleased at your interest in becoming part of the Children at the Well project. We want to extend warm congratulations to you for having been chosen, and a welcome to you in joining us in this venture! Thank you for your thoughtful letter which enabled us to know a bit about you. We're very much looking forward to meeting you in person, and we'd like to give you a chance to hear some stories in an interfaith setting, so we invite you (family and friends are welcome, too) to attend the annual Winter Lights event of the Interfaith Story Circle on January 22 from 2 to 4, at the Church of St. Vincent DePaul at 900 Madison Ave. (corner of Partridge St.) in Albany (see attached flier). There will be stories, music... and cookies. **We will have a brief but important Children at the Well meeting at 1:15 PM, just before the performance.** We'd like to introduce you and the others in the group to the audience that afternoon. Please let me know whether or not you can be there. You can call me at 785-7842, or email me (pbethweiss@aol.com).

Now, I'd like to give you an idea who is behind that mysterious "we" I've been referring to. The two story coaches with whom you will be working are Mary Murphy and Marni Gillard. Mary is a writer and teller of stories. She has told stories, given workshops and held residencies in schools and libraries throughout New York State and beyond. Last year she traveled to her husband's native Hawaii...and came back with new stories (of course!). Her stories have been anthologized and published in journals over the years.

Marni was a teacher, and is now a professional teller. She is the author of **Storyteller, Storyteacher: The Power of Storytelling for Teaching and Living** and has written several articles on the teaching of storytelling. She recorded five life tales which echo her Catholic upbringing on **Without a Splash: Diving into Childhood Memories.**

Mrs. Gert Johnson, the director of the Children at the Well project, is a retired high school religious studies teacher. She is the founder/coordinator of the Interfaith Story Circle of the Tri-City Area.

All three have taught storytelling units in schools and coached students for performances. All three are amazing people, and very nice, too!

I (Paula Weiss) am the assistant director of the Children at the Well. I helped in planning and writing up the project, and I am responsible for a variety of administrative tasks. So, if you have any questions at any point, please call or email me (785-7842, pbethweiss@aol.com) and I'll try to get you the answers. You can also call Mrs. Johnson at 374-0637.

The story coaching sessions will be on Sunday afternoons, from 2 to 4, on the following dates: 2/5, 2/12, 3/5, 3/26, 4/9, and 4/23. Our end-of-the-project pot-luck and telling will be on Sunday, April 30, 2006, app.1 to 6.

We'd like to encourage you to begin thinking about two or three stories from your tradition that you might like to choose from to work on. You can talk with your teachers about those stories. Check to make sure they are in fact from your own religious tradition.

Mrs. Johnson, Marni, Mary and I are all looking forward to a wonderfully fun and productive time working with you and the others. Hope you can join us on January 22 at Winter Lights. Don't forget to let me know if you can make it.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Sincerely,