

OPENING NEW WORLDS AROUND THE WORLD: THE JOURNAL OF CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORK AS ACTIVITY

We'd all agree the game of basketball—one of my favorites—is an activity. On my international travels, I have dribbled and taken it to the hoop with people of all ages in such places as Israel, Finland, and Australia. Somehow this game represents a universal language. Just the sight of a ball was an invitation to play. The commonly understood structure and rules, even with some variations depending on where I was, enabled a game, and some very pleasant relationships to get underway.

Relationships are the fundamental aspect of child and youth work. However, we always need to be aware that the activities we engage in serve as a crucible for connecting with others and forging relationships with them. From activities are generated not only relationships, but also stories representing the ever-changing interaction between relationships and the activities. These stories and their telling further extend connections and relationships.

What may not be so apparent as well is that like basketball, the *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, with a story and stories to tell, is itself an activity, a global form of communication that nurtures relationships. Professional journals provide a common format and common purpose for a worldwide community of professionals in the field who report their findings and concerns in exchanges with editors and other contributors and readers. The growth of the *Journal* reflects the growing community of professions it serves.

When the *Journal* arrives, recipients admire and handle it, and then see what it contains. Each article in itself provides the context for a relationship—with the material as it is read, with the author, and with one's own thoughts that are called forth as the reading proceeds. That people have an actual relationship with the written page is not an original idea—it has long been recognized since the beginning of writing—but has been revisited by postmodern philosophers and their preoccupation with language.

Thus, the *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, being viewed as an activity and a connector, takes on new meaning and significance. The original vision for the *Journal* grew out of relationships among those connected with each other through common interest in child and youth work. And so it grew, through ups and downs, and through the best and worst of times generating a story and engaging story tellers.

Each time we have read the *Journal*, shared it with somebody else, helped somebody else see that he or she had something to contribute it—we formed and extended our relationships. Now it enters a new era, enabling not only those within the field to connect with each other, but also to connect us with those outside of it, near and far. Thus they may be more aware of what we are doing, what we have to offer, and be encouraged to all work collectively for the betterment of children, youth, and families. Long live the activities that allow us to reach around the world, and the activities of the *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*. The story will continue.

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