

WELCOME to the first issue of *Growing the Future*, the CYE newsletter produced by Ph.D. students. We plan to offer an exciting issue twice a year, filled with stories and information from the people of CYE. Each issue will contain updates on what students, faculty and staff are doing as well as what is happening in the field. If you would like to contribute a story or if you have comments or questions please email us at cye@colorado.edu. Enjoy!

CHILD/YOUTH FRIENDLY CITIES INITIATIVE

by Dr. Beverly Kingston

In June 2006, representatives from the Denver Mayor's Office for Education and Children, Assets for Colorado Youth, and CYE launched the Child/Youth Friendly Cities Initiative (CYFC) for the City of Denver. The principles for a child-youth friendly city are based on the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees young people the right to supportive environments and processes through which they can make their voices heard on matters that affect them. Denver is the first city in the United States seeking to implement this treaty, making it a leader in the nation and a model for other cities. The main goals for Denver's Child/Youth Friendly Cities Initiative are to: (1) ensure children and youth have a voice and are decision makers in their communities and in Denver; (2) strengthen people and places that make children and youth feel recognized and valued in Denver; and (3) ensure that Denver supports the healthy development of children and youth.

The committee is working with key stakeholders from across Denver to implement this Initiative, including the Honorable Mayor John Hickenlooper, Denver's School Superintendent, Michael Bennet, and other Denver leaders. By forming a broad-based alliance across public and private partners, the



The "Express Yourself" Lounge at the Youth Speak Event. (Photo: Jennifer Kirschke)

Child/Youth Friendly Cities Initiative aims to unify and strengthen Denver's efforts to provide healthy, safe, and caring environments for young people. Doing so will not only benefit Denver's children and their families, it will also retain and attract the work force that is essential to the City's economic well-being.

On December 17, the CYFC Youth Executive Committee hosted the first Youth Speak event. Youth Speak was designed to be a fun and inviting opportunity for the youth of Denver to voice their opinions about issues that affect their lives and to begin the process of planning how they will take action to address those issues. The event was planned and run with youth playing key roles. Over 150 youth and adults attended.

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Dr. Kingston is a sociologist and a Research Associate with CYE. For more information about this study, please contact her at beverly.kingston@colorado.edu.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

This newsletter is wonderful testimony to the vibrant organization that the CYE Center has become since its launch in September 2004. After scarcely two years, the Center involves faculty and students from colleges on the Denver downtown campus and Health Sciences Center, as well as the Boulder campus. CYE-related courses are now offered at all levels. CYE projects involve numerous community partners. During its first two years, the Center was successful in all but one of more than 20 grant applications. External project funding exceeds \$1.5 million. Last summer, the Center received an enormous boost when an anonymous donor pledged \$2.5 million to establish an endowment. This unprecedented gift represents the largest donation ever in the history of the downtown CU-Denver campus. It will guarantee an ongoing source of support for the Center's operations.

Our current activities include publication of the Journal (now read in more than 150 countries), the Learning Landscapes (built at 46 schools), the Child-Youth Friendly City Initiative, various school-ground projects, and the TrailerWrap. The upcoming annual report will provide more information on these and other exciting projects.

One of the hallmarks of a thriving center is the synergy

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it creates, making the whole greater than the sum of its parts. This is certainly true for the CYE Center at the heart of which lie the passion and commitment of a great group of unique people whose wealth of experience and expertise humble me, time and again. They include 13 PhD students who play invaluable roles in every aspect of the Center's activities. The work of some of them is briefly highlighted throughout this newsletter. I'd also like to welcome Louise Chawla, who recently accepted an appointment as a professor in the Department of Planning and Design, joining Lois Brink, Fahriye Sancar, and other faculty colleagues. In addition, we are very lucky to have Beverly Kingston and Pamela Wridt as research associates, doing absolutely splendid work. Finally, the support of the Board of Directors, under the visionary leadership of Bob Surles, bodes well for the Center.

I want to thank all these people for their dedication. It truly is a pleasure and a privilege to be working with them! Together, we look forward to creating an exciting future for the Center and making meaningful contributions to improving the lives of children and youth.

Willem van Vliet—
Director
CYE Center



THE CYE PHD STUDENTS

George Awuor 3rd year

george.awuor@colorado.edu
George is interested in children and youth participation in planning, especially in low-income countries, and is preparing to do his fieldwork in Nairobi, Kenya.

Kim Bailey 1st year

Kim.Bailey@ci.denver.co.us
Kim is Manager of Parks and Recreation for the City of Denver and takes an interest in play in public spaces.

Jan Bates 3rd year

iankentbates@hotmail.com
Jan is involved in various activities through teaching and working on a community gardening study with the Department of Preventative Medicine.

Shawn Edmonds 1st year

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Shawn's interest and research in inter-generational programming in community development grows out of his concern with social and community well being.

Kelly Draper Zuniga 3rd year

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Kelly studies participatory planning involving children, paying special attention to perceptions of public interest and the interests (and conceptualization) of young people.

Debra Flanders Cushing 2nd year

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Debra is interested in children and youth participation in community design projects as well as issues affecting undocumented immigrant children and youth.

Jllène Pevec 2nd year

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Jllène studies the sensory experiences of teens, the implications for youth development and the daily needs of young people exhibited in a market garden program.

Rebecca Schlachter 2nd year

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Rebecca, who teaches in the Denver Public School system, connects youth from disadvantaged urban areas to nature.

Yucel Severcan 1st year

csevercan@yahoo.com
Yucel is interested in issues of privatization of public open spaces, the design of children's environments, and children and youth participation in the planning and design process.

Barbara Stuart 5th year

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Barbara is interested in children's participation in emergency response and disaster mitigation and is currently working in the earthquake zone in Pakistan as a Program Development Manager.

Robert Surles 5th year

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Bob is interested in environments that support learning and social cognition.

Darcy Varney 3rd year

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Darcy is conducting an in-depth case study and policy analysis of the Denver Child/Youth Friendly City Initiative.

Bambi Yost 3rd year

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Bambi organizes and leads community-based projects with children and adults to enhance public schoolgrounds and promote community involvement. She is evaluating the Learning Landscapes playgrounds.



CYE welcomes your tax-deductible donation. Please send your gift to:

University of Colorado Foundation - Gift Processing
P.O. Box 17126
Denver, CO 80217

or download a simple gift form at <http://www.cufund.org/giveonline/>.

Please, be sure to indicate your gift is for the CYE Center and specify if you wish to target a particular project or use of your gift. We sincerely appreciate your support of CYE!

DR. LOUISE CHAWLA

recently joined the faculty of the Department of Planning and Design in the College of Architecture and Planning, attracted by opportunities to contribute to the continuing development of the CYE Center. She comes to us from an interdisciplinary honors program at Kentucky State University, Frankfort, Kentucky, and the doctoral program in Environmental Studies at Antioch New England Graduate School. She steps into new positions as a member of the CYE Executive Committee and a co-editor of the CYE Journal.

While she was a Fulbright Scholar in the Norwegian Center for Child Research, she initiated a revival of the Growing up in Cities project of UNESCO, first conceived by urban designer Kevin Lynch. Under her leadership, the project

won the 2002 Place Research Award from the Environmental Design Research Association and *Places Magazine*. In her role with this project, she works on international issues related to children's rights, poverty, environmental quality and participatory community development.

She has published widely on children's participation in community development, children's experience of their environments, the development of environmental concern and responsibility, and cultural interpretations of nature. She authored *In the First Country of Places: Nature, Poetry and Childhood Memory* (State University of New York, 1994) and is editor and co-author of *Growing Up in an Urbanizing World* (UNESCO/ Earthscan Publications, 2002).

Louise taught *ENVD 4764, Sustainable Development and Human Behavior* last fall and is teaching *ENVD 3001, Environment and Behavior* in

the spring. After returning from a *National Dialogue on Children and Nature* in September, convened in response to Richard Louv's book *Last Child in the Woods*, she proposed the CYE Center play a leading role in the movement to reconnect children to nature by sharing research with the building and development community. She is now working with others in the Center to implement this proposal.



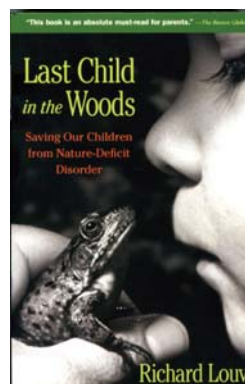
Each semester, the **Who's Who in CYE** column will highlight people in CYE who are new to our community or who are making a significant contribution to the field at large.

RICHARD LOUV

recently joined the CYE Board of Directors. Rich is the author of seven books, including *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. Rich is a columnist for the *San Diego Union Tribune* and has written for the *New York Times* and other newspapers and magazines. He chairs the *Children and Nature Network* (www.cnaturenet.org) and appeared on *Good Morning America*, *The Today Show*, NPR's *Fresh Air* and *Talk of the Nation*, and both the *CBS Evening News* and *NBC Nightly News*.

Rich came to CU-Boulder in October to give a talk about the disconnection between children and nature and its implications for human health and the future of the environment. To an audience that brought together the campus and wider community, he made a convincing argument about the important mental, physical, and spiritual implications of our relationship to nature by describing personal stories and experiences.

Since the book's publication, Rich has come to believe in the great potential for an international *Leave No Child Inside* movement based on many disciplines, including urban design and architecture.



THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

The father of a four-year-old boy described his venture into the forest with his son after an ice storm had knocked down many twigs and branches. The little boy began singing as he entered the woods, "Everything is good... everything is good," repeating the tune over and over. He turned to his father and said, "Daddy, I am going to make a forest." He picked up the fallen twigs and carefully planted each in the ground in a pattern of his own choosing. After he had planted about 20 twigs he turned to his father and said, "There Daddy, my forest is planted. Everything is good. Let's go home."

CYE FACULTY AND STUDENTS participated in international, national, and local events in 2006, including:

Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting

Pamela Wridt: "Children's Health Geographies in Denver" - Chicago, IL

World Urban Forum

Fahriye Sancar: "Place of Children: A discussion of issues and methods"; Willem van Vliet-- attended the Advisory Board meeting of the Human Settlements Network of UN-Habitat; Darcy Varney coordinated the networking event, "An Idea into Action: Discovering the Place of Children in Cities around the World." - Vancouver, BC Canada

World Youth Forum

Darcy Varney co-authored the discussion paper for the forum, "Youth in Urban Development: Bringing Ideas into Action," and served as an adult advisor; CYE students and faculty participated in the celebration of the *Growing Up in Cities* project's 10th anniversary and helped strategize new approaches. - Vancouver, BC Canada

Planners Network Conference

Darcy Varney presented the concept for the PLACES (Planning, Local Action and Community Engagement Skills) project - Chicago, IL

Active Living Research Annual Conference

Lois Brink and Beverly Kingston: "Studying Children: Challenges and Solutions" - San Diego, CA

National Dialogue on Children and Nature

Louise Chawla was an invited participant - Shepherds town, WV

World Planners Congress

Lois Brink and Beverly Kingston: "Transforming Inner-City School Grounds: From the Top Down and the Bottom Up" - Vancouver, BC

Human Forum: Faces of Courage conference

Illène Pevec was invited as a "Change Agent" by the Alliance for a New Humanity - San Juan, Puerto Rico

CDC Diabetes and Obesity Conference

Beverly Kingston: "The Effects of Elementary School Playground Renovations on Children's Physical Activity Levels" - Denver, CO

Istanbul Housing Convention

Fahriye Sancar: "Traditional Urban Fabric, Child Friendly Cities and Affordable Housing: Examples from Turkey and United States" - Istanbul, Turkey

North American Montessori Teachers Association

Louise Chawla was a keynote speaker - Columbia, MD

Environmental Design Research Association

Illène Pevec: "Using Video to Transcend Social Barriers" - Atlanta GA

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF PEACE *by Illène Pevec*

I headed to southern Brazil for the first time in 2001, to work in partnership with a small group of Brazilian educators from an economically deprived neighborhood of Santo Angelo, Rio Grande do Sul. That first year, I worked with over one hundred children and a handful of adults for three months to start a school and community garden, engage the community in cooperative work for food security, and give children the chance to have contact with nature. Five years later, I am still working with the same children and now far more parents on these goals.

With the help of Brazilian educators and key community volunteer leaders, we held community meetings, attended by about ten adults and droves of young children. Though many significant issues were identified, we decided to focus on creating a park where chil-

dren can play safely, providing fresh fruit and vegetables, and planting additional street trees for shade. We also worked with the grade school to start a natural habitat garden for the native hummingbirds and butterflies, a medicinal plant garden, and a food garden.

For my fifth trip in 2006, Myra Margolin, an American artist and filmmaker, accompanied me. I proposed a mural project for the wall that separates the school from the street to be done under Myra's artistic direction, she and the school agreed to this challenge. We facilitated a brainstorming process in every classroom and discovered that all the children want-

ed the same thing on their mural: a waterfall, river, lake, mountains covered in flowers, a myriad of wild and domestic animals, a house with a garden full of food, fruit trees and play equipment where children could play. They did many individual drawings and Myra mounted these into a single scene on the long wall for the children to paint.

Through my experiences, I have learned first hand that in order for community development to continue and develop a life of its



The finished mural painted by children. (Photo: Illène Pevec)

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Ismael painting his fish in the mural. (Photo: Illène Pevec)

own, social scaffolding needs to happen in the community. Developing local capacity has become a major thrust of the work I do, and I am touched by the eagerness with which people engage in community greening and health activities.

We have created a documentary film about the first two years of this project called, *A Child's Garden of Peace*. It has been shown around the world in film festivals and will be in Nevada City, California in January, 2007. We also helped eight teenagers create films about their community and their lives. Both documentaries are available for \$20 each and all proceeds will support the scholarship fund set up to enable some of these children to go to college. http://www.susiladharma.org/members_samerica_brazil.html

If your PBS station carries the series *Local Heroes*, watch for *A Child's Garden of Peace* on your own home TV. Please write me at Illene.pevec@colorado.edu if you would like more information or would like to help build the scholarship fund.

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Illène is a second year PhD student who will be heading back to Brazil to continue her work in 2007.

DESIGN AND PLANNING DAY CAMP *by Kelly Draper Zuniga*

This past July, CYE teamed with Gold Crown in Lakewood, Colorado to offer two one-week sessions of a design and planning day camp. The camp ran from 9-12 on weekdays and was coordinated with afternoon basketball camp.

The camp planning team included: Fran Baker, Joan Pacos and Nate Stone from Gold Crown; Alejandra Palacios, Kelly Draper Zuniga and Willem van Vliet-- from CYE; and Tim Thomas of the Denver Architecture Foundation. The team decided on a progressive design for the week-long camp. Each day of camp focused on a new topic and built on the previous day's lessons and activities towards a final, comprehensive



Presenting their final project. (Photo: Kelly Draper Zuniga)



Ali and Tony making gumdrop sculptures. (Photo: Kelly Draper Zuniga)

design and planning project. The goal was for youth to use a variety of communication tools and ultimately take interest in a design or planning career.

The camp offered a variety of hands-on activities with tangible products and pulled in professionals from the community. Visitors to the camp included Ryan Dawson, an RNL

Architect, who presented professional models and digital images, and worked with the kids on their projects. Becky Clark, a Planner with the City of Lakewood, shared her experience and helped each group plan their communities. The youth seemed to enjoy the week's activities and produced impressive graphics and models of their community design.

One camp participant, Ali, who lives in public housing and works with a Bridge Foundation mentor, was described as a star in the class. According to his mentor, he showed more focus than usual and expressed excitement about his projects. His mentor reflected, "The camp has made a real difference for Ali. This makes my summer."

Months of preparation went into the two-week camp - a seed expected to mature into a long-term relationship between stakeholders. CYE plans to partner with Gold Crown in the summer of 2007 to prepare CU planning and design students to work with young people and to develop a planning curriculum for public schools.

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Kelly Draper Zuniga is a third year PhD student currently preparing for her comprehensive exams.

INTEGRATED LEARNING IN THE SHOOLYARD *by Ian Bates, Illène Pevec and Debra Flanders Cushing*

This semester we embarked on a participatory project, pairing undergraduate students with elementary school children at Creekside Elementary School in Boulder. This project was part of a



An undergraduate reading a nature-focused story with children at Creekside. (Photo: Debra Flanders Cushing)

new course titled, Participatory Community Planning: Urban Agriculture, offered as an upper level course in the Environmental Design Program on the CU-Boulder campus.

Twelve students, from a variety of majors, learned theories of children's participation and landscape design, and received hands-on experience working with the community. Our students and Creekside co-created a masterplan that will guide the transformation of the school's courtyard into an ecological outdoor classroom that will be used to teach existing curriculum

and inspire new learning opportunities. We developed the process to include activities with nearly all of the Creekside students in order to engage the children in the design of their own courtyard. Activities such as reading stories related to nature; going on a child-led tour of the schoolyard; and using natural treasures, such as flowers and shells, all helped inspire the design.

Tangible results of the course include the construction and installation of a worm bin for composting and a booklet containing a complete record of the participatory process as well as a copy of the final concept plan.

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Ian, Illène and Debra are PhD students interested in children's access to nature.

CYE AT THE WORLD URBAN FORUM *by Darcy Varney*

In June, three major world events took place back-to-back in Vancouver, Canada, and representatives of CYE participated in each, generating exciting ideas and international alliances. Organized in conjunction with the Third Session of the *World Urban Forum*, produced by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), the events aimed to build coalitions of support for young people's access to decision-making processes in their cities and their right to have their voices, ideas and opinions heard.

The first event celebrated the revival of the *UNESCO Growing Up in Cities* project 10 years ago (*GUIC +10*), spearheaded by Dr. Louise Chawla. *GUIC +10* featured more than 80 participants from Kenya, Japan, Mexico, Norway, South Africa, Australia, the United States, and Canada. Participants presented their action research projects and learned from each other over

three days of workshops and strategy sessions. *UNESCO Growing Up in Cities* Chair David Driskell co-hosted the event with Dr. Chawla at the University of British Columbia. CYE Research Associate Dr. Pamela Wridt and Ph.D. students Illène Pevec, Ian Bates, Kelly Draper Zuniga and I attended, sharing ideas and gathering inspiration for our own action research projects.

The *World Youth Forum (WYF)* followed *GUIC +10* with two days of intensive training, networking and small-group discussions about topics ranging from making a living to creating healthy and sustainable communities. More than 400 youth from some 40 countries participated in the *WYF*, which served in part to help young people organize to make their voices heard at the larger *World Urban Forum*. I served as a research advisor to the *WYF* team and co-authored the discussion paper, "Youth in Urban Development: Bringing Ideas into Action", to be published

by UN-HABITAT in 2007.

The culminating event was the *World Urban Forum*, attended by 10,000 people from 100 countries. CYE hosted a networking session, "Discovering The Place of Children in Cities and Slums Around the World," which featured case studies Dr. Fahriye Sancar and I developed for a forthcoming book co-sponsored by UN-HABITAT. Dr. Chawla co-hosted a networking event about *GUIC*, and I participated on a panel in another session about child- and youth-friendly cities.

The "Place of Children" caught the attention of a producer with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and CYE was subsequently featured on the morning television show, "CBC Today."

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Darcy Varney is a third year PhD student and the Director of Special Projects for CYE. If you would like more information about the "Place of Children" project or any other project mentioned here, please email her at darcy.varney@colorado.edu.

CHILDREN'S GUIDE TO ACTIVE LIVING *by Dr. Pamela Wridt*

As the obesity epidemic for children increases, it is important to consider the role of safe, outdoor play environments that support children's physical activity in their local community. Through a grant from the *Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*, we recently finished the first year of a



Mustafa presents the guidebook to Mayor Hickenlooper. (Photo: Jennifer Kirschke)

two year study designed to analyze how neighborhood environments support or hinder children's healthy development from the perspective of children and their caretakers.

We worked with fourth and fifth grade children (ages 9-12) at two diverse Denver elementary schools and facilitated activities including mapping neighborhood places on large aerial photographs, working in focus groups, completing daily activity diaries, and photographing significant people and places in the neighborhood. The final product was a *Children's Guide to Active Living*, in which the children articulated their ideas about improving their local environment to promote physical activity.

The children's guidebook showcases results of the student research and provides information for children

and their families about where children like to play and hang out, where children and their families get food, and bad places that children would like to change. The book is written by the children themselves in both English and Spanish and will be distributed throughout the participating neighborhoods. To get this guidebook in the hands of policy makers and planners, four of the children involved in the project presented the guidebook to Mayor Hickenlooper at the Child/Youth Friendly Cities Initiative kick-off meeting in June, 2006.

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Dr. Wridt is a geographer and Research Associate with CYE, as well as an instructor for the College of Architecture and Planning. For more information about this project contact her at pamela.wridt@colorado.edu.

LEARNING LANDSCAPES AND CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY *by Dr. Beverly Kingston*

The quality of children's environments has come into question in response to the recent childhood obesity epidemic. Designing safe outdoor play environments that support children's physical activity provides a potential mechanism for counteracting childhood obesity. Since 1998, the Learning Landscape Initiative has transformed 46 neglected Denver elementary school playgrounds into attractive and safe multi-use resources that encourage outdoor play and learning and provide op-

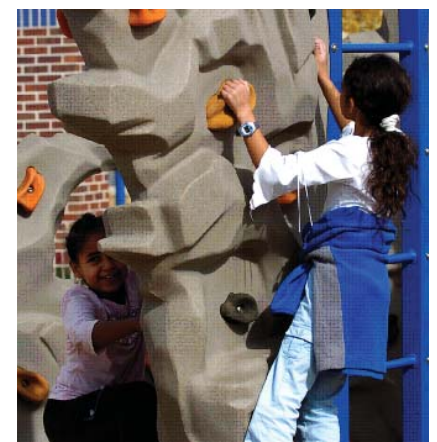


Students play on primary play equipment at Southmoor Elementary School

portunities for social and physical activity. Three newly renovated playgrounds and three playgrounds that were renovated over four years ago were compared to three playgrounds that have not been renovated.

The Learning Landscapes appear to positively influence children's physical activity levels.

- Children at the Learning Landscape playgrounds were significantly less sedentary than children at the three control sites.
- A significantly greater percentage of boys (50%) were very active at the most recently built Learning Landscapes, compared with the earlier built Learning Landscapes (44%) and the control sites (39%). School yard design also seems to influence children's physical activity levels.
- Children were significantly more active in the Learning Landscape play equipment areas, compared with the play equipment areas in the old playgrounds.



Climbing wall at Ellis Elementary School's Learning Landscape.

- The percent of boys engaged in very active physical activity on the basketball courts doubled in the Learning Landscapes (52%), compared to old playgrounds (26%).
- Girls (70%) were significantly more likely than boys (59%) to be very active on the swings, but this difference was not affected by the playground renovations.



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CYE MISSION:

The Children, Youth and Environments Center for Research and Design works with the design professions and allied disciplines to contribute to the health, safety and welfare of children and youth.

The Center undertakes and supports interdisciplinary activities in research, teaching and community outreach that connect the worlds of research, policy and practice, while recognizing young people's capacity for meaningful participation in the processes that shape their lives. It focuses in particular on children and youth in environments of disadvantage and those with special needs.

CYE JOURNAL:

The Center also serves as the secretariat for the CYE Journal, an independent publication with a multidisciplinary audience of researchers, policy makers and professionals, dedicated to improving the lives of children and young people around the world.

The CYE Journal is seeing a tremendous amount of success. Readers in more than 150 countries access the Journal. On an average day, readers download more than 400 papers and establish more than 700 independent, unduplicated accesses. In November alone, the Journal received 74,407 hits.

We recently published Issue no. 2, vol. 16, which contains papers from Europe, Australia and New Zealand on participatory planning and design with children and youth (other world regions will follow next year). You can access the current issue at <http://www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/>.