

## **Why Our Family Supports Natick Early Childhood Network**

May 2010

Dear NECN Families:

Spring, it's finally here! It's the time of year when we clean and reorganize our lives a little bit to give ourselves and our households a fresh start. Last year at this time, I took reorganizing in a new direction. I decided to commit to donating monthly to Natick Family Network (now Natick Early Childhood Network). I called Judy and Pam and pledged my donation to the program over the phone, so they knew they could count on my check each month. In the past, I had made occasional financial donations to NECN—usually at the end or beginning of an event—and my monthly pledges really didn't add up to more annually than I was already giving through those unscheduled donations. I give less than what I pay for my gym membership, and I don't belong to a state-of-the-art gym! Every little bit helps Natick Early Childhood Network. NECN has open Council meetings for anyone to attend, and they share their budget and spending at each meeting, so I know where my money goes.

When I made the decision to pledge, I was the mom of a one-year-old daughter and had been participating in Natick Early Childhood Network since my daughter was quite young. I had started by visiting a few Drop-In sessions. Then, I enrolled in the New Moms' Chat group, participated in a few playgroups, and even facilitated one with a friend whom I met through the program. Last spring as the Parent Volunteers, Council and Program Coordinator from Natick Family Network were meeting to discuss the budget and program consolidation with another local program, Children First Natick, I took advantage of an open invitation to find out how Natick Family Network might be changing. I learned that due to budget cuts the Network was struggling to provide the free quality programs and services of which I took advantage. At that time, we were uncertain that NECN would even receive the state funding that allowed it to exist, and I was amazed to learn all that the program was expected to accomplish with so little money.

NECN has been the best resource for me as a new mother. I met many of my "new mom" friends there, and many of us are still friends today almost two years later. When I first considered joining a new moms group I priced some around the area and was stunned to find that many of them ran over \$150 for the same time, services and, in some cases, even facilitators that NECN provided to our community for free. NECN has offered me free drop-in play times, playgroups, workshops, open houses, family events, and general support for two years, and it has cost me nothing. However, after attending the budget meetings last year, I believed that the program needed a more reliable plan to increase its funding. I decided to be part of that plan.

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So this spring as you clean out closets, dust the ceiling fans and reorganize drawers, I ask you to consider reorganizing your wallet too and making a donation to NECN. Whether it's a single donation or a monthly pledge like mine, every contribution helps support the program. If you just can't make a financial contribution right now, there are lots of opportunities for you to "give back" in other ways too. Almost every newsletter includes a list of volunteer opportunities—playgroup facilitators, envelope stuffers, event helpers and more—and the office keeps an email list of volunteers willing to help out when needs arise. However you choose to contribute, I promise it will be worth it!

Sincerely,

Nicole Cowart  
mom to Lizzie, age 2

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**YES! My family would like to support Natick Early Childhood Network.**

\_\_\_ Please accept our single donation for:

\$5 \_\_\_ \$10 \_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_ Other: \$\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ We would like to make a monthly pledge of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ We cannot donate at this time, but please add me to your volunteer contact list!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address & phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check out to: **ACCEPT Education Collaborative** and mail to: Program Coordinator, Natick Early Childhood Network, 179 Boden Lane, Natick, MA 01760.