On behalf of the staff and board of directors of Kindering Center, I am pleased to present you with the 2012 Annual Report. This year marked the 50th Anniversary of Kindering being in the forefront of helping the most vulnerable, disadvantaged, and medically fragile children in our community live life to the fullest. The research on the value of early intervention is indisputable. Intervention before age 3 is the vital element in the success of these children in overcoming their, sometimes, great hurdles. Without it, no matter what is done later, a golden opportunity is lost.

Kindering is the only center in the region offering a full continuum of programs to meet the needs not only of children, but their parents, caregivers, and siblings. More than 3,000 families each year come to us with a wide range of conditions such as autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, chromosomal abnormalities, congenital heart failure, Down syndrome, metabolic disorders, the effects of prematurity, seizures, visual and/or hearing impairments, and abuse or neglect. We also reach out to infants and children at risk such as children in foster care, homeless shelters, poverty, and non-English environments. Our own research shows 97% of Kindering children make significant gains, 73% narrow the gap with their typically developing peers, and 38% fully close the gap and are no longer eligible for special services or special education after age 3.

There have been many wildly successful events in this anniversary year. Our 50th Anniversary Celebration and Auction on March 3 and the Annual Salute to Courage Luncheon in the fall were resounding successes, both financially and as a reaffirmation of who we are. And, Drs. Patricia Kuhl and Andrew Meltzoff spoke at a Kindering event in November in support of our mission. They are founders and co-directors of the Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences at the University of Washington, which is dedicated to discovering the fundamental principles of human learning, with special emphasis on work that will enable all children from 0 to 5 to achieve their full potential. Their commitment to the practice of measurable results, paired with their total-family approach makes them natural partners in the journey with us of helping kids reach their highest potential.

Our staff and board have worked hard to continue to get Kindering to the next level. Our long term plan created two years ago has turned out to be an excellent blueprint for the work of the organization. We have beefed up our committee/task force structure and put our noses to the grindstone to improve in all the five key areas outlined in the plan. Our biggest challenge has been the increasing demand for our services in the face of having no more space to meet that need. When given the prospect of having to turn away children who need our services, we looked inward and realized that our DNA would not allow us to do that. So we made the important decision to open a satellite in the North Creek/Bothell area in 2013.

This is my first letter to you as board president. As a practicing pediatrician in the eastside community from 1977-2009, I benefitted from Kindering’s great expertise in taking care of our most vulnerable children over the last three decades. I have been privileged to serve as a board member since 2009 and now as board president starting in January 2012. I get to work with the best executive director, staff, and board on the planet. Whenever a thank you is expressed, there is the risk that a key person will be left out. I will take that risk, because two people need special recognition. Tony Mestres ended his tenure as president at the end of 2011 with an organization financially strong and pointed in the right direction. There is no greater success in leadership than that. And Mimi Siegel, our tireless, talented, and passionate executive director, has continued this year to do what she has done for the past 30+ years, which is to make Kindering strong, successful, and ever new.

Thank you.
Our 50th year. So much to celebrate! The dreams of five determined founding families half a century later have been fully realized. Their own sons and daughters reached their fullest potential and Kindering leads the nation in the depth and breadth of services for infants and children with special needs.

Dr. Peter and Diane Demopulos chaired the 50th Anniversary honorary committee, and three glorious record-breaking events marked the occasion. Janet and Doug True and their daughter, Effie Gleason, chaired a spectacular spring gala. The family of Charlie Alhadeff (four generations of dedicated Kindering supporters) joined together in his honor to chair Kindering’s annual Salute to Courage luncheon. And a group of alumni and family members numbering 900, five decades of Kindering grads, swapped stories and shared festivities during a spectacular reunion hosted by Greg Benn. Two important themes guided these celebrations and all our work. We paid tribute to the past and our graduates, families and community who led the way, and we dedicated ourselves to a bold future for our children.

Whilst serving a record number of infants and children with special needs, Kindering continued to refine our services to best meet community needs:

★ East King County is home to a marvelous tapestry of languages and heritage. To ensure that our work is sensitive and respectful, staff intensified our cultural competency self-explorations and trainings.

★ Kindering has the most sophisticated data management system in our sector. In collaboration with the University of Washington, we mined a decade of efficacy data to inform our programs and therapies.

★ The organization’s CHERISH project (Children Encouraged by Relationships in Secure Homes) has achieved national acclaim. To ensure that these impactful foster care interventions reach more children, we launched a replication project, instructing colleagues at developmental centers throughout King County.

Lastly the impact of early intervention is indisputable. Each and every day our staff and families witness small victories of infants and children achieving wondrous new milestones. Both extensive national research and our fifty years of experience reaffirm this powerful truth. Neuroscientists are mindful that eighty percent of a child’s brain develops in the first three years. Infants can’t wait.

However, our Bellevue Crossroads facility was designed to serve just 1/3 of our current enrollment. Every available nook is used to serve families. Still the possibility of having to turn away children in need is unconscionable. Thus board and leadership thoughtfully strategized the expansion to a spacious new satellite in Bothell. We will keep you abreast of our progress building a second home for our programs, and, most importantly always, the accomplishments of our children.

With gratitude for our caring community’s half century of support and concern for our families,
In The Beginning

As Kindering proudly celebrates its 50th anniversary, it is fitting to reflect back on the determination and innovation of a small group of parents of children with special needs, without whom Kindering may never have existed.
In the 1960s, children with disabilities were not even allowed into schools before age seven because they were not considered educable. It was entirely up to parents to provide their children with social and educational opportunities. Fortunately, parents like Gert Wyse and Morey Wetherald were determined to change all of that.

In 1961, Gert lived with her husband, George and their five children in Juanita. When their sixth child, Debbie, was born with Down syndrome, Gert worried that she wouldn’t have any friends her own age. “I didn’t really know what was available, because I had never been around any handicapped kids,” said Gert. As it turned out, “there was nothing. Absolutely nothing.” Refusing to accept the status quo, Gert set out to form a swimming group for children with special needs and their parents. At first, about five families showed up regularly to swim and socialize at a local county pool.

Morey Wetherald had a son named Denny who was diagnosed with “partial retardation” and did not speak or walk before age 4. At the time, Morey recalls, “we were told to take our child home and love him.” Like Gert, Morey refused to simply sit back and accept that his child could not progress. Morey remembers that after the initial sadness over the lack of resources for children with special needs, “we decided, ‘well, there’s no help here, Denny needs help, so we’ve gotta get out there and make something happen!’”

Morey read an article about Gert’s swimming group in the local newspaper and brought Denny to join. Slowly, the parents began to notice positive changes in their children. Although formal early intervention did not exist at that time, “we made up our own!” said Gert. Eventually the families who participated in the swimming group decided they wanted to create a more formal association to do more than just socialize.

In 1963 the families formed a non-profit and won a grant to start a little preschool called the Eastside Preschool for the Special Child. They met in the basement of a church in Bellevue. Morey’s wife Donnie became the first director of the school, and the children made progress. Morey recalls the thrill he felt as the school began to grow. “It was very exciting, trying things and finding things that worked. And we knew that there had to be other kids out there, so it wasn’t long before our group turned into twelve!”

Over the years the preschool continued to grow and changed names many times, eventually evolving into Kindering as we know it today. 50 years later the research has caught up to what these parents instinctively knew. The first critical 1,100 days of a child’s life is the key window when intervention makes the difference between a child reaching his full potential or losing an irreplaceable opportunity.

In the last five decades Kindering has grown from five families with children with special needs meeting at a swimming pool, to a nationally-recognized early intervention center serving over 3,000 infants, children and their families each year. It is truly amazing what hard work, determination and love for a child can accomplish. Speaking about Debbie, Gert humbly says “And she actually has made my life. Things I had been involved in and accomplished through her... it feels pretty good.”

Morey agrees, noting that Denny graduated from the University of Washington’s ROTC program, was commissioned four years later and is now “what the Navy calls their newest and latest baby admiral. It’s outside the box, you know, that this could have happened. There were so many minefields that he had to go through. And I think it’s an extraordinary story that comes from the genesis of this school.”

Morey concludes, “I feel enormous pride. Enormous pride, really. Because we have something that is real, it’s permanent, and it’s growing.”
Historical Highlights

Five mothers of children with disabilities meet during a King County special swimming program and explore the possibility of a specialized training program. — 1962

The Bellevue School District permits the use of an empty classroom for 12-months. Although still very much a parent cooperative, the agency is able to hire one salaried teacher. — 1963

Eastside Preschool for the Special Child incorporates. — 1964

Relocates to Bellevue Presbyterian Church. — 1970

Organization changes name to Merrywood School. — 1972

Education for All Act grants free, appropriate, public education to all students. Eastside schools admit students from age three. Merrywood focuses its programs for children from birth to three. — 1975
1978
Agency moves to Ashwood Center, a closed Bellevue School building. Mimi Siegel is hired as executive director, and remains at the helm 35 years later.

1980
Merrywood becomes a United Way Agency.

1981
A modest building is erected in the Crossroads area with the help of Referendum 37, Bellevue Development Block Grants, and private and corporate donors.

1983
Over the next 6 years, 4 separate expansions increase the size of the building to meet the growing demand for services.

1984
Merrywood begins their work in foster and childcare programs.

1985
Fathers Network, a support system for fathers of disabled children, is established.

1986
Unparalleled parent education and counseling programs are added.

1987
Merrywood begins their work in foster and childcare programs.

1988

1989

1990

1992

Merrywood changes its name to Kindering Center to reflect the kindness, kinship and nurturing child development services families receive.

1993
Eastside Nutrition and Feeding Team Forms. Bellevue School District contracts with Kindering Center to provide special education programs for infants and toddlers within the district.

1994
Kindering Center partners with the University of Washington’s Experimental Education Unit to create the CUBS program (Communication, Understanding, Behaviors, and Socialization), a research-based treatment program for children with autism spectrum disorder.

1995
Lake Washington School District contracts with Kindering to provide special education for infants and toddlers. Neighboring districts soon follow.

1996
Kindering Center dedicates newly renovated and expanded facility to house state-of-the-art programs for infants and children with special needs as a result of a highly successful $6 million capital campaign.

1997
CHERISH (Children Encouraged by Relationships in Secure Homes) is established to support children living in foster and kinship care.

1998
Kindering welcomes Don Meyer and the Sibling Support Project to our family of programs.

1999
The Parent Child Home Program reaches out to Spanish speaking families to develop early literacy and school readiness.

2000
Kindering celebrates its 50th anniversary. Surging community need drives leadership to explore a satellite facility.
Paige and Ian Wilson had their first child, Michael, in March of 2009. Within the first couple of weeks of his birth, they sensed that something was wrong. His eyes never seemed to focus; he did not grab for toys, and over the next two to three months Michael continued to fall behind in milestones. The Wilsons brought their concerns to Michael’s pediatrician, who quickly suggested that they take Michael to Kindering for a full developmental evaluation.
Michael and his parents came to Kindering for his evaluation when he was five months old. His mother remembers that she felt comfortable at Kindering right away. Still, when she and her husband received the results of the evaluation, Paige says “it was like getting doused with cold water. It was shocking how far behind he really was – three standard deviations below the mean for almost every category.” Feeling that Michael’s future was suddenly very uncertain, Paige and Ian said “we held our breaths and waited for Kindering to tell us what to do.”

Michael started physical and occupational therapy right away, and the Wilsons also joined Kindering’s Baby Steps infant play group. Paige remembers “I felt a real sense of belonging and finally meeting people in a similar boat. The wonderful thing about Kindering is that it gave our whole family a sense of belonging that we didn’t get elsewhere.”

At seven months old, the Wilsons learned that Michael had Joubert Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that is estimated to affect only 1 in 80,000 to 100,000 newborns. Joubert Syndrome can present in a number of different ways including abnormally rapid breathing, decreased muscle tone, jerky eye movements and intellectual impairments. When the Wilsons received Michael’s diagnosis, they said “this was another douse of cold water. We were told Michael would never be a typical kid. It helped to have Kindering there to share that news with, to process what it meant for Michael and for our family.”

As Michael grew and progressed, he and his family participated in more of Kindering’s programs. Michael started speech therapy at one year old. His family participated in Kindering’s co-op preschool and finally, Michael got to join Kindering’s Stepping Stones toddler preschool.

Michael graduated from Kindering at age three, in March of 2012. The Wilsons felt how many parents of Kindering graduates feel – a sense of bittersweet – excited to move on but sad to leave a place that had become like a second home. “I honestly don’t know where we would be without Kindering,” said Paige, “When we first got the diagnosis we didn’t know what Michael should be doing or how to get him there. Kindering gave us so much guidance. Michael has come so far, and I truly believe that is because the people at Kindering took me by the hand and said ‘this is how you can help Michael. We will help Michael reach his greatest potential.’”

Now at 4 years old, Michael is entering his final year in the Early Childhood Education program in the Issaquah School District. He continues to build on the skills he learned at Kindering and is working on going up and down stairs, improving his handwriting and asking who, what, where, when and why questions. He is also still a regular face at Kindering, attending Courage Camp there in the summers. Michael’s dad Ian recently joined Kindering’s board of directors to help ensure that the programs that so helped Michael remain in place for future generations. Michael’s mom Paige says now that she knows Michael is on such a great track, “I don’t feel as scared – I feel really positive about Michael’s future.”
2012 Financials

Revenue & Support
$7,134,408
Investment income of $586,717 is excluded.

Expenditures
$6,355,459
Depreciation expense of $173,758 is excluded.
**Services**

**Comprehensive Developmental Assessment** Evaluates each child’s individual abilities and special health care needs.

**Physical and Occupational Therapy** Assist children in reaching motor milestones (sitting, crawling, walking, reaching, grasping) as well as functional skills such as dressing and eating.

**Speech and Language Therapy** Develops and enhances communication skills through spoken or sign language, picture exchange, computers and other communication devices.

**Nutrition/Feeding Team** Evaluates and treats the nutritional and feeding difficulties of children ages birth to five years.

**Special Education, Community Preschool and Family Co-op** Enhance children’s cognitive and social development, support the parent-child relationship, create safe and secure learning environments, and encourage children to socialize with their peers. Children develop self-confidence, independence and the foundation for all future learning.

**CUBS (Communication, Understanding, Behavior and Socialization)** Combines a high-quality early intervention program, extended instruction time, and technical and social support for families of children with autism.

**Integrated Spanish Programs** Offer developmental assessments, early intervention therapies and special education, preschool classes, resource coordination, parent education, and support groups all provided in Spanish.

**Family Resource Coordination** Links families with appropriate community resources; helps with funding and eligibility requirements; and coordinates services.

**Early Care & Education Consultation** Provides developmental screenings in the community as well as on-site visits to child care programs to observe children, consult with child care staff and parents, make appropriate referrals, and develop strategies to ensure all children succeed in child care. Trainings are individualized to the unique needs of providers.

**CHERISH (CHildren Encouraged by Relationships In Secure Homes)** Supports young children in foster and kinship care and their families through a carefully structured set of assessments and interventions. CHERISH educates foster and relative caregivers about the attachment cycle, guides each caregiver-child pair through the process of developing this important early bond and provides developmental therapies and early education to prepare children to reach their full social, emotional, physical and academic potential.

**Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP)** Works to serve families who experience one or multiple educational and/or economic barriers in accessing high quality early learning services to prepare their children for early school success.

**Family Therapy** Supports families facing the emotional impact and unique challenges of parenting a child with special needs. Licensed family therapists provide counseling, facilitate group programs and collaborate with treatment teams to promote healthy family relationships.

**Fathers Network** Provides male peer support, resources and education, father-child interaction sessions, and family social occasions. Fathers become more competent and compassionate caregivers for their children with special needs.

**Sibling Support Project and Sibshops** Support siblings of children with special needs. Through activities, arts, games and discussion, children share their experiences and learn that they are not alone in facing the challenges of being a brother or sister of a child with special needs.

**Parenting Plus** Provides free, multi-lingual parenting education courses for families who may be experiencing difficulties. Monthly support groups are offered to program graduates.
Don & Jollene Leob  
Kevin & Mary Case  
Gentry & Christine Valley  

HeARtFelt  

The Jordan Fund  

Alan & Mary Frazier  
Michael Ernst & Carol Weisbecker  
Scott & Catherine Callan  
David & Barbara Boss  
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are helping our children reach for

Leo  

Hercules donated the skin of a lion as

his mantle of bravery. Your generous

philanthropy is a sign of strong

dedication to our mission.

The Anderson Foundation  

David & Myrne Meyerson Foundation  
The Seattle Times Fund  

for the Needy  
The Ball Foundation  

Doug & Janet True  

$10,000 to $24,999

Androeclas helped an injured lion by
gently removing a thorn from his paw.
Your contribution illustrates your
concern and ensures that our most
vulnerable children receive the service
they deserve.

Michael L & Lisa Anderson  

Bellevue Breakfast Rotary Club  

Donna Baranovskaya  
Gregory & Cari Benn  
Donna Benaroya  

Anonymous Donations  

Michael & Lisa Anderson  

vulnerable children receive the service

courtesy of the kindness of our donors.

The heartfelt generosity of our donors

will help us provide a better future for

our children.

$50,000 or more

Yours is the Coeur de Lion, the heart of

your enduring investment in Kindering's

programs demonstrates your care and compassion.

The Friends of the Children  

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$25,000 to $49,999

Hercules donned the skin of a lion as

takes a community to raise a child with special needs. Thank you for

becoming such a vital member of our

family. With gratitude, we welcome you to our

Jordan Fund  

Steve & Cindy Cordial  
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The Seattle Foundation  

Martin S. & Catherine Mayer  
Martin & Minnie Siegel  

Swedish Medical Center  

$5,000 to $9,999

All children are unique, their potential

shines bright. As a Leo donor, you are

helping our children reach for the stars.

David & Terry Azose  
David & Barbara Ross  
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Sterling Realty Organization  
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$2,500 to $4,999

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50th Anniversary Honorary Committee Chairs

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Our commitment is to create and provide superior, individualized, family-centered services for children who are disabled, medically fragile, or vulnerable because of abuse or neglect; to develop maximum potential, hope, and community understanding.