



Ithaca's Play Symposium

Presenter Profiles

Erin Marteau, *A Culture of Play at Ithaca Children's Garden (ICG)*

Ithaca Children's Garden is thrilled to host the second annual Play Symposium, and offers this 2-day time together, and the magic of our 3-acre children's garden, home of the Hands-on-Nature Anarchy Zone, to all symposium-goers for edification and enjoyment. Wisdom gained through experience, trial and error, incredible partnerships, and a public garden perspective are available for the taking during our time together. Learn how a culture of play flows through everything we do at ICG.

Erin Marteau has served ICG as Executive Director since 2011. With a masters in public garden leadership from Cornell University, and 10 years experience in the garden-based learning world, she feels passionate and grateful to work in a field she loves, leading an organization she believes in, rooted in a magically wonderful place, with a dynamite team, supporting positive change.

Erica Larsen-Dockray & Jeremiah Dockray: *Fits and Starts and Garbage Piles*

The beginnings of Santa Clarita Valley Adventure Play, Eureka Villa, and the many tips and tricks and roadblocks and fun that have got us to where we are. We'll share some insights on our unique situation as private landowners, and our hopes for both our permanent space and our pop-up and playworker outreach.

Erica Larsen-Dockray is a native of Scottsbluff, NE. She is currently an adjunct faculty at her alma mater, the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), in the school of Film/Video. She is also a teaching artist at Inner-City Arts in downtown Los Angeles teaching Media Arts to grade school students and Animation to 7-12th grades.

Erica co-founded Calibraska Arts Initiative which is a summer program bringing artists from California to small town Western Nebraska to teach multi-generational workshops in their métier while enveloped in the Nebraska landscape. She is also in the process of launching her businesses, SCV Adventure Play and Eureka Villa with her husband Jeremiah which focuses on creating temporary and permanent play spaces for children and adults which facilitate and support self-directed and unstructured play.

Jeremiah Dockray is a preschool teacher and playworker, TV and film editor, and a co-founder of SCV Adventure Play and Eureka Villa.

After studying film at the College of Santa Fe in his home state of New Mexico, he moved to California and worked in the TV industry for over a decade. In 2012, he discovered the concept of Adventure Playgrounds, and was happy to discover a thriving movement to join. Along with his wife Erica, he is in the process of setting up SCV Adventure Play and Eureka Villa, an outreach and a permanent space that will advocate for free play for all.

Janice O'Donnell: *PlayCorps- Adventure Play in Providence Public Parks*

PlayCorps places teams trained in playwork in 7 inner-city Providence parks throughout the summer, plus PlayMobile brings additional adventure play to 10 other Providence parks. Presentation describes how the program originated, how it is funded and how it works - plus lessons learned. PlayCorps served nearly 4,000 children in summer 2015.

Janice O'Donnell, who served as Executive Director at Providence Children's Museum from 1987 through 2014, now directs PlayCorps at the Partnership for Providence Parks and consults for several child-centered organizations. As a Rhode Island Foundation Fellow, Ms. O'Donnell studied playwork in the UK, and applies playwork techniques in her work in inner-city parks.

Alex Cote: *Designing Anarchy*

We talk about adventure playgrounds as a place where children design their own play within a site, but much of the design of the site itself is created by adults. This presentation will chronicle some of the design decisions that went into the Hands-On-Nature Anarchy Zone from inception to present day.

Alex Cote has been part of the Hands-On-Nature Anarchy Zone team from before it was created in 2012 to the present. She is currently Ithaca Children's Garden's Playwork Coordinator and maintains the Hands-on-Nature Anarchy Zone through its many changes; she also makes a lot of bubbles.

Jill Wood & Kids of Adventure Playground: *Our Playground*

The Kids of Adventure Playground at The Parish School (Houston, TX) will tell you what is important to them about their playground.

Jill Wood was born in Los Angeles, CA. Her favorite subject in school was recess and her favorite childhood hours were spent on her bike, digging in mud, or labeling rocks. In 2008, she founded The Parish School's adventure playground in Houston, TX. The Kids of Adventure Playground have built it from there.

Suzanna Law: *Learning to Playwork*

There are two ways through playwork - mostly experience based and mostly academic based. This pecha kucha will talk about the academic route through playwork and the lessons that were picked up along the way.

Suzanna Law is half of Pop-Up Adventure Play, a small but delightfully international charity. She is based in the UK and focuses on the communications and networking side of Pop-Up. She has been a playworker for the last 8 years, starting as a playranger and is now working towards a PhD in playwork.

Tricia O'Connor: *Rebuilding the American Dream ... thru PLAY*

In August 2013, my tiny town was featured in the New York Times as the poster child of the Crumbling American Dream. A month later we held our first pop-up playground and Lake Erie Adventure Play (LEAP) was born.

Only girl I know who could climb trees barefoot like a monkey.” — My childhood friend, Joe I hold the vision as well as develop and implement operations of a new nonprofit program currently funded by United Way in Ottawa Co and based in Port Clinton, Ohio. Lake Erie Adventure Play (LEAP) builds confidence and connections through self-directed play. In our last fiscal year, we served 2000 youth in a three-county area. In 2015, we also piloted two weeks of Tinkering School Lake Erie (in the Works) based upon the philosophy and program developed by software engineer Gever Tulley, author of 50 Dangerous Things (You Should Let Your Children Do). In my other life, I’m a museum consultant with over 18 years experience developing award-winning exhibits for children, families and life-long learners. I’m also a wife, mom, grandma and dog lover. One of the things I do for play is twist metal and steel into garden sculptures. And I still climb trees.

Morgan Leichter-Saxby & Suzanna Law: *Playwork in Practice*

From the first adventure playgrounds to playwork’s more recent applications in schools, hospitals and public spaces, adults have found creative ways to help “compensate” children for lost opportunities to play. With pictures and stories, this presentation covers a short history of the adventure playground movement and some essential playwork practices that can be applied by anyone, anywhere.

Morgan Leichter-Saxby has worked on adventure playgrounds and ranging projects in the UK and US since 2007. She’s a co-founder of Pop-Up Adventure Play, and leads on their playwork training internationally. She’s currently working towards her PhD in playwork with Prof. Fraser Brown.

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Erin Davis: *The Land*

The Land (2015) is a short documentary film about the nature of play, risk and hazard set in The Land, a Welsh “adventure” playground. At The Land, children climb trees, light fires and use hammers and nails in a play-space rooted in the belief that kids are empowered when they learn to manage risks on their own.

Erin Davis is an artist, filmmaker, radio producer and educator living in Vermont, USA. To support her documentary habit, Erin teaches courses in radio documentary at Middlebury College. Her favorite game is catch.

Joan Almon, *Alliance for Childhood*

Joan Almon is director of programs at the U.S. Alliance for Childhood which she co-founded in 1999. The Alliance builds partnerships of individuals and organizations committed to providing a healthy and creative childhood for all children. Joan leads workshops and gives lectures on child development and play and has authored many articles and book chapters. She was formerly a Waldorf early childhood educator and has been a consultant for schools around the world.

Rusty Keeler: *Inspiring Places for Play (and Ruckus)*

We are how we play - we are where we play. This slideshow presentation will give a whirlwind tour of a variety of adventurous play places from around the world that say "yes" to children's free play and support mess, creativity, mud and mayhem.

Rusty Keeler is an author, speaker, and designer of natural play environments for children. He's worked with communities all over the world to create magical messy playscapes filled with trees, sand, water, mud, hills, loose parts and more. His favorite playspace of course is Ithaca's Hands-on-Nature Anarchy Zone.

Reilly Wilson: *Troubling the Spatial Politics of Adventure Playground Funding*

This presentation will examine the larger spatial politics of playground funding and their role in shaping playgrounds in ways that inhibit autonomous free play. It traces the negative consequences of privatized playground funding through case studies ranging from 1950s Minneapolis, 1950s-60s London, and 1970s New York City to contemporary Bosnia, the United Kingdom, Philadelphia, and New York City.

*Reilly Bergin Wilson is a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow in the Environmental Psychology doctoral program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and a research associate at the Children's Environments Research Group. Reilly is also a founding member of play:ground, a project seeking to produce an adventure playground in NYC. She was awarded a Masters by Research with Distinction in Geography from the University of Leeds for her thesis, *Who Owns the Playground: Space and Power at Lollard Adventure Playground (1954-1961)*, funded through a US-UK Fulbright Commission University of Leeds Partnership Award. She also holds an Honors B.A. in Geography from Temple University, for which she conducted funded research in Bosnia-Herzegovina on playground privatization. Currently, Reilly's research is focused on constructing a critical history of adventure playgrounds in the United States. Reilly's interest in playgrounds stems from her work as a caregiver for very young people, as she witnessed their constant efforts to find patches of loose materiality in mostly static playscapes.*

Beth Myers: *Time to Move: Salutogenic Environments for All*

In the context of the 'second wave' of the environmental justice movement, a greater focus is on creating enabling environments for health promotion, especially to affect physical activity behavior. Given the disproportionate health burden of physical inactivity among low-income, racial and ethnic minorities, designing and systematically researching 'salutogenic' or health-promoting environments is critical. This study examines the influence of an adventure playground on children's active free play and positions the free play movement within an environmental justice framework.

Beth recently graduated with her PhD in Environmental Psychology from Cornell University where she studied how outdoor environments affect children's physical activity and active free play. Passionate about social justice and environmental justice, her work focuses on child health inequalities. Living in Ithaca for the past 4 years, and welcoming her first son (now 5 months!) she is excited to call Ithaca home. Beth is currently continuing her training as a National Institutes of Health Postdoctoral Fellow in Community Nutrition at Cornell University, in preparation to one day work in academia. She hopes that her teaching inspires and her research can be used for good.

Kristin Eno: *Little Creatures who Seek and Find*

Little Creatures Films connects children with filmmakers and educators to produce imaginative live action films told in the children's voice. Find & Seek is a project-based early childhood laboratory that invites children to explore materials, play, and tell stories.

Kristin is an education entrepreneur, filmmaker and visual artist. She develops environments that facilitate imaginative play, and records children's adventures, stories and songs. She founded and directed Digital Story Workshop, which provided video storytelling workshops in NYC schools, and Little Creatures Films, which produced the short film Spirit Ship. Kristin currently offers workshops, consults and writes for Find & Seek, and was recently featured as a changemaker in the book Squandering America's Future – Why ECE Policy Matters for Equality, Our Economy, and Our Children, by Susan Ochshorn. Kristin seeks to make system change in publicly-funded early childhood education, using the arts and authentic self-directed learning to serve children living in poverty. Kristin and her husband Sean and their own little creatures (girls ages 3 and 6) live in Red Hook, Brooklyn.

David Stillwell: US Fish & Wildlife Service - Adventure Playground?

How and why the US Fish & Wildlife Service is involved with adventure play. An exploration of this unlikely but amazing partnership.

David Stilwell is the Field Supervisor for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's New York Field Office. Over the 36 years he has worked in the natural resource field he has noted how young people have begun to lose their connection to the outdoors and the natural environment around them. In an effort to start to address this, he worked with an amazing team of collaborators to create the Hands-on-Nature Anarchy Zone, a unique approach to reconnect children and families to nature.

Morgan Leichter-Saxby: Embodiment, ethnography and reflective playwork

We use physical metaphors to communicate all the time, often unthinkingly. Together, we'll look at common phrases in playwork vocabulary and how these might shape in-the-moment practice.

Morgan Leichter-Saxby has worked on adventure playgrounds and ranging projects in the UK and US since 2007. She's a co-founder of Pop-Up Adventure Play, and leads on their playwork training internationally. She's currently working towards her PhD in playwork with Prof. Fraser Brown.

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Pecha what?

Dubbed by some as the "antidote to death by PowerPoint," Pecha Kucha is a style of presentation wherein a speaker shows and discusses 20 slides for 20 seconds each (so the whole presentation is under 7 minutes). It is a fun, fast-paced format that compels the speaker to really get down to the 'meat' of their topic in a concise and engaging way.