

### *CRIBBS NOTES – June 1, 2007*

The truth of the matter is we are children for a very brief moment and then we rush into the passage that leads to adulthood. It happens too soon, not to be recovered. Unfortunately, many of us don't realize how precious childhood is until we are way past its gentle grip. In fact, too many children lose their innocence much too early. They are forced into the arena of responsibility before they are able to enjoy days of playful wonder. It is a cruel twist of fate and human error that robs them of fleeting years of childish frolic.

I get great pleasure out of driving my daughter Mika to school. It is our special time together. She is quiet while I impart "fatherly" wisdom. It may be she is tuning out the drone of daddy's voice, but usually she patiently allows me to go on. One day we talked about childhood. Although she has entered the teen zone, I encouraged her not to waste these waning years of her youth. "Don't do anything that will deprive you of your last years of childhood," I warned her. "You will be an adult much longer than these too few years of being a kid. Think and don't do anything that will have permanent consequences."

This year my classmates are celebrating our 40<sup>th</sup> high school reunion. What happened to the time? It seems not so long ago we were running up and down the football field, sitting in history and science classes, and taking the long way to get home. We were laughing and fretting about finals. We were signing yearbooks and wishing each other farewell. Those days are gone, not to return. Graduation signaled the end of childhood. We went our separate ways: some to war; others to college; most to our first jobs. Memories now faded into vague shadows and darkened flashes. Our childhood is no more.

Setting aside a day dedicated to little children who have not begun their formal education careers is quite remarkable. This is our moment to express true appreciation to the director, teachers, staff, and volunteers who spend their weekdays in the lives of our children. We are grateful to the parents who entrust their most precious treasures into our hands. And we are glad to have the children here with us.

Every time someone tells me how important our pre-school has been to a child, I feel a warm sensation of responsibility and dignity. Early childhood education is the foundation on which their learning skills are built. Learning how to be a person in community with other people begins on our campus. Dedication to the well being of children is a great gift and necessary if we are to achieve our potential as a society. Our future depends on them.

Today, we say, "Thank you!" to everyone who is a teacher, counselor, administrator, janitor, aide, and volunteer in our pre-school program. Thank you for giving yourselves to the development of our children. Also, "Thank you," parents, who bring your children here everyday and give us the privilege of learning how to be more human by working closely with the innocent ones.

Perhaps, there is a way to recapture a bit of our childhood. Maybe it happens whenever we spend a moment playing, laughing, and being with children.