

A Guide to the Overlee Preschool Records, 1946-2013

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Descriptive Summary

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Overlee Preschool Association

Extent

6 boxes.

Repository

Arlington Public Library, Center for Local History

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

The collection is open for research.

Use Restrictions

Images depicting children in RG 332 cannot be digitized until the photographs are 25 years old. There are no other research restrictions on RG 332.

Acquisition Information

Gift of Patricia Schnely, representative of Overlee Preschool, on February 14, 2017.

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Records

Researchers may find [RG 7, Arlington County Public Schools](#), of interest, which contains some documents related to public school Kindergarten ([Subgroup 1, Series 5, Files 50 and 51](#)). [Record Group 9, Citizens Committee for School Improvement](#), may also be of interest since CCSI was involved with the establishment of the first kindergartens in Arlington County.

Historical Information

On August 7, 1945, a group of Arlington parents met to organize their own cooperative preschool. World War II brought an influx of permanent residents to the county: the population doubled between 1940 and 1944. An unprecedented demand for day care and early childhood education centers emerged since the county public school system did not offer preschool or kindergarten. Mrs. Hazel Mahler decided to organize a new cooperative preschool when she discovered the nearby Rock Spring Cooperative was full, the waitlist long, and local private schools remained too expensive. She organized a meeting with local, interested parents at her home to discuss how they could provide reasonably-priced education for their young children. The parents decided to form their own cooperative preschool, named Overlee Preschool in honor of the nearby neighborhood, Overlee Knolls. As a cooperative preschool, parents made all the decisions regarding school policy, tuition, and classroom activities. Parents paid tuition, hired professional teachers, managed finances, served on the board of directors, acted as teaching assistants, and maintained the school facilities.

The founding parents secured three rooms for their preschool in the Resurrection Lutheran Church on Washington Boulevard and North Powhatan Street in Arlington. The school opened on October 8, 1945 and offered a morning session for nursery and kindergarten age children. In 1947, Overlee offered a separate kindergarten class for the first time, as well as a nursery class for children aged three and four. Overlee discontinued kindergarten classes in 1960 when Arlington County Public Schools began to offer kindergarten. Instead, Overlee offered a separate class for 3-year-olds (called the Bluebirds) and 4-year-olds (called the Redbirds). In 1980, Overlee introduced an additional class for 2-year-olds (called the Yellowbirds). Overlee classes emphasized social and emotional development over other specific skills (like reading or math) through play, activities involving art, music, and nature, and field trips.

Overlee has occupied several different locations in Arlington since opening, all in local churches, though it has been nonsectarian throughout its existence.

- 1) Resurrection Lutheran Church, 6201 N Washington Blvd (1945-1947)
- 2) Trinity Presbyterian Church, 5533 N 16th Street (April 1947-September 12, 1955)
- 3) Christ Methodist Church, 5700 Lee Highway (September 13, 1955-1965)
- 4) St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 2425 N Glebe Rd (1965-1989)
- 5) Church of the Covenant, 2666 N Military Road (1989-present)

Scope and Content

This collection contains materials from the Overlee Preschool Association, relating to operation of the preschool and Overlee's participation in educational organizations, like the Parent Cooperative Preschools International and the Northern Virginia Council of Parent Participation Nursery Schools, Inc. (also referred to as the Council of Cooperative Preschools of Northern Virginia and the Virginia Cooperative Preschool Council). The entire collection currently measures three linear feet.

The materials cover the years 1946 to 2013, but the bulk date from the 1970s to the 1990s. There are documents, including minutes, directories, bibliographies, workshop reports, surveys, and newsletters from the Parent Cooperative Preschool International and the Northern Virginia Council of Parent Participation Nursery Schools, Inc., both of which Overlee was a member of. Surveys conducted by the Council of Cooperative Preschools of Virginia provide statistics on the salaries, enrollment numbers, and class sizes at Overlee in comparison to other local cooperative preschools. The majority of the rest of the collection illustrates Overlee's operation. There are financial records, including budgets, treasurer's reports, and related correspondence, as well as field trip reports, class schedules, pamphlets, parent handbooks, and a small amount of early childhood education literature.

Cognizant of its history, at some point Overlee started and maintained a "history file," which contains most of

the cooperative's earliest extant records from the 1940s to 1960s, including early newsletters, a constitution, informational brochures, and documentation of Overlee's various facilities over the years. Other early records can be found in a scrapbook maintained from 1947 to the 1970s, which features informational brochures, photographs, and relevant newspaper clippings.

A significant collection of newsletters from the 1970s to 1990s remain, which parents wrote and used to communicate with one another. These monthly newsletters, titled variations of *Overlee Preschool*, *Overlee Preschool Association*, or *Overlee Preschool News* during the 1970s and 1980s, and finally *Bird's Eye View* from 1983-1990. The newsletters contain a calendar of events, updates from teachers, the President, and Director, information on upcoming events, like field trips, parent meetings, or conferences, tuition and fundraising, as well as occasional articles from parents on child rearing.

Lastly, the collection features a substantial audio-visual collection of photographs of children in the classroom with teachers and parent assistants, playing on playgrounds, and on field trips, as well as a videotape of Mrs. Sue Hewitt from the 1990s, who taught at Overlee from 1971-1997.

Index Terms

Subjects:

Education, Preschool -- United States

Cooperative schools

Arlington (Va.)

Arlington County (Va.)

Arrangement

Most of these files have been accrued by multiple contributors over the years. Due to the cooperative nature of the association, one parent may have been in charge of a certain aspect of the school's operation, such as budgets or the newsletter, and became in charge of those files. Once their child left the preschool, this duty would be handed off to another parent, who became responsible for the files. Most files are arranged in reverse chronological order, as Overlee had the files organized. Overall, original file titles are preserved in quotes (" "). The archivist has added information in brackets ([]) in folder titles where clarification was needed.

This collection is split into five series. *Series 1* contains files from cooperative preschool associations Overlee became member of. *Series 2* contains financial records. These are both labeled and arranged in the manner Overlee created.

Series 3, called Administrative Files, contains the material Overlee originally referred to as their "History" files. At some point, the cooperative began to actively collect older documents from past members and saved materials they believed relevant to their past as cooperative preschool. The archivist arranged this series into three subseries: the original "history file," files pertaining to events and student activities, and informational brochures and handbooks on Overlee Preschool and child rearing. These are labelled and the file items arranged in the manner Overlee formed.

Series 4 contains the Overlee Preschool Association newsletter from 1969-1999. The original file schema was maintained. Newsletters were filed by month and in reverse chronological order by year. Files were arranged from September until June to match the school calendar year. No newsletters were published in summer months when school was not in session. More information on the editing process and maintenance of the Newsletter file can be found in the file Newsletter Editor Instructions in this series. Assorted newsletters found in a separate folder in the History section (*Series 3*) have been moved to this Series in the "Assorted Newsletters" file. Copies of all of these "assorted newsletters" also exist in the other folders in Series 4.

Series 5 holds the Audio Visual Material materials, comprised of two videotapes (VHS), a few folders of loose photographs, photos mounted on photo boards, three photo albums, and two scrapbooks. Albums and scrapbooks were rehoused in files and photo sleeves. Digital images of the scrapbooks, Photo Album 3, and the photo boards before the archivist rehoused the contents can be found on the staff drive. Please ask a Center for Local History staff member for help to view these images. The archivist also took photocopies of the scrapbooks, Photo Album 3, and the photo boards before each were deconstructed, which are included in the corresponding folders.

Contents List

Series 1: Cooperative Preschool Association Literature and Correspondence

File 1: "Parent Cooperative Preschools International" (Overlee a Founder), 1958-1986

Box 1

File 2: "Northern Virginia Council of Parent Participation Nursery Schools, Inc. Workshop Reports," 1961-1980

Box 1

File 3: [Handbook] - "Northern Virginia Council of Parent Participation Nursery Schools, Inc.," 1976

Box 1

File 4: "Council of Cooperative Preschools of Northern Virginia - Surveys and Directories," 1970-1989

Box 1

File 5: "Council of Cooperative [Pre]Schools of Northern Virginia - Minutes, Bylaws, Newsletters," [pamphlets, calendars, memos], 1981-1990

Box 1

Series 2: Financial Records

File 1: "Budgets," [Treasurer's Reports, and Financial Correspondence], 1973-1990

Box 1

Series 3: Administrative Files

Subseries 1: History File

File 1: "History of Overlee Preschool" - [brochures, newsletters, constitution/bylaws, newspaper clippings, relocation documents], 1946-1968

Box 2

Subseries 2: Events and Student Activities

File 1: "Overlee's 40th Anniversary" [Planning], 1986

Box 2

File 2: "Press Releases/40th Anniversary" [Planning], 1986-1995

Box 2

File 3: "Overlee's 50th Anniversary" [Planning], 1996

Box 2

File 4: "Field Trips," [Reports], 1972-1973, 1978-1980, 1984-1985, 1993, 1999

Box 2

File 5: "Field Trips," [Announcements], 1972-1973, 1978-1980, 1984-1985, 1993, 1999

Box 2

File 6: "Camp and Playground Reports" 1971, 1972, 1984, 1988, and

File 6: "Camp and Playground Reports," 1971, 1975, 1984, 1989, n.d.

Box 2

File 7: "Class Schedules/Playground Rules," n.d.

Box 2

Subseries 3: Brochures and Handbooks

File 1: "Child Guidance Pamphlets," 1946, 1951, 1953, 1957, 1959, n.d.

Box 2

File 2: "Old Advertising Brochures" [and 1988 Overlee statistics, 1989 relocation letters], 1988-1989, 2000-2001, n.d.

Box 2

File 3: [Handbook for Overlee Parents], 1984, 1990

Box 2

File 4: "Old Handbooks" [for Overlee Parents], 2007-2013

Box 2

Series 4: Overlee Preschool Association Newsletter

File 1: "September" [Newsletters], 1990-1994, 1996-1998

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File 2: "September" [Newsletters], 1981-1986, 1988-1989

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File 3: "September" [Newsletters], 1970-1979

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File 4: "October" [Newsletters], 1990-1994, 1996, 1998

Box 3

File 5: "October" [Newsletters], 1980-1981, 1983, 1985-1989

Box 3

File 6: "October" [Newsletters], 1971-1972, 1975-1979

Box 3

File 7: "November" [Newsletters], 1990-1998

Box 3

File 8: "November" [Newsletters], 1980-1981, 1984-1989

Box 3

File 9: "November" [Newsletters], 1970-1973, 1975-1979

Box 3

File 10: "December" [Newsletters], 1991-1997

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File 11: "December" [Newsletters], 1980-1989

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File 12: "December" [Newsletters], 1971-1973, 1975-1979

Box 4

File 13: "January" [Newsletters], 1990-1999

Box 4

File 14: "January" [Newsletters], 1982-1983, 1985, 1987-1989

Box 4

File 15: "January" [Newsletters], 1970, 1972-1975, 1977-1978

Box 4

File 16: "February" [Newsletters], 1990-1999

Box 4

File 17: "February" [Newsletters], 1980-1989

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File 18: "February" [Newsletters], 1970-1978

Box 4

File 19: "March" [Newsletters], 1990-1999

Box 4

File 20: "March" [Newsletters], 1980-1989

Box 4

File 21: "March" [Newsletters], 1969-1979

Box 4

File 22: "April" [Newsletters], 1990-1999

Box 5

File 23: "April" [Newsletters], 1981-1982, 1984-1989

Box 5

File 24: "April" [Newsletters], 1970-1979

Box 5

File 25: "May" [Newsletters], 1990-1994, 1996-1999

Box 5

File 26: "May" [Newsletters], 1980-1989

Box 5

File 27: "May" [Newsletters], 1970-1974, 1976, 1978-1979

Box 5

File 28: "June" [Newsletters], 1990-1999

Box 5

File 29: "June" [Newsletters], 1970-1972, 1975, 1981-1982, 1986-1987

Box 5

File 30: [Newsletter Editor Instructions], 1983-1988, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1996

Box 5

File 31: "Assorted Newsletters," 1979, 1981, 1983, 1988-1990

Box 5

Series 5: Audio-Visual Materials

File 1: "Mrs. Sue Hewitt, 25 years," videotape, n.d.

Box 5

File 2: "Photographs - Color," [1984], 1985-1989

Box 5

File 3: [Halloween, Last Day of School], 1988-1999

Box 5

File 4: "Photographs - 8" x 10" Black & White," 1986

Box 5

File 5: "Photographs - 8" x 10" Black & White," 1986

Box 5

File 6: [Photograph Album 1], 1997

Box 7

File 7: [Photograph Album 2], 1992-1993

Box 7

File 8: "Need Copies," [Loose Photographs and Photo Boards], 1984-2004

Box 7

File 9: [Photograph Album 3], 1981-1982, 1988-1989

Box 7

File 10: [Scrapbook 1], 1970, n.d.

Box 7

File 11: [Scrapbook 2], 1947, 1952-1964, 1967-1968, 1970, 1972, 1977, 1979, n.d.

Box 7