

Serving Children Since 1956

# Tiny Tim Tales

Winter, 2009 Volume 5, Issue 1

## My Interview with Teedee Keister

By Martha Clemensen



Teedee and Tiny Tim scholar, Adam Roth

**Joy, Love, Peace** – just three simple words on the sweatshirt Teedee was wearing the day I interviewed her about her upcoming departure as Executive Director of Tiny Tim. These three words struck me throughout my interview. For me, the words printed on this sweatshirt were more than just words – they

were an embodiment of the way Teedee is leaving her position as Executive Director of Tiny Tim.

I spent about an hour with Teedee talking about her upcoming retirement and how she felt about leaving Tiny Tim after 22 years. Her words weren't melancholy or regretful; they were excited, joyful and futuristic.

**MC:** Why now?

**TK:** It's time. Over 10 years ago, I had two visions for the Center – one was to move into a new facility and the other was to be fiscally strong. I have seen these visions to fruition and I am ready for the next chapter of my life to begin. My husband is now retired and I have two grandchildren whom I would like to spend more time with. Two years ago I put forth the idea of retirement. Initially, I thought I would walk out the door and hand the center off to a new Executive Director. But over time I realized, both personally and professionally, that I couldn't just walk out. There will be a learning curve for the new ED and I want to assist in this process. I also believe I can fulfill a need at the Center: grant writing, which in the tough economic times ahead is critical. So, though I am handing over the reins to a new ED, I am still going to have some involvement in the Center.

**MC:** What have you seen change in the years that you have been with the Center?

**TK:** I started at Tiny Tim as a classroom teacher in 1986. I was hired as a substitute and then as a teacher a year later. In 1990, I became the Executive Director. The biggest change has been the increase in the number of children we serve. In 1986 it was 26 kids in preschool. Today we have over 100 children in preschool and in the Therapeutic Outreach program the caseload is between 125 and 150 children. That translates into over 500 children per year vs. the 40 of years past. We have also expanded to serve kids up to age 12 through our Therapeutic Outreach Program. This shift is largely credited to Becky Brandli, who was a professional colleague and a friend. She was the "Eleanor Roosevelt of Pediatric Therapeutic Services" in Longmont and she gave her business to Tiny Tim and then worked for Tiny Tim.

**MC:** Who will carry the historical perspective forward?

**TK:** I only provide a snapshot of Tiny Tim. We have staff members who have been with Tiny Tim longer than I have and can provide a larger and longer historical perspective. The staff, along with the dedicated alumni parents, the volunteers and the current Board of Directors will continue to define, develop and enact the work of Tiny Tim. The current Board of Directors is passionate about the future of Tiny Tim because of the importance of the mission.

I believe these linkages to the past are part of a vital future. However, I believe Tiny Tim is just in its "teenage years." I am joyful it is an organization that is not stagnant and continues to develop.

**MC:** What do you believe are some of the challenges facing Tiny Tim?

Continued on page 2

### DON'T FORGET THE POWER OF THE TAX CREDIT



Did you know that you could benefit from your cash gift to Tiny Tim? The Child Care Contribution Credit was designed to promote child care in Colorado. Your valuable

gift helps to promote childcare in the state of Colorado and will give you an additional tax break at the same time. A tax credit up to 50% of the total gift can be claimed.

This significant tax credit has been extended until the end of December 2009. Consult your CPA or financial adviser for specifics regarding these potential tax savings. Not only might you benefit from these savings but you will also help to guarantee the future of Tiny Tim. Remember that a pledge enables you to spread the cost of your gift over a longer period of time.

### Inside this Issue...

Tiny Tim Photo Gallery	2
Christmas Tree Festival	2
We're Going Green	2
A Message from the President	3
Rock & Roll Auction	3
Thank You to Donors	3
Time for School!	4

## TINY TIM PHOTO GALLERY

### Christmas Tree Festival

Who's that special visitor at the 2008 Christmas Tree Festival?



2008 Christmas Tree Festival



The 2008 Christmas Tree Festival far surpassed expectations, especially during this time of economic stress. Our community stepped up to the plate through their support of donated trees and door prizes, their attendance and purchase of raffle tickets.

With the combined events there were 119 trees donated, raising over \$66,000 for our programs for children with special needs.

*Special thanks to our chair Mary Kopman and all of her jolly elves who helped to make this event such a success.*



Thank You...  
**Precision Plumbing, Heating & Electric** for their wonderful support.

### Help us "Go Green"

In an effort to cut back on the amount of paper we generate, and to help us reduce mailing and postage costs, Tiny Tim is implementing an e-news service this year. If you would like to receive updates and announcements about Tiny Tim's programs and events via e-mail, please visit our Web site, [www.tinytimcenter.org](http://www.tinytimcenter.org), and sign up to receive our newsletter.

### INTERVIEW WITH TEEDEE (Cont'd from pg 1)

**TK:** The challenge is to continue to provide the highest quality of pediatric services and fiscally sustain them. Historically, there have been Tiny Tim angels who have assisted the Center in the attainment of its goals. This year, the economic climate has shifted and we need to be prepared for this.

**MC:** What do you believe are the opportunities?

**TK:** To create a better understanding among families and donors of what Tiny Tim does in the community.

**MC:** What parting words do you have for the staff, the families, the volunteers, and the board of directors?

**TK:** I am not leaving with sadness or remorse. I am leaving with love and joy. So, what I would like to say is "Thank you!"

Thank you to the staff because they are the heart and soul of Tiny Tim. What they do day in and day out for the kids and families is the very reason I have been able to do the things I do. The quality of the care, love and services allowed me to create a vision for the future that has included program growth and a successful building campaign.

Thank you to the alumni families for trusting us with the lives of your children. To the current families I would just like to say that everything is going to be okay. I may be the captain but it takes a crew and they are still here at the Center.

To the donors, thank you for giving from the heart. Every gift, large or small, has made a difference.

The volunteers free up time for the Executive Director and the staff to focus on the core mission. Thank you to all of you for being there and doing the hard work you do.

The Board is enmeshed with the donors and volunteers. Not a single circle in Tiny Tim is alone, they are all comingled and crossover and they are what make the Center work.

**MC:** Is that all?

**TK:** No, I haven't talked about the kids. This is the hardest one for me. Not one child stands out as I look back over the years – there are so many that flash before my eyes. Thank you for your perseverance, humor and love of life in the face of some of the most extraordinary challenges. Each and every one has been such a gift personally and professionally. I will cherish those memories.

I hope to take those qualities into my future and the way I live my life.

I also want to say thank you to my family for supporting me through all these years and understanding the time I have spent away from home.



### A Message from the President

How do you say good-bye to a leader who has been part of an organization for more than 20 years – to a person who has grown an organization? You don't!

We are going to miss Teedee Keister's lively presence on a daily basis when she retires this coming spring. Her compassion for children with challenges (and their families), her sense of humor, her determination to raise the funds necessary to further the Center's programs, her guitar skills, her calm advice: all of these talents we have enjoyed for 22 years will long be remembered. As President of the Board of Directors, I know I speak for the whole Board in thanking Teedee for her remarkable efforts on behalf of Tiny Tim. And we are so grateful that Teedee will continue to serve the Center as a grant writer in her retirement!

As a Board, we are excited to be part of the future direction of Tiny Tim as we implement our new strategic plan and as we welcome a new Executive Director to the Center. The Search Committee was delighted with the quality and experience of the candidates who applied to fill this position and looks forward to making an exciting announcement soon. In fact, we plan to introduce the new Executive Director at the Annual Auction on March 7.

Teedee, we thank you for your support of The Tiny Tim Center and for the difference you have made in the lives of some very special children. In the words of the 2009 Auction, you rock!

*Beth Shipp, President*

### Join us for a Rock 'n' Roll Night to Remember!

Please save the date for **Tiny Tim's 26th Annual Auction**, which will be held on **Saturday, March 7, 2009**, at 5:30 p.m. at the Radisson Conference Center in Longmont. This fun event will celebrate rock music across the decades and is a special tribute to Tiny Tim's executive director, Teedee Keister, who is retiring this year. The event features a silent and live auction with hundreds of items donated by local businesses and individuals, a "heads and tails" raffle and more. As always, proceeds from the fundraiser support Tiny Tim's developmental preschool, transitional kindergarten and therapeutic outreach programs. Tickets go on sale **February 1** and can be purchased online at [www.tinytimcenter.org](http://www.tinytimcenter.org) or by calling 303-776-7417.

We are in the process of soliciting items for both the silent and live auctions. If you, or someone you know, can donate nights in a vacation home or condo, tickets for sporting events, or a gourmet dinner for eight in your home -- or unique experiences, arts & crafts, professional services -- please contact Jennie or Carey at 303-776-7417 or via e-mail at [info@tinytimcenter.org](mailto:info@tinytimcenter.org). The **deadline** for donations (to receive recognition in our materials) is **February 16**. In addition, we are always looking for people who would like to volunteer for the auction, including decorating, auction set-up and clean-up. If you'd like to volunteer, let us know. We greatly appreciate your support!

### INTERVIEW WITH TEEDEE (Cont'd from pg 1)

**MC:** Any parting words about Tiny Tim?

**TK:** Years ago, at the beginning of our capital campaign, Mayor Stoecker was quoted as saying "Tiny Tim is the hidden jewel of Longmont." There is still a large population that doesn't know about us. This community can be proud of the fact, that when a family is faced with one of the biggest challenges of their lives (finding out they have a child with special needs), Tiny Tim is there for them. Tiny Tim is there to show them how to fall in love with the unplanned destination.

The theme of the upcoming auction says it all, Tiny Tim Rocks!

**MC:** What now for you?

**TK:** Life is just beginning for me. I am joyous about this next transition. I am not sure what it is but I know its coming. There is no pain associated with leaving, just joy!

**MC:** It wasn't just joy I saw in Teedee that day; it was also love and peace as well. Her sweatshirt said it all.

### Thank You to Our Generous Foundation Donors!

**In 2008, the Tiny Tim Center received grants from the following Foundations:**

- Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation
- Collins Foundation
- The Community Foundation Serving Boulder County: Ertl Gift Fund
- The Lowe Fund of the Denver Foundation
- Herbert E. Parker Charitable Trust
- Longmont Community Foundation
  - Howard and Mary Allen Fund
  - Raymond and Mildred Sarchet Family Fund
  - Ken and Karen Kanemoto Family Fund
  - Merl F. and Albert J. Yeager Fund
  - Ray Lanyon Fund
- Lynn and Helen Clark Fund
- Season To Share, a McCormick Foundation Fund
- Rose Community Foundation
- Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation
- U.S. Bank

### The Tiny Tim Board of Directors for 2008-2009

**are:** **President** - Beth Shipp  
**Vice-President** - Vicki Schlagel  
**Secretary** - Steve Boettcher  
**Treasurer** - Mike Kirkland

#### Board Members

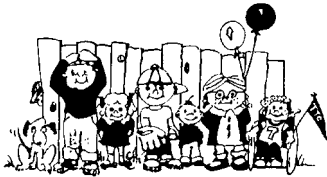
Stacy Cornay	Mike Hindman	Alison Miester
Lorry Cashatt	Wendy Kling	Julia Richardson-Staver
Chris Gaddis	Rick Kellogg	Deb Schmidt
Cole Gauger	Dan Kohler	Shelly Walker

# The Tiny Tim Center

The Tiny Tim Center  
611 Korte Parkway  
Longmont, Colorado 80501

Phone: 303-776-7417  
Fax: 303-776-7471  
Email: [info@tinytimcenter.org](mailto:info@tinytimcenter.org)

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## OUR MISSION

The Tiny Tim Center is committed to assist each child in reaching his or her highest potential through our developmental preschool, kindergarten and therapeutic outreach programs. Tiny Tim is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to serving families in Longmont and surrounding communities.

For more information on the Center and its programs for typical children or children with special needs, contact Teedee Keister, Executive Director, Tina Farrell, Coordinator of Educational Services; or Shari Karmen, Coordinator of Therapeutic Services. Or feel free to email us at [info@tinytimcenter.org](mailto:info@tinytimcenter.org).



Foothills United Way



## IT'S TIME TO DECIDE ON PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

The decision of where to send kids for preschool, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten sneaks up on parents. Usually, this decision needs to be made in the first few months of a new year for the following school year and the time it takes to evaluate a potential program can be daunting. Any parent who has gone through this process will counsel new parents to plan early, talk with friends and be sure you do your homework. Homework typically includes walk-throughs, conversations with directors and class observations.

No program is as friendly to this process as Tiny Tim. From the moment you walk in the door, you and your child feel that you have come home. Imagine the opportunity to spend a full day in a classroom experiencing everything from snack time to play time. This is available at Tiny Tim.

Other reasons to make this the first and only choice for pre-elementary school choices include:

- Small class sizes with a teacher to student ratio that is 1:4—1:5 excluding therapists.
- Creative Curriculum for observation, planning and assessment (the

philosophy is that children learn best by doing). Children explore their world using all their senses (touching, tasting, listening, smelling and looking).

- Teachers who are more than dedicated to the success of the children. This is a calling for all of them and as a parent you know your children are the recipient of this dedication.

Here are some comments from parents about this amazing Center...

- "I had always heard about the great work they do at Tiny Tim."
- "Tiny Tim was recommended to me as a great preschool program for children with and without special needs."
- "Tiny Tim offers children the chance to be children. They show children, through example and play, that differences don't mean you can't be friends."
- "Tiny Tim offers loving and compassionate staff. They are flexible and centered on his needs. They are very current on their instructional practices and continue to teach me."

**Don't Just Choose Tiny Tim But Promote It! Enrollment is Here So Come on By!**