



THE PIKLER INSTITUTE

Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA



WELL-BEING
FOR THE
CHILDREN OF
THE WORLD

INTERNATIONAL EMMI PIKLER FOUNDATION Spring 2004

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The Pikler Institute Lóczy, Budapest

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An Evening with Tony Curtis

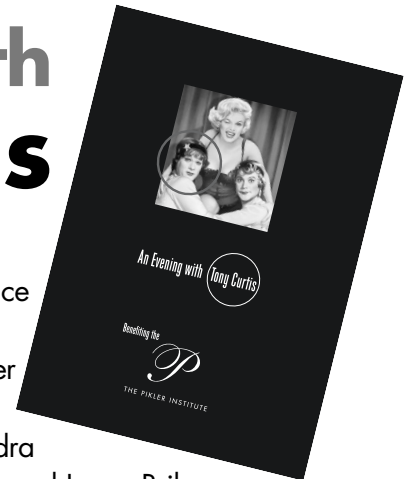
The Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA is proud to have been able to find a wonderful supporter for the Pikler Institute, the famous actor, Tony Curtis. Mr. Curtis offered to be the spokesperson and to be the featured artist at a charity gala in Budapest, Hungary at the Urania National Historical Cinema with all proceeds benefiting the Pikler Institute. A private cocktail reception was held where guests had an opportunity to meet Mr. Curtis, his wife, and daughter Alexandra Sargent.

The fundraiser was held October 30th, 2003. Mrs. Christine Elder, Cultural Secretary of the United States Embassy in Hungary opened the evening and praised the efforts of the Pikler Institute, which aids children without families. Mr. Curtis spoke about his ties with Hungary

and the assistance of his daughter

Alexandra Sargent and Laura Briley who helped organize the fundraising event for the Pikler Institute. He spoke of his memorable visit to the orphanage with his wife, Jill and spoke of the wonderful work that he observed at Pikler and the children who were so well cared for. He then presented a check for \$10,000.00 from the Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA to Anna Tardos. Anna is the Director of the Institute and is also Emmi Pikler's daughter. Anna asked him, "How could you so sensitively and easily get into contact with the small children you visited at our Institute?" The answer came quite naturally from the 78 year old actor, "Perhaps because I am still a small child." After the question and answer period, the audience of 500 viewed "Some Like It Hot". The film's humor and quality showed why Mr. Curtis has played in more than 160 films and has become famous all over the world.

We are happy to say that the event raised an additional \$10,000.





Alexandra Sargent, Tony Curtis' daughter, has written an article about the event for the Pikler Bulletin.

Excerpts of the article appear below:

"So, how did this all begin? In the summer of 2001, a year after my RIE I training in which I had learned of the Pikler Institute, I went to Budapest for a two-day observation. I was struck not only by the quality of the work there, but also by the working conditions; professionals doing vital and innovative work with children, yet struggling financially to stay open."

"While there, I learned about Dr. Emmi Pikler's background, which had some similarity with my father, Tony Curtis. Being of Hungarian descent, he had done a fundraising project for the Dohany Synagogue in Budapest. (The Dohany Synagogue is the largest Synagogue in Eastern

Europe). I thought my father might be able and willing to help the Pikler Institute. Anna gave me some information to bring to him and then our project slumbered for another year."

I continued working with parents and infants, fueled by what I had seen at Pikler and wishing that I could be involved in some way. I contacted Istvan Szanto in Paris who was the General Secretary of the Association of the International Pikler Institute. He recommended that I contact Laura Briley who ran the Eastern European Children's Aid in the USA and who was assisting with the fundraising efforts for Pikler in America.

Thus, began a madcap and sometimes maddening slew of three way intercontinental e-mails to plan a fundraiser, enough to fill a binder. Laura had dreamt of doing an event at the Opera House in Budapest, Steve had ideas and contacts of his own, and I had a format that I had used. Our plans went from a grand night at the opera with orchestra and variety show, down to the more manageable reception and screening. The tricky part was that the Institute had no budget for an event of this kind. So, it all had to be arranged for very little money.

Another issue was that we wanted

it to be in Budapest, but had no one who could organize it. As luck would have it, Dad had met the Hungarian Ambassador in Washington who felt that his wife, Nada Pejak might help us. She had been to Pikler and put us in touch with Csillas Farkas who made several good contacts and was able to arrange the booking of the beautiful Urania Cinema for a nominal fee.

There were months of arranging dates around everyone's schedule. Finally, a date was set. The Hungarian Tourism Board paid for Dad's flight, hotel and extras... another plus for us.

Six weeks before the event, my husband, daughter, and I left for Budapest to assist with the final planning. Being in a foreign country, things were even more challenging. Everything took twice as long...even getting a cell phone. True cooperation took place as both Pikler staff and the American Chamber of Commerce gave of their time to handle tickets, register guests, greet and host. It was a busy six weeks, but we found everyone eager and pleasant to work with. My father and his wife visited Pikler and were moved by what they saw, perhaps even inspired. This was truly a unique and satisfying experience."



MY IMPRESSIONS OF THE PIKLER INSTITUTE

Janet Gonzalez-Mena

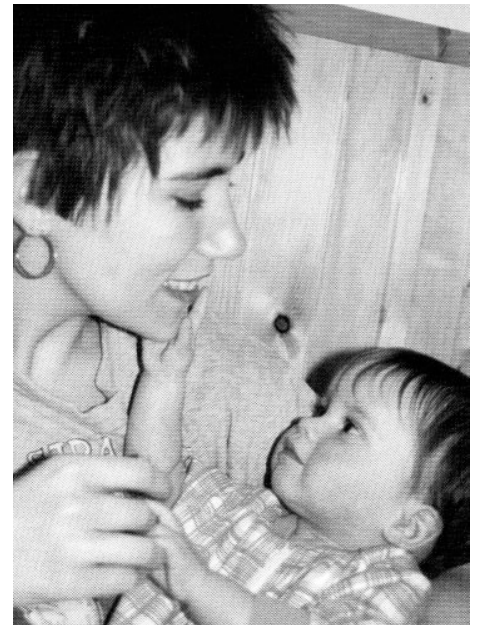
I sat on a chair at the Pikler Institute in the room with the youngest infants. In spite of jet lag, I was wide-awake, both physically and mentally. Being there as an observer turned out to be literally an eye-opening experience.

I teach people about relationship-based programs with caregiving as curriculum, but until my visit to the Pikler Institute last November, I didn't have a clear picture of the possibilities. I am at a loss for words to describe the respect and skill that I saw as the nurses washed, changed, and fed the children. I have an even harder time describing how well the children played on their own while the nurse was engaged in one-on-one caregiving.

While observing a toddler group, I remembered a scene in a teaching video made in the United States. Children about the same age as the child I was watching were wandering listlessly around the

classroom of a child care center. The narrator explained that this group size was too large for the children to feel secure and become engaged. The group in the video was about the same size as the one I was watching, yet, I never saw that kind of aimlessness in any of my observations at the Pikler Institute. The difference lies not in group size, but in the methods at the Pikler Institute. I was able to see both the process and the product of the methods with my own eyes.

The children learn from early on that they are fully capable of independent play and exploration. Because they are never put into positions they can't get into by themselves, they feel physically secure and free to move. They are used to taking the initiative in their motor development. They don't need or expect adult interference or entertainment during the times of the day not devoted to the essential



activities of daily living. The freedom to explore goes hand in hand with the deep feelings of emotional security. The children are confident that someone with whom they have a close personal relationship will meet their needs. They get full adult attention during caregiving times, which gives the firm foundation they need to feel the freedom to explore without adult involvement at other times.

I also saw with my own eyes how respect breeds cooperation. The children I observed at the Pikler Institute cooperated with the adults better than any group of infants and toddlers I have ever known or had the occasion to observe. When I

was with the youngest group, I saw how it all started. The adults cooperated with the babies, never forcing an arm through a sleeve, but waiting until the muscles relaxed. Because of the adult's exquisite sense of timing, the baby could cooperate so the adult could guide the arm gently by holding the hand. I observed real teamwork in every interaction!

That teamwork approach showed up in the toddlers too. The strong oppositional behavior I expect to see in toddlers simply was not there. That doesn't mean the children were passively compliant; far from it! They showed healthy streaks of independence and individuality and at the same time were remarkably cooperative. It was as if they were secure enough in themselves to choose to be part of a team effort. I marvel at the way the Pikler



approach results in a wonderful combination of cooperation and independence! I got hints about how it happens when I asked why one of the nurses fed a toddler before the rest of the group ate. The answer was that he couldn't eat with the others in a cooperative way, so he was allowed to go back to an earlier stage. I've seen adults in the United States say to a child, "Well, if you're going to act like a baby, then I'm going to treat you like one." That statement has threatening overtones and if carried out, the adult treatment is punishment for what is perceived as misbehavior. There was no such threat in the nurse's action at the Pikler Institute. Being fed is a gift to the child, not a punishment. The gift was made because the nurse knew that the joy of cooperating as an independent individual would be his once he was truly ready for it. She was not pushing the child, making demands, or asking him to please her with his ability to be independent. "In his own time," seems to be a motto of the Pikler Institute.

When I left Budapest for California, my mind and heart were

full. Ideas, images, and feelings were bouncing around inside me as I sat on the plane. What a gift the Pikler Institute has for the world! At the same time, I was troubled because of the Institute's financial difficulties. How much longer will people like me be able to see with their own eyes an approach that works so well? Will the Pikler Institute be there to support others who desire to improve early care and education in their own countries? If the Pikler Institute disappears, the loss will be enormous. At a time when the world is full of violence, pain, and neglect, the Pikler Institute stands as a symbol of hope for children everywhere. The solid principled practice of the Pikler Institute allows children to grow into caring, healthy, well-functioning adults who can create a peaceful world for the generations to come. Please, join with me in a movement to help the survival of the Pikler Institute so it can continue to influence the early childhood profession. If you would like to have additional information, you can contact Pikler-Lóczy Fund U.S.A. at 918.665.0877 and visit the website www.aipl.org.



ARE WE TOO LATE?

by Laura J. Briley

This article is written for my friends, family, colleagues, and everyone else who cares about the life of a child. I write this for the people at the Pikler Institute who care for 40 children 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. They have been doing this since 1946. More than two thousand children have gone through the Pikler Institute and are now contributing members of society. These are children who could have been throwaway children or irrecoverables as they are called in Romania. But, they aren't throwaways, thanks to the Pikler Institute. They are contributing members of our society. Isn't this what we hope and pray for all children to be able to achieve?

I have spent 29 years in the early childhood profession and have never encountered children so well cared for and valued than at this institution. Not only is the Pikler Institute an orphanage for 40 children, but also it is a training and research center.

Hundreds of professionals from all over the world have visited, trained and observed there. They have learned from Dr. Emmi Pikler and now from her daughter, Anna Tardos as well as from many other professionals who work there. They have weeklong sessions whereby professionals from over 20 countries have gained insight and knowledge of the very young child. Videos, articles, booklets are written to inform people about the research undertaken at the Pikler Institute by those working day to day with the children. This is a scientific opportunity to study children's behavior and their outcomes.

But, the institution is on the verge of closing its doors forever. They need everyone's help to raise money for its survival. The people at the Institute have never had to ask for money. But in 1997 the government almost closed their doors due to the economy. Due to the ceaseless efforts of a few people who established an international association, they were

able to reach the former President of the Republic of Hungary and Hungarian authorities, this international Association was able to ensure its survival during the last 6 years. Funding is being reduced and the threat of closing is again imminent. We only have a short period of time to secure funds for its survival.

Since we established the Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA, we have had a great interest in helping the orphanage. The Tony Curtis benefit raised awareness in Hungary and many corporate companies were contacted as well as the Chamber of Commerce and United Way in Budapest. We feel confident that if we can buy some more time that we will be able to get a grant. But, as you know grant proposals take time to write and then to receive. If you can help us in any way, please call or write to the Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA. Please help us in our fight for the life of the Pikler Institute.

NEW BOARD ANNOUNCED FOR PIKLER/LÓCZY FUND USA



Pictures left to right: Alexandra Sargent, Karen Gordon, Elsa Chahin-Nasta, and Laura Briley

On February 19, 2004, a group of dedicated individuals met to work on plans to assist the orphanage and the life of the Pikler Institute.

Alexandra Sargent, Karen Gordon, Elsa Chahin-Nasta, and Laura Briley met in Los Angeles for a 2-day session of brainstorming and planning to assist the future growth and development of the Pikler Institute. All of these women have been to the Pikler Institute several times and have made a commitment to work on assisting with its survival. Ms. Sargent, Ms. Gordon, and Ms.

Nasta agreed to be on the Board of Directors for the Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA that was started by Laura Briley in June 2003. Mrs. Briley has been assisting orphanages in Eastern Europe since 1990 and specifically the Pikler Institute, since 1998. The Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA was established to raise money for the ongoing work of the Pikler Institute.

A turning point for the Fund came when Alexandra Sargent (Tony Curtis' daughter) contacted her Father and asked for his assistance. He contacted Mrs. Briley and agreed to be a spokesperson for the Institute.

He also contributed funds in order for a brochure to be made that explains the purpose and mission of the Pikler Institute. Through the brochure and the charity fundraiser held in Budapest, approximately \$20,000 has been raised.

In addition to organizing this event, Karen Gordon announced to the board her contribution of \$10,000 to "kick-off" the building campaign for an educational training center to be built at the orphanage in Budapest. German architect Hans Zeitler has provided renderings and plans for the new center. His wife, Peggy Zeitler currently oversees the Pikler Association in Germany.

The newly formed Board is asking for assistance in their fundraising efforts. If you would like to participate, please contact them through the Fund at Pikler/Lóczy Fund USA, c/o Day Schools, Inc., 3210 South Norwood, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74114, 918.665.0877.

EMMI PIKLER TRAINING COURSES

Training courses are instructed by Anna Tardos and take place in groups of 12 to 15 people on pre-set subjects at the International Emmi Pikler Foundation, Pikler Institute, Budapest, Hungary. Training courses may be requested by established groups as well as by individuals.

Dates

Courses in English

June 28-July 9: Summer Course

Courses in German

October 11-15: Care

November 15-19: Word and Socialization

(advanced course)

Applications and Acceptance

Applications should be in writing (typed/printed) and sent to:

International Emmi Pikler Foundation,
Pikler Institute, 1022 Budapest –
Lóczy Lahos utca 3 – Hungary

You may also email applications to

pikler@matavnet.hu

(Applications will be accepted in the order they are received.)

Fees

Training and Direct Observation:

110 euros per person/day

Training only:

80 euros per person/day

Scholarships are available.

For more information, email your questions to pikler@matavnet.hu or call: 33.1.212 4609.

THANK YOU!

PIKLER FUND USA CONTRIBUTORS

| | |
|--|---|
| TONY & JILL CURTIS | CHARLIE JACKSON & TAMARA RAINS |
| JAMIE LEE CURTIS & CHRISTOPHER GUEST | ROLF SCHMITZ / CHILDREN FIRST |
| ALEXANDRA SARGENT & KEVIN BOYER | DEBORAH SMITH |
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