

## **Child's Garden of Peace report – Faces of Courage conference**

**By Illene Pevec**

The Alliance for a New Humanity invited A Child's Garden of Peace to attend their conference, *The Human Forum: Faces of Courage* in San Juan, Puerto Rico December 7 to 10, 2006. This organization, started by Deepak Chopra, exists to bring together people committed to social, spiritual, economic and environmental solutions to the inequities and problems that face the world today. Organizations as large as Care International and as small as us came together with people from many different countries and walks of life to share experiences and resources and the incredible natural beauty of our surroundings while we learned from one another.

I was a member of two "Dialogos", one exploring the integration of inner spiritual life and community action. My co-dialogue partners included the Nobel Peace Prize winner, Rigoberta Menchu of Guatemala and Satish Kumar, founder of Schumacher College and the editor of Resurgence Magazine, one of the world's leading journals exploring issues of sustainability. Rigoberta made sure that members of the audience were able to speak, sit in the front, share the wisdom all around as we all traded chairs and positions to share the mikes and translators. We explored where we get the strength to go on when the work we are doing feels overwhelming. The next day Myra Margolin and I lead a workshop on how to involve children in participatory planning of any activity from art to community planning. I also was part of a second Dialogo on participatory Design with a woman from the UN in charge of AIDS and Child and maternal health in the least developed nations, Monica Sharma.

If you want to connect with others doing social and spiritual change work The Alliance for a New Humanity has a way to sign up on their web site so that you can use their software to ask questions and find people who share your interests, just google the Alliance.

Subud member, Honorah Foah, planned this conference with others and Dachlan helped in a myriad of ways, including photographing the many beautiful music, art and cultural events that wove throughout the event. I met many people who inspired me in a myriad of ways. I shall introduce you to one mother-daughter pair of artists whose organization, MonkeyBiz works with 455 Cape Town, South Africa women to teach them to bead and then to market the extraordinary animals and dolls that these women make with beads, each one unique. The women have become world class artists whose work is documented in the just released documentary, *Bigger than Barbie*. Barbara Jackson is a well known ceramic artist whose own work will soon be featured in Oprah's magazine. She started MonkeyBiz with another artist and the profits support an AIDS clinic, community burial fund, a music program and programs for children. Martine, her daughter, designed the fabulous AIDS book, *Positively HIV*, they have published that gives the facts and dispels the myths about HIV. They have invited me to come to Cape Town and help to start vegetable gardens with the children there because of the shortage of fresh produce in the townships. I am very grateful to Honorah for including me in this wonderful conference.

Also, I got an email from the Natural Heroes TV series that included our documentary, *A Child's Garden of Peace*. It was broadcast by over 60 PBS affiliates across the US this past year and it still airing on twenty. They are seeking new documentaries with an environmental focus. They need to be 24 minutes long. Interested people can google Natural Heroes to get the info on how to submit a film for consideration.