

UNL facilities provide day care for students' children

Two UNL facilities make sure students' children have sanctuary while their parents are busy.

The University Child Care Project and the Campus Recreation Program each have day-care programs for children of students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The Child Care Project, located in the YWCA building at 1432 N St., is a full-time child-care program that admits children of full-time UNL students. It is licensed by the State of Nebraska.

Director Barbara Vigil said a difficulty with the system was its inability to accept part-time enrollments.

"It's part of our lease agreement," she said. "But many students need part-time care."

Vigil also said finding care for children was a difficulty, especially for infants. She said parents-to-be usually spend time on a waiting list.

"For infants, most people are on the list for eight or nine months," she said. "People usually sign up when they find out they're pregnant. I had one parent sign up before she became pregnant."

Vigil said infant care was harder for the program to provide because one teacher is needed for every three infants, as opposed to one teacher for nine 3-year-olds. "It's not very cost-effective," she said.

All teachers counted in the teacher-student ratio are paid staff, Vigil said. Supervising teachers have college degrees in either human development or education.

In addition to the day care, the program, which is in its 22nd year, also sponsors a state-approved all-day kindergarten, Vigil said.

The Campus Recreation Center sponsors a temporary day care for children whose parents are using the center. This program started

this year, Campus Rec officials said.

"We just opened it in October," said Sally Pfeiffer, coordinator of informal recreation.

"We've had a lot of requests for it, but it's patterned after a University of Colorado setup that opened one and a half years ago. It was so successful, we thought we'd try it," she said.

Pfeiffer said the program was open to anyone using the Rec Center, but non-members had to pay twice the membership rate of \$1 per hour per child (with a two-hour limit).

Pfeiffer said children totals were not available for February, but more than 300 children came to the facility in January.

Jan Calinger is a freshman news-editorial major and a Diversions contributor.



Sydney Turner, a UNL student, picks up her son, Nick, 3, at the University Day Care Center located at the YWCA.

Michelle Paulman/DN

Adopted man glad to be alive

Women should think of unborn child when considering options

My mother who bore me was not married — not when she conceived me, nor later, when she gave birth.

I don't know if she was ever married. I've never met her — I was adopted.

In those days and at that time, little compassion was spared for unwed mothers. They were considered outside polite society and their chances in the world were slim. Still are, I know, but the times were definitely different — it was 1964.

The Beatles had just come to America for the first time, and they wore suits. There were no hippies.

But JFK had just been killed and the times were in the process of a 'changin.'

Still, social workers counseled mothers who were giving up their children for adoption to think of that child henceforth as dead. They would never be allowed to contact the child, never know who raised the child.

Even now, when the rights of all concerned are construed differently, many women — who gave up a child at that time — do not know that they now have access to channels of communication with the adoptive family and the child.

Maybe they learned to think of the child as dead after all, but somehow I doubt it.

There is somewhere in the world a woman who, around Dec. 4 each year, remembers that once she gave birth to a boy who she never saw or heard from again.

It seems terrible to me, and sad.

All this is not to say that I ever felt unwanted. I knew from as soon as I could understand such things that I was adopted by my family. If anything, that knowledge made me feel a little superior to siblings and friends who were mere accidents of timing —

In order to deal with my strong and conflicting emotions over the abortion controversy, I have come to picture the pregnant woman as a kind of symbiotic life form — an idea I get from science fiction and one, I hope, that does not seem too cold (though perhaps we could use a little cold abstraction when dealing with this issue).

I was chosen.

I knew I had been anticipated vividly for some months before my arrival in the house of my parents, and that they knew they wanted me.

And I have never been ashamed of being "illegitimate."

I thought I was as legitimate as the next kid, maybe even more so. And I've always taken a kind of perverse pleasure in being a bastard. It lends an air of the rascal to my otherwise bland biography.

What has been difficult for me is dealing with the issue of abortion and abortion rights. I know how much I value my freedom, and I don't tolerate anyone telling me what I can or cannot do with my own body. It seems an obvious human right.

But when I was born, abortion was illegal and unsafe. It was also seen as morally unconscionable. All these factors must have contributed in some degree to the decision women like my biological mother made about what to do with a baby they could not support.

I am grateful, to a woman I do not know, that she was brave enough to make the terrible decision that she had to make. The idea that I might never have been at all, I find too horrible really to comprehend.

My friends are also glad I was born, I think, and in a small way I imagine I feel an indebtedness to life, to the world, to make it a

little better by doing what I do best for it. It is a payment for my life — the chance, at least, to feel the sun on my face.

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In symbiosis, two distinct lives occupy a single destiny. In the case of a human pregnancy, the symbiosis is temporary and unequal: One of the entities has to make the decisions for both.

I can only hope that unmarried women who find themselves pregnant and under the extreme pressures such a condition brings with it will come to face their responsibilities as seriously as they can.

After that everyone must make their own decisions by their own lights; no one else can or should try to take on the weight of those decisions for them.

I am a man. The question will never pose itself to me in the same way as it can to a woman. All I can say is:

I've enjoyed being alive. I'm happy to be here.

Mark Baldridge is the Arts and Entertainment editor and a Diversions contributor.

Mom goes back to school

Flexible schedule benefits single parents

Some women swear they know the moment of conception when it happens, well...it was sort of like that with me. The moment I knew I'd be single-parenting, the idea of becoming a full-time student was conceived.

I admit it wasn't instantaneous. For several months, as my marital bliss evaporated into the mist, I plotted ways to survive on my own with two elementary-aged youngsters.

Going back to school made the most sense.

Now, thanks to loans, scholarships, social services, a part-time

reporting job and child support, no one in our household trio suffers. We can afford the basics — rent, shoes and Amigos.

"School is my job," I tell my kids. And when they misbehave or it's been an extremely stressful week, I threaten to become part of the 8-to-5 work force again.

It's a gruesome thought. Especially since school also affords me a flexible schedule, more so than any 40-hour-a-week job. Most days I can be home by the

See MOM on 8



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