

**Attachment Parenting International 15th Anniversary
Think-Tank Event Participant Bios**

Martha Sears, RN, author



Martha, wife of renowned pediatrician William Sears, MD, is the mother of eight children, a registered nurse, a former childbirth educator, a La Leche League Leader, and a lactation consultant.

Martha is the co-author of 25 parenting books and is a popular lecturer and media guest, drawing on her 18 years of breastfeeding experience with her 8 children (including Stephen with Down Syndrome and Lauren, her adopted daughter).

Martha speaks frequently at national parenting conferences and is noted for her advice on how to handle the most common problems facing today's mothers with their changing lifestyles. Martha is able to connect with both full-time mothers and mothers who work full-time, because she herself has experienced both styles of parenting. Martha takes great pride in referring to herself as a "professional mother," and one of her favorite quips when someone voices their concern about her having eight children in an already populated world is: "The world needs my children."

Martha and Dr. Bill have been guests on over 100 television shows including 20/20, Donahue, Good Morning America, The Oprah Winfrey Show, CBS This Morning, CNN, The Today Show, Dateline, and, most recently, The Dr. Phil Show, where they are regular guests. Martha and Dr. Bill are best known for their Sears Parenting Library published by Little Brown: *The Pregnancy Book*, *The Birth Book*, *The Baby Book*, *The Discipline Book*, *The Breastfeeding Book*, *The Fussy Baby Book*, *The A.D.D. Book*, *The Family Nutrition Book*, *The Premature Baby Book*, *The Baby Sleep Book*, and *The Healthiest Kid In The Neighborhood*.

William Sears, MD, author



William Sears, one of America's most renowned pediatricians, is the father of 8 children, ages 15 to 40 years, author of over 40 books on childcare, and Associate Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the University of California, Irvine School of Medicine. A pediatrician for over 35 years, he currently lives and practices pediatrics along with his three sons Dr. Bob and Dr. Jim, and Dr. Pete in San Clemente, California.

Dr. Sears received his pediatric training at Harvard Medical School's Children's Hospital in Boston and The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, the largest children's hospital in the world, where he served as Associate Ward Chief of the newborn nursery and Associate Professor of Pediatrics. In addition to writing many books and scientific articles, Dr. Sears is a medical and parenting consultant to Baby Talk and Parenting Magazines. Dr. Sears is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Royal College of Pediatricians.

"Dr. Bill" (as his little patients call him) and Martha have been guests on over 100 television shows including 20/20, Donahue, Good Morning America, The Oprah Winfrey Show, CBS This Morning, CNN, The Today Show, Dateline, and, most recently, The Dr. Phil Show, where they are regular guests. Dr. Bill is the on-line pediatrician for Parenting.com. William and Martha are best known for their Sears Parenting Library published by Little Brown: *The Pregnancy Book*, *The Birth Book*, *The Baby Book*, *The Discipline Book*, *The Breastfeeding*

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Book, The Fussy Baby Book, The A.D.D. Book, The Family Nutrition Book, The Premature Baby Book, The Baby Sleep Book, and The Healthiest Kid In The Neighborhood.

Dr. Stephen Bavolek, Parent Educator



Stephen J. Bavolek, Ph.D., is a recognized leader in the fields of child abuse and neglect treatment and prevention, and parenting education.

Born and raised in Chicago, Dr. Bavolek's professional background includes working with emotionally disturbed children and adolescents in schools and residential settings, and abused children and abusive parents in treatment programs.

Dr. Bavolek has conducted extensive research in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. He received his doctorate at Utah State University in 1978 and completed a post-doctoral internship at the Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect in Denver, Colorado. He has held university faculty positions at the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire, and the University of Utah.

Dr. Bavolek has received numerous international, national, state and local awards for his work, including induction in 1989 into the Royal Guild of the International Social Work Round Table in Vienna, Austria, and selection in 1983 by Phi Delta Kappa as one of 75 young educators in the country who represent the best in educational leadership, research and services. In addition, he has been selected by Oxford's *Who's Who* in 1993 as a member of the elite registry of extraordinary professionals and in 1998 as a member of the elite registry of extraordinary CEO's. Dr. Bavolek was also Mental Health Professional of the Year of Northern Wisconsin in 1985 and Child Advocate of the Year in Utah in 1991. In 1980, he was recognized by the Military Order of the Purple Heart for outstanding research and services to the handicapped.

He has conducted over 1,000 workshops, has appeared on more than 50 radio and television talk show programs, and has published numerous books, articles, programs and newsletters. He is the principal author of the Nurturing Parenting Programs®, programs designed to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect, and the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI), an inventory designed to assess high risk parenting attitudes. Dr. Bavolek is President of Family Development Resources, Inc. and Executive Director of Family Nurturing Centers International.

Mary Ann Cahill, Founder LLLI



Mary Ann Cahill was born to John William (Bill) Phalen and Olivia Spoerlein on June 10, 1927. She was raised to believe in the power of service, giving and connecting with others—strong elements for her future interest in reaching out to support mothers and babies. Mary Ann comments, “My favorite subjects in school were history and English. In history I had an excellent teacher who brought life to historical movers and shakers!” She graduated from high school in Chicago and went on to attend college. However, she soon met Chuck, a friend of her brother’s, and she and Chuck Cahill married in 1948 and settled in Franklin Park, Illinois. They began their family that grew to nine children.

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Mary Ann shares her early philosophy of “people building”(parenting), “We were idealists and dreamers, as are all parents of young children to some extent. For Chuck and me it was a wonderfully exciting time. Chuck and I and other young parents found each other through the Christian Family Movement. A good number of young couples in the community were going through the same joys and frustrations. A sense of camaraderie developed that helped us to cope as parents.”

It was during 1956 that the sharing of breastfeeding information began and became formalized. Mary Ann says, “When the seven of us started the nursing mothers group named La Leche League, we were not thinking of founding a worldwide organization. Our families were a great help. Grandparents, brothers, and sisters lived nearby. Chuck was starting his own accounting business. Chuck and I were well aware of the power of having the love of family and friends to support us. When the idea came up of helping mothers learn to breastfeed their babies, there could be no hesitation. It was all part of the wonderful adventure of which we saw ourselves being part.”

When asked about challenges she and the other Founders faced when they started La Leche League, Mary Ann commented, “The main challenge was women’s attitude toward breastfeeding. Women would ask us, ‘Why would you want to do that [breastfeed]?’”

When the Founders would talk to women about breastfeeding, one of the replies they got was, “I will try, but I know I won’t succeed!” Mary Ann added that there was a strong negative societal environment related to breastfeeding. She ended with the words “We trusted our instincts and followed our hearts, and very soon we knew we were right!” For the seven, these were exhilarating times. Their phone lines buzzed with calls. The pace was brisk because decisions needed to be made quickly. Mothers were in a quandary, on the one hand feeling an obligation to follow the doctor’s orders, while at the same time being impressed by the healthy, happy, totally breastfed babies that were everywhere at La Leche League meetings. Giving birth, breastfeeding, mothering became known as La Leche League’s philosophy. The perspective of the Founders on this and how the philosophy was to be passed on to others would dominate their thinking for years to come.

Mary Ann’s talent for connecting people is apparent in her statements, “My first love was always with the group, meeting with other mothers, sharing the wonders of babies and breastfeeding.” The introductory series of the Christian Family Movement began with the question, “Who is my neighbor?” It provided the nudge for the members to reach out and discover how small, seemingly inconsequential actions aimed at helping one’s neighbor can make a difference, even against strong odds. Taking a small step, doing what is doable, rather than spending limited time and energy on theorizing about a grand plan was Mary Ann’s philosophy and one of the tactics that helped build the organization. In the 1950s, in matters of infant feeding and child care, small steps were all that could be taken.

From the onset of La Leche League, Mary Ann worked tirelessly filling different positions and responding to the needs of the organization. She answered letters; was Editor of LLL News; was the Director of the Leader Applicant Department; worked together with Viola Lennon in the Funding Development Department, and was Acting Executive Director for nine months in 1994. After this position and until her retirement, she continued working in the Funding Development Department. Mary Ann left the LLLI office staff in 1995 and now works part time as the Stewardship Coordinator for The Church of the Holy Apostles. “But I still don’t have enough

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time to do all that I'd like to do," she says. Working with the other Founders on the Founders' Advisory Council remains a favorite activity for her.

Chuck passed away in 1978 and Mary Ann found comfort in her family. There are nine children in the Cahill family —Bob, Elizabeth, Tim, Teresa, Mary, Joe, Margaret, Charlene ("Charlie"), and Frannie, with room always at the table for Janet, a foster daughter who spent several of her grade-school years with her "Cahill family." Mary Ann lived in Franklin Park, then Libertyville, and now lives in McHenry, Illinois. Mary Ann spends as much time as she can with her seventeen grandchildren. "When we're all together, we have a grand time," Mary Ann says. "The hopes and dreams, the prayers and hard work of 'people building' are well worth the effort. I can't imagine a more satisfying life."

Mary Ann was one of a group of seven women who shared a simple idea to bring gentleness to giving birth and joy to the womanly art of breastfeeding. None of the seven women imagined that their dream would travel around the world, stem the tide toward artificial infant feeding, change how people thought about child care and, in so doing, reverse a societal trend. At the time, they saw their lives as already busy and fulfilling and not too unlike those of other young wives and mothers.

Isabelle Fox, PhD, Psychotherapist & Author



Dr. Fox received degrees from Harvard/Radcliffe College and UCLA. For 35 years, she was a practicing psychotherapist at the Western Psychological Center, in Encino, California, specializing in parent-child relationships and developmental issues. For 10 years, she was the senior mental health consultant for Operation Head Start in Los Angeles, and she is a frequent lecturer on child development issues.

She is the author of *Being There: The Benefits of a Stay-at-Home Parent* (Barron's, 1996) and *Growing Up: Attachment Parenting from Kindergarten to College* (Sun Publishers, 2003). Dr. Fox has posted two articles online dealing with custody and visitation issues involving infants and young children.

She lives in Sherman Oaks, California, and was a stay-at-home parent for ten years. She and her husband are the proud parents of two sons, one daughter, and seven grandchildren.

Professor James J. McKenna, Ph.D.



Dr. McKenna is the Edmund P. Joyce C.S.C. Chair in Anthropology at Notre Dame University and the Director of the Mother-Baby Behavioral Sleep Lab. His areas of interest and expertise are Infant Sleep, Breast Feeding, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), Evolution of Human Behavior (especially parenting and infant development), Evolutionary Medicine, Primate Social Behavior, and Human Evolution

Dr. McKenna studied anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley and San Diego State University, and has his Ph.D., Department of Anthropology, University of Oregon.

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Barbara Nicholson, MEd, API Founder



Barbara Nicholson holds a master's degree in Education, specializing in learning disabilities. She has volunteered for over 20 years with La Leche League International, an educational and support organization for breastfeeding mothers. She is also trained as a facilitator in the Nurturing Parenting Program. Ms. Nicholson co-founded Attachment Parenting International in 1994.

She has spoken to a variety of groups -- including parent educators, psychology students, conference attendees, and juvenile probation officers -- about parenting as a prevention model for societal violence. Ms. Nicholson continues to work closely with API on fundraising and has served on the development committee for the Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker (MIHOW) Program at Vanderbilt University. Barbara is the mother of four adult sons and resides in Nashville, Tennessee.

Lysa Parker, MS, CFLE, API Founder & Director Emeritus ParentsLifeLine.com



Lysa Parker has a master's degree in Human Development and Family Studies, is a Certified Family Life Educator (C.F.L.E.), and is a trained facilitator for the Nurturing Parenting Program. Ms. Parker is the co-founder of API and served as the Executive Director from 1994 to 2007. She managed program development and public relations and continues to speak to various groups and conferences about parenting as a prevention model for societal violence.

With a bachelor's degree in Education, specializing in special education, she taught in California, Tennessee, and Alabama during her 20-year career, working with children with multiple handicaps and/or learning disabilities. Other experience includes several years of volunteer work with La Leche League International, a nonprofit organization that provides breastfeeding education and support, and as an API Support Group Leader.

She is the mother of two adult sons and an adult stepdaughter and grandmother to twin grandsons. She lives with her husband in Madison, Alabama.

Lu Hanessian,



Seasoned television host, published author, magazine writer, parent/child advocate, and sought-after speaker, Lu Hanessian is the mother of two boys, 5 and 8. For the past two years, she has combined a unique mix of broadcasting skills, personality and mothering insight as host of "Make Room for Baby" on Discovery Health Channel.

A Michigan native, she began her multi-media career as a writer, reporter and broadcaster in Montreal, where she worked in newspaper, radio and television. In 1987, she joined the national CTV affiliate in Montreal, and hosted, anchored and

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produced the internationally syndicated travel program, "Travel, Travel," and weekly prime-time news magazine, "Park Avenue Metro." She hosted the internationally syndicated "The Science Show," seen in North America on the Discovery Channel and the Sci-Fi Channel, as well as in 110 countries in 17 languages.

In 1994, Lu moved to New York, where she hosted a live afternoon talk show on NBC's national cable network, "America's Talking." The following year, she became co-anchor of NBC's new daily morning magazine show, "Real Life." In 1996, she guest co-hosted with Robert Stack on several episodes of NBC's "Unsolved Mysteries." In 1997, Lu moderated the United Nation's (UNESCO) live televised town meeting on literacy in Hamburg, Germany.

A veteran writer, Lu's articles and essays have most recently been published in The New York Times, Playboy, Redbook, Mothering, Parenting and regularly in Fit Pregnancy magazine, for which she is a contributor. Fit Pregnancy documented her second pregnancy in 2002 with Lu's "Three Trimester Diaries."

Lu is the author of the popular book, "Let the Baby Drive: Navigating the Road of New Motherhood" (St. Martin's Press). An excerpted chapter from LET THE BABY DRIVE was published in Redbook magazine (May 2004). She has been interviewed on CNN, MSNBC, FOX News Channel, "Life & Style," NPR's "The Parent Journal," "Your Healthy Family" radio show, "MomTalk" radio, and Working Mother magazine, among other shows and magazines.

Also a musician, Lu studied classical and jazz piano in Canada and the U.S., and taught piano for several years. In 1993, Lu wrote, directed and performed in a musical revue about relationships entitled "Love Notes," which was staged in Montreal to sold-out audiences.

Her new CD of original contemporary ballads, "Welcome Home, My Child: Songs for a Mother's Journey", is a soulful and stirring collection of "lullabies for mothers."