

Parenting Now! Through The Generations: The Pangborn-Lafferty Family

The Pangborn-Lafferty family has been part of Birth To Three/Parenting Now! for three generations.

It began 28 years ago when Mark and his wife, Christina Svarverud, lived next door to Minalee Saks, executive director and co-founder of our non-profit. Mark served on the board of directors in then-Birth To Three's early days.

Mark and Christina took all three years of the *First 3 Years* curriculum. While they participated in their groups, Mark's older daughter, Aleta, helped with the Children's Program. Aleta now has a daughter, Della, and enjoyed an *Incredible INFANTS* Parenting Now! group with her husband, Jason.

"I was 7 when my sister was born," Aleta says. "I got to 'babysit' [during dad's group] and enjoyed the big sister role. I remember the social activities our group did – camping, skiing, birthday parties – and I was still in a helping role. I felt the other parents trusted me and gave me responsibility."



Aleta with daughter Della

"Everyone in the group was couples," Mark says, "and both parents in all the couples worked full-time so we had common family experiences. We were one of two families in the group with older children. It was an immediate social group. We talked about balancing issues like working and raising children, and coping with emotional issues like taking them to daycare. It was a discussion and support group."

"We still meet – in May, we'll have a birthday party. The kids are scattered, but the parents still meet."

"They threw a baby shower for Della," Aleta recalls.

Meanwhile, Aleta grew up in Eugene and met and married Jason. “When I was pregnant, we talked about joining Parenting Now! When Della was 3 months old, I called and joined. Birth To Three was a really positive influence, and it still is.

“Many in our group were looking for social support, but having grown up in Eugene and having parents and family here, we already had that. My dad said to suspend all judgment because we’ll be amazed at what we have in common.

“As we got in the routine of coming to the group,” Aleta recalls, “we really valued the time to reflect on how parenting affects us. We found we had real similarities to other parents. It’s nice to know parents who have children the same age as us.



Della, Aleta and Mark reminisce with Minalee Saks, executive director of Parenting Now!



A multi-generational family portrait!

“We still meet once a month for a potluck. Half the group has moved away, but we added a new member who has a child in the same age range. We still comment on how nice it is to see everyone and catch up.

“One of the women in the group, Renee, has become one of my best friends and her daughter, Aubrey, is Della’s best friend. Della calls her ‘Abba.’

Aleta adds, “The group is helpful. I can look across the breadth of kids there and it provides assurance that I’m not the only one dealing with ‘x’ challenge. It’s easy to see everyone doing this, and that provides a little perspective.”

Mark says that everyone ought to consider Parenting Now! “It’s community. When I see new parents, I suggest they look at it. There are experts to help, particularly for first-time parents and people new to town. Everyone shares the commonality of child-raising. The parenting experience is such a strong common experience. It brings people together.”

Meanwhile, Mark and Aleta and their families are looking forward to late August, when Aleta is due with her second child.