

Barbara C. Unell Literary Credits and Biography 2024

A devoted mother and G'Ma, Barbara is an entrepreneur, author, adjunct professor, and parenting/health educator promoting social justice and healthy living through her multi-faceted approach to developing innovative community-based programs, multi-media communications, including *Kid's Stuff*, *TWINS Magazine*, *Caring Parent*, *Safety Net*, *LEAP*, *Kansas City Parent*, and *Friday Mornings*; and 18 books, including *Discipline without Shouting or Spanking*, co-authored by Jerry Wyckoff, Ph.D., and translated into 27 languages, with over a million copies sold worldwide.

For more than 40 years, Barbara has been committed to the emotional value of written communication and the positive difference it can make in people's lives. She wrote her first book with her best friend when they were 8 years old—*Barbara Coleman's and Barbara Beeson's New Word Dictionary*—a foreshadowing of 18 more books that she would be fortunate to author. During these years, she also treasured precious relationships with mentors and heroes, researchers and fellow journalists, friends who have entrusted her to help people nurture their relationships and translate scientific research into experiential learning programs and more.

As a lover of learning and a curious problem-solver beginning in childhood and throughout her career, Barbara has always taken every underreported story as a personal challenge. Over 20 years ago, when she discovered game-changing scientific breakthroughs about preventing cancer recurrence and improving quality of life after cancer...and data about how to enrich our lives to prevent Alzheimer's Disease...and research about ways to prevent and lower the risk of children's lifelong health, learning and behavior problems, it was impossible for her to walk away. She told herself: The "people" have to know this life-changing news!

This desire to inform and educate the public about this settled science resulted in her being part of the team who co-developed the "Baby Buffer" website through a 2013 grant to the Kansas Chapter of The American Academy of Pediatrics from the national nonprofit organization, The American Academy of Pediatrics.

And, likewise, Barbara's passion for "taking this knowledge to the people" led her to navigate uncharted waters in 2015. That year, she collaborated with a dedicated team from the The University of Kansas Alzheimer's Disease Center to co-develop and edit the first guide to "LEAP"—Lifestyle Enrichment for Alzheimer's Prevention—smart aging workshop series.

Over the past 25 years, she has joyfully been committed to launching and leading two novel grassroots nonprofit organizations, *Back in the Swing* (www.BackintheSwing.org) and *The Raised with Love and Limits Foundation*, (www.behaviorchecker.org); each energized by the urgent need to communicate the game-changing facts noted above. It is in her work with brilliant and passionate people, and collaborations with partner organizations, that she has been able to co-create and co-implement innovative tools to

spread these evidence-based messages that have been scientifically demonstrated to systemically (and joyfully!) change people's lives for the better. She is grateful for the privilege to be able to follow her passion.

Barbara is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin, and has combined her passion for activism and innovation with her degrees in psychology and journalism. She utilizes a collaborative, consumer-based approach in partnering with local and national organizations. In so doing, the innovative projects she fosters are designed to fill a gap and solve problems, all to serve the greater good. These entrepreneurial ventures are designed to lead to permanent, personalized and practical solutions that become systemic to organizations, filling a gap and meeting a need in more effective and efficient ways to foster positive family relationships, and physical, mental and emotional well-being. Barbara works to translate science into new ways to prevent health, learning and behavior problems through accessing practical "tools we can use".

In 1997, Barbara opened the Daniel L. Brenner Family Education Center, to honor the legacy of her uncle and mentor, the distinguished judge and lawyer Daniel L. Brenner, her role model of philanthropy, family support, and lifelong learning. The Center's signature character-building program, "Uncle Dan's Report Card", (www.UncleDansReportCard.org) is based around her uncle's actual 1914 Kansas City, Kansas elementary school report card.

A frequent guest on media, including OPRAH, NBC Nightly News, TODAY, NPR, and local radio and television, Barbara is the recipient of:

- 2020 University of Kansas Honorary Nursing Alumna Award
- 2013 IACP Health and Special Diet Cookbook Award
- 2011 "Hats Off to Mothers Award" of United Cerebral Palsy of Kansas City
- The 2010 "Fearless Woman Award" from EWomen Network
- 2010 "Myrtle Wreath Award" from Hadassah Kansas City
- 2009 "GLOW Award" by Speaking of Women's Health
- 2008 Richard A. Bloch "Cancer Survivorship Award"
- 2005 "Maxine Bowers Legacy of Service Award" by Cancer Action
- 2003 Leawood Chamber of Commerce "Hall of Fame Award"
- 1996 Junior Achievement of Middle America "Up and Comers Award"
- 1994 "Woman of the Year Award" by the Metropolitan Business and Women's Club
- The "People of Vision Award" from Shawnee Mission Medical Center
- The Blue Valley School District "Friend of Education Award"
- Ingram's Magazine's "Local Hero Award"
- The J.C. Penney "Golden Rule Award"

She was the subject of Simply KC Magazine's October 2019 leadership profile and the "Women Who Make a Difference" column in "Family Circle" magazine's June 2, 2000 issue for her work in character education.

Barbara has served on The University of Kansas Health System Advancement Board; The Blue Valley Educational Foundation Board; The Menorah Legacy Foundation Board; The Midwest Center for Holocaust Education Board; The Ribbons of Pink Foundation Board; KU Breast Cancer Prevention Center Advisory Board; The University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Communications Internship Advisory Board; and The STOP Violence Coalition Board. She lives in suburban Kansas City with her husband, Robert.

I Books by Barbara C. Unell:

- *The Kansas City Kids' Catalog*, 1980
- *Discipline Without Shouting or Spanking*, 1984), with Jerry L. Wyckoff, Ph.D. (translated into 27 languages)
- *Anorexia Nervosa: Finding the Lifeline*, 1986, with Patricia Stein, R.D,
- *How to Discipline Your 6 to 12-Year-Old Without Losing Your Mind*, 1991, with Jerry L. Wyckoff, Ph.D.
- *Kindness is Contagious... Catch It!* 1991
- *The Twinship Sourcebook*, 1992
- *20 Teachable Virtues*, 1995, with Jerry L. Wyckoff, Ph.D.
- *Discipline Without Shouting or Spanking*, revised edition, 2000
- *The 8 Seasons of Parenthood*, 2002, with Jerry L. Wyckoff, Ph.D.
- *Getting Your Child from No to Yes Without Nagging, Bribing or Threatening*, 2004, with Jerry L. Wyckoff, Ph.D.
- *Dinner with Uncle Dan*, 2005
- *Uncle Dan's Report Card*, with Bob Unell, Perigee Books, 2011
- *The Back in the Swing Cookbook*, with Judith Fertig, 2012
- *Starting at the Finish Line: Coach Al Buehler's Timeless Words of Wisdom*, Putnam, 2012
- *Discipline with Love and Limits*, with Jerry L. Wyckoff, Ph.D., 2015
- *Behavior Checker*, 2016
- *Discipline with Love and Limits*, with Jerry L. Wyckoff, Ph. D., revised edition, 2019
- *The New Back in the Swing Cookbook, 10th Anniversary Edition*, with Judith Fertig, 2023

II Publications founded and edited by Barbara C. Unell:

- Co-founder, Editor, bimonthly national magazine *TWINS*, 1984-1996
- Co-founder, Editor, monthly magazine *Kansas City Parent*, 1985-1986
- Founder/editor: *Family Questions* (sourcebook for relatives of nursing home patients), 1986
- Founder/Editor: *Parent File*, Universal Press Syndicate, 1987
- Founder/Editor: *Caring Parent* (newsletter for La Petite Academies), 1997
- Founder/Editor: *Safety Net*, Suicide Prevention Newsletter, 1997
- Founder/Editor: Lifeworks Work/Life Program, 1999
- Editor of *Things I Didn't Know I Knew* (memoir by Mary S. Branton), 2004

- Editor of *The Kitchen is My Happy Place* (cookbook/memoir by Elaine F. Nelson), 2014
- Editor of *Two Hairs Talking on an Old Head* (memoir by Mary Lou Anderson), 2014
- Co- founder, Editor, LEAP!: Lifestyle Enrichment for Alzheimer’s Prevention, Smart Aging Workshop Series, in partnership with the University of Kansas Alzheimer’s Disease Center 2016-

III Media Appearances: Web, Radio, Print, and Television, 1980 to present:

- *OPRAH*
- *NBC Nightly News*
- *Good Morning America*
- *The TODAY Show*
- *CBS Evening News*
- *The CBS Early Show*
- *The Phil Donahue Show*
- *Hour Magazine*
- National and local television programs across the country
- Promotion Director, KSHB-TV, Kansas City, Missouri, 1977-1979
- Promotion Writer, KMBC-TV, Kansas City, Missouri, 1976-1977
- Writer of “Hearts of America” column for *The Kansas City Star*, 1997-1998
- Writer of parenting, character education stories in local and national newspapers and magazines, 1984 to present
- Host of Associated Press Network nationally syndicated radio feature, “*Kid’s Stuff*”, 1985-1990
- National and local radio programs across the country
- *OUR365* website, family expert writer, 2008
- *Friday Mornings* website, 24/7 parenting source, 2007
- *UncleDansReportCard.org* family sharing teaching tool for the “other side of the report card”, 2006 to present
- *BackintheSwing.org* 2005 to present
- *BehaviorChecker.org* 2016 to present
- *RaisingKC.org*, 2023 to present

IV Other Ventures by Barbara C. Unell:

Kindness is Contagious...Catch It!

- In 1990, Barbara co-founded, along with dedicated volunteers of the STOP Violence Coalition, the nationally acclaimed, school-based character education program, “Kindness is Contagious...Catch It!”. Today, Synergy Services oversees the program, which has taught kindness, respect and compassion to over 250,000 children throughout the Kansas City area for the past 33 years. The signature focus of the program involves thousands of schoolchildren annually, who nominate their “Kindest Kansas Citian” and tell why they have nominated this

individual who is their personal role model of kindness, respect and compassion. Honorary Stars—community leaders who have advocated for making kindness contagious in Kansas City—are honored at a fundraising celebration of the “Kindest Kansas Citian” each year in May.

Adjunct Professorship

- In 2002, Barbara became an Adjunct Professor, specializing in teaching cause-related marketing and public relations, as well as non-profit strategic planning, to students at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, alongside her husband, Bob Unell.

***Back in the Swing*®**

- In 2000, Barbara founded the nonprofit organization, *Back in the Swing*, with a mission of improving and protecting every individual’s health and wellbeing after breast cancer. The name of the organization is its mission: Create *groundbreaking* personalized, comprehensive clinical breast cancer survivorship healthcare, education, and research. *Back in the Swing Retail Therapy*® and other experiential events raise funds and awareness to support clinical care and research that directly help breast cancer survivors get “back in the swing of life” physically, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually.
- *Back in the Swing* is at the forefront of the “cancer survivorship” movement, answering the questions every survivor asks after treatment ends, “Now what? How do I get back in the swing of life...and stay there?” *Back in the Swing* is dedicated to ensuring that each survivor is empowered and educated to answer that question through accessing groundbreaking clinical care that is multi-disciplinary, personalized, and evidence-based. The organization’s fundraising events motivate, inspire and benefit survivors wherever they work and play across America.
- In 2015, the American College of Surgeons made it mandatory for membership accreditation to provide cancer survivorship care plans and follow-up support after treatment, systemically changing how cancer centers and all members who care for cancer patients address the near-and late-term side effects of a cancer diagnosis and treatment.
- The new *Back in the Swing Cookbook: Eating and Living Well Every Day After Breast Cancer*, co-authored by Barbara and Judith Fertig, published by Andrews McMeel in 2023, includes fact-based information, recipes and inspiration that cannot be found in any other cookbook. Sales benefit the nonprofit, Back in the Swing.

Sunflower Celebration/Ambassadors

- In 1998, as a member of the Board of Directors of the Blue Valley Educational Foundation, Barbara and a team of volunteers, co-led by KO Strohbehn, created the Sunflower Ambassadors program as a fundraising/awareness-building event in which schools in the Blue Valley School District in Overland Park, Kansas, honor students and staff for their demonstration of the seven Blue Valley Virtues. The Foundation has raised over a million dollars from the event, and awarded Sunflower Awards to over 1000 students and staff in the District since its inception.

Bi-State Character Education Conference

- In 2002, Barbara chaired the first bi-state character-education conference for community leaders and 200 educators from over 40 school districts in the Greater Kansas City Area, at Johnson County Community College. The Conference led to a KC Chamber of Commerce Character Roundtable for collaboration and partnership among districts city-wide.

Uncle Dan's Report Card®

- In 2005, Barbara partnered with Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius and United States Congressman Dennis Moore to launch the pilot program, *Uncle Dan's Report Card*, a unique experience that brings teachers, parents and children together to recognize, reflect on, and reinforce daily habits that are essential for children ages 2 through 8 to learn and practice
- Research by the University of Virginia proved that children's joy, pride, and positive consequences in practicing these habits motivated them to incorporate them into their daily lives, independent of nagging, bribing and threatening by the adults in their lives. This core goal of all parent education—children's independent practicing of self-control and self-reliance—also was met in the classroom, as educators reported demonstration of the healthy habits on Uncle Dan's Report Card. Teachers and parents cooperatively were motivated and accountable for paying attention to “the other side of the report card”—personal responsibility, positive relationships and learning readiness—which have proven to lead to healthy living inside and outside the home and school.
- This teaching tool is based on the actual 1914 Fifth Grade Report Card from Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools that belonged to Barbara's Uncle, Daniel Brenner (for whom the Brenner Family Education Center is named, see above) that emphasizes the timeless lesson that “the worth of a child cannot be measured by percent alone”.
- Parents, teachers and students find common ground in using the universal language on Uncle Dan's Report Card—the language of kindness, respect and empathy—at school and at home. Promoting the common use of this universal language fosters the education of the “whole child”, one educated in building

community, personal responsibility and positive relationships that lead to personal integrity and academic success.

Baby Buffer: Raising A Healthy Person Starts at Birth

- The Baby Buffer Project is based on brain science that tells us how consistent, nurturing, supportive adults can impact a baby's growing brain. The project was funded by a grant in June 2013 from national American Academy of Pediatrics to the Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and its community partner, the Brenner Family Education Center. A "Baby Buffer" is a caring, responsive, consistent adult, who uses the latest information on how a baby's brain works to give his or her baby the best possible start in life.

A collaborative team headed by University of Kansas developmental pediatrician, Katherine Ellerbeck, MD, this project includes teaching parents how to take time to interact and give their baby lots of "face time", letting their toddler safely explore his world, and using positive discipline with their child.

- During the first year, Baby Buffer concentrates on parents' relationships with their baby. The first six months are often very stressful for parents. Before they can take care of their baby's emotional needs, they may need help in managing their own stress. Nobody should have to go it alone. The second half of the first year can also be stressful. Some babies really don't want anybody *but* their parents, and parents also need some time for themselves. There are positive ways to help their baby adjust to other caregivers without causing him or her (or them) unhealthy stress. During the second year, the baby becomes a toddler and strives to have "a say" in what is going on. Young toddlers often don't have enough language to communicate and are just beginning to develop the brain systems that help them to manage their emotions. During the second year, Baby Buffer concentrates on understanding a child's temperament and learning techniques to manage the inevitable emotional outbursts in ways that promote healthy brain development and decrease toxic stress.

Raised with Love and Limits Foundation

- Founded in 2016, The Raised with Love and Limits Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting safe, stable, nurturing relationships to prevent toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences. The Foundation grew out of the challenge by the American Academy of Pediatrics to change the underutilized platform of the pediatric clinical practice, and other behavioral and mental health settings to help reduce dangerous health, learning and behavior risks to children and adults, including, but not limited to: Bullying, obesity, depression, drug abuse, cancer, anxiety, heart disease and violence. These risks can all be reduced, according to scientific research data, with the presence of a safe, stable, nurturing adult-child relationship to mitigate stress from before birth forward, so it does not become toxic to the child's developing brain/body.

- Promoting lifelong optimum health, learning and behavior starts before birth by preventing adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress. The less exposure to toxic stress caused by adverse childhood experiences (emotional and physical abuse and neglect, etc.), the less the risk of the problems listed above, according to the seminal research in the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE), replicated in more than 100 diverse populations since its inception in 1998.

Behavior Checker®

- To help prevent ACEs and Toxic Stress and build safe, stable, nurturing relationships between an adult and a child, the Raised with Love and Limits Foundation launched the signature novel, evidence-based online tool, Behavior Checker, in 2018.
- Behavior Checker increases the number of people who are responsible for, know how to, have access to, and are motivated to, advise and coach adults to use caring, supportive, protective behavior to “mitigate kids’ stress”—thus raising them in healthy ways that use love and limits.
- Behavior Checker has a 4-part solution: Education, Practice, Teaching and Research. Though Behavior Checker, an innovative system of change happens in pediatric healthcare, as well as in mental health and early childhood education settings, in which the education, practice, implementation and delivery of evidence-based personalized practical healthy behavior problem solving is standardized and seamlessly integrated into the routine, workflow and mission of primary care and nursing, as well as counseling, early childhood classrooms, schools and home-visiting parent education programs, such as Parents as Teachers.
- Since its pilot at University of Kansas Pediatrics in 2016, Behavior Checker has been researched and tested in sites across the states of Kansas and Missouri, and sites outside Kansas, in behavioral health, primary pediatrics, community health centers and educational settings.
- Behavior Checker began its first home-visiting partnership in 2023, with research and implementation throughout the state of Kansas through Kansas Parents of Teachers parent educators and other members integrating the digital tool and resources state-wide.

“Parenting Is Healthcare®” Online Course

- The first online course for healthcare practitioners nationally, “Parenting is Healthcare”, was launched in 2018, in partnership with Johnson County Community College the the Raised with Love and Limits Foundation.

AdventHealth ParentCare

- Bringing the public health crises of ACEs and Toxic Stress to the forefront to meet the demand for change, AdventHealth ParentCare (AHPC) is a collaboration

between AdventHealth Shawnee Mission and the Raised with Love and Limits Foundation. In 2021, AdventHealth ParentCare launched the website <https://parentcare.com> to provide access to an ecosystem of services, programs, and partners to support parents and caregivers in a new and vibrant way. This multipronged approach includes a phone number to “ask-a-parenting-question” (913-632-4206), lactation and other coaching, behavioral advice, community resources, and education (C.A.R.E.) support to provide the best possible opportunity for the lifelong health of every adult and child in mind, body, and spirit. The AdventHealth ParentCare Community Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/adventhealthparentcare/> also provides access to information about building healthy children and adults. Helping families build lifelong “buffers” in one C.A.R.E. resource is the overarching mission of AHPC. AHPC is committed to the greater good, providing universal access to this care.

RaisingKC®

- The Raised with Love and Limits Foundation is an establishing partner, along with The Greater Kansas City Mental Health Coalition and Jewish Family Services Kansas City, in the 2024-launching of a new public health initiative, RaisingKC. This awareness-building campaign is designed to inform, advocate and stimulate positive, hopeful citywide conversation about building healthful adult-child relationships and preventing childhood trauma. Parents, extended family, administrators, mental health professionals, pediatricians, teachers, coaches, neighbors, business, community and city leaders can find helpful resources and simple, supportive ways to “raise KC” on the website <http://RaisingKC.org>. Fun, interactive tools will be accessible throughout the KC community in public settings, nonprofits, clinics and more, beginning June 2024.

Community Presentations, Workshops and Early Childhood Education Training

- Through partnerships with healthcare organizations, corporations, nonprofits, city health departments and schools, the Raised with Love and Limits Foundation champions educate, inform and build awareness about evidence-based ways to build mental and physical health and well-being.