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May 7, 2009

Dear Liz,

You are a gift.

Thank you for delving deeply into this thing called RIE and becoming the teacher that you are.

When I first entered your class, I was sort of expecting a mommy and me type of experience. I was immediately struck by your skill in generating rich discussion about five-month-old babies. I had not considered what was possible in connecting and communicating with my five-month-old. I wanted to write down everything you were saying and I knew I had stumbled upon a golden opportunity. Because of you I learned to set up an environment that allowed my child uninterrupted opportunity to be free, to take pleasure in learning in her own way how to roll, sit, crawl, stand, walk, babble, climb, speak, and then loudly sing for herself. You always watched with genuine interest and offered thoughtful reflections, readings, quotes for close to two years as my child passed through each of her stages. You taught me the value in taking the time to sit and attentively observe. To watch my child create solutions in the process of getting from here to there on your rug and then with the other children was empowering. I felt like I was set free when I learned that it was a demonstration of respect to get my personal needs met. Because of you, I began to speak to my child to tell her what I was going to do before such care as diapering or feeding. It took a while to cultivate the patience. I learned how to speak from my perspective and then pause to offer her the opportunity to respond. You were the guide that showed me the expansive capacity a child has in responding to authentic communication. You taught me that I can speak softly when setting limits. It is amazing to watch you consistently have five children simultaneously sitting in chairs at a table, wearing bibs, pouring from pitchers, eating to satisfy their hunger. You never once raised your voice or offered anything but possibility in facilitating this active participation. Your teaching has been embedded into the DNA of our family and the relationships that we have with each other. I have enjoyed every ounce of the time we have spent in your magical room and my heart-strings get tugged when I think about tomorrow being [REDACTED]'s graduation. Your weekly wisdoms have been such an anchor for us. The contemplative time spent on your rug, your wooden yoga equipment, with your creative simple toy-like goodies will likely be one of the