

KHSA Newsletter

Spring Edition, 2009

Task Force



On February 19, 2009, I had the honor and privilege to attend a ceremony at the Anderson County Early Childhood Center where Governor Steve Beshear signed an Executive Order creating a 27 member Task Force on Early Childhood Development and Educa-

tion. This Task Force is a result of the Head Start Act of 2007 which requires that the Governor “designate or establish a council to serve as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care for children from birth to school entry.”

“The future success of our Commonwealth is dependent upon the education, health and welfare of our youngest citizens,” said Governor Beshear. “We must all work together to provide for them a solid foundation on which to build happy, healthy, successful lives.”

Aubrey Nehring, Treasurer of the Kentucky Head Start Asso-

ciation and Director of Audubon Area Head Start, joins me as a representative with a vested interest in Head Start. Other members include a variety of stakeholders including public and private child care providers, school system personnel, college professors and business people.

The group is charged with working to promote greater collaboration among service providers to young children, bring a renewed emphasis to quality at all levels, and determine a common understanding and definition of school readiness. Kentucky’s Education and Workforce Development Cabinet Secretary, Helen Mountjoy, and Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary, Janie Miller, will co-chair the task force.

Learning: Uncovering a Secret

This Rhodes Scholar has continued his preschool approach to learning throughout his life. He told reporters from a local television station that he thinks learning is like uncovering a secret. Former Head Start student Chase Palisch of Calvert City was awarded the Rhodes Scholarship last November. This scholarship provides all expenses for several years of study at the University of Oxford in England. He is a biochemistry and molecular biology major at Centre College and was one of 32 winners among 769 applicants from 207 colleges and universities across the United States. At Oxford, Palisch plans to pursue a doctorate in infection, immunity and translational medicine. Eventually he would like to work in medical research. So just how does a Head Start child end up at

Oxford? His mother, Ashley Jones, shared a little bit about his early educational experiences. When asked how Head Start might have impacted his outlook on school, she replied that he learned at a very early



age that school was important. She was a student herself at the time and provided a good role model. He loved going to school! Play dough and scissors were not high on the list

for a single, working mom who was going to school. Head Start provided two free meals a day and an environment where Chase could grow and thrive. The late Audrey Young was his teacher at the *Marshall County Preschool/Head Start Program*. She is remembered for her genuine respect and strong commitment to the children in her class. She also worked extremely well with their families. She valued children and provided a balanced curriculum with an emphasis on reading experiences. These early experiences certainly gave Chase a “Head Start” on his path to great success. The Rhodes Scholarships are the most well known awards for international study and the most prominent available to the American college graduate.

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Toyota Gift Provides Computer Systems for Head Start

Toyota Motor Manufacturing of Kentucky awarded a grant of \$41,000 to provide Hatch Computer Imagination Stations for *Paducah Head Start* classrooms. The award was presented at a ceremony at the United Way office on June 27. [Hatch systems](#) are all-inclusive computer systems that include a com-



puter, preschool sized computer table, printer, and age-appropriate software.

Cindy Rogers, Family Services Manager for Head Start, worked with Robyn West, Coordinator of Kids Company One Family Resource Center at Clark in writing the grant application.

“This is a technological age,” Rodgers said. “Children have an affinity for learning complicated things. These computer systems are child friendly and reviews about them have been positive in terms of children getting comfortable with technology. We have 265 kids coming in next year who will be thrilled to use it.”

Diana Carlson, a Head Start teacher at Morgan who attended the presentation, saw big benefits for her students.

“The games (on these systems) are much more age appropriate for three, four, and five year olds. The computers use touch screens instead of a mouse- this will reach kids who might not be able to use other programs.”

The grants are part of an effort by Toyota to invest in the communities across the state. Kim Menke, manager of community services for Toyota Manufacturing, said, “We are happy to help in laying a foundation for kids all across the state. For kids to be successful, they must have computer skills early.”

Collaboration Is Beneficial

In Clark County, the *Kentucky River Foothills Head Start* Program and the Clark County Board of Education have embraced the philosophy of collaboration in serving their preschoolers. These two programs in coordination with People Helping People, have opened an 11,000 sq./ft. building which houses the preschool program in the heart of Winchester. The People Helping People program offers Angel Food Ministries, a Thrift Store, Day Care Services, a Donation Center, Chapel Services, a Café, and an Athletic Club. In the near future, a computer lab will also be available. The cen-

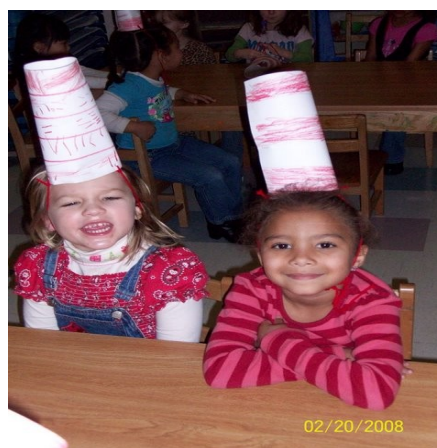
ter can provide full day preschool services to 220 children attending Head Start and KERA Preschool. As a result of the collaboration, all 11 classrooms are equipped with smart boards, projectors, digital document cameras, and computer workstations. The integration of technology supplements the intentional learning provided by the classroom teachers. The collaboration has allowed the parents to come together in one central location for parent meetings, trainings, events and volunteering. This shows that collaboration between programs is not only achievable, but when all parties are working

together for the interests of families and children it is the ideal situation.



Reading is Fundamental

At *Western Kentucky University Child Care Centers*, children and families participate in the Reading Is Fundamental program. One of the benefits is that children can choose a book to take home for them and their family to enjoy, along with families receiving information regarding the importance in pre-literacy activities. This year we celebrated RIF day by incorporating it into activities such as fall and winter festivals, Dr. Seuss Day and Friendship Day. Each classroom incorporates special activities surrounding the importance of reading and children



choosing their own books to take home. Several parents participated by coming in their child’s classroom to participate in a special story time. RIF day also inspired one classroom to write their own books,” All About Me”.

Also this year, several parents stated in home visits, how much their child benefited and enjoyed choosing and taking their own books home. RIF has again supported our efforts to promote the importance of early literacy in our program.

LEAP into Learning



Trimble County Head Start serves 83 children; 49 center base students are served in 4 classrooms Monday-Thursday from 8:00 a.m.-2:30 pm. 34 home base students are visited weekly by a home visitor and are provided 19 socialization days at the Head Start site. A blended State Preschool program was added in 2004. Bussing is provided for all students.

Trimble County Head Start/Preschool center base students are receiving nutrition enrichment activities on-site bi-weekly through 2 community partners, the Trimble County Extension Office and Trimble County Community Education. The program is Literacy, Eating, and Activity for Primary (LEAP). The LEAP for Health curriculum is a series of 22 lessons which use storybooks to teach children about staying healthy, being physically active, and eating more fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and whole grains; a family newsletter is also sent home.

Jefferson Community and Technical College Adult Education in Trimble County provide adult learning, family literacy, and on-site child care at no cost to families one weeknight per week at the Head Start site.

The Trimble County Public Library has collaborated with the Trimble County Head Start program for many years, providing literacy and language activities to

the students monthly. The Cat in the Hat visited in March.

Trimble County Head Start works closely with community medical health providers and Dr. O'Connor, the local dentist who has provided dental care to the students for 27 years, to assist families in obtaining quality medical and dental care for their children



Learning to Move, Moving to Learn

The *Middle Kentucky Head Start* Director, Tammy Caudill along with the man-



agement team attended a three day training entitled "I am Moving I am Learning" in Atlanta Georgia. This is a proactive approach for addressing childhood obesity in Head Start children. The workshops provided were: Planning Tools, Moving with the Brain in Mind, Body Language Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity and Nutrition Building Blocks. As we learned during this training event,

our children today are overfed, under nourished and dehydrated.

During the training we compiled a plan of action addressing strategies to further implement the IMIL program. We are currently using the Choosy Kids CD's in our classrooms. This is a fun way to ensure that the children are engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity during daily routines. The resource manual is full of nutritional activities for children that promote making healthy eating choices at even their young age. We will be provid-



ing staff and parents training to further enhance their knowledge and teach them strategies to implement into the children's daily routines. We are planning to purchase water coolers for every classroom to make water more accessible to children throughout the day. Our goal is to teach children, parents and staff the importance of eating healthy and exercising to maintain a healthy life style their whole life through

Celebrating A Healthy You

On February 5, 2009, the Head Start and Early Head Start programs of Shelby County hosted their second annual parent training at Clear Creek Elementary. The theme of the event was "Celebrating a Healthy You". Over 150 parents, staff, children and community volunteers participated in the event.

The evening began with an energetic musical performance by the Head Start children. Families were treated to a delicious catered meal donated and prepared by the Shelby County Cooperative Extension Office. Teenage volunteers from the Shelby County High School Jr. ROTC and Beta Clubs assisted with family registration, food service and clean-up.

Twenty local businesses and nonprofit agencies set up booths to provide program families with information related to health, safety and nutrition. Some of the topics included dental health, positive

parenting, pregnancy resources, stress management, emergency medical care, drug and alcohol resources, healthy eating habits and many, many more. The Clear Creek Park Family Activity Center donated day passes to be given away as door prizes.

Each family was given a Healthy You Toolkit filled with items to help implement the ideas presented. Healthy You Toolkits contained Heart Healthy Cookbooks, recipes for nutritious snacks for children under five, musical CD's and gross motor activities to encourage movement. Families unable to attend the event were given Healthy You Toolkits when their children returned to school the following day.

In total, "Celebrating a Healthy You" brought over \$1500 in In-Kind to the *OVEC Head Start and Early Head Start Programs!*



Clear Creek Head Start teacher Laura Shelton and her Assistant Sarah Lyons wait with the Head Start children before their performance.

Participation & Involvement

Williamstown Head Start/Preschool participates in the Kentucky Conservation Poster contest. Here Mrs. Christine Martin's class is putting the finishing touches on the poster that they submitted. Mrs. Martin had 100% participation from her students at the Mason-Corinth Elementary Center. Together, the students learned what it meant to be good stewards of our environment. Instructional Assistant, Melissa Wagers, enjoyed the activity with all of the students. "They all wanted to work on the poster every day."



. Representatives from the cabinet even made it out to the center to present Mrs. Martin's class with a \$35.00 check to congratulate them on having 100% participation. The students couldn't wait to help decide what items would be purchased for their classroom

We are very proud of our instructional assistants that all will be finishing their CDAs in May of 2009. After the six wonderful instructional assistants are finished, every assistant will have their CDA. This is awesome and we are very proud of the hard work and extra time that they have dedicated to the program, students, and mainly themselves.

Finally, parent committees and workshop are reaching more of the intended audience. Our staff is even more diligent at recruiting parents to become involved and stay involved in their child's education. Teachers are taking the extra initiative to provide more flexible meeting times. Also, by coordinating parent workshops with the teachers we are able to facilitate more parent meetings. And, as you know, KIDS WIN.

