

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Teaching Children...Strengthening Families...Enhancing Communities. Our agency's slogan is intended to describe to the world what we do. But how do we know if our claim is accurate? Assessment.

As a collective community nonprofits are under scrutiny. We see corporate scandals in the news every day. Political leaders are grilled over ethical lapses and questionable business practices. From time to time nonprofits lapse. More recently some of the 9/11 charities faced questioning over their practice, and even some Head Start agencies had questioned practices that made the news a couple of years ago.

Public confidence is paramount to a charity's preservation. Right now public confidence in charities measures in the low 70th percentile. Confidence rises when proof is shown that charities deliver results. Practices deliver results when they are held accountable. And accountability is determined by assessment.

As good stewards of the public money entrusted to us, we seek feedback on our own performance. Head Start just completed its annual week-long Self-Assessment process conducted by many staff and parents. An intensive scrutiny, it sheds light on what the program is doing well and where there are opportunities for performance improvement.

An interesting statistic is that only about 43% of the nonprofits surveyed by the Independent Sector, a U.S. nonprofit-strengthening organization, did a regular self-assessment of their programs and practices. Only 33% used a written instrument like the one Head Start uses called PRISM. Again, we see that as an agency we are ahead of the game. We have a written instrument, assess yearly, involve a good cross section of staff, conduct it honestly and with integrity, and we report the findings to the board of directors. This puts us at the top of an "effective practices" scale.

To the staff and parents who spent their week collecting data, analyzing and reporting, I thank you very much. You strengthened our Head Start program and the nonprofit community in Madison County. Most importantly, you enable the public to have confidence in us, securing our future.



Chuck Parr, President

United Way Funds Transitions

You've been reading in Riverbend Connections about United Way funding for Transitions Counseling. The grant submitted this past winter has been awarded \$78,500, a \$1,500 increase over last year. The grant allows Transitions Counseling to offer clients a sliding fee scale, something that is paramount to making therapy accessible to all those in need of help finding solutions to their challenges.

92%

The number of Transitions Counseling clients surveyed who said their experience was very good to excellent.

KIDS SAY THE FUNNIEST THINGS



Porsche: Dinner Anyone?

Veneta Wadlow, Center Supervisor of the Granite City North Head Start center proves that kids say the funniest things!

Anthony a three year old who LOVES cars was taking my finger and pointing to pictures of cars for me to identify.

I was over-exaggerating my words. I did not know all of the cars so I was saying B-L-U-E car, Y-E-L-L-O-W Taurus, greeeen VW, RED PORSCHE and white car.

Anthony then took three year old Crystal's hand and began pointing to the cars with her finger. Crystal had been playing alone, but was obviously listening to our conversation, because she repeated B-L-U-E car, Y-E-L-L-O-W car, green car, RED PORK CHOP, white car. . .

I love kids!!

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United Way  A United Way Supported Agency

RIVERBEND
HEAD START
& Family Services

Riverbend Connections

Timely information for employees of Riverbend Head Start & Family Services

April 2007

STEPPIN' OUT

Riverbend Steppers is the hottest news since word processing at RHSFS. The get up and go contest encouraging employees to walk, skip, run or march as much as possible has a grand prize of \$200 for the most mileage but every employee who participates is a winner because their health becomes better.

The competition is fierce and the 100 mile club has been established by Debra Harrington, teacher at the Granite City Head Start center, and Dora Kinder, File Clerk at Central Office. They've each walked over 100 miles since the contest launched on March 6.

Visit Riverbend Remote for updates on who's walking and how much.

Those who've gained membership in the club by the May 29 RHSFS outing will have their names placed in a drawing for baseball tickets. Two of the 'hard-walking' employees will receive a pair of Cardinals baseball tickets donated by Mike Kniepman of Holmes Murphy & Associates, our

health insurance broker. Thanks Mike!

Teams have been established with names as creative as the methods of amassing mileage. Here's a look:

The 12-Step Program
Family Foundations

Psycho Steppers
Transitions Counseling

Red Hat Steppers
Venice Head Start center

Steppin' Southside Southern Belles
Granite City South Head Start center

GCN Pavement Pounders
Granite City North Head Start center

Four Left Feet
Edwardsville Head Start Center

Red-Headed Steppin' Children
Collinsville Head Start center

Fourth Floors Fancy Footwork
Head Start Admin-4th floor of CO

Red Hot Chili Steppers
RHSFS Housekeeping and Admin-3rd floor of CO

Ellen Fredrick, the brains behind all this brawn, offers a few words of wisdom to all you steppers.

The Riverbend Steppers Dance Troupe is thrilled with your participation and enthusiasm in regards to the agency's stepping program.



Nancy Schmidt and Aaron Evola "step out" at a kick-off for Head Start staff. Several RHSFS staff, called The Riverbend Steppers Dance Troupe, staged a lively dance routine to introduce the program at the March 5 Head Start in-service.

Just a cautionary note pertaining to over-stepping:

If you are experiencing any pain associated with your personal stepping program, you may need to decrease your mileage for a few days.

To avoid injury:

1. Increase speed and distance gradually.
2. Wear good, flexible walking shoes with a low heel.
3. Perform circles and toe points before and after your walks.
4. Stretch your calves and shins before and after your walks.
5. Stay hydrated.

First...Safety...Last

Word is that wearing your pedometer on your shoe provides the most accurate measure of steppin'!

RIVERBEND
HEAD START
& Family Services

APRIL DATES TO REMEMBER

RHSFS Employee Birthdays

- 2 Ruth Embley
- 4 Tammy Houth
- 6 Kathryn Pegg
- 8 Aggie Collman
- 10 Kisha James
- 11 Debbie Dunn
- 12 Gwen Redden
- 12 Jennifer Hartwick
- 18 Debbie Bellamy
- 18 Susan Sheets
- 22 Deb Ozier
- 24 Melanie Moore
- 25 Debbie Lee
- 26 Sheila Williams
- 27 Lunita Allen
- 28 Royce Burnett

Special Days

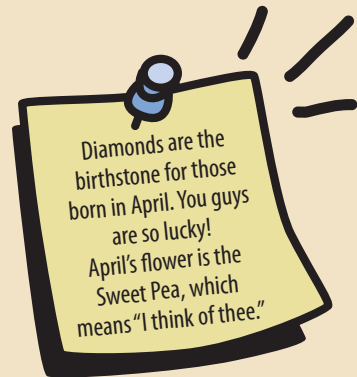
- 1 April Fool's Day
- 5 Alcohol Screening Day
- 5 A Day to End Sexual Violence
- 6 Student Athlete Day
- 7 World Health Day
- 15 Holocaust Remembrance Day
- 15 Income Tax Day
- 19 High Five Day
- 21 Kindergarten Day (first one founded by Friedrich Froebel in Germany in 1837)
- 21 School Librarian Day
- 22 Earth Day
- 25 Administrative Professionals Day
- 27 Arbor Day (IL state tree, White Oak)
- 30 Honesty Day, in observance of George Washington's inauguration as first president, 1789

Special Weeks

- 8-14 Egg Salad Week
- 15-21 Human Violence Awareness Week
- Library Week
- 22-29 Administrative Professionals Week
- Infant Immunization Week
- TV-Turnoff Week
- Volunteer Appreciation Week
- Week of the Young Child
- 28-May 6 SAFE KIDS Week

Month-Long Observances

- Alcohol Awareness Month
- Autism Awareness Month
- Child Abuse Prevention Month
- Counseling Awareness Month
- Holocaust Remembrance Month
- Mathematics Education Month
- Poetry Month
- Occupational Therapy Month
- Sexual Assault Awareness Month



ONE STEP FORWARD FOR HEAD START REAUTHORIZATION

A Head Start reauthorization bill (HR 1429) was approved in March by the U.S. House of Representatives Education and Labor Committee. The National Head Start Association (NHSA), the national voice of Head Start grantees like RHSFS, applauded the following:

- * Defeat of an amendment to approve block-granting of Head Start programs in eight states with no quality standards;
- * Defeat of an amendment to permit hiring discrimination on religious grounds;
- * Maintaining a strong role of shared governance for Head Start parents on policy councils;
- * Increasing income eligibility to 130 percent under certain circumstances;
- * Terminating the controversial and non-scientific National Reporting System testing system of toddlers;

- * Increasing the set-aside for Early Head Start, Migrant and Indian Head Start programs; and
- * A more common-sense approach to Head Start grantee re-competition.

NHSA President and CEO Sarah Greene said, "The House's approach to reauthorization of Head Start gets almost everything right and we are very pleased to see this important piece of legislation move forward."

"It is our hope that several of the key provisions of the House reauthorization bill be looked at closely by the Senate," she continued, "as ... it considers its version of the bill (S. 556), which was approved by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee on February 14, 2007."

If you search your memory, you'll recall from ninth grade civics class, (or Schoolhouse Rock for gen-Xers), that a bill becomes a law by going through a tedious process in both the House and

the Senate. Then, it has to be signed (or vetoed) by the President of the United States. For Head Start reauthorization, this process will likely take all spring and summer. We'll keep you posted on progress.

The NHSA (<http://www.nhsa.org>) is a private not-for-profit membership organization dedicated exclusively to meeting the needs of Head Start children and their families. It represents more than 1 million children, 200,000 staff and 2,600 Head Start programs in the United States.

The NHSA provides support by advocating for policies that strengthen services; by providing extensive training and professional development; and by developing and disseminating research, information, and resources that enrich Head Start program delivery.

NEWSWORTHY



Scott Cousins, city editor of the Granite City Press Record, interviews Alice W., a Venice Head Start parent who brought her daughter, Arissa, to Granite City North for a free evaluation by a dentist. The story made the newspaper!

The March issue of *Riverbend Connections* had a story about Head Start's oral health initiatives. The activities gained the interest of the *Granite City Press Record*, specifically its city editor, Scott Cousins.

Cousins came by Granite City North Head Start center's oral education event. Dr. Gerusa Mello gave oral exams. She is from Associated Pediatric Dentistry, a community partner in teaching kids and parents know just how important brushing, flossing and dentist visits are to children's overall health.

We're grateful for the press and even more grateful for how it emphasized the importance of healthy mouths.



FAMILY FOUNDATIONS RECEIVES GRANT

Family Foundations receives state funding from the Illinois State Board of Education for a program called Prevention Initiative. ISBE's program is designed to reduce the known risks of school failure through home-based case management to families with children age birth to three.

Family Foundations operates much like Early Head Start with a few exceptions, oral health care support being one of them. ISBE's grant does not allow or require Family Founda-

tions to provide this health service to its high-risk families. But, the babies and toddlers enrolled in Family Foundations suffer the same oral health issues as those in Early Head Start, namely teeth damaged from bottle rot.

To fund oral health care for its families, Family Foundations submitted a grant proposal to the Alton Foundation and received a \$4,000 grant to pay for oral health treatments.

In order to determine which of its 200+ clients has the highest need or oral health care, Family Foundations will have a dental screening in May.

Recently another grant was submitted to the United Way requesting funding to defray the cost of transportation provided to families for medical screenings and appointments.

PULASKI - PUBLIC ENEMY TURNED HERO



Kazimierz Pułaski
Often written Casimir
Pułaski in English in the
USA.

In Illinois, the first Monday in March is Casimir Pulaski Day, an official state holiday. Public schools and Head Start are closed in observance of his contributions to our country's freedom from Great Britain.

But, what exactly did he do?

Pulaski was a Polish soldier and politician who became one of the notable commanders of the American Revolutionary War.

In Poland, Pułaski was deemed a pub-

lic enemy and fled the country after an alleged attempt to kidnap and kill the king.

While in Paris, he heard of the American Revolutionary War. He wrote Benjamin Franklin, who was in Paris, to ask if he would consider hiring him to fight against the British. After hearing of his reputation as a great leader, Franklin recommended him to General George Washington.

Washington knew that the colonists had no trained cavalry, so he met with Pulaski and introduced him to John Hancock. In September 1777, Washington convinced Congress to give Pulaski temporary command of a small, new cavalry detachment. On the same day, Pulaski saved military supplies and pushed back the British at the Battle of Brandywine. The next day, he prevented a surprise attack at

an area called Warren's Tavern.

Congress acknowledged Pulaski's leadership and bravery and commissioned him as Brigadier General. He was placed in command of four light cavalry regiments.

He was a noted cavalryman and dubbed the "Father of the American Cavalry." He took part in the Siege of Charleston (South Carolina), and the Battle of Savannah (Georgia) where he was killed.

The United States has long commemorated Pułaski's contributions to the Revolutionary War, but Polish immigration in the 20th century accelerated the interest. In Illinois a city and a county are now named after Pulaski and a state holiday commemorates his service to the U.S.

Sources: *Wikipedia.org* and *Eastern Illinois University at eiu.edu*

Last November you received a letter in your mailbox at home asking for a donation to the RHSFS *Riverbend Friends* annual fundraising campaign. To date we have received 93 donations totaling \$12,180.

You might have wondered why you were sent the letter. After all, you are already an employee, why would you be asked to give a donation to the place you work?

A fair question. Here's why.

If you weren't asked, you wouldn't have given. Some of the 90 donors are RHSFS employees.

A donation is another way you can impact the lives of the children and families RHSFS serves. Some employees who don't work directly with our clients find it gratifying to give in support of those who do.

continued on page 6

\$11,000 RAISED...*continued from page 3*

Keeping you informed. As an employee, you should know what the community is reading, seeing or hearing about your place of business.

Awareness of the fundraising campaign might spur you to compel others to give. Perhaps a friend or peer would give RHSFS a donation if you responded with, "I

WORLD HEALTH DAY APRIL 7, 2007: INTERNATIONAL



In 1948, the First World Health Assembly called for the creation of a "World Health Day" to mark the founding of the World Health Organization.

Since 1950, World Health Day has been celebrated on the 7th of April annually. Each year a theme is selected for World Health Day that highlights a priority area of concern for WHO.

This year's theme is International Health Security. "In the current context of increasing global threats to health including SARS, avian flu, HIV/AIDS and humanitarian emergencies, this year's theme for World Health Day and the World Health Report is international health security," said WHO Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan.

The aim of the day is to urge governments, organizations and businesses to "invest in health, build a safer future".

"Threats to health know no borders," said Chan. "In an age of widespread global trade and travel, new and existing diseases can cross national borders and threaten our collective security. Only through strong collaboration among developed and developing countries, together with an increased focus on information sharing and the strengthening of public health systems and surveillance, can we



Dr. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, the United Nations specialized agency for health established in 1948.

contain their spread. I look forward to June of this year when the revised International Health Regulations come into force. Their implementation will help to build and strengthen effective mechanisms for outbreak alert and response at national and international levels. We must continue to invest and build."

A high-level global debate will take place in Singapore on 2 April 2007, in advance of the Day, to raise the profile of international health security. Read about the high-level global debate online at <http://www.who.int/world-health-day/activities/en/index.html>.

The debate, involving the WHO Director-General together with political and opinion leaders, will be a dynamic forum to discuss health security challenges and find solutions for how partners can work together to prepare for and respond to acute threats to health. The debate will involve high-level panellists,

including the Prime Minister of Singapore Mr Lee Hsien Loong, most likely Norway's Foreign Affairs Minister Mr Jonas Gahr Store, and WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan. Another panellist will be confirmed shortly.

World Health Day is a worldwide opportunity to focus on key public health issues that affect the international community. World Health Day launches longer-term advocacy programs that continue well beyond April 7.

THE FLAP ON AVIAN FLU

Dr Margaret Chan is the Director-General of WHO, appointed by the World Health Assembly.

Before being appointed Director-General, Dr Chan was WHO Assistant Director-General for Communicable Diseases as well as Representative of the Director-General for Pandemic Influenza.

Prior to joining WHO, she was Director of Health in Hong Kong. During her nine-year tenure as director, Dr Chan confronted the first human outbreak of H5N1 avian influenza in 1997. She successfully defeated the spate of

severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in Hong Kong in 2003. She also launched new services to prevent disease and promote better health.

MAGIC IN THE HOUSE

The Magic House puts an interesting spin on math, science and reading in its preschool programs. Collinsville and Granite City North Head Start centers have taken advantage of them this year and last. Best of all, the programs are free.

Sounds With Seuss integrates literacy with science in an effort to teach preschoolers how sounds are made by people and objects. In January, Collinsville students listened to Dr. Seuss's book *Mr. Brown Can Moo, Can You?*, a story about silly sounds, then explored the world of sounds through two games and a tuning fork.

"The program augments our own curriculum," explained Felicia Jeffries, the Head Start teacher who arranged the visit, "It expands on the ideas and activities that we are doing in the classroom."

The Magic House endeavors to engage all children in hands-on learning experiences that encourage experimentation, creativity and the development of problem-solving skills. Julie Tubbs, Director of Community Education claims, "These literacy based programs introduce science or math through a literacy activity. It is a great resource for teachers."

The Magic House can present *Sounds With Seuss* and *Math With Clifford* free of charge thanks to a special giving society of individuals whose gifts are designated for outreach to underserved youth.

If your program or center, or another community group you know is interested in The Magic House's outreach programming, visit magichouse.org or call 314/822-8900 ext. 23 and ask for Julie Tubbs.

60 LIVES SAVED BY RHSFS STAFF



Before losing her battle with liver cancer, Alysia Powell's mother-in-law received plasma from blood donors to curtail internal bleeding. **Alysia donated for the first time** when she learned cancer patients are the main recipients of donated blood. Alysia is a teacher at Granite City North Head Start. Good for you, Alysia!

The Granite City North Head Start center hosted a blood drive by Central Illinois Community Blood Center on Monday, February 12. Twenty pints of blood were drawn from RHSFS staff and parents. According to the CICBC, three lives are saved by every pint of blood donated. Better yet, those lives belong to people in our own communities.

"There were 29 donors who provided 20 units of blood, and 20 of them were new donors," said Christina Schutze, CICBC Donor Recruiter, "If you do the math, that means that your group is responsible for helping to save 60 lives! That is terrific, you and the donors should feel proud."

CICBC is the sole provider of blood to Gateway Regional Medical Center in Granite City, Anderson Hospital in Maryville, St. Anthony's Hospital in Alton, and St. Joseph's Hospital in Highland, among others. The blood donated stays in the community and affects the lives of cancer patients, the number one recipient of donated blood. Second are moms having emergency c-sections, followed by

victims of trauma.

If you took the time to donate, thank you from the RHSFS and CICBC management teams. According to Schutze, community partnerships like this, "extend the good work that you [RHSFS staff] already do."

If your community organization, church or other group would like to host a blood drive, call Schutze at (618) 593-0725. Visit www.cicbc.org for more information about donating.



Christina Schutze of CICBC helped Mary Hill, Granite City North Head Start teacher exit the self-contained unit (fondly called "The Bus") on which blood was donated. It was parked in front of the GCN Head Start building. Mary was happy to give!

(No parking? oops!)

PROTECTING THOSE CHOPPERS



Kristina Vann, Head Start parent and Policy Council Vice-Chairperson reads to her daughter, Adrianna, about healthy baby teeth after an oral health presentation given to Early Head Start families at Essic Robinson.

Mark Twain said that, "Adam and Eve had many advantages, but the principal one was that they escaped teething."

Indeed the famous couple were lucky, though many might think having a rib removed sounds less pleasant than popping out a tooth.

Teething is a tough time for most babies but the results are worth it. First you have those darling little partial-tooth smiles, then big, bright grins once all their pearly whites are in, and then finally, you have a child ready

for the next level in eating and speech.

According to the American Dental Association, strong, healthy primary teeth affect chewing, smiling, speaking, speech development, self esteem, and jaw development.

Some parents may wonder why there is concern about baby teeth becoming decayed when they will be replaced by permanent teeth. Decay in primary teeth may damage the hidden permanent teeth that are forming inside the gums.

"A child's permanent teeth may not all come in until the child is 6-8 years old," said Sheryl Byrnes, Head Start Health Coordinator. "Tooth decay is unfortunately a common childhood disease. It causes missed school days, pain and an inability to learn. All this is preventable with oral health and nutritional education to the parents."

There was no better time to launch this cavity-fighting campaign than in February, National Children's Dental Health Month. Byrnes lined up a notable team of dental professionals

to augment the training Head Start Nurses Michelle Baalman, Nancy Schmidt and Tracy Zukas have been conducting at the Head Start centers and day care partnerships.

They are:

Barb Meyer, Oral Hgienist, Associated Pediatric Dentistry

Dr. Gerusa Mello, Associated Pediatric Dentistry

Michelle Singley, Associate Professor, Coordinator, Dental Hygiene Program at Lewis & Clark Community College

Dr. Poonan Jain, BDS,MS Associate Professor, Director of SIUE Dental School, Community Dentistry

James Hwang, 4th year student at SIUE Dental School

We are deeply grateful to them for their collaboration, training, screenings, presentations, stickers, tooth-brushes, considerable time, effort and expertise.



Sheryl Byrnes, Head Start Health Coordinator, and SIUE Dental School student, James Hwang talk tooth decay. Hwang gave a presentation to Early Head Start and Home Base children and their parents at Essic Robinson Head Start center.