



Judy Center Partnerships

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Newsletter

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Judy Centers Effecting the Lives of Children and Families Across the State of Maryland



***(The following is excerpted from stories gathered by Diane Umstead, Judy Center Coordinator, Queen Anne's County)

Judy Center Partnerships across the State of Maryland have been helping families to realize success by providing access to coordinated services usually slowed down by the red tape of bureaucracy. The effects of this coordinated effort, it would appear, will last a lifetime. Children are speaking, writing, learning to read and socializing—all are getting ready for school. Parents are working, learning, listening, teaching, and getting support—they are confidently involved in their children's growth and education. One such family is Susan McCallum and daughter Andrea. Susan first learned of the Judy Center Partnership through the local Health Department while expecting

her daughter Andrea. After deciding to go back to school to obtain her nursing degree, Susan needed childcare for her daughter in order to make the 60 mile trip to the nearest Community College. Andrea participated in a public school half-day three year old program, with wraparound childcare before and after. This service would not have been available for Andrea had it not been for the involvement of the Judy Center Partnership. Susan felt comfortable to concentrate on her studies knowing that her child was well cared for in one location while also receiving breakfast, lunch and two snacks daily. She will graduate this May with an Associates Registered Nurse degree and plans in the future to pursue a Bachelors degree from the University of Maryland after working in her field for a few years. Susan is one of the Judy Center's best advertisers—as a nurse, she has referred some of her patients, as a parent, she has helped a newly widowed Dad make connections to services for his young child, and as a neighbor, she has driven another child to school, when his own mother was unable, to make sure he received speech services. Finally, Susan says, "I give the Judy Center at least 50% of the credit. I worked hard to get good grades, but the flexibility of being able to bring Andrea here and know she is safe—that's made it a lot easier."

Inside this Issue

Judy Center Stories from Families 1

Head Start-State Collaboration Project Moving Forward 2

Local Garrett County Author explains her craft to Head Start, Pre-K and Kindergarten students 3

On the Horizon at the Howard County Judy Center 4

Judy Hoyer dedicated her life to improving the lives of young children and their families. Her legacy continues because of the work of the twenty four Maryland Judy Centers that strive to promote school readiness through the development and expansion of collaborative approaches to the delivery of high quality, comprehensive, full-day, full-year early child care and education



Ready At Five Promoting Language and Literacy

Dr. Nonie Lesaux, Ph.D. will be the key speaker at the Ready At Five Partnership's 2004 Spring School Readiness Symposium entitled "Promoting Language and Literacy in Young Children from Diverse Backgrounds". Dr. Lesaux stresses the need for careful consideration when planning strategies for optimal language development for a growing

population of children from immigrant families, many of whom are living in poverty. The Symposium will be held on Tuesday, May 11th at the Holiday Inn Columbia. You may register by visiting Ready@Five's website at www.readyatfive.org or by calling 410.727410.727.6290.

Head Start-State Collaboration Project Continues Progress

Two collaboration agreements were recently signed to improve the school readiness of Maryland's young children. A Statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by State Superintendent, Dr. Nancy Grasmick and Clare Siegel, President of the Maryland Head Start Association to create "Successful Linkages between Head Start programs and public schools. The agreement addresses common areas that Head Start and public schools can work on collaboratively, including joint planning, articulation, parent involvement, and professional development. A series of regional and local meetings were held to promote local agreements between public schools and Head Start programs based on the Statewide MOU. Judy Center Coordinators are vital partners in these agreements.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was developed by Head Start and Maryland State Department of Education's Infant and Toddler Program and Preschool Special Education Services in the Division of Special Education /

Early Intervention to improve the quality of services to young children with disabilities, birth through four years, and their families through collaboration and the provision of enhanced opportunities to participate in inclusive early childhood environments. The Statewide agreement was recently signed and regional meetings are planned to encourage local implementation of this MOA.

The joint implementation of both agreements was presented at a series of "Successful Linkages" meetings. Regional meetings have been held over the last two months in Western MD, the Eastern Shore, North East Maryland, Baltimore City, and Southern and Central Maryland to introduce statewide the "Successful Linkages" initiative and to encourage the development of regional and local agreements. Local meetings are currently being conducted to continue the progress. As embodied by Judy Center principals, communities are coming together to help young children succeed in school.

You Can Teach an "Old Dad" New Tricks

Mark Wright works seven days a week, often-clocking eighty hours. He is also the father of seven children ages three to fifteen. He and Shelly moved to Maryland from Colorado three years ago, with just the clothes on their backs. Mark's family is from Maryland, but his wife Shelley, knows no one. Their daughter, Jamie, had been born with a cleft palate and had difficulty with her speech. When the family got in touch with a special education center, they heard about a summer camp offered by the Judy Center Partnership at the local school, where their elementary age children were planning to attend in the fall. Upon enrollment, the Judy Center Partnership Service Coordinator got in touch with the family to see if there were any other needs. With seven children, four of them under the age of five, how could there *not* be?

All of the children were receiving services from Health Partners and the Health Department, but two of the children needed dental work. The Judy Center had a partner to provide for this service. Even though Community Action and the Housing Authority had helped them, the family had spent all their money on relocation and basic needs. They would have nothing left to celebrate Christmas. The Judy Center and Children's Aid adopted them and they had "the best holiday ever." Then, Crystal, their kindergartner got sick and had to miss a lot of school. The staff stopped by to check on her. They took Crystal and her mom to doctor's appointments since Dad was busy working to provide for them and Mom does not drive. Shelley and Mark received tremendous support from the Judy Center staff and its partners. Shelley would hear about activities and events from the teachers and noticed that everyone was working to-

gether to get the problems solved—something she had not seen in other schools. "This school is so great because the Judy Center is involved. I really believe these children are our future and they have to have the best education, but I don't see this everywhere. Here, everyone talks to each other and they get things done. The kids do not go without anything and will get ahead in life. Everything has gone faster because of this."

The Wright children had not had any other early education experiences. They were struggling. Shelley told me that she was so glad to hear about full-day kindergarten—just in time for her



The Wright family recently posed for the camera when Diane Umstead, Queen Anne's County Judy Center Coordinator, traveled through out the state documenting the success of families in the twenty four Judy Center Partnerships.

son Joseph to attend. Now, with only one child left at home, Shelley began to think about her own education. She was grateful to her husband for making it possible for her to stay home full-time, but really wanted to better herself. She tried attending GED classes, but the schedule didn't fit into her very busy life. A flier came home from school about an at-home program for obtaining a degree, as long as you had a computer. The Judy Center provided Shelley with a computer. She is working with the teacher once a week and taking practice tests on her own time, in her own space and according to her schedule. It will take 16 weeks, but she will get to keep

Local Garrett County Author Role Model for Children

At a recent assembly for Garrett County Head Start, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten children, sponsored by the Overlook Judy Center Partnership, local author Amanda Grose discussed how she wrote and illustrated her own children's book, Drip Drops. Ms. Grose explained that many times authors use subjects and themes that are familiar to them, and that experiences and events from our own lives are a good source when looking for ideas for a story. She also noted that when she writes, she enjoys using rhyming words.

Amanda and her assistant Benjamin entertained the children with a puppet show that taught the children about responsibilities. Each of the individual classrooms that attended and parents who attended the program, were given an autographed copy of Amanda's

book and all children received a copy of a book by Bruce Larkin.

One of the Overlook Judy Center Partnerships goals is to continue to sponsor parent/child assemblies for their two affiliated public schools, Dennett Roads and Yough Glades Elementary. The Judy Center also recently sponsored Kinder-Man, the Baltimore based entertainer of young children, who provided a workshop for teachers as well as entertainment for the children.

An future assembly will introduce children and families to different cultures. The Judy Center Partnership will invite guest speakers to share information about their customs, dress, food and music. The children and their families will have an opportunity to sample multicultural foods and to learn about the ways of children from other cultures.



Local author, Amanda Grose, talks with the Head Start, Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten children about her writing experiences at recently sponsored Judy Center event.

.....You Can Teach an "Old Dad."

(Continued from page 2)

the computer when she is finished. Shelley stated, "I didn't realize this would change the way I think about learning. I used to make a mistake and give up. This time I'm trying." Her kids see her doing this, feel proud of her, and they benefit from the impact of a good education on the whole family.

In the midst of their hectic life, Shelley invited Mark to attend a series of parenting classes provided by the Judy Center. She acknowledges that Mark is a good father, but just not home a lot. When it came to interacting with and praising the children, she took the lead. Shelley reports that since taking the workshops, Mark is now the first to do the praising! They've been together for twelve years and she has seen him change more in one month than in all those years. He's talking to the kids and telling them, "I'm proud of you or I'm happy for you." She said he doesn't come from a very loving family and even though she does, they live so far from each other that her kids rarely see outward expressions of love. Now, the usually quiet Mark is expressing himself and reaching out to the children, making connections with them. Shelley told me, "He's more of a loving guy. He even takes off work on Sunday once a month to spend with the kids, telling her we'll sacrifice the money, because that Sunday pays for itself with the children." According to Shelley, "He's become a whole different person...they say you can't teach an old dog new tricks, but the Judy Center Partnership does miracles.

When I asked how these services had affected her family and children's lives, Shelley emphatically stated, "They talk about education differently. My older kids have plans for their lives. They have better self-esteem. They know that somebody besides their teachers care about their education. It's a big circle around them for education. The Judy Center affects my life everyday. Once the Judy Center Partnership touches a family, that family is touched for life. I'm never going to forget everything they have done for me and my children and I would do anything for them."

Shelley Wright does do something very important. She volunteers at the school with her 3-year old, James, at her side. As soon as she enters the school, people call for her. Shelley serves as the parent representative on the Judy Center's Steering Committee. She spoke at the Judy Center public dedication and has written to Congressman Steney Hoyer about her experiences with the Judy Center, and to top it off, Shelley bakes cupcakes for four classes whenever requested. It truly sounds like both Mark and Shelley are learning a few new tricks toward success for themselves and their family.

**story written by Diane Umstead, Queen Anne's County Judy Center Program Coordinator.





"The most crucial responsibility of any community is the protection, education and mentoring of its children."
Judith P. Hoyer

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**FIND MSDE ON THE
WEB**

www.mdk12.org/instruction/ensure/readiness/index.html

Find local Judy Centers at:
www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/JudyCenters/
www.judycenter.allconet.org
www.ccboe.com/judycenter
www.judycenter.com
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Howard County Judy Center Happenings

The Judy Center Partnership at Dasher Green Owen Brown School is excited to announce the opening of the first **Even Start** program in Howard County. This program offers parents, who have children ages 1 to 5, basic educational opportunities including learning how to speak English, while helping Mom's and Dad's to enhance their parenting skills. The program began through the Judy Center Partnership on March 8, 2004 with fourteen pre-registered families eager to participate. Seven families are enrolled in the ESOL class, seven families enrolled in the Adult Education/GED class; and twenty-three children are receiving child care services through Lornwood Day Care and Gifted Center. This is certain to be an effective program to prepare parents to be their child's first teacher while exposing children to enriching language and literacy experiences.

To help ensure that students maintain the level of

learning received during the regular school year, the Judy Center will help to fund four weeks of a full day summer school for students entering kindergarten and first grade. This program will add three hours to the traditional summer school day. In addition, the Judy Center will also fund a three hour, three day a week program for non-English speaking children entering the Pre-Kindergarten program in the fall.

Dasher Green Owen Brown School is also proud to announce that they are one of seven schools in Howard County chosen to implement full day Kindergarten in August, 2004. The staff at the Judy Center is sure this will add additional support to their efforts to ensure that students come to school ready to learn.

For more information regarding these and other activities at the Judy Center at Dasher Green Owen Brown, contact Dr. Anne Yenchko, at 410-381-9024.