

Happy 20th!

The Office for Children is now in its 20th year of operating Head Start in the Gum Springs community. Since 1990, the program has provided early childhood education and health, nutrition and family services in southern Fairfax County.

Gum Springs, a historic community that was founded by a former slave freed by George Washington, is located in Alexandria near the Mt. Vernon Estate.

The program is provided in two sites. The Gum Springs Children's Center serves 3-5 year-olds and their families, and Gum Springs Glen serves newborn-3 year-olds and their families. Over the past 20 years, almost 3,500 children have been enrolled in Head Start in the Gum Springs area.



Full Circle

Lateffa King was recently hired by the OFC Head Start office as the Parent Involvement and Family Services Specialist.

In addition to her professional credentials, she has firsthand experience with Head Start.

As a child, **King** was enrolled in Head Start in Pulaski, Virginia, and her mother has been a Head Start teacher for more than 12 years. **King** enrolled her own children in the Greater Mt. Vernon Community Head Start program, where she was a parent

representative on the Head Start Policy Council.

"We're excited to have **Lateffa** join our team with her wealth of knowledge and experience to engage and promote parental involvement through-out the program." said Head Start Director **Jennifer Branch**, noting that **King** is also working toward her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology



New Agreement for CCAR vendors



The Virginia Department of Social Services has developed a new vendor agreement for family child care providers and child care centers that work with families receiving child care subsidies.

Because the new agreement must be signed before July 1 by all 1,200 vendors who care for children in the subsidy program, staff in OFC's Child Care Assistance and Referral program organized a series of information meetings in May and June to help up to 100 providers at a time complete the new vendor agreements.

"Congratulations to the CCAR staff for developing such an efficient process," said CCAR Program Administrator **Carol Keil**. "Because we're there in person to help providers fill out the forms and answer questions they may have about the state's new policies and procedures, we are well on our way to having the agreements signed by July 1st."

Seven sessions were held in May; four additional meetings are planned this month.

Child Care Professionals Week

At the request of the Office for Children, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors declared May 2-8 Child Care Professionals Week in Fairfax County. Noting that child care professionals in Fairfax County work in more than 2,200 family child care homes and 522 centers and preschools, the board's proclamation states: "the early care and education experiences provided by child care professionals prepare children for ongoing success in school and in life"

OFC's Community Education and Provider Services staff mailed copies of the proclamation to Fairfax County child care programs. The mailing included a letter from OFC Director **Anne-Marie Twohie**, which explained that the board's proclamation was in keeping with the national commemoration of Provider Appreciation Day, which was celebrated across the U.S. on May 7, and Teacher Appreciation Day on May 4.

Twohie thanked child care providers and teachers for all their work for children and families in Fairfax County.



OFC on TV



OFC Director **Anne-Marie Twohie**, Fairfax Futures Executive Director **Dalissa Vargas**, and symposium speakers and participants recently appeared in a 12-minute video produced by Fairfax Public Access.

FPA broadcasts community programs on Cox Cable TV's channel 10 in Fairfax County. Their story about the 6th annual School Readiness Symposium aired during the May edition of the "Fairfax Digest" show.

"I'm glad that channel 10 viewers got to watch highlights from the symposium, which is such an important collaboration between OFC, Fairfax Futures and the public schools," **Twohie** said.

The video can be viewed on OFC's Facebook page from non-county computers. There's a link to Facebook on Child Care Central at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc.

Technology Workshop

Close to 70 South County family child care providers attended "How to Safely Use Technology in Your Child Care Business" at the Government Center in Alexandria. It was the first workshop of its kind offered by OFC's Community Education and Provider Services division.

The workshop kicked off with a session on cyber bullying delivered by Stefan Mascoll from the public schools' Office of Safety and Wellness. Vee Johnson, from the county's consumer affairs division, explained how to prevent identity theft, and CEPS Business Analyst **Casey McCullough** demonstrated how to submit USDA Food Program claims online. OFC Marketing Manager **Lois Kirkpatrick** wrapped up the workshop with a discussion of online marketing.

In explaining why the topic was chosen, CEPS Program Administrator **Maria Elena Martinez** said, "We are encouraging providers to use technology to communicate, find resources and for learning. And also wanted to provide information and the tools for safe use."

"The event was very well received," said Child Care Specialist **Marilyn Frost**. Organizers for the event were CEPS Team One members **Tammi Daniels, Marilyn Frost, Maria Gonzales, Dana Haynes** and **Linda Hogue**.



*CEPS Business Analyst
Casey McCullough*



Children and Chicks

The School Age Child Care program participated in “The Beginning of Life” 4-H embryology project again this year, which is operated by the Fairfax Cooperative Extension program.

The embryology project gives SACC centers a dozen fertile eggs and teaching materials in April. During the following weeks that the eggs are in the SACC incubators, children learn about the embryo development process. After the chicks hatch in May, they’re returned to the Extension program, which is located on the 10th floor of the Pennino Building. From there the chicks are taken to a farm.

While they were waiting to be returned to the Extension program this year, the chicks were visited by children from the Employees’ Child Care Center, which is located on the 1st floor of the Pennino Building.

“This is a big hands-on project for the kids. They have to turn the eggs several times a day. They measure, chart, check the temperature of the incubator, and observe the whole process for 21 days,” explained Sleepy Hollow SACC Center Supervisor **Beth Byham**.

Old Creek SACC Center Supervisor **Sue Deremer** and **Byham** conduct the training for the 40 or so SACC centers that participate in the project each year.

