



SACC Kicks Off New Year

More than 600 School Age Child Care staff kicked off the new school year with SACC's annual curriculum and program orientation.

a retired Lockheed Martin program director whose career included 25 years with IBM. Johnson is the husband of retired SACC teacher Panzie Johnson, who spent more than 30 years with the Office for Children.

The 2010-2011 SACC school year will be filled with opportunities for children to explore cutting-edge technology and futuristic creations while investigating trends in inventions, robotics and techno-art. Children will create products that make life easier and more fun, perform techno music, and showcase their art.

The afternoon breakout sessions included presentations by guest speakers from the Reston Robotics Club and the George Mason University Inventors Club, and techno-artist Tony Karp and animation artist Joey Wallen. The interactive sessions gave SACC teachers practical ideas for incorporating technology into the curriculum in a way that's exciting and appealing to children.

The day-long SACC staff development event began with welcoming remarks from Office for Children Director **Anne-Marie Twohie** and SACC Director **Anne Goldstein**. Introductions were made by SACC Curriculum Work Group members **Denise Reid** and **Art Cole**. The keynote address, "Kids and Technology," was presented by Michael L. Johnson,

SACC administrative staff also presented materials, supplies, books and other resources for SACC teachers to use in this year's technology-related activities for children.



Keynote speaker Michael Johnson with wife Panzie, a retired SACC teacher.



Anne Goldstein



Denise Reid



Art Cole



S.T.E.M. Adds Up



Maria Gallagher featured in Wolf Trap's STEM video.

Recently the Office for Children was given the opportunity to work with Wolf Trap as it launched its new Early Childhood STEM Education Through the Arts initiative. This program will use the performing arts to teach 3-5 year-olds concepts related to science, technology, engineering and math.

OFC's involvement began when two Wolf Trap staff attended "Count Me In: Math and Young Children," a class for child care professionals offered by OFC's Institute for Early Learning. Impressed, Wolf Trap

invited OFC trainer **Maria Gallagher** to help them develop a curriculum for their STEM project.

In August, **Gallagher** spent a week with Wolf Trap staff and teaching artists designing activities that infuse math concepts into dancing, singing, storytelling and acting.

"With the arts, early childhood educators can take math off the printed page and make it three dimensional so young children can feel it and relate to it," **Gallagher** said.

In September, **Gallagher** presented a workshop for all of Wolf Trap's teaching artists. She and the artists also gave a day-long workshop to preschool teachers from Maryland, DC and Fairfax County. The artists will now spend 16 sessions in each participating child care center, coaching and mentoring the staff in teaching math concepts to children using the performing arts.

"The arts really are a very natural way of teaching math," **Gallagher** said.

Wolf Trap plans to replicate this program in 10 regions across the U.S.



Flu and You

The Centers for Disease Control warns that school-age children catch the flu more often than any other age group, and children younger than 2 have the highest risk for

hospitalization and death from the flu. Because of this, staff who work with children are advised to get the flu vaccine, which is available now in health clinics and doctors' offices.

The CDC forecast for this flu season, expected to run from October to April, includes the H1N1 ("swine flu") virus, along with seasonal flu viruses. The 2010-2011 flu vaccine is designed to protect against both types of flu virus.

It's important for staff who work with children to teach and model hygiene habits that will help children avoid catching or spreading the flu:

- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Avoid people who are sick or have flu symptoms.
- If you catch the flu, stay home and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Ask parents to keep sick children home.



Happy Anniversary

October is National Head Start Awareness Month, and this year the national program celebrates 45 years of providing education and family support to eligible pregnant women, children from birth to age 5, and their families.

“Over the past 45 years since Head Start was founded, research has shown that the effects of quality preschool programs last all the way into adulthood,” said OFC Head Start Director **Jennifer Branch**.

The Fairfax County Head Start program serves a total of 1,750 children and is offered in 62 Fairfax County Public Schools; the Higher Horizons Day Care Center in Falls Church; the Greater Mt. Vernon Community Head Start program in Alexandria, and in family child care homes throughout the county.

OFC directly operates the Greater Mt. Vernon Community Head Start program. According to its director, **Anne Taggart**, 100 percent of families taking the latest survey responded that their child developed new skills and abilities while enrolled in the program. One parent wrote, “Head Start has given my child a

great start.” Another responded, “Head Start has helped our family grow strong and happy.”

In addition, 96 percent of children enrolled in the Greater Mt. Vernon Community Head Start program achieved benchmarks in social-emotional development, which is one of the top predictors of



future school success. Ninety-six percent of the children also reached benchmarks in literacy and language skills.

October Is SIDS Awareness Month



Please encourage parents, teachers and child care professionals who care for infants to follow these guidelines to help prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome:

- Always place babies on their backs for sleep.
- Use a firm mattress in a safety-approved crib or bassinet.
- Do not cover the baby with sheets or blankets; use sleeper garments instead.

- Do not allow babies to share a crib.
- Babies should never sleep or play in an environment where smoking is allowed.

Parents, teachers and child care professionals should also be aware of Shaken Baby Syndrome. Rapidly shaking a child by the arms, legs, chest or shoulders causes the brain to bounce back and forth within the child’s skull, which injures or destroys brain tissue. This can result in seizures, vomiting, or death.

Even if the child survives, Shaken Baby Syndrome can result in learning disabilities, blindness, cerebral palsy or other permanent disabilities.

“SACC Rocks!”

Those are the words of a parent responding to the 2010 satisfaction survey distributed by the School Age Child Care program.

Words other respondents used to describe SACC staff include “amazing,” “incredible,” “awesome,” “superb,” “terrific,” “extraordinary,” “top-notch,” “excellent” and “fantastic.”

There were more than 2,400 respondents to this year’s survey. Ninety-eight percent reported that their children enjoy SACC. Ninety-seven percent agreed that SACC helps children learn how to have positive interactions with others, and 95 percent agreed that SACC’s curriculum provides a variety of learning opportunities and activities to meet children’s interests.



In considering the positive response from families, SACC Director **Anne Goldstein** said, “We are very gratified by our community’s appreciation of the hard work and dedication of the SACC staff. We strive to be responsive to issues parents raise

on our surveys. For example, last year, survey respondents mentioned giving children more opportunities to do homework. This year, respondents thanked us for helping their children with homework.

“This year, parents commented on snacks, fees and hours of operation. We plan to follow up on these issues during the coming year.”

More than 1,000 of this year’s survey respondents wrote in additional comments. Here is just a sampling

of the comments received:

“No one will find a better day care program that is so educational and with exceptional teachers.”



“It is a very well-run organization, from billing to keeping information current.”

“Without SACC services I would not be able to work.”
“Although the program is separate from the school there is a lot of coordination between the school administration and SACC, which is great!”

“SACC staff has been amazing with my kid who has special needs. They are caring and accepting, and my son loves going to SACC.”



“The gender/age/ethnic diversity in SACC staff is also important; [my son] has good role models and is comfortable with folks that are reflective of our community and our country. Most of all, he has fun!”