

## Successful Symposium



More early childhood educators than ever before – nearly 350 – attended this year’s School Readiness Symposium, which was presented by Fairfax Futures, the Fairfax County Office for Children, and Fairfax County Public Schools. The event was co-hosted by George Mason University and made possible by a generous grant from the PNC Foundation.



“Bringing Math and Science Into Children’s Everyday Lives” opened with remarks by Fairfax Futures’ Executive Director

**Dalissa Vargas**, Hunter Mill District Supervisor Catherine Hudgins, Fairfax County Public School’s Coordinator of Early Childhood Programs Maura Burke, OFC Director **Anne-Marie Twohie**, and the Executive V.P. and Market Manager of PNC Bank, Enrico Della Corna.

Workshops were presented by The Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, the National Children’s Museum, Wolf Trap, and Sesame Workshop in partnership with PNC.

“The overwhelming response this year was a testament to the quality of our workshops, our partnerships in the community, and the dedication of child care professionals and FCPS staff,” **Vargas** said.

“We were delighted to be able to hold the event at GMU this year, and heard from participants that they appreciated the opportunity to attend an event on the GMU campus.”





## Special Ride-Along

Department of Family Services  
Director **Nannette Bowler** recently accompanied Child Care Specialist **Dana Haynes-Lovelace** on a USDA Food Program visit as part of **Bowler's**

ongoing efforts to “walk a mile in the shoes” of frontline staff.

The Office for Children’s Community Education and Provider Services program administers the USDA Food Program for child care programs in Fairfax County. The USDA Food Program helps make sure children are offered healthy meals and snacks while in care. CEPS staff make regular, unannounced visits to make sure

participating family child care providers follow USDA requirements.

**Bowler** and **Lovelace** visited a home in Alexandria. “The family child care provider was serving an afternoon snack to the four children in her care,” **Lovelace** said. **Bowler** talked with the children while Lovelace performed the review. The visit took about 30 minutes, and was just one of hundreds of visits **Lovelace** will make this year. CEPS child care specialists are required to visit each USDA Food Program participant four times each year.

“I enjoyed sharing with Nannette about the work we do,” **Lovelace** said.

**Bowler** thanked **Lovelace** for the opportunity to see her in action. **Bowler** is participating in quarterly ride-alongs with employees from each DFS division.



## SACC Tours Childhelp

SACC program administrators and regional supervisors recently toured the Childhelp Children’s Center of Virginia, which is located in Fairfax. The CCCV investigates child abuse cases and offers treatment, family support and therapy. DFS Child Protective Services Sexual Abuse Unit Supervisor Beth Iddings and Social Worker Pat Humphrey helped organize the tour for SACC.

“As one way to ensure that children in SACC are healthy and safe, all staff receive training on recognizing indicators of child abuse and neglect,” explained SACC Regional Supervisor **Tanya Pullman**, who helped plan the tour. “The SACC program is always looking for ways to connect with other agencies, so this was a great opportunity to learn about the services CCCV provides for children and families. We plan to share the experience with our field staff.”



## Celebrating Babies and Tots

Office for Children Child Care Specialists **Debbie Wiegand**, **Helen Webster** and **Jennifer Miller**, and Employees' Child Care Center Teacher **Mary Caskey** were presenters at the Infant and Toddler Specialist Network's "Celebrating Babies and Tots," which was held at the Fair Oaks Marriott.

The day-long event was attended by child care professionals from Northern Virginia and the counties of Culpeper, Fauquier, Prince William, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania and Stafford.

"What stands out most to me is the dedication of the people in attendance," said **Caskey**, who team-taught the seminar "It's More Than Just Baby Talk."

"My best memory of the event would be the enthusiasm of the participants. Even the keynote speaker participated fully and really seemed excited to be there. She also mentioned how impressed she was with the level of professionalism of the participants," said **Webster**, who presented "Let Me Move. See Me Learn" and the director's forum.

**Weigand** presented "Why Water, Not Wipes," and team-taught the director's forum. **Miller** presented "Rattle to Riding Toys: Multiple Ages in Family Care," and team-taught "Strengthening Families."

"The day was highly successful, as evidenced by over 100 early childhood educators actively engaged all day in the learning process," confirmed OFC's ITSN Coordinator **Karen Quist**.



This fall, an estimated 13,000 Fairfax County children will start kindergarten. The Office for Children partners with Fairfax County Public Schools to support children's school readiness. Recently, OFC and FCPS teamed up for an "Ask Fairfax" online chat about school readiness and starting kindergarten.

The topic was very popular; readers submitted more than 50 questions. OFC Director **Anne-Marie Twohie**

## Ask Fairfax

and FCPS' Coordinator of Early Childhood Programs Maura Burke answered about 25 questions during the time limit allowed for the event.

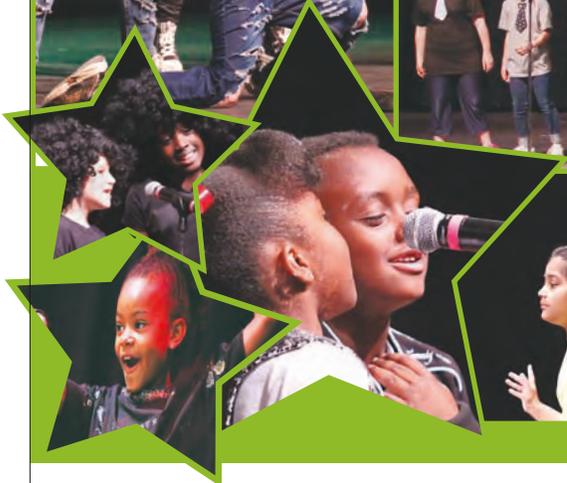
"There were many questions about FCPS' requirements, curriculum, and how to support children's school readiness," **Twohie** said. "Ask Fairfax' was a great opportunity to let families and child care professionals know about activities they can do with preschoolers to promote language, literacy, social, fine-motor and self-help skills they'll use in kindergarten."

You can read a transcript of the chat at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/AskFairfax](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/AskFairfax).



# SACC Sings

Almost 200 children from 10 SACC centers performed the hits of Rock and Roll Hall of Fame stars Aretha Franklin, The Beach Boys, Aerosmith and others at West Springfield High School. Attendees donated several large boxes worth of food items, which were delivered to United Community Ministries.



# Head Start Hosts Health Forum



Fairfax County Head Start staff recently hosted a forum for 75 health, nutrition, family services and education representatives from 15 Virginia Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

Dr. Constance Gewa, of the Department of Global and Community Health at George Mason University, presented “Childhood Obesity and the Role of Culture,” and Jan Cox, health subject matter expert with the Office of Head Start’s Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, helped participants understand their role in “Partnering With Families for Positive Health Outcomes.”

“We surveyed staff to determine the health-related issues they wanted to learn more about,” stated **Marna Zok**, health services specialist for the Office for Children’s Head Start program. “We were fortunate to be able to contract with highly qualified content specialists for our presentations.”

“In addition to the presentations, the forum provided resource materials and served as a networking opportunity,” **Zok** reported. “We’ve had a very positive response, both from our program survey and in follow-up email messages.”

The breastfeeding coordinator of the Fairfax County Health Department’s WIC program, Margaret Prosser, debunked breastfeeding myths and presented new information to attendees. Dr. Rene Hackney, founder of Parenting Playgroups, offered new insights into children’s emotional and social learning and development.



## Office for Children

This employee newsletter is published by the Office for Children, a division of the Fairfax County Dept. of Family Services. If you have any questions, contact Lois Kirkpatrick at 703-324-7162 or Nancy McDonough at 703-324-8042. [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc).



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