

## SACC Stars in Healthy Food Video



Fairfax County Public Schools' Food and Nutrition Services program has partnered with Walter Media on a video to show elementary school students how to make healthy food choices. Children enrolled in the Weyanoke SACC center were invited to act out the story line for the video.

"At first during the rehearsal, the students were shy because it was new to them," said Weyanoke Center Supervisor **Yakob Beyen**. But by the end of the video shoot, the children had overcome their

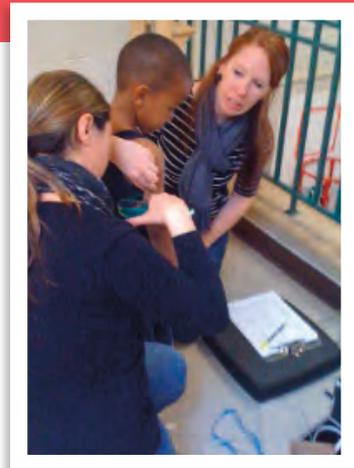
stage fright. "While we were doing the final filming, they knew what to expect and came out with a lot of energy. The students were very excited and proud of themselves to be a part of this amazing project!" **Beyen** said.

The video will be shown to FCPS students and is based on nutrition guidelines from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## Grad Students Help Head Start

Graduate students from George Mason University's Global and Community Health Department have completed a two-week project at the Gum Springs Head Start center. The purpose of this project was to evaluate the nutritional status of the children while giving the GMU students hands-on experience and training in taking accurate anthropometric measurements. This included measuring the children's height, weight, arm circumference, and skin folds to determine whether they're underweight, normal weight, overweight, or obese for their age.

All measurements were supervised by GMU Assistant Professor Dr. Constance Gewa. The results were sent to each child's parent or guardian.



# Federal Reviewers Visit the Office for Children



Every three years, every Head Start program in the U.S. undergoes an intense, comprehensive review by federal monitors. The Office for Children Head Start/Early Head Start program went through a week-long process of having a 12-member federal review team evaluate every aspect of the work they perform.

“The federal review analyzes all areas of operations,” said OFC Head Start Director **Jennifer Branch**. “There are more than 1,700 regulations Head Start programs are required to follow, and the federal review evaluates us on each one.”

Included in the review were the two centers in the Greater Mt. Vernon Community program, the Fairfax County Public Schools, the Higher Horizons Day Care Center, and the Early Head Start family child care option. The review included on-site visits to classrooms, looking at files, verifying fiscal compliance, and interviewing parents and community representatives on the Head Start Policy Council.

The results of the review are in, and report no non-compliance in the areas of education, health, parental

involvement, nutrition, social services, or financial management. In addition, the report indicated our Head Start program scored higher than the national average in the teacher-child interactions that were observed using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System. Also, the county’s Early Head Start expansion program, funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, was reviewed and found to be fully in compliance.

The report also included program strengths. For example, the curriculum used in FCPS Head Start classrooms aligns with FCPS’ curriculum, which helps ensure Head Start children start kindergarten ready to succeed. And the report noted our participation in a national pilot, the Early Childhood Hearing Outreach Project, which provided equipment and training for screening the hearing of all children enrolled in Early Head Start.

“We’re very pleased with the results in the report,” **Branch** said. “Although our program has an ongoing monitoring system, this was an opportunity for the federal government to validate our quality services.”



## VPI Event

The Office for Children’s Virginia Preschool Initiative program hosted an event for children who’ll start kindergarten this fall, and their parents and family child care providers. “Taking Chances, Making Dances” featured Wolf Trap Master Artist Laura Schandelmeier, who encouraged children to learn new vocabulary words while helping to tell a story through singing and dancing.



“We wanted to give family child care providers and families an opportunity to have a Wolf Trap experience,” said VPI Director **Carol Osborn**. “This type of event offers parents and providers fun ways to help children develop a love for language and literacy that will help them succeed in school.”

More than 60 adults and children attended the school readiness event, which was held at the Lynbrook Elementary School in Springfield.

# SACC Sets Sail

Children from 26 SACC centers participated in the 10th annual Cardboard Boat Regatta, which was held at Lake Accotink Park in Springfield. All SACC contestants created boats that reflected this year's theme: "automobiles in history."

There were five heats for SACC racers; the winners were from the Ravensworth, Pine Spring, Waples Mill, Colvin Run and Forestdale SACC centers. The event organizers also gave awards for the best time to the Waples Mill SACC center; the creativity award went to the Oak View SACC center; and the best costume award went to the West Springfield SACC center.



## Transition Teams

The school year 2011-2012 starts soon, and parents with children who will turn 5 by September 30 are registering for kindergarten now. Neighborhood School Readiness Teams work with the child care community, parents and school staff to

help make children's transition to school as smooth as possible for everyone.

In the last few weeks, the Neighborhood School Readiness Teams held workshops for family child care providers and child care center teachers at six local elementary schools. The meetings focused on school readiness and kindergarten registration, and presenters shared information about how to partner with parents to help children start and succeed in

school. They discussed how to support children's developing social, emotional, cognitive and motor skills, and offered lists of library books for children about starting school.

Presenters also talked about kindergarten orientations, the school registration process, immunizations, resources for families with low incomes, before- and after-school care, and supplies children need for school.

Team members reported that participants said the meetings were very informative, and that they were excited to implement some of the new strategies and use the resources.

The Neighborhood School Readiness Teams are a collaboration between the Office for Children, Fairfax Futures, and Fairfax County Public Schools.



Kamini Jassal

## OFC Helps Fight Obesity

**Kamini Jassal**, a registered dietitian who works in the Office for Children’s Community Education and Providers Services program, recently gave a presentation on “Infant Development and Nutrition” at a conference in Williamsburg. The Virginia Child and Adult Care Food Program Sponsors’ Association 2011 Spring Conference was attended by child care specialists and field monitors who help child care professionals serve healthy meals and snacks to the children in their care.

There’s a growing concern in the U.S. about the quality and amount of food offered to children during their first 12 months. According to information recently released by the White House, obesity rates among 2 to 5 year-olds have doubled in the past four decades, and more than half of obese children first become overweight at or before age 2.

One of the reasons for the growing number of overweight infants is the increase in baby foods, formulas and juices that are high in sugar, salt and fat. Research shows that, in addition to weighing infants down with more calories than they need, consuming these types of foods during infancy can cause children to form preferences for fatty, sugary food. Regularly choosing unhealthy food can lead to obesity in childhood and later in life.

OFC nutritionists help make sure children who are enrolled in OFC programs, or who are served by county child care professionals, are offered healthy meals and snacks while in care. OFC’s registered dietitians are **Kamini Jassal, Everludis Lopez, Maria Elena Martinez** and **Abeba Tzeggai**.



Everludis Lopez



Maria Elena Martinez



Abeba Tzeggai