

SACC Children Reach the Global Community

The School Age Child Care program promotes community service initiatives that encourage children to reach out to those in need both locally and globally. SACC centers participate in a wide variety of projects which provide the opportunity for children to use their natural creativity while contributing to a larger community.

During the recent school year, children at Lake Anne and Aldrin

SACC centers collected plastic grocery bags from their home, their school and the community. The bags were altered and crocheted to make sleeping mats. To make the mats, children removed the bags' handles and seams, and cut the bags into loops; the children tied these loops together to make plarn (plastic yarn). The SACC teachers,

children, and even the children's families crocheted the plarn into water-resistant, comfortable mats that can be used to insulate a person against the cold and damp of the ground.

A local church presented the mats on SACC's behalf to Haitian children, still affected by the 2010 earthquake. SACC teacher Alexa O'Flynn said it best, "Children understand that not everyone is as fortunate as they are, but it can often be difficult for a young person to make a contribution where they can see results. Not so here. Bring on the bags, the scissors, the large crochet hooks and join us as we Recycle for Hope."



"These are the mats that Lake Anne SACC students made for children in Haiti. They are used for children to sit on the very dirty floor. . . Without the mats the children would not have a place to learn through play.

We are trying to build these children a school. We hope it is open in the fall. Then we can serve the children food and water so they will not be so tired and can learn. Thank you to your students and teachers for their support."

— a message received from a contact in Haiti



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Regional Forum Highlights County Partnerships

OFC Director Anne-Marie Twohie and Fairfax Futures Executive Director Dalissa Vargas recently participated in the Washington Area Women's Foundation Stepping Stones Forum. The Women's Foundation is a DC-based public foundation dedicated to mobilizing our community to ensure that economically vulnerable women and girls in the Washington region have the resources they need to thrive. This event focused on three different areas that affect

women's lives: workforce development, affordable housing and early care and education. As part of the Early Care and Education panel, Twohie and Vargas discussed Fairfax County's approach to extending the availability of early care and education through public private partnerships.

"We explained the work of the School Readiness Community Collaborative Council and the Neighborhood School Readiness Teams project, which are unique initiatives in this region," said Vargas. "Fairfax County's population and geographic area are many times larger than most other local jurisdictions. This requires Fairfax to employ tailored initiatives like Neighborhood School Readiness Teams to reach as many people as possible," said Vargas.

NSRT members represent the county, the school system, their communities and nonprofit agencies within identified neighborhoods with the greatest need to provide supports to families with young children. Public private partnerships are an integral means of making the NSRT system work. The participation of all team members supports children's successful transitions to school and beyond.

IFEL Staff Brings Back New Insights from NAEYC Conference

IFEL Director Karen Quist, and instructors Bronwyn Dean and Marshann Snyder recently attended The National Association for the Education of Young Children – National Institute for Professional Development annual conference in San Francisco. Quist said, "Conferences like this provide us with valuable new information that we can in turn pass on to early childhood educators as we develop our courses."

The theme "Developmentally Appropriate Practice: the Next Era" refers to the foundation and philosophy for all of NAEYC's work. In this practice early childhood educators meet children where they are developmentally as individuals and as part of a larger group with the goal of promoting each child's optimal learning and development.

The IFEL team attended a variety of workshops that provided information useful for developing curriculum and materials for IFEL courses. Other workshops provided helpful insights for using technology, online resources and new national program standards in the administration and expansion of professional development programs like IFEL.

Marshann Snyder attended a memorable workshop presented by J. Ronald Lally and Peter Mangione from WestEd., called "Building Infant and Toddler Intellect and



Language on a Social-Emotional Base: The Developmentally Appropriate Roots of School Readiness." Snyder was struck by a key point of Lally's: "So much of the young child's interest is in the emotional exchange, the relationship between the infant care teacher and the child. This . . . is more important than anything else for early learning." Building a deep connection and trust between educator and child lays the groundwork for that child's executive function and school readiness.

The conference was attended by approximately 2600 educators including child care center directors, family child care providers, administrators, college faculty, teachers, professional development instructors, and others who are "dedicated to excellence in early childhood education."

SACC Track & Field

On Saturday, May 18 children from 24 SACC centers came together for SACC's annual Track and Field Meet. Approximately 375 children, ages 5–8, competed in the event which included the 50-yard dash, 100-yard dash, javelin throw and 4 x 1 relay.

For several months prior to the event, SACC staff facilitated a variety of activities at their centers that helped each of the children develop their track and field skills and expertise. Staff also offered experiences designed to instill a sense of teamwork and promote good sportsmanship. On the day of the meet, the children were excited and well-prepared.



Midday rain showers didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the children, proud families, and dedicated staff. "This was an exciting SACC family event and a meaningful personal accomplishment for the children!" said SACC Director Anne Goldstein.

SACC on the High Seas



A large crowd turned out to cheer on participants in the annual Cardboard Boat Regatta, held at Lake Accotink Park in Springfield. For the 12th year SACC children and staff worked together to design and build cardboard boats reflecting SACC's theme for the race. This year's theme was "SACC on the High Seas."

SACC children from 29 centers paddled their boats in several heats. Sleepy Hollow SACC won the SACC heat in "Sharkbait Hoo Hoo Ha," and Terra Centre SACC's "TC Minnow" won the Civic/Scout/Corporate Groups heat. In all, 14 SACC boats lasted until the final survivor race.



Event Judges, Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay, and Braddock District Supervisor John Cook awarded The Pride of the Regatta to Willow Springs SACC for "Sea Fox," Team Spirit to Lees Corner SACC for "Doomship," and Most Likely to Sink was Oakton SACC's "Canoe."

"This project gives children an opportunity to experience the results of teamwork and build friendships along the way," said Kali Pellegrino, head teacher at Kings Glen SACC. Preparation for and participation in the Springfield Days boat regatta is a wonderful experience for the SACC children, staff and families, and an event sure to bring a smile to everyone's face.



Early Head Start Providers Introduce Gardening

Many Early Head Start family child care providers are using gardening to help children develop early math, science and social skills. While children are having fun planning their gardens, digging in the soil, and watering the earth; the providers know that the children are engaged in hands-on learning about the natural world, the importance of caring for something else, working with others, and making independent choices. These lessons are essential to supporting their school readiness.

No two approaches to gardening look the same. In some family child care homes plants are grown in containers, while some other providers have established outdoor garden plots, and still others have integrated the children's gardens into their existing landscaping.

When EHS provider Silvia Pizarro decided to begin this project she enlisted the help of a parent volunteer to create individual garden plots for each child. To develop children's independence and decision-making skills, Pizarro had children choose the fruit and vegetable seeds they wanted to plant. Each child planted their seeds in their own plot and is responsible for caring for their plants as they grow.

EHS providers Hanan Adam and Maria Fabiola Araujo planted flower and vegetable gardens with children. These providers emphasize learning about what plants need to thrive (water and sunlight), and the importance of plants for all life. Through caring for the plants, children learn a sense of compassion and empathy, respect for nature, and how to be good helpers. They also develop an appreciation for the beauty found in nature.

In addition, children who garden gain a deeper understanding of the origins of some foods they eat regularly. Even the least adventurous eater is more likely to eat and enjoy vegetables they grew themselves.



O F C Office for Children

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