

Reaching Out to the Community



SACC staff LaTisha Robinson and Laura Carter sharing information with the public.

Back to school is a busy time for families. Several community events were recently held throughout the county to support families as they prepare to start a new school year. Staff from the Office for Children have represented the agency at a variety of these events.

In a whirlwind couple of weeks, OFC staff from Consumer Education and Provider Services, Child Care Assistance and Referral and School Age Child Care participated in four events between August 15 and August 25. The activities were held in four communities throughout the county, including the Back-to-School Opportunity Fair at the South County Government Center; J.E.B. Stuart High School Pyramid Back to School Fair; the South Lakes Pyramid Back



Mariam Lane and Sheree Berry of CCAR, Tina McKeivitt and Dorie Irby of SACC, and Cielo Rangel of CEPS at the J.E.B. Stuart High School Pyramid Back to School Fair.

to School Bash, and the Lee High School Pyramid Fair in Springfield.

These community fairs are an outreach to families in these areas who are struggling with back to school related expenses. A large percentage of students attending schools in these areas are eligible for free or reduced price school meals. Organizers provided resources to families that promote student success, as well as health screenings, school supplies, donated clothing and free haircuts. Representatives from an array of community and county organizations including Fairfax County Public Schools and the Office for Children were on hand to share information about services that could be of help to families.

Through these events OFC staff raises community awareness of our programs, the child care

database on the OFC website, and the importance of choosing regulated child care programs. Families were also able to pick up OFC resources that can help children become school ready such as “Helping Your Child Love to Learn,” and “Stepping into Kindergarten.”



Partnerships Lead to Exciting Experiences in SACC's Summer Camp Discovery



Children at Fox Mill Summer SACC enjoy a soccer skills clinic conducted by DC United Midfielder Davy Arnaud.

The School Age Child Care program's partnerships with a variety of sports teams and theaters provided some delightful experiences for children participating in SACC's Camp Discovery. SACC continued ongoing partnerships with the Washington Nationals Major League Baseball team, the Washington Mystics Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) team, and Riverside Dinner Theater. In addition

this year, SACC began working with the DC United Major League Soccer team and National Children's Theatre to create opportunities for children to explore different aspects of sports and the performing arts.

Once again this summer, 1,500 children in Camp Discovery's Athlete's Cabins were thrilled to attend a Washington Nationals' baseball game. A number of SACC

children had the opportunity to run the bases and meet some of the players including second baseman Danny Espinosa, third baseman Yunel Escobar, and right fielder Bryce Harper.

As part of a new partnership, nearly 700 children took to the field at RFK Stadium to participate in soccer drills and scrimmages on DC United's home turf. Children also



Children in the Athlete's Cabin join Screetch, the Washington Nationals' mascot, on the field.



Children in the Performer's Cabin perform a dance routine during halftime of the Mystics' basketball game.

OFC Encourages Emergency Planning

In recognition of National Preparedness Month this September, the Office for Children is reminding child care programs in Fairfax County to make a plan and be prepared in the event of an emergency.

OFC is sending each child care program a postcard with a list of important emergency resources including emergency information websites and contact information for local emergency organizations.

The postcard also provides online resources to help clarify the emergency preparedness requirements for state-licensed and county-permitted child care facilities. "This is such an important opportunity to raise awareness about emergency planning best practices," said OFC Director Anne-Marie Twohie. "Critical time can be saved in an emergency situation if programs have reviewed their emergency plans, made any necessary updates and communicated their plans with families."



toured the locker rooms and had the opportunity to interview the players. The children got a real "kick" out of playing the role of the media. During the last week of the summer program, several DC United players visited SACC centers including Laurel Hill, West Springfield and Fox Mill to further work with children in the Athlete's Cabin.

SACC's partnership with the Mystics continued this year, and expanded to include a new opportunity for children in the Artist's Cabin to participate in a media arts clinic. Children in fourth through sixth grade toured the Verizon Center, and were able to see the broadcasting rooms. The children jumped at the chance to use the professional equipment in the Mystic's studios to develop graphics and logos.

In addition, the Mystics' dance team choreographer led nearly 1,200 enthusiastic children from the Camp Discovery Performer's Cabin through dance clinics where they learned routines. After several weeks of practicing, the children performed their routines as part of the Washington Mystics' pregame

and halftime shows in front of an electrifying crowd of friends, family and approximately 3,000 children enrolled in Camp Discovery.

In a partnership with the newly formed National Children's Theater, an alliance between National Theatre and Imagination Stage, nearly 700 children from the Artist's Cabin enjoyed a production of the "BFG," based on Roald Dahl's beloved children's classic. At Riverside Dinner Theater, children from the Performer's Cabin had the opportunity to receive instruction from professionally trained actors and light and sound technicians. The children practiced at their centers before taking to the stage to bring to life scenes from the classic show, "Schoolhouse Rock."

"We are ecstatic about SACC's partnerships with each of these organizations, and the variety of unique opportunities that have been possible," said Damon Terrell, SACC Regional Supervisor. "The field trips are just one of the ways SACC Camp Discovery's Performer's, Athlete's and Artist's Cabins, encourage the development of each child's unique interests and talents."



Head Start Hosts Professional Day

Early Head Start held its Annual Professional Day for family child care providers on July 25. In addition to learning about program updates, and health and safety regulations, this year the early childhood educators received support in implementing a new curriculum.

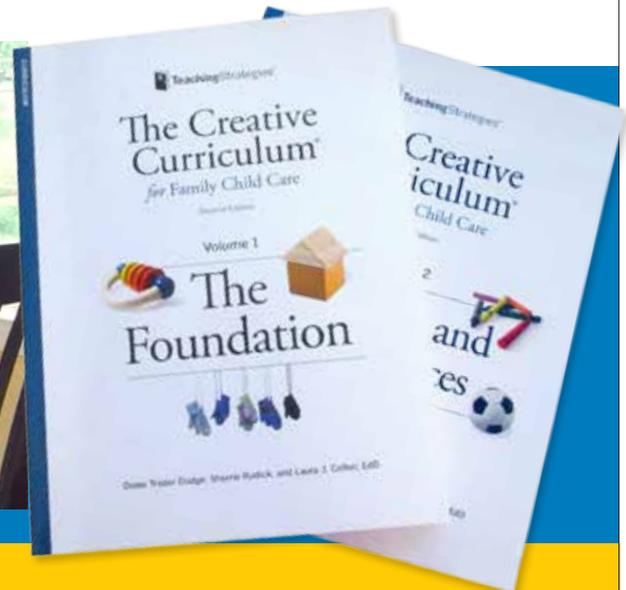
Early Head Start Family Child Care recently began using Teaching Strategies GOLD: Creative Curriculum for Family Child Care and the Assessment Toolkit. As part of the new curriculum, providers will be

completing assessments of the children online and uploading observations such as anecdotal notes, photos and videos.

During the professional development session, providers received support with using the new online curriculum and assessment tool. In addition to assessment and observations the curriculum software helps educators choose learning activities to support each child's development.

According to Child Care Specialist Greta Chacon, "The

providers are very excited to begin using Teaching Strategies GOLD. The information they record will be very helpful when conducting parent conferences throughout the program year." Bonnie Arjona, EHS Coordinator added that "using this platform makes it possible for EHS child care specialists to view their providers' plans online and be prepared to discuss them during home visits. This is truly a win-win for everyone involved."



Office for Children

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