

# Supporting Children's Active Learning

Rae Pica Prompts Educators to Move and Learn

Children are hard-wired for movement. Many early childhood educators will tell you that young children tend to learn best while using their entire bodies and all their senses to explore ideas. Meanwhile, many of these same educators feel pressured to direct children to sit still and learn at increasingly younger ages.

**Educating the thinking, feeling, moving child is an area of expertise for national education consultant and author Rae Pica.**

The Office for Children recently hosted Pica for a two day professional development event for early childhood educators. Her presentations explored various aspects of the mind/body connection, and ways movement can enhance and increase learning.

**"Movement helps children express themselves and actively engage in learning." Pica says.**

Pica's lively presentation kept the participants on their feet and in motion. During the two days of Pica's presentation more than 260 early childhood educators gathered for professional development.

Pica explained that movement is the young child's preferred mode of learning. When teachers add intentional opportunities for movement, it naturally enriches children's development. In fact, research shows that being sedentary for too long can increase fatigue and reduce focus.

**To demonstrate, Pica led participants in several activities that help children physically experience concepts including:**

- Working with a partner to form alphabets using their whole bodies.
- "Mirroring" the actions of another person while facing them.



Rae Pica leads educators in learning movement activities to use with young children.

- Physically demonstrating various concepts including shapes, colors, positions and opposites.

Pica's presentation was as engaging as it was informative. She shared funny anecdotes from her career to show that adding movement in early childhood programs can help increase learning across all domains and develop healthy habits that combat obesity.

Pica seemed to enjoy the professional development event as much as the educators. She explained, "I could see the participants learning and catching on to everything that I said. It is apparent that this learning is a result of the tremendous time and energy that the IFEL team has put into providing meaningful professional development."



# Fairfax Futures Hosts Leadership Forum on Digital Literacy

## “Tapping Into Technology” Guide for Families and Teachers Released at Forum

Fairfax Futures recently released “Tapping into Technology,” a booklet which can help educators and families use digital technology with children in an educational, enjoyable and engaging way. This guide was developed collaboratively with the Office for Children, with additional support from the PNC Foundation.

and access to global experts and expertise.

**Chisholm emphasized the importance of fun and mischief in education.** Games provide the freedom to experiment, and they foster curiosity, creativity and persistence.

### Other Leadership Forum speakers included:

- **Tara Chklovski, CEO of Iridescent**, which focuses on helping parents engage their children in STEM-related activities (science, technology, engineering and math).
- **Microsoft’s Allyson Knox, Director of Education Policy and Programs**, concluded the program, addressing the need for greater support for computer science education nationwide.

Fairfax Futures’ 2015 Leadership Forum, Building 21st Century Workforce Skills: Supporting Digital Literacy, was the perfect setting to announce “Tapping into Technology.” The event explored how the effective integration of technology from Pre-K through high school, higher education and the workplace will impact education and the way we do business.

### Leadership Forum keynote speakers included:

- **Karen Cator** - President and CEO of Digital Promise
- **Alex Chisholm** - President, Skylab Learning, who previously served as executive director of the Learning Games Network.

**Cator described how technology is transforming classrooms and leveling the playing field for students with different learning styles and challenges.** She highlighted eight ways that technology supports lifelong learning, from providing students with access to professional tools, and feedback loops that monitor their progress, to online demonstrations and visualizations,

The Leadership Forum draws business, government, education and nonprofit leaders from across Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia to address education and workforce issues impacting our region. This event was made possible through the generous support of The Boeing Company and Sevatec, Inc.

To learn more about the topics discussed at the Leadership Forum or to view “Tapping into Technology,” visit [www.fairfax-futures.org/2015-leadership-forum-summary](http://www.fairfax-futures.org/2015-leadership-forum-summary).



Fairfax Futures Executive Director Vera Steiner Blore with Keynote Speaker Karen Cator, President and CEO of Digital Promise.



Deputy County Executive Patricia Harrison, OFC Director Anne-Marie Twohie, Delegate Ken Plum, Fairfax County School Board Member Tammy Derenak Koufax, and Fairfax Futures Executive Director Vera Steiner Blore.



Fairfax Futures Executive Director Vera Steiner Blore introduces Patricia Barber, founder of 3WaysDigital, and Tara Chklovski, CEO of Iridescent (via Skype).

# Caring for Our Community

## SACC Community Service Projects Inspire Children's Spirit of Giving

Aidan is a 5th grade student at the Armstrong SACC program who recently surprised his mother with a not so typical request. According to his mother, Stephanie, "Aidan suggested that we cash in all the loose change in the house (\$127) to buy groceries for the local food drive, and I could not be prouder."

As a result of Aidan's idea, the family is donating six grocery bags full of food through the SACC center to benefit those in need in our community! Stephanie attributes Aidan's new-found generosity in part to the SACC program's emphasis on giving back to the community.

**This year, many SACC centers have organized drives collecting food, clothes and other goods to provide to organizations working with those in need.** Through these efforts, children in SACC have developed an enhanced awareness of the needs of others and strong "Community Connections."

**These are a just few recent SACC community service projects:**

- **Socktober Drive** — During October, several SACC sites including Woodlawn, Lane, Mount Vernon

Woods, Key, and Hayfield schools collected 238 pairs of socks for families in United Community Ministries' Basic Needs program.

- **Winter and Spring Food and Clothing Drives** — Each year Woodley Hills SACC gathers clothing and food to benefit families through UCM. Children have also begun to restore donated furniture to give to families in need within the school community.
- **Food, clothing and toy drives for Oakbrook Church** — Armstrong SACC's families donate non-perishable food items, gently used clothing, and toys throughout the school year. For the holidays the center collected several large bins filled with new toys for donation.
- **Fifth Annual Complete the Circle FoodRaiser!** — Seven SACC centers from the Centreville area took part in this event which supports area families through Our Daily Bread and the Lorton Community Action Center. The SACC team was among nearly 1,500 participants who collected and sorted more than 11,000 pounds of food.

SACC Regional Supervisor Tanya Pullman observed, "These hands-on



Aidan and his brother Jacob shopping for the items to donate to the food drive at Armstrong SACC.

community service experiences are a meaningful way that SACC teachers demonstrate the importance of working to make a positive change in other's lives.

"Providing opportunities for children to develop their sense of connection to the community is just one way that SACC teachers model empathy and help children become compassionate and involved citizens."



Children, families, and staff from Bull Run, Centre Ridge, Centreville, Cub Run, Deer Park, London Towne, and Union Mill SACC centers at the 5th Annual Complete the Circle FoodRaiser.

Children attending Cunningham Park SACC knitted hats to donate to The Alternative House, a refuge for children who have experienced abused and homelessness.

# Head Start Children Receive New Coats

## Fire Department Coat Drive Benefits thousands of county children in need

Oct. 28 was a day full of opportunities for a group of 158 preschoolers from Greater Mount Vernon Community Head Start. Following a short bus ride to the Penn Daw Fire Station, the 3-5 year old children were delighted to pet and cuddle with friendly therapy dogs, and pick out a new coat and a new pair of shoes.

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Battalion Chief Willie Bailey began this coat drive more than 15 years ago as an outreach to children in the Head Start program in the Alexandria area. It has grown to provide coats and shoes for more than 2,000 children countywide each year.

The Fire Department's partnership with a variety of local and national donor groups make this generous work possible. Operation Warm provided the coats and FOCUS North America worked with TOMS to provide the shoes.

A group of community volunteers, firefighters, and public safety officers were on hand to assist with fitting children for their new coats and shoes. The thankful words, smiles and giggles of the children showed how grateful they were that day.

"We are glad to work with Chief Bailey to make sure children in



County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova, and Supervisors Gerry Hyland, Penny Gross (not pictured) and Jeff McKay (not pictured) helped volunteers and Head Start staff fit children for their new coats and shoes.

our program have these very basic needs met," said GMVCHS Family Service Manager Deborah White. "We are thankful for the generosity of others that will allow the children to be less distracted by worry and more engaged in learning."



### **O F C** 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 Angela Morlu at 703-324-7528 or Nancy McDonough at 703-324-8042. [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc).



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