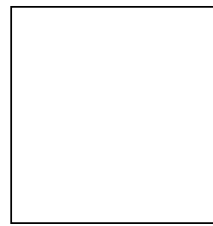


CHERISH EVERY CHILD

C/O Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation
One Monarch Place, Suite 1450
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CHECHS

NEWS ABOUT THE CHERISH EVERY CHILD INITIATIVE



News

Where We Are... Where We Are Going

As trustees of the Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation, we have always been committed to supporting efforts to improve educational outcomes for children, youth and adults. We began our work on Cherish Every Child Springfield (CHECHS) by looking at the question: What would it take for an entire city to come together to improve the lives of its youngest children? After gathering information from members of the Springfield community – from educators, providers of health care, early education and care, family support, literacy, along with advocates, government leaders, and, most importantly, parents, we agreed on a series of focus areas for our work. We then convened many of those same people to help us, and the CHECHS initiative was begun.

Our success thus far is due to the collaborative work of literally hundreds of volunteers community-based and neighborhood-based organizations that work with children from birth to age five, and people from the Springfield community working in these focus areas. This collaboration has produced small steps, but steady steps, toward improving the lives of Springfield's youngest children.

Guided by Margaret Blood and the Strategies for Children organization, one piece of our work was in public policy, specifically to support a campaign to make voluntary, high-quality early childhood education available to *all* Massachusetts children, ages three through five. A significant success was the legislature's creation, as of July 1, 2005, of the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), which is charged with developing "a streamlined, effective and accountable system of high-quality early childhood education for all Massachusetts children."

This department, the first of its kind in the nation, will be dedicated to overseeing early education and care among not only the more than 18,000 three, four and five-year-olds in Hampden County, but tens of thousands of pre-schoolers statewide, as well as infants, toddlers and children in out-of-school time programs.

We are pleased that the new head of the Department of EEC, Commissioner Ann Reale, will come to Springfield in mid-September to learn more about the work of CHECHS and Springfield's early education community.

The creation of the new Department of EEC also comes at a time when CHECHS is refining its own mission by revising downward our target age group from birth through eight to birth through five. This change helps us better align with Step-Up Springfield, which is focusing on proficiency and character development in Springfield's public schools.

Together, CHECHS and Step-Up are providing a continuum of effort in improving the lives of Springfield's children.

Finally, this first edition of CHECHS News gives us the opportunity to share with the CHECHS family information about the progress being made and to say "thank you" to the hundreds of individuals and organizations offering their time, resources and expertise to the initiative. It is only through these collaborative efforts that a brighter future for Springfield's children will be realized.

CHECHS Sponsors Storytelling Festival at Quad

LittleFest of Storytelling, a collaboration of CHECHS, the Springfield Library and the Springfield Museums, will make children's literature come alive in a FREE festival to be held at the Quadrangle, Saturday, Oct. 1, 2005 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Storytellers and performers Leeny Del Seamonds, Abigail Jefferson, Cindy Melikian, and *The Cat in the Hat* will read stories to children and their families. Event is FREE to those with a Springfield Library card and cards will be available at the event.



A Day in the Life of Springfield's Children

– Photos taken by Springfield Children



John and Steve Davis

Where We've Been *A Progress Report*

Among the Initiative's accomplishments to date:

- Implementation of a community-wide parent survey – conducted in both English and Spanish – to determine Springfield families' most pressing needs, serving as a baseline to prioritize the Initiative's efforts
- The publication of a report, *The Status of Springfield's Children*, containing specific data on children's educational, health, safety and economic status
- The publishing of a directory aimed at informing the early child development workforce about educational and professional development opportunities
- Funding and supporting the Literacy Works initiative of the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County to promote adult and family literacy
- Support of successful state legislation creating a new Massachusetts Department of Early Education & Care
- Display of the photo initiative *A Day in the Life of Springfield's Children* at the Valley Photographic Center in Tower Square in the fall of 2004, in June at the Youth Summit held at STCC initiated by *The Republican* and this summer at the Eastfield Mall
- Funding and supporting a pilot oral health program in five early education centers

Where We're Going

In each issue of CHECHS News, we'll feature the activity of one of the workgroups:

Strengthening Families. This workgroup has completed a survey of parents to determine what Springfield parents perceive as their biggest challenges in raising their children. The survey's findings indicated that parents have three major concerns: 1) the cost of providing for their children's basic needs; 2) the safety and security of their children, and 3) the quality of education their children receive.

The workgroup, made up of community-based and neighborhood-based organizations, has decided that they will focus on the concept of a program of home visiting to parents of newborn children, as a way to work with families to help them receive resources and services for their children. The plan is to conduct a survey of existing home visiting programs to determine what would be required to ensure that all parents of newborns receive a home visit upon the birth of a child.



Strengthening Families Work Group

(L to R) Marie Peirent, Program Manager, Thom Springfield Infant Toddler Services; Sandy Sachs, Family Nurturing Center, Inc.; Joni Beck Brewer, Prevention Director, MSPCC; Terri Cain, Valley Infant Development Services

New Project Manager

Sally Fuller, formerly Community Relations Officer with United Bank and Business/Education Coordinator of Springfield Chamber of Commerce has been named Project Manager for the Initiative.



Fuller is coordinating activities of the Initiative's work groups, assisting in strategic planning, and is responsible for outreach to the business and public policy communities, the general public and to parents of young children.

Our Partners and Collaborators

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| <p>Baystate Medical Center-
Wesson Women's Clinic</p> <p>Child Guidance
Clinic/Behavioral Health
Network</p> <p>Children's House</p> <p>Children's Study Home</p> <p>College of Our Lady
of the Elms</p> <p>Community Music School
of Springfield</p> <p>Community United Way of
Pioneer Valley</p> <p>Community Foundation of
Western Mass.</p> <p>Early Childhood Centers of
Greater Springfield</p> <p>Health New England</p> <p>Holyoke Community College</p> <p>Holyoke/Chicopee/Springfield
Head Start</p> <p>Jewish Community Center</p> <p>Martin Luther King, Jr.
Community Center</p> <p>Mason Square Neighborhood
Health Center</p> <p>Mass. Department of Early
Care and Education</p> <p>Mass. Department of
Public Health</p> <p>Mass. Department of
Social Services</p> <p>Massachusetts Society for
the Prevention of Cruelty
to Children</p> <p>MassMutual Financial Group</p> <p>Mercy Hospital - Family
Life Center</p> <p>Mercy Hospital - Vietnamese
Health Program</p> | <p>New North Citizens Council</p> <p>North End Outreach Network</p> <p>North End Youth Center</p> <p>Partners for a Healthier
Community</p> <p>Pioneer Valley Planning
Commission</p> <p>Pre-School Enrichment Team</p> <p>Regional Employment Board
of Hampden County</p> <p>Springfield City Library</p> <p>Springfield College</p> <p>Springfield College Child
Development Center</p> <p>Springfield Day Nursery</p> <p>Springfield Department of
Health and Human Services</p> <p>Springfield Early Care and
Education Partnership</p> <p>Springfield Family Support
Program</p> <p>Springfield Museums</p> <p>Springfield Public Schools</p> <p>Springfield Public Schools -
OWL Adult Basic Education</p> <p>Springfield Symphony
Orchestra Association</p> <p>Springfield Technical
Community College</p> <p>Step Up Springfield</p> <p>Strategies for Children</p> <p>Thom Springfield Infant
Toddler Services</p> <p>Valley Infant Development
Services</p> <p>Western Massachusetts
Economic Development
Council</p> <p>WGBY-TV</p> <p>YMCA of Greater Springfield</p> |
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Champions of Literacy

Literacy Works, a program of the Regional Employment Board, has received funding from CHECHS on its initiative to improve family literacy. Individuals served by these programs were highlighted in a video, *Champions of Literacy*, produced by the REB.

Eimy Santiago,
Graduate,
Youth Build



Definitions:

Implementation Team – The Implementation Team is comprised of members of CHECHS working groups and representatives of agencies or organizations with an interest in the target age group, birth through 5. The I Team meets quarterly and provides input and updates on the Initiative's progress.

Info:

To learn how your organization can participate in CHECHS, contact Sally Fuller at 734-8336, email fuller@davisfdn.org or www.cherishspringfield.org.

The Faces of Cherish Every Child



Photos taken by
Springfield Children

