

Partnership Press

News and Information about Smart Start in Lincoln & Gaston Counties

Summer 2007

Hundreds of Child Care Professionals Honored at State of the Young Child Event



On Monday, June 4, community leaders and those serving our area's youngest citizens came together to celebrate their achievements.

The annual "State of the Young Child" event was held at the Citizens Resource Center in Dallas. Over 150 community leaders and child care professionals attended the event.

Pearl Burris Floyd, Vice-Chair of the Gaston County Board of Commissioners, served as emcee. Also on hand for the event was former NC Senator Clark Plexico, Vice-Chair of the North Carolina Partnership for Children, who delivered the keynote address.



NCPC Vice-Chair Clark Plexico reaffirmed the need to advocate for children birth to five at the annual State of the Young Child event.

Plexico related the need for early childhood development to gelatin. "A young child's brain is like gelatin—you have to make sure you get the good things in there before it sets," said Plexico. He honored those in attendance for their contributions, and thanked them for advocating for Smart Start. "Legislators listen to you—the ones who nurture our young children. When you see them, make sure they are aware of the impact that Smart Start makes in children's lives."

The Partnership for Children also recognized the 108 four star and five star child care facilities in the two-county region and 187 child care professionals who have taken college-level courses to further their education and skills in the classroom. Carolyn Harbinson of Gaston Community Action noted, "There are 212 licensed child care facilities and family child care homes in Lincoln and Gaston Counties. Over half of them are either a four or five star licensed facility. Obtaining that goal is no easy feat."

Additionally, the Partnership for Children presented a number of awards to child care centers. The Grace School Child Development Center of Lucia received the Helen R. Marvin Award, which is given to a child care facility or family home for outstanding efforts in improving child care. "The Grace School has chosen to maintain small ratios, and (continued on page 2)

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State of the Young Child (con't)

concentrates on providing a high-quality preschool experience," said Lowell Councilwoman Martha Burris. The center opened in 2002 and is owned and operated by Amy and Mark Simmons. They also provide a More at Four preschool classroom.

Four centers were honored with the Shining Star award, given to child care facilities or family child care homes for providing consistent high quality child care—First Baptist Children's Ministry of Lincolnton, First Baptist Day Care Center of Stanley, Kids Unlimited of Lincolnton, and Mrs. Peg's Care for God's Precious Gifts of Lincolnton. All four of the facilities were noted for their continuing dedication to provide a high-quality child care experience, dedication to employee training, and increasing the quality of their programs.

The You Make a Difference Award was presented to Community Health Partners, one of the Partnership's direct service providers. Cathy Davis of the Lincoln County United Way presented the award, stating, "Community Health Partners made a difference this year by demonstrating the name of their organization—developing partnerships in the health community. They have expanded their work to provide Health Check Coordination services in both Gaston and Lincoln counties this year, in addition to providing Early Intervention Awareness in both counties." The work of Community Health Partners assisted the Partnership for Children of Lincoln and Gaston Counties to achieve two state-level performance goals.

Gaston College Receives NAEYC Accreditation

Gaston College was chosen as one of the first seventeen institutions to earn the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation. The designation, new to NAEYC last year, identifies that Gaston College's program aligns with programs at four-year colleges and universities, making it easier for associate degree graduates to continue on to receive a four-year degree at another institution.



Wanda Wyont, who served as the Early Childhood Education department chair during NAEYC's assessment of the program says that the accreditation "valuates that Gaston has a strong program that is meeting national competencies. It also states that our students graduate ready to teach and have the knowledge to best serve young children."

The accreditation process required the college to perform and submit a self-study of the program. In October 2006, an evaluation team visited Gaston College to evaluate the program, which included a review of the courses and visits to learning facilities. The evaluation team also gathered feedback from local child care programs in regards to the courses offered and how centers could be better served.

Since 2005, over 200 associate degree programs have applied to join the accreditation system. At this time only 17 institutions, including Gaston College, have received full early childhood associate degree accreditation from NAEYC.

The Partnership for Children's Board of Directors also presented the Robert E. Tull Award for Outstanding Service. This award is given annually to a board member that has demonstrated outstanding service to the Partnership and dedication to improving the lives of young children in Lincoln and Gaston Counties. Wanda Wyont, last year's recipient, presented the award to Martha Burris. Burris has volunteered her time to the Partnership for Children since its inception in 1997, serving in all leadership roles on the Partnership board, including chair.

Proclamations were presented from both the Gaston and Lincoln

County Board of Commissioners to Cindy Moose, Board Chair, by Gaston County Commissioner Pearl Burris Floyd and Susan McCracken of Lincoln County Department of Social Services. The proclamations honor the Partnership for Children as it begins its tenth anniversary and urges all citizens to recognize and support the needs of young children in the community. The event closed with a drawing for gift cards donated by Kaplan Early Learning Co.

Congratulations to all those honored for their contributions to early childhood development.

You Make a Difference Award



Community Health Partners--Pam Adams, Evande Herndon, Charlotte Lynch and Kathy Hudson

Helen Rhyne Marvin Award



The Grace School Child Development Center, Lucia--Amy and Mark Simmons

Shining Star Award



Mrs. Peg's Care for God's Precious Gifts, Lincoln-ton--Keith and Peggy Hunter, along with two of the children in their care, Zakia and Mariah.

Shining Star Award



First Baptist Day Care Center, Stanley-- Sonya Woodward, Lisa Austin, Director, Lauren Erwin and Christy Waters.

Shining Star Award



First Baptist Children's Ministry, Lincoln-ton--Chastity Friday and Doreen Melton, Co-Directors

Shining Star Award



Kids Unlimited, Inc., Lincoln-ton--Lisa Wallace, Ann Beal, Director; Kristine Graham and April Robinson.

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Our Vision:

A community where young children
will reach their full health and
educational potential.



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To serve as a leading advocate
and financial resource, in
collaboration with other community
agencies, to provide affordable
access to high quality services
for young children.

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