

A Commitment to Our Babies

by Pat Purnell, Executive Director

MISSION STATEMENT:

To ensure that every child, birth to five, in Craven County receives the education, health and family support necessary to arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, we need to pay more attention to babies in our midst- as a nation, as a state, as a county and as a community. Assuring that all babies have a healthy start in life would reduce: the achievement gap, juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy, school drop-out rate, obesity, heart disease, diabetes, alcoholism and cancer. The research is in- the science is solid. Babies need to be nurtured, they need interaction, they need to be read to and hear singing and lots of language. Dr. Jack Shonkoff, Director of the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, states this as succinctly as anyone, “we need to close the gap between what we know and what we do”.



Poverty, teen parents, divorce, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, inadequate nutrition cause babies such stress that their brains don't develop at their full potential. Stress and chaos early in life turns out to be the cause of much of the disease which affects adults later in life. See the ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) study at www.acestudy.org for the startling results of the research with 17,421 adults.



Parents as Teachers Program

With this research in mind, Craven Smart Start will continue to examine our funding priorities. This year our funds were cut by almost \$200,000, which caused us to eliminate a program and our annual early childhood conference; reduce our allocation to several programs we fund, and reduce the hours of several key employees, among other program reductions. The funding for Craven Smart Start, Inc. is expected to decrease due to the economic downturn over the coming years. The Board of Directors will have to make some difficult decisions in the future regarding which activities and programs to fund. The Board will also have to explore additional opportunities to raise funds. The wonderful support from the community for our Purse Sale in November, held in conjunction with Newspapers in Education, encourages us to find additional creative ways to increase our revenue in order to support our mission: that every child, birth through five, in Craven County -- receive the education, health and family support necessary to arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed.



Technology Enrichment Program

We wish you the blessings of this holiday season and wish that 2010 will be a year of focus and commitment to “our babies”.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA



The Family Support Network's 2nd Annual Breakfast with Santa was another great success! 100 children with special needs, their siblings and their parents attended the free event, held on December 5th at Garber United Methodist Church in New Bern. Each child had their picture taken with Santa and received a personal gift. Families also enjoyed breakfast and took part in special activities including making baggies of “reindeer food” and marking their houses for Santa on local aviation charts. The event was supported by the Harold H. Bate Foundation, Craven Smart Start, NC Early Intervention, the Arc of Craven County, and Wal-Mart.

2009-2010 Board of Directors

Officers and Executive Committee

Arey Grady—President
Sumrell Sugg Carmichael, Hicks & Hart PA
Wendy Chapman -Vice President
Child Development Services Agency
Carol Erwin—Secretary
Craven County Health Department
Denise Powell—Treasurer
New Bern Police Department
Kent Flowers
Director, DSS
Julie Rowe
Licensed Psychological Associate

Directors

Lee K. Allen
Craven County Commissioner
Jackie Beach
Craven/New Bern Public Library
Virginia Buchanan
Community Representative
Kelly Canupp Beasley
Family & Consumer Science Agent,
County Cooperative Extension
Tonya Cedars
Eastern Carolina Council on Aging
Dr. Catherine Chew
President, Craven Community College
Tammy Cullom
Craven County Schools
Lisa Green
LICC Co-Chair
Teresa Harris-Suhrie
New Bern Chamber of Commerce
Dr. Barbara Heckman
Head Start
Deborah Hodges
Craven County Government
Jeannie Holton
Little Hands Day Nursery
Erica Howard
Parent Rcv. Svcs.
Susan Husson
Interfaith Refugee Ministry
Ingrid Johansen
Community Representative
Paula Jones
Family Child Care Provider
Kelly Klemmer
Community Representative
Diane Miller
City of Havelock
Jerry Neal
DSS Social Worker
Suzanne Richey
Community Representative
John Roberts
EFP Program
Barbara Rodgers
Dayspring After School
Dr. Mike Romaine
Zales Foundation
Rev. Jeff Sockwell
Faith Community
Nancy Wells
East Carolina Behavioral Health

Staff

Pat Purnell, Executive Director
Rebecca Buzzard, Program Evaluator
Christy Montanye, Fiscal Manager
Ellie Toombs, Admin. Assistant
Newsletter Production Staff
Pinkie Moore, Editor, Writer & Photographer



Purses with a Purpose

Craven Smart Start joined forces again with Newspapers in Education (NIE) to raise funds for our respective programs through ... a mega purse sale. In early October, we began collecting new and gently used purses to sell at the Women's Expo on November. By the end of October we had received over 1,300 purses, which board members, staff and volunteers promptly began cleaning and preparing for sale. The collaborative project resulted in \$6,850 to support local literacy efforts. Many, many thanks to all who donated purses, bought purses or cleaned purses; to staff of the Sun Journal and Craven Smart Start who supported the effort; to McKim and Creed for storage and work space; to the Sun Journal for advertising and to Margaret Chance of Newspapers in Education for asking us to partner with NIE.

And we're not done yet. If you missed the sale, we have 400 very nice purses to sell at the Bridal Expo on January 30th at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center. Come see us then and buy a "purse with a purpose".



Kindergarten Readiness Bag Project

Carrie Mullins (right) and Josephine Johnson, teachers with the More at Four class at Child Care Network #77A, examine the supplies in one of the kindergarten readiness bags they received from Craven Smart Start. The project provides children's books and educational supplies to at-risk families with a four year old in the home to promote the child's readiness for kindergarten during the year before they enter school. Craven Smart Start, with the support of a grant from Target, has been providing kindergarten readiness bags to Craven County More at Four classes for their families since 2006.

Annual Fund Drive

Craven Smart Start's Board of Directors recently kicked off the 2009 Annual Fund Drive with the hopes of raising significant funds to support our program. Persons who have benefitted from the services or resources of Craven Smart Start or persons who recognize the importance of getting children off to a "smart start" are encouraged to make a monetary donation. Donations can be dropped off at our office at 1917 Trent Boulevard in New Bern or can be mailed to that address. Also, for the first time, donations can be made on-line on our website www.cravensmartstart.org. Craven Smart Start is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and all donations to the organization are tax-deductible.