

CRAVEN SMART START NEWS

Craven Smart Start Newsletter

First Issue FY 2020- 2021

Adapting In A Virtual World

It seems more and more we are living in a virtual world. Since March 16th, many of us have been teleworking; holding our staff meetings on Zoom; and participating on webinars to keep abreast of state updates. Yes, our world has changed a lot to keep people healthy and safe from the COVID-19 virus. But some things can't be virtual and one of them is the care of little children. Young children need loving human contact and nurturing care by well-trained caregivers, who have child development knowledge and understand the needs of young children. Training and professional development of the child care workforce is at the core of the Smart Start initiative. Research shows us that young children need high quality child care and learning experiences to build a strong foundation for learning in school and in life.

Since the creation of Craven Smart Start, our Child Care Resource and Referral staff have provided child care workers quality in-person trainings on a variety of developmentally appropriate areas. To assure that our child care providers are trained in these areas and are safe in doing so, our CCR&R staff have discontinued face to face trainings and are now offering trainings online through Zoom for **free** during the COVID-19 crisis. In this way, both providers and CCR&R staff stay safe. For more info, check out our website or contact Kelly@cravensmartstart.onmicrosoft.com.

We also want to take this opportunity to thank WITN, the Ricci Law Firm and the New Bern Breakfast Rotary Club for their generous donations and the Bosch Community Fund for their support and generous grant. Hope you enjoy the updates and information in this issue. Stay safe.

Mission of Craven Smart Start:

Building Brighter Futures for Young Children



Craven Smart Start was selected the July winner of WITN's Eastern NC Cares initiative and was presented a \$1,000 check from the Ricci Law Firm by Brian Ricci.

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Dr. Sandra Plata-Potter, Board President, kicked off the Building Brighter Futures Early Childhood Conference in 2019, when we celebrated our 20th year of operation.

Dr. Sandra Plata-Potter Retires from Board

The following is a letter from Dr. Sandra Plata-Potter:

One day in the fall of 2012, new to New Bern and while reading the Sun Journal, I came across an article written about Craven Smart Start. I did not know what Craven Smart Start was, but the name caught my attention. After reading the article, I contacted Craven Smart Start and told them I was interested in becoming a partner in the important work of the agency, in whatever capacity available. You see, I have a Ph.D. in child development, and I am interested in anything that supports young children. It was during this conversation I was invited to consider serving on the Craven Smart Start Board of Directors. That was the start of a commitment that remained stable until COVID-19 made its entrance and caused the need to make changes in my life, making it difficult to continue with the level of commitment I had given over the past few years. In August of 2020, I submitted my resignation as Craven Smart Start Board President, a position I had held since January, 2013. One thing I have come to realize is that there are many people in this community who still do not understand or know Craven Smart Start.

Those of us who have been a part of Craven Smart Start have seen the amazing positive impact it has on the children, families, and early childhood programs in Craven County. Whether it is the resource libraries (e.g. New Bern, to include satellite sites in Cove City and Havelock, the training provided to early childhood educators, providing a regional conference for early childhood educators, serving as a resource for parents, engaging with community organizations that, in some way, have connections to early childhood, the amazing help provided to early childhood programs who lost so much during the hurricane, literacy projects such as Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and Reach Out & Read etc.; I can go on and on. Much of this would not be possible without the commitment and caring of the personnel who work for Craven Smart Start. In all the years that I have been a part of Craven Smart Start, I have had the pleasure of witnessing a team dedicated to the mission of the program,..."Building Brighter Futures for Young Children." Thank you Craven Smart Start for all you have done and continue to do.

Dr. Sandra Plata-Potter

Jean Kenefick New Board President!

Jean Kenefick was voted new Board President for Craven Smart Start on August 26, 2020 and has served as an active board member since 2012. She also serves on two other non-profit boards. She recently retired after a 40 year career working primarily in leadership roles for non-profit organizations. Jean grew up in Connecticut and began her career with the State of Connecticut's Department of Children & Youth Services. She continued working in non-profits after moving to North Carolina, where she has imparted valuable experience and expertise to those serving young children and families in Craven County. She has served on several county, state and national committees supporting, advocating, and lobbying for children and their families. On behalf of Craven Smart Start staff and Board of Directors, we would like to congratulate Jean in her new role as Board President.



Jean Kenefick and Pat Morrow help children select books at our Dolly Parton's Imagination Library booth during Reading Fun Day in February, 2020.

2020-2021 Board of Directors

Officers & Executive Committee

Jean Kenefick, President,
Community Representative

Suzanne Gifford, Vice-Pres.,
Excel Learning Centers, LLC

Open—Secretary

Don Brinkley, Treasurer
Foundation Representative

Zac Everhart, At Large Member
Excel Learning Centers

Chief Toussaint Summers, At
Large Member, NB Police Dept.

Directors

Charles Collins , Business
Representative

Lynn Hardison, Community Rep.

Pat Ipock, Community Rep.

Pam Jenkins, Craven County
Library

Lisa Kemp, Craven County
Schools

Betty Kwasnick, Craven County
Health Department

Geoffrey Marett, Craven County
Department of Social Services

Theron McCabe, Craven County
Commissioner

Staff

Pat Morrow, Executive Director

Cherie Holt, Program Evaluator

Christy Montanye, Finance Mgr.

Mary jo MacLaren, Adm. Asst.

Pinkie Moore –Community
Outreach Coordinator /Newsletter
Writer/Editor



Robyn Scott, Child Care Services Coordinator for Craven County DSS with Pat Morrow, following a presentation she made to the Craven Early Learning Network in February, 2018.

Spotlight: Subsidized Child Care Assistance

Since becoming incorporated in 1998, Craven Smart Start has always worked with partnering agencies to provide services that focus on early learning, literacy, health and family support. One of our most critical partnering agencies is the Craven County Department of Social Services that administers the Subsidized Child Care Assistance Program (SCCA), which provides assistance to eligible families in paying for quality child care. Families must meet income and need categories. Craven Smart Start is very proud to provide funding to help support SCCA. Robyn Scott, Child Care Services Coordinator, recently provided us the up-date below:

Over the past five months, parents as well as child care providers have received help as it relates the COVID-19 pandemic. Parent fees have been waived for parents from April-August, providers have received bonuses, full monthly payments regardless of attendance, differential pay, when needed and grants to help with operating costs. Additionally annual re-certifications for families were automatically extended for an additional 12 months from April to June. Starting in September, things are slowing down returning to normal in the SCCA program, with re-certifications being due (since July), parent fees assessed once again and providers will be paid based on their attendance rather than an automatic monthly payment. Subsidy spending is increased, but hopefully after the September service month, we will see more of a normal picture of ongoing spending. Also, DCDEE will be compensating providers for their care of school-age children who attending at child care facilities full time due to school closures, when they would normally only attend on a blended or part-time basis.

Our Holiday Hustle Is Going “Virtual”

The 8th Annual Craven Smart Start Holiday Hustle is going virtual this year, with an ending date of December 12th. For this Virtual Holiday Hustle fundraiser, registrants will select the type of exercise they want to take part in, whether it be running, walking, biking, swimming or elliptical, etc. on their own time, wherever they like, to get their miles in to complete a 5K, 10K or a 48.6 Mile Challenge....any time during the first 12 days of December!

Registration is now open, so sign up to experience a virtual race or better still, invite your friends and co-workers to join you for the fun and exercise, all for a good cause “to give kids a running start”! Registration ends on November 27 at 11:59 p.m. EST.

<https://runsignup.com/Race/NC/Anytown/CravenSmartStartHolidayHustle>

We are currently seeking sponsors for this fundraising event. If you are interested in being a sponsor, please contact Christy Montanye, Craven Smart Start Finance Manager, at Christy@cravensmartstart.org.

Many thanks to the following Sponsors: Taco Bell– a Jingle Bell Jog 5K Sponsor; The Harold H. Bate Foundation—a Spirit Sponsor and the Fuel Market– a Mistletoe Sponsor. We greatly appreciate your support!

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information or questions about our services and programs.

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Visit us on the web at
www.cravensmartstart.org

Craven Smart Start is a 501(c)3. Donations are tax-deductible.

Information about photos on page 5 below.

Raising A Reader (RAR)

- Top Left and Right: Craven Smart Start (on behalf of Raising A Reader) was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Bosch Community Fund to incorporate STEM into the RAR program, again this year. Our RAR program will be implemented through a hybrid model, utilizing both remote and in-person instruction. RAR Coordinator, Nadia Lowe, seen here in previous years, plans to provide materials and then weekly readings. STEM activities and workshops for implementers (child care teachers and family child care home providers) will be done online.

More About Dr. Sandra Plata-Potter

- Center Left and Right: Dr. Potter has been a very active Board Member over the years. One of her favorite activities has been reading to children in English and Spanish at Reading Fun Day, annually. She also has worked each year at the Holiday Hustle, giving out awards to runners and contest winners on some very cold December Saturdays. Many thanks, Dr. Potter!

Participants in Raising A Reader

- Bottom Left and Right: Two Family Child Care Homes are participating in Raising A Reader this year: Paula Cusson, operator of Paula’s Day Care Home, in Havelock and Paula Jones, the operator of A Touch of Love Child Care Home in New Bern. Other sites include Excel Learning Center 1 & Excel Learning Center 7 in New Bern and Excel Learning Center 6 in Havelock.

