

CRAVEN SMART START NEWS

Craven Smart Start Newsletter

Second Issue FY 2020- 2021

Challenges for Non-Profits during a Pandemic

Last August, Craven Smart Start and other members of the Non-Profit Council were asked to share the pandemic's impacts on their programs with the New Bern Chamber Board of Directors. Most of the impacts had to do with staff teleworking; the loss of volunteers; the decrease of fundraisers resulting in a loss of program revenue and an increase in clients needing assistance. While these were true of our non-profit, we, also, had other challenges because of our focus on young children, our emphasis on high quality early childhood education and our collaboration with early childhood programs and child care facilities, that were struggling to stay open and to meet more stringent licensing requirements. But our CCR&R staff were creative and resourceful and were able to secure needed supplies and to find new ways to provide critical child care training to child care workers, that was safe for both child care workers and CCR&R.

Another challenge brought on by the pandemic has been the lack of community outreach opportunities. Long-standing events for families and children have been cancelled for almost a year, so there have been no opportunities to have face to face conversations with parents about resources or to give them brochures about our services. Children have only 2000 days from the day they are born to the day they enter kindergarten, so every day in the life of a young child is a critical day in his/her development. But good news, we have been in touch with local health providers that serve young children and with programs aboard MCAS Cherry Point and we will soon be providing them with many copies of our program brochures to give to their patients or clients. If your program would like a number of Craven Smart Start brochures, please contact Pinkie Moore at pmoore@cravensmartstart.org. Hope to hear from you.

Mission of Craven Smart Start:

Building Brighter Futures for Young Children



Prior to COVID-19, direct service providers for Craven Smart Start met in person to share updates about their Smart Start-funded activities. Afterwards, meetings were held on Zoom.

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If you are interested in learning about advocacy or in how to become an advocate for young children, contact Sandra Arasim, at Sandra@cravensmartstart.org

8th Annual Holiday Hustle Goes Virtual

Our 8th Annual Holiday Hustle race fundraiser, usually held on the 2nd Saturday of December at Union Point Park, was revamped to be a virtual event this year. Registrants found the virtual event had lots of options. They were able to choose the type of exercise (running, walking, biking) to get their miles in to complete a 5K, 10K or 48.6 Mile Challenge.... on their own time between December 1st—December 12thwherever they wanted to do it.

All in all, the event proved to be a successful fundraiser. Many thanks to the 75 runners and walkers; the 10 sponsors; and the four teams that participated. A big shout-out to Board President Jean Kenefick for organizing the first Board of Directors team.!



December 1—December 12

Things Babies Learn When We Read with Them!

We all know that it's good to read to our babies. But what exactly are they learning? Here are some of the things babies can learn, as you read together.

1. Books contain wonderful stories and songs that I can hear over and over again.
2. Reading time is a time when I am held and loved.
3. You tell me the names of my body parts, the sounds different animals make and that animals go to sleep, too.
4. Some books are especially enjoyable and I can hear them again and again.
5. Every time we read, I hear how words are used, listen to rich language, and learn new words.
6. The letter, words, and pictures you point to, all have meaning.
7. I can explore how books are the same and how they are different by tasting and touching them.
8. There is always something hiding behind the flap; my favorite pictures are always in the same place in a book.
9. Listening is part of communication and language includes listening and understanding.
10. Things come in different colors, sizes, and shape.
11. It's fun to play with language and to explore rhythm, rhyme and humor.
12. I love books and one day I will love to read on my own.

By Julia Luckenbill

From NAEYC for Families

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Terrell Mejias, an adult student at the Vanceboro site of the Family Literacy Program, received the latest G.E.D. Scholarship from the Richard Dobbs Spaight Chapter of the DAR.

Family Literacy Student Receives DAR Scholarship

On December 17th, Terrell Mejias, an adult student with the Craven County Family Literacy Program, was awarded a G.E.D. Scholarship from the Richard Dobbs Spaight Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Terrell was presented the award from Regina Edmonds, an adult teacher with the Family Literacy site at Vanceboro Farm Life Elementary School. According to Ms. Edmonds, "Terrell, has been with the program for a year. He has great potential and fortitude and enjoys sharing his ideas and perspectives on current events and domestic issues in class discussions. He is much admired for his devotion and concern for his mother and siblings and is very determined to earn his High School Equivalency Diploma to set an example for his younger brother." Terrell, who also works for local business, was originally referred to the program by the Vanceboro Christian Help Center, where he regularly volunteers.

The Richard Dobbs Spaight Chapter, NSDAR works to promote literacy in various ways, including partnering with other literacy-focused organizations. For the past three years, the Literacy Promotion Committee of the DAR Chapter has worked with the Family Literacy Program, in collaboration with Craven Smart Start, to award a scholarship to an adult student, who is working to earn their High School Equivalency (HSE) Diploma through the Family Literacy Program. The scholarship was created to assist a deserving student with the cost of the four tests they must take to earn their HSE Diploma.

For more information about the Craven County Family Literacy Program, call (252) 244-3226.

In Memoriam: Commissioner Johnnie Sampson, Jr.

Johnnie Sampson, Jr., a long-time Craven County Commissioner, passed away from complications of the COVID-19 virus on November 3, 2020. In expressing his condolences to the Sampson family, Governor Roy Cooper stated that “Mr. Sampson was a true public servant and committed community leader who worked tirelessly for Craven County and our state”.

Craven Smart Start would like to echo Governor Cooper’s comments. Mr. Sampson was an early supporter of Smart Start, when the program was created in North Carolina in 1993. He was the first Craven County Commissioner to work with our Board of Directors, when the program began operation in 1998.

The staff of Craven of Craven Smart Start, would like to express our deepest condolences to Rev. Ethel Belle Sampson, his wife, and to his family. We take this opportunity to remember Mr. Sampson for his life of service to the families of our community.

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.

- **Top Left:** Looking for Child Care? The “Find Child Care NC” call center is still available to help. Specialists, like our Parent Referral Specialist Bianca Salinas (seen here) are available to assist you on weekdays between 8 a.m.—5 p.m. EST. Call 1-888-600-1685 to connect with the childcare facility fit for you and your child.
- **Top Right** Want to know about Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library? Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is alive and well in Craven County. Over 4,500 Craven County children, from birth to 5th birthday, have been registered to receive the free books, since Craven Smart Start began administering the program. To receive a registration brochure, like the one being held by the grandmother in the picture, call Pinkie Moore, at (252) 671-0689.
- **Bottom Left** Raising A Reader is progressing into the new year with excitement and lots of books being shared. Many classrooms have completed their parent trainings and are beginning to rotate red bags, adhering to sanitizing requirements. To comply with COVID regulations, parents at Excel learning Center 7 (like the parent in the photo) had their parent training during the time when they picked-up their children.
- **Bottom Right** : Reading Fun Day, the popular literacy outreach event, that draws hundreds of children to the New Bern Mall each year has been cancelled for 2021, because of the surge of COVID-19 cases in the community. (The photo is from the Reading Fun Day in 2020.) Co-sponsors, Craven Smart Start and Twin Rivers Reading Council, hope to hold it again in 2022.

