

# CRAVEN SMART START NEWS

Craven Smart Start Newsletter

Second Issue FY 2022-2023

## A Time of Gratitude and Reflection

Greetings friends. We hope this finds each of you doing well in 2023. We, at Craven Smart Start, are very excited and optimistic about the new year. We ended the second quarter of 2022 on a positive note with another successful Holiday Hustle race fundraiser and our first-time diaper drive had very good community support. We are very grateful to all who supported us in these ventures and very appreciative for the relationships that have evolved.

The 2nd quarter of Fiscal Year 22-23 also proved to be a time for much reflection, as we assessed our successes and accomplishments over the last year for the North Carolina Partnership for Children to use in their reports to the North Carolina General Assembly. This time of reflection also helped us identify areas that we need to work on and services that families with young children in our community need. As we have reported before, Craven Smart Start, like other non-profits, has limited private dollars which restricts our ability to expand our services, so we will be increasing our fundraising efforts this spring, through the leadership of our Executive Director Cassandra Bennett and the guidance of our Board of Directors. We have already added several donation opportunities on our website. We encourage you to check them out.

We greatly appreciate your interest in Craven Smart Start and we hope you find our publication beneficial and informative. We are very proud of our staff and community partners and of the Smart Start services offered to families with young children, early care educators, and other community resources. Stop by our administrative office/lending library, located at 2111F Neuse Boulevard in New Bern, to learn more. Hope to see you soon.

## Mission of Craven Smart Start:

**Building Brighter Futures for Young Children**



Craven Smart Start staff led the New Bern Parks and Recreation "Halloween Preschool Parade"

## In This Issue

- A Time of Gratitude and Reflection
- Assessing Successes at Craven Smart Start
- The 10th Annual Craven Smart Start Holiday Hustle
- Welcome Brandi Parnell
- Craven Smart Start Diaper Drop



Shawn Klabo, Clinical Nurse Manager with the Women and Children's Division of CarolinaEast, at left, was a guest speaker at the LICC collaborative meeting in November.

## Assessing Successes at Craven Smart Start

Below are some of the “success stories” submitted to the North Carolina Partnership for Children for their Beginning of the Year Celebration call.

- **Nadia Lowe, our Raising A Reader Coordinator,** is very pleased for Raising A Reader to be a recipient of the Bosch Community Fund for the past five years. This year Raising A Reader was awarded our largest amount of \$12,500 which will enhance the Raising A Reader program by providing STEAM activities to 23 teachers and 150 children in Craven County. Over the past four years, the focus has been on STEM but this year we are delighted with the expansion of an art component to create STEAM activities.
- **Our Community Outreach Coordinator, Pinkie Moore,** began working with the New Bern CDSA and Exceptional Preschool Children’s Program with Craven County Schools in April, 2022 to reorganize the Craven County Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC) that was unable to meet for two years during the pandemic. When that was accomplished, the group agreed to merge the LICC with the early learning collaborative that Pinkie has coordinated since 2016. The result: the two groups now meet together for one meeting each month and these meetings include lots of community sharing and presentations by new resources in the community, as well as planning of “child find activities” and discussions relevant to children with special needs. The LICC is now much larger and includes greater diversity of agencies focusing on all young children in our community.
- After we announced our **diaper drive**, we soon heard from the CarolinaEast Health System that they were encouraging employees to donate diapers and this was followed by a \$1,000 cash donation from the hospital. We are very grateful to CarolinaEast for their support.

## The 10th Annual Craven Smart Start Holiday Hustle

Our Holiday Hustle race fundraiser, which was held on the morning of December 10th is still “running strong” after 10 years! We had 274 runners and walkers to register, our largest # ever.

Thanks to B/S/H, the Presenting Sponsor, the event featured both in-person races and virtual race options. The Tinsel 10K was sponsored by Taco Bell (Hagan & Hagan, Inc.) and the Jingle Bell Jog 5K was sponsored by Tammy Ferebee, Broker-Realtor with Coldwell Banker Sea Coast Advantage. Spirit sponsors included: The Harold H. Bate Foundation; Cowey Insurance Group; Bender Apparel; and the Craven County Independent Insurance Agents Association. Mistletoe Sponsors included: Pat & Carr Irock; Captain Ratty's; Zaxby's and Fisher Stores, Inc.

Also, many thanks to the volunteers and others who supported the event, including Carolina Bagel, James City Food Lion and Moriah Davis, WCTI Morning Anchor, who served as our Emcee.



Many thanks to Holiday Hustle sponsors , supporters. participants and Santa who presented the race medals to our runners of all ages.

## Board of Directors

### Officers & Executive Committee

Jean Kenefick, President,  
Community Representative

Suzanne Gifford, Vice-Pres.  
CCR&R Representative

Lynn Hardison—Secretary  
Community Rep

Don Brinkley, Treasurer  
Foundation Representative

Zac Everhart, At Large Member  
Business Representative

### Directors

Jennifer Blackmon Craven County  
Health Department

James Burns, Children's  
Developmental Services Agency

Angelia Crawley, Coastal  
Community Action

Linder Ervin , Child Care Network

Chief Patrick Gallagher, New Bern  
Police Department

LaTicia Garfield, Precious Mo-  
ments FCCH

Susan Husson, Interfaith Refugee  
Ministries

Pat Ipoock, Community Rep.

Lisa Kemp, Craven County  
Schools

Geoffrey Marett, Craven County  
Department of Social Services

Beatrice Smith, Craven County  
Commissioner

### Staff

Cassandra Bennett, Executive  
Director

Cherie Holt, Program Evaluator

Christy Montanye, Finance Mgr.

Mary jo MacLaren, Adm. Asst.

Pinkie Moore –Community  
Outreach Coordinator /Newsletter  
Writer/Editor



**Brandi Parnell has joined our staff at Craven Smart Start.**

## Welcome Brandi Parnell

Brandi Parnell was hired by Craven Smart Start to fill the second Healthy Social Behavior Specialist position for Region 2 Child Care Resource and Referral, which serves Beaufort, Craven, Hyde, Pamlico, Tyrrell and Washington Counties. The Healthy Social Behavior Specialist position is a certified professional position that was established to reduce the expulsion rate in childcare and to promote social emotional development of children at licensed child care centers. In this position, Brandi will work with teachers to enhance classroom management techniques and promote child-centered learning activities that promote pro-social behaviors. Also, she will help teachers determine strategies for teaching children socially appropriate behaviors.

Brandi holds degrees from Piedmont University and Liberty University in Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education. She has extensive experience in working with children, families and teachers through research, program evaluation. She has held multiple teaching positions in early childhood and elementary education, teaching at Creekside Elementary School with the Craven County School District for seven years and in Georgia for four years, prior to moving to Craven County.

Brandi and her family have lived in the New Bern area since 2004. Craven Smart Start is very pleased to welcome Brandi to our Region 2 Child Care Resource and Referral Team!

## Craven Smart Start Sponsors Diaper Drop

One in three US families with young children struggle to provide enough diapers to keep their babies or toddlers clean, dry and healthy. The cost of diapers hits low-wage families the hardest and current public support programs help some families, but not many. To help meet the diaper need for Craven County families who struggle to pay for diapers, Craven Smart Start sponsored a diaper drop during the month of November, which has continued into January. Distribution of diapers is now planned for late January, 2023.

Craven Smart Start would like to thank the partnering organizations, groups and individuals for their support of the diaper drop campaign, which we call "From the Bottom Up". These donors include CarolinaEast Health System; Carolina Therapy Connection; Carolina Pines Home and Garden Club; the Motley Sunday School Class of Garber Methodist Church; the Craven County Family Literacy Program, the Democratic Women of Craven County, as well as parents, Craven Smart Start Board Members and Craven Smart Start staff.

For more information, contact Pinkie Moore, Community Outreach Coordinator at [pmoore@cravensmartstart.org](mailto:pmoore@cravensmartstart.org) or call our office at (252) 672-5921.

## Contact Us

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

**Craven Smart Start, Inc.**  
2111F Neuse Boulevard  
New Bern, NC 28560

(252) 671-0689 (Mobile)

[pmoore@cravensmartstart.org](mailto:pmoore@cravensmartstart.org)

Visit us on the web at  
[www.cravensmartstart.org](http://www.cravensmartstart.org)

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

### About photos on page 5.

- **Top Left:** Nadia Lowe and Bethanie Alexander, NC Pre-K teacher, are pictured holding the Raising A Reader Selection Certificate for the NC Pre-Kindergarten class at Havelock Elementary.
- **Top Right :** Kathy Gillette, the NC Pre-K teacher at Duffyfield Child Development Center, is pictured holding the Raising A Reader Selection Certificate for the center.
  
- **Middle Left:** Savannah Lowe, our Literacy Coordinator for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library & Reach Out and Read, joined Pinkie Moore at the Havelock Police Department's Trunk or Treat event on October 28th. According to Havelock Police Chief Chris Morning, over 1,500 adults and children attended!
- **Middle Right:** Susie Sawyer, a NC Pre-K teacher at Excel 7, demonstrates "a picture walk" during a RAR parent orientation.
  
- \* **Bottom:** Pinkie Moore, Community Outreach Coordinator, presents packets for parents of newborns and hand-made baby blankets to Shawn Klabo, to give to parents whose babies were born at CarolinaEast Medical Center. The presentation was made during the LICC/Early Learning Network meeting in November. Brittaney Ratzlaff, the Hope Family Resource Center Supervisor, also was a guest speaker for the meeting. For more information about the LICC/Early Learning Network collaborative, contact Pinkie Moore at [pmoore@cravensmartstart.org](mailto:pmoore@cravensmartstart.org)

