

ECS TODAY

With news you can use from Every Child Succeeds!

AUGUST 2008

Program Notes

Please join us in welcoming the following home visitors, who were hired in July: Marsha Spivey-Harris, Cincinnati Health Department; Kesha Wilson, Family Services; and Jennifer Winebrenner, YWCA.

August is Breastfeeding

Awareness Month, and Aug. 1-7 is World Breastfeeding Week. While overall rates of breastfeeding are at historic highs, the most recent Centers for Disease Control report found rates were lowest among women who are unmarried, poor, rural, younger than age 20 and have a high school education or less. Thank you for doing your part to promote breastfeeding among our at-risk population. Watch for more information about community resources to support breastfeeding.

Have you put the new Parent Reflections Journal to use?

These journal pages are to be used by moms to reflect on their experiences as new parents. Home visitors can complete journal pages with the mom or leave them behind for mom to complete. We need your feedback! Is the format useful? What are moms saying about the journal? What do you think? Please send your feedback to Margaret at clarm1@cchmc.org. Special thanks to Mary Ellen Meier, Sue Milinkovich and Shannon Starkey for leading this effort.

A Letter from Judy Van Ginkel, ECS President

Just a few days ago, I had the honor of attending the American Hospital Association Leadership Summit in San Diego, where Every Child Succeeds was honored as one of only five recipients of the national NOVA Award. This award honors "effective collaborative programs focused on improving community health status," applauding those that, like ECS, bring like-minded organizations together to accomplish far more than they would individually. James M. Anderson, President and CEO of Cincinnati Children's, received the award on our behalf, and it was exciting to be in attendance and to talk to health-care leaders from around the country about our very successful program.

You can download the NOVA Awards booklet by visiting <http://www.aha.org/aha/news-center/awards/NOVA.html>. In it is a story about ECS attributing our success to the contributions of our founding partners, Cincinnati Children's, United Way of Greater Cincinnati and Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency; the quality of our lead provider agencies; our dynamic public/private funding mix; and the involvement of senior executives from private industry.

Many thanks to all of you, for your part in making ECS worthy of national recognition for its collaborative approach to giving children an optimal start in life!



All Together Now: Santa Maria

Things sure can change in 111 years! What began as an agency serving Italian immigrants in Cincinnati has since become Santa Maria, an organization providing parenting and youth development, wellness services, and quality, affordable housing for people living in the west side communities of Lower Price Hill, East Price Hill and Sedamsville/Riverside.

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Calling all cooks! Every Child Succeeds is creating a special cookbook to be shared with ECS families, staff members and volunteers. Made possible by a grant from Speaking of Women's Health, the cookbook will feature healthy, low-cost recipes that are easy to prepare. Please submit your favorites via the submission form located on the eECS downloads page, or by emailing them to brenda.clark@cchmc.org, or by fax at 636-2830. Questions? Call Brenda at 825-3020.

The United Way Campaign is underway, and Every Child Succeeds has been asked to provide speakers for campaign kick-off events at local companies. We are eager to find home visitors who will participate, since they can provide a first-hand account of how ECS benefits families in our community. Even better: home visitors who bring along a client! To volunteer or learn more, please contact Brenda.

Do you have an ECS success story to share? If so, please contact Brenda. She will arrange a time to meet with you and the ECS family to take a picture and learn more about how Every Child Succeeds has impacted their lives. The photo and story can then be featured on the ECS website and other communications.

Among Santa Maria's many services is Every Child Succeeds, whose six home visitors serve about 150 families at any one time. The program's affiliation with Santa Maria tends to open doors. "Santa Maria is well-respected in the Price Hill area, and considered to be a place where people can go for help," says Julie McGregor, who serves as the ECS program manager and also has a small caseload of ECS clients.

The culture at Santa Maria adds to the program's value, McGregor says. "There is an emphasis on relationship building, not just with clients but with fellow staff members as well," she says. "We are serious about meeting performance goals, but we also take time to sit and chat. As a result, team members feel they can share their stresses and successes with each other, and be supportive of each other when facing difficult client situations."



The ECS Team at Santa Maria (all are home visitors unless otherwise indicated):
Top row (left to right) — Zori Diaz-Cabrera, Colleen Healey, Ruth Ann Dopp, Barbara Smith, Eleanor Henry, administrative assistant; Bottom row — Sarah Blanton, Julie McGregor, program manager, Mindy Heathcoat

Relationship building is also at the heart of the program's extracurricular activities. Each month, ECS moms are invited to bring their children to an outing. Past events include a day at Parky's Farm, story time at the public library, a spa day (provided by Western Hills School of Beauty) and a fire safety talk at Dunham Recreation Center. Transportation is always provided. "One benefit of these popular programs is that many of our moms have bonded with one another and developed friendships outside of ECS," McGregor explains.

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Getting to Know . . . Amy Balson, business director



Amy Balson joined Every Child Succeeds in July and has been spending her first few weeks learning about the program and its financial operations. Now, let's learn a little bit about her!

Were you always good with numbers?

Yes, but my major at the University of Cincinnati was psychology, and I also have an associate's degree in radiologic technology. I became interested in accounting when I was attending UC and working in the College of Medicine's business department. I found I really liked the accounting piece, so I earned my CPA and went from there.

Where else have you worked?

I stayed at the College of Medicine for 10 years, and then worked at Jewish Vocational Services in Blue Ash as the Director of Finance for about seven years. I started thinking about looking for a position at Cincinnati Children's because it seemed to me that the organization was really growing. I heard about the job with Every Child Succeeds, and it turned out to be a good fit. I've enjoyed learning about what we do, and am looking forward to going on a home visit soon.

Tell us about your family.

My husband, Steve, and I live in Villa Hills, Kentucky, and have two children — our daughter, Sydney, is five, and our son, Luc, just turned four. Steve and I met 14 years ago when I was doing my practicals at Jewish Hospital and he was working in the ER. Our first date was to a Jimmy Buffett concert, and we got married a month later!

Do you balance your checkbook to the penny?

Oh, yes. We accountants like that sort of thing.



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