

ECS TODAY

With news you can use from Every Child Succeeds!

NOVEMBER 2008

Program Notes

During this Thanksgiving season, we reflect with profound gratitude on the generosity of our community, the dedicated leadership of our board and caring commitment of our staff. Thank you for giving thousands of families the opportunity to realize their dreams and create a better future for their children.

United Way of Greater Cincinnati wrapped up its 2008 campaign last week, projecting \$62 million in donations — an incredible feat in this challenging economic environment. UWGC's campaign is one of the United Way's top 10 campaigns in the country. If you have given, thank you! If you haven't, it's never too late to do so!

You are invited to be part of the annual Isle of Skye ECS Benefit, December 6–13, when 20 percent of all purchases made in the store will be donated directly to ECS! You'll find luxury sweaters, but also many lower priced items that would make great Christmas gifts, including mittens and gloves from \$30 and stoles from \$55. Isle of Skye is located at 7004-B Center Street in Madeira, and store hours are 10–5 Monday through Saturday.

ECS bids a fond farewell to Carol Edwards, ECS supervisor at Family Services. Carol provided 7 years of outstanding leadership with ECS. Pam Wilz, who has been involved with ECS at Family Services since the beginning, will now supervise the program. Congratulations, Pam!

A Letter from Judy Van Ginkel, ECS President

Participating in an ECS home visit is an eye-opening experience for Cincinnati Children's pediatric residents. We recently received this feedback from a young physician: "Low-income families don't have a lot of the resources we take for granted. I think if I ever work in a clinic dealing with families like these, I would be inclined to work directly with an agency like Every Child Succeeds to help establish better health care for these families."



It's good to know that, in addition to serving at-risk families, we are also helping their future caregivers — about 25 a year — better understand the challenges they face.

All Together Now: St. Elizabeth Medical Center

St. Elizabeth Medical Center is one of only two ECS agencies to use the Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) model, a national home visitation program recognized in 22 states. Using NFP creates unique opportunities and some challenges for St. Elizabeth's home visitors, who serve families in Kentucky's Boone, Kenton and Campbell Counties.

One opportunity lies in the model's focus on health and wellness, something that comes naturally to the agency's 11 home visitors, most of whom are nurses. Another relates to the fact that moms must enroll before they reach 28 weeks gestation — giving home visitors a chance to connect with mother and baby early on. The NFP curriculum only covers the baby's first two years, but a new program developed by the Northern Kentucky Independent Health District called "Home to School" reimburses ECS for home visits for children ages two to three and a half.

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ECS welcomes the following home visitors, who came on staff in October: Georgia Drummond, Beech Acres; Karen Goodwin, YWCA; Martha Morris, Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency; Carrie Sanker, Family Services; Shira Williams, Cincinnati Children's Home.

More and more ECS families are facing extremely difficult financial situations. Following are several resources that can help; please let us know if you hear of any more!

- All Meijer Pharmacies are providing free prenatal vitamins (Advanced NatalCare, NatalCare Glosstabs, NatalCare Plus, NatalTab Rx, Ultra Natal Care) and free oral antibiotics with a special focus on the prescriptions most often filled for children (Amoxicillin, Ampicillin, Cephalexin, Ciprofloxacin, Erythromycin, Penicillin VK, SMZ-TMP). Antibiotics are free with a prescription, regardless of insurance or co-pay. For more details, call your local Meijer store or visit www.meijer.com/pharmacy.

- Another valuable website is www.cincybenefitsinfo.com, which provides a free, printable list of local emergency shelters, clothing, food pantries, soup kitchens, mom and baby resources, utility assistance, rental assistance, \$8 prescription glasses, and much more.

- Also, be sure to check out the Ohio Benefit Bank, an incredible resource that helps families determine their eligibility for public programs, including Medicaid, food stamps, child care vouchers and WIC. It's available at www.obb.ohio.gov.

Thank you to Julie McGregor and Debi Schneider for sending along these wonderful resources.

Another strength and challenge is the integration of three curriculums into home visits. The nurses complement their NFP curriculum with the ECS Model and Growing Great Kids and Families. All three are used in visits with families, including the Home to School Transition visits.



The St. Elizabeth Medical Center ECS staff includes the following home visitors; all are RNs. Left to right, bottom row—Kim Hennigan, Annette Rader, Stacie Nance, Melanie Abeling; middle row—Cathea Poland, Mary Ellen Meier, Elaine Whittle, Tamra Brown; top row—Beth Kaiser, Tracy Buckler and Lois Bradford. Not pictured: Mignelis Figueroa, a nurses aide who works with Spanish-speaking families.

One challenge is that both ECS and NFP require home visitors to collect and submit extensive data. "We've worked closely with ECS and the Cincinnati Health Department, which also uses the NFP model, to redesign certain forms so that our home visitors don't have to fill out two different forms with the same information," says Mary Ellen Meier, coordinator for grant funded maternal-child programs at St. Elizabeth.

Another unique aspect of the program is that home visitors work from home. "This provides greater flexibility in the home visitors' work schedule, but we've found it can foster a sense of disconnection," Meier says. "To combat that, we meet weekly as a team. Two meetings a month are for case conferences, while the other two have more of a team-building focus. Those weekly meetings have become a real asset for our agency."

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Getting to Know . . . Anita Brentley, Quality Assurance Coordinator



Anita Brentley has a lot on her plate at work and at home — where pancake breakfasts and Wii grudge matches with her younger son are favorite activities.

What are your main areas of responsibility at work?

I am the staff liaison to ECS's Medical Home Committee, which is designed to ensure consistent, quality health care by connecting moms and babies with a medical home. I also run our immunization program, which updates agencies as to where each child stands on immunizations and helps agencies locate shot records. The third component of my job involves running the ECS/Avondale Partnership.

What is the main challenge in working with Avondale families?

Helping them deal with the crises in their lives, which can involve poverty, homelessness and lack of access to medical care. The ECS/Avondale Partnership is making a phenomenal difference in the lives of many families. It's a community-based coalition of organizations that serve the 0 to 3 population, and many of them take an active role in leadership, in our Caring Network Pantry and in our support group.

Being located in the community and connected to so many other organizations in Avondale helps us find the people who really need ECS and then meet their needs in specific ways. For instance, the pantry, which is open to the entire community, provides moms with diapers, clothing and other essential items. This helps them focus less on survival and more on working with home visitors to be better parents.

How do you get it all done?

I am able to juggle my responsibilities by focusing on how important they are to the future outcomes of our children. I love what I do and that also makes me put in the extra time and energy.

Tell us about your family.

My husband, Thurmond, and I have two boys — one is in high school and the other is a freshman at Kentucky State University. Family is my first priority. I'll be making my older son's favorites for Thanksgiving — turkey, mashed potatoes and fried corn. And grilling him about college, of course.

Who wins those Wii grudge matches?

My younger son, pretty much every time.

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