

# ECS TODAY

*With news you can use from Every Child Succeeds!*

JANUARY 2009

## Program Notes

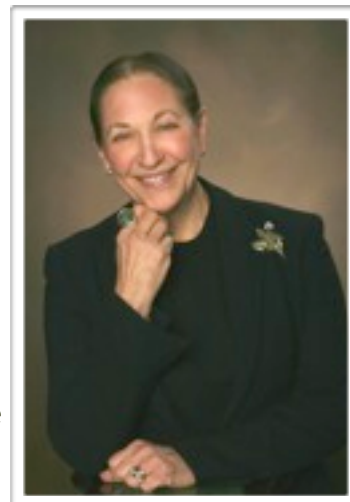
*ECS invites you to attend "From Risk to Resilience,"* an all-day conference on Thursday, March 5 at Drake Center. The conference is supported in part by Help Me Grow, and will focus on building healthy relationships between infants and parents. Nationally known speaker Dr. Martin Maldonado will present, and afternoon breakout sessions may include topics such as parental mental health, parenting practices and stress and time management. Ohio Counselor and Social Worker CEUs will be provided. The registration fee of \$25 includes materials, continental breakfast and lunch. For more information, email [LearningCenter@BeechAcres.org](mailto:LearningCenter@BeechAcres.org)

*A January 2 article in the Cincinnati Enquirer featured ECS* for its successful efforts to encourage moms to attend their postpartum doctor visit. Sixty-three percent of ECS moms attend the visit versus 43 percent of Ohio mothers whose care was covered by Medicaid. Great work! Thank you for completing the survey that provided the data and for promoting this critical self care among ECS others. See Health & Wellness Binder for information about the postpartum visit.

## A Letter from Judy Van Ginkel, ECS President

Out with the old, in with the new! But before we put last year behind us entirely, let's recall just a few of our significant accomplishments in 2008.

Most importantly, we served 3,520 families and once again demonstrated the quality of our program through impressive outcomes. Thanks to your hard work with parents and babies, we are making a difference! In other news, ECS received the NOVA Award from the American Hospital Association in recognition of its collaborative approach to improving community health status . . . . hosted a very successful Mothers Day event for ECS families . . . launched its literacy curriculum pilot program. . . continued to grow in Avondale . . . and much more. Thank you for your part in making ECS successful, and Happy New Year!



## Cincinnati-Hamilton County CAA:

### Here from the Beginning

Before Every Child Succeeds became a comprehensive home visitation program for at-risk families, it was simply an exciting idea being considered by United Way of Greater Cincinnati. As the idea became a reality, three organizations stepped forward to take a leadership role: Cincinnati Children's, United Way of Greater Cincinnati and Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency. CAA is now one of ECS's lead provider agencies, serving about 60 families in some of Cincinnati's poorest neighborhoods, including Avondale, Evanston and the West End.

CAA's best-known program is Head Start, which provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition and parent involvement services to low-income children ages three and four and their families. "Head Start is a good next step for children who graduate from ECS, because it ensures that they will

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**Staff News:** *Welcome to Kasi Kinnett*, who recently joined ECS as a Lighthouse Youth Services home visitor.

*Congratulations to Stacie Nance*, the new ECS supervisor at St Elizabeth Medical Center.

*And best wishes to Tricia Shaffer*, STAY, who gave birth to a son, J.T. Shaffer, on January 5.

*ECS families and other middle- and low-income wage earners* can receive free and fair tax preparation services, thanks to the Regional Earned Income Tax Collaborative. Help our families avoid filing fees and refund anticipation loans! Volunteer tax preparers are standing by, so for more information or to find locations, call the United Way at 211 or visit [www.makeworkpay.com](http://www.makeworkpay.com)

*The following websites* are helpful resources for families in need: [www.meijer.com/pharmacy](http://www.meijer.com/pharmacy) (free prenatal vitamins and antibiotics from Meijer Pharmacies); [cincybenefitsinfo.com](http://cincybenefitsinfo.com) (free, printable list of local assistance programs); and [www.obb.ohio.gov](http://www.obb.ohio.gov) (helps families determine their eligibility for public programs).

continue to receive the help they need in preparation for school," says Verline Dotson, director of CAA's Head Start program. "In fact, we give all ECS families — not just those served by CAA— priority enrollment for Head Start."

Head Start is just one CAA resource that benefits low- and moderate-income families. The Cincinnati organization, which began about 40 years ago, also provides home weatherization, the Home Energy Assistance Program, a microentrepreneurship course, financial management classes, emergency assistance, transitional housing and much more. Also, CAA partners with local public high schools to provide life skills training, healthy relationships workshops, parenting classes and a fatherhood initiative. And, families that are ineligible for ECS because they have more than one child can participate in Early Head Start, a federally funded program for children ages 0-3. Like ECS, Early Head Start has a home visitation component, as well as center-based services.



The CAA staff includes the following people (all are family support workers unless otherwise indicated). Left to right, back row: Brandy Harris; Stephanie Parker, pregnant mom team leader; Mia Garnett; and Diana Israel, program manager. Front row: Martha Morris, Minnie Terry.

Dotson says that being part of ECS's growth has been exciting for her and for Gwen Robinson, President and Chief Executive Officer of CAA, both of whom have been involved with the organization since it was in the planning stages. "I'm so proud of our city and of the organizations that made ECS a reality," Dotson says. "The program is very much needed, and is making a tremendous impact in the lives of pregnant women, young parents and their children."

To learn more about CAA, please visit [www.cincy-caa.org](http://www.cincy-caa.org) or call Verline Dotson at 513.569.1840 x 1026.

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### Getting to Know . . . Brenda Clark, Volunteer Program Coordinator



Say "cheese"! In addition to all of her other responsibilities with ECS, Brenda is also our official photographer, and has her own photography business.

#### *What are your main responsibilities with ECS?*

I oversee the Parent Aid Bag Program, which is run out of our 2,500-square-foot warehouse in Forest Park. This requires a lot of logistics, such as purchasing the products and coordinating the volunteers to assemble them once a month. I couldn't function without my volunteers! I have seven main volunteers and a group of mentally and physically disabled teens who help out as well. And I really appreciate that staff from each ECS agency comes to the warehouse to assemble bags once a year.

Another aspect of my job involves delivering boxes of cookies to friends of ECS who have gone above and beyond to enhance our program, and I run our special needs fund, which provides emergency assistance to ECS families. And

I speak on behalf of ECS at many United Way events throughout the year.

#### *And you just finished college!*

Yes, I just received my bachelor's degree in business management from Indiana Wesleyan University. My goal was to graduate summa cum laude, and I did it! I'm so glad it's over.

#### *We understand you are a real traveler.*

I do love to travel. In fact, Jodie Short (clinical research coordinator at ECS) and I have gone on a lot of trips together, to places like Colonial Williamsburg, Amish Country, Las Vegas and Costa Rica. My dream is to move to Puerto Rico for a year — that's where my mom is from, and I'd love to immerse myself in the culture and learn the language. Of course, I'd have to find a way to make a living first!

#### *And you'd have to find someone to take care of your bunnies.*

That's true. I've had Thumpy and Salty for about five years, when I borrowed them from a pet store so that I could use them with kids in Easter portraits. I fell in love with the bunnies and just couldn't return them! So, I bought them instead.



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### *Every Child Succeeds*

Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center

3333 Burnet Avenue, ML 3005

Cincinnati, OH 45229-3039

Phone: 513-636-2830 Fax: 513-636-2460

Email: [everychildsucceeds@cchmc.org](mailto:everychildsucceeds@cchmc.org)

Website: [EveryChildSucceeds.org](http://EveryChildSucceeds.org)

