

The Correspondent

Early Intervention Program

Early Head Start

Parent-Child Home Program

Wise Adult Day Health

Residential Services

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EHS EXPANDS into Norton, Attleboro & Middleboro

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Associates for Human Services, Inc. is pleased to announce the expansion of the Early Head Start Program, made possible through a grant from the Administration for Children and Families, with funds from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. This expansion will allow the EHS program to deliver services, not only to families in the Taunton and Raynham areas, as a delegate agency, but also to families in the Middleboro, Attleboro and Norton areas, as a grantee.

Families supported will increase from 42 to 84 families in a home-based service delivery model. Five new professional positions will be added to the current staff of 8 full time employees.

Early Head Start provides early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services to pregnant women, their partners, and families with children birth to age 3, who meet income eligibility guidelines. The Program supports parents' efforts to fulfill their parental roles, with an emphasis on building strong positive parent-child



Spring Wine Tasting

Thursday, April 29, 2010
5:30 - 8:00 pm
at Occasions at Village South
Raynham, MA

Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. They will be available in March.

Wine Tasting will be co-hosted by Raynham / Taunton Wine & Liquors

relationships based on knowledge of child development and helps them move toward self-sufficiency. Early Head Start also emphasizes parent empowerment by helping participants to improve their employment skills, marketability, and community involvement.

"We are very excited for this opportunity to be able to respond to the requests we've had to offer services in additional communities, to reach out to new families and expand our community collaborations", said program director Ronna Schaffer.

For more information, or to make a referral, please call Milly or Ronna at 508-880-0202.

Agency Information

Missions Statement: AHS is a not-for-profit organization. We are dedicated to providing choice, opportunity, and support to the individuals we serve, their families, and those we employ in order to enhance the quality of life in our communities.

Notes from Executive Director

Welcome to the winter edition of the AHS Correspondent. Throughout these pages you will find news related to programs, legislative updates, tips, resources, and a variety of candid pictures.

We're a little more than half-way through the fiscal year, and have many accomplishments to report. Even in this very tough economic climate, including 9c and program cuts which have effected every department, AHS has been able to sustain and make program improvements. There's lots of excitement in the early childhood division over the Early Head Start expansion, doubling the number of families we will be able to support; a new parent-led fundraiser in the design phase for Early Intervention, and PCHP has received a number of small grants to enhance quality. In the adult division, Residential has restructured Individual Supports to be more effective, achieved a 2 year license and certification; Wise continues to expand capacity, activities and behavioral components. In short, we are doing our best to do more with less.

In addition to the changes we've made to cope with current cuts, there remains the devastating possibility of more cuts to next year's budgets in a way never experienced before. Families and individuals may be impacted by losing precious services designed to improve and/or maintain skills, provide day programs and residential services. Please do all you can to assist our communities to retain the valuable services, provided by AHS programs, to your families or loved ones. Your program's professionals can help you identify who your legislators are, brief you on the issues, and discuss various means of contacting them. It can be as simple as a phone call, however you may consider a letter, email or a personal visit. Working together, we'll get through this.

There is no greater joy nor reward than to make a fundamental difference in someone's life.

Mary Rose McGeady, Advocate



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WISE Elder Services

Olympic Taste Testing

Wise Adult Day Health program held a taste testing event Friday, February 26, in honor of the 2010 Olympic Games. The event was held in the Wise quiet room at 10:00 A.M.

Participants and staff had been busy preparing for this event for weeks. Each staff person chose a country to represent. This included preparing a flag for the country, researching and preparing information on the country, and preparing a dish from that country. Each staff member worked with a group of participants to accomplish these tasks, and all staff and participants tasted the food from the represented countries.

Cheryl Abdow represented China and she and her group prepared Sweet and Sour Chicken. Cora Peirce represented England and she and her group prepared Auntie Dot's delish dish. Deb Brower represented France and she and her group prepared Quiche. Germany was represented by Ray Pratt, and he and his group made Oktoberfest. Dawn Burr represented Italy and she and her group prepared Minestrone soup. The Phillipines were represented by Kathy Waslyk, and she and her group prepared Halohalo. Portugal was represented by Mary Freitas and Allison Moniz and they prepared Chourico and peppers. Pat Burrows represented Switzerland and made Chocolate Mousse cake. Jen Cansler represented Puerto Rico and she and her group prepared Empanadas.

Jennifer Cansler, Activities Coordinator, initiated, planned and led the entire exercise. She organized time-lines for recipe submissions, flag completion, and grocery shopping. She did all the shopping for the recipes with several participants by Friday, February 18, leaving the final week for cooking and food preparation by each group. She organized the activity as a way to acknowledge the Olympics, learn and have fun at the same time.

Staff and participants really enjoyed learning about the countries and are very proud of their work. The flags are on display in the Wise quiet room. Feel free to stop by and see them.



Gerry and Patti help Jennifer Cansler, activities coordinator, prepared empanadas

Volunteer Award

Jessica Howland, a frequent visitor at the Wise Adult Day Health Program, was recently named the Massachusetts Middle School Volunteer of the Year by the Prudential Spirit of the Community Committee. Jessica has been coming to Wise for the past few years during February, April and summer vacations to visit with the participants. She helps with arts & crafts, reads to individuals, plays games or just visits with them. Participants look forward to her visits. Jessica was also awarded the President's Volunteer Service Award.

Jessica will be traveling to Washington D.C. to accept her award. She was also nominated for the National Middle School Volunteer of the Year. Thank you for all you do for the Wise Program. Congratulations!!



Adult Day Health Services

Wise Elder Services is an Adult Day Health and day support service for adults over the age of 55, and/or who are experiencing health care related issues. Wise is designed to provide quality services, including daily leisure, recreational and preventive health activities to aging individuals. An R.N. oversees all health-related activities, including restorative and maintenance therapies, nutritional consulting, and participant/caregiver training in preventive health. A nutritious lunch is served daily along with two snacks. For more information or referrals, please call the Wise Program Director, Debra Brower, at 508-880-0202, ext. 327.

Residential Services

Thursday Night Happenings

Helena Creaney, Program Supervisor for our Independent Supports, and Danita Gordon, Program Supervisor for Center St., have recently initiated Thursday Night Get Togethers at Center Street. And they're a HIT!

The first get together included Donald and Cheryl M., Mary B., Christine L. and Karin M. They participated in an evening of board games and card games, such as "Garbage", which everyone enjoyed. Christine and Donald, old acquaintances, quickly began catching up on old times and what they are doing currently. Cheryl not only enjoyed socializing with the others, but was also the big winner of the night. Congratulations, Cheryl! Despite folks being somewhat timid about what to expect that first night the house quickly filled with laughter and enjoyment. New friendships were made, plans were explored for the next get together and everyone loved the grand finale of a very special dessert....strawberry shortcake.



Staff helps Cheryl M. and Lakshmi J. with their nails.

The second event was a pizza night, which drew even more folks after they had heard about the great time everyone had the previous week. Everyone returned and four new folks joined in, Bob B., Lakshmi J., Jeanette S. and Mary C. While enjoying the variety of pizzas, the reminiscence about old times began as did the laughter, which could be heard throughout the house. Donald suggested a few games of "Garbage", obviously one of the favorites, and the games began. Bob, our camera man, had brought his camera and began snapping away. Bob mentioned putting the pictures in a photo album...a great idea! On the way home Donald mentioned "I really like Thursday nights now; it's nice to have something fun to do." Staff enjoyed knowing that they are facilitating a fun night, an opportunity to experience social supports and recreation, as well as appreciating the joy each individual expresses, while enhancing their lives.

A Ladies Night Out was recently enjoyed by the women in the group. It was a night of pampering with manicures, pedicures and fashion chatter, as well as mutual support and shared friendship. Several of the men in the group have asked for a "men's night out", and are working on defining what that would be. Stay tuned!

Helena Creaney, Program Supervisor

Helena, previously employed at the Center St. program, returned to AHS in late December as the Individual Supports Program Supervisor, a position created when the IS program was restructured. Helena has already proven she is a great addition to the team, working in sync with the Program Manager, and providing caring support for the individuals. She is creative, calm under pressure, knowledgeable of the AHS and DDS systems and dedicated. Helena, in the short time she has been the IS program supervisor, has had a positive effect on the folks as well as the IS staff, Dolores Soares and newly hired Les Greene.



Residential ...

The **Residential Program** provides a variety of supports to individuals with developmental disabilities, living throughout the community in single-family homes and apartments. Individuals are supported to achieve optimal independence through choices and opportunities that enhance their quality of life. Please call Ann Doyle, Program Manager, at 508-880-0202, ext. 330 for more information; referrals are made through the Department of Mental Retardation.

Early Childhood Programs

Early Intervention

Parent-Child Home Program

Early Head Start

Letter to EI Families

Dear Families:

As the deep economic recession across Massachusetts and the country has affected us in many ways, I want to share with you the impact on Early Intervention Services. Early Intervention is a program of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. State funding supports the 59 EI Programs in Massachusetts. Over the past two years, there have been substantial cuts to the state budget due to the economic crisis and decreased tax revenue coming into the state, which has also affected the EI budget.

The Early Intervention budget is facing a \$2 million shortfall for the remainder of this year and a \$10.5 million shortfall for the next fiscal year starting July 1st. (Early Intervention received federal stimulus money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act assisting to preserve services after cuts of the past two years, which will no longer be available.)

To balance the EI budget deficit, the Department of Public Health has proposed increasing family participation fees 600% to 1200%! The state is poised to implement this change starting April 1st. The Early Intervention Consortium has been advocating strongly against this proposal, but we need parents to speak out. We need parents to let the state know that this drastic increase in participation fee will cause many families, like yourself, to have to discontinue the services that are so desperately needed for their child.

Your voice really counts! We know that parent voices are the most effective in creating change. I have sent out emails and asked Service Coordinators to assist you with writing these letters. If you have not been able to write the letter by the time of the public hearing on March 1, you may still send letters to the Governor, and the Department of Public Health (addresses on right) up until April 7, 2010. If you need us to mail in the letters we can do so, as well. (cont. on next column)

Letter to EI Families (cont.)

These are the proposals that DPH is looking to impose, should funding not occur:

a. Increasing the parent participation fees 6-13 times (600% - 1200%).

b. Changing the eligibility requirement from a 30% delay to a 40% delay, and as much as 50% delay in expressive language. These changes are projected to eliminate approximately 1 out of every 3 children currently receiving EI services (10,000 children).

Address the letters as follows:

Governor Deval Patrick
State House Room 360
Boston, MA 02133

Attn: Ron Benham
DPECSHN
Massachusetts Department
of Public Health
250 Washington St., 5th
Floor
Boston, MA 02108 – 4619



CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS and send them a copy of your letter
http://www.mass.gov/legis/city_town.htm (list is provided by your service coordinator as well)

Thank you for helping to preserve Early Intervention for your child, and all the children in the commonwealth that need Early Intervention services.

Zulmira Allcock, LMHC, CEIS, CEID,
Early Intervention Program Director

Early Childhood Programs ...

Early Head Start Program is a federally funded program that provides comprehensive services to families who are pregnant or have children between the ages of birth to 3 and meet income guidelines. Call Ronna Schaffer at 508-880-0202, ext. 354 for more information or to make a referral.

Early Intervention Program is an integrated developmental service available to families of children, between birth and three years of age, for whom there are developmental concerns due to identified disabilities, certain birth circumstances, or environmental circumstances (e.g. cerebral palsy, prematurity, homelessness) or show a delay in one or more areas of development. Please call Zulmira Allcock at 508-880-0202, ext. 302 for more information or to make a referral.

Parent-Child Home Program is a home-based literacy and parenting program, which helps prepare children to succeed in school, emphasizing parent-child verbal interaction. Please call Debbie Jenkins at 508-880-0202, ext. 362 for more information or to make a referral.

Early Childhood Programs

Early Intervention

Parent-Child Home Program

Early Head Start

EHS Update

There is a lot going on in the EHS program these days. We have been busy throughout January and February getting everything in place for our expansion to Attleboro, Middleboro and Norton. If you visit us at AHS you will

see we have moved around a bit. The office formerly occupied by Ronna Schaffer, the director, is now home to



The new Resource Room....Under Construction.

our 3 program managers: Milly Burrows, Family Partnerships Manager; Sandy Furtado, Health Manager and our newly hired Meredith Arieta-Heany, Education Manager. Ronna has moved to the office where Milly was, next to Kit Tunney, AHS executive director. But that is not all! We have added 3 desks to accommodate our new Parent/ Child Advocates. The family room is being divided to create an EHS resource area for staff.

In addition to hiring Meredith as our new Education



Terry Rodrigues, HR Manager, conducting an employee orientation for the new EHS employees.

Manager, we have hired 4 new Parent/Child Advocates. They are: Tracy Tinkham, Lori Grayden, Tina Slavick and Kathy Bart. The April newsletter will feature our new staff members— pictures and all!

In addition to all these changes, Ronna and Milly have been meeting with community professionals in the 3 new communities to establish collaborations and recruit families. We are working on securing space for parent/child playgroups in Middleboro and in Attleboro and identifying licensed Family Childcare Educators for our Family child care option. We are excited about starting our program in April!

TV Viewing

Television watching is taking up much of our families' time and affecting the way our children learn. You may ask yourself when is it the right time to introduce your baby to television and how does it affect them.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under age two should not be watching any television. Some of the reasons for such a drastic recommendation may include how studies have shown that television viewing may lead to more aggressive behavior, less physical activity, obesity in children and now the risk of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder related to early TV use.

Infants and toddlers who are exposed to a lot of TV may develop speech and language skills later than their peers. The first two years of a child's life is especially important in the growth and development of their brain. During this time, children need healthy, positive interaction with other children and adults to develop good language and social skills. Reading will help a child sharpen their thinking and imaginative skills by requiring them to fill in the details.

Playing, reading and spending time with family and friends is a much healthier way to spend their time than just sitting in front of a TV.

One other factor to be aware of is that TV viewing can become addictive. It is far easier to place limits when they are young and develop habits now than to try and change them later.

The following are some ideas on how to help your child use television more wisely.

- *If your child is under two, keep watching to a minimum. If you do choose to let them watch, keep it to 10 to 15 minutes.
- *From ages 2-3, limit their viewing to no more than 1 hour a day.
- *Keep the television out of your child's bedroom and off during meals.
- *Watch programs you have preselected and turn the TV off when they are over.
- *Choose simple programs that encourage interaction.
- *Watch TV with your child and talk about it.
- *Extend the program with other activities related to the show (like reading a book about a similar topic or completing a similar activity.)
- *Limiting your own TV viewing and choosing programs carefully will help your child do the same.

(Sources: Television – How It Affects Children, American Academy of Pediatrics, Should Babies and Toddlers Watch Television?, Robin E. Weiss, LCCE, Toddlers and Television, Irene H. Zundel)

Resource/Information

It IS Easy Being Green

by Chrissy Collins, Early Intervention Counselor

It's finally time to start thinking about planting a garden.

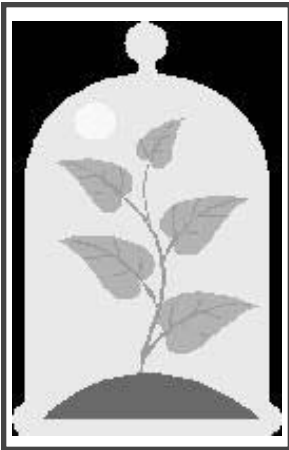
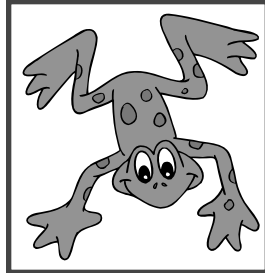
Growing vegetables and herbs at home is a money saver and it also gives you a better-tasting product. This type of project can be a lesson for the children in your life but it can also be a way to get to know your neighbors. A fruitful garden grows enough produce to allow you to share with neighbors and family. Also, if you are looking for a healthy way to spend some time, getting outside in the fresh air and sun is a perfect way.

The first step is picking a location. This step can either make or break your project. Choose a location that gets a full day of sun. Next, examine your soil. The perfect soil is what is called "sandy loam." To make sure you have sandy loam, take a handful of soil and squeeze it in your hand. You are looking to see that it crumbles when you let it go. If your soil is too dry add compost soil and too wet give the space time to dry out, till the soil and make sure there is ample drainage. The smaller the garden space the easier to manage. For example, a well cared for 10x10 foot garden will produce more vegetables than a weed filled or diseased ridden 25x50 foot space.

Container gardens are a great way to have a garden without a big yard. Produce that grows well in containers are tomatoes, basil, parsley, rosemary and oregano. Make sure your containers have holes at the bottom to ensure proper drainage.

Now the fun part, planting time. The later you plant the better to ensure you do not expose your new plants to frost. When it comes to choosing seeds refrain from penny pinching. Look for buying brand name seed or catalogue seed. The 10 seed packets for a dollar are not worth your hard work. Easy to grow crops include onion, peas, beets, zucchini and squash.

Never forget to fertilize (using homemade compost or the store bought organic kind) and treat your garden to ward off any insects. Enjoy the weeding and pick only when your produce is ripe. Let me know how it is going at Chrissyc1@cox.net.



PCHP Update: Building Vocabulary

You are your child's most important teacher and that is why it is so important for you to make their reading experience fun. There are several things you can do to help your child be better prepared to enter school and begin reading. You can sing songs, play games, read aloud and have conversations with them. These kinds of activities can help them make the connection between what they hear and see, a first step in understanding how to read.

Talking with toddlers can sometimes be challenging. You give them the message that you feel what they say is important, and encourage more communication, by listening, making eye contact and responding the best you can to what you believe they have said. The more words a toddler hears in these types of "conversations" with those who care for them, the larger their vocabulary will be and the faster it will grow. It is important to understand that children do not learn language from just listening to T.V., or conversations other people are having; they need to be involved. Your toddler needs to "talk" about things that are meaningful to them like their own actions, feelings and needs. The following are some helpful tips to encourage your child's vocabulary development:

- * Get down to your child's eye level and talk to them face-to-face.
- * Talk about things they see and hear around them.
- * Talk about what they are doing (for example, "Good job stacking the blocks!")
- * Talk about what you are doing, "Mommy needs to sweep the floor now."
- * Show excitement over your child's attempts to communicate.

Sources: *Preschoolers and Reading, Reading is Fundamental, Inc., Brain Wonders, Birth to Three*

Cures for Loneliness

Keep busy- write letters, visit people, fix something that needs to be fixed, or take up a hobby.

Involve yourself-involve yourself in community affairs.

Help others-look for and strive to cure the loneliness of someone else--it will cure your own.

Avoid escapes-avoid day dreaming, sleeping too much, and watching too much TV.

Choose to be happy-Fight unhappiness with a direct attack of the will--choose to be happy in spite of the circumstances.

Join a social group-join one of the many social groups in your community. See that you visit the Senior Center regularly and meet new people.

Source: <http://seniors-site.com/widowm/lonely.html>

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TTY: 508-880-0950

E-mail: dhowland@ahsinc.org

"Quality Service for Quality Life"



Wish List

If you have an item you'd like to donate, please contact Debbie Howland at 508-880-0202, ext 333.

- * stickers
- * small kitchen table & chairs
- * TV Stand, coffee table, end table
- * double stroller
- * umbrella stroller
- * toddler beds (2)
- * 12 X 16 carpet
- * vinyl recliner
- * 100% fruit juice
- * Pack and Play
- * Crib

Additional News

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Are you responsible for raising a relative's child? Well you are not alone.....

Come to a **Grandparents Relatives Elders and Children Together (GREAT)** support group.

Monthly daytime group: meets on the 4th Thursday of the month from 10:00 - 11:30 AM at Winthrop Street Baptist Church, 39 Winthrop Street, Taunton

Monthly evening groups: meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 7:00 - 8:30 PM at The Arbors, 763 County Street, Taunton.

For more information call: Michelle Jussaume at 774-627-1325 or Milly Burrows at 508-880-0202.



CSS sponsored a "Winter Olympics" luncheon for staff to enjoy in February.

