

In this Issue:

- Director's ColumnPg. 1
- Program Highlights and HappeningsPg. 2-3
- Showhouse SearchPg. 3
- 'Big Hearts' FundraiserPg. 3
- Staff AnnouncementsPg. 4
- Dine & DonatePg. 4
- Fall Home Tours.....Pg. 4

THE SHOWHOUSE SEARCH IS ON!



Hello friends!

Spring is always a time of renewal, and the sunshine and warmer weather are welcomed after the harsh cold of winter. Perhaps this year more than most, we look ahead with an attitude of hope for what lies ahead. Across Kansas communities, businesses are reopening and resuming more typical schedules and services. Our agency will slowly begin resuming some on-site services in child care programs as feasible while keeping the health and safety of our team as well as the child care providers and children in mind. As much as we all look forward to a "new normal," we also recognize that we can't move too quickly. For me, not being fully consumed with Designers' Showhouse planning has brought an unusual rhythm to my Spring calendar, yet I seem to succeed at filling it with other activities. There is always more to do!

As I shared last time, we have launched some new efforts to address child care supply and demand in our region. I am excited to share that we are already experiencing success! You can read more about these new programs in a separate article in this newsletter.

Plans are beginning to take shape as we embrace new fundraising efforts for summer and fall. In this newsletter, you will see information about how you can support our cause by hosting a "Dine and Donate" event with your friends and colleagues. We are also planning for a fall home tour and will share more plans about that endeavor soon. Without a 2021 Showhouse, we have to find new ways to fund agency programs and services that are so critically needed. Child care is needed as parents with young children return to the workplace over the coming months. Communities working to attract new employers understand that a workforce with young families needs high-quality child care options. We all want young children to have high-quality early learning experiences that start them off on a path to success in school and throughout life.

I always love to hear from you, so please reach out (reva@east.ks.childcareaware.org or 785-440-4507) if you have suggestions or ideas to share. Your support means so much, and we are grateful for our partnership as we work together to make great things happen for young children and their families!

Until next time...

Reva Wywadis

Reva Wywadis
Executive Director



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Quincei Clark, Accountant
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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & HAPPENINGS

EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE CENTER LAUNCHES SEPTEMBER 2021!

A significant obstacle to child care access in Shawnee County is the lack of qualified teaching staff. Multiple child care center directors in the community report struggling to hire staff and some have reported having to limit their current enrollment as classrooms are closed until qualified staff is identified and on board. To address this broad-based need in the area, Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas is launching an Early Childhood Workforce Training Center. This new Center will provide classroom training for potential/prospective child care providers, staff, and substitutes interested in a career in child care. This Center will be housed at the new SENT (Strengthening and Equipping Neighborhoods Together) Prep Academy which is scheduled to open April 2021, with the inaugural class of the Workforce Training Center scheduled for September 2021. Enrolled participants will complete a 60-hour preparatory career training track which provides all the initial training and background checks required by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Once this two-week training session is completed, participants may choose to continue with an experiential classroom teaching track. This track offers the opportunity to gain classroom experience in a high-quality early childhood classroom, similar to an internship or student-teaching experience.

Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas will be hiring a Workforce Center Coordinator to oversee the project, helping each student create a professional learning plan that sets them on the path towards their professional goals in the early childhood field. The project goal is for 30 adult learners (10 in each of three cohorts) to complete the program between September 2021 and April 2022. Applications for the first cohort of participants will be available July 1. This exciting project, funded through a Preschool Development Grant* through the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, will help us evaluate effective recruitment strategies to grow the pool of qualified early childhood teachers in the community and will serve as a model for other similar efforts throughout the state!

SHAWNEE COUNTY KINDERGARTEN TRANSITIONS PROJECT

In November 2020, the Kansas Children's Cabinet & Trust Fund sponsored a Kindergarten Transitions Summit. This Summit brought together teams from throughout the state to explore and discuss ways to support the critical needs of children as they transition into kindergarten. Continuing the discussions that began during this summit, representatives from all six Shawnee County public school districts have joined with private schools, Head Start, Kansas Children's Discovery Center, United Way of Greater Topeka, Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, child care professionals, Washburn Tech, and Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas to continue to move this work forward. This collaborative group has adopted the shared vision that every family in Shawnee County, no matter where they live or where their child will attend school, has access to support and information around kindergarten transitions.

With support from a facilitator provided through the Kansas Children's Cabinet, a grant proposal was submitted to fund activities to help the community achieve this goal. Proposed primary strategies include: the creation of a centralized website linking parents with information regarding kindergarten transitions, community events, and school enrollment; professional development for child care providers to support transitions between community-based child care, families, and schools; and engagement activities that connect families to schools and community supports including developmental screening opportunities. If the proposal is funded, project activities will benefit approximately 2,000 children and families each year to prepare for a successful transition into kindergarten. Stay tuned for updates and more information!

* This project was made possible by grant #90TP0078-01-00. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.



STORMONT VAIL FOUNDATION GRANT SUPPORTS SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES

Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas was thrilled to receive a grant from the Stormont Vail Foundation that will provide consumer education for families around safe sleep practices. Packets containing “Sleep Baby” board books, a Sleep Sack, printed consumer educational materials around safe sleep practices, and an “All About Me” child development calendar will be distributed throughout 2021 in 11 communities served by a Stormont Vail Health/Cotton O’Neil Clinic. Often these communities will host educational outreach events intended to draw participation from prenatal moms and those who have recently given birth, typically as community baby showers but sometimes taking other formats. While in 2021 we expect many of these events to take place as “drive-through baby showers,” we recognize the importance of continued outreach to families during these challenging times. This grant will provide this wonderful resource to 75 families, and we are excited about this opportunity to support the needs of newborns and their families in northeast Kansas. Thank you, Stormont Vail Foundation!

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROGRAMS OFFER DIVERSE SUPPORT

The agency has launched new services throughout the region, specifically designed to focus both on the retention of existing child care programs as well as supporting new programs. The Successful Start service brings coaching support and peer learning opportunities to providers throughout their first year, with a concentration on the business aspect of child care. Providers can access technical assistance in a wide range of business topics while additionally having access to family child care business courses. Thus far, 27 of the 33 counties in our service area have been served by this program, with many providers successfully connecting regularly with their coach.

Providers can gain additional support through the “Den,” a monthly meeting place for family child care providers to discuss business topics and share resources via Zoom. These discussions, led by an agency instructor, offer a new topic each month. The first discussion took place in March, sharing tips on finding a tax preparer for a child care business. This discussion allowed for providers to apply the knowledge they learned in accurately assessing their accounting situation needs. Participants were also able to connect and develop support from their peers.

In a continued effort to connect child care businesses to early learning resources, our agency launched On The Go! mobile services, which provide library materials and technical assistance. Currently, our agency serves 26 classrooms in Jefferson, Miami, Franklin, Douglas, Neosho, and Linn County. This service also provides support through one-on-one coaching, peer learning, free professional development opportunities, and full access to our mobile library of classroom materials at no cost. Participants have the option to choose from one of three tracks offered in healthy habits (wellness), program planning (daily schedules and routines), and kindness classroom (social-emotional supports). Each track provides a professional development opportunity through an online class as well as additional assistance through a variety of associated topics and supports.

Through our recruitment and retention work, our agency has made a total of 119 successful contacts and 22.5 hours of technical assistance as of January 2021.



THE SHOWHOUSE SEARCH IS ON!

It's that time! We are in the market for a house that the agency can purchase and renovate as the 2022 Designers' Showhouse. This is a great opportunity for anyone looking to sell or downsize without having to make updates or repairs in order to get your house ready to sell before listing it. Great tax benefits may be available to the seller. General criteria include being located in Topeka (or close to city limits) and having approximately 3,000 square feet of living space. Contact Reva at reva@east.ks.childcareaware.org or 785-440-4507 for more information.



Big Hearts Shape Little Minds

Parents Recognizing Providers

The “Big Hearts Shape Little Minds” campaign is focused on giving families the opportunity to show their appreciation for our providers while supporting a great cause! During April and May, Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas will be promoting this campaign to families throughout our region. Parents will have the opportunity to show their appreciation for their child care provider through a tax-deductible donation to our agency. Their heartfelt story will be shared, and nominating families and their providers will be recognized on our website and this newsletter. All donations will be used to support professional development opportunities, helping to strengthen the child care workforce in our region.

Welcome to the Team!



Quincei Clark is an Accountant who recently joined our agency in March. Quincei is a native Virginian, but has lived in North Carolina the past five years where her husband was stationed at Fort Bragg. She has five years of experience working in the accounting field and spent the past three years working as a Senior Accountant for a mid-size company in North Carolina. She received a MBA with a focus in leadership and a BS in finance from Liberty University. She also has a BS in Accounting received from Southern New Hampshire University. Quincei loves accounting because she likes the feeling she gets by helping organizations achieve their goals through proper financial reporting and sound analysis. In her spare time, she likes to read, hike and spend time with her family going on adventures.



Eva Abril is an Administrative Assistant/Bilingual Resource Specialist who has also recently joined our agency in March. She currently lives in Topeka but is a native of Phoenix, Arizona. Eva previously worked with a local nonprofit, providing translating services and administrative support to the director and leadership staff. She is passionate about her translating efforts as she believes it is important to bridge the communication gap in support of Spanish speaking families. In her spare time she enjoys cooking and spending time with her three daughters. Eva enjoys being a part of nonprofit work because it gives her a sense of satisfaction that she is making a real difference in the lives of children and their families.



DINE & DONATE - A FUNDRAISING EVENT

Dine & Donate events are when agency supporters (individuals or businesses) volunteer to host a luncheon or dinner party benefitting Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas. Child Care Aware® will provide hosts a "Dine & Donate Party Kit" that has flyers and a template for printed or email invitations. The host plans the gathering, invites their friends or colleagues, and provides the food and drink. Invitations clearly state that this is a Dine & Donate fundraising event, and that all proceeds support Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas' mission: supporting the healthy development of young children by improving access to high-quality child care options and educational resources for families and early childhood professionals. The host has the party and collects the checks, sending them to the CCA office for processing. (Online donations through a secure website link are also accepted.) Child Care Aware® will provide each donor a thank you letter and receipt for their charitable contribution. Hosts may also be eligible for a charitable contribution receipt for expenses related to hosting the event. All events raising \$1,500 or more will be acknowledged in the agency donor newsletter and on our website (party pictures are encouraged), and the event that raises the most money will receive some VERY special recognition, as well as the opportunity for a private gathering at the 2022 Designers' Showhouse!

FALL HOME TOURS



We are now in the planning phase for Fall Home Tours. We are seeking 4-6 spectacular homes that can be featured in this special event held this fall. Area interior designers will work with homeowners to add festive fall décor. If you would like your home to be considered for this weekend event, please email reva@east.ks.childcareaware.org or call 785-440-4507. Watch for additional details on this new fundraiser, coming soon!