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Did You Know?

Back to School Facts

- A study indicated that children who heard the greatest amount of language in the first three years of life had the highest 3rd grade achievement test scores
- Social emotional indicators such as self-regulation, turn-taking, and negotiation are highly related to school readiness and success. These are skills whose foundations are firmly laid during the first five years of life. They are primarily learned through play and nurturing relationships

For more information about early childhood development, call (580) 548-2365

YouthBuild Brings New Funding and Jobs to Enid

The U.S. Department of Labor has awarded CDSA funding for a new program called YouthBuild.

Through YouthBuild, CDSA will provide services that will lead to the completion of the GED, construction training, job skill development, building leadership skills and community service while working to develop quality low-income housing in neighborhoods around the Enid community. New positions have been created at CDSA in order to implement Youthbuild.

The YouthBuild program emphasizes serving at-risk youth including foster children, high school drop-outs, teen parents, children of incarcerated parents and others between the ages of 17 ½ and 24.

“Interested youth may pick up an application at CDSA,” said Tracey Polson, Program Coordinator. “We are expecting to interview 40 young people and will place 26 in the program with 4 alternates.” Youth will receive supportive services to help cover costs while they are in the program. “The right person for YouthBuild is someone who has dropped out of school,



and hasn't had much success working low paying jobs,” said Polson, “students should be interested in working in the construction industry and committed to making a positive change in their lives.”

CDSA was one of 183 agencies chosen to operate the YouthBuild program for 2009 and will receive part of the \$144 million dollars in funding from the U.S. Dept. of Labor. The Enid Community Learning Center located at CDSA will be the site of the YouthBuild GED program. Construction training will begin on a residential property donated to CDSA by American General Finance of Enid. Students will receive hands-on training and have the opportunity to see an older house in need of help turn into someone's home.

Roosevelt Park Apartments Grand Opening

The Grand Opening of the Roosevelt Park apartments was held in August at a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Roosevelt Park provides 48 high quality affordable housing units for hard working Enid families. The apartment homes are located one block east of St. Mary's Hospital and are at full capacity with a considerable waiting list.

This development is part of a concerted effort to revitalize and restore areas of the historic east side of Enid.



Photo courtesy of David Isaak

2-1-1 Picks Up the Pace

North Central Oklahoma 2-1-1 continues to gain momentum as call volume reaches 4,000 since inception in April 2008. Call volume has more than doubled from the previous year.

2-1-1 referrals are expanding to include basic human needs, physical and mental health resources, employment support, family, youth and children services and elderly and disabled services. 2-1-1 will continue to be of particular importance to north central Oklahoma communities with the upcoming flu and holiday sea-

sons.

As 2-1-1 expands its reach and increases visibility, the push for a national 2-1-1 Act continues to strengthen, as well. Over the past twelve months, nearly 60 percent of the needs identified each month are request for financial assistance followed by general information, utility assistance and food and health care.

For additional information, contact Kacie Dickinson at CDSA, (580)242-6131 or visit www.211oklahoma.org.

Lowe's Invests in Young Children and Enid's Future

On July 18th, the Sandbox Learning Center held an open house to showcase one of CDSA/Smart Start Northwest Oklahoma's latest initiatives – a community garden. The project was made a reality through a partnership with Lowes Home Improvement Center of Enid and will enrich young children's learning experiences at the center for years to come.

Lowes designed and built the garden at Sandbox Learning Center, Enid's only stand alone non-profit child care center, in order to provide young children in our community an opportunity to experience nature and learn about gardening. Lowes donated the materials and supplies to construct the garden as part of their *Community Heroes* project. In addition, Lowes employees provided over 200 hours of volunteer labor.

"The purpose of Smart Start is to bring investment into the lives of young children in our community," said Paula Waters of CDSA Smart Start. From a practical standpoint, the garden provides a hands-on opportunity for children to learn about nature and interact with their outdoor environment. The Sandbox Garden will nurture chil-



Photo courtesy of Sandbox Learning Center

dren's awareness, confidence, and connections to the natural world. Within the center's early childhood curriculum, the garden will provide an exciting learning environment for science, math, literacy, and social/emotional skills.

Also donating to the project were Lavicky Sand Company of Enid and Humalfa LLC of Shattuck. CDSA Smart Start donated a large selection of books and resources to help keep gardening in the curriculum and enhance educational opportunities.

Parents As Teachers Annual Report

For almost 20 years, the CDSA Parents as Teachers program has shared information with parents to help them get their young children off to a good start. A study released last year in the Journal of Primary Prevention confirms that the Parents as Teachers model does, measurably, improve school readiness. Further, according to the researchers, kindergarten readiness is the most important significant predictor of third-grade achievement and far outweighs other demographic variables in predicting subsequent third-grade performance.

The study also refutes views that such services should be limited to high-poverty children, by showing that school readiness scores of non-poverty children were also enhanced through Parents as Teachers participation.

The CDSA Parents as Teachers services are offered free of charge to all residents. Last year the program served 220 children and completed over 1600 home visits.

Community Leaders Represent Enid at Summit

The Oklahoma Economic Summit on Early Childhood Investment on July 27th in Oklahoma City drew a state-wide audience of over 384 business and community leaders to focus state attention on investment in human capital beginning in the early years. Enid was represented by a delegation of 6 from CDSA/Smart Start, Enid Chamber of Commerce, The Alliance for Economic Development, and local businesses leaders.

The goal of the event was to increase awareness of the importance of the early years in laying the foundation for future educational and economic success in Oklahoma. Featured speakers included 2000 Nobel Prize winner James J. Heckman, Ph.D., whose evaluation of economic policy has led him to champion quality early childhood experiences as the solution for better education and health outcomes, less crime and poverty, and greater economic prosperity. Dr. Heckman makes the case for quality early learning experiences as the best economic investment with the highest rate



of return that will pay dividends in America for generations to come.

The Summit concluded with a call to action for Oklahomans to focus on the economic future of our state through early childhood investment in order to build a strong foundation for higher educational attainment for our students and a better prepared and more productive workforce for future generations.

New Housing In Progress

One of the missions of CDSA is to revitalize older Enid neighborhoods. The house currently being built at 10th Street and East Randolph may help us learn how to produce energy efficient, cost efficient new housing in fully developed neighborhoods. Drive by to see how Styrofoam Insulated Panels (SIPS) can be used in residential housing.

For additional information, contact Craig Stokes of CDSA at (580)242-6131.

Federal Grant Awarded

The American Recovery and Re-investment Act has awarded CDSA's Housing Department with the Homeless and Rapid Re-housing Program, or HPRP. CDSA received \$300,000 to provide financial assistance and services to either prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless or help those who are experiencing homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized.

Families in the north central Continuum of Care will be eligible for assistance through CDSA.

CDSA Float in the Cherokee Strip Parade

CDSA participated in the Cherokee Strip Celebration Parade around the square on September 12th.

In remembrance of the Great Land Run, CDSA hopes to *keep this land running great!*

CDSA's float promoted awareness of the Weatherization Assistance Program which allows low-income families to permanently reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. During the last 25 years, the Weatherization Assistance Program has provided weatherization services to over 500 households throughout Garfield and Grant counties.



Photo courtesy of Donna Biggers



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Cheri's Corner



Have you ever known someone who had a really rough time growing up and became incredibly successful anyway? Maybe you have known two siblings, one in constant trouble, the other constantly successful. Some researchers think that resilience makes all the difference.

Resilient people are independent and creative. They have initiative. Resilient people can find humor in tragedy. They ask tough questions and

value honesty. We see resilient people every day at CDSA. We also see people who are broken and have to work hard to accomplish even the simplest tasks of daily life. According to some experts, "resilience is a process of connectedness, of linking to people, to interests, and ultimately to life itself." Maybe that's why we sometimes feel better when we push ourselves to get out and do something for others. So, if you are feeling a little less than resilient, call us. We can find something for you to do!

- Cheri Ezzell, *Executive Director*

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