

MEDIA RELEASE

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Stephanie Lux, Community Outreach Coordinator

(816) 233-8281, ext. 106;

slux@endpov.com

www.endpov.com

Governor Nixon recognizes Head Start during Head Start awareness month

Head Start more than a preschool—it provides whole family care, focusing on children from pregnancy to age five who are moving out of poverty



Left: A community volunteer reads to children in a Head Start classroom

(Oct 27, 2009—St. Joseph, MO) Head Start and Early Head Start Programs are proud to announce October is National Head Start Awareness Month. In recognition of this, Governor Jay Nixon certified a resolution stating his appreciation for the work performed by the Head Start and Early Head Start programs in serving Missouri’s lower income children and families.

Community Action Partnership of Greater St. Joseph (CAP St. Joe) runs Head Start in Andrew, Buchanan, Clinton, and DeKalb Counties, and Early Head Start in Buchanan County.

Head Start is a program dedicated to caring for low-income families with children ages three to five. Head Start uses a variety of proven methods to accomplish its goals, which include:

- Enhancing children’s physical, social, emotional and cognitive development
- Enabling parents to be better caregivers and teachers to their children
- Helping parents meet their own goals, including economic independence

Five things you didn’t know about Head Start

1. **Head Start children consistently score high** in verbal achievement, perceptual reasoning and social competence—often higher than children who are not from low-income families.
2. **From the age of 12 months**, an emphasis on “planning, doing, and reviewing” is utilized in Head Start classrooms and shown to be linked with school success.
3. **Programs like Head Start are the most effective** ways to reduce juvenile delinquency, childhood anti-social behavior, low cognitive abilities, and unstable or inadequate parenting, research shows.
4. **For every \$1 invested** in high-quality early education and care programs, society saves \$17 down the road.
5. **At least 20%** of every dollar spent on Head Start is raised in the community. Head Start would not exist without community support.

Some of the ways Head Start addresses these goals include providing child care services that promote children's academic, social and emotional development, and whole family care, often given in the home, including social, health, and nutrition services.

Early Head Start has the same goals as Head Start, but provides more of those services in direct home visits. Early Head Start is offered by CAP in Buchanan County to children from prenatal to age three. CAP's Head Start serves 411 children ages 3-5 from low-income families, in 12 Head Start centers across Northwest Missouri, and Early Head Start serves 72 children from conception to 36 months in Buchanan County.

Toni Hayes, mother of Lafayette's 2009 Valedictorian Patience Mozee, credits Head Start with getting her daughter off to the right start. "When she started Head Start at age 4, she had trouble with socialization, things like sharing and getting along with the other kids," says Hayes. "But soon, the teachers at Head Start had her past that and they literally worked wonders for her in Head Start. It made the difference toward the level of success she has now." Today Hayes is a Head Start staff member herself.

Head Start, which generates at least 20% of its annual funding through community support, is not only money spent on short-term solutions—it is also an investment in the future. Research shows that for every dollar invested in quality early education programs, the community saves \$17 down the road, with tangible results measured in lower crime, fewer single parents, and higher individual earnings and education levels.

In addition to registered dietician-approved meals, certified curriculum, health and dental screenings, family goal setting, and parental involvement, Head Start has another element that sets it apart: a work or school requirement for families who attend the full-day, full-year center. Each household attending CAP's S. 9th St. Head Start Center works or attends school at least 20 hours per week. Without Head Start, many families could not afford a quality early childcare experience that would allow them to take steps toward economic stability.

Head Start Director Traci Bowman knows that she is part of a good thing. "I am privileged to lead a group of gifted individuals within the Prenatal to Five Head Start Program," she says, "Through this strong Early Childhood Community, which involves a variety of people from educational professionals to business owners, families benefit from the remarkable collaborative efforts offered to assist them in becoming successful."

Community Action Partnership is proud to honor Head Start this October during Head Start Awareness Month. Head Start is one of its core programs, working hard to move families out of poverty and into economic stability. For more information about Head Start, please contact Traci Bowman at 816-233-8281 or visit our website at <http://www.endpov.com/headstart.html>.

Community Action Partnership has worked to move low-income families out of poverty since 1965, serving nearly 16,000 people in poverty in Northwest Missouri. In addition to Head Start, Community Action Partnership provides many other services to low-income families, including utilities assistance, affordable housing, financial literacy and home ownership classes, life skills and workforce training. For more information, visit www.endpov.com.

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