

MEDIA RELEASE

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Fathers and low-income families to gather for a night of football and literacy with the Kansas City Chiefs

Head Start families will have a chance to meet KC Wolf and former Kansas City Chiefs players for an evening of family fun at Benton High School, Oct. 14

(Oct. 9, 2009 – St. Joseph, Mo.) Fathers, families, football, and fun—what more could a family ask for? How about KC Wolf and former Kansas City Chiefs players?

Community Action Partnership of St. Joseph (CAP St. Joe) is inviting Head Start children and their families to Football and Fatherhood, hosted by East Side Rotary of St. Joseph, Mo. The night will offer fathers and other male role models a unique chance to bond with their children and families, with the extra element of a “Chiefs Training Camp” theme. K.C. Chiefs former players will be on hand, in addition to K.C. Wolf.

For many dads working a full-time schedule, it can be difficult to find time to make memories with their children and be encouraged in their role as fathers. Research shows that strong male role models—including uncles, cousins, grandfathers, or brothers—can be a key factor in breaking the cycle of poverty. Football and Fatherhood will celebrate fatherhood and offer fathers a chance to be dads and make memories with their children.

“Strengthening family bonds—not just fathers, but mothers and sisters too—is a key part of the success of the Head Start program,” says Traci Bowman, director, Prenatal to Five Head Start for Community Action Partnership. “This could be the night when a child is inspired toward reaching a goal, and takes that memory with them for a lifetime—and that’s a great compliment to the curriculum and family involvement strategies we put in place every day at Head Start.”

The event, a monthly Family Fun Night celebration for the Head Start program, will feature games centered around a Chiefs training camp experience, specifically geared toward developmental milestones for early childhood-aged learners (18 months to 5 years old). Traditional “football food” will be offered, and families will have the opportunity to meet KC Wolf and former KC Chiefs players. Each child will have the opportunity to make his or her own sports trading card with a dad or other male role model, and will receive a new children’s book to take home. There will be a storytime station where dads can share a book with their child.

The KC Chiefs will be moving their 3-week training camp to the Missouri Western campus in St. Joseph in 2010, and hope to have a larger presence in the community. “We really appreciate the impact of male role models on kids, and we wanted to find a way to be part of the community in St. Joseph,” says Larry Marshall, K.C. Chiefs Ambassador, and former player.

Before the fun starts, parents will participate in a short parents’ meeting, a part of the Head Start process that allows families to make decisions about the program, including curriculum and future plans. CAP St.

Joe hopes this event will encourage fathers and male role models in their role in moving their families out of poverty.

Physical development and family development are part of the Head Start program, a comprehensive early childhood learning program designed to give children in poverty (or who have disabilities) the same chance to succeed at school as children from non-low-income families. From nutritious meals to physical screenings, home visits, accredited curriculum and family opportunities for socialization and goal-setting, Head Start utilizes every opportunity to move families out of poverty and into economic stability.

“Bringing community leaders to Head Start family events is another way to move them closer to breaking the cycle of poverty,” says Rachel McCoy, director of development and communications, Community Action Partnership of Greater St. Joseph. “It’s encouraging to the families, and demonstrates that the community is on their side when it comes to getting out of poverty.”

Head Start Family Fun Night, featuring fathers and football, is Wed, Oct. 14, from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Benton High School in St. Joseph. The event is open to families of all children enrolled in Head Start in Greater St. Joseph. For questions, call Rachel McCoy, Community Action Partnership, at (816) 233-8281, ext. 110.

Community Action Partnership of Greater St. Joseph operates 12 Head Start centers across Buchanan, Andrew, Clinton and DeKalb Counties, serving nearly 500 children. Last year, more than 95% of Head Start program graduates tested ready for school in terms of intellectual and social development skills.

Community Action Partnership has provided programs to move low-income families out of poverty since 1965, serving nearly 16,000 people in poverty in Northwest Missouri. Head Start is one of the core programs managed by the agency. Additional services provided by Community Action Partnership to low-income families include 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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