

WCELI Update

News from the White Center Early Learning Initiative, a Thrive by Five Washington Community

December 2010

Greetings from WCELI



I hope you are enjoying the brisk change in seasons that we are experiencing and finding ways to stay warm! I will keep my remarks brief because there are a few significant things to share.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our community partners, service providers and program staff for all their hard work this past year to provide high quality services to the children and families in White Center. The passion and dedication that I encounter in this community every day is nothing short of inspirational and I am honored to be able to work beside such committed individuals.

We can expect changes going into the next year particularly in light of the shifting political and economic landscape. There will be transitions along the way, including the departure of our fearless leader – John Bancroft who will be retiring next Spring. As we experience these transitions, we will continue to keep you updated along the way.

Play and Learn Groups

Our Play and Learn groups have evolved and we are please to share that we have grown into multicultural groups with increasing attendance. We continue to offer groups on Thursdays and Fridays from 10am - 12pm in the Educare building.

The increased attendance and interest has highlighted a need in our community for more resources for Family, Friend and Neighbor caregivers. In order to meet that need, we are hoping to expand the number of Play and Learn groups we offer through WCELI as well as continue to work with our community partners in supporting the ongoing operation of their groups.




Boeing Grant

We received a grant from Boeing to provide training and supports to participating childcare providers in social-emotional development. The grant aims to provide training and materials in the use of appropriate assessment tools and also provides on-site consultation and supports. We are pleased to be able to partner with Lenore Rubin, from Public Health Seattle – King County, in providing this on-site support to providers. Lenore has a wealth of experience in working with childcare providers and will be a welcome resource in the childcare community.

Promise Neighborhoods

Southwest Youth and Family Services was unsuccessful in their federal planning grant application for Promise Neighborhoods but remain steadfastly committed to moving forward with developing a “cradle to college” pipeline for the White Center community. Several local funders have expressed continued interest in supporting this work and have generously donated money to continue the planning process. WCELI will continue to be a partner in the process, particularly around the early learning components of the pipeline. We are looking forward to deeper collaborations and the potential for larger systems change.

[Learn more about Promise Neighborhoods around the country.](#)

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| <p>Kindergarten Transition Program Evaluation</p> |  <p>The Kindergarten Transition Program at Beverly Park was successfully implemented this past summer. The program was featured in a Learning for Life segment which aired on King 5 and Kong 6/16. If you haven't seen it yet you can find links on our website: http://www.wceli.org/news.html.</p> <p>We are currently analyzing evaluation results of the program which we plan to share in January via a report and presentation of findings. Early results look very encouraging and we will be seeking funding to continue and hopefully expand this program next year.</p> <p>We want to thank the wonderful teachers and staff at Beverly Park for their hard work in implementing the program. We are especially grateful to Kathy Emmerick, Beverly Park Elementary School principal, who was deeply committed to ensuring the success of the program. And finally, we want to acknowledge the generous support of the Norcliffe Foundation and Thrive By Five WA which made the program possible.</p> |
| <p>Community Advisory Committee Recruitment</p> | <p>We are currently recruiting new members for our CAC and will be sending out a separate recruitment flyer. Our priorities for membership include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families with children birth to five who reside in White Center or Boulevard Park • Families with children receiving WCELI services • Providers who serve families with children birth to five in White Center or Boulevard Park • Business and/or community members-at-large with an interest in improving the lives of young children <p>If you are interested in joining or know someone who is interested, please contact either Nubia Lopez at (206) 716-8855 or nlopez@psesd.org, or Leilani Dela Cruz at (206) 716-8851 or ldelacruz@psesd.org.</p> |
| <p>Funding Reductions</p> | <p>WCELI is beginning the planning process for its 2011-2012 fiscal year, which begins in July 2011.</p> <p>WCELI has received generous funding since 2006 from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Thrive by Five Washington. They have funded the planning, start up and implementation phases of WCELI's services. Because of this support, many more young children are receiving early learning services, and the quality of existing services has been significantly increased.</p> <p>WCELI's partnering organizations have also received increased amounts of state and federal funding for early learning through Head Start, the Department of Early Learning, the Department of Health, the Department of Social and Health Services and other sources, which have helped to establish and expand essential programs currently in place for children and families.</p> <p>The current economic climate and state and federal budget realities are such that we anticipate, and are planning for, reduced funding levels from almost all of these primary sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the federal level, future funding levels for Head Start and Early Head Start will not be determined by Congress until the 2011 budget is approved. We hope the final budget will continue the current level of funding initially made possible by ARRA. This level of funding has been proposed by the President and passed by Appropriations committees in both the House and Senate, but there is no certainty that the new Congress will sustain this level of support. This funding is integral to the Educare Early Learning Center and Highline Head Start which is operated in White Center by Puget Sound ESD. |

- In response to the state's budget deficit and economic forecasts, state funding for early learning programs has already been reduced and is slated for further reductions by the Governor. Next year's funding levels will be determined by the State Legislature when its 2011-13 budget is determined this spring.
- We have been notified that WCELI's two primary philanthropic partners, Thrive by Five Washington and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, will also be reducing their contributions in 2011-12 from current levels, and that funding will be awarded to WCELI's programs based on specific priorities they have identified. These priorities will be impacted by the availability of yet uncertain public matching dollars, but at this time include reduced levels for child care quality improvement services provided by Child Care Resources, the Educare Early Learning Center operated by PSESD, outreach doula services provided by Open Arms, and home visiting services provided by Seattle-King County Public Health. The generous multiple year funding we have received from these two organizations has allowed us to initiate many new WCELI services, and their substantial on-going commitment to school readiness in White Center will continue to be crucial to many children in our community.

We want our supporters and partners to know that many services developed as part of the White Center Early Learning Initiative will continue, but that some changes and adjustments will be necessary. The WCELI partners will work within the constraints of reduced funding to serve as many children and families as possible and will aggressively seek other funding sources to help maintain services. We share with our philanthropic partners the long-term goal of having our WCELI services funded primarily from public sources.

We will continue to update you and involve the community as more information is available.

If you have questions about any information in this issue of WCELI Update, please do not hesitate to contact Leilani Dela Cruz at (206) 979-6926 or ldelacruz@psed.org. Thank you for your continued interest and support in the White Center Early Learning Initiative!



The White Center Early Learning Initiative (WCELI) is a partnership of community members and public and private organizations working to create integrated and accessible child development and family support services in White Center. Funded by grants from Thrive by Five Washington and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, WCELI provides education and support for parents, caregivers, and child care and early learning staff to help ensure that all children in the community begin school ready to succeed.

For more information on WCELI, visit www.wceli.org, or contact: Leilani DelaCruz, White Center Early Learning Initiative, 625 SW 100th St., Seattle, WA 98146; (206) 716-8851, ldelacruz@psed.org.