

WCELI Update

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

October 2009

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Many exciting things are happening at the White Center Early Learning Initiative! We are pleased to announce that Leilani Dela Cruz will be starting on October 26 as the new WCELI Director. (Learn more about Leilani's appointment at www.wceli.org/news.) Construction of the Educare Learning Hub is on track to be completed by the end of the year and will be ready for students by mid-February. There are trainings for child care providers and services for pregnant and new mothers happening in our community. And, we have also been working hard on the construction of our website, www.wceli.org. (Visit often for the latest WCELI news, services, class offerings and other opportunities.)

We hope you enjoy this issue of the WCELI Update! Please share it with your neighbors and colleagues and let us know how we are doing!

Greetings From the New WCELI Director, Leilani Dela Cruz



Hello!

I am very excited and humbled by the opportunity to come back to WCELI full time. It has been a wonderful experience to get to know many of you from our work together when I was the WCELI Planning Coordinator and as the Co-Chair of the Community Advisory

Committee. I am eager to meet and interact with those of you whom I have not yet had the pleasure of knowing, and continue to create and build strong partnerships.

I believe in the strengths that exist in White Center and Boulevard Park and want to work with all of you to build on our talents and resources to create a true community-based initiative. Together I know we will realize our shared dream of improving the lives and opportunities of our young children and families!

- Leilani Dela Cruz

Training Opportunities from Child Care Resources

Beginning in fall of this year, Child Care Resources (CCR) is offering free STARS training for child care providers in White Center. We are sponsoring two series: 1) Social Emotional needs of young children and 2) Active Play. These classes will educate and inspire you in your work with children and families. Visit www.wceli.org/classes to view a complete list of classes.

If you are a licensed provider in the White Center area (WCELI boundary) you and your staff may attend these trainings free of charge! These trainings are also open to other caregivers and providers outside White Center for a small fee. Please contact Valerie at CCR to register and for more information: 206-329-1011, ext. 259.



WCELI Job Opportunities

PSESD has two WCELI positions open for employment at this time, and seeks your assistance in helping to recruit the most talented and diverse candidate pool. These are the last remaining WCELI positions for which we will be hiring at this time. We anticipate further hirings as we get closer to the opening of our Educare center this winter.

1. The **WCELI Community Engagement Coordinator** is responsible for community outreach activities related to early learning in the White Center community. The Coordinator also organizes and facilitates Play & Learn groups and other activities for caregivers of young children and other residents so that the entire community plays a role in supporting young children's development. The position closes on October 19th.
2. The **Educare/WCELI Fiscal Manager** will manage expenditures and revenue for the Educare Early Learning Hub, its professional development center, and program-wide initiatives of WCELI. The Manager will be responsible for budget planning, implementation of the program's budget, and production of fiscal reports for staff, funders, and auditors. The Manager will also be responsible for administering contracts and managing systems for collection of fee-for-service revenue. The position closes on October 26th.

Further information on both positions is available at www.psesd.org and www.wceli.org.

Seeds to Success Update

The modified field test of Seeds to Success is approaching closure on December 31, 2009. Providers will receive their final assessments in January. Although the field test phase will end, we have good news for participants. CCR has received approval from our funders to continue existing services to current participants in the field test through June 30, 2010. Between January and June 30, our evaluators, funders and program staff will review data and explore redesigning elements of the current Seeds to Success Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). At that point we hope to fully engage more White Center providers in an enhanced QRIS. Thanks for participating!

Educare Early Learning Hub: Construction Update



If you drive by our new Educare Hub just north of White Center Heights Elementary School, you can see the building is almost completed on the outside, and fits wonderfully in the Greenbridge community that is rising around it. Inside the building, the walls are completed, sinks and other child-sized plumbing fixtures are installed, and common rooms are taking shape. Our public art, which is designed to help children experience different surfaces (stone, glass, and wood) and reflect the cultures and community around our Educare building, is installed but covered for its protection. The outdoor play area, which will provide children with a natural setting of plants, rocks, and water and lots of places to climb and play, will be the last part of the center to be built. We hope to have the entire building done by the end of the year, and once permits, licensing, and facilities systems are completed, to move in and be open for services by mid February.

Educare Evaluation

Educare is being evaluated as part of a national study coordinated by the University of North Carolina that includes sites from across the nation. In White Center, the evaluation is being conducted by the University of Washington's Center for Infant Mental Health and Development. The UW team recently wrapped up their first year of data collection, which was spent piloting assessments and helping teachers, family support staff, and families become familiar with the study.

Early evaluation results from other Educare programs that have been providing services for a while reveal promising results in preparing at-risk children from birth to five for later academic success. We expect to achieve these same types of outcomes once our site is fully up and running and our evaluation work will help us continuously improve the services provided to children and families.

The White Center site will be a model for other Educare sites to learn more about how to successfully implement the Educare model in a linguistically and culturally diverse community. We are also thinking about how to meaningfully evaluate implementation and outcomes in such diverse classrooms. We believe the early childhood education field will benefit from our learning here.

We are excited about the year ahead, and thankful to Educare staff and families for their important contributions to this study.



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: John Bancroft, Puget Sound Educational Service District, 800 Oakesdale Ave SE., Renton, WA, 98057, 425-917-7625, jbancroft@psed.org.

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